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THE MYSTERY OF RESURRECTION

An Enquiry into the Writings of Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara, CMI

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Introduction

The mystery of resurrection is at the heart of Christian faith and life. It is also the centre of Christian liturgical celebration. For the Eastern Christians the peace and joy of resurrection permeates in all their liturgy and spirituality. As T. Federici says, "for the Eastern Christians the Easter is the centre, fount, summit and all."¹ This article is a short enquiry into the writings of the septuagenarian Rev. Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara CMI,² on the mystery of resurrection,

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¹T. Federici, *Teologia Liturgica Orientale I*, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 1978, 85: "Per gli Orientali cristiani la Pasqua è centro, è fonte, è culmine, è tutto". Tomasso Federici was the professor and guide of the doctoral thesis of Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Rome, and influenced him greatly. Another person who had profound influence on him was Fr. Placid J. Podipara CMI, theologian, liturgist, canonist and above all a "heroic son of the Syro-Malabar Church." See, *Liturgy-Experience*, Kottayam: Denha Services, 1995, 10-11. (Unless otherwise specified, the works cited in this article are authored by Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara).

²Varghese Pathikulangara, CMI was born on 21st August 1940 in Kizhakambalam, Kerala, professed in the CMI Religious Community on 16th May 1961 (so this is the golden jubilee year of his religious profession) and was ordained

the key concept of his theological vision, and its expressions in the liturgy and life.

1. Source and Methodology of Pathikulangara's Theology

Scripture and liturgy are the main sources of Pathikulangara's theology. At the same time as a passionate son of the Church he tries to enliven the spirit of the authentic teachings of the Church and often quotes from them. As an ardent follower of the *Mar Thoma Margam* he takes pride in the great tradition of Thomas Christians. At times he delves deep into the writings of Fathers of the Church, especially Syriac Fathers, as well as those of many modern authors.

His theologizing methodology is both liturgical analysis and synthesis. In the beginning of the doctoral dissertation, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal*³ he says: "The method is both analytical and synthetical, historical, liturgical and theological. The liturgical texts are analysed for a deeper study and final synthesis."⁴ Though he has said this particularly about the doctoral research this is true also about his other works.⁵ Because the liturgy contains scriptural and patristic texts, credal formulas, prayers and chants, ceremonies, signs and symbols his methodology can be summarized like this: liturgical analysis and synthesis with spiritual insights and ecclesial application.

2. Mystery of Resurrection: Centre of Christian Faith

The bodily resurrection of Christ and the Christians is at the centre of Christian faith. As Paul says, "if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile

priest on 17th May 1970. In the year 1981 he completed his doctoral studies in Sacred Liturgy. He was the ordinary professor of Liturgy at DVK, Bangalore (1975-2006) and is guiding research students as professor emeritus. He was associate Professor of Liturgy at Paurastya Vidyapitham, Kottayam, and visiting professor in many theological faculties in India. He was editor of the Spirituality Section of *Christian Orient* for many years, the editorial consultant to many journals like *Dukrana*, *Kathioli* and a regular contributor to many theological journals. He is the founder and co-ordinator of Denha Services (Manganam, Kottayam), started in 1984, which has published about 75 books up to this date. He is a member of many national and international theological associations like Societas Liturgica, ARAM, ETAI, ASML.

³The full title is: *Qyamta w-hayye w-hudata Resurrection, Life and Renewal: A Theological Study of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Great Saturday and the Sunday of Resurrection in the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, Bangalore-Kottayam: Dharmaram and OIRSI, 1982.

⁴*Resurrection*, xxvii.

⁵For a comprehensive bibliography of his works see the forthcoming *Festschrift* in his honour, *The Way of Life*, ed. P. Kochappilly, G. Pallikunnel and J. Kureethara.

and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1Cor 15:16-18). So in the Nicene Creed we proclaim: "For us human beings and for our salvation he came down, and became flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day."⁶

2.1. Defeat of Death and Victory of Life

Death is the consequence of sin and a cause of disintegration. Adam symbolizes these both. Christ is the sacrament and source of life and wholeness. "Trampling down death by death", he made us partakers of his Resurrection and life.⁷ So, for human beings resurrection of Christ is the stepping stone to eternal life.

2.1.1. Adam-Christ Parallelism

Adam is the first human being and through him death had an entry into the world. He ate the fruit of the forbidden tree (Gen 3:17), alienated himself from God, the source of all life, and gave himself to death. "Death here means something more than physical death. It is the separation from God, namely the sin of disobedience and its consequences. Physical death was only a sign of that."⁸ Christ is the second Adam and through him life, instead of death, entered into the world. He is the Tree of Life (Gen 3:22) and through his death and resurrection, i.e. victory over death, gave life to the mortal Adam, i.e. the humankind. The final human resurrection will be the final defeat of death.⁹

2.1.2. Resurrection, Life and Renewal

If the first Adam was instrumental to the sin and death, the second/last Adam, Christ, became the instrument of life in abundance. He himself is the resurrection and life (Jn 11:25). His resurrection is a passage from death to life. While interpreting the NT tradition of resurrection Varghese Pathikulangara says that the resurrection event has a double significance:

On the one hand, God vindicated Jesus with regard to both his mission and his claim, by raising him from among the dead (Mt 12:40; Rom 1:4). On the other hand, the Resurrection is understood in the total context of Salvation History: negatively, it is the overcoming of sin and its consequence, death; positively, it is the beginning of a new life (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor15:14, 17, 22).¹⁰

⁶J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, ed., *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore: TPI, 2001, 6.

⁷"Editorial," *Christian Orient*, 19.3 (1998) 103.

⁸*Resurrection*, 151.

⁹*Resurrection*, 144, 151.

¹⁰*Resurrection*, 225.

So, resurrection of Christ by overcoming sin and death, affirms life, the life-divine, and renews the human being and the whole creation in Christ. It is the very centre and converging point of the whole history of salvation. It is the meeting point of time and eternity. Every liturgical commemoration makes present this great mystery in the Community through *anamnesis* in the context of the total plan of God's salvation.

2.1.3. Role of Holy Spirit in the Resurrection

Holy Spirit is the spirit of life. As the Spirit of God transformed the creation (Gen 1:2) in the beginning and human being at his creation (Gen 2:7), he also became the transforming principle of the new creation, the resurrection. In the Pauline understanding, "when the Lord Jesus was buried in the tomb, the Holy Spirit descended and filled his 'flesh body' and transformed it into the 'spirit body'."¹¹ Christ is raised by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is transformed by the same Spirit. And he becomes the source of the Spirit for the baptized.¹² "The risen Lord imparts to everyone who comes in contact with him his Spirit, the new life."¹³ So we can say, the resurrection of Christ can be considered as a symbol of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. There is no Pentecost without the Resurrection.

2.2. Christ's Resurrection and Human Resurrection

Christian life is a waiting in hope for the final transformation in Christ. "The Resurrection of Jesus is a pledge of the Resurrection of the baptized, and his glorification is an earnest to them, that they also, one day, will be glorified."¹⁴ Christ is the first-born in the new-creation.

3. Mystery of Resurrection: Centre Point of Apostolic Preaching

The Mystery of Resurrection is at the centre of the Apostolic preaching, which leads to conversion and formation of the Christian communities.

3.1. Apostolic Christ Experience

The Pauline understanding of an apostle is the key to understand Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara's ecclesiology and vision on mission. For Paul, "an Apostle of Christ ought to have two specific qualities: first of all he must be an eye-witness to Jesus Resurrection; but that is

¹¹*Church and Celebration*, Kottayam: Denha Services, 1984, 19.

¹²See, F.X. Durrwell, *La Résurrection de Jésus, mystère de salut*, Paris-Le Puy: Xavier Mappus, 1954, 115-131.

¹³*Church and Celebration*, 19.

¹⁴*Resurrection*, 111.

not enough, he must also have a direct authorization from Christ to proclaim the Gospel."¹⁵ From this we can understand that "the authenticity and authority of a Church depended solely on the Apostolicity of her founder."¹⁶

In relation to the East Syriac Churches¹⁷ the Christ experience of St. Thomas is very important. "In St. Thomas we have an undisputable witness to Jesus' Resurrection, on which the Christian faith is built up."¹⁸ The response of Apostle Thomas, "My Lord and my God", is the complete response to the risen Lord. This is not an expression of unbelief, as many western authors propose, but an expression of deep faith and intimate love.¹⁹

3.2. Apostolic Kerygma

The centre of every apostolic preaching is the mystery of Christ, and the mystery of resurrection is the very core of it. For example take the first Proclamation of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But *God raised him up*, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:22-24).²⁰ "Jesus' historical life is crowned through his Resurrection... The uniqueness of life in Jesus is enjoyed in resurrection-experience and it is received as the gift of the Holy Spirit."²¹ And these Apostolic proclamations and outpouring of the Holy Spirit lead one to reconciliation and witnessing to Christ.

4. Mystery of Resurrection and the Church

Christ through his passion, death and resurrection founded the Church and became the head of it.²² It is "the assembly that God gathers together, and thus must be understood in contrast to all other

¹⁵*Resurrection*, 5.

¹⁶*Resurrection*, 5; "Communion of Churches according to the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Tradition", in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 27.2-3 (1978) 169.

¹⁷These Churches consider St. Thomas as their father in faith and apostolic founder, directly or indirectly.

¹⁸*Resurrection*, 10.

¹⁹"An Individual Church and its Liturgy" in J. Madey and G. Kaniarakath, ed., *The Church I Love: A Tribute to Rev. Placid J. Podipara C.M.I.*, Kottayam: EBOSC, 1983, 3.

²⁰See some other kerygmatic proclamations on the resurrection of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles: 2:32; 3:15; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30.

²¹*Divine Praises and Liturgical year*, Kottayam: Denha Services, 2000, 137.

²²*Resurrection*, 262.

forms of society."²³ According to the Pauline understanding "the Church is built on a special Christ experience of the Apostles, especially of Jesus' Resurrection."²⁴

Church is formed from the seed of Apostolic kerygma sown in a particular people and culture. "An Individual Church is the concretization of the Christ-experience of one or more Apostles in the life-situation of a given people. When the Apostle's unique encounter with and experience of the Risen Lord is shared to that particular group of people, then a Church has taken root."²⁵ The individuality and unity of the Churches shall be explained by this very concept. Individual Churches are different from each other in their Apostolicity and life-situation, or in one of these constituent elements. This diversity of their proper apostolic heritage is expressed through their worship, spirituality, theology and system of discipline.²⁶ At the same time "these individual Churches express their unity through their one faith in Christ Jesus."²⁷

In the Church how the resurrection experience is to be transferred? Through proper celebration of liturgy "the original experience is to be repeatedly awakened in order that this community may grow to its maturity and fullness and to transmit it to the posterity."²⁸ Through this the Church is renewed constantly on her way to the final destination.

5. Mystery of Resurrection Expressed in the Liturgy and Life

The mystery of Christ's resurrection is part of very life and celebration of the Church from the beginning. The liturgy celebrates the whole mystery of salvation, and its centre is the Paschal Mystery. The life imbued with the Spirit of the risen Lord leads one to the life in Christ and final transformation.

5.1. Liturgy

In liturgy we celebrate the whole mystery of salvation, and its very centre is the resurrection event. "The whole liturgy of the Church, and the liturgical cycle itself, is developed around this most important celebration. Hence the Orientals consider it as the centre,

²³*Resurrection*, 4.

²⁴*Resurrection*, 5. See also, "Communion of Churches," 169.

²⁵*Resurrection*, 6.

²⁶UR, 17; See also *Resurrection*, 6-7.

²⁷*Resurrection*, 6-7.

²⁸*Resurrection*, 12.

source and culmination of every liturgical celebration and also of the whole liturgical year."²⁹ Especially, the East Syriac liturgical tradition is a clear example of that. "It is a fact that almost all liturgical celebrations in Chaldeo-Indian Churches are centred around the principal theme of salvation history, the Resurrection of the Lord."³⁰ It is the transforming experience of the Mystery of Christ's Resurrection in the Church.

5.1.1. Sacraments of Initiation

Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist)³¹ is an important part of the Easter celebration in almost all Christian traditions, both in the east and the west. "In the practice of the Church, this celebration was always linked with baptism, which is a participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord."³² Baptism is seen in relation to the divine call in the history and the human response to it. The main stages of human responses are the conversion, faith, baptism and Eucharist in the sacramental economy. Other sacraments are compliments to these four.³³ The conversion and faith in the risen Lord lead to baptism, where one sacramentally participates in the death and resurrection of Christ. Sacramental death with Christ in baptism is "a death for resurrection."³⁴ It is a total transformation and through these mysteries one becomes an icon of Christ.³⁵ Baptismal liturgy is also a communitarian confession of faith in the Resurrected Lord.³⁶ Through it the liturgical community renews its faith in the risen Lord.

5.1.2. Sunday Celebration

Sunday is the symbol of the resurrection of Christ and it integrates the whole concept of sacred time in the Christian tradition. "It is the day of Resurrection, the day of life after death, the day beyond the natural order where the risen Lord awaits us."³⁷ The NT and early

²⁹*Divine Praises*, 125.

³⁰*Divine Praises*, 34.

³¹See, *Mysteries of the Church (Sacraments and Sacramentals)*, Kottayam: Denha Services, 2004, 26-69.

³²*Divine Praises*, 125.

³³See, *Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I Introduction*, Kottayam: OIRSI, 1982, 22-24.

³⁴*Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I*, 24.

³⁵*Bless the Lord*, Kottayam: Denha Services, 1996, vii. Christ is the true icon/image of God, as Paul says in Col 1:15. And for many Fathers of the Church human being was created as the icon of this true Icon. See, PG XI, 1393; LXI, 353; PO XXXVI, 602; P. Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, IV, Paris-Leipzig, 1908, 591.

³⁶*Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I*, 24.

³⁷*Divine Praises*, 120.

Christian Writings put the "Lord's Day" as the day of the assembly and Eucharistic Liturgy.³⁸ Not only that, as R. Taft says, "for in the Early Church, Sunday was indeed everything."³⁹ It is the first day and 8th day, day of creation and new creation, day of light, day of resurrection, day of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), day of Eucharist, day of Baptism, and the day of final rest in God. "It was the symbolic day, sign of the time of the Church between ascension and parousia, the time in which we are living now."⁴⁰ It symbolically contains the whole concept of sacred time in a nutshell.

5.1.3. Eucharistic Liturgy

Eucharistic Liturgy is the source and summit of Christian life.⁴¹ As the mystery of Resurrection is at the heart of Christian faith and life it is also the centre of Church's faith-celebration, the Eucharistic Liturgy. In his theological analysis of the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Varghese Pathikulangara reiterates this idea very often. The liturgical space (church building) is the symbol of the resurrected Christ and the community living in the risen Christ. The central point of the liturgical space is the altar and in the East Syriac tradition it is the symbol (*raza/sacrament*) of the sepulchre of our Lord, the empty tomb, the symbol of our Lord's Resurrection.⁴²

The Resurrection Hymn (*Laku Mara*) in the Introductory Rites (*Enarxis*) reminds the faithful of the centrality of resurrection. In this hymn the community confesses Jesus' divinity and his victory over death. "Moreover we proclaim our faith in our own resurrection and life after death."⁴³ In the central part of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the *Quddaša* (Anaphora), the worshipping community contemplates, celebrates and proclaims the death and resurrection of the Lord which are the apex of the redemptive mystery.⁴⁴ And particularly, the community proclaims the death of the Lord in relation to the Institution Narrative, and resurrection in the *Epiclesis*.⁴⁵ It is not only

³⁸See Acts 20:27; *Didache*, 7.

³⁹R. Taft, "Sunday in the Byzantine Tradition", in M. Searle, ed., *Sunday Mornings: A Time for Worship*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1982, 49-74, reprint in R. Taft, *Beyond East and West Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 2nd ed., Rome: PIO, 1997, 52.

⁴⁰R. Taft, "Sunday," 52.

⁴¹LG, 11

⁴²See, *Church and Celebration*, 15-16; *Qurbana: The Eucharistic Celebration of the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, 2nd ed., Kottayam: Denha Services, 2007, 140-141.

⁴³*Qurbana*, 167.

⁴⁴*Church and Celebration*, 33; *Qurbana*, 92.

⁴⁵*Qurbana*, 232. This explanation is in accordance with the liturgical commentaries of the East Syriac Tradition. See, S. Brock, intr. & tr. "Gabriel of Qatar's

a transforming act in relation to the bread and wine, but also to the community. "The believers share in the Resurrection according to their own transfiguration in Jesus which happens through their participation in the Eucharistic Liturgy."⁴⁶

5.1.4. Celebration of Light in the Liturgy of the Hours

The celebration of light in the Liturgy of the Hours, especially in the Evening Prayer (*Ramša*), is actually the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection, light's⁴⁷ victory over darkness. "Jesus' death was the victory over the power of darkness and the inauguration of a new era of light."⁴⁸In the East Syriac tradition at the time of the Resurrection Hymn (*Laku Mara*) the lights are lit and the sanctuary is incensed. "Christ's Resurrection blotted out completely the darkness of sin ... In that night [of Resurrection] the whole cosmos was illuminated in the light of Resurrection; New Life won victory over death. The resurrection of our Lord is verily qualified to be the second creation."⁴⁹ The Royal Anthem (*Onita d-basiliqe*) and the procession around the Cross at the churchyard in the Evening Prayer⁵⁰ of Sundays and Feast Days also symbolize the victory of Christ over death and sin. Another symbolic act is the exchange of peace after the liturgy. Peace is very much related to the Risen Christ, and he himself is the peace here on earth and in heaven above. The exchange of peace⁵¹ at the end of the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours by each other signifies that they are a people of resurrection, a true Christian living in the Risen Christ.

5.1.5. Passion Week Celebration Culminates in Resurrection

The Feast of Resurrection/Easter is the most important feast in the whole Christian tradition. It also appears to be the first feast of Christians. It is "known to be the Feast of feasts."⁵² The season of

Commentary on the Liturgy", *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 6.2(2003), <http://syrcom.cua.edu/hugoye/Vol6No2/HV6N2Brock.html> (1.11.2010), no. 70; R.H. Connolly, intr. & tr., *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Cambridge: CUP, 1909, 21.

⁴⁶*Qurbana*, 89.

⁴⁷Christ is the true light. He says: "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12).

⁴⁸*Divine Praises*, 177.

⁴⁹*Divine Praises*, 178.

⁵⁰This reminds us of the practice of *lucernarium* and the procession to the Holy Sepulchre by the early Christian community in Jerusalem. See, *Divine Praises*, 35-38, 83; G. W. Woolfenden, *Daily Liturgical Prayer*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, 50-51, 130.

⁵¹It is normal among the Thomas Christians (and among all East Syrians) to exchange peace at the end of different liturgical celebrations, especially at the end of Holy Qurbana and Liturgy of the Hours.

⁵²*Divine Praises*, 179.

Great Fast,⁵³ especially the Passion Week, is the preparation for this great feast. "Resurrection is celebrated by the Eastern Churches as the crowning of Christ-event. When the Resurrection is considered in relation with the Nativity-Epiphany, it is the Christ-event in which the salvific action is perfected."⁵⁴ This celebration is the foretaste of the eternal joy that awaits us in the Kingdom. It is "both an end and a beginning: the end of all that which is "old" and the beginning of the "new life", a constant "passage" from "this world" into the Kingdom already revealed in Christ."⁵⁵ The elaborate celebration of the Easter Vigil and the Morning Liturgy with the exchange of the Peace of Resurrection in the East Syriac tradition is surely an experience of this Mystery of Resurrection.

5.1.6. St. Thomas Cross

Cross is the symbol of Christ's death and resurrection, and by that it is the prime symbol of salvation for all Christians. This theological symbol shows the power of Christ in his resurrection, "as an object of eschatological expectation and as the sign of the cosmic scope of the redemption."⁵⁶ It can be considered as a summary of the whole Mystery of Christ.

The cross venerated among the Thomas Christians is called St. Thomas Cross (*Mar Toma Sliba*),⁵⁷ an Indianised symbol of Christ's resurrection. The blooming buds of it "proclaim the new life which we have gained through participation in Jesus' Resurrection." "The empty cross without the crucified body of Jesus, just like the empty tomb," and the descending Holy Spirit on it all symbolically express our Lord's Resurrection.⁵⁸

⁵³In the East Syriac Tradition the Lent season is known as *Sauma Rabba* (the Great Fast) recalling the 40 days fast of Jesus in the wilderness, in the beginning of his public life.

⁵⁴*Divine Praises*, 131.

⁵⁵"Editorial", 103.

⁵⁶*Divine Praises*, 131.

⁵⁷St. Thomas Cross (or Persian Cross or flowery Cross) is the cross without the crucified body of Christ and with flowery cross-ends, descending Spirit, stands on the lotus flower above three steps. It is the "Cross engraved on the rock on which the Apostle St. Thomas is believed to have fallen down as he was wounded by his enemies and obtained a martyr's death". We can see models of this particular Cross in several ancient churches of Kerala (See, *Church and Celebration*, 17-21), and even outside of Kerala, especially in the Konkan coast, a sure sign of the presence of Thomas Christians in the pre-Portuguese Goa. See, C.J. Costa, *Apostolic Christianity in Goa and in the West Coast*, Pilar Goa: Xaverian Publication Society, 2009, 75-92.

⁵⁸*Church and Celebration*, 18-19.

5.2. Life in the Spirit

Christian life is a life in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Risen Lord. This Spirit was the one who transformed Christ's physical body into the resurrected/pneumatic body and is still transforming the bread and wine into Christ's body in the Eucharist and human beings into Christ's body, the Church. And again the Holy Spirit leads one to proclaim this Good News of Christ to others, the Mission.

5.2.1. Life in the Risen Christ and the Spirit of Holiness: Transforming Spirituality

Every Christian through his baptism, anointing and sealing is called to "share in the nature of God" (2 Pet 1:4) and participate in "the holiness of God" (Heb 12:10). This makes the Church a community of "saints," as Paul calls it (1 Cor 1:2). As the second person of the Trinity participated in the human nature through Incarnation we participate in the divine nature through the resurrection of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, not by nature but by grace.

Holy Spirit is the hypostatized Holiness of the Father and the Son.⁵⁹ He is the Spirit of Holiness (*ruhā d-qudšā*⁶⁰), life and glory; and also the Spirit of creation, re-creation and elevation to the Divine state.⁶¹ This Spirit of Holiness is the sanctifier and divinizer par excellence. Yes, He is the life-giving principle and irresistible force of the divine action.⁶² Through Him one participates in the inner life, light, and love of the Most Holy Trinity.⁶³ By this He elevates one to the divine state and divinizes. Christian life is this constant transformation into the Risen Christ and life in the Trinity through the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only human beings but the whole material creation will be renewed and transformed at the end.⁶⁴

⁵⁹*Resurrection*, 253; P.B. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit: An Eastern Approach*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1980, 177.

⁶⁰In the Syriac tradition Holy Spirit is commonly referred in this name.

⁶¹For detailed discussion on the Holy Spirit in the Syriac tradition see, S.P. Brock, *Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, Poona, 1979; E. Kaniyampampil, *The Spirit of Life A Study of the Holy Spirit in the Early Syriac Tradition*, Kottayam: OIRSI, 2003; I. Arickappillil, *Holy Spirit in Narsai of Nisibis*, UDD, Rome: PIO, 1991; J. Challassery, *Holy Spirit and the Christian Initiation*, Rome: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1995; A. Miklozhazy, *East Syrian Eucharistic Pneumatology*, Rome: PUG, 1968; S.M. Burges, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Traditions*, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1989, 86-109, 169-209.

⁶²*Resurrection*, 253.

⁶³P.B. Bilaniuk, *Studies in Eastern Christianity*, I, Munich-Toronto, 1977, 54.

⁶⁴*Resurrection*, 238, 278.

Holiness in the Church is seen in relation to the death and resurrection of our Lord and his Spirit. In the East Syriac tradition the feast of All Saints is celebrated on the Friday of the Easter Week. Saints are those who participate in the death and resurrection of our Lord through their heroic life and witness.⁶⁵ It is a call to all Christians for higher perfection and transformation/divinization in the Risen Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

5.2.2. Mission: Proclaiming the Resurrection Experience

The joyful sharing of the experience of the risen Christ, as in the case of the Apostles, is the mission. "Since Christian faith is an experience of Christ, by its very nature, it is to be transmitted."⁶⁶ It is considered as an existential duty or privilege of an Apostolic Church. "The deeper and dearer is our Christ-experience, the stronger and compelling will be our desire to share it with others."⁶⁷ St. Thomas, the Apostle of India, himself is the prime model of this missionary force. "His adventures to come over to India and his readiness to face all oppositions are constituent elements of the missionary thrust of this individual Church."⁶⁸ But the present situation in India, denying the fundamental right of sharing Gospel message for this Apostolic Church of Thomas Christians in their own genius and rite, is a serious concern of Varghese Pathikulangara.

Conclusion

As a liturgiologist and theologian of a living eastern ecclesial tradition, the Syro Malabar Church, there is no wonder that the mystery of Resurrection is at the centre of Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara's life, thinking and writings. His theology of resurrection may be summarized in his own words:

In short, the Resurrection of Jesus, a perfect victory over sin and death, and a perennial source of life and joy, is also the centre of the whole history of salvation. God's salvific actions are all summarized in this one Christ-event, the Resurrection. It is to this, the whole OT history converges, and it is from here that the new economy of salvation proceeds.⁶⁹

⁶⁵See, *Divine Praises*, 182ff.

⁶⁶*Resurrection*, 16.

⁶⁷*Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I*, 35.

⁶⁸*Resurrection*, 16.

⁶⁹*Resurrection*, 229.

The mystery of resurrection contains the human and cosmic destiny. In Christ we move forward by participating and experiencing this key mystery in our life through Church's liturgy and attain life and renewal. It has a special importance in today's 'culture of death' and anthropocentric world, where human and cosmic dignity is threatened by so many facts, such as wars, forced poverty, ecological crisis, etc. Let the hope of final resurrection move us forward. Let the divine life permeate and renew us all!