

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Vettuvazhy, Kuriakose, *The Synod of Diamper (1599) Revisited in the Light of CCEO*, Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum, 2021, pp. 596.**

This book, in seven chapters, explores the influence of the Synod of Diamper decrees in the present Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) and how the teachings of that Synod became one of the sources of many canons in CCEO. The stipulations of the synod are cited fifty-three times as a source of CCEO, and its influence is evident in canons dealing with sacraments of Christian Initiation, anointing of the sick, sacred ordination, matrimony, sacramentals, sacred space, and penal laws.

In the first chapter of this scientific and systematic work entitled "The Synod of Diamper (1599) in the Hierarchy of Malabar Church," the author clearly explains how the hierarchical set up of the Malabar Church was radically and completely changed through the decrees, reforms, and legislation enacted by the Synod. In this regard, he throws light on important historical events like substituting Eastern rite with Latin rite, imposition of Western style of priestly formation and Western hierarchical setup, curtailing and eventually suppressing all the powers of archdeacon, the *de facto* head of Malabar Christians. Changes were also introduced in the spirituality and lifestyle of Malabar Christians. Thus, according to the author, a study on the Synod amply reveals that it has profoundly influenced the course of events of the Church of the Thomas Christians during the centuries that followed.

In the second chapter, the author makes a critical analysis of the impact of the decrees of Synod of Diamper on the administration of the sacrament of Christian initiation in the Church of the Thomas Christians and how it has become one of the sources of canons of CCEO dealing with the three sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Coming to the sacrament of baptism, he points out that misunderstanding the East Syrian baptismal rites, which were in the passive form, in the Synod of Diamper, the Latin imperative baptismal formula, which was the

only valid one in the eyes of the Portuguese theologians, was introduced in place of East Syrian formula. This imperative formula is one of the sources of CCEO c. 675 §1. The Synod also gave instructions concerning the role, age, and qualities of sponsors, the time of baptism, etc., and thus subsequently became a source CCEO c. 684 §1 (sponsors) and CCEO c. 686 §1, which obliges parents to have their children baptized as early as possible. Since the sacrament of Confirmation was administered together with baptism, in the East Syrian Church, there were no special regulations regarding its administration. The Synod of Diamper specified olive oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the bishop as the matter for Confirmation. Bishop as the ordinary administrator of the sacrament is one of the sources of CCEO c. 693, and thus the faculty to bless the Holy Myron which is to be used to anoint the recipient of the sacrament, is reserved to the bishop. As far as the sacrament of Divine Eucharist is concerned, the Synod gave a clear description about the matter and form for its valid celebration. The Synod made it mandatory that the matter of this sacrament should be the bread of wheat and the grape of wine which could be mixed with a smaller quantity of water, and specified that the form of the sacrament is the consecration words used by the Lord during the last supper. These specifications made by the Synod made it one of the sources of CCEO c. 707 §1. The Synod also made instructions regarding eucharistic fasting, liturgical vestments, the place, time, days and frequency of celebration of the sacrament, the necessity of confession to receive the sacrament, etc., and became the sources of CCEO canons 707, 708, 711, 712, 713, 714, 869 and 882.

The third chapter of the work focuses its attention on the legislation of the Synod of Diamper on the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick and explains how this legislation influenced the administration of these sacraments in the Church of Malabar Christians and to what extent it became one of the sources of CCEO cc. 718, 719, 722 §3, 724 §1, 727, 737 §1, 741 and 742. As per the author, the insistence of the Synod on frequent confession, the requirement of a written permission from the bishop for the priests to hear confession, the concept of reserved sins etc., had a profound influence on the administration of the sacrament of reconciliation in the Malabar Church thereafter. Without realizing the fact that this sacrament of extreme unction had been administered in the Malabar Church, the Diamper legislation

prescribes the use of this sacrament in Malabar and gives detailed guidelines regarding its administration.

The fourth chapter, which is exclusively dedicated to the Sacrament of Holy Orders gives a clear exposition of the rights and duties of the clergy. In this regard, the canons of the Synod of Diamper serve as a source of CCEO cc. 744, 758 §1, 758 § 3, 758 § 4, 759 §1, 373, 377, 383 §2 and 387. The Synod of Diamper clearly decreed that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Orders, stipulated the qualities required for the candidates to the priesthood, fixed the minimum age for diaconate and presbyterate, abolished the Eastern discipline of married clergy, and imposed the Latin discipline of obligatory celibacy. The Synod also made it obligatory for clerics to celebrate divine praises and prohibited them from rendering military service and meddling with secular affairs. The insistence of the Synod that clergy should be distinguished from the faithful not only in manners but also in habit and dress helped to prevent abuses, especially the priests indulging in activities like trade, hunting, etc. In this regard, the teaching of the Synod is one of the sources of CCEO c. 387, which states that particular law is to be observed regarding the attire of clerics.

The fifth chapter of this study that deals with the sacrament of matrimony, describes the legislation of the Synod of Diamper on this matter, its impact on the celebration of marriage in the Malabar Church thereafter, and how it served as one of the sources of CCEO canons on marriage. Important among them are the immediate preparation of the couples before marriage, binding the parties to prepare themselves for the reception of the sacrament of marriage, pre-nuptial investigations, publications of banns, etc. which had to be done well in advance before the marriage. Marriage curries, prohibition to marry from certain degrees of the relationship of consanguinity and affinity etc are other innovations of the synod. The Synod also put strict rules regarding inter church marriages, marriage in lent, impediment of age, form and liturgical rite of marriage.

After having made an analysis on the impact of the Synod of Diamper on the CCEO canons on sacraments, the author in the sixth chapter deals with the legislation of the Synod on sacramentals and sacred space made in the seven sessions of this Synod. Although, most of the 41 decrees enacted on this matter do not have much

juridical significance, in the author's analysis, they helped to improve the order, administration, and maintenance of the places of divine worship. The author also clearly explains how the strong instructions and recommendations given by the Synod in this regard serve as one of the sources of the CCEO cc. 867 §2, 872 §1, 880 §2, 881 § 1, 882, 884 and 886, 888 §2. These instructions concern matters connected with sanctuary and the holiness of the Church, mandatory use of surplice and stole for the administration of sacraments and sacramentals, blessings of candles, processions and litanies, ecclesiastical burials, regulations regarding names to be given to Churches, feast days of obligation, obligation to attend mass on Sundays and feast days, observance of fasting, veneration of saints, importance to be given to sacred images and relics, etc.

In the seventh and final chapter of this scholarly work, the author gives a clear picture about the penal system that existed in the Malabar Church till the end of the sixteenth century, the teachings of the Synod of Diamper on excommunication and abduction and their application to CCEO cc. 1434 §1 and 1451. It also examines the regulations enacted by the Synod on concubinage of the clergy, simony, and merchandise, the teachings of the Synod on penal sanctions, *latae sententiae* penalties, etc., and its influence on CCEO cc. 1453 §1, 1461 and 1466.

In short, this book is a highly useful source material which gives a clear picture about the life and the disciplinary, administrative and liturgical practices of the Malabar Church before and after the Synod of Diamper and describes the impact of its legislation as one of the sources of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches promulgated in 1990.

**Benny Sebastian Tharakunnel, CMI**