

## CANONICAL FACET OF THE MISSIONARY THRUST OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

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Abstract: The evangelical mission of the Church, theologically and canonically, is a complex reality comprised of various forms of the apostolate. Each Church *sui iuris* must fulfill the missionary task that obliges the universal Church. Today, the Syro-Malabar Church is a major archiepiscopal Church with a global presence. However, as a whole, the Syro-Malabar Church does not possess a missionary thrust as such towards the new evangelization which must have become part of the mission of the Commission for Evangelization.

### Introduction

Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to end of the age" (Mt 28:18-20). "As the Son was sent by the Father so He, too, sent the Apostles" (LG 17). The mission given by Jesus to his disciples continues in the Church today. The Church by its very nature is missionary. Being the Mystical Body of Jesus (1Cor. 12:27), the Church is also the continued presence of Christ on earth. Therefore, the Church has the mission to proclaim the Gospel and to bear witness to the presence of Jesus on earth by living the Christian values.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris missio* (RM), 42 and 43.

Church exists for this mission, and she cannot desist from it until the consummation of the world.<sup>2</sup>

The salvific mission continues through the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church that animates her missionary work (LG 4, 13, 24). Through the Spirit, the Church becomes the “universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48). Likewise, the Church continues the mission of Jesus, who tasked it with proclaiming and establishing the Kingdom of God among all peoples (LG 5).

“Since the whole Church is by its nature missionary and the work of evangelization must be held as a fundamental duty of the people of God, all the Christian faithful, conscious of their responsibility, are to assume their part in missionary work” (CIC c. 781; CCEO c. 584 §1). The Church on earth exists and acts through her members. Because the Lord addressed his command to each member of the Church, every Christian is charged with living the mission as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. Evangelization and pastoral care are the fundamental right and obligation divinely commissioned to each Church *sui iuris* (OE 3 and 4).

“Evangelization is the grace and vocation of the Church. The Church exists in order to evangelize.”<sup>3</sup> Jesus imparted his mission to the Church universal, calling all its members to this mission (LG 17 and 35). As these faithful have combined to form the Churches *sui iuris*, the latter all possess the equal right and obligation to fulfill this mandate (see, OE 3).

Throughout her history, the Syro-Malabar Church has responded to this mission through direct evangelization, education, healthcare and socio-economic development of the underprivileged. Although numerically small, the Syro-Malabar Church has substantially contributed to the Church’s growth. She has also furthered the socio-cultural and economic developments not only of the Church in India but also of the nation itself.

### 1. The Canonical Understanding of the Mission

The evangelical mission of the Church, theologically and canonically, is a “complex, rich and dynamic reality” (EN 28) comprised of various forms of the apostolate: proclaiming the Gospel, witnessing to Jesus,

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Powathil, *The Ecclesial Milieu: Ecclesial Vision and Historical Interventions*, Trivandr-um: Carmel International Publishing Centre, 2009, 164.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi* (EN), 14.

uplifting the downtrodden and marginalized, forming faith communities, dialoguing with those working for peace and justice, and various other forms (AG. 11-18). "In the Church's mind, to evangelize means to bring the Good News to all the strata of humanity and through its influence to transform humanity from within and make it new" (EN 18). CCEO canons 584-594 (see, also CIC cc. 781-782) deal with evangelization and the missionary activities of the Church. According to the norm, "Obeying the mandate of Christ to evangelize all peoples, and moved by the grace and charity of the Holy Spirit, the Church recognizes herself to be totally missionary" (CCEO c. 584 §1). The norm accepts the missionary activities as an obligation of the universal Church to be carried out under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Each Church *sui iuris* must fulfill the missionary task that obliges the universal Church, for "Each of the Churches *sui iuris* is to continually see that, through suitably prepared preachers sent by the competent authority according to the norms of the common law, the Gospel is preached in the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (CCEO c. 585 §1). Accordingly, the Syro-Malabar Church has the right and obligation, always "under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (CCEO c. 585 §1), to evangelize people preserving the integrity of faith and morals, to proclaim the Gospel "in the culture of individual peoples, to promote their own liturgical rites, sacred art, particular law, and, in short, the whole ecclesial life" (CCEO c. 584 §2). The norm, adhering to Conciliar teaching, promotes the freedom of a Church *sui iuris* to preach the Gospel and live according to her established traditions for the good of the Universal Church.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The Missionary Thrust of the Syro-Malabar Church

As an Apostolic Church with her own identity, the Syro-Malabar Church has to spell out her specific missionary role in the Catholic communion in the multi-ecclesial and multi-religious contexts. Being an Eastern ecclesial tradition which in many respects is harmonious with the Indian religious heritage, the Syro-Malabar Church can have her own missionary approach and effectively carry out her own mission policy clearly spelt out in the present context. St. Thomas Christians become genuine missionaries when

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<sup>4</sup> See, Joseph Kallarangatt, "Theology of Mission According to the Teachings of Vatican II, with Special Reference to *Ad Gentes*", in Pauli Kannookadan (ed.), *The Mission Theology of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kochi: LRC Publications, 2008, 73.

they share the faith with others and lead them to enjoy the fullness of life in Jesus Christ. To achieve this goal they have to become the light of the world, the salt of the earth and the leaven in the society.<sup>5</sup>

The evangelical activity of the Syro-Malabar Church, founded in India by the St. Thomas, has always been inspired by the missionary zeal and fervour of this apostle. Unlike other apostles, Thomas tangibly experienced the Risen Lord (Jn 20:27-28). Coming to India as a missionary, the apostle established a faith community to which he imparted the 'touch experience of the Risen Lord.' As a result, the missionary disposition of the Syro-Malabar Church is based on the true God-experience of a complete salvific mission fulfilled in and through the person of Jesus. The experience, therefore, is not based on emotional satisfaction, but on a deeply personal encounter with the Risen Lord that resulted in radical change of life. St. Thomas is entrusted the Syro-Malabar Church with this mystical experience, which is both the end of a search and the beginning of a journey. <sup>6</sup>

Because Syro-Malabar Christians had hierarchical and ritual affiliations with the East Syrian Church, they have also been called 'Syrian Christians'.<sup>7</sup> The history of evangelization by East Syrian missionaries laudably establishes the missionary thrust of the Church. Because of her vibrant missionary charism, this Church is also known as the "Church on Fire."<sup>8</sup>

As a faith community that emerged and flourished in the Indian socio-political context, the Syro-Malabar Church *sui iuris* plays a unique role in the evangelizing mission of the entire Church in India. Although no evidence documents the missionary activities of the early Church in Kerala, the growth of the community testifies that the proclamation of

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<sup>5</sup> The Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, *To be the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World*, The Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church, St. Thomas Mount, Kakkannad, 2011, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Alukka George, "Response to the paper, Syro-Malabar Missionary Witnessing Thrust," in Pauli Kannookadan (ed.), *The Mission Theology of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kochi: LRC Publications, 2008, 122-123.

<sup>7</sup> See George Thanchan, *The Juridical Institution of Major Archbishop in Oriental Canon Law: with a Special Reference to Syro Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church*, Dharmaram Canonical Series, no. 19, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2017, 274-275.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Thekkekarott, "Mission Theology and the Syro-Malabar Church," in Pauli Kannookadan (ed.), *The Mission Theology of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kochi: LRC Publications, 2008, 129.

Good News had effectively taken place. Of course, this early missionary activity cannot compare with later efforts undertaken by Western missionaries.

### **2.1. Synodal Commission for Mission**

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches states: "The synod of bishops of the patriarchal Church or the council of hierarchs is to establish a commission to foster a more effective cooperation among all the eparchies in the missionary activity of the Church" (CCEO c. 585 §2). By virtue of this norm, each patriarchal or major archiepiscopal Church *sui iuris* must establish a synodal commission specifically "to foster a more effective cooperation among all the eparchies in the missionary activity of the Church." Here, the direct and immediate activities of the mission are the responsibilities of individual eparchies. In contrast, the synodal commission serves to coordinate those activities for their more effective implementation, one consonant with the entire patrimony and "ecclesial life" (CCEO c. 587 §2) of the Church *Sui iuris*.

### **2.2. Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization**

As required by the Eastern code, the Syro-Malabar Church has established such a synodal commission. The task of this Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of Migrants (CEPCM) is defined as follows:

The love of Christ towards migrants urges us (cf. 2Cor. 5:14) to look afresh at their problems and to respond more efficiently to the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the *territorium proprium* of the church in India and abroad and the zeal for Christ obliges us to be His witnesses in the whole world sharing the light of Faith lit by St Thomas the Apostle.<sup>9</sup>

The mission of the commission is therefore re-evangelization, not new evangelization. In other words, the Church's missionary activity focuses not on unevangelized persons, but strictly on migrant Syro-Malabar faithful. Regrettably, the mission of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization does not contain the main and real thrust of this Church's missionary mandate.

In constituting the commission, the provision of CCEO c. 585 §2 was overlooked. Applied instead was CCEO c. 124.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions\\_CEPCM.php](http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions_CEPCM.php).

Canon 124 of the *CCEO* prescribes that there should be Commissions to take care of the different fields of activity in the Church. Commissions are erected by the Major Archbishop, constituted of persons chosen by him and are governed by norms established by him.<sup>10</sup>

The long history of the constituting commission vividly demonstrates that pastoral assistance to Syro-Malabar migrants is the only focus of the commission. Since its establishment in May 1993,<sup>11</sup> the commission was occasionally reconstituted from 1998 to 2008.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the activities of the commission are described as follows: "Pastoral care of the emigrants of the Syro-Malabar Church has always been the priority of the Commission."<sup>13</sup> This missionary limitation is unfortunate given the growth of the Syro-Malabar Church. Since her elevation to major archiepiscopal status, the Syro-Malabar Church has added multiple mission eparchies and over twenty-five years of experience as a quasi-patriarchal Church. Thus, it is high time for the Syro-Malabar Church to implement the provisions of *CCEO* cc. 584 - 593 regarding the evangelizing mission of the Church.

### 2.3. The Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church

A decree on the mission policy of the Syro-Malabar major archiepiscopal Church was first promulgated on 19 March 2006 by then-major archbishop Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil under the title *To be the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World*.<sup>14</sup> The same document was published again verbatim in 2011 on the auspicious of the Mission Year. It was promulgated in accordance with the provision of *CCEO* c. 112 §1.<sup>15</sup> The document was given as a guide to all those persons engaged in the Apostolate of Evangelization in the Mission areas as well as to those who prepare the personnel for such endeavours. The mission policy consisting of eight chapters expounds the theological perspective of the mission of the Church, the historical context of the

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<sup>10</sup> *Synodal News*, no. 1, August 1993, p. 47; See, [http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions\\_CEPCM.hp](http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions_CEPCM.hp).

<sup>11</sup> *Synodal News*, no. 1, August 1993, pp. 6-7; *Synodal News*, no. 6, May 1995, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Synodal News*, nos. 1 & 2, November 2008, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions\\_CEPCM.hp](http://www.syromalabarchurch.in/Commissions_CEPCM.hp).

<sup>14</sup> The Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, *To be the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World*, The Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church, St. Thomas Mount, Kakkanad, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> *CCEO* c. 112 §1: "The promulgation of laws and the publication of decisions of the synod of bishops of the patriarchal Church is the competence of the patriarch."

Syro-Malabar Church, the East Syrian heritage and the Syro-Malabar tradition, the missionary context of India, challenges and opportunities in the mission, the specific paths and dimensions of the mission, lay involvement in the mission of the Church, and missionary formation and missionary spirituality.

Chapter six of the *Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, titled "The Specific Paths and Dimensions of Our Mission," gives the following practical guidelines of the mission of the Church.

### **2.3.1. Proclaiming Jesus**

Proclamation of the Person Jesus is the sum and substance of evangelization. The Church has to preach that Jesus is the unique mediator between God and humanity.

### **2.3.2. Witness of Life**

Authentic Christian life itself is witness: wordless but powerful and effective proclamation of the Good News. Where direct proclamation becomes impossible we have to diffuse the Gospel message through the witness of a true Christian life, as has been commanded by our Lord (Lk. 24:48). Life witness must be a priority in our missionary endeavours. The formation of our missionaries as well our families, especially our migrants, shall be steered towards this priority. In India in particular, where we are surrounded by the followers of other deep rooted religious traditions, the very life of Christians shall be the best way of transmitting the Gospel values. In this, contemplation and prayer have a priority. The other religious traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism etc.) are profoundly characterized by a sense of prayer and interiority. The specialty of the Eastern Churches lies in their Liturgy and the contemplative approach in their spirituality. Therefore we consider it our bounden duty to present ourselves as a community of worshippers where contemplation and prayer become high priority.

### **2.3.3. Dialogue with the Religions**

In the multi-religious context of India dialogue is not just an option for the missionaries but a necessity. While upholding our own Christ-experience we recognize the God-experience of humanity. The recognition of the positive values in other religions in no way undermines the uniqueness of Christianity. A missionary in dialogue lives in good rapport with people around. The dialogue of life should lead to action, theological exchange and spiritual experience. Through dialogue of action, Christians work together with followers of other religions for the socio-economic development of the society. In this

living and working together, they share their faith with others. Indians in general are more attracted to sharing the God-experience in life rather than to theological discourses, dogmas, doctrines and theories. The missionaries should be trained for such dialogue.

#### **2.3.4. Asceticism and Monasticism**

The central place of contemplation in Indian and Syro-Malabar traditions of evangelization is self-evident. There is close resemblance between the Oriental and Indian outlook on asceticism. Monasteries were great centres of evangelization. The Syro-Malabar monks should become not only ascetics but also charismatic heralds of the Good News to our fellow brethren. Hence one of our missionary priorities ought to be the founding of as many small houses of prayer as possible all over India. Religious Orders, Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life and even interested lay people have to imbibe the spirit of asceticism and monasticism. The missionaries who take such a way of life should have an authentic monastic formation. Training centres for initiating such monastic ashram-life are necessary today. Such missionaries have to live in ashrams of humble surroundings not far removed from people and sharing their way of life. Such missionary work is passive and indirect but at the same time intense and dynamic. This form of ashram life, which is already prevalent in some of our mission dioceses has to become an important missionary method of the Syro-Malabar Church. Such ashram lifestyle can lead people of our missionary dioceses closer and closer to the divine *Guru*, Jesus Christ.

#### **2.3.5. Itinerant Missionaries**

The missionaries as Christian witnesses, like *rishis*, *munis*, *gurus*, go around radiating their God-experience sharing with people their heavenly bliss and enthusiasm. This way of life, needs to be adopted by at least a few of our missionaries. It will be a very powerful means of evangelization in the Asian contexts.

#### **2.3.6. Founding of Local Liturgical Assemblies**

Another key element in evangelization is the formation of the local liturgical assembly, the Church. Syro-Malabar missionary activity should be proclaimed and share the faith experience of this particular Church, an experience handed down to us through its genuine liturgical traditions. Over time, Indian and Eastern elements will combine to produce new forms of Eucharistic celebration, which are a natural and anticipated fruit of mission work. Following our tradition



of *palliyogam*, our missionaries shall attend to building up these assemblies on a participatory basis. In sharing one's own Christ-experience and Church-experience, they must work towards the realization of a better Gospel-culture encounter.

### **2.3.7. The Path of Inculturation**

The Church can begin to acquire and understand new cultural elements only by involving herself in the life and struggles of the people around her. The Gospel message must be communicated through the medium best understood by the people. Hence, studying the local language of those to be evangelized is paramount. Inculturation must extend to all aspects of ecclesial life, not merely to changes in liturgical dress, art, music, etc. Such changes are insufficient for the Church to be genuinely incarnated in the local culture. Rather, the Church needs a profound existential adaptation. True inculturation is not a simple adaptation of certain names, nor the borrowing of certain religious symbolisms or religious practices. Inculturation has to cover the total reality of the Church.

### **2.3.8. Human Promotion and Development of the Society**

Syro-Malabar missionaries have to consider all efforts for humanization as an integral part of their mission. They must also know that work for human development pertains to the very core of the Gospel. The Syro-Malabar Church has to be the living sign of Christ the liberator.

The missionaries who preach the message of the Gospel to these poor people cannot but identify themselves with Christ who identified himself with the poor and the marginalized. Because evangelization in such a context is a struggle for justice, great emphasis must be placed on the liberating mission of the Church in India. Missionary efforts should inform the downtrodden of their rights and empower them to fight for justice. Missionaries may organize reconstruction programmes, adult literacy, rural health education, campaign for payment of just wages, campaign against discrimination on the basis of caste and sex and campaign against corruption. While executing developmental works, the Church should not present itself as a rich and privileged institution.

### **2.3.9. Missionaries as Reconciliatory**

The message of repentance and reconciliation was explicit in the preaching of Jesus. He began His ministry by preaching, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the

Gospel" (Mk 1:14-15). Our missionary life, apostolate and preaching should inspire people to come closer to God and their fellow human beings. Because missionaries are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2Cor 5:18), inviting others to reconcile with God and human beings remains at the core of mission. Reconciliation with God involves an experience of repentance and of being forgiven. Reconciliation with others is the only convincing evidence that we are reconciled with God. In the present context of increasing ethnic rivalries, communal riots, intolerance, etc., this ministry of reconciliation becomes more urgent.

### **2.3.10. Society Based on Justice, Peace and Love**

"Our salvation is very much bound up with our commitment to the transformation of the material and earthly realities and to the creation of a new society" (GS 43). The Church today exists at a time of globalization and neo-colonialism, one marked by poverty, exploitation, oppression and marginalization. Consequently, missionary efforts must explore new means of becoming 'context-sensitive' and therefore relevant to peoples' lives. In her missionary praxis, the Church must address human and human rights issues. Accomplishing this requires returning to the Bible and ministry of Jesus, thereby rediscovering the truth that "God identifies himself and intervenes on behalf of the poor and the oppressed."

### **2.3.11. The Role of the Media in Mission**

The media have tremendous power to influence the world by informing, educating, entertaining and enriching. "The Church would feel guilty before the Lord, if she did not utilize this powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect."<sup>16</sup> Communication is the fastest developing technology today; however, it has to be used to communicate God's love to the world. The Church must explore the great potential of instruments of social communication and utilize them to accomplish her mission. In this regard, media education for Church personnel is necessary. "This knowledge should be an integral part of their ordinary education."<sup>17</sup> Experts in theoretical and practical aspects of media should work together to transform it into a liberating force. The media should be instruments in the Church's programme of evangelization in the modern world. "It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's

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<sup>16</sup> *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> *Communio et progressi*, 22.

authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the new culture created by modern communications with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology."<sup>18</sup>

### **2.3.12. Ecumenical Dimension of Our Mission**

In India, the Syro-Malabar Church has a special ecumenical mission. Her task is to reunite all the sons and daughters of St. Thomas who had comprised a single community for sixteen centuries. To accomplish this mission, the Syro-Malabar Church can act as a mediator between the East and the West, deepen her own theological position and live according to her rich Eastern patrimony.

### **2.3.13. Liturgical Dimension of Mission**

Liturgy is the motivating factor for mission, for which it provides both content and context. Christian worship cannot occur without reference to the world mission, and real mission cannot occur without living participation in the Eucharist. The Eucharistic celebration makes the Church what it is, transforming it into mission. Making the Church present is her first mission. Those who are nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ are the best 'witnesses to Christ-event'. Their mission is to go out and bear witness to what they themselves have experienced. Without this mystical experience nobody can be a true witness, a true missionary.

### **2.3.14. Missionary Thrust of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy**

The Syro-Malabar Liturgy is essentially Syrian or, more precisely, East Syrian. Rediscovering liturgical traditions is critical for this Church's missionary activity, which is fundamentally a sharing of the Christ-experience of the Church. Some important missionary elements of the Syro-Malabar liturgy are: prayers for the catechumens, expression of profound love of the Father through the repeated chants and praise of the Trinity, the Abba experience, the Anaphora, the experience of the forgiving love of God, and recalling the great role of the Holy Spirit in redemption. Participation in the Divine Liturgy becomes a Pentecostal experience for the faithful, whom the Spirit leads to witness to Christ in far away places.

The practical guidelines described here are true to the rich patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church. They are well-founded on the teaching of the Universal Church, especially as formulated in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (see *CCEO* cc. 584-594). Nevertheless, these

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<sup>18</sup> *Redemptoris missio*, 37.

guidelines have significant limitations. They restrict Syro-Malabar missionary activity to an Indian and sometimes Asian context, thereby diluting and ignoring the global reality of the Syro-Malabar mission. For that reason, these guidelines should have been part of the synodal commission for the mission of the Church per CCEO c. 585 §2.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. The Particular Law

*The Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, arts. 125-130 describe the mission of the Church under "Title IX: Evangelization of Peoples". The norms are as follows:

Art. 125. Those who desire to join the Catholic Church shall submit a written request to the local hierarchy, signed and testified by two witnesses, along with the recommendation of the parish of the place of domicile.

Art. 126. The intention and the genuineness of the catechumen's motivation is to be evaluated by the ecclesiastical authority.

Art. 127. The catechumens shall undergo an appropriate period of training, the duration of which is to be stipulated in the eparchial statutes.

Art. 128. The names of the catechumens are to be enrolled in a separate register, to be maintained in the eparchial archives.

Art. 129. Catechumens are to be given an ecclesiastical burial, unless the family members object to it.

Art. 130. Just remuneration to the catechists who train the catechumens shall be fixed by the eparchial norms.<sup>20</sup>

These above particular laws, simple guidelines for preparing catechumens for baptism, should have been supported by the evangelical vision of the Syro-Malabar Church. The mission plan of the Syro-Malabar Church should likewise have been given a normative place in its particular law.

### 4. The Mission Eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church

The major archbishop and synod of bishops cannot fully govern the nine Syro-Malabar mission eparchies, which still function as suffragans of Latin metropolises. Consequently, for instance, the first

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<sup>19</sup> "The synod of bishops of the patriarchal Church or the council of hierarchs is to establish a commission to foster a more effective cooperation among all the eparchies in the missionary activity of the Church" (CCEO c. 585 §2).

<sup>20</sup> *The Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, 2013, 24-25.

appellate tribunal for these eparchies is not the major archiepiscopal tribunal, but that of the proper Latin metropolitan. Nevertheless, these eparchies are part of the Syro-Malabar Church. Their bishops belong to the synod of bishops, wherein they enjoy a deliberative vote according to particular law. Moreover, although these bishops are appointed by the Roman Pontiff, the synod of bishops can propose three candidates to the Roman Pontiff (CCEO c. 149). The major archbishop has the faculty to ordain and enthrone these bishops (CCEO c. 86 §2), who, prior to episcopal ordination, promise him obedience in matters in which they are subject to him (CCEO c. 187 §2). They may freely enforce the decisions of the Synod of Bishops in their own eparchies (CCEO c. 150 §3). While submitting the *quinquennial* report to the Apostolic See, these bishops are to send a copy of the same report to the major archbishop (CCEO c. 206 §2). They are exhorted to make the *ad limina* visit together with their major archbishop at least occasionally (CCEO c. 208 §2). They are also members of the major archiepiscopal assembly (CCEO c. 143 §1, 1). Thus, there exists a different level of juridical relationship between the major archbishop and the mission eparchies.<sup>21</sup>

Because of Syro-Malabar evangelization efforts, on 31 March 1962, Pope Paul VI raised the ordinariate of Chanda to an exarchate and erected the new apostolic exarchates of Sagar, Satna and Ujjain. Two additional apostolic exarchates, Bijnor and Jagdalpur, were established on 23 March 1972.<sup>22</sup> On 26 January 1977 Pope Paul VI raised all six apostolic exarchates to the rank of eparchy and erected the new mission eparchy of Rajkot.<sup>23</sup> St. Pope John Paul II established the eparchy of Gorakhpur on 11 September 1984 and the eparchy of Adilabad on 23 July 1999.<sup>24</sup> These Syro-Malabar eparchies, unlike the others erected outside this Church's proper territory, were erected not to care for migrant faithful<sup>25</sup> but to evangelize their territories.<sup>26</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> George Thanchan, *The Juridical Institution of Major Archbishop in Oriental Canon Law: with a Special Reference to Syro Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church*, 333.

<sup>22</sup> Sebastian Vadakkal, "Syro Malabar Church: Its Pastoral and Missionary Rights and Obligations as a *Sui Iuris* Church," 40 .

<sup>23</sup> Sebastian Vadakkal, "Syro Malabar Church: Its Pastoral and Missionary Rights and Obligations as a *Sui Iuris* Church," 40 .

<sup>24</sup> Jacob Marangattu (ed.), *The Syro Malabar Church: History and Statistics*, Rajkot: Deepti Publications, 2006, 17.

<sup>25</sup> George Thanchan, *The Juridical Institution of Major Archbishop in Oriental Canon Law: with a Special Reference to Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church*, 310.

mission eparchies in North India are directly subject to the Apostolic See.<sup>27</sup> All other Syro-Malabar eparchies outside the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church are mainly for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar faithful residing there. More clarity is required regarding the primary purpose of the eparchies of Faridabad (2012) and Shamshabad (2017).

### Conclusion

The Church of St. Thomas Christians has reached a key point in her history. Today, the Syro-Malabar Church is a major archiepiscopal Church with a global presence. She is called to participate in the worldwide evangelization of Jesus Christ in a new way,<sup>28</sup> but one that remains permeated by the evangelical zeal of St. Thomas. Commendable missionary efforts do occur in Syro-Malabar missionary eparchies; however, as a whole, this Church *sui iuris* does not possess a missionary thrust as such towards the new evangelization. Consequently, the erection and establishment of the eparchy of Shamshabad has created a kind of unrest in the Catholic Church in India. To prevent such difficulties in the future, the Syro-Malabar and Latin hierarchies must collaborate on definitive mission policies. This policy of *new* evangelization must also become part of the mission of the Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization.

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<sup>26</sup> At the time of the erection of these exarchies there were only a few Catholics in those territories. Cf. *Annuario pontificio* (1970).

<sup>27</sup> These eparchies were suffragans of Latin Metropolitans and not of any Syro-Malabar Metropolitan. Similarly, they had exclusive jurisdiction, namely, all Catholics, irrespective of their rite, within the territory of these eparchies, came under them.

<sup>28</sup> Gregory Karotemprel, *Evangelizing Mission of St. Thomas Christians*, Rajkot: Deepti Publications, 2013, 11.