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THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE MALABAR CHURCH



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THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE MALABAR CHURCH

From its very beginning the Malabar Church has come in Malabar, the south west coast of India. "Particular Church" with its own Hierarchy, Liturgy etc., and has, therefore, an Individuality distinct from that of all the other "Particular Churches".

In the past the Individuality of the Malabar Church existed in the form of autonomy and was genuinely Indo-Oriental with its peculiar characteristics. By the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century it was '*de jure*' suppressed and disfigured. After a long and strenuous fight it has been regained. Its importance is great specially if it could be brought to perfection and to its former beauty. Nevertheless it has yet to struggle for its existence and well being. We will treat briefly of these points below.

In the past the Individuality of the Malabar Church existed in the form of autonomy and was genuinely Indo-Oriental with its peculiar characteristics.

According to a well attested tradition the Apostle St Thomas is the founder of the Malabar Church. The Malabarians are, therefore, called "Thomas Christians". At a very early period the Malabar Church established contacts with the Church of Persia proper first, and then with that of Mesopotamia. It got down its bishops successively from these Churches from which it received its East Syriac Liturgy also. But it was not an output nor an integral part of these Churches. It gloried in its Apostolic origin and had its own customs and discipline based on the Malabar way of life. Keeping intact the East Syriac Liturgy which it received from the above mentioned Churches, it enriched it by modifying and christianising the Hindu way of life familiar to the Malabarians¹.

The chief ecclesiastical head of the Malabar Church was called *The Metropolitan and the Gate of All India*² "Gate" in the Orient stands for "sublime power". The jurisdiction of this Metropolitan extended to the whole of India³. Though he was sent by the East Syrian Patriarch of Mesopotamia, he enjoyed an autonomous status. This might be the reason why he was sometimes referred to as Patriarch⁴. The effective government, however, of the Malabar Church, as we know from tradition and from certain documents of the 16th and the 17th centuries was in the hands of local prelates known as Archdeacons. The title of the Archdeacon was *The Archdeacon of All India*⁵. The Church of All India, therefore, gravitated towards Malabar. The Malabar Church carried on its activities under the guidance of the Archdeacons who were also the social and the political

leaders of the Malabarians. Leaving aside all other activities we will speak here a little about the activities of the Malabar church - assemblies.

. The assembly of the adults and the priests ascribed to a parish administered the temporalities of the parish and looked after the christian life of the people. This assembly had the power even to excommunicate public delinquents. Matters of a serious nature were dealt with in the joint assemblies of two or more churches or parishes, while matters that pertained to the whole Church or Community were treated by the representatives of all the parishes. The Malabar Church thus presented the appearance of a *Christian Republic*⁶.

The Individuality of the Malabar Church as expressed in its autonomy mentioned above, the East Syriac Liturgy, the christianised Hindu customs etc., were all *The Law of Thomas* for the Malabarians. This *Law of Thomas* made the Malabar Church fully at home in the Indian soil both from the religious and the cultural points of view. The peculiar characteristics of the Individuality of the Malabar Church was entirely Indo - Oriental⁷.

NOTES

1. Placid J. Podipara, CMI, *Die Thomas Christen*, Wurzburg, 1966, kapitel 4.
2. Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, OCD, *India Orientalis Christiana*, Roma, 1794 p. 88.
3. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa, 65, ff. 45, 43.
4. Schurhammer G, SJ, *The Malabar Church and Rome during the early Portuguese period and before*, Trichinopoly, 1934 p. 29.
5. Jesuit Archives, Rome, l. c., f. 43.
6. Paolino di S. Bartolomeo, OCD, *Viaggio All'Indie Orientali*, Roma, 1796 p. 80.
(Propaganda Archives, Rome, *Istoria della Missione del Malabar*
(Congr. Part. Vol. 109)
7. "The Prospects of Pluralism in Catholicism" *The Eastern Churches review*, England, Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 412, 413.

II

It is to be regretted that by the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century the Individuality of the Malabar Church was '*de jure*' suppressed and disfigured. The Portuguese policy towards the Malabar Church was responsible for this.

The Portuguese began their commercial and missionary activities in Malabar in the 16th century. Goa which was a Portuguese bishopric since 1534 became an archbishopric in 1558. Cochin in Malabar, erected in 1558 as a Portuguese bishopric, was Goa's suffragan see. Both were under the Padroado (Patronage) of the Portuguese crown.

In the eyes of the Portuguese *The Law of Thomas* of the Malabar Church and all that it comprised were heresy and superstition. Their policy was to make the Malabarians Latin in Rite and to put them under their Padroado Latin jurisdiction. Some of the East Syrian bishops who were in Malabar in the 16th century were treated by the Portuguese as Catholics and some others as heretics.⁸ The Malabarians stood against the Latinisation of their Rite and even against their own children whom the Portuguese had ordained priests in the Latin Rite.⁹ Even before Goa became an archdiocese the Portuguese contended that the bishop of Goa was the bishop of Malabar and of the whole of India¹⁰.

The Metropolitan of the Malabar Church in the second half of the 16th century was Mar Abraham of Angamale. It was at the instance of the Pope that the East Syrian Patriarch gave him the title of Angamale¹¹. He was also *The Gate of All India*¹² and the Superior of all the bishops and archbishops¹³ of his Rite. During his regime the Portuguese did all they could to realise their policy regarding the Malabarians. The enactments of the Councils

of Goa of 1575 and 1585 regarding the Malabar Church were all made for this purpose¹⁴. Like his colleague Mar Joseph, Mar Abraham also was accused of heresy. By an Apostolic Brief dated Dec. 27, 1595, it was decided that the successor of Mar Abraham was to be nominated not by the East Syrian Patriarch, but by Rome directly¹⁵. Mar Abraham died in 1597. Relying chiefly on the aforesaid Brief and on another dated Jan. 21, 1597, both issued in the case of Mar Abraham¹⁶ Dom Menezes, the Portuguese Latin archbishop of Goa, entered Malabar, exercised jurisdiction in the Malabar Church and celebrated what in history is known as "the diocesan synod of Diamper" — everything for realizing the Portuguese policy mentioned above. But everything was *ultra vires*¹⁷. According to the acts of the synod of Diamper the Malabarians condemned their Patriarch as a heretic, promised they would accept as their bishop only him whom Rome directly nominated etc. But Roz, SJ and Campori SJ who were present at the synod say that the synod was not in form, that there was no discussion there, that the assembled did not understand anything, that the assembled put their signatures to the acts of the synod at the insistence of Roz SJ., that menezes made additions to the acts after the synod was over; they prayed that the Pope might not approve such a synod¹⁸.

Before knowing anything of what Menezes had done in Malabar, Rome on Nov. 5, 1599, nominated Roz SJ, a Latin, as the successor of Mar Abraham of Angamale. What is more surprising is that on Dec. 20, 1599, Angamale, the Primatial see of the Malabarians, was reduced to a mere diocese and was made suffragan to the Portuguese Latin archdiocese of Goa¹⁹. Thus an autonomous Apostolic Church was put under a 16th century missionary Church, the autonomy of the former having been abolished.

The Malabarians when they came to know of the degradation of their Church gave vent to their bitter feelings saying:

"What wrong have we done...? Was not our Church founded by an Apostle? Is it not the most ancient Church of India? This is the doing of the Archbishop of Goa...how can he be the Primate if our Church is more ancient than his?...²⁰.

The Padroado of the king of Portugal was extended over Angamale on August 4, 1600.

— Latinisation of the Rite and Liturgy (ie. of *The Law of Thomas*) followed. Latin laws were put into execution and the time-honoured powers of the Archdeacon were curtailed. Latinisation of the Liturgy was not a complete success. The Liturgy was highly mutilated and many of its items were substituted with Syriac translations of the Latin (Roman) Liturgy²¹.

Owing to the repeated requests of the Malabarians and of bishop Roz SJ, the archiepiscopal dignity of Angamale was restored in 1608 as if it was not suppressed. But its title and residence were transferred to Cranganore. Though Cranganore was not a suffragan to Goa, still it remained under the *Padroado*²².

Another development. In 1610 while Roz SJ was the archbishop of Cranganore, the *Padroado* ecclesiastical territory in India was divided among the *Padroado* Prelates of (Goa), Cranganore, Cochin and Mylapore (erected in 1606). The Malabarians were, in consequence, divided between Cranganore and Cochin which two sees had Latins also under them. This was the final blow aimed at the Individuality of the Malabar Church, viz. to the Church of India and to the All India jurisdiction of its chief Prelate²³. The Latinised Rite and Liturgy of the Malabar Church disfigured what was left of its *de facto* Individuality. —

NOTES

8. Placid J. Podipara, CMI, op. cit., Kapitel 6.
9. British Museum Add. MS 9853, *Relacao da Serra*, 1604 f. 90. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa, 65, f. 43 (Relacao 1606). D'Souza f, SJ, *Oriente Conquistando a Jesu Cristo*, II, Bombay, 1886, p. 71.
10. Letter of Antonio do Perto, Nov. 20, 1557 cited by Beltrami G. *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell'Unione*, Roma 1933, p. 43.
11. The Decree of the Patriarch - Beltrami G., op. cit., pp. 95, 96
12. Jesuit Archives Rome, Goa, 65 f. 5.
13. The Decree of the Patriarch, l. c.
14. The important enactment was that Malabar was to be governed by bishops presented by the king of Portugal, or that Mar Abraham was to attend the Councils of Goa. In the Council of 1585 the Latinisation of the Liturgy was decreed upon. See Beltrami, G. op. cit., p. 97, note 23; p. 111. The archbishop of Goa addressed Mar Abraham as his "bishop comprovincial"!! which he was not. (ibid. p. 97. note 23)
15. See the Brief in Beltrami G., op. cit. pp. 248, 249.
16. See the second Brief in Beltrami G. op. cit. pp. 252, 253, According to the first Brief, among other things a process was to be made against Mar Abraham, who, if found guilty was to be kept in custody, and a Vicar Apostolic appointed in his place. According to the second Brief a Vicar Apost. was to be appointed for Angamale if Mar Abraham died before the nomination of his successor. We shall speak of these again.
17. What Menezes could do by virtue of the Briefs after the death of Mar Abraham were: he could appoint a Vicar Apost. for Angamale (2nd Brief); he could conduct process against those, if any, who were suspected of heresy (1st Brief); he could prevent from coming to Malabar any Prelate other than the one directly appointed by Rome. (1st Brief). These certainly could not entitle him to do what he did. To justify himself he invoked his position as the Primate of the East. But he was Primate of the Latin Church of the East, not of Angamale whose Prelate was the Metropolitan and the Gate of All India (of the Oriental Rite). Another title he relied on was the absence of a cathedral chapter in the vacant see of Angamale. But cathedral chapters are a Latin institution!

18. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa, 15, ff. 155, 156, 176-179, 182, 183, 196 - 200 , 242 , 243 , 246.

Through the acts of the synod the Portuguese made the whole world believe that Menezes converted the Malabarians from heresy and schism in or a little before the synod of Diamper. What a calumny .

19. Beltrami G. , op . cit. , p 133.

20. Letter of Roz SJ to Fr. Alvarez S J. Dec. 1, 1601. The Examiner, Bombay , March 26, 1936 The synod of Diamper was concluded on June 24, 1599. Angamala was made suffragan to Goa on Dec. 20, 1599 But the acts of the synod anticipate this as some other Portuguese documents ! Roz. SJ, though a mere bishop styled himself "Metropolitan of India" and called his diocese "Eparchy of India" *Un Manuscrit Oublie De La Liturgie Syro - Malabare Latinisee*, Ajuda 52 - VIII - 4 , article by E. R. Hambye , SJ in Memorial Mgr. Gabriel Khouri - Sarkis (1898-1868), Louvain , 1969, pp. 223, 224.

21. Article of E. R. Hambye SJ just cited

22. Gradually the archbishop of Goa began to nominate administrators to the see of Cranganore during its vacancy just as he was doing in the case of his suffragan sees.

23. It is interesting to see that Britto SJ, the successor of Roz SJ, used to call himself "Archbishop of India" - K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar *Commemoratiou Volume* , p. 366 (The Travancore University Publications, Trivandrum , 1946)

III

The Malabarians keenly felt the loss of the Individuality of their Church. They did not keep quiet. They had their Liturgy which, though Latinised, was in Syriac; they had also their socio-ecclesiastical customs and usages. All this gave them a *de facto* Individuality distinct from that of the Latins. Holding fast to this they began their struggle for regaining the *de jure* Individuality of their Church under a Prelate of their own Rite. Long and strenuous was the struggle. In 1653 it burst out into a revolt against their Latin Prelate of Cranganore, Garcia SJ. The arrival of an Oriental Prelate and his deportation to Goa by the Portuguese was the immediate cause of the revolt. The Malabarians as a whole believed that the Prelate in question was sent to them by the Pope²⁴. The revolt in the case of the minority ended in schism and in the acceptance of Jacobitism²⁵.

In consequence of the revolt the Latin Propaganda jurisdiction too was introduced into Malabar. The majority of the Malabarians who had remained faithful were thus divided between the Latin Propaganda and the Latin Padroado jurisdictions. The first propaganda prelate was asked by the S. Propaganda Congregation to suppress the the Malabar Rite and to introduce the Latin Rite in its place²⁶. The propaganda Prelates were generally called Vicars Apostolic. From 1700 until 1887 they were all foreign Latin Carmelites²⁷. There were periods when all the Malabarians were under the one or the other jurisdiction. There were also Latins under both. The territory under these jurisdictions was gradually narrowed down in extension, and the Church of India or the Indo - Malabar Church became definitely the Malabar Church. But only the central portion of Malabar was to be the territory of this Malabar Church which had yet to regain its *de jure* individuality.

The Malabarians continued to fight as before for the attainment of their goal. Though they were the recipients of several good things at the hands of their Latin Superiors, still they suffered much from them. Among their several complaints one was that their priests were cruelly handled by the Propaganda missionaries. At this the S. Propaganda Congregation being "*altamente commossa*" scolded the Vicar Apostolic and his missionaries ordering them to behave themselves as "*amorevoli Padri, e non mai come autorevoli Dominatori*"²⁸. Several factions also took place among the Malabarians. Those of 1715, 1799, 1861 and 1874 were respectively led by the bishops Gabriel, Pandari, Roccas and Mellus. Of these Pandari was a Malabarian consecrated in Mesopotamia and the others were Messo-potamians. A few who followed Mellus became "*Nestorians*" in 1908.²⁹

During the crisis of 1874 the Malabarians sent up their complaints and requests directly to the Holy See.³⁰ The Propaganda Vicar Apost. took stringent measures against those who led this movement. He expelled seven Malabarian religious from their religious Institute and even declared it a reserved sin to write to the Holy See³¹.

The Holy See made inquiries through two Visitors Apostolic. In 1877 the Propaganda Vicar Apostolic was given a (Latin) Coadjutor. The Coadjutor had the exclusive care of the Malabarians. The Vicar Apostolic had to delegate to him all his powers and he could not do anything in the case of the Malabarians except with the consent of the Coadjutor³². The Coadjutor was asked by the Holy See to take a Vicar General and four Councillors from among the Malabarians. But he did not do this³³.

In 1886 the Padroado jurisdiction over the Malabarians was definitely suppressed³⁴. In the following year there was made a ritual separation between the Malabarians

and the Latins. The Malabarians were put under two Latin Propaganda Vicars Apostolic who were not Carmelites as their predecessors. These Vicars Apostolic were to have (and they had) Pontifically privileged Vicars General and Councillors from among the Malabarians³⁵.

This arrangement was a *de jure*, though partial, acknowledgement of the Individuality of the Malabar Church, and it was foreshadowed in the appointment of the Coadjutor mentioned above.

✓ The Malabarians in no way slackened their efforts. In 1896 they were constituted into the three Propaganda Vicariates Apostolic of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry over which were also placed Malabarian Prelates. To these three was added in 1911 the Vicariate Apostolic of Kottayam³⁶. In 1917 from under the S. Propaganda Congre. the Malabarians came under the S. Oriental Congregation. The Malabar Hierarchy was restored in 1923 with Ernakulam as Metropolis and the other units as suffragan eparchies. The eparchy of Palai was started in 1950 by a division of Changanacherry. In 1953 the eparchy of Tellicherry was started for the Malabarian emigrants who were outside the then Malabar territory. The territory was again extended to the south, north and north-east in 1955. Changanacherry was raised as a Metropolis in 1956 with Kottayam and Palai as its suffragan sees. The suffragan sees of Ernakulam are Trichur, Tellicherry and Kothamangalam which last was erected in 1956 by a division of Ernakulam³⁷. In addition there are now four mission Exarchates Apostolic in Central India, and they are Chanda (1962), Sagar (1968), Satna (1968) and Ujjain (1968).

Thus the Apostolic Individuality of the Malabar Church has finally been *de jure* regained. To regain this the Malabarians had to suffer much; no small was the struggle they put up for centuries. ✓

NOTES

24. See the letter of Garcia SJ dated January 3, 1639, Propaganda Archives, Rome, *Scritture rif. nelle Congr. Gener.* Vol. 232 ff 297sq. Even the leaders of the revolt who were in bad faith invoked the papal authority to deceive the mass (ibid).
25. In course of time they adopted the West Syriac Liturgy. They have been divided and subdivided into several denominations. Those who have remained Jacobites, after several intestine quarrels, are now under a Catholicos who is in communion with the foreign Jacobite Patriarch. They have thus reinstated in another way the autonomy the Malabar Church enjoyed under the East Syrian Patriarchs. Immediately after the revolt of 1653 they set up indigenous leaders as bishops. They did not think of reinstating the ancient Archdeaconship. This shows that the Archdeacon was the real leader of the ancient Malabar Church though there were foreign Prelates set over that Church. Now that those who revolted set up an indigenous leader they did not think of an indigenous Archdeacon since that leader took the place of the Archdeacon. Their leaders used the Ancient title of "All India" "Head of India" (Assemani J. S. *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, IV, 416). The Catholicos has now assumed this title as the Catholicos of India. The Jacobites now call themselves Orthodox.

- From the Jacobite Church was formed the Independent Church of Anjoor (c. 1772); a part of the Church Missionary Society (c. 1836): now they are part of the South Indian United Church; again c. 1875 was formed from the Jacobites the Marthomite Church. In 1961 the Marthomite Church was divided into the Marthomite and the St. Thomas Evangelical Churches. The Catholic (Syro) Malankara Church - a Particular Church - is composed mainly of those who have become Catholic since 1930 from the denomination mentioned above.
26. Propaganda Archives, Rome, *Scritti rif. (origi.)* Vol. 233, f. 29
27. Among the Vicars Ap. there was one Malabarian, Alexander Parampil (1663 - 1687). But he got no Malabarian successor. Though only a titular bishop he designated himself as 'Metropolitan of All India' (Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, OCD, *India Orient. Christ. op. cit.*, p263). Among the Padroado archbishops h e was a Malabarian, Mar Joseph Cariattil (1782 - 1786)

Though his Rite was changed into the Latin (Vati. Arch. *Acta Camarari S. Coll. S. R. E. Cardi.* No. 39, f. 238) he was following his native Rite also. As his "successors" there were two Malabarians, Th Paremmakal and Geo. Sankurikal, who were administrators *sede vacante* (1786-1801). There was another administrator of Cranganore, Mathew, a Malabarian with the title of Archdeacon (1694-1701). He designated himself as "Gate of India" (P Kurian, *The Orthodoxy of the St. Thomas Christians*, Trivandrum, 1908, p. 148 - The book is in Malayalam). During Matthew's administration the arch bishop of Cranganore stayed away in Portugal.

All these show how deep rooted the idea of All India jurisdiction was in the mind of the Malabarians.

28. Propaganda Archives, Rome, Instruction, 1774: *Scritture rif. nelle Congrega. Gen. a. 1774*, V. 839, ff. 220 - 225.
29. The Prelate of these "Nestorians" calls himself by the ancient title of "Metropolitan of India".
During the crises of 1861 and 1874 Malabarians (religious) were made Vicars General of the Propaganda Vicars Ap. but none of them was made auxiliary though Rome would have liked it.
30. See some of these petitions in Mar Luis Pareparampil *An Account of a very Important period of the history of the Catholic Syrians of Malabar* Puthen pally, 1920.
31. Propaganda Archives, Rome (now in the S. Or. Congr.) *Scritti rif. Malabaresi*, 1879-1899. f. 1431. One of the religious thus expelled was Luis Pareparampil who became one of the first Malabar Vicars Ap. (bishop). He is the Mar Louis cited above.
32. Mar Luis Pareparampil, *op. cit.*, p. 109 (documents.)
33. Propaganda Archives, Rome (now in the s. Or. Congr.) *Lettere e Decreti per gli affari orientali*, Vol. XXII, 1889, f. 216.
34. It had been temporarily suppressed from 1838 until 1857/64 owing to troubles in Portugal.
35. One of the Vicars Ap. had two Vicars General since he had under him two communities of Malabarians known as Northists and Southists.
36. This was for the Southists.
37. The present Metropolitan of Ernakulam is a Cardinal.

IV

The importance of the Apostolic Individuality of the Malabar Church is, no doubt, very great. It is a precious treasure to be jealously guarded. Not all Particular Churches nor any missionary Church can claim a direct Apostolic origin and distinct continuity as the Malabar Church can. How many Churches wish they had such a status!!

A great many non-Christians in India think that Christianity is a Western religion that entered India in the wake of European conquerors. So they think that it is high time that it quitted India. But the Apostolic Church of Malabar is a proof that Christianity is not a Western religion and that the Indian Christinity is as old as Christianity itself. Those who go deep into the matter will certainly congratulate the Malabarians for the great sacrifices they underwent in order to preserve the Apostolic Individuality of their Church as a *de jure* distinct entity. If the Malabarians of old had yielded to the Portuguese pressure, India would have lost such a precious treasure.

‘The Malabarians of old were not led by obstinacy or blind sentiments when they reacted against the Portuguese policy saying: “was not our Church founded by an Apostle? Is not our Church the most ancient in India?...” (See above).

The Individuality of the Malabar Church and its importance could be enhanced by bringing the Malabar Church back to its former status and beauty.

The Malabar Church has now two Metropolitans of equal status. A common head - a Major Archbishop, better a Patriarch - will juridically perfect the Hierarchy. This is only a natural development of the autonomy the Church in

question enjoyed in the past. The restoration of the ancient "All India Jurisdiction" - of course, only over the Malabarians dispersed all over India - also will contribute towards the juridical perfection of the Individuality in question. The non-Catholic Oriental Churches that directly or indirectly separated themselves from the Malabar Church exercise this jurisdiction over their subjects all over India and even beyond.

The timely restoration of the Rite with all that it comprises will not only add to the beauty of the Malabar Church, but also will make it appear Oriental in all its externals. Let no non-Christian Indian suspect in it anything of colonialism which he would be glad not to find in the non-catholic Oriental Churches of India.

V

The Individuality of the Malabar Church that has been regained after a tough fight has yet to struggle for its existence and well-being.

(1)

What is known as "the One Rite movement" threatens to wipe out the Individuality of the Malabar Church. There are those who frightened by the evils of multi-jurisdiction in the same place, or fascinated by the idea of uniformity in worship, or instigated by some other motives, advocate the adoption of one Rite for the whole of India or for Malabar.

One Rite, according to its advocates, will bring in one jurisdiction in one territory. But this will result in the complete extinction of the Individuality — the Apostolic Individuality — of the Malabar Church whose importance we have spoken of above. By the introduction of one Rite the Malabarians with no Rite or Hierarchy of their own will be distributed under several jurisdictions together with non-Malabarians. Without at least a Hierarchy of its own how could there be a Particular Church or its Individuality? The loss is immense as we have pointed out above. It is in the uncertain hope (if not in the vain hope) of eliminating the evils mentioned above that such a loss is to be sustained. But are not these evils the result of the lack of christian charity, rather than of Rite or multi-jurisdiction? They could be controlled by christian charity from the practice of which no Christian can exempt himself or herself at any time or place even where there is multi-jurisdiction. Multi-jurisdiction, moreover, is not exercised over one and the same person.

Uniformity of worship is against the universality of the Catholic Church which is composed of various Particular Churches and which is realised in each Particular Church.

The other motives for advocating one Rite are not given due publicity.

(2)

The question of attending to the needs of the Malabarian emigrants is a serious one. There are hundreds of such emigrants in several parts of India outside the Malabar ecclesiastical territory. They have the right and duty to foster and practise their Rite. According to Vatican II there should be priests and parishes and even eparchies if necessary, for such emigrants in their own Rite³⁸. But in India those concerned are not disposed to implement to the full the decrees of Vatican II. They are totally against the extension of the Malabar ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But how can the Malabarians grow to their full stature without their own jurisdiction? Rite comprises not only the Liturgy, but also the history, genius, temperament etc. of this people as Pius XII has expressed in the Encyclical on St. Cyril of Alexandria³⁹. No Prelate of another Rite will be able to help the Malabarians develop these in full. Under the Latin Prelates the Malabarians were always a stagnant community. Under their own Prelates they have made wonderful progress which has become a matter of emulation for the other communities. Troubles will set in only if jealousy takes the place of emulation.

Denial of the jurisdiction in question will cut off the emigrants from their mother Church and impede the natural expansion of the same Church by weakening its vigour. But the Malabar emigrants have not even their own priests now!

Priests and parishes precede jurisdiction, multi-jurisdiction in our case in the same territory, though the latter is not impossible to be had without the former. But multi-jurisdiction is not anything to be alarmed at. First

of all such a jurisdiction is not exercised over one and the same person. Then it is something that is seen today everywhere in the world since it is the only means to safeguard the interests of particular Churches under the present circumstances.

Multi-jurisdiction goes against the idea that there can be only one jurisdiction in one territory.

Now, the Church is "the People of God Worshipping"; it is not a territory as the State. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction should, therefore, be considered *per se* personal, not territorial. What is important is that its subjects should be earmarked as belonging to a Rite or Community. Territory enters into it when the persons over whom it is exercised are dispersed very extensively or are too numerous for one man to look after.

To insist on one jurisdiction in one territory is to insist on Canon 9 of Lateran IV. This Canon which caused much havoc to the Orientals even widening schisms, has no force now. If it had any force, catholic Orientals would not have had jurisdiction in Western Europe, in the Americas, in England, and in Australia, nor would Vatican II have decreed as it did (see above). Again, H. H. Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution of Aug. 15, 1967, dealing with the competency of the S. Oriental Congregation, has ruled that this Congregation takes care of the Orientals who are found in the Latin territories also by appointing Visitors and even by constituting their own hierarchy if their number and circumstances require this⁴⁰. The creation and the extension of the present Malabar jurisdiction was a repealing of the Canon in question in the case of the Malabar Church.

In spite of what we have said above, Canon 9 of Lateran IV has appeared again in the form of Majority Rule which comes to this: In a given territory where there are

more than one Rite, that Rite which has more adherents than the others should have its bishop and the others must be under this bishop. In other words the minority should be denied the right of being governed by its own bishop and should be impeded from developing itself to the full ! There are places in India where the Malabar emigrants will never form the majority, and in course of time they will lose their identity if the present policy is followed , The documents cited above do not speak of majority at all.

The non-Catholic Oriental Churches of Malabar exercise jurisdiction all over India over their subjects. Will they be denied this if they become catholic?

The documents we have adduced above are of the highest authority in the Catholic Church. Not to implement them would be to dishonour the Catholic Church and to estrange the non-Catholic Orientals from her.

Multi-jurisdiction has its inconveniences and they were not unforeseen by the authors of the documents we have adduced above. These inconveniences, as we said above, could be controlled to a great extent by friendly dialogue and charity. As a matter of fact, tension (sometimes silent) between Communities of different Rites under the same jurisdiction will be greater than that between two jurisdictions in the same territory. Multi-jurisdiction can ease the situation⁴¹: Let us remember that we are living in a period of ecumenism.

(3)

The mass exodus of the Malabarians into the Latin Rite as Priests and Religious will, in the long run, weaken the Individuality of the Malabar Church from within. According to the statistics of 1969 there are 645 diocesan priests, 703 major seminarians, 401 minor seminarians, 593 religious priests, 9345 scholastics, 547 religious brothers and

6197 religious sisters working in several parts of India in the Latin Rite⁴⁹. Formerly these vocations had to change their Rite; now they retain their Rite juridically and follow the Latin Rite. But practically this makes no difference. The exodus continues steadily, not as something casual, but as a regular day-to-day phenomenon. Hence its danger.

Those that go out have no knowledge of the history, Liturgy etc. of their mother Church. They are all trained in the Latin Rite. No wonder they are puzzled, if not scandalized, at the Individuality of the Malabar Church which appears to them as an obstacle to evangelisation and catholicity. Naturally they influence their friends and relatives at home who are not a few. In this way a kind of anti-Malabar mentality is being created in many in Malabar itself. The "One Rite Movement" has an attraction to those of this mentality. Thus the mass exodus in question which is always on the increase, tends towards weakening the Malabar Church from within, the more so since not a few of those who 'go out' work in Malabar itself in the Latin Rite.

Could not these vocations be utilised in the future for the growth of the Malabar Church in India? Why should the Latin Particular Church get enriched by impeding the growth of the Malabar Church, and this too through the children of the Malabar Church? The growth of the Malabar Church through the work of her children is the growth of the catholic Church, and it is also natural. If the Latins are short of priests to look after those who are already catholics, the Malabarians should help them even by following the Latin Rite. But why should the Malabarians follow the Latin Rite to do mission work in their own father land, and this among the non-Christians who have no Rite? If the Latin Missions have no personnel for evangelisation, they should, instead of latinising the Malabarians, entrust the mission to the Malabar Rite. This

would be natural and catholic, especially in India which is an oriental country. This is also the way 'to help' what they call 'the surplus vocations'.

Cannot the Latin religious Institutes open Malabar houses and provinces and take up mission work outside the Malabar ecclesiastical territory? In this way they can be of profit to their religious Institute and to the Malabar Church. Biritualism that is practised by some in Malabar is no solution of the problem.

Those who accept and those who encourage the vocations in question have no thought for the growth and well-being of the Malabar Church. In the name of Catholicity and Generosity they are in good faith working indirectly towards the weakening of the Malabar Church from within impeding the exercise of its full rights.

Vatican II has made it clear that all the Rites are equal⁴³, that everywhere (*ubique terrarum*) each Rite (Particular Church) should be preserved and allowed to grow⁴⁴, and that each has the duty and obligation to do mission work under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff⁴⁵. Has any Roman Pontiff said that the Orientals should follow the Latin Rite and do mission work? Should one Particular Church grow by impeding the growth of another Particular Church?

Those who recruit vocations have recourse to the dictum "It is not the Rite, but it is the Faith that matters". Yes, let them, therefore, in proof of their *bona fides* sincerely endeavour that the vocations they recruit may become in the Malabar Rite what they are intended to be in the Latin Rite. Then there will not be what they call the problem of "surplus vocations". The well-being of the Particular Church of Malabar will not also be endangered by a too generous application of their dictum which could very well be retorted against them⁴⁶. They cannot be ignorant that

they are recruiting vocations that may even positively stand against the legitimate claims of the Malabar Church which is slumbering in self-complacency.

(4)

The Hierarchy, the Liturgy, the genius, the history, the temperament, the social customs, the special ecclesiastical usages etc. of the Malabarians constitute the Individuality of their Church. This Individuality must certainly have an appearance fully worthy of it in every aspect. But it is marred by the latinising tendency, specially of its clergy who, owing to their long Latin training, cannot understand certain things except in term of the Latin. All the same they want by all means to be Malabarian and Oriental. We will adduce a few instances.

The Holy See did much in the matter of restoring Liturgy to its genuine form. But even this has been revised after the Latin model, even Latin elements having been introduced into it. This is exactly what the Portuguese did in spite of the Malabarians of old. True, all this is done by way of experiment. Nevertheless, what has been done reveals the mentality of its authors. In 1929 the Malabar Hierarchy submitted to the Holy See for approbation a Syriac translation of the Latin (Roman) Pontificals. H. H. Pope Pius XI, the same Pope who in 1923 had restored the Malabar Hierarchy, denied approbation saying: "Latinism ought not to be encouraged among the Orientals; half measures are neither generous nor fruitful." So saying he ordered that the ancient (East Syriac) Pontificals were to be given to the Malabarians⁴⁷. The great theological and appologetic values of ancient Liturgies require that they should be preserved and developed in their genuine form. Each of the ancient Liturgies is in its own way a development of the primitive Apostolic Liturgy and they contain inestimable treasures of the christian traditions.

"If they (the Orientals) have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstances of time or personage", Vatican II requires "that they should take pains to return to their ancestral ways"⁴⁸. There is no proof that the Malabar Church ever developed a Liturgy of its own. It adopted the ancient East Syriac Liturgy which it included in "The Law of Thomas". Hence the ancient Liturgy of the Malabar Church is the East Syriac one, and the Malabar Church has to practise it in its genuine form by returning "to the ancestral ways". It is less foreign to Malabar than the Latin (Roman) Liturgy is, say, to Germany. Abbreviation, modernisation, adaptation, new compositions etc. are necessary, but all this must form one organic whole with the original in accordance with its genius. "The lawful rites and their (Orientals) established way of life", Vatican II orders, "should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development"⁴⁹. A new or a disfigured Liturgy does not become an ancient Church. Latinisation, moreover, is against ecumenism, especially in Malabar where Latinisation was the ultimate cause of all the schisms ⁵⁰

Another thing that causes admiration is the dress of the Prelates. They dress like the Latin Prelates. It is not at all difficult to design an Indo-Oriental dress in conformity with the genius of the Rite.

The Latin juridical mentality has influenced not a little the observance of fasts and abstinences. The Oriental way will conserve the traditions with less difficulty of observance.

We may also mention that the Malabar religious literature too should be orientated in conformity with traditions of the Malabar Church. The deep sense of Individuality extends to all these and more including church architecture, church music and so on. Even such little

things as the way of making the sign of the Cross acquire great importance when viewed against the background of the Individuality of a Church.

✓ Let no one think that we are advocating sectarianism. In the unity of faith and charity, and with mutual co-operation with the other Particular Churches, each Particular Church has the duty and obligation to preserve and develop congenially its particular traits and traditions. All of them will thus give a splendid and joint testimony to the beauty and universality of the Catholic Church which will be fully realised in each of them⁵¹.

NOTES

38. ... "attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of the Particular Churches. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demand" (*Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches*, 4). "... where there are faithful of a different Rite, the diocesan bishop should provide for their spiritual needs either through priests or parishes of that Rite or through an episcopal vicar endowed with the necessary faculties. Whenever it is fitting, the latter should also have episcopal rank. Or, the Ordinary himself may perform the office of an Ordinary of different Rites, If, for certain reasons, these arrangements are not feasible in the eyes of the apostolic See, then a proper hierarchy for the different Rites is to be established" (*Decree on the Pastoral Office of bishops*, 23/3).

It goes without saying that "spiritual good" and "spiritual needs" are not to be restricted to the administration of Sacraments alone. The cultural, social, educational and the other needs also go along with the spiritual needs.

39. "a lawful freedom must be allowed to each and every people of the Oriental Rite in all that depends on the history, genius and temperament of each single people" (Encyclical, *Orientalium Ecclesiae Decus*, AAS XXXVI (1944) pp. 137, 138).
40. "... in the very Latin territories (the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches) with diligent care watches over, also through Visitors, the not yet organised centres of the faithful of the

Oriental Rites, and takes care of their spiritual needs, as far as possible, even by constituting hierarchies for them, if the number of the faithful and the circumstances require it" (Ap. Constitution, *Regiminis Ecclesiae Universae - De Curia Romana* - N. 44 15/VIII/1967).

41. It is an undeniable fact that in India there is a great tension among the different Communities of the same Rite that exist under the same jurisdiction. This is sometimes greater than that which is noticed between two jurisdictions in the same place. The intensity of the tension is proportionate to the degree of development each Community has attained to. One would, therefore, simply think that it will be of advantage to all concerned if the Communities that are sufficiently developed are given their own bishops and jurisdiction in the same territory even though they be of the same Rite. This is not anything new to the Holy See.
42. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, N. 186, Roma, 1970, pp. 278-280.
43. Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches, N. 3.
44. *Ibid.*, N. 4.
45. *Ibid.*, N. 3.
46. For some what matters is the salvation of souls, and nothing else. Yes Should we not take into consideration the quality of the souls that are to be saved?
47. *Ordo Persolvendi Ritus Pontificalis juxta usum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabaren-sis*, *Sacra Congregatio Orientalis*, Roma, 1558, Prefatio.
48. Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches, N. 6.
49. *Ibid.*
50. The Jacobites and "the Nestorians" of Malabar who broke away from the Malabarians preserve their liturgical and other traditions scrupulously. The ancient Malabar Church with its Latin touches is a scandal to them. The Malabarians have to show them by word and deed that one can be a Catholic without beeing latinised.
51. "It is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or Rite retain its traditions whole and entire, while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place". (Vatican II, Decare on the Catholic Oriental Churches, N. 2)

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