

**ASIAN
HORIZONS**

Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2012

Pages: 465-480

**ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH PARECATTIL IN
THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL:
ENVISAGING A PASTORAL AGENDA FOR
THE CHURCH IN INDIA**

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Introduction

Archbishop Joseph Parecattil, the most important spokesperson of the Syro Malabar Church in the Council, was one who understood the call of aggiornamento given by Pope John XXIII. In the preparatory phases of the Council and in the actual sessions, Parecattil led the Indian bishops with his characteristic boldness, vision and with a conviction that all the innovations and renewal must be for the greater pastoral good of the people. In this article, we are looking at his yeomen contribution in the Council, analyzing his Vota to the Council, his interventions in the preparatory period and in the four sessions of the Council. He clearly shared the vision of Pope John

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XXIII and later that of Pope Paul VI that the Council is to lead the Church beyond the status quo, beyond a mentality that saw the Church as a fortress, looking at others as enemies and opponents. He sincerely believed that if the Catholic Church is to be really *catholic*, it must accept in its treasure house, the riches found in the non European cultures and traditions.

The Ante Preparatory Period

The preparations to the Council began with the appointment of the Ante Preparatory Commission (APC) on 17th May 1959, entrusted with the task of collecting the Vota - the wishes and suggestions to the Council. The Bishops, members of the Roman curia and the Catholic Universities had to submit Vota which were intended to set the agenda for the Council. The worldwide response from the Catholic episcopacy to this request from Rome was a little surprising: only 76.4% responded to this initiative from APC. The Indian average was still less - 75%. Studying the Vota, there seems to have been close consultation among the oriental bishops in general and among Parecattil, Vayalil, Valloppilly, Polachirackal and Thangalathil in particular. Although the Vota did not, in the end, achieve the result it was intended due to an inadequate editing, it very well depicts the Catholicism at the start of the Council.

The Vota sent by Archbishop Parecattil are the following. One of the key demands of the Oriental bishops was to allow plural jurisdiction in the whole of India. Parecattil, together with other Oriental bishops, suggested that the priests and the religious of the Oriental rites could be permitted to work in the Mission regions where there were very few Latin rite Catholics (ADA II/4, p. 129).¹ These Oriental bishops also wished that the supreme head of every rite may be made equal to the Cardinal in dignity as well as in privileges (p. 130).² Another votum of Parecattil was for the strengthening of the provincial, regional and diocesan synods (p. 128). There may be regional, provincial or diocesan pastoral centres and associations for the

¹P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II, A Historico Theological Study of the Indian Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, Trichur: Marymatha Publications, 2001, 83. For Indian Vota see, *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando*. Series I (Antepreparatoria) (ADA) II/4, 101-226. Cf. also A.M. Mundadan, ed., *Cardinal Parecattil, the Man, His Vision and His Contribution*, Alwaye: Star Publications, 1988.

²P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 82

diocesan clergy for promoting the spiritual life, studies, apostolic activities of priests, adapted to the present day (p. 128).

An important proposal from Parecattil, as well as the other Oriental bishops, was that the training of the clergy should be entrusted to the indigenous priests of one's proper rite. Further, the priests and the seminarians of the Latin rite may be better educated in the understanding of the Oriental Church (p. 129). Parecattil, like his colleagues in the Syro Malabar and Malankara Churches, wanted that the Latin Congregations who received candidates from the Oriental rites may institute houses in the Oriental rite (p. 129). He asked that more authority be given to bishops over the religious (p. 128). He was also of the opinion that the Secular Institutes should be promoted and their juridical status and relation to the local ordinary be clearly defined (p. 151). A confederation of the religious congregations, with the similar activities could be established.

Parecattil strongly called for the strengthening of the ecumenical movement, among Catholics themselves as well as in relation to the separated brethren (p. 129). He also thought that the reunion of the protestant pastors would be easier if they could be accepted in to Catholic Church with priestly ordination or diaconate even while remaining married, allowing this for the first generation (p. 129). Parecattil emphasized the role of the ecumenical movement: a) the Council may reject certain expressions, disputes, judgements, which smacked so much of the superiority of the Western Church, or which showed some contempt to those "separated brethren", b) it may also reject "Latinization" in rites as well as in jurisdiction, c) if a Church may return to the union of the true Church, one should not introduce immediately in it the total canonical legislation in force today; the access to the Pope must be made easy to them (p. 130). Parecattil suggested that it would be very beneficial to invite the Oriental dissidents to the Council. From Kerala, the Catholicos, the legate of the Jacobite Patriarch, the bishop of the Church of the East, representatives of the Marthoma Church and the Church of South India could be invited (pp. 127-128). He also suggested that representatives of the World Council of Churches and World Lutheran Association could be invited for the Council.³

³Cf. P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 114.

Two other Vota of the archbishop were on liturgy and the internationalization of the Roman Curia. He asked for more freedom in adapting the catholic liturgy in accordance with the cultural and religious heritage of the people who lived outside Europe (p. 128). Parecattil, like several of the Oriental bishops from India, called for the internationalization of the Curia (p. 128).

In the Preparatory Period

The Preparatory period of the Council began on June 5, 1960, as on this day by the *Motu Proprio Superno Dei nutu* Pope John XXIII appointed 10 Preparatory commissions and two secretariats. Their task was to prepare schemas for the Council fathers on various subjects. On the inauguration of the Preparatory commissions on Nov. 14th 1960, the Pope underlined the human and Christian character of the Council and its ecumenical outreach. Archbishop Parecattil observed that by officiating at the liturgy in the byzantine rite on November 13th, the Pope showed concern towards the reunion of the Eastern Churches (which was one of the aims of the Council), and respect towards these Churches.⁴

Mar Joseph Parecattil was a member of the Preparatory commission for the Oriental Churches, along with Mar Mathew Kavukatt of Changanacherry (both of them from the Syro Malabar Church) and Mar Gregorius Thangalathil of Trivandrum (Syro-Malankara Church). In this commission, the Indian members had a good contribution.⁵ This commission⁶ was chaired by Card. Cicognani and had the representatives of almost all the Eastern Churches in communion with Rome and experts in Oriental affairs with a strong presence of professors from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome. The initial plan was to discuss four themes: transfers of rite, shared worship with the Oriental Christians, reconciling the Oriental dissidents, giving perspective of the Eastern Churches on the chief disciplinary problems assigned to other Preparatory

⁴*Ernakulam Missam* 31 (1961) 1-4, 2

⁵Cf. P. Pulikkan & M. Lamberigts, *The Vota of the Indian Bishops and their Participation in the Liturgy Debate During the Second Vatican Council*, in *Questions Liturgiques* 78 (1997) 65-66.

⁶J. Komonchak, *The Struggle for the Council during the Preparation of Vatican II (1960-1962)*, in G. Alberigo & J. Komonchak, ed., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, Leuven, 1995, 200-205; N. Edelby and I. Dick, ed., *Les Églises Orientales Catholiques, Décret "Orientalium Ecclesiarum"*, (Unam Sanctam 76), Paris, 1970, 63-72.

commissions. From Nov. 1960 to May 1962, the Commission had 6 meetings.⁷

Schemata on the Identity of Different Churches

The Commission prepared 11 schemata (one schema *De habitu clericorum* did not come before the coordinating body of Central Preparatory Commission for its consideration). Other texts were later included in a single text *De Ecclesiis Orientalibus* except the schema *De Ecclesiae unitate*.⁸ The first to be discussed was "the Rites in the Church".⁹ This text made it clear that though the Pope, as bishop of Rome, belonged to a particular Church with its own rite, he had universal primacy over all rites. The schema stated that all the particular Churches or rites were equal in holiness and dignity and, had the same rights and privileges and were bound by the same obligations. The variety of rites was an expression of Catholicity, which both required the preservation of legitimate traditions and the Church's adaptation to various needs of time and place.¹⁰ In the discussion of this text, Parecattil took exception to the statement of the Canon Law that the Oriental Churches were decorations to the Universal Church. They were not merely ornaments but indivisible members of the Ecclesial body. This must be clearly held, if one wanted to speak of the equality of the different particular Churches.¹¹

⁷Card. Cicognani's letter to Parecattil, dated April 4th, 1961 (cf. Parecattil Papers, AAE) mentions the themes to be discussed in the plenary session of the Commission: 1) the rites in the Church 2) the form of matrimony 3) the liturgical language 4) the sacrament of chrismation 5) catechism 6) fasts and abstinences 7) the mode of reconciling the Oriental dissidents 8) the extra sacramental *communicatio in sacris* 9) the habit of ecclesiastics 10) the permanent diaconate.

⁸These were: the Rites in the Church; the Sacraments in the Church; Oriental Patriarchs; *Communication in sacris* with the non-Catholic Oriental Christians; the Use of Vernaculars in the Liturgy; Ecclesiastical Precepts; the Faculties of the Bishops; Catechism and Catechetical Institution; Perpetual Calendar and the Celebration of Easter; the Divine Office in the Oriental Churches; The Vestments of Clergy; The Unity of the Church: "that they all may be one"; cf. J. Komonchak, *The Struggle for the Council II*, 201.

⁹*Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando*. Series II (Praeparatoria) (ADP) III/2, 189-191.

¹⁰J. Komonchak, *The Struggle for the Council II*, 202. P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 143-144

¹¹J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, ("As I See Myself"- autobiography), 2 vols, Cochin, 1985, 510-513. Parecattil says that in the meeting he also explained the difficulties that the Oriental Churches faced in India. The Orientals were restricted in their jurisdiction.

There was vigorous discussion on the schema on the Oriental Patriarchs.¹² The text acknowledged “the very broad authority” of the Oriental Patriarchs and expressed a desire that the patriarchal dignity may be restored. It proposed the establishment of new Patriarchates for the Oriental Catholic Churches which had at least one million members. It may be noted that the final text contained a proposal for the setting up of ‘a patriarchate for the Orientals in India, since it would help the propagation of the Christian faith in these vast lands more efficiently’.¹³

The Disciplinary Schemata

The schema on Ecclesiastical precepts¹⁴ made specific proposals regarding feast days, fast and abstinence, Easter communion, financial contributions and the celebration of marriages. In the discussions on the schema, Parecattil even suggested that the obligation of fasting may be totally taken away, since there were only a few who kept this accurately and thus, for many, this law was an occasion of sin.¹⁵ He thought that the reduction of the feast days seemed necessary because of the civil duties and due to the fact that many worked in factories.¹⁶ Hearing the word of God and being present in the catechism need not be proposed as precepts of obligation under sin but as counsels and practical directions with regard to the duty of keeping the faith. However, the archbishop observed, if the universal Church was to introduce new precepts, they should be applicable also for the Orientals: in such things there should not be any difference between Orientals and Occidentals.¹⁷

The text on ‘the faculties of the bishops’¹⁸ called that the authority of the bishops in their own sees may not be limited except when the

¹²ADP III/2, 192-195.

¹³ADP II/2, 194; the commission made such a specific request only in the case of India, though in an addenda it asked for the elevation of the Major Archiepiscopate of the Ukrainian Church to a Patriarchate; cf. N. Edelby and I. Dick, *Les Églises Orientales Catholiques*, 69.

¹⁴ADP III/2, 207-213. P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 145-146.

¹⁵Parecattil Papers, AAE.

¹⁶The number of the prescribed feasts could be reduced to two: 1) the birth of the Lord 2) the feast of the patron of region or nation, e.g., the feast of St Thomas the apostle, on the 3rd of July, for the Oriental Church in India. The obligation of being present in the sacred liturgy need not be mitigated. cf. Parecattil Papers, AAE.

¹⁷Parecattil Papers, AAE.

¹⁸ADP III/2, 214-215.

common good of the whole Church demanded it. In the discussion on this text, Parecattil proposed that the bishops in the Oriental regions may have jurisdiction also in those regions, where there were already Latin bishops, considering the particular law and Oriental tradition.¹⁹ The schema on 'catechism and the catechetical institution'²⁰ asked for a single catechism for the whole Church, both Eastern and Western. The archbishop observed that in its preparation, full respect may be given to the variety and distinctiveness of the Oriental Churches.

The schema on the sacraments in the Church addressed the question of the restoration of the permanent diaconate. Parecattil observed that in the Syro-Malabar Church, the permanent diaconate seemed to be neither necessary nor suitable.²¹

On the text 'the divine office',²² all the three Indian archbishops in the commission stated that reciting the breviary should be made a grave obligation for priests. Parecattil however acknowledged that in the case of parish priests and other pastors, there could be a mitigation in this precept, on Sundays and other prescribed feast days. On the other hand, Msgr. Sebastian Chereath, a consultor in the commission, was all against making the recital of the breviary, an obligation.²³

In the Council Sessions

In the months leading up to the Council, there were high expectations and concerted preparations for the Council. Card. Valerian Gracias, speaking to a distinguished audience in Bombay, thought that the Council was intended to put 'our own house in order', and key themes would be liturgy (participation of the faithful, vernacular)

¹⁹Parecattil also suggested that it was good and useful to give more faculties to the bishops with regard to a) dispensations in the matrimonial impediments b) the bination of Mass on feast days and on any days with just reason.

²⁰ADP III/2, 216-217.

²¹Parecattil Papers, AAE; cf. E.R. Hambye, *Permanent Deacons in the Eastern Rites*, in CMS 4 (1959) 269-270. Parecattil and Kavukatt opposed any change in the current discipline with regard to the canonical form in the mixed marriages; cf. Carlo de Clercq Papers, *De Ecclesiis Orientalibus*, (p. 1) dated 18th March 1961 (numbered 51/1961), ALFT, Leuven.

²²ADP III/2, 218-221; Parecattil papers, AAE, *Pontificia Commissio de Ecclesiis Orientalibus Praeparatoria Concilii Vaticani II*, ns. 101/1961, De Disciplina Cleri, 1.

²³Parecattil Papers, AAE, *Pontificia Commissio de Ecclesiis Orientalibus Praeparatoria Concilii Vaticani II*, 101/1961, De Disciplina Cleri, 5-6.

and mission.²⁴ In a pastoral letter, Parecattil summarized all the preparation that went into the Council.²⁵ He referred to *Ad petri cathedram*, the first encyclical of Pope John XXIII, with regard to the aims of the Council - these were: to understand the truth, renew the Christian life, re-establish unity, mutual understanding and peace and work for the 'return' of the dissidents.

Parecattil, as well as many other bishops, wrote pastorals to their flock to pray for the success of the Council. The majority of the Oriental bishops from India had their residence, together with many other Oriental bishops, in the Collegio Damasceno.²⁶ It seems there was some confusion as to the official dress of the Syro Malabar bishops in the Council.²⁷ In the election to various conciliar commissions, Parecattil was selected to the Commission for Oriental Churches, along with Archbishops Kavukatt and Thangalathil. During the first session of the Council in 1962, a nagging concern of the Indian bishops was the Chinese attack on Indian soil on 19th Sept. 1962. Parecattil wrote that in the context of the Chinese attack, the Indian bishops spent the First Session in anxiety. Sharing the concerns of the people, the bishops found it difficult to be away from India in those tense moments.²⁸ Parecattil gave a radio speech on November 3rd speaking about the Council and the Chinese attack.²⁹ According to him, a unique feature of the Council was an increased and conscious desire to invite those in other Churches, through the means of love, to the Catholic Church. Accordingly, the Council did not use the words

²⁴V. Gracias, *Cardinal's Address on Vatican Council*, in *The Examiner* 113 (1962) 545.

²⁵J. Parecattil, *Pastoral Letter*, in *Ernakulam Missam* 32 (1962) 131-136.

²⁶J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 523.

²⁷There was some controversy on the official dress of the Syro Malabar bishops in the inaugural ceremony of the Council. Among the Syro-Malabarians one bishop wore the traditional Oriental dress for the Mass; some others had the western chasuble and the alb. Parecattil himself had the western alb and the eastern chasuble. On other days, the Syro Malabar bishops went to the Sessions in the same uniform as the Latin ones. The Oriental Congregation sent a letter to the bishops, asking why the Syro Malabar bishops went to the Council without an official vestment of their Church. In a meeting of November 24th, the Syro Malabar bishops discussed this issue but did not reach in an agreement on an 'Oriental dress' for the bishops. Parecattil notes that he did not like the imitation of the dress of the foreign Chaldean bishops and wanted an Indian dress, adapted to the local climate and considering the popular wish. J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 523-524.

²⁸J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 530.

²⁹J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 527-530.

schismatics and heretics to refer to the non-Catholics but the "separated brethren".³⁰

Oriental Churches, not Ornaments, but Integral Parts of the Church

In the first Session, on 27th Nov. 1962, the archbishop gave an important speech – this was indeed the first speech from the Syro Malabar Church in the Council.³¹ The discussion was on the schema "Unity of the Church". The schema discussed the ways to achieve union with the Orthodox. The first part dealt with the theological unity of the Church, with the successor of St Peter as the head of the Church. The second part highlighted the theological, liturgical, juridical, psychological and practical means needed for union. Parecattil stated that the schema was generally acceptable both because an ardent desire was manifested for opening a way for the dissident brethren to enter the Church respectably and easily and because various ways had been suggested for fostering and effecting such reunion (the speaker spoke of "reunion" and not "return").

However, he observed, echoing his comments in the preparatory period, that in the schema and in the Church documents, the Oriental rites (Churches) were spoken of as ornaments of the Universal Church and that they increased the beauty of the Body of Christ. Though one understood the good intention behind these expressions, such usages were not acceptable. For, the Oriental Churches did not need such a defence for their existence since they were directly or indirectly from the Apostles and therefore, from Christ. They were not mere ornaments or decoration for the Church but integral parts of the Universal Church. The schema proposed with regard to the liturgical reform among the Orientals, that they might return to the ancient and venerable past, if they had gone away due to the circumstances of times and persons. Parecattil observed that in this, the pastoral aspect and the good of the souls must be considered. With the changed circumstances of persons, times, things, in the course of centuries, one may ask

³⁰J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 527-530.

³¹*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (AS) 1/3, 627-629; P. Pulikkan, *Indian Bishops in the First Session: From a Slow Start to an Emerging Conciliar Ethos*, in M.T. Fattori & A. Melloni, ed., *Experience, Organisations and Bodies at Vatican II*, Leuven, 1999, 115; P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 231-232.

whether the faithful would gladly return to the old ceremonies and obsolete customs.

Further, the speaker observed that the Oriental parishes must be allowed in the cities outside Kerala, from where many Oriental faithful had migrated. This was necessary, if one were to preserve the proper rite and historical traditions. This was needed also from an ecumenical point of view since the non-Catholic Oriental Churches had their parishes in different parts of India and the members from these Churches would like to join an Oriental rite and not the Latin one. In the same vein, Parecattil called for the creation of mixed Episcopal conferences of Catholics and non-Catholics in various regions. This, he said, from the personal experience of such a Conference in Kerala.³²

On 3 Dec. 1962, the Mass in the Council Hall was celebrated by Archbishop Joseph Parecattil in the Syro Malabar rite in Malayalam, the language of Kerala. The private prayers of the priest and the words of consecration were in Aramaic, which had been the liturgical language of the Syro Malabar Church. We may recall that it was on July 3rd, 1962, that the Mass was allowed in vernacular. Introduction to the Mass was given by Sebastian Valloppilly (Tellicherry). The enthronization of the gospel was done by George Alappat (Trichur).³³

Parecattil wrote an article in the daily *Malabar Mail* evaluating the First Session.³⁴ One of his memorable impressions was the celebration of the Holy Mass with around 2000 Fathers. He observed that the Church could be well-rooted in a place, only if there were indigenous bishops and the clergy and this was reflected when, the bishops from Africa offered the Mass twice in the Council. The Masses in different rites testified to the universality of the Catholic Church. The offering of the Syro Malabar liturgy in the Council was an important event in the history of the Church. The archbishop particularly noted the free discussion enjoyed by the Fathers and the role of the media which faithfully reported the Council happenings.

³²Parecattil observed that the mixed Conference of all the Christian bishops (the Catholics, Jacobites, Marthomites, Anglicans, Church of South India and others) of Kerala successfully withstood the takeover attempt of the schools by the Communist government which had come to power in Kerala in 1957.

³³ASI/1, 146.

³⁴Parecattil Papers, 716 V (1) Vatican Council II, AAE.

Call to Holiness and the Lay Spirituality

In the second session in 1963, the predominant theme was the discussion on the schema on the Church. The discussion in the final chapter of the schema, *the call to holiness* saw severe criticisms for its lack of clarity, the overtreatment of religious holiness and an apparent contradiction in certain ideas with other chapters. The chapter gave too much emphasis on subjective sanctity and spoke in a triumphalistic tone. Sanctity was seen as a fruit of the human effort. The Fathers observed that the holiness of the religious should be shown in the ecclesial context. Parecattil gave a speech on Oct. 31st, 'in the name of several Fathers from India and other regions.'³⁵ He underlined that the schema should present poverty and chastity, not only as signs but above all as realities which they signified. Poverty was a voluntary renunciation of legitimate temporal goods in order to serve God. Chastity was the total giving made to God in order to love Him more freely. Both were a personal dedication made to God. Parecattil further noted that the schema should give a balanced view with regard to the active and contemplative apostolate. Together with the appreciation for those in the active ministry and studies, the contemplative life also must be esteemed, which was a great treasure existing in the whole Church.

Card. Léger of Canada had criticized the schema as it had given the impression that the monastic sanctity was the only real sanctity and that ideal was unattainable to the secular clergy and laity.³⁶ In a similar vein, disapproving of the general tone of the chapter, Parecattil wanted to delve into the vocation of the faithful to holiness.³⁷ a) According to n. 29 of the schema, each one was called to one and the same Christian holiness but n. 30 discussed, somewhat illogically, that such holiness was limited to the ministry of bishops, priests and to the laity chosen by the bishop. The exercise of pastoral duty was only an aspect of apostolate, being an ecclesial manifestation of personal sanctity and not the exercise of the total sanctity. b) The nature of this sanctity was not well described in the schema. Though the schema said that the holiness began in faith and in baptism, it was silent about the profound transformation of human person in baptism, his intimate union (*koinonia*) with Christ and the growth of Christ in the baptized through the sacraments, especially the

³⁵AS II/4, 49-51; P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 289-290.

³⁶AS II/3, 632-634.

³⁷Cf. the text of the speech, AS II/4, 49-51.

Eucharist.³⁸ c) Parecattil also saw in the chapter a disproportionately larger treatment on the evangelical counsels, which came from a negative vision of the holiness and Christian perfection based on abnegations. Under the light of the sublime mystery of Incarnation, there was a completely different vision and orientation. According to the speaker, the chapter should speak more clearly and deeply on the sanctification of the laity in modern life and the apostolate.³⁹

The second session saw strong debates on the question of plural jurisdiction. Archbishop B. Athaide, in the name of 40 Latin bishops from India, called for “unum territorium, unus Ordinarius” (One territory, One bishop).⁴⁰ Since the discussion on the concerned chapter (IV) had been closed, a special petition was sent by the Oriental bishops of India to the Secretary General archbishop Felici for permission to speak. The bishops said that the proposals in the schema, especially with regard to the erection of the diocese due to the plurality of the rites had been acceptable to them, and so none of them chose to speak at the discussion on the respective topic. However, since ‘someone spoke about one jurisdiction in one territory’, they wanted to explain their position in the council hall.⁴¹ In a meeting on Nov 16th, the Oriental bishops decided unanimously to voice their opinion that there should not be any change in the proposed schema regarding the subject.⁴² Bishop Valloppilly gave the speech on Nov. 18th, stating that dioceses must be set up according to the diversity of rites, where there were large numbers of people of different rites.⁴³

³⁸According to him, this Christological or Christocentric, sacramental character of the total Christian holiness, in its beginning as well as in its evolution had to be brought to light. This was necessary for coherence, consistency and harmony of this schema with other ones (e.g. liturgy). AS II/4, 50.

³⁹Card. Léger asked for a clearer treatment of the lay spirituality, for which the laity had to enter into the intellectual life of the Church; thus they should be allowed to get secure theological degrees and teach in the seminaries. AS II/3, 632-634.

⁴⁰AS II/5, 250-253.

⁴¹Cf. the letter of the bishops (unnumbered, undated), found in *Valloppilly Papers*, Archbishop's House, Tellicherry; cf. AS II/5, 409; our interview with Bishop Sebastian Valloppilly, 8.1.1997, Tellicherry.

⁴²*Parecattil Papers*, 717 V (II) Vatican Council II, 3, AAE.

⁴³AS II/5, 409-411. There was an anonymous leaflet titled *Hendo*, (from the Syriac for India) which circulated among the fathers, describing the difficulties faced by the Orientals in India but it was written in bad taste, according to Parecattil. Somehow, some bishops thought that he was behind the leaflet. Parecattil had to write several letters to clear his name. J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 542-543.

Parecattil spoke on the Vatican Radio on Nov. 16, 1963.⁴⁴ Reflecting the themes of discussion in the second session, he reported that there was a positive opinion among the Fathers regarding the principle of collegiality and the setting up of a Bishops' Senate to help the Pope in the administration of the Church. Though a decision with regard to the restoration of diaconate to the married was difficult, it could be permitted in certain regions and conditions. According to the archbishop, the bishops generally opposed giving a juridical status to the Episcopal Conferences. He recalled the speech of Card. Frings who spoke about the 100 year old German Bishops' Conference, which could achieve many things with the cooperation of bishops, though its decisions were not juridically binding.⁴⁵

Necessity of Interreligious Dialogue

In the third session, the discussion on the schema on Religious Liberty was a key topic. The discussion on the schema started on 23 Sept. 1964. Significant Interventions were made by Indian bishops like Eugene D'Souza, V. Gracias and A. Lecue. After this, a related theme, the schema *on the Jews and Other non-Christian religions* was taken up for discussion. The schema gave special treatment to Jews and Muslims, but kept silent about Hinduism. Indian bishops rightly called that Hinduism also be given an equal treatment in the schema. Archbishop Parecattil made an important contribution to the discussion on this topic on 29th Sept.⁴⁶ He pointed out that the appreciable reference in the schema (nn. 33-34) to the non-Christians must be expanded. The Church's mission was to preach the Gospel to all creatures and to bring salvation to all, especially since a large part of humanity remained ignorant of the Good News. It was with this sense of obligation that Pope Paul VI founded the Secretariat for non-Christians. The schema rightly exhorted that with great care one must consider the opinions and doctrine of non-Christians, which although differed very much from Christians, contained rays of truth which illuminated all people.⁴⁷

⁴⁴P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 337.

⁴⁵Parecattil Papers, 717 V (II) Vatican Council II, 1-2. AAE.

⁴⁶AS III/3, 43-45; 365-367.

⁴⁷According to Parecattil, the true foundations of Christ's revelation could be found in the sacred books of non-Christian religions. All creation was groaning and in travail (Rom: 8. 22), expecting the full revelation of the Son of God. This was true of the sincere and devoted followers of the majority of the non-Christians like Hindus. For example, in the *Upanishads*, the holy book of the Hindus, one could find

Parecattil took many conclusions from the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people. 1. Christ is not extraneous and unknown to these religions but the expected one in their hearts, who would fulfil their expectations. 2. Conversions due to temporal motives and through the external persuasion without internal conviction should be dissuaded. 3. In these dangerous times of atheism and materialism, it is better that people remained in their own faiths than to lose their sense of religion. This should be specially noted about non-Christians in the Catholic Schools. 4. Dialogue with non-Christians is not only useful but also necessary so that Christ may be rightly presented. With this, many prejudices on both sides would vanish. 5. The Church ought to assume what was good and humane in these religions and cultures. It must incarnate in all cultures and in all human values. It would be very useful to study more deeply the ancient religions of India and China, their culture and philosophy. The catholicity of the Church called for such a dialogue with these religions, so that the ineffable divine mystery could be presented to them in a more intelligible way. 6. If one accepts the invisible activity of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people who sincerely seek God, a certain unity of all who worship God in Spirit and Truth is needed. Avoiding the danger of indifferentism, this unity must be expressed even externally: by convoking interreligious meetings for study and discussion, permitting non-Christians to pray in the Churches, fostering an active cooperation in social, political, cultural and moral fields. This unity could be shown until all who served God may be assembled in his one Church.

The Church shall not shy away from the process of inculturation: Parecattil gave many examples from the history of the Church.⁴⁸ The Church accepted in its culture many feasts and ceremonies from Egyptians and the Phoenicians. It took laws from Babylon, used Greek philosophy to develop its doctrine and imitated the Romans in administration. Clearly Parecattil's intervention was a decisive one in the formation of the Declaration of World Religions (*Nostra Aetate*).

The Workers and Their Obligations

A major topic that the Council was engaged in the fourth session in 1964 was the 13th schema (*Church in the Modern World*), which Pope

a true aspiration for God as the Director and the Liberator; although these people were ignorant of Christ, they actually sought Him; AS III/3, 44.

⁴⁸III/3, 44-45.

Paul VI had called at the end of the third session “the crown of the Council’s work.”⁴⁹ The schema was squarely criticized by the Indian bishops as it dwelt with the economic situation of the developed West which enjoyed the fruits of ‘socialization, industrialization and urbanization’. The first part of the schema dealt with the general principles (the vocation of the human person, human community, human activity and the role of the Church in the modern world). The second part was on the practical application of the first part. The third chapter of second part was on Economic and Social Life. Parecattil gave a written statement in this session, which was also signed by Archbishop Thangalathil.⁵⁰ N. 79 dealt with work, working conditions and leisure. Archbishop Parecattil⁵¹ observed that though sufficient emphasis was paid to the claims and rights of workers, their *obligations* were forgotten. Workers should discharge their duties conscientiously and cooperate with the management, for, management and labourers travelled in the same boat. Its shipwreck would spell disaster for all. Labour was only *one* factor of production, the others being *Land, Capital* and *Organization*. Parecattil maintained that the schema seemed to give an impression that labour alone counted in production. Such a one-sided view would prompt the labourers to advance undue demands with the possible danger for the industrial progress of the country, upsetting its economic balance.⁵² Perhaps recalling the labour unrest in Kerala, Parecattil observed that the *leaders* of the workers should not be puppets in the hands of people with selfish interests but good citizens, imbued with the spirit of justice and charity. The archbishop too was of the opinion that the schema’s drafters had before them the industrial situation in the West, where the problem was one of distribution whereas in the developing countries it was one of greater production.

Conclusion

The Vota of archbishop Parecattil clearly show that plural jurisdiction, formation of the clergy in one’s own ecclesial tradition, ecumenical impetus needed for the Church etc. were his important

⁴⁹AS III/8, 914.

⁵⁰AS IV/3, 461; 527.

⁵¹Cf. also, J. Parecattil, *Njan Ente Drushtiyil*, 546.

⁵²He mentioned that in Kerala, both the Government and private agencies were afraid to start any new industry, fearing labour struggles which were often organized by the Communists and Leftists.

concerns before the Council. His Vota markedly make him as one of the bishops who stood for reform of the Church. In the preparatory period, Parecattil involved himself in the discussions of the more pastoral themes of the daily Church life (cf. calls for plural jurisdiction, proposal on the reduction of feasts, more faculties for the bishop, etc.), some of which are the continuation of his wishes expressed in the Vota. His observation that the precepts of obligation (under the punishment of sin) should not stifle Christian faith and that the latter could be fostered more by an approach of counsels and directives, seems to be more attuned to the spirit of conciliar renewal.

In the council discussions, his three speeches and one written observation are to be highly appreciated, not only because it created an indelible impression on the council fathers but also because of the fact that other fathers from the Syro Malabar Church did not give many speeches in the Council. It may appear strange that in the debate on liturgy in the first session, Parecattil did not speak, as liturgy was a key theme close to his heart. Maybe he chose to speak in the session on a greater concern – the identity of the Syro Malabar Church. He clearly highlighted the fact that the existence of the Oriental Churches was not a privilege from anyone but a right and responsibility. In the preaching of the gospel elsewhere in India, this right must be respected. In the council hall itself, Parecattil witnessed to the plurality in ecclesial life in the form of celebration of different liturgical rites. Perhaps, the crown of his conciliar interventions was the speech he gave in 1964 on the necessity of interreligious dialogue and the inculturation such dialogue brought forth. Joining with the well known speeches from his colleagues V. Gracias and E. D'Souza on this theme, he underlined that we needed a dialogue not only of ideas but a dialogue of life with the followers of world's great religions. Thus, he stressed that the Christians have to cooperate with them in social, political, cultural and moral fields.

Archbishop Parecattil sincerely believed that the Syro Malabar Church, with its own special Oriental tradition and because of its pluralistic environment in India, has much to offer to the Universal Church. On the other hand, he was a patient listener and learner, being open to other traditions and patrimonies. His interventions in the Council are courageous testimonies to this ecclesial vision.