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## **BOOK REVIEW**

**Dr Flower Jose CHF, *Eucharist Impetus for Family Apostolate, A Theological Investigation***, Mannuthy, Thrissur: Holy Family Publications, 2014, Pages XVIII+302.

This is a doctoral dissertation, defended at the faculty of Theology and Religious studies, KU Leuven, Belgium, under the guidance of Prof. Dr Marc Steen. Sr Flower Jose (henceforth FJ) is a former BTh student of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. The work is “a systematic study on the Eucharistic insights and reflections of Blessed Mariam Thesia and the contemporary Eucharistic spirituality in light of the three documents of St John Paul II namely, *Dominicae Cenae, Ecclesia de Eucharistia and Mane Nobiscum Domine*” (p. VII). I am proud of stating that the author has come with flying colours in her endeavour. Although FJ is a CHF sister, she with all the academic honesty admits the lack of systematic and comprehensive treatment of the Eucharistic spirituality in the works of the foundress. Also she acknowledges that blessed Mariam Thesia had not directly linked with the family apostolate. Such sincerity deserves our wholehearted appreciation.

The study is divided into 3 chapters: Presentation of the Eucharistic Spirituality of Mariam Thesia (henceforth MT), A Theological Deepening and Broadening of Eucharistic Spirituality of MT in the Light of the Writings of John Paul II on the Eucharist, and Towards a Eucharistically Inspired Family Apostolate in the Syro-Malabar Church, particularly in the Congregation of the Holy family.

The limitations of a review article do not allow us to make a detailed critical analysis of the work. In the conclusion of chapter I FJ states that MT has lived her Eucharist spirituality in connection with her family apostolate. The frequent repetitions in the writings should not lead us to undervalue the originality of her visions; rather they point out to her existential pastoral concerns. “MT was miles Christi who, receiving strength from the Eucharist fought against the wise and zealously worked to build up families around the Eucharistic

table" (p. 94). The author opines that the basic intuitions of MT need to be translated into a contemporary language and practice. Thus she devotes chapter II to theologically deepen the basic characteristics in the light of the writings of John Paul II.

FJ pinpoints John Paul's sacrificial, mystical, eschatological and communicational dimensions of the Eucharist. In this light the author tries to build up a eucharistically inspired Family Apostolate of the Holy Family Congregation in chapter III. This part provides the original contribution of FJ. First she exposes the contemporary challenges of the families; evolution of families in the Syro-Malabar Church; the interreligious perspective of marriage and family; the impulse given to the Family Apostolate by the proclamation of the Eucharistic year. Then the author tries to re-formulate the Eucharistic inspired Family Apostolate as the charism of MT, the grounding principle of which is "Christian Family as Community finding its model in the Trinity and in the Holy Family." In this light the author draws a brief sketch of the CHF's apostolate in the current situation. Finally the young scholar gives some proposals for a renewed and deepened approach of Family Apostolate.

The author claims that her study has two unique traits. According to her this is the first attempt to make a scientific and detailed investigation of the spiritual documents of MT in order to explore her Eucharistic spirituality in critical dialogue with John Paul's teachings that establishes "to be Eucharistic means to be socially responsible." Secondly the originality of the thesis, "lies in the influence this study must exert on efforts for the renewal of the religious life and socio-pastoral commitment of the CHF in the Syro-Malabar Church" (p. 271). An elaborate bibliography of 31 pages proves that FJ has written the dissertation on solid foundations.

Once more I record my deep appreciation of this valuable study. A very minor defect of the work is that the author could not consult more scientific studies on the liturgical spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church. It would have provided her deeper insights. I hope and pray that FJ will continue to bless the Church with the fruits of her research in the academic field.

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