

## **Editorial**

### **Mission and the Syro-Malabar Church *Sui iuris***

That the Church is missionary by nature and that all the faithful, irrespective of their differences as lay, religious and clerics, have the right and duty to partake in the mission of the Church, have been established by the Vatican Council II (AG 35, 2) and are underlined by both the CIC (c. 781) and the CCEO (c. 584). The mission or the missionary mandate given by Jesus to his disciples is nothing but the work of evangelization. Jesus sent the apostles to preach the Good News to the whole world. "Go into the whole world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mk. 16: 15). In Matthew also we see: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Mt. 28:19). The disciples are reminded to bear witness empowered by the Holy Spirit: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts. 1: 8). The CIC affirms clearly that "the work of evangelization is to be considered a fundamental duty of the people of God..." (c. 781).

CIC c. 784 describes or defines who the missionaries are: "Missionaries" are "those who have been sent by the competent ecclesiastical authority to engage in missionary activity..." In the light of this canon if we look at the statement made by Jesus two thousand years back, He is the first and prototype of all Christian missionaries: "As the Father has sent me, so also I send you" (Jn. 20: 21). Here we comprehend two aspects: one is the act of sending by the one who has authority and the other is the aspect of going with the intent to discharge the mandate. God the Father sends and Jesus the Son accepting the mandate goes to fulfil the mission given by the Father. In John 10.10 we see further the purpose of the coming of the

‘sent one’ Jesus Christ: “I came so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”

The globalized secular world around convinces us that every establishment, firm, institution or association that wants to be effective has its own vision and mission statement for its activity. The vision and mission of the Church could be identified in the last canon of the CIC: “Salvation of souls is the supreme law in the Church” (c. 1752). The Church founded by Christ continues the life giving mission of Christ. As the Father sent the Son with authority, now the mystical body of Christ, the Church founded and authorized by Christ sends her missionaries to spread the Good News so that those who have not yet heard the gospel message know the truth and come to life. The Vatican Council II and the codes stipulate that “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; Cf. AG 35, 2). “All the Christian faithful have the right and obligation to work so that the divine message of salvation may more and more reach all people of all times and of all the world” (CCEO cc. 7 & 14).

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church which is one of the most vibrant and flourishing Oriental Churches *sui iuris* in the Catholic communion of Churches, is celebrating this year the 50<sup>th</sup> year of her sending forth missionaries to preach the Good News to the people in places outside the so called proper territory, Kerala. As the Syro-Malabar Church has, hence, declared this year as the Jubilee Year of its Mission, *IUSTITIA Dharmaram Journal of Canon law* dedicates its current issue to the ‘mission.’

By coincidence, in the Universal Church also the mission thrust resounds at present. More than ever, perhaps, the Church faces challenges and difficulties in the missionary work today and taking this fact seriously into account Pope Benedict XVI has now established a ‘Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization’ (*motu proprio Ubicumque et semper, art.1 §1*, 21 September 2010 [*L’Osservatore Romano*, 12 October 2010]). The theme selected for the forthcoming General Assembly of the Synod of

Bishops' (October 2012) also is mission: "The new Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith."

Most often by the concept or expression mission we associate those priests and religious both men and women and sometimes also lay faithful who, leaving their own native places and dear ones, reach out to distant, remote and unknown places or territories and the evangelization activities happening there. In this general sense which, in one way, is a narrowed understanding of the concept, the Syro-Malabar Church has completed fifty years (1962-2012) since she, for the first time, sent her missionaries to other parts, remote territories of India, outside Kerala, and started missionary work in an organized and systematic way. The pioneers of this missionary work outside the proper territory (Kerala) of the Syro-Malabar Church, were a few young zealous missionaries from the Congregation, Carmelites of Mary Immaculate [CMI] at the beginning of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who responded positively to the invitation of Oscar Severin SJ, the Bishop of Raigarh-Ambikapur.

"The expansion of the Syro-Malabar Church beyond Kerala got a momentum towards the middle of the twentieth century. Responding to the call of His Excellency Oscar Severin SJ, Bishop of Raigarh-Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh (then Madhya Pradesh), the CMI Fathers of the Syro-Malabar Church started working in the Raigarh-Ambikapur Diocese from 1955 with an understanding that a territory proper for mission work in the Syro-Malabar Rite would be entrusted to them in the near future. The path for the realization of this promise was opened when His Grace Eugene D'Souza, Archbishop of Nagpur, offered to cede a territory from the large uncommitted areas of his archdiocese to the CMI fathers for mission work in the Syro-Malabar Rite."<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to this historical development several other institutes of consecrated life also got involved in the growth of the mission. The Syro-Malabar Church is

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.smmissionyear.org>, accessed on 21 June 2012. The following information regarding the eleven Syro-Malabar Mission Eparchies is from this official website.

at present having eleven 'Mission Dioceses' outside its proper territory, that is, Kerala principally. A brief sketch of each of these dioceses will be in order here:

1) Chanda: It was His Holiness Pope John XXIII who erected Chanda, the first Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church *sui iuris*: "Thus, separating a territory from the Archdiocese of Nagpur, His Holiness Pope John XXIII erected Chanda, the first Syro-Malabar Mission, through the Decree "Ad lucem Sancti Evangelii" (Prot N 81/61, dt. March 31, 1962) and entrusted it to the CMI Congregation on August 15, 1962." Msgr. Januarius Palathuruthy shepherded the mission under the capacity of an Apostolic Exarch. The mission was later elevated to the status of an Exarchate in 1968 and subsequently in 1977 as a diocese with the above mentioned pastor as its first bishop. Following this historical beginning several other mission territories also developed subsequently.

2) Eparchy of Sagar: It was through the initiative of the late Eugene De Souza, the then Archbishop of Bhopal that the Eparchy of Sagar took its origin. "On 29 July 1968 the Exarchate Sagar was constituted and entrusted to the CMI Congregation and Msgr. Clement Thottungal CMI was appointed as the Exarch." It was elevated to the status of a diocese through the decree "Divina Verba" and Msgr. Clement Thottungal CMI was appointed its first bishop in 1977.

3) Eparchy of Ujjain: "Apostolic Exarchate of Ujjain" was erected by Pope Paul VI on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1968 with the Papal Bull "Apostolicum Munus" and entrusted to the newly formed 'Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle.'" Very Rev. Fr. John Perumattam, was appointed Apostolic Exarch of Ujjain in 1969 and he was appointed the first bishop when the Exarchate of Ujjain was erected as the Eparchy of Ujjain on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1977, by Pope Paul VI with the Apostolic Letter "Qui Divino Consilio."

4) Eparchy of Satna: The Syro-Malabar mission of Satna was first established as an Apostolic Exarchate in 1968 through the Papal Bull "In more est" (July 29) and Pope Paul VI elevated it to the rank of an Eparchy through the Papal Bull "Ecclesiarum Orientalium" on 26

February 1977. This mission was entrusted to the Vincentian Congregation (Syro-Malabar). Mar Abraham D. Mattam VC shepherded the mission first as the Apostolic Exarch and then as the first bishop of the eparchy.

5) Eparchy of Jagdalpur: Pope Paul VI erected the Syro-Malabar Jagdalpur mission as an Apostolic Exarchate on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1972. This mission was entrusted to the CMI Congregation and Mar Paulinus Jeerakath CMI who headed the mission first as the exarch became the first bishop when it was erected an Eparchy on 11, May 1977.

6) Mission Eparchy of Bijnor: Through the papal bull "Beatorum Apostolorum" Pope Paul VI constituted the Exarchate of Bijnor on 23 March 1972 and entrusted it to the CMI Congregation. Msgr. Gratian Mundadan CMI who served the mission as the exarch became the first bishop of the mission when it was raised to the status of an eparchy on 26 February 1977.

7) Rajkot: It was Pope Paul VI who erected the Eparchy of Rajkot on 25 February 1977 and entrusted it to the CMI Congregation. Late Msgr. Jonas Thaliyath CMI was appointed its first bishop.

8) Gorakhpur: Pope John Paul II erected the Gorakhpur Diocese through the papal bull "Ex quo Divinum Concilium" (19 June 1984) and it was formally inaugurated on 14 October 1984. The eparchy was entrusted to the Little Flower Congregation (CST Fathers) and Mar Dominic Kokkatt CST was appointed its first Bishop.

9) Kalyan: Pope John Paul II, after his visit to Kerala, India in 1986, erected the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Kalyan on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1988, though the historic announcement came on 19 May 1988. Bishop Paul Chittilappilly headed the Eparchy as its first bishop. More than a new mission, it was an eparchy established for those Syro-Malabar Catholics who migrated from Kerala to Mumbai either in search of job or for study purpose.

10) Adilabad: Pope John Paul II, through his papal bull "Ad apties consulendum," bifurcated the Chanda Eparchy into two creating the

new Adilabad Eparchy on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1999. Fr. Joseph Kunnath CMI was appointed its first Bishop through the Papal Bull “Quonian Oportet.”

11) Chicago: We can say that it was according to the spirit and in line with the teachings of the Vatican Council II and of the legislation of CCEO cc. 39-41 that the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Chicago which is named after St. Thomas the Apostle, was established. As mentioned earlier, seeking better opportunities and possibilities for higher studies or job, thousands of Syro-Malabar Catholics migrated to the United States beginning from the 1960s. The various centers of these migrants gradually developed into Syro-Malabar Missions in different parts of United States and Canada. “They were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop designated by the Syro-Malabar Synod for the migrants. Bp. Gregory Karotemprel CMI who was in charge of the Syro-Malabar migrants made a visit to the United States and Canada in 1996 to have a personal assessment of the situation of the Syro-Malabar Catholics. The report of his assessment and evaluation was sent to the Syro-Malabar Synod as well as to Rome. The Holy Father, recognizing the need to preserve the faith and liturgical tradition of the Syro-Malabar Catholics established the eparchy of Chicago in 2001 and appointed Bishop Jacob Angadiath as its first Bishop. The diocese has now four parishes and 29 missions.”

Out of these eleven eparchies, nine are mission eparchies proper and the other two – Kalyan and Chicago, we may say, are mainly catering to the needs of the Syro-Malabar migrant faithful. In the case of all these mission eparchies, except Chicago, various religious congregations have taken the initiative either for the origin, growth and development or for the continued functioning and evangelization. Thus, we can note a beautiful collaboration between the hierarchy which wants to incorporate the religious and the religious who whole heartedly accept, cooperate with and courageously take up new initiatives in discharging the missionary mandate of the gospel in the Church, thus harvesting thirty, sixty or hundred fold fruits from the mission work. For the growth and expansion of the Syro-Malabar Mission as well as the pastoral care of

the migrants the Syro-Malabar Church *sui iuris* has to be grateful to the local hierarchs of the respective territories as well as to the Popes John XXIII who was instrumental for the beginning of the first mission, Paul VI who conceded six mission eparchies and Blessed John Paul II who established the other two mission eparchies and two eparchies for the Syro-Malabar migrant faithful.

Msgr. Dimitrios Salachas clarifies, with expertise and clarity, from a juridical perspective the concepts of 'Missionary Action' and 'Mission Territory,' *missio ad intra* and *missio ad gentes ad extra*. Highlighting the concrete Indian situation he says: "a) The vast territories destined for evangelization are in general of exclusive competence of the Latin hierarchy. b) The oriental religious who are already working in the territories entrusted to the Latin Bishops are called to carry out the evangelization in the Latin rite." According to him, "in the concrete situation of India, restricting the pastoral and missionary activity of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches to a very reduced territory does not correspond to the teaching of the Council document OE, n. 3..." He concludes by saying that "the problem would be resolved by ensuring to each Church the right to evangelization according to the proper ritual characteristic, and guaranteeing at the same time the unity of purpose and the coordination of the evangelization." He affirms that "the catechetical, religious, spiritual and historical formation of the faithful and their organization in the tradition of the proper Church *sui iuris* is necessary and this can be guaranteed only with the establishment of the proper parishes and eparchies."

Natale Loda, in his article "Project for a New Evangelization of the Archiepiscopal Syro-Malabar Church" first clarifies terms or concepts like Missions, mission, the *mission ad gentes*, evangelization and *plantatio ecclesiae* or *implantatio ecclesiae*. Then, he discusses the concept of 'New Evangelization' which includes 'Re-evangelization,' 'auto-evangelization' and 'second evangelization,' the Evangelization of the People in the CCEO and the *Pastor Bonus* and that in the Oriental Churches, touching also the issue of territoriality. In connection with the problematic of 'territoriality' and 'personality'

and the right of every Church for missionary activity, the author says that "It is necessary to come out of the common ecclesiastical mentality, that all the territories outside the confines of the Churches *sui iuris* are solely Latin, where the Oriental Churches insisting on them, are seen as only an addition." He says that "The CCEO offers ... for a transition from the mere criterion of territoriality to a broader personal, functional and organizational," and to solve the problem we should go beyond "the ecclesial and ecclesiological situations of the past century, before the Vatican Council II." Finally he concludes with "Prospectives for a New Evangelization of the Syro-Malabar and Syro- Malankara Churches."

As one who was born and grown up as a migrant and now as pastor and judicial vicar of a migrant community, Sajan George Thengumpally considers "Migration as a tool of Evangelization" and opines that "Establishing Pastoral Structures for Migrants will foster Mission." In the context of the phenomenon of migration of the oriental faithful and the allied "confrontation between proper mission undertaken by the Latin Church and the pastoral care according to one's own Rite demanded by the Oriental Catholic faithful," the author discusses "how the hierarchical structures established for the pastoral care of the Oriental Catholic faithful could be used as an effective tool for evangelization."

As a champion of comparative study, as far as the CIC and CCEO are concerned, Jobe Abbass sees a prospective 'Revising [of] the Eastern Canons on Consecrated Life' and identifies eight specific areas like, for example, 'defining the proper law of a institute of consecrated life' in the title XII of CCEO which could be improved. From a comparative reading of the CIC and the CCEO the author comments that the very "recognition of a wider variety of forms of consecrated life distinguishes the 1990 Eastern Code from the 1983 *Codex Iuris Canonici* (CIC), where the legislator only recognizes institutes of consecrated life as either religious or secular." In view of the prospective revision of the material the author suggests that "some CCEO norms could be reformulated or changed while other canons could be added to a new and updated Eastern Code so as to regulate better the consecrated life."

Michael Vattapalam, who works in the eparchial curia of the Diocese of Palai, Kerala, India as the Judicial Vicar of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, offers a rather detailed account of the Roman Curia, its history, structure, functioning, and the recent developments, in his article 'Reformations in the Roman Curia' in three parts: Earliest Form of the Roman Curia; Major Documents which Reorganized the Roman Curia, and Recent Modifications in the Roman Curia.

A concerted effort for the success of the mission, more than ever before, is expedient today because of the unfavourable atmosphere and circumstances prevailing against the Church in many parts of the world. For this, ecclesiological, juridical, theological, ecumenical and concrete practical measures and approaches have to be employed. Above all there should be meaningful planning, cooperation and coordination among the various individual Churches *sui iuris*, between the Latin and the Oriental Churches as well as between the hierarchy and the religious, and the involvement of the laity.

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