

QUEEN
of the
SACRAMENTS

Revised Edition

Fr. K. Mani Rajan

2008

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QUEEN
of the
SACRAMENTS

Revised Edition

A treatise on the liturgy of the Holy Mass
as celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church

Fr. K. Mani Rajan

The Travancore Syriac Orthodox Publishers
Kottayam - 686 004, Kerala, India

QUEEN
of the
SACRAMENTS

By

Rev. Fr. Dr. K. Mani Rajan

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First Published in 1991 by St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox
Church, Los Angeles, California, USA.

First Indian Edition in 1994 by Seminary Publications, Udayagiri,
Mulanthuruthy, Kerala, India

Revised Indian Edition: 2008 by The Travancore Syriac Orthodox
Publishers, Kottayam - 686 004,
Kerala, India

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Price Rs. 120.00
U.S. \$ 10.00

Printed at: M/s Dona Colour Graphs, Kottayam

Copies: 1000

Dedicated to the blessed memory of

St. Ignatius Elias III Shaker

(A. D. 1867 - 1932)

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

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CONTENTS

Bull from H. H. Ignatius Zakka I Ivas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East	ix
Letter from H. E. Athanasius Y. Samuel, Archbishop of United States & Canada	xi
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgement	xvii
Abbreviations Used	xix

PART - I

CHAPTER 1	The Syrian Orthodox Church	1
CHAPTER 2	Church Building	5
CHAPTER 3	Sanctuary and Accoutrements	10
CHAPTER 4	The Altar and Sacramentalia	19
CHAPTER 5	Vestments	26
CHAPTER 6	Liturgy - Symbolism & Evolution	36

PART - II

CHAPTER 7	Preparatory Prayers	45
CHAPTER 8	Mass of the Catechumens	52
CHAPTER 9	Pre-Anaphora	61

PART - III

CHAPTER 10	Anaphora	79
CHAPTER 11	Diptychs	94
CHAPTER 12	Prayers for the Faithful Departed	135
CHAPTER 13	Fracture and Commixture	138
CHAPTER 14	Lord's Prayer & the Elevation	149
CHAPTER 15	Hymns of Eucharistic Devotion	154
CHAPTER 16	Prayers in Anticipation of the Second Coming	158
CHAPTER 17	The Conclusion	162
	References	167
	Author Index	173
	Subject Index	175
	Glossary	181
	About the author	183

ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܥܪܘܩܝܝܬܐ
ܕܩܝܡܝܐ

SYRIAN PATRIARCHATE
OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST
DAMASCUS - SYRIA



By the Grace of God
Ignatius Zakka I Ivas
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East
Supreme head of the Universal Syrian
Orthodox Church

ܕܡܫܩܐ ܘܥܪܘܩܝܝܬܐ
ܕܩܝܡܝܐ

دمشق - سوريا

No.E125/91.

May 14, 1991



Apostolic Benediction to our beloved
spiritual son Rev. Fr. K. Mani Rajan.

We have gone through the draft of the
book, "Queen of the Sacraments", you have
authored. The work is indeed an expositive
study of liturgical symbolism and is a
significant contribution to the
comprehension of the Holy Mass, as
celebrated for ages, in the Syrian Orthodox
Church.

This book is also a valuable source of
information to all Christians. The
interpretations are devotional and
authentically represent our faith and
tenets. We are sure that all faithful,
especially students of liturgy, will benefit
immensely from this scholarly work. We
invoke heavenly blessings on your efforts in
this regard.

We hereby authorize the publication of
the book. May the grace of God Almighty be
with you and all faithful members of St.
Mary's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Los
Angeles, who made this endeavour a success.

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ARCHIDIOKESI
MAR ANTHAKIYAN T. SAMUEL
PRIMATE

ARCHDIOCESE OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

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May 3, 1991

Rev. Father Matt Rajan
101 West Marquitta, #28
San Clemente, CA 92672

Dear Spiritual Son,

May the peace and grace of our Lord be with you. We thank you for the manuscript copy of your forthcoming book on the Holy Liturgy of our Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, entitled Queen of Sacraments, which we have read with great interest. The work has revealed to us the many hours of research and dedicated study that have gone into its writing, and we do commend you and Mr. Thomas Joseph for an excellent piece of scholarship and research. We have found your study most instructive and well organized, and we ask God Almighty to bless you and Mr. Joseph for what you have accomplished. Queen of Sacraments will be a most valuable reference to both young and old alike and will be a tremendous asset to all scholars and students of our Holy Church and the liturgical tradition of our Holy See of Antioch. We bless your work and commend it for immediate publication, knowing that it will be of service to both the present generation as well as to future faithful and scholars. We send forth your study with the prayer that God will bless it for the benefit and edification of His Holy Church. In doing so, we urge all our faithful throughout our North American Archdiocese to obtain a copy of your study to better understand and appreciate the rich and beautiful liturgical life of our Holy Church of Antioch.

In closing, we extend to you and all who have contributed to the writing and publication of Queen of Sacraments our fatherly commending and paternal benediction.

Sincerely in Christ,

ܐܘܨܬܝܢܝܘܬܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܘܬܝܢ ܕܩܝܫܝܢ

Athanasios Y. Samuel,
Archbishop

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PREFACE

The beauty of liturgy is a hidden treasure for those who are not proficient in classical languages such as Syriac, Greek, and Hebrew. The traditions and teachings of the Holy Church are preserved and transmitted through the liturgy. Though the term liturgy commonly refers to the Holy *Qurbano*, it includes all sacred rites employed in the Church's official worship.

Jerusalem was the first center of the Church, but the destruction of the city made it impossible for it to continue in its pre-eminent position. We learn from the New Testament that after Jerusalem, Antioch, the capital of the Eastern world, was the first home of Christianity (Acts 11:26,27; 14:26).

The liturgy of St. James or the Jerusalem liturgy, is none other than that of the Patriarchate of Antioch and of all Orthodox Syria (Salaville, 1938). During the first three centuries, local practices influenced the liturgy. Until then the liturgy was mostly preserved by the word of mouth. From the first century A. D. onwards, the liturgy was documented at first in part. It was later completed and modified over the ages to the diverse forms we find today. Though different bishops made adaptations over different periods of time, the sacred traditions which trace back to the Apostles themselves were always maintained.

Renaudot provides criteria for evaluating liturgy. A liturgy is authentic if it expresses with exactness the faith of the Church which makes use of its formularies (cited in Salaville, 1938). A liturgy is authentic if it has been in use in the Church constantly from time immemorial, or if it is the work of the author to whom it is attributed. In the former sense, Syrian Orthodox liturgy has been handed down from the time of the Apostles, generation to generation, without significant changes. The work of Aphram Barsoum (2000) is one of the best sources available in the study of the evolution of liturgy.

The references listed in this book are the basic sources available in English and Malayalam. They include a number of books in classical languages. Their available English translations were used as the primary sources in spite of the fact that a historical researcher would treat translations as secondary sources. References to Mose Bar Kephō, Bishop of Mosul (c. A. D. 813-903), Mor Dionysius Bar Saleebi, Bishop of Amid (d. 1171) and Mor Gregorius Yuhanon Bar Hebraeus (A. D. 1226-1286), Maphrian of Tikrit, are based on citations by many authors and available translations in English and Malayalam. To the extent possible, the American Psychological Association (APA) style of referencing is used throughout the book.

Many of the interpretations presented are from informal and formal conversations with my spiritual teachers. I have drawn extensively from the speeches of learned people, both clergy and

laity. Most of the prayers of the Holy *Qurbono* included in this book have been taken from *Anaphora* published by His Eminence Athanasius Yeshue Samuel (1967), the Late Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox diocese of USA and Canada.

In this revised edition I have added a few biblical and other references to substantiate the interpretations. Biographies of saints remembered in the fifth diptych are enriched with more details. A few corrections were made to the text of the first edition which were noticed later. Though not exhaustive, this book is an earnest attempt to shed light on the rich liturgical heritage of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Fr. K Mani Rajan

July, 2008.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is deeply indebted to His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Ivas, Prince Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and Supreme head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, for verifying the manuscript and approving the publication of the first edition of this book.

The author is grateful to Very Rev. Rabban K. V. Kuriakose, (Mor Julius Kuriakose Metropolitan), the then Principal Secretary to His Holiness the Patriarch, for reviewing the manuscript and making suggestions and corrections, in consultation with His Holiness.

The author pays respectful homage to His Eminence Athanasius Yeshu Samuel, Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of United States and Canada (d. 1995) for blessing and encouraging the first publication in 1991 with paternal love and affection.

It is the abundance of reference material in the United States of America that made this work a reality. The author expresses his sincere thanks to the staff of the Public Library at San Clemente, California, USA for rendering all possible assistance in securing the necessary reference materials from libraries all

over the country.

The author is thankful to all those who shared the work load, especially Dr. Thomas Joseph, who, by his disciplined thought and assiduous efforts, compiled the notes and drafted the manuscript which was, for most part, delivered in the form of lectures at St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Los Angeles.

Various drafts of the manuscript were read by Very Rev. John Meno, the then secretary to His Eminence Athanasius Yesu Samuel; Mr. Jacob Jacob and Dr. Kurian Mani, members of the St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Los Angeles; and Mrs. Susan Hill, my colleague at CERC, University of California, Riverside. The author is grateful to them for their encouragement, their frank criticism, and their wise counsel.

The author places on record the help rendered by Dr. Kurian Mani and Mrs. Jaya Kurian in scanning the text of the first edition for this revised edition. I sincerely thank M/s The Travancore Syriac Orthodox Publishers, Kottayam for taking up the publication. The printing was done by M/s Dona Colour Graphs, Kottayam. The author is thankful to all sponsors for their inspiration and financial assistance in making the revised edition a reality.

Fr. K, Mani Rajan

July, 2008.

Abbreviations Used

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
c. (<i>Circa</i>)	About
cf. (<i>confer</i>)	Compare
ed., eds.	Edited, editor(s), edition(s)
Gr.	Greek
H. E.	His Eminence
H. G.	His Grace
H. H.	His Holiness
i.e. (<i>id est</i>)	That is
Mal.	Malayalam
n. a.	No author
n. d.	No date
n. p.	No publisher, No place of publication
no., nos.	Number(s)
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
Rev.	Reverend
rev.	Revised
Syr.	Syriac
trans.	Translated, translation, Translator
viz., (<i>videlicet</i>)	Namely
Vol(s).	Volume(s)

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PART -1

Chapter I

The Syrian Orthodox Church

The Church is the body of true believers in Christ. *Eetho*, the Syriac word for Church, means ‘to bring together.’ This is different from the term *knustho* used in the Old Testament to denote an ‘assembly’ - a synagogue. The word ‘Church’ itself has its etymological roots in the Greek word *ecclesia*, which means ‘to call and separate.’ The roots of the word can also be traced to the Hebrew word *quhal*, which means ‘an assembly summoned’ (Jean-Nesmy, 1966). The Church is the heaven on earth.

Some theologians are of the opinion that the term ‘Church’ is beyond definition, and that at most, it can only be described (Verheul, 1972). This is because no single image or definition can fully express or contain the reality implied by the term ‘Church.’ The Holy Scripture approaches the reality through a variety of images. The Church is described as the kingdom of God, the people of God, the bride of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the body of Christ, and so on. The image of the Church as the bride of Christ is most common, “...for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” - 2 Corinthians 11:2; “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her” - Ephesians 5:25. The image of the Church as the body of Christ is also common

from the liturgical point of view. *“Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it - 1 Corinthians 12:27; “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one of another” - Romans 12:4,5.*

The Church is a community of those who, from the dispersion of all races and classes, religions and people, are called together through Christ to be a unity in Godhead (Verheul, 1972). *“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him” - Romans 10:12.*

The Church of Antioch (Syrian Orthodox Church) was established in A.D. 37 by St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, who was its Bishop until A.D. 67. The pre-eminent position of the Church can be gauged from the fact that the disciples were sent forth to preach the word of our Lord from Antioch. *“From there they sailed to Antioch, from where they had been commended to the Grace of God for the work that they had accomplished” - Acts 14:26.* Moreover, it was at Antioch that the Disciples of Christ were first called Christians. *“... And it came about that for an entire year they met with the Church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” - Acts 11:26.* The forms of worship, the

liturgy, the Syriac language, the vestments of priests and prelates, and their names proclaim the Antiochean origin of the Church.

Antioch remained the seat of the patriarchate until c. A. D. 518. The turbulent history of the Church forced transfer of the patriarchate to several Mesopotomian cities. In the thirteenth century A. D., the patriarchate was at Deir Al-Za'fran monastery in Mardin, Turkey (Zakka I, 1983). In 1953, the patriarchate was transferred to Damascus, Syria.

Our Lord and His disciples spoke in Syriac (Edessene dialect of Aramaic) which was also the vernacular of Antioch. The Church uses Syriac as its liturgical language. Syriac was the only liturgical language used for the first six hundred years in the history of the Church. Until A. D. 451, there was just a single Church and the liturgy written in Syriac by St. James, brother of Christ, first bishop of Jerusalem, was in popular use. This liturgy continues to be used in the Syrian Orthodox Church to this day.

The Syrian Orthodox Church has produced many saints and writers whose holiness and learning have made the Patriarchate of Antioch illustrious. The fathers of the Church made valuable contributions to the study of the Holy Bible and liturgy.

The Syrian Orthodox Church has been a member of the World Council of Churches since 1960 (Yacoub, 1985). The Church takes part in ecumenical and theological dialogues with other

churches. As a result of these dialogues, the Church has made two joint declarations with the Roman Catholic Church, one in 1971 and another in 1984 (Paul, 1985).

Chapter 2

Church Building

In the days of the Old Testament, the earthly sanctuaries for divine worship were the tabernacles. *“Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat”* - Hebrews 9:1-5. In the early days of the New Testament, the Christian Church met in homes of the faithful (Acts 2:46).

The church building is always constructed facing the East, with the sanctuary at the eastern end. The Gospel of St. Matthew teaches that the second coming of our Lord shall be from the East. *“For just as the lightning comes from the East and flashes even to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be”* - Matthew 24:27. Hence the Church, awaiting the second coming of the Lord, worships Him facing the East (Genesis 2:8;

Isaiah 41:2; Ezekiel 10:19, 43:1-4, 46: 12).

The church building has five parts:

Narthex (*Mondalam* - Mal.)

Nave (*Haik'lo* - Syr.)

Kesthrumo (Gr.)

Sanctuary (*Madhb'ho* - Syr.)

Baptistery (*Beth-mamodiso* - Syr.)

Narthex - This is the western-most portion of the church, which in the early days was used by the catechumens during the Anaphora of the faithful, following the recital of the Nicene Creed. The narthex is now primarily intended to shelter the faithful from inclement weather. Women, after conception, undergo purification rites in the narthex.

The narthex is at a lower elevation than the rest of the church. At times, it is no more than a wide porch stretching across the whole width of the church.

Nave - This is the largest portion of the church where the faithful gather for worship. Men congregate on the north side and women on the south side. In the early church, women stood behind men (Salaville, 1938). Even today, in some Syrian Orthodox churches in Turabdin (South-east Turkey), women stand behind men.

The nave symbolizes the area where the sons of Israel congregated when Moses went up Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34). The nave is demarcated for the faithful.

Kesthrumo - This Greek term (also referred to as *Catastroma* in many texts) literally means 'not risen from earth.' This is the space between the nave and the sanctuary. It is often separated from the nave by a railing and a step and from the sanctuary by a screen and two or more steps. It is the place assigned to the cantors (Codrington, 1952). The prayer table and the baptismal font (in the absence of a baptistery) are normally in this area.

Sanctuary - The Syriac term *madhb'ho* literally means the holy place. It is built at the eastern end of the church since it symbolizes the paradise which is traditionally believed to be in the East. *"Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the East. And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East ... And the glory of the Lord came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east"* - Ezekiel 43:1,2,4. Heavenly paradise is marked by the Tree of Life and the holy beings. The Holy Cross and the priests in the sanctuary, which is the paradise on earth, symbolize the Tree of Life and the holy beings. As the holy place is considered to be glowing in fire, the priest wears ceremonial shoes while celebrating the Holy *Qurbano*. The altar (*thronos* - Syr.) is at the center of the sanctuary. It is symbolic of Christ's tomb (Mose Bar

Kepho; John Chrysostom). Also, the Holy Fathers of the Church consider it to symbolize Mount Golgotha (the site of Christ's sacrifice). The altar is the abode of the Holy Trinity. *Thronos* literally means the throne.

Baptistry - This is a room built to the south of the *kestrumo* and is used for conducting baptismal services. But in many churches the baptismal font is either situated in the nave or in the *kestrumo*. The baptismal font is normally made of granite and is often ornamentally carved.

The baptistry in the early centuries was erected near the church, and both were connected by a covered passageway. At the center of the baptistry sunken into the floor was a large basin or pool, often with steps leading down. The baptismal font came into widespread use when infant baptism became common and baptistry became part of the church building (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958).

Baptism gives new life to men and women and makes them brothers and sisters in Christ. Hence, the Holy Fathers consider the baptismal font to symbolize Holy Virgin Mary. The baptismal font is also considered to symbolize the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord. *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the*

glory of the Father, so too we might walk in newness of life”

- Romans 6:3,4.

The Holy Chrism (*moorone* - Syr.) and oil, which are used for baptismal services, are kept in a cupboard in the baptistery. Other requisites for baptismal services, like the veil (*shushafo* - Syr.), vessels to pour water into the font, and towels are stored in another cupboard.

Chapter 3

Sanctuary and Accoutrements

As early as the end of the fourth century A. D. and the beginning of the fifth, biblical history was represented in the church by the use of paintings on the walls of the churches. Events of the Old and New Testaments were depicted on the walls. A letter written by St. Nilus (A. D. 451), deserves special mention since it formulates the principle of religious instruction by means of church decoration (Salaville, 1938). However, sculptures or statues are forbidden in the church. This is the result of the long iconoclastic struggles that purged the heretic practice of using statues, which had crept into the Church over the ages. The Old Testament has strict injunctions prohibiting the use of idols. *'You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth'* -Exodus 20:4.

The furnishings, either necessary or permitted in the sanctuary, which have liturgical significance, are listed below.

Vilo (Syr.) - Curtain - Thirasheela (Mal.) - This is a curtain separating the sanctuary and the *kesthrumo*. The veil should be of supple material and should conceal the sanctuary completely.

Altar Canopy - The altar (*thronos* - Syr.) is the throne of the Holy Trinity, and the altar canopy is the most expressive symbol of its awe and majesty. Three forms of altar canopies are popular. These are:

- (a) *Ciborium* or *Ciborium magnum* (Gr.)
- (b) *Baldachin* (Syr.)
- (c) Tester

- (a) The *ciborium* or *ciborium magnum* (Gr.) is a solid structure of metal, stone, marble, or wood, erected over the altar, supported on four or more columns, with a roof which is either domed, spherical or flat.
- (b) The *baldachin* is a smaller and lighter structure in metal or wood or merely a light frame covered with silk. It is hung over the altar by chains attached to brackets fixed on the wall. The word *baldachinum* is derived from the Italian equivalent for Baghdad, where the textile material made of silk, wool and metal thread warp used for the canopies was first made.
- (c) The tester is a rectangular, square; round or conical shaped canopy made of rich fabric and stretched over a metal or wood frame, with a deep valence on the lower edge. It is suspended from the ceiling (Anson, 1948; Webb, 1949).

The use of the altar canopy became widespread in the 10th century A.D. It is normally found today only in old churches.

Durgo (Syr.) - Step - This is a 3' x 1.5' x 0.5' step in front of the altar. It is used by the priest during the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono*.

Sleebo (Syr.) - Holy Cross - The Easter Cross (Cross without the icon of Christ) is used in churches since the Church believe in the resurrected Christ. The Cross was not used in churches until 4th century A. D. In fact, in those days the Cross was considered a repugnant symbol.

Emperor Constantine Chlores was routed by his Prime Minister Meximinas in a war. The emperor avenged his defeat after marking all his weapons and flags with the symbol of the cross as directed by God through a dream (*A history of the Church*, 1846). On March 24th, A. D. 345, St. Helen (A. D. 248-328), the mother of Emperor Constantine, discovered the Cross Christ was crucified on at Jerusalem. With this the symbol of the cross came into widespread use in the Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A. D. 313-386) speaks of the true Cross and its adoration at Jerusalem and adds that portions of the Cross have been distributed as relics throughout the world (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958).

The Cross symbolizes our Lord's sacrifice on Mount Golgotha (John 3:14; Numbers 21: 4-10). All sacraments are, therefore, completed by the sign of the Holy Cross. The symbol of the cross is believed to appear in the sky on the day of the

second coming of our Lord. The Cross is the symbol of peace, victory and salvation. It is also described as the weapon in the struggle against Satan.

Phirmo (Syr.) - Censer - Until the 4th century A. D. the censer was not used in churches, though the Roman custom of using censers as a mark of respect to prominent people existed. Exodus 40:27 indicates the use of incense in the Old Testament tabernacle. The incense signifies purification and veneration. We beseech our Lord to accept our prayers and lents which rise to the heavens as incense (*Malankara yacobaya suriyani christianikalude prarthanakramam*, 1927).

There are two types of censers. One is a plain bowl without chains and is no longer in popular use. The other design has a cup as the base which is suspended by three chains. A lid (an inverted cup) can be lifted with another chain that goes down between the other three chains. The three chains to the base are connected to a hook. The chain connected to the lid passes through the base of the hook and ends in a ring large enough to slip a finger in to adjust the position of the lid.

The four chains have three bells each, symbolizing the twelve Apostles. The four chains together have a total of seventy-two links to represent the seventy-two emissaries of the Old Testament who prepared men to be worthy of the new covenant with God. The chains symbolize the Holy Trinity, two of them representing

Christ~the union of His divine and human natures. The lower cup symbolizes the earth, and the coal in it represents the sinners. The glowing coal symbolizes the purging of sin. The lid represents the heaven. Another interpretation, which is not popular, compares the censer with Virgin Mother and the fire to our Lord conceived in the womb of the Virgin (“For *our God is a consuming fire ...*” - Hebrews 12:29).

There are smaller censers without lids used by priests when conducting prayers at homes. Such censers are never used during the Holy *Qurbano*.

Incense pot - This is a small bowl in which frankincense is usually kept. With it is an ordinary spoon which is used to place frankincense in the censer.

Candles - God is the light of the world. Candles symbolize the presence of God. *“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life”* - John 8:12.

In the Old Testament times, lamps were used instead of candles. *“And you shall bring in the tabernacle and arrange what belongs on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps”* - Exodus 40:4. Today, in some places, oil lamps are used in the sanctuary only on Good Friday after the entombment rites.

There is no documentary evidence that lighted candles were placed on the altar before the tenth or eleventh century A. D. But lights were certainly placed around or near the altar, either suspended from the ceiling or fixed on brackets attached to the wall (Anson, 1948).

The candles remind us to turn away from the darkness of sin into light. “*The Lord is my light and my salvation ...*” -Psalm 27:1. They also symbolize the human souls who render sacrifices for their fellow beings until the end of their lives.

Roman history and customs, and the parable of ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) depict the tradition of using lamps on auspicious occasions. In the Syrian Orthodox Church, a high priest is usually received by the congregation with lighted candles. This symbolizes the reception of the bridegroom (Christ) by the bride (the Church).

On Christmas day (*Eldho* - Syr.), the palm leaves from the previous Palm Sunday are burned in a cruciform pit to symbolize the birth of the Divine Light (Lord Jesus Christ) on earth. “*The people who sat in darkness saw great light; and to them who sat in the shadow of death light is sprung up*” -Matthew 4:16.

The hymn, *Nuharok hosaenan nuharo Yesu milae rahamae ...* - Syr. (*Velivuniranjoreeso nin velival-kanunnu ...* -Mal.), (In Thy light we see the light Jesus full of light, who art the true light that enlighten every creature; enlighten us by Thy glorius

light, O effulgence of the heavenly Father), before the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono*, again emphasizes the fact that our Lord is the light of the world. The candles on the altar are lit while the congregation is singing this hymn. They are lighted starting from the north, due to the traditional prominence attached to the northern direction (Exodus 26: 35-36; 40: 22; Leviticus 1: 11; Matthew 25:34).

There are 12 candles on the altar to symbolize the 12 Apostles. In some churches, 13 candles are lighted, an extra one below the cross representing Christ. Bar Hebraeus points out that only one candle, symbolizing Christ, is lit before the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono*. The cross represents Christ, and an additional candle is not necessary. The practice varies with local traditions.

Candles made of animal fats are never used in the church. With the sacrifice of Christ, animal sacrifice was put to an end. Hence, no animal product (e.g., leather-bound books) is used in the sanctuary (*Jacobaya suriyani sabayile nadapadi chattangal*, n.d.).

Marvahtso (Syr.) - Fan - This is a metal fan mounted on a long pole, which the deacon waves on certain occasions during the Holy *Qurbono*. They are used along with the hand bells. They are often carried by deacons or cantors as ornaments in processions on either side of the Book of Gospel. The custom

became prevalent in the 4th century A. D. The fans symbolize the presence of angels around the altar. The image (face and wings) of a Seraph (an order of fiery six-winged angels) proclaiming, 'Holy, Holy, Holy', is carved on the *marvahtso* ("... *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts*" - Isaiah 6:3). Small bells are attached all around the edge of the *marvahtso*. The fans are always used in pairs.

Bells - Two types of bells, big bells and small bells (hand bells), are used in the churches. Big bells are rung in churches before the morning prayers begin and again before the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono*. Bells are rung four times before the *Qurbono* if a prelate is present. Bells are also rung during the procession of the cross and during funeral rites for the faithful. Many of the practices associated with ringing of bells vary with local traditions.

The significance of ringing bells has been explained by Mar Jacob as a call to the faithful: "*O wise one, when you hear the church bells ring, rejoice and rush to the holy dwelling of God.*" Bells serve as a warning and a reminder to the faithful to rush to God's dwelling. The clamor of the big church bells awakens the faithful to divine worship, the war against Satan, in much the same way soldiers are summoned to readiness to wage a war. On hearing the ringing of the church bell, the faithful pray: "*God, allow me to praise thee for Your great sacrifice that offered me salvation*" (*Malankara yacobaya suriyani christianikalude*

prarthana kramam, 1927) or “*Halleluia, halleluia, halleluia, All praise to thee, O God*”, or “*Open Thou my lips, O Lord, that I might praise Thee*” (Samuel, 1967).

Bells ring out the call to offer redemption of sins and eternal life to the faithful, who through repentance and faith, have overcome the world and the devil (Bar Kephō). Genesis 6:13-17 describes how Noah prepared people for the great deluge. It is said that he clapped wood, while building the ark, to call people to work and to warn people of the impending disaster.

Small bells (hand bells) are rung during the Holy *Qurbono* to call the attention of the faithful to the most significant rites, much the same way as the fans (*marvahtso*) do. However, ringing of big bells is forbidden during the Holy *Qurbono*.

Gogultho (Syr.) - Lectern - This is the pulpit which symbolizes the heights of Mt. Sinai from where God spoke to Moses and handed him the stone tablets (Exodus 34:2). God speaks to men from the heights. Matthew 5:1 tells us that Christ went up a mountain to preach the gospel to the multitude. Therefore the Book of Gospel, which points to Christ Himself, is placed on the lectern (Samuel, 1967).

Kursyodh Husoyo (Syr.) - Prayer table - This is a prayer table placed in the center of the *kesthnimo*. The book of *Proemion* and *Sedhro* is placed on the table. Prayers seeking mercy and forgiveness (*husoyo* - Syr.) are said at this table.

Chapter 4

The Altar and Sacramentalia

***Thronos* (Syr.)** - Altar - The Syriac word '*thronos*' literally means throne. The altar is the throne of the Holy Trinity. It is located at the center of the sanctuary.

The primordial altar in Christian churches was, in general, a plain table made of wood, similar to that used at the Last Supper (Salaville, 1938). These altars were practically cubes, 3.5 to 4 feet long. Many altars in the medieval age extended up to 16 feet 4 inches (Webb, 1949). A special vault in the altar is used for the entombment rites on Good Friday.

From the very early days, besides the cross and the candles, the altar had on it only the *tabalitho*, sacred vessels and the book of liturgy (*thakso* - Syr.). These alone are considered worthy to be placed on the altar. This practice is faithfully followed to this day.

The altars in modern churches have ledges. The cross and the candles are placed on the ledges.

Traditionally only one sacrifice is offered on an altar on any particular day. A partial relaxation to this rule has been allowed during the last decade.

Altar Cloth - Altar cloth consists of *Chithol* (Mal.) and frontal. The *chithol*, the front apron, is made of colored cloth divided into three sections to symbolize the Holy Trinity. The primordial altar was draped with a white cloth of fine silk or linen. This was fringed and covered the table completely. The frontal is a white cloth which covers the top of the table, but its fringes fall to the front over the *chithol*.

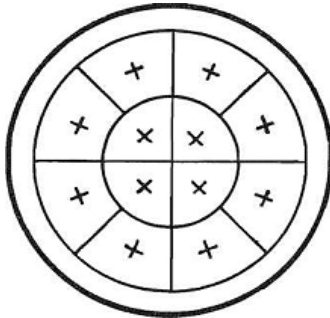
Tabaliho (Syr.) - Altar Stone - This is a rectangular piece of wood or marble usually covered with cloth. *Tabalitho* symbolizes the cross on which our Lord was crucified. The paten and chalice are set on the *tabalitho*.

The *tabalitho* is consecrated with Holy Chrism (*Moorone* - Syr.). The consecration is done by a bishop during the consecration of a church. Each *tabalitho* has inscribed on it the following: "The Holy Ghost has hallowed this *tabalitho* by the hands of Mor N," and across it "year N" (King, 1947).

Bar Hebraeus suggests that in case of necessity, a leaf of the book of the Gospels may be used in place of the *tabalitho*. He also suggests that if there is no facility to place the *tabalitho*, it can be held in a cloth tied around the neck of the celebrant, and the paten and chalice can then be placed on it. This has occurred in the past, when clergymen, often fleeing from persecutors, had to celebrate Holy *Qurbano* during the course of their long and arduous journeys through jungles.

Eucharist - The Eucharist consists of bread and wine. Bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. Wine used by the Church is always mixed with water. This practice has a scriptural basis. “*But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water*” -John 19:34. The hymn before the Mass of the catechumens -*Thoockappettu marathil vilavu thurannachavalam, Rektham vellamodozhukum masihaye...* (Mal.) - refers to the blood and water flowing from the body of crucified Christ.

Lahmo - (Syr.) - The Eucharistic bread - It is round and approximately 3 inches in diameter. The whole surface of the bread is divided into four equal segments by two cross lines. The central part is demarcated by a circle. Each of the four segments in the outer ring is further divided into two parts by a radial line. The twelve segments thus formed are each marked with a cross as shown below. This pattern is imprinted on the bread flour mix by a seal.



Eucharistic Bread

The bread mix is made of flour, pure water, leaven and salt. Olive oil is used on the seal for imprinting the pattern. The flour symbolically represents the earth, leaven represents the air, and salt represents the fire. Thus all elements of creation are symbolically represented by the basic elements in the sacrifice. The olive oil is a symbolic reminder that our Lord was anointed for the life-giving sacrifice. The leaven used for preparing the bread is a portion of the leaven used in a previous preparation and can be traced to the leaven which was used by the disciples of our Lord to make the bread at the Last Supper (Dionysius Bar Saleebi, 1990, has explained in detail the reason for the use of leavened bread, cf. pp. 39-40).

Caso (Syr.) - Chalice - The chalice, which holds the Eucharistic wine, is the most important of all sacramental vessels. The type of cup used at the Last Supper is unknown. The earliest chalices were tumbler-shaped and were made of glass. Some of the primitive chalices were large and had two handles (Anson, 1948). In the fourth century A.D., chalices made of precious metals and studded with diamonds were popular. In the middle Ages, chalices made of wood were in use. Today chalices are wineglass-shaped and are made of gold, silver or other gold-plated metal. Chalices are, at the most, 28 centimeters high (Anson, 1948).

Peelaso (Syr.) - Paten - This is a small plate of 7" in diameter and 1" deep. It is made of the same metal as the chalice. Eucharistic bread is placed in the paten.

Kaukbo (Syr.) - Star - This is a star-shaped frame made of two hoops of metal fastened together at the center. It is placed over the paten to hold the paten's cover (*Cabalana* - Syr.) without touching the bread. It symbolizes the Star of Nativity—the star which stood above the manger where Christ was born (Matthew 2:10-11).

Tharvodo (Syr.) - Spoon - This is a small spoon of precious metal (the same metal as that of the chalice). It is used to administer the Holy Eucharist from the chalice. It symbolizes the tongs with which the Seraph placed live coal on Isaiah's lips in his vision. "*One of the seraphim flew to me and in his hand was a live coal which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth ...*" - Isaiah 6:6,7.

Esphugo (Syr.) - Sponge - This is a small piece of sponge of fine texture used to cleanse the sacramental vessels. It symbolizes the sponge the soldiers used to feed Christ with sour wine during His passion on the cross. "*... and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink*" - Matthew 27:48.

A sponge does not exclude the use of a purificator, which the priests need for wiping the lips and fingers and also for cleaning the outer edges of the chalice after the priests have received the sacred Blood.

***Mshamshanitho* (Syr.)** - Finger bowl - This is used by the priest to mix wine with water and also for cleaning his fingers while handling the Holy Body and Blood.

***Gomourto* (Syr.)** - Cushion - This is a cushion of size 3" x 1.5". It symbolizes the throne of God.

***Thalbestho* (Syr.)** - *Virikoottam* (Mal.) - This is a rectangular piece of cloth which covers the *tabalitho*. It is made of red, green, and white pieces of cloth. The red, green and white portions are 30" x 24", 24" x 18", and 18" x 12" respectively. The outer border is red symbolizing the universe created by God. The inner border is green symbolizing the earth, man's abode. The center piece is white symbolizing the Holy Church. The chalice and paten are placed on the center piece. The *virikoottam* is either plain or decorated with embroidery work of vine and wheat stalks.

***Shushafo* (Syr.)** - Veil - This is the veil used to cover the Eucharist. The veil symbolizes the stone rolled over the sepulchre of Christ. It also represents the rock of flint which sent forth twelve streams of water for the twelve tribes of Israel. It represents the fact that the Divine Mysteries are hidden from the understanding of men and that the divinity and humanity united in Christ, the Divine Word, is beyond human comprehension just the same way as the transformation of bread and wine to the flesh and blood of Christ is beyond our perception (Samuel, 1967).

Cabalana (Syr.) - Covers of Chalice and Paten - This includes the cloth covers for both paten and chalice. These are 8" squares made of red cloth or the same cloth as that of the *Phaino* (Syr.) - chasuble. The chalice cover symbolizes the shroud which wrapped our Lord's body; the paten cover represents the veil which covered His face.

Pyx - This is a small cylindrical box about 1.5 to 2 inches in diameter and less than 1 inch deep. It is usually made of silver and has a hinged lid with a spring latch. The priest carries the Eucharist in the pyx when it is to be given to sick people in their homes. The priest usually carries the pyx in a small silk bag.

Chapter 5

Vestments

Until around the third century A.D. the ministers of the Church did not wear any distinctive liturgical or symbolical costumes when performing the duties demanded by their office. Bishop John Chrysostom (c. A.D. 347-407), Mor Rabbula of Edessa (c. A. D. 411-435), and Mor Ephrem (c. A. D. 303-373) have expounded on the significance of vestments used by the priests.

The vestments worn by the clergy vary with their hierarchical order in the priesthood. The deacons, the priests, the bishops, and the patriarch have distinct liturgical vestments.

***Pheero* (Syr.)** - Zucchetto (skull cap) - This is a small black cap with seven sections which indicates the full priesthood of the celebrant. Even the high priests wear it under the *koobatho*.

***M'sone* (Syr.)** - Shoes - The priest wears ceremonial shoes while celebrating the Holy *Qurbono* because the sanctuary is considered to be glowing in fire. Since no animal product is permitted in the sanctuary, the shoes are never made of leather. As the priest puts the shoe on the left foot, he says: "*May my feet, O Lord God, be shod with the preparation of the Vestments Gospel of peace, so that I may tread underfoot serpents and scorpions and all*

the power of the enemy, for ever.” While putting the shoe on the right foot, he says: “Cast down under my foot, Lord God, all false pride that is exalted against Thy knowledge, and grant that by Thy help may bring the lusts of the flesh into subjection, for ever.”

Kutino (Syr.) - Alb - The white surplice (*Chiton* Gr.) used by priests of all ranks points to the spiritual purity which should adorn their souls, especially when they are mystically sacrificing the spotless Lamb. It resembles the white robes used by the Romans in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A. D. Alb was also worn by men of classic Greece during the first six centuries before Christ. Hegsippus records that St. James, brother of our Lord, was clothed in a linen tunic (Roulin, 1950). The priest wears the *kutino* signing the cross over it three times and saying the prayer: *“Clothe me, O Lord, with the robe of incorruption through the strength of Thy Holy Spirit, and make me worthy to keep the true faith and walk in the paths of purity and righteousness all the days of my life.”*

Hammikho (Syr.) - Stole - This is a 7" wide piece of decorated cloth worn by priests of all ranks over the surplice and hanging down in the front from the neck to the ankle. It is symbolic of the breastplate in the war against the world, the body, and Satan (*“Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having*

shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one” - Ephesians 6:14-16.)

Hamnikho is a modified form of *uraroh* (Syr.) in that the two ends are joined together. The *hamnikho* is of the same color and material as that of the chasuble and other vestments (also see, Exodus 28:31-32; Leviticus 8: 7).

Uraroh (Syr.), a vestment which distinguishes different orders of priesthood, symbolizes the wings of the Seraphim. The normal size of *uraroh* is 9 feet in length and 2.5 to 3.5 inches in width, which widens to about 5 inches at the ends. The deacon of the fourth order, *korooyo* (Syr.), who is authorized to read the books of the Bible, wears *uraroh* in an X shape, across the chest. The deacon of the fifth order, *youphidakino* (Syr.), the orator, wears *uraroh* over the chest from the left shoulder down to the right. The deacon of the sixth order, *shamshono* (Syr.), the full deacon, wears *uraroh* over his left shoulder down on both sides. A full deacon is authorized to conduct a few of the sacraments, in part, in the absence of an ordained priest. The deacon of the seventh order, the priest, *kasheeso* (Syr.), who is authorized to conduct the Holy *Qurbono* and sacraments wears the *uraroh* around the neck.

The priest wears the *hamnikho* signing the cross twice over it and saying: “*Gird me with strength unto the battle and subdue under me them that rise up against me, defeat my enemies and silence those who hate me*” (Psalm 18:39, 40).

According to Germanos (cited in Salaville, 1938), *hamnikho* symbolizes the rope put around the neck of Jesus Christ by the Roman soldiers. Whenever the priest officiates a public prayer as God’s minister, he is required to wear it. If an occasion arises when a priest is unable to find one, he ought, says Simeon of Thessalonica, to take a piece of material of any sort, a girdle or even a rope, bless it with the sign of the cross, and place it around his neck to represent a *hamnikho*.

Zunoro (Syr.) - Girdle - This is the girdle worn by priests around the waist over the stole and alb. The use of the girdle dates back to very early times (Exodus 28: 4; Leviticus 8: 7). The girdle shows the readiness to celebrate the Mass. It also speaks of control over all bodily desires. The first authoritative reference to the girdle as a liturgical vestment dates to the sixth century AD. The priest girds himself, signing the cross over it once saying: “*Gird Thy sword upon my thigh, O thou most mighty with Thy splendor and glory. Thy glory triumphs*” (Psalm 45:3).

Zendo (Syr.) - Sleeves - These are the sleeves (maniples) worn over the forearms. They speak of a priest’s readiness to keep God’s law and do works of righteousness. The priest prays over

the two *zende*: “*O Lord, make my members instruments of righteousness, meet for all good and right works, make us pure temples and chosen vessels fit for the service of Thy Glory, Our Lord and God forever*” He puts on the left *zendo*, signing the cross twice over it and saying: “*He trains my hands to war; and he strengthens my arms like a bow of brass*” (Psalm 18:34). He puts on the right *zendo*, signing the cross once over it, saying: “*Let Thy right hand help me up, and let Thy Loving discipline raise me*” (Psalm 18:35).

Phaino (Syr.) - Chasuble - This is a sleeveless outer vestment worn by the priest while celebrating the Holy Mass. It symbolizes Aaron's robes of many colors and the Savior's seamless robe. The chasuble is semi-circular in shape and is never in black except for those used during the Passion week and for funeral services. In the early centuries, chasubles used by patriarchs had a large number of crosses on them and for this reason were referred to as 'polystaurion' (Salaville, 1938). Later, such chasubles were used by bishops. Today there are no such distinctions in the design or quality of cloth used. Before wearing the chasuble, the celebrant signs the cross thrice over it saying: “*Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness and Thy righteous with glory. For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of Thine anointed*” (Psalm 132:9,10).

Vestments used by Prelates

Koobatho (Syr.) - This is part of the regular vestment of prelates and is a modified form of the headgear worn by the triglodyte hermits of the early Church. It has thirteen embroidered crosses to symbolize Christ and his disciples. While celebrating the Holy *Qurbano*, *pheero* (skull cap) is worn under it.

Masanaftso (Syr.) - *Sheelamudi*, *Shirovastram* (Mal.) - This is the mitre, head cover worn by bishops which reminds us of the cloth with which the Lord's head was bound for His burial (John 20:6-7). St. Peter took it from the empty tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ and wore it on his head while consecrating priests. Prelates use the mitre while administering the sacraments.

The ancient Jewish high priest wore a headdress, which was a linen turban and attached to it was a gold plate with the inscription "Holy to the Lord" (*"And these are the garments which they shall make: a breast piece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me"* - Exodus 28:4).

The prelate wears the mitre saying: *"Who can show me He who is good? May the light of Thy countenance shine upon us, O Lord, Thou hast given gladness to my heart"* (Psalm 4:6).

Uraroh Raboh - Batrasheel (Syr.) - This is the analogue of the Latin pallium (*omophorion*) worn by 5th century Roman emperors and consuls. It symbolizes the ephod described in Exodus 28:6-14. It was probably granted by the first Christian emperors to bishops as a sign of their rank. According to St. Isidore (5th century A.D.), the *omophorion* is made of wool and not of linen. It represents the lost sheep that our Savior went to seek and brought back on His shoulders (Matthew: 18:12,13).

The *uraroh raboh* indicates the jurisdictionary powers of the bishop. In earlier days, it was a white cloth with a black cross. Now it is usually made of the same cloth as the chasuble. The bishop wears it around his neck, and its ends hang down both in front and back.

The prelate wears the *batrasheel* making the sign of the cross once and saying: “*In the days of trouble, He protects me in the shadow of His tabernacle. He exalts me upon a rock; and now he shall lift up my head above mine enemies*” (Psalm 27:5).

Sakro (Syr.) - Shield - This is a square piece of cloth 9"x9", with the face and wings of an angel embroidered on it. This is worn only by the patriarch and is attached to the girdle on the right side with a hook. This shield shows his position and authority. It also symbolizes the shield of faith for he is the protector of faith (“... *above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be*

able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” - Ephesians 6:16).

Pectoral Cross - This is worn with the cross pinned up with the chain drooping on either side to portray the symbol of a dove (Mar Rahboole). The prelate wears the cross around his neck saying: *“Turn your eyes to Him and hope in Him and you shall not be disappointed”* (Psalm 34:5).

Icons - An archbishop wears an icon of St. Mary with Infant Christ. The patriarch wears two icons one on either side of the pectoral cross. One icon is of St. Mary with Infant Christ and the other is of Christ.

Hand-Cross - The hand-cross reminds us of Moses’ hand which when upright brought victory to Israel. *“So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed”* - Exodus 17:11. The hand-cross has a kerchief (*shushofo*) attached to it. When the prelate takes the hand-cross he says: *“For Thy cause we shall combat our enemies and for the cause of Thy name we shall trample those who hate us”* (Psalm 44:5). Salaville (1938) refers to an alternate prayer which alludes to its symbolism - *“If anyone will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”* (Matthew 10:38).

Mooroneeso (Syr.) - Crozier - The natural symbolism of the crozier (bishop’s staff), the analogue of the shepherd’s staff, is that of

pastoral authority. The crozier or pastoral staff ends in two branches which curve around and are ornamented with serpents' heads with a ball between them surmounted with a cross, or of a single serpent curved like the head of a Roman crozier. Serpents invite the symbolic interpretation that they typify the prudence requisite in the holders of the pastoral office. "*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*" - Matthew 10:16.

The origin of the practice of using a staff dates to the time when hermits used it to lean over during long prayers. According to Bernardakis (cited in Salaville, 1938), the crozier originally was only a wooden staff ending in a T-shaped cross. Later the wood gave way to ivory/ebony, and the upper part was fashioned of ivory or wrought metal.

The crozier represents Moses' staff which turned into a serpent when he threw it on the ground, and when grasped by the tail, turned back into a staff in his hand (Exodus 4:1-5). It also represents the staff which separated the sea (Exodus 14:16) and also Aaron's staff which turned into a serpent (Exodus 7:9). When the prelate takes the crozier from the archdeacon he says: "*The Lord will send forth the scepter of Thy power out of Zion: thou shalt rule in the midst of thine enemies*" (Psalm 110:2).

Huthro (Syr.) - Khazaranion - Outside the church, bishops carry a *khazranion* (a word of Turkish origin), a straight stick or cane

made of ebony with a silver or ivory head. It serves as a means of support, in addition to being a sign of rank. It also symbolizes the shepherd's staff, the prelate being the shepherd of the faithful. It is even used in the church by bishops for ceremonies in which they are not officiating (Salaville, 1938).

Chapter 6

Liturgy - Symbolism & Evolution

Celebration of the Eucharist is a sacramental actualization of the paschal mystery of redemption through Christ, in order that ultimately in and through Christ, we might go to the Father and render Him praise, homage, and thanks-the worship that is due unto Him (Verheul, 1972). Verheul defines liturgy as a personal meeting of God, under the veil of holy signs, with His Church and with the total person of each one of her members, in and through Christ and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The above definition elicits three main aspects of the liturgy:

- a. The liturgy is a personal meeting with God.
- b. This meeting takes place through Christ, the mediator.
- c. This takes place with the living community of the church.

In the Old Testament times, only the High Priest was allowed once a year and for only a few moments, to enter into the Holy of Holies, (*“And behind the second veil, there was a Holy of Holies”* - Hebrews 9:3. *“... the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, ... The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle*

is still standing” - Hebrews 9:7,8). Thus as St. Paul says, the Holy Spirit shows that the way to the sanctuary is not open as long as the first veil (the tangible sign of first covenant) remains. When Christ died on the cross, the Evangelist tells us that the veil, which screened the Holy of Holies, split from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). The new covenant is pre-eminently a covenant of love and mercy, where the infinite distance between man and God is bridged by Christ (“*But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ*” - Ephesians 2:13). In Christ, the distant God becomes the graciously-near God. Therefore, Christ the High Priest is the great ‘bridge-maker’ who bridges the infinite distance between God and man. Jesus Christ comes to meet us, from the Father, in order to lead us back to the Father.

Theodore of Andeda describes liturgy not only as the figure of passion, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but also as the episode of Christ’s coming and His sacrifice for our salvation. The commemoration includes all the divine stages of salvation beginning with His conception and birth, the ministry of His forerunner, His showing forth in His baptism, the calling of the Apostles, the three years of His ministry and miracles, His sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection, ascension, and ending with the prayers of thanksgiving.

Highlights of Liturgy

Liturgy is a symbolic 'interpretative scheme/ and the liturgical gestures are faith in action (Schmidt, 1971). Material symbols make it easier for us to affirm our faith since they can be seen and felt. Faith is an inner state of the soul (Hebrew 11:1), which manifests itself through liturgical gestures. The person of Christ and His redeeming action remain perceptible to our senses through the symbolism in liturgy. Material things, such as bread and wine, and perceptible gestures are central to all liturgical celebrations.

Wealth of theological teachings: As observed by Mor Baselius of Caesarea (c. A.D. 330-379), the Church depends not only on the Holy Bible, but also on its doctrines, traditions and teachings. Liturgy is the source of authoritative teachings of the Church. All important themes - - the Holy Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, the Holy Mother of God and the mysteries associated with her, the primacy of St. Peter and his successors, the Holy synods of the Church, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the prayers for the departed, and the intercession of Holy Saints are included in the liturgy.

Devotional Spirit: Through the liturgy, we pronounce our devotion to the Living God and to the most holy and adorable Trinity - - the Holy Father (*abo* - Syr.), the Son (*bro* - Syr.), and the Holy Ghost (*rooho-kadisso* Syr.). The prayers of adoration,

praise, thanksgiving, love and petition are addressed to the Holy Trinity. There is devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of men. There is devotion to the Holy Angels, whose spirituality is ceaselessly proclaimed. Devotion to the saints includes veneration to the Old Testament Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and Patriarchs.

Doctrinal Confession of Faith: The basic theme of the liturgy is the doctrine and belief that the Word Incarnate (John 1:1) became our redeemer. The love of Jesus Christ, His passion on the Cross, and resurrection are alive in the celebration.

Basis in the Holy Scriptures: The Holy Scriptures always had a place of first importance in all the liturgies. The comparison of the Old Testament offerings with the Holy *Qurbano* throws light into the deeper meanings of the symbolism involved.

Poetic Beauty: St. Ephrem, the Syrian (c. A. D. 306-373) of Nisibis; St. James of Sarug (c. A. D. 451-521) , bishop of Batnae acclaimed as the ‘flute of the Holy Spirit;’ and Mor Philoxenus (c. A. D. 450-523), bishop of Mabug; were the gifted and renowned poets of the Syrian Church. The official teachings of the Church are transcribed in their poetry. The tonic accent and rhythm of their poetry, appropriate to each occasion, are unique in themselves.

Variety and Symbolism: Maintaining the continuous attention of the congregation during the liturgical rites is a significant

problem. Monotony is avoided by various means. The active participation of the deacons and the faithful with the priest serves to avoid monotony. The screen, though primarily used to symbolize very important occasions, adds to the variety. The variety of tonic accent and rhythm employed to suit various occasions appeal to the faithful.

Evolution

From the very beginning of Christianity, the essence of the liturgy or Eucharistic service has been the reenactment of what our Lord did in the upper room ‘on the day before He suffered’ and this has always been the basis of the Mass of the faithful (Matthew 26:26-28, Acts 2:42).

The taking of bread and wine mixed with water, the giving of thanks, the blessing of the elements and breaking of the bread after repeating the words of institution, and finally partaking in the Holy Communion have found a place in liturgy from the days of the Apostles, who in obedience to their master did these things ‘in remembrance of Him’ (King, 1947).

In the Acts of the Apostles, we find the beginnings of the Mass of the catechumens, lessons from the Old Testament, singing of psalms and preaching. Israelites fleeing from Egypt to Caanan offered sacrifices in the tabernacle, officiated by Levites. The sacrifices were offered late after midnight, and Israelites walked

together to the tabernacle singing the Psalms, in particular Psalm 51. The liturgical rites of the Church in the early centuries began at 1:30 a.m. with preparatory readings from the Psalms and the Gospels.

The midnight prayers marked the beginning of the services in the early Church. The practice of conducting midnight prayers and morning prayers before the public celebration of Holy *Qurbano* was observed with rigor for a long time, but today these prayers have been considerably condensed.

Following these prayers, lections from the books of the prophets were read as a reminder of the Old Testament era. This reminds us of the period when ‘God spoke to the fathers through prophets ...,’ with the veil concealing the sanctuary (*madhb’ho* - Syr.). Jesus Christ was then yet to be revealed. The faithful of those ages looked for the coming of the Messiah, which was foretold by the prophets (“*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers through the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world*” - Hebrews 1:1,2).

Through the prophecies of Isaiah, they knew that Messiah would be borne by a virgin and would be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Mor Simeon is believed to be the scribe who recorded Isaiah’s prophecies. While writing this verse, Simeon was confused

by the prophecy that a virgin would conceive and proceeded to correct the text. He was concerned that this would lead to controversies and misunderstandings, and he changed the word 'virgin' to 'woman.' However, a day later, he found the text restored to 'virgin.' As he set out to correct the text a second time, the Holy Ghost, through a vision, revealed to him that since he refused to believe the prophecy, he would live to see the child himself. St. Luke describes that moment Simeon lived to see. Simeon exclaims, "*Now Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace*" - Luke 2:29.

The faithful of the Old Testament era longed for the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies. Christ came to fulfill the prophecies, not to abolish the Law or the prophets (Matthew 5:17). God reconciled us to Himself, through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). The New Testament Church has Christ as its High Priest.

The sons of Israel worshipped God in tents during their exodus to Caanan. Today's children of the Church on their way to the heavenly Caanan worship God in churches.

PART - II

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Chapter 7

Preparatory Prayers

Thuyobo (Syr.) - Preparation - This is the set of preparatory prayers preceding the Holy *Qurbono*. During these preparatory prayers the sanctuary is concealed by the veil. *Thuyobo* consists of two sets of prayers: the order of Melchizedek followed by the order of Aaron.

Order of Melchizedek

Melchizedek is described as the king of Jerusalem and as the priest of the most high God (Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5: 6, 10; 6: 20; 7: 1-3). In the presence of God he stood as the priest of all men much before the institution of the Levite priestly order. He was a naturalistic priest in that priesthood did not come to him through a priestly lineage (Moolaveetil, 1976).

Throughout the Old Testament we find instances of sacrifices and offerings to God. Genesis 4:26 notes the beginning of worship in the Lord's name. Genesis 4:4, 12:7, 13:4, and 13:18 describe the offerings and altars erected in the name of the Lord. The hymn sung during the preparatory prayers sings of the sacrifices of Abel (Genesis 4:4), Noah (Genesis 8:20) and Abraham (Genesis 22) which propitiated God: *Habelin kunjhadum nohinude kazhchayathum Abraham than baliyum kaikkonda*

karthave ... (Mal.) (God Who received the lamb Abel brought, Who accepted the gift of Noah and Abraham's sacrifice ...).

The offerings and sacrifices offered by the fathers were for themselves. However, it was with Melchizedek that a priest mediated the worship of God by men. He offered sacrifices for Abraham and for all mankind. Through the order of Melchizedek we are reminded that the sacrifice of Christ our High Priest is for all mankind much the same way as Melchizedek offered sacrifice for all men (*'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'* - Psalms 110:4, Hebrews 5:6, 7:1-3, 11-17).

The order of Melchizedek has predominantly prayers of repentance and starts with Psalm 51. Prior to the preparations for the Holy *Qurbono* the officiating priest clad in a black cassock goes to the prelates (if they are present) and kisses each one's hand and says: "*Bless and redeem me.*" (referred to as *al-shubkono* - Syr.). If other priests are present he proceeds to each of his brother priests and holding their hands says: '*Bless me and redeem me.*' The priest then turns to the faithful with outstretched hands and says: "*My brothers, teachers, and beloved ones pray for me to make me worthy of offering this life giving sacrifice for the whole Church*" (referred to as *shubkono* - Syr.). The officiating priest then enters the sanctuary praying: "*I will go unto the altar of God, to God who makes me joyful with the joy of my youth*" - Psalm 43:4. He bows his head before the altar and says: "*Into thine house, O God, have*

I entered and before Thy sanctuary have I worshiped, O heavenly king forgive me all wherein I have sinned against thee.”

The priest then proceeds to walk around the altar in remembrance of the great sacrifice at Mount Golgotha. He kisses the horns of the altar starting from the right-hand side (South side) saying: *“O Lord, Our God, enlighten us; bind our festival processions as an unbroken chain, even to the horns of the altar. Thou art my God and I will give thanks to thee; Thou art my God, I will exalt thee”* - Psalm 118:27,28.

The priest steps on the *durgo*, kissing the altar thrice - - once in the middle in the name of the Father, on the left in the name of the Son, and on the right in the name of the Holy Spirit. The paten and the chalice are arranged by the priest on the *tabalitho* (the chalice is set at the eastern end for the blood and water poured out to the front from the body -St. John 19:34). He places the paten cover, the sponge, and the spoon on the southern side of the altar (celebrant's right-hand side). He places the chalice cover, the veil, the finger bowl, the star and the *gomurtho* on the northern side of the altar (celebrant's left-hand side). He then takes the best available host with both hands and says: *“Like a lamb that is led to slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers so He did not open His mouth”* - Isaiah 53:7; Acts 8:32.

Normally one host is used, but, if there are many people to receive the Holy Communion, more than one host may be used. Host should be prepared on the same day as suggested in the Hudaya Canon (also cf. Exodus 16:21). The number of host can be two or an odd number (Hudaya Canon, 1974, p. 31; Dionysius Bar Saleebi, 1990, p. 36). As the priest sets the paten, a candle is lit to symbolize the fact that the host is the Light of the world. The priest then mixes wine with equal amount of water (Hudaya Canon, 1974, p. 30) in the finger bowl and says: “*O Lord God, as Thy divinity was united with Thy humanity so unite this water with this wine.*” As he pours the same into the chalice, he says: “*O Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on cross between two thieves in Jerusalem, and was pierced in His side with the spear, and there flowed out from Him blood and water to wash away the sins of all creation. And he who saw it testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows well that what he said is true that you may also believe*” (John 19:35). The celebrant covers the paten and the chalice with *cabalana*. The priest then steps down from the *durgo* kissing in the middle of the *tabalitho* once.

The prayers in the order of Melchizedek have an introduction followed by the body of the prayer.

Proemion (Syr.) - Introduction - The *proemion* is an introductory prayer. The origin of these prayers are attributed to John III,

Patriarch of Antioch (A. D. 631-648), popularly known as John of Sedras. The words used in the *proemion* have their origins in the prayers of the Sabbath (Moolaveetil, 1976). These prayers start with the words: “*Let us pray and implore the Lord for grace and mercy. Gracious Lord have mercy upon us and help us. Make us worthy O Lord, to offer unto Thee continually at all times and in all seasons, praise and thanksgiving, glory and honor and never ceasing exaltation.*”

Sedro (Syr.) - Expiatory prayer - This is the prayer that follows the *proemion*. This prayer praises the Lord and asks for His abundant blessings.

Order of Aaron

The order of Aaron symbolizes the offerings of Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 1:5-9). The celebrant, after wearing the vestments (Exodus 28:2-43; Leviticus 8: 6-13) and kneeling before the altar, prays for purification of his organs. The celebrant then stands up, kisses the altar thrice and ascends the altar step. He takes the covers of the paten and chalice off and puts the cover of the paten on his right side, and that of the chalice on his left side and says Psalm 93:1-2. He then takes the paten in his right hand and the chalice in his left hand and stretches his right hand over the left and holds them over the *tabalitho* and says the general prayer once and other (special) prayers thrice. These prayers are for the whole Church, particularly for people who have specifically

given their names for the *Qurbono* or intercessory prayers to the Mother of God and for the faithful departed for whom prayers have been requested. The celebrant remembers the congregation in general (without mentioning specific names) and also his parents and teachers. Different prayers are offered depending on the purpose of the *Qurbono* which may be for praise and thanksgiving or intercession of saints or for the departed and so on. The prophets, Apostles, and the fathers of the Church are remembered in the prayers.

These prayers are reminders of the prayers of the Levite priests of the Old Testament who prayed for the twelve tribes of Israel whose names were inscribed on a stone which the priest secured to his girdle.

The priest covers the paten and the chalice with the veil (*shushafo*) which is symbolic of the nature of the Holy Mysteries - - the divine and nonmaterialistic nature. The left edge of the *shushafo* is folded to symbolize the seal on Christ's tomb. It suggests that, even in the Old Testament sacrifices, Immanuel was concealed but present.

The priest then descends from the *durgo* and places incense in the censer, praying to God to accept the sacrifice just as He accepted the incense Aaron offered in the tabernacle. The priest censens the Holy Mysteries holding the middle of the *shushafo* which symbolizes the Father, then folds back the left edge which

symbolizes the Son, and finally the right edge which symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

The order of Aaron is concluded by *huthomo* (Syr.) meaning ‘a prayer of conclusion,’ *qaumo* (Syr.) which is a set of prayers including the Trisagion and the Lord’s Prayer, and the Nicene Creed. While these prayers are said by the priest inaudibly in the concealed sanctuary, deacons read lessons from the Old Testament to the laity.

Chapter 8

Mass of the Catechumens

The first part of the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono* is referred to as the Mass of the catechumens. In the early Church, this was primarily intended for those who were being initiated into the faith but were not baptized members of the church.

The screen (*thirasheela* - Mal.) concealing the sanctuary is drawn aside to herald the birth of the New Testament age. The priest begins the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbono* praying: “*Mary who gave birth to thee and John who baptized thee shall pray for us bestow thine abundant mercies upon us and bless us.*”

The priest offering incense along with deacons holding candles move in a procession around the altar. The priest represents Christ, the High Priest. The deacon (thurifer) who leads the procession represents John the Baptist, and the other deacons represent the Apostles and disciples of Christ. The priest kisses the four corners of the altar. The incense symbolizes the purification of the Old Testament Temple through the crucifixion of Christ. A hymn referred to as *manisso* (Syr.), meaning ‘responsory,’ authored by St. Severius, Patriarch of Antioch (c. AD. 460-538), is sung by the congregation during the procession. The hymn asserts some fundamental tenets of the Church. It praises our Lord as Word Incarnate (John 1:1), the one who came to grant

salvation to humanity, the one who through His death saved us from death and the one who is glorified along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Following the procession, the priest initiates the Trisagion, and the congregation joins him. The Trisagion praises the Lord thrice - - a tradition that follows the vision of Isaiah. The angels praise the Lord thrice (*"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts"* - Isaiah 6:3). It is said that angels sang the Trisagion as Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Christ for entombment. Another tradition of the Church tells us that the Trisagion was the reply of the angels to the mocking crowd at the site of crucifixion heard by Nicodemus. As the crowd mocked Christ calling Him a betrayer, the angels proclaimed *"Holy art Thou O God."* As they taunted Him to come down from the Cross if He was powerful enough, the angels proclaimed *"Holy art Thou Almighty"* and as they mocked Him asking why He could not save Himself from death, the angels sang, *"Holy art Thou Immortal"* And Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathia on behalf of the believers cried out, *"Thou who was crucified for us have mercy on us."* The *proemion* of the evening prayer of Saturday of Good Tiding (Saturday following the Good Friday) affirms this tradition.

The first time the priest sings the Trisagion, he touches the *tabalitho*, the second time the paten and the *tabalitho*, and the third time chalice, paten and *tabalitho*. One interpretation for this practice is that God's praise sung by the angels rise in three steps.

After the Trisagion the priest and the congregation chant *kurielaison* (Gr.) thrice. *Kyrie-eleison* is a Greek word meaning 'Lord have mercy upon us.' It is said several times during the *Qurbano*. It is believed that this Greek word came into use in liturgy around the 6th century A.D. This term was used in those days by the sun worshipers in France. The concept of Christ as the eternal sun probably influenced the adoption of this word (Moolaveetil, 1976).

Lections for the day (from the calendar of readings) are then read first at the north due to the prominence attached to the northern direction and then at the south side of the sanctuary. While reading the lections, the deacons stand on the chancel step. Stepping down from the sanctuary symbolizes the fact that the Apostles were sent by heavenly authority, and the readings at the north and south sides symbolize the fact that they spread the Gospel in all corners of the world.

The hymn - *Sleehag bayo ...*(Syr.), *Bhoovilasesham daivathal praeri-tharaya sleehan-marpoi...* (Mal.) - is sung before the first lection. The hymn (based on Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8 and John 1:1,2) proclaims that the Apostles were sent by the Father. Heavenly fortunes lay in store for those who receive the Gospel spread by the Apostles. This hymn is the trumpet of the heavenly herald. The first lection is from one of the epistles of the Apostles written to the entire Church - *qatholiqi* (Syr.) or the Acts of the Apostles. At the beginning and at the end of the lection,

the congregation is addressed *Habibai* (Syr.) meaning ‘My beloved.’

The hymn, *Paulose shleeho thoobono ...*(Syr.), *Paulose sleeha dhanian cholkatte nithevam ...* (Mal.), is sung prior to the second lection. This hymn is based on St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians. “*But even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a Gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you let him be accursed. As we have said before so I say again now if any man is preaching to you a Gospel contrary to that which you received let him be accursed... For I would have you know brethren that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man nor was I taught it but received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*” - Galatians 1:8-9, 11-12. The hymn is an exhortation to believers to be steadfast in the Gospel they received. The second lection is from an epistle of St. Paul. The congregation is addressed *Ahai* (Syr.) meaning ‘My Brethren’ at the beginning and at the end of the lection.

Before the reading of the second lection, the priest says silent prayers: “*Accept, O Lord, our prayers and supplications which are before thee at this time and make us worthy that with purity and holiness we may keep Thy commandments and those of Thy divine Apostles and of Paul the architect and builder of Thy Holy Church, Our Lord and God for ever.*”

After the reading of the second lection, the congregation prepares to receive the Gospel by singing the hymn: *Halleluiah, halleluiah, dabahale debaheth shubaho ...* (Syr.), *Sthuthiyam balikaleyarpippin...* (Mal.). That our Lord Christ spoke to men two millenniums ago is historical fact. That He still speaks to us through the Gospel is the cornerstone of our Faith. The hymn sung along with the clamor of bells and *marvahtso* (fans) is symbolic of a herald ushering in the Lord Himself to the reading of the Gospel. The hymn is an exhortation to receive the Lord with undefiled offerings.

While the hymn is sung, the priest prays silently: “*Grant us, O Lord God, the knowledge of Thy divine words and fill us with the understanding of Thy Holy Gospel and the richness of Thy divine gifts and the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. Grant us that with joy we may keep Thy commandments and accomplish and fulfill Thy will and be accounted worthy of the blessings and the mercies which are from Thee now and at all times.*”

The thurifer offering incense urges the congregation to listen to the Gospel: “*With calm and modesty let us give heed and listen to the good tidings of the Living Words of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which is being read to us.*”

Only priests and prelates are permitted to read the Gospel except on St. Stephen’s feast when a deacon of the sixth order

(*shamshono*) is permitted to read it. The priest reading the Gospel is required to wear the *hamnikho* (stole), symbol of priesthood. However a bishop may read the Gospel without the '*hamnikho*' since the pectoral cross indicates his position. The Gospel is read with candles lit on either side symbolic of the glowing Word, our Lord who became the light of this world.

The priest greets the congregation saying: "*Peace be to you all*" (peace be with those who await the coming of the Lord) and blesses them making the sign of the cross. The congregation responds saying "*And with your spirit*" (the peace that resides in us be with you too). The benediction of peace uses the very same words with which our Lord greeted the congregation of Apostles after His resurrection (Luke 24:36; John 20:19). The good news of Christ's peace is being read here. ("*I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all people*" - Luke 2:10).

During the Passion Week, the remembrance of the suffering of our Lord, the greeting of peace is omitted. Instead the priest says: "*Praise the Lord, let His grace be upon us forever. Amen.*"

The priest begins the reading of the Gospel, *evangelion* (Syr.), with the preface: "*The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Life-giving preaching from Matthew (or from John) the Apostle, the preacher who preaches life and redemption*

to the world.” If the lection is from Mark or Luke, he says: “*From Mark (or Luke) the evangelist who published good tidings of life and redemption to the world.*” The congregation responds saying: “*Blessed is He who hath come and shall come. Praises to Him Who sent Him and on all of us be His Mercy forever,*” a profession of faith. The priest continues: “*Now in the time of the ‘Dispensation’ (to suit the festival on which the Holy Eucharist is celebrated - Birth, Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection, etc.) of our Lord and our God and our Redeemer Jesus Christ the Word of Life God Who had taken flesh of the Holy Virgin Mary these things thus came to pass.*” While saying these words the priest turns to the altar and makes the sign of the cross on himself. This act is an affirmation of the belief that the words to be read from the Gospel are the words of our Lord who is embodied in the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist set on the altar. He then faces the congregation, blesses them by making the sign of the cross and then kisses the Book of Gospel. The people respond: “*So we believe and confess.*” After the reading of the Gospel the priest blesses the congregation again saying: “*Peace be to you all.*”

After the reading of the Gospel, the congregation sings a hymn which is appropriate for the day (Sundays, feast days, etc.). There are more than twenty-five such hymns. The hymn that is commonly sung is, *Thoobayk hullab daethobe ...* (Syr.), *Yajamanan varumannera thunarvulloray-than ...* (Mal.). The

hymn is based on the parable of the faithful servants whom their master finds working diligently on his return (Luke 12:37). The hymn reminds us of Christ's promise, 'Fortunate are those whom the Lord finds working faithfully on His second coming in His vineyard - the Church. Lord the Father shall seat them for the feast - the gift of heavenly experience and the Son shall serve them, and they shall be crowned victors by the Holy Paraclete who plaits for them the crowns.'

The crown is an important symbol which denotes our togetherness with God in His kingdom. The hymn, *Ahoon smar shubaho labre dumore kul...* (Syr.), *Nriparum mohichoru makudam nee charthi ...* (Mal.) sung during the sacrament of Holy baptism and the crown that the baptized receive explain the richness of this meaning. The sacrament of baptism gives us the gift of the heavenly crown - the crown which the kings longed for. The baptized are urged to cling to this great treasure lest the wicked one gets hold of it. The baptized child is taken to the altar to symbolize the heavenly experience. Though the custom of wearing a crown made of cloth for seven days is no longer followed, the child is blessed with the crown. The priest prays that the child continue to be worthy to receive the crown which awaits the righteous in the heavenly Kingdom.

The hymn commemorating the departed clergy (during *quqal' yon*), *Kleelah deelin varsiphin...* (Syr.), *Mudikal*

mudanjotti thakidum ... (Mal.), again speaks of the crowns that the Holy Ghost closely braids for the departed clergy. Eusebius (1980) refers to St. Stephen as the first to receive the crown for being victorious. St. Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 says: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."

In the early Church, the sermon on the theme of the Gospel reading used to be delivered immediately. This was for the benefit of the catechumens who were required to leave the church before the beginning of the Mass of the faithful. This practice continued until around the eighth century A.D.

Chapter 9

Pre-Anaphora

In the early church, the catechumens were required to leave the church after the reading of the Gospel (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958). It is said that, until around the 13th century A.D., the doors of the church were closed by a *youthidakino* (a fifth order deacon) after the catechumens left. The prayers following this are called the Pre-Anaphora. Rites of pre-anaphora include a set of prayers and blessing of the censer followed by the recital of the Nicene Creed.

Proemion, Hoosoyo and Sedro

The Pre-Anaphora starts with the *Proemion* (Syr.), meaning preface. This is preceded by the diaconal exclamation, *Stomen Kalos* (Let us stand well) and the response *Kyrie aleison* (Lord have mercy). The prayer of *Proemion* remembers the great sacrifice of our Lord and beseeches Him to make us worthy of offering the sacrifice. Following the *Proemion* the priest burns incense and unfolds the northern corner of the *shushafo* (veil). It is said that the *shushafo* symbolizes the stone which sealed Christ's tomb (Samuel, 1967), and the act of unfolding symbolizes the revelation of the resurrected Christ to humanity. The deacon then censures the altar, the celebrant, other clergymen in the

sanctuary, and the people.

The *Proemion* is followed by *Hoosoyo* (Syr.), meaning propitiatory prayer. It is an invariable prayer. The priest, on behalf of the penitent congregation, beseeches the Lord for mercy and absolution. Christ is described as the absolver and the absolution, the celebrant as well as the offering.

The *Hoosoyo* is followed by the *Sedro* (Syr.), which is an expiatory prayer. Most of the texts in use for *Sedro* reflect on the fundamental tenets of our faith regarding Christ's life on earth, His incarnation and redemptive passion. There are several sets of *proemion* and *sedro* that are in common use. The priest selects one appropriate to the day the mass is celebrated.

These prayers are all reminders of our sinful nature and beseech the Lord to make us worthy of offering the sacrifice.

Blessing of the Censer

The prayers for the blessing of the censer are proclamations of the faith in Trinity. The worship of Trinity reminds us of the three periods - - the period of Old Testament, the period of Christ's ministry, and the period in which we are living. The Nicene creed which follows the blessing of the censer elaborates on the tenets regarding the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The priest stands face to face with the thurifer, the latter

carrying the censer. The Priest puts incense in the censer, grasps one of the chains of the censer in the middle with his left hand , makes the sign of cross over it, and says: *"I a weak and sinful servant..."* *"Holy is the Holy Father."* Grasping two more chains and making the sign of the cross over them he proclaims: *"Holy is the Holy Son"* Then he grasps the last chain and, again making the sign of the cross, the priest proclaims: *"Holy is the Living Holy Spirit, who hallows the censer of His sinful servant, Thou sparing and being merciful to our souls and the souls of our parents and of our brothers and sisters and of our instructors and of our teachers and of our departed and of all the faithful departed, in both worlds for ever and ever."*

The three proclamations are comparable to the Trisagion. While the Trisagion confines its proclamations to Lord Jesus Christ, these three proclamations are a doctrinal confession of the faith in Trinity. Absolution is completed by the Holy Trinity. The Apostles and the disciples, who enabled men to be worthy of partaking in the heavenly Mysteries (represented by the bells and links of the chains-symbolic links between heaven and earth), are our mediators in receiving this absolution.

The priest censens the sanctuary and hands over the censer to the thurifer who walks down the center aisle of the church censening the people. In some churches in Syria and Turkey, the thurifer walks along the side aisles, surrounding the people, in

order to gather the faithful into one fold. The incense is the visible indication of the purification needed. Thus, censuring is also a symbolic reminder that the Holy Confession is a prerequisite for the Holy Communion.

Nicene Creed

The Nicene creed is recited following the blessing of the censer. It is a confession of faith as proclaimed by the 318 fathers of the early church in 325 A. D. at the synod convened in Nicea (now Isnik in Turkey), in the district of Bithynia (Fuller, 1655; *A history of the Church*, 1846).

The recital of the Nicene Creed is preceded by an exhortation by the deacon to join in the affirmation of the faith. The priest initiates the creed saying: “*We believe in one true God*” A deacon, stepping down at the northern side of the sanctuary, representing the congregation continues (in some churches all people join together to recite the creed), “*the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Who was begotten of the Father before all worlds; Light of Light, true God of true God; Begotten and not made; and being of one substance with His Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. And He became man, and*

was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered, died and was buried, and the third day He rose according to His will, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of His Father; and He will come again with great glory to judge both the living and the dead; And His Kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life to all, Who proceeds from the Father; Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the Prophets and the Apostles: And in One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church: We confess one Baptism for the remission of sins: And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the new life in the world to come, Amen.”

While the Nicene Creed is recited by the deacon, the priest washes the tips of his fingers in water beseeching the Lord God to wash away his sins and make him worthy to enter into the Holy of Holies and without blemish to handle the divine Mysteries and offer the living sacrifice. The washing of the finger tips is also a reminder to the congregation of the confession of sins necessary to partake in these Mysteries. The officiating priest offers the sacrifice for all and reminds all of us to partake in the Sacrament with clean conscience (Mingana, 1932a; 1932b). *“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself is also beset with weakness; and*

because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself -Hebrews 5:1-3.

The priest then turns to the clergy and to the people and asks for forgiveness and requests them to pray to the Lord to accept his oblations. The priest then kneels before the altar and again beseeches the Lord for remission of sins and acceptance of his offering. The priest prays for and makes the sign of the cross with his right thumb on the altar mentioning the names of those (alive and departed) for whom prayers have been requested

The need for affirmation of faith

Religious faith involves belief in objects that are invisible and concepts that are indescribable. It is the faith which causes the mind to visualize such objects and concepts. St. Paul elicits this definition of faith in his epistles to both Hebrews and Romans. *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” - Hebrews 11:1; “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” - Hebrews 11:3; “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” - Hebrews 11:6; “for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” - Romans 10:10.*

By the fourth century A. D., the Church started experiencing schisms due to the influence of men who lacked faith and defied the basic tenets of the Church. The heresies were a product of lack of faith and dependence on knowledge of material world. Arius spread the heresy that the Son was a creature and made from nothing (Mingana, 1932b). Thus it was necessary to formulate a creed to root out Arian heresy.

Mor Baselius of Caesarea (A. D. 330-379) observes that the faith of the Church depends both on the Holy Bible and the apostolic traditions. The creed of the Church which was formulated by the synod of Nicea came to be an inseparable part of all sacraments and prayers. It is a solemn affirmation of the faith of the Church.

Major Tenets of the Nicene Creed

Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 A. D.) has written a detailed account of the Nicene Creed (Mingana, 1932b). The treatise in this book relies mostly on the scriptures and the work of Yacoub III (1985). The four major tenets of the creed are - - The Holy Trinity, The Son, The Holy Spirit, and The Church.

(a) Doctrine regarding the Holy Trinity

Christ ordered His disciples to teach all nations to turn from all the error of paganism and believe in the unity of the Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. “Go *therefore and teach*

all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” Matthew 28:19.

One True God - Among pagans, gods were many and of different kinds and of different natures. The Gentiles taught the doctrine of polytheism-plurality of gods. The first line of the Creed is a proclamation of monotheism - the doctrine that there is but one God. (*You shall have no other gods besides me - Exodus 20:3; .And there is no god besides me -Deuteronomy 32:39*). The Father is the maker of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1).

(b) Doctrine regarding the Son

The Son is truly begotten of His Father and not made
- As the Father is from the beginning, so is the Son. St. John explains the consubstantial being of the Son with the Father from the beginning of time. *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” - John 1:1. “ The Father and I are one” - John 10:30. “..He who has seen me has seen the Father.” - John 14:9. “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me ...” - John 14:11.*

The Son came down from heaven for us men and our salvation - *“Who, existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon the form of a servant and made in the likeness of men: and being found in the appearance of a man, He humbled Himself by becoming*

*obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” -
Philippians 2:6-8.*

He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of Virgin Mary, Mother of God. And He became man - *“The unique Son and Word of God, who is the second person of the Holy Trinity, descended from heaven to the womb of Virgin Mary and was incarnate and made man of her by the Holy Spirit and born from her after nine months in an undescrivable way, while she remained Virgin during the time of bringing forth and after that also” (Yacoub III, 1985). “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel’ - Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23. “...God was manifest in the flesh, justified in Spirit..” - 1 Timothy 3:16.*

He was crucified, and suffered, and died and was buried, and the third day He rose according to His will, and ascended into Heaven - *That He was buried shows us that His death was real and His body was buried like that of any human being. “... Christ died for our sins according to our Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. “He parted from them and was carried up into heaven” - Luke 24:51. “... He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” - Acts 1:9.*

He sits at the right hand of His Father - St. Stephen, before being stoned to death (c. A. D. 35?) by the Jewish Sanhedrin, saw the vision of Christ at the right hand of God (Pollock, 1985). *“But being full of Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said: “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God”* - Acts 7:55,56. St. Paul in his epistles to the Romans also speaks of Christ being at the right hand of God: *“..Christ Jesus is He who died, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us”* - Romans 8:34.

He will come again with great glory to judge both the living and the dead - The two angels at the ascension of our Lord affirmed His second coming. *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into Heaven”* - Acts 1:11. The Son will judge all born of Adam, children of men, both living and dead, according to their deeds. *“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds”* - Matthew 16:27; *“For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgement to the Son”* - John 5:22; *“...because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having*

furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” - Acts 17:31; “For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” - 2 Corinthians 5:10; “For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality” -Colossians 3:25.

His Kingdom shall have no end - *“He will reign over the House of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.” -Luke 1:33; “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” - 1 Thessalonians 4:17.*

(c) Doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit

The Nicene Council did not address the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit because at that time no question had yet been raised concerning Him by heretics (Mingana, 1932b; Bhilmeyer & Tuchle, 1958). However, the creed being an affirmation of faith, the doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit was appended later.

The Holy Spirit possesses an identical nature with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, as taught by our Lord. *“When the Comforter comes, whom I will send you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of me” -John 15:26.* Our

Lord refers to the Holy Spirit as the paraclete, who would comfort men in their trials and tribulations.

The Syrian Orthodox Church does not subscribe to the *filioque* (literally means ‘and from the Son’) clause because it is not based on the decisions of ecumenical councils. The *filioque* clause asserts that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and Son. The *filioque* clause was adapted later to the creed by Pope Benedict VIII of the Roman church, under pressure from Emperor Henry II in the eleventh century A.D.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and it is with the Son and it is in us. “*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you*” - Romans 8:11.

The one living Holy Spirit - “*There is one body and one spirit...*” - Ephesians 4:4; “*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit*” - 1 Corinthians 12:4.

Holy Spirit is the Giver of life to all - “*... if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live*” - Romans 8:13.

The Holy Spirit spoke through the Prophets and Apostles. “*For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God*” -

2 Peter 1:21; “... *He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’* - John 20:22; “... *do not be anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say*” -Luke 12:11-12.

(d) Doctrine regarding the Church

The Church is one body - “*Now I exhort you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all agree and there be no divisions among you but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgement*” - 1 Corinthians 1:10. “*But now God has placed the members each one of them in the body just as he desired. And if they were all one member where would the body be? But now there are many members but one body*” - 1 Corinthians 12:18-20.

The Church is Apostolic - “*And I also say to you that you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church ...*” - Matthew 16:18. “*Jesus therefore said to them again ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me I also send you,’ ...If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained’* - John 20:21,23. “*...Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to Him, ‘Tend My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you*

love Me?’ He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to Him, ‘Tend My sheep’ - John 21:15-18. The disciples followed Apostolic hierarchy as is evident in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Peter presided at the first meeting of the disciples. “... Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons...” - Acts 1:15).

We confess one baptism for the remission of sins -
“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so too we might walk in newness of Life” - Romans 6:3,4. Baptism absolves the original sin-the sin of Adam that we inherit by birth. “For since by a man came death by a man also came the resurrection of the dead” - 1 Corinthians 15:22. “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” - Galatians 3:27.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the new life in the world to come -
“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ we all be made alive” - 1 Corinthians 15:22; “For our

citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself - Philippians 3:20-21; “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

PART - III

Queen of the Sacraments

Chapter 10

Anaphora

Anaphora is a Greek term signifying the celebration of the Eucharist (Barsaum, 2000). The term *anaphora* in Greek means offering. Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum (2000) has listed seventy-nine Anaphoras, scripts of which are available.

The priest steps on the *durgo* (the step in front of the altar) to celebrate the anaphora. This is symbolic of our Lord entering the upper house of St. Mark for the celebration of the Last Supper.

Adam, the father of mankind, was driven out of his heavenly abode (paradise) because of his disobedience (Genesis 2:8, 3:23). We, who became heirs of his nature and punishment, regain our right to heaven through Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha. Anaphora is the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and through our partaking in the anaphora (the Holy Body and Blood) we become heirs of the lost Paradise.

Prayer of the Kiss of Peace

The Kiss of Peace is as ancient as the Church itself. St. Paul says: "*Greet one another with a holy kiss*" 2 Corinthians 13:12; Romans 16:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:26. St. Peter also exhorts: "*Greet one another with a kiss of love*" 1 Peter 5:14.

The roots of the practice lie in the Jewish tradition of kissing before eating. The *Qurbono* is the spiritual food of the Church. The prayer of the kiss of peace is a prayer of reconciliation of the congregation - - each one with his brethren - - an essential requisite to partake in the Holy *Qurbono*.

Our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount commands us to be reconciled with our brethren before offering sacrifice. *“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering - Matthew 5:23,24. “But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” - Matthew 6:15.*

God is reconciled with the world through Christ, in spite of our trespasses. Apostle Paul, on behalf of Christ, appeals to us to be reconciled to God. *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.* The prayer is one of reconciliation with God and with one another.

The priest without turning to the congregation blesses them saying: “*Peace be to you all.*” The benediction of peace uses the very same words with which our Lord greeted the congregation of Apostles after His resurrection (Luke 24:36, John 20:19). Connolly (1909) describes the meaning of this benediction vividly. The ‘peace’ is attributed to:

- the love of God, who gave His Only-begotten Son
condemnation of Satan by the Son of God
- reconciliation of God, the Father, with the world by the death
of His only Son, who suffered on the cross for our salvation
- the new life reserved for man, that was lost in the Garden
of Eden
- the place in the Kingdom of God which Lord Jesus is
preparing for us

The people respond to the benediction saying: “*And with your spirit*” At ordination, the priest receives the power of the Spirit that enables him to handle the divine Mysteries. It is this grace that is referred to as ‘Spirit’ in the response. The implication is that even the priest is in need of intercession, and it is necessary that the whole church should intercede for him.

The priest gives the hand of peace to the thurifer who passes it to other clergy and deacons in the sanctuary and then to the people. The deacon urges: “*Let us give peace to one another*

with a holy and divine kiss in the love of our Lord and God,” to which the people respond: *“Lord, our God, account us worthy of this peace.”* Each person passes the hand of peace to the next person, saying: *“The peace of our Lord and God”* and the person receiving it responds: *“May it be with us and among us”* In some churches the hymn: *“Anyonyam slomo nalkin...”* (Mal.) is also sung. The deacon then says: *“And after the holy and divine peace has been given, let us bow our heads before the merciful Lord”* to which the people, bowing their heads, respond: *“We bow down our heads before thee, our Lord and God.”*

Some books indicate the practice of reading from the ‘Book of Life’ in the early Church, from 5th to 11th century A.D., during the passing of the hand of peace (King, 1947).

The Prayers of Inclination

The two prayers of inclination plead for God’s grace to make us worthy of offering the sacrifice. The priest, with crossed hands and raising his voice, says: *“ Thou Who art alone the merciful Lord who dwells on high and yet beholds the humblest things. Send blessings to those who have bowed down their heads before Thee and bless them through the grace and mercies of Thine Only-begotten Son through Whom and with Whom Thou art worthy of glory and honor and dominion with Thy Holy Spirit, all-holy, and good, and adorable and life-giving, Who is of one substance with Thee now and forever;*

world without end.” The people respond: “Amen.”

The priest, with crossed hands, says: “*God the Father, Who by Thy great and indescribable love towards mankind did send Thy son into the world to bring back the sheep that had gone astray, reject not Thou, my Lord, this bloodless sacrifice; for we rely not on our own righteousness but on Thy mercy. And grant that this Sacrament, which was instituted for our salvation, be not for our condemnation but that we thereby receive remission of our sins and may render due praise and thanksgiving unto Thee and unto Thy Only-begotten Son and unto Thy Holy Spirit, all-holy and good and adorable and life-giving, who is of one substance with Thee, now and forever, world without end.*” The people again respond: “Amen.”

The Celebration of *Shushafo*

The priest lifts up the *shushafo* (Veil) covering the chalice and paten and waves it three times over the Mysteries and then collects the veil and encircles it around the Mysteries thrice - - twice anti-clockwise, then once clockwise.

While the priest is celebrating the *shushafo*, the deacon exhorts: “*Let us stand well, let us stand with fear, with modesty, with purity, with holiness, let us all stand, my brethren in love and true faith. Let us behold with fear of God, this Holy Eucharist which is being placed before us by the hands of*

this reverend priest. For he offers this living sacrifice on behalf of us all to God the Father in unity and peace.” The people respond: *“This Qurbano is mercy, peace, sacrifice and thanksgiving.”*

During the celebration of *shushafo*, the priest prays in a low voice: *“Thou art the rock of flint, which sent forth twelve streams of water for the twelve tribes of Israel Thou art the hard rock, which was set against the tomb of our Redeemer”*

The celebration of the veil is symbolic of the vision that St. Peter had in the city of Joppa. *“I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, and when I had fixed my gaze upon it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. And I also heard a voice saying, ‘Arise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth”* - Acts 11:5-8. Deuteronomy 14:3-21 explains St. Peter’s answer to the voice. *“But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ And this happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky”* -Acts 11:9-10.

The new covenant of God was with all men - - Jew and

Gentile. *“A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all - Colossians 3:11. Our Lord during His ministry, through parables, spoke of the rights of the Gentiles to the kingdom of God. “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing fruit of it” - Matthew 21:43.*

The vision of St. Peter made God’s will abundantly clear. *“If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in the God’s way ... Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life” -Acts 11:17-18. The celebration of the *shushofo* symbolizes the granting of this right to all the races of the world who confess their faith in Christ.*

The silent prayer recited by the priest describes God as the rock of flint, which brought forth water for the twelve tribes of Israel and the rock set against the tomb of our Redeemer. *“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink” - Exodus 17:6; “...He brought water for you out of the rock of flint” - Deuteronomy 8:15.*

Immediately after removing the veil, the priest takes the

kaukbo (star), which symbolizes the Star of Nativity, from the paten and places it to his right. The removal of the veil and the star symbolizes the birth of Christ.

The priest, turning to the congregation gives the first benediction (*rushmo* - Syr.): *“The Love of God, the Father, the grace of the Only-begotten Son and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all, my brethren, forever.”* These are the words by which St. Paul blesses the Corinthians as noted in his second epistle to them. *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all”* - 2 Corinthians 13:14.

The abundant love of God for man is evident in His giving of His Only-begotten Son as sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”* - John 3:16. God showed this love, not because He received from us anything worthy of this good will, but due to His abundant mercy. May that great love be with all the faithful.

Through the grace of the Son, the infinite distance between God and man is bridged. *“But now in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”* - Ephesians 2:13. May that grace abide in all the faithful.

The Holy Spirit was taken away from the corrupt mankind.

“... *My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh ...*” - Genesis 6:3. The Holy Spirit returned to those who obey Him. “... *and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him*” - Acts 5:32. May the fellowship of the Holy Spirit which filled the disciples on the Day of Pentecost be with all the faithful. “*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance*” - Acts 2:3.

Sarsum Corda (Syr.) - Lift ye up

The priest, extending and elevating his hands to receive blessings, raises his voice and urges the congregation: “*Let our minds and our understanding and our hearts, be above where our Lord, Jesus Christ, sits at the right hand of God the Father.*” The omnipresent Christ, who is present in the Holy Mass, is interceding for us with the Father in heaven. “... *Christ Jesus, ... who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us*” -Romans 8:34. The congregation is urged to raise themselves above worldly thoughts and extend their hearts to the highest. The sacrifice is offered on earth, by the priest, who symbolizes Christ, who intercedes for us in heaven. The congregation responds: “*They are with the Lord God.*”

The priest exhorts the congregation: “*Let us give thanks unto the Lord in awe.*” Praise the Lord who through His sacrifice regained for us the right to heaven, the right to call God, ‘Abba

Father.’ The congregation responds: “*It is meet and right to give thanks.*” The priest bows down his head, waves his hand over the Mysteries, and says in a low voice: “*It is truly meet and right to thank the Creator of the World and to worship and praise Him.*”

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Tersanctus (Thrice Holy)

The priest stretches out his hands, and raising his voice, says: “*He Whom the heavens praise and all the hosts thereof, corporeal and incorporeal; the sun, the moon and all the stars, the earth, the seas and the first-borns whose names are written in the heavenly Jerusalem; angels and archangels, principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, celestial virtues, the many-eyed cherubim, and six-winged seraphim who, veiling their faces and feet, fly one to another proclaiming His Holiness, crying aloud saint Holy.*”

The people join in saying: “*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Heaven and earth are full of His glories. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that came and is to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.*” This is based on Isaiah 6:3 - “*And one called out to the other and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of the Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.*”

The priest, waving his hands over the Holy Mysteries, prays silently: “*In truth art Thou Holy, O King of the worlds and*

Giver of all Holiness. Holy is Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Holy also is Thine Holy Spirit Who searches out Thy hidden mysteries, Thou made man out of earth and placed him in Paradise and when he transgressed Thy commandment and fell, Thou did not abandon him but did guide him by the Prophets, and in the fullness of time Thou did send into the world even Thine Only-begotten Son, who being Incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of Virgin Mary renewed Thine image that was impaired in mankind.”

The Prayers of Institution

The priest takes the Host from the paten with his right hand. He places it on the palm of his left hand and, raising his eyes skyward, says in a loud voice: *“When He, the Sinless One, of His Own Will prepared Himself to accept death for us, sinners, He took bread into His Holy Hands and when He had given thanks, He blessed and consecrated (He makes the sign of cross three times over the bread) and broke and gave it to His holy Apostles, saying: ‘Take, eat of it, this is My Body which is broken for you and for many and is given for the remission of sins and for life eternal.’”* The people respond: *“Amen.”*

The priest takes the chalice with both hands saying: *“Likewise also He took the Cup and when he had given thanks, He blessed, consecrated and gave to His Apostles saying; take, drink of it, all of you. This is My Blood which is*

shed for you and for many and is given for the remission of sins and for life eternal” (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:15-20). While the prayers are said, he makes the sign of the cross three times over the chalice with his right hand and tilts it cross-wise keeping the right thumb on its edge. The people respond: “Amen.”

The prayer of institution has references in the Old Testament. *“So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, “Behold the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” - Exodus 24:8; “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” - Jeremiah 31:31.*

St. Paul asserts the practice of Holy communion: *“The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, ‘This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way He took the cup also, after supper saying ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.*

The priest takes the *gomourto* which symbolizes the throne of God from the northern side with his left hand, then the *tharvodo*

(spoon) with his right hand and places it on the *gomourto*. He raises both of them with his right hand. This is to remind the faithful of the Lord's second coming which will be like a flash of lightning. *"For just as lightning comes from the East and flashes even to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be"* - Matthew 24:27. He then puts the *gomourto* and *tharvodo* on the southern side, saying in a loud voice: *"Do this in remembrance of Me as often as ye partake of this Sacrament, commemorating my death and my resurrection, until I come."* The people respond saying: *"Thy death, O Lord, we commemorate. Thy resurrection we confess, and Thy second coming we look for. May Thy mercy be upon us all."*

The priest, with crossed hands, says audibly: *"Remembering therefore, O Lord, Thy death and Thy resurrection on the third day, Thy ascension into heaven and Thy second coming wherein Thou shall judge the world in righteousness and recompense every man according to his deeds, we offer this bloodless Sacrifice, beseeching Thee not to deal with us according to our debts, O Lord, nor reward us after our iniquities, but according to Thy abundant mercies blot out the sins of thy servants. For Thy people and Thine inheritance pray to Thee, and through Thee to Thy Father, saying, (people join in saying): "Have mercy upon us, O God, Father Almighty."*

Stretching out his hands at equal level and gazing upwards, the priest says in a loud voice: *"We also, O Lord, Thy weak and*

sinful servants, receiving Thy grace give thanks unto Thee and praise Thee for all things and by reason of all things.” The people respond: *“Lord God, We glorify Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, and we beseech Thee for mercy. Have mercy upon us.”*

The Invocation of the Holy Spirit

During the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the deacon reminds the people: *“Barekhmore, How awful is this hour and how perturbed this time, my beloved ones, wherein the Holy Spirit from the heights of heaven takes wing and descends, and broods and rests upon this Eucharist here present and hallows it. In calm and in awe were you, standing and praying. Pray that peace be with us and all of us may have tranquility.”* The people respond: *“May peace be with us and tranquility unto us all.”*

The priest waves his hands over the Mysteries, and bowing down his head, says silently: *“Have mercy upon us, O God the Father and send forth upon us and upon these offerings Thy Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, Who shares Thy Throne and Thy Kingdom with Thee and with Thy Son that reigns with Thee, of One substance and co-eternal; Who spoke in The Old and New Testaments; Who descended in the likeness of a dove upon our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan, and descended in the likeness of fiery tongues upon the Apostles*

in the Upper Room.”

Stretching out both his hands, he says loudly: “*Answer me, O Lord. Answer me, O Lord. Answer me, O Lord and have mercy upon us.*” The Lord God took away His Holy Spirit from men who lived the way of the flesh. In His abundant mercies, He sent forth the Spirit again to the disciples in the Upper Room of St. Mark’s house. The priest entreats the Lord to bless the congregation, the same way He blessed the disciples, by sending the Holy Spirit to abide in them.

Mor Dionysius Bar Saleebi, Bishop of Amid, notes of the wrong practice of the priest beating on his chest during the invocation of the Spirit (Mose Bar Kepho, 1988, p. 44; Dionysius Bar Saleebi, 1990, pp. 89-90). However, this is not to suggest that the prayer is a lamentation. The invocation of the Holy Spirit has its Old Testament analogue in the invocation of Prophet Elijah at Mt. Carmel where the fire of the Lord descended on the altar and consumed the burnt offering, confounding Ahab and the innumerable prophets of Baal. “*Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O Lord, art God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench*” - 1 Kings 18:37,38. The people respond: “*Kyrie Eleison* (Lord, have mercy) thrice.

Chapter 11

Diptychs

The term diptych has Greek roots and denotes a double tablet. Diptychs were, in fact, the records of each church in which were recorded the names of all the orthodox bishops who had ruled it from the time of its foundation. Another set of diptychs recorded the names of the living or departed benefactors of the church.

It is believed that the diptychs was formally arranged by St. Jacob of Edessa (c. AD. 633-708). The reading of the diptychs was a practice which originally followed the kiss of peace. The martyrologies evolved from the ancient diptychs and, when made general instead of local, provided the framework for the original form of the Christian calendar (Blunt, 1891).

The concept of a heavenly register (referred to as Book of Life) of the elect is based on the ideas found in the Old and New Testaments. *“And the Lord said to Moses, whoever has sinned against me I will blot him out of My book”* - Exodus 32:33; *“May they be blotted out of the Book of Life, and may they not be recorded with the righteous”* - Psalm 69:28; *“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the*

sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued” - Daniel 12:1; “Then those who revered the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and esteem His name” - Malachi 3:16; “... but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven” - Luke 10:20; “Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my trouble in the cause of the Gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life,” - Philippians 4:3.

The extant liturgies have six prayers, the first three for the living and the other three for the departed. The diptychs for the living include the prayers of the Church for the spiritual fathers, the living faithful and the rulers. The diptychs for the departed include prayers for the Mother of God, the saints, the spiritual fathers and doctors of the Church, and the faithful departed in general.

First Diptych

For the Spiritual Fathers Who Tend the Church

In this diptych, the Church remembers and prays for the well-being of the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox

Church, the Prince Patriarch of Antioch and All the East (since 1980, Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Ivas), the Catholicose (*Maphrian* - Syr.) of the East, canonically ordained by the Patriarch (since 2002, Aboon Mor Baselius Thomas I), and the diocesan bishop. If a bishop other than the diocesan bishop is present, the name of the bishop is also included.

In the past, the Church used to remember the name of the Jerusalem Patriarch, Mar Gregorius. However, at present, the Syrian Orthodox Church does not have communion with this Jerusalem-based Church. Therefore, the name of the Jerusalem Patriarch is excluded from the diptych. The Syrian Orthodox Church has its Patriarchal vicar in Jerusalem, who is also the metropolitan of that diocese. While the deacon reads the diptych, the priest says a silent prayer which varies with the liturgy used. The names of the spiritual fathers are remembered, and the sign of the cross is drawn on the right side of the *tabalitho*.

Second Diptych

For the Living Faithful Brethren

This is a general prayer for the whole Christian community during which those who are in hard trials and have asked for intercession are also remembered. The priest remembers the names following a silent prayer. The fraternal spirit in the Christian community is evident in this diptych. He draws the sign of the cross with his right thumb on the altar to the right side of the *tabalitho*.

Third Diptych

For the Living Faithful Rulers

This prayer is an indication that, from time to time, the Church had received patronage and support from the faithful kings and rulers. The Church remembers and prays for the well-being of all Christian rulers, who are guardians of the uncorrupt faith. The priest remembers the names following a silent prayer and draws the sign of the cross on the altar to the right side of the *tabalitho*.

Fourth Diptych

Intercession of the Mother of God and Saints

This is a prayer seeking the intercession of St. Mary, Mother of God; John the Baptist, forerunner of our Lord; St. Stephen, the head of the deacons and first of the martyrs of the Church and St. Peter and St. Paul, the chiefs among the Apostles. St. Thomas, the patron saint of India, is also remembered in Malankara churches since 1987 (Zakka I, 1987). The priest says a silent prayer and draws the sign of the cross once on the upper rim (Eastern side) of the paten, while remembering the name of St. Mary; and then five times on the bottom rim (Western side) of the paten, while remembering each of the five saints - - St. John the Baptist, St. Stephen, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Thomas.

St. Mary (c.B. C. 14? - A. D. 66?)

St. Mary, the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, is the most revered saint of the Church. She was born to Joachim and Hanna and was raised in the temple at Jerusalem. After her betrothal to Joseph, of the tribe of David, she lived at Nazareth. Before her marriage to Joseph, as a virgin, she miraculously conceived Our Lord, and thus became the Mother of God. The doctrine of the Church regarding St. Mary is the theme of innumerable liturgical works and is beyond the scope of this book. All prayers of the Church seek intercession of St. Mary.

St. John, the Baptist (c. B. C. 3 - A . D. 32?)

St. John, the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. *“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me”* -Malachi 3:1; Luke 7:27; *“And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah ...”* - Luke 1:17; *“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways”* - Luke 1:76. John was born to Zacharias, the High Priest, and Elizabeth in their advanced years. He was baptized in the womb by the Holy Spirit. *“... he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb”* - Luke 1:15; *“... the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”* - Luke 1:41. He was beheaded by Herod, the tetrarch, instigated by Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Matthew

14:1-12). The Church commemorates St. John, the Baptist's memory through the feast held on the 7th of January.

St. Stephen (? - A. D. 35?)

St. Stephen is known as the head of deacons and is the first martyr of the Church. Filled with grace and power of the Holy Spirit, he performed great wonders and signs among the people and was arraigned by the Synagogue of Freedmen before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 6:8-15). His erudite defense is recorded in Acts 7. He was stoned to death. Death looming portentously, he saw the heavens open and the Son of God standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). His martyrdom was probably around A. D. 31 (Pollock, 1985). The Church commemorates his memory through the feast held on the 8th of January.

St. Peter (? - A. D. 67)

St. Peter was called to tend the Church by Lord Jesus Christ Himself and is thus known as the chief of the Apostles (John 20:15-17). He is the foundation of the One Apostolic and Catholic Church and was the first Patriarch of the Church of Antioch. *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be*

loosened in heaven” - Matthew 16:17,18. He was publicly crucified on the 29th of June, A. D. 67 by Nero, the tyrant Emperor of Rome. He was nailed to the cross with his head downward, at his own request, symbolically kissing the feet of His Lord (Pollock, 1985). His memory is commemorated by the Church at the end of the ‘13 days lent’ which falls on the day of his martyrdom.

St. Paul (? - A. D. 67)

St. Paul was the greatest evangelist of the Church. He, originally a persecutor of the Church, transformed into its most eloquent leader. He was born at Tarsus in Cicilia and was known as Saul. He was sent to a Jewish school at Tarsus at the age of six (Aphrem, 1963). At the age of fifteen, he became a student of Gamaliel, a Pharisee and a teacher of Law (Acts 5:34; 22:1-3). He was among the council of Jews who stoned St. Stephen to death (*“And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul - Acts 7:58*). Zealous in his persecution of the Church, he proceeded to Damascus to imprison and torture the believers there but was called upon by Lord Jesus Christ to turn from his path and be a witness for Him to all men (Acts 9:3-6). This is believed to have happened in A. D. 31.

His epistles to the fledgling Church of the early ages form the doctrinal basis for the faith of the Church. Though he had many privileges as a Roman citizen, he was finally condemned by

the Roman Senate on the charge of treason against Nero, the Roman Emperor, and was beheaded on the same day St. Peter was crucified (Pollock, 1985). His memory is commemorated by the Church, on the 29th of June, along with that of St. Peter.

St. Thomas (? - A . D. 72)

It is traditionally believed that St. Thomas arrived in Malankara (Kerala, India) in A. D. 52. Haban, a businessman, brought St. Thomas as an architect for Gondaphorus, an obscure Indian king (*Malankara yacobaya suriyani christianikalude prarthana kramam*, 1927). It is believed that St. Thomas installed seven crosses in different parts of Kerala and performed several miracles which attracted many to the faith. St. Thomas was martyred at Mylapore, near Chennai, India on 21st of December, A. D. 72. His mortal remains were transferred to Uraha (Edessa) in A. D. 394 (Aphrem, 1964; Cross & Livingstone, 1974). The feast of St. Thomas is celebrated on July 3rd, presumably the day the mortal remains were transferred to Uraha.

Fifth Diptych

For the Fathers of the Church

The Church remembers the Holy fathers who handed down the uncorrupt faith, which was nurtured by their blood and life. The Church acknowledges the three Holy synods and the fathers who participated in them.

The Three Ecumenical Councils (Holy Synods)

The Church flourished during the first four centuries of its existence. In seeking more perfect knowledge of God, controversial questions were raised which, until then, were not examined.

The First Council at Nicea (A.D. 325)

Lord Jesus Christ was acknowledged by the Church to be divine and yet distinct from the Father. But there was no authoritative doctrine regarding the relationship of the Son's divinity to that of the Father. There were quite a few who, without denying the divinity of the Son, held that Christ was 'subordinate' to the Father. They believed that the Son had received His divine being from the Father. Hence, He was subordinate to the Father.

Arius, a distinguished priest of Alexandria, taught that the Son is subordinate and that the Son had no divine nature nor any of the divine attributes, especially eternity. Arius was a crafty logician, who had the audacity to preach what no one before him had ever suggested (*A history of the Church*, 1846). According to him, the Logos (Son), the first and noblest of creatures, was created by the Father out of nothing to serve as a sort of instrument in the rest of creation, because according to the Stoic philosophy of Philo, the absolute, transcendent God cannot come into direct contact with what is wholly material (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958).

The Holy fathers of that time contended that the Son is consubstantial and coeternal with the Father (*A history of the Church*, 1846). The Church in the East was drawn into the controversy and was divided over the issue. Emperor Constantine the Great, realizing the gravity of the situation, took on the task of restoring the unity of the Church. He sent his friend Hosius, the eminent bishop of Corduba, to Alexandria to try to resolve the schism. But nothing was accomplished. Later Constantine summoned a general Council to settle the dispute. The decision was to hold the Council at Ancrya. But the Council met at Nicea (today Isnik in Turkey) in Bithynia (Fuller, 1655), from May until July, A.D. 325 and was attended by 318 bishops from all parts of the Christian world.

The most ardent and capable doctors of the orthodox faith, besides Hosius and Alexander, were Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch (A. D. 324 - 337) and Athanasius, later the Patriarch of Alexandria (A. D. 328 - 373), who attended the Council as a companion and secretary to bishop Alexander. Eusebius, the renowned Church historian, was also present (Eusebius, 1980). Eustathius presided over the Council and delivered the opening address which was followed by an exhortation by Emperor Constantine to resolve differences (Cayre, 1935). A creed, known today as Nicene creed, was drawn up (June 19, A. D. 325) to establish without doubt that the Son of God is “of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God,

begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father through whom all things in heaven and earth are made.” The main teachings of Arius that were listed and placed under anathema are: There was a time when the Son of God did not exist, He was made from nothing, He is of different substance or essence than the Father, He was created, and He is subject to change.

The Council completed its work by assigning a specific date for Easter and by adopting twenty disciplinary canons which dealt with the election of bishops, organization of patriarchates, the disciplines of penance, celibacy, etc.

The Second Council at Constantinople (A.D. 381)

Emperor Theodosius the Great (A.D. 379-395) became the powerful patron of orthodoxy, the victory of which was sealed at this Council. The Church’s teaching regarding the Holy Spirit, undefined until then, was formulated for the first time at this Council.

The followers of Origenes Adamantius, one of the most influential and seminal theologians of the early Greek Church, professed the view of subordinate nature of the second (the Son) and third (the Holy Spirit) persons in the Holy Trinity. Until the middle of the fourth century, very few attempts were made to rectify the then prevalent erroneous teachings regarding the Holy Spirit (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958; Mingana, 1932b).

Macedonius, the Semi-Arian bishop of Constantinople, was

the chief representative of the heretical views that the Son not being of the same substance as of the Father (*A history of the Church*, 1846). He was deposed in A. D. 316.

The general Council, with the support of one hundred and fifty orthodox bishops, pronounced the official and authoritative condemnation of Macedonian's heresy. The bishops who supported Macedonius, 36 in all, apparently withdrew from the Council. The first and second articles in the Nicene creed pertaining to the Father and the Son were retained; while the third article 'And (we believe) in the Holy Spirit' was modified to contain the doctrine stressed by the Council, 'the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26), Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets' (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958).

The Third Council at Ephesus (A. D. 431)

Emperor Theodosius II called the general Council in A. D. 431 during the Pentecost at Ephesus. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, opened the assembly on June 22nd in the presence of one hundred and fifty-nine bishops (*A history of the Church*, 1846).

Official declarations of the Church had upheld the consubstantial nature of the Son of God (divinity of the Logos). It became essential to define more clearly the relationship between

the divine and human nature of Son of God. Nestorius, a monk at Antioch and a renowned preacher, who was later elevated to the See of Constantinople (AD. 428), rebuked the people for using the ancient and cherished title 'Mother of God' in their devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He claimed that the expression was erroneous and that the appropriate term is the 'Mother of Christ.'

In the first session of the Council, early fathers were cited for justifying the real union of the two natures of Christ. The teaching about the Holy Virgin Mary as 'Mother of God' was affirmed and was incorporated into the Nicene Creed.

The Holy Fathers of the Church

The names of twenty-seven holy fathers are remembered in this diptych (three of these were added by the Bull of Zakka I, 1987 and one in 2006). The priest says a silent prayer and remembers the names by drawing the sign of the Cross on the left rim (Northern side) of the paten. A brief life history of these holy fathers is presented here. In a few cases, the information presented is minimal due to lack of verifiable references (for a detailed account, see, Rajan, 2007).

1. James - First Archbishop of Jerusalem (c. A. D. ? - 62)

The episcopal seat of Jerusalem was entrusted by the Apostles to James, the brother of Our Lord. Hegesippus (cited in Eusebius, 1980) describes that St. James was in the habit of being

alone in the temple. He was frequently found on his knees begging forgiveness for the people. This caused his knees to turn hard like a camel's. Josephus, a Pharisee of the time, and Clement (cited by Eusebius, 1980), the primary sources of information about St. James, recorded that James was called "The Just" for his excellence in virtue and righteousness. The divine liturgy of St. James was formulated by him.

His persecutors demanded a denial in public of his faith in Christ. But, when he affirmed his faith that Christ, our Lord and Savior, is the Son of God, they threw him down from the pinnacle of the temple. Even though he survived the fall, he was subsequently, beaten to death with a fuller's club (club of laundrymen). He was martyred in A.D. 62.

2. Mor Ignatius of Antioch (c. A. D. 35-107)

Ignatius, the Patriarch of Antioch, the successor of St. Peter is one of the most outstanding figures and one of the strongest characters of the early Church. Eusebius (1980) refers to Ignatius as the third patriarch, second being Evodius. The name is interpreted both as 'the one carried by God' and 'he who carries God' (Cayre, 1935). Ignatius is also known as 'theophoros' meaning 'bearer of God' or, perhaps, 'borne by God' (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). Mor Ignatius is also known as *Noorono* (Syr.) which means 'the fiery one' or 'one clothed in fire.' It is believed that Ignatius was the child whom Jesus took in His arms and offered to the

Apostles as an example of humility (Matthew 18:1-3). He was also called Ignatius, the Illuminator.

Mor Ignatius stressed Christ's true humanity and identified it with the healing food of the Eucharist, a focus of congregational unity (Douglas, 1978). There is a lengthy liturgy formulated by him.

In A. D. 107, St. Ignatius was condemned and martyred in the Roman theater, where he was fed to caged hungry animals. This seemingly fulfilled his own saying: "the wheat of Christ ground by the teeth of beasts." While he was incarcerated in Rome, deputations led by bishops came to him to comfort him and returned with letters from the would be martyr to their communities (Cayre, 1935).

The earliest witnesses relate that only the hardest bones of his body remained. They were gathered up by the Christians and taken back to Antioch, where they immediately became the object of pious veneration (Cayre, 1935; Smith & Wace, 1882). St. Ignatius is believed to have been martyred on October 17th (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). December 20th, the day of his feast, is in all probability the date of the transfer of the relics under Theodosius II in c. A. D. 408 (Smith & Wace, 1882).

3. Clemis (c. A. D. 30-100)

Clemis (Clement of Rome) was a prominent bishop, who is

probably referred in Philippians 4:3. Some apocryphal books describe how he was forced to work in mines during the reign of Trajan. It is said that his missionary labors met with remarkable success. He was bound to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea. The traditional belief is that his tomb, which was built by angels, was visible once a year to the pilgrims by the miraculous ebbing of the tide. His feast is celebrated on the 24th or 25th of November (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

There are two letters written by him which can be considered equal to the Epistles. There is a special prayer formulated by him, which is read during the enthronement of the Patriarchs (*Hudaya Canon*, 1974).

4. Dionysius of Alexandria (c. A. D. 190-265)

It is believed that Dionysius was born in the last decade of the second century. His parents were Gentiles, and he, on his own, examined the claims of Christianity through private study. His conversion was the result of the influence of great teachers, especially Origen (Smith & Wace, 1877). Dionysius was the Bishop of Alexandria from c. A. D. 247-265 (Eusebius, 1980). He died shortly after A. D. 265. He was also an eminent writer.

5. Athanasius, the great, of Alexandria (c. A.D. 295?-373)

Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, was born in c. A. D. 295 at Alexandria where he received his classical and theological

education. He was born to wealthy Egyptian parents and was brought up in the Greek tradition. In A. D. 319, he was ordained deacon by bishop Alexander and served shortly afterwards as his secretary. Though Athanasius took no official part in the proceedings of the Council of Nicea (A. D. 325), as secretary to bishop Alexander, his notes, circulars, and encyclicals (written on behalf of his bishop) had an important effect on the outcome of the Council (Douglas, 1978). The letters written by Alexander in defense of the Nicene creed reflect this influence.

He was a steadfast champion and a great defender of the faith of Nicea, 'The Pillar of the Church,' as St. Gregory of Nazianzus called him (Quasten, Vol.3, 1960). The writings of St. Athanasius refuting Arianism are well recorded in the book *Select treatises of St. Athanasius* (Vol.1, 1890).

By his refusal to compromise with Arianism, he incurred enmity of its proponents and was exiled several times. Before A. D. 318, while still in his twenties, he wrote two short treatises, one of which expounds how God the Word, by his union with manhood, restored to fallen man the image of God in which he had been created (Genesis 1:27).

From A. D. 339-359, Athanasius wrote a series of works in the defense of the faith proclaimed at Nicea. He contested Arius and his supporters during the fourth century. Arius taught that Christ, the Logos, was not the eternal Son of God, but a subordinate

being, a view which disputed the doctrines of the Trinity, the Creation, and the Redemption. Athanasius upheld the scriptures which taught that the Logos is the eternal Son of God, the world was directly created by God, and that the world and men are redeemed by God in Christ. Athanasius was enthroned as bishop when he was only thirty-three. He was exiled five times and embraced seventeen years of flight and hiding in the deserts and in Alexandria where he was shielded by the people (Douglas, 1978). He spent his last years (A. D. 366-373) in peace and died at Alexandria on 2nd of May, A. D. 373 (Quasten, Vol. 3, 1960; Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

6. Julius of Rome (c. A. D. 290-352)

Julius was the bishop of Rome from A. D. 337-352 . He was elected to the See of Rome in the year Constantine died. His pontificate was notable for his defense of Athanasius. He provided refuge for Athanasius during his second exile (A. D. 339-346). Julius built two churches in Rome (Douglas, 1978). He also formulated a liturgy.

7. Baselius of Caesarea (c. A. D. 329-379)

Baselius is popularly known as ‘Basil the Great,’ the mighty champion of orthodoxy in the East. He was born at Caesarea (originally called Mazaca), the capital of Cappodocia, towards the end of A.D. 329. His parents were of noble and wealthy descent

and were Christian (Smith & Wace, 1877). His father, Basil, was a famous rhetorician at Neo-Caesarea in Pontus. His mother Emmelia, the daughter of a martyr, gave birth to ten children, three of whom became bishops - - St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Peter of Sebaste. Her eldest daughter is well known as St. Macrina the Younger, an exemplary ascetic (Quasten, Vol.3, 1960).

Basil was first sent to his native city of Caesarea, for completing his education, where he gained a great reputation for his brilliance and for his virtuous life. Later he went to Constantinople where, it is believed, he was a student of Libanius. From Constantinople, he proceeded to Athens where he was a student during A. D. 351-356. Gregory of Nazianzen, another contemporary saintly personality of that era, was a senior student in the same institution. They were good friends and seldom left their dwelling except for school or church. Basil returned to his native city c. A. D. 356 and embarked on a career as a rhetorician, which he later renounced to embrace a life entirely devoted to God. The spiritual awakening, as described in an original work, is comparable to 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6. In c. A. D. 358 he founded a number of monasteries and in c. A. D. 364 was ordained priest. When Eusebius died in A. D. 370, Basil succeeded him as Bishop of Caesarea, Metropolitan of Cappodocia and Exarch of the civil diocese of Pontus.

Basil's contributions to the Church are threefold (Douglas, 1978):

- As an ascetic, he devoted much time to introducing and establishing the monastic system in Pontus. Extensive institutions flourished under his fostering care.
- As a bishop, he showed the genuine gift of leadership which was seen not only in his able directorship of the ecclesiastical affairs of Cappadocia but also in the application of the Gospel to the social needs of his people.
- As a theologian and teacher, he showed the determination to uphold Nicene doctrine.

He is rightly known as a man of action, for he established hospitals for the sick and home for travelers and strangers. He passed away at the age of fifty on 1st of January, A. D. 379 (Quasten, Vol.3, 1960). His feast is celebrated on 1st of January, along with that of St. Gregory of Nazianzus.

8. Gregory of Nyssa (c. A. D. 335-394)

Gregory of Nyssa is the youngest brother of Basil of Caesarea. In A.D. 371, he reluctantly accepted Basil's invitation to become Bishop of Nyssa and was consecrated by Basil in A. D. 372 (Douglas, 1978). In the late 4th century A. D., he helped to bring about the victory of Nicene orthodoxy over Arianism and gave a definite shape to the doctrine of the Trinity. After Basil's death, Gregory was one of the leading figures at the Council of

Constantinople in A.D. 381. His doctrine of the Eucharist arises from his understanding of the physical aspect of salvation in the resurrection of the body. He taught that salvation is communicated to the body through the Eucharist. The bread and wine become the elements of the body of Christ through the words of consecration through which our bodies receive a share in divine immortality (Ferguson & Wright, 1988).

9. Dioscorus of Alexandria (? - A. D. 454)

Dioscorus was the Patriarch of Alexandria from AD. 444 to 451. He succeeded Cyril and became a leading figure in the Monophysite controversy (the tenet of the Church that the Divine and Human natures in Christ are so united into an inseparable 'single nature' (Douglas, 1978). He served as archdeacon to Cyril. He clung tenaciously to the phrase, "one incarnate nature of God the Word," which Cyril had used on the authority of St. Athanasius (Smith & Wace, 1877).

10. Timotheus of Alexandria (? – A. D. 477)

Timotheus had been at first a monk, then presbyter under Dioscorus of Alexandria. The Chalcedon synod had deposed Dioscorus, and a presbyter named Proterius was elected in his place. Dioscorus was banished into Libya. The monks of Egypt refused to recognise the deposition of Dioscorus. Thus, there was general riot in Alexandria. In A. D. 457, the Emperor Marcian

died and was succeeded by Leo I. The monks and clergy elected a new Bishop Timotheus, a great friend of the deposed Dioscorus. The Imperial power restored Proterius and Timotheus was banished. Timotheus was exiled for a second time in c. A. D. 460 with his brother Anatolius to Gangra. The strife continued until A. D. 474. Leo I was replaced by Leo II, and soon after by Zeno in A. D. 475. Emperor Zeno supported the true faith (Miaphysitism). Timotheus was summoned to Constantinople. He spent his last years in his monastery at the suburb called Canopus and died in A. D. 477 (Wace & Piercy, 1999, pp. 988-989).

11. Philoxenus of Mabug (c. A. D. 450-523)

Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabug, was born at Tahal, Persia. He was named Xenaya. He studied in Edessa when Ibas was bishop and later went to Antioch. Peter the Fuller appointed him the Bishop of Mabug in A. D. 485. He was one of the most learned Syrian theologians and spokesmen of the Patriarchate of Antioch. His extensive writings include 13 discourses on the Christian Life, works on the Incarnation, many letters, and a Syriac version of the New Testament published in A. D. 508 (Douglas, 1978; Comfort, 1992).

According to Philoxenus, the very personality of God the Word descended from heaven and became man in the womb of the virgin, personally without conversion. Thus, He became a man

who could be seen, felt, handled, and yet as God, He continued to possess the spiritual, invisible, impalpable character essential to the Deity.

Philoxenus was a zealous guardian of the true faith and was active in the synods convened by Anastas Caesar. Justinus of Chalcedon who succeeded Anastas Caesar in A. D. 518 exiled him to Philibobris in Bulgaria where he was tortured for five years. However, he persisted with his encyclicals to the faithful with greater zeal. He was later shifted to Ghangara where he was suffocated to death with smoke (Smith & Wace, 1877; Aphrem, 1963).

12. Anthimus of Trapezuntius (?-A. D. 541)

Anthimus of Trapezuntius was raised to the Patriarchate of Constantinople (c. A. D. 535) through the influence of Theodora, who favored the Miaphysites (Smith & Wace, 1877). In A. D. 536 Pope Agapetus arrived at Constantinople and deposed Anthimus. Mennas was accepted as the Patriarch of Constantinople (O' Leary, 2002, pp. 119-120). A synod was held at which Anthimus, Severus of Antioch, Peter of Apamea, and a monk named Zonaras were condemned. By an Imperial edict it was decreed to exile all monophysites and ordered confiscation of all their books. The edict was carried out in all cities except Egypt. Later, Empress Theodore and the Christian Sheikh Harith Ibn Jabala arranged a meeting of monophysite prelates including

Theodosius, the ex-patriarch of Alexandria; Severus, the ex-patriarch of Antioch; Anthimus, the ex-patriarch of Constantinople; Peter of Apamea, Constantius of Laodicea and other bishops who supported the Orthodox faith (Miaphysitism). Subsequently, in c. A. D. 542 Mor Jacob Bardaeus was ordained to lead the faithful.

13. Ivanius (c. A. D. 347-407)

Ivanius (referred to in many texts as John Chrysostom), the Patriarch of Constantinople, was born in Antioch in c. A. D. 347 to Secundus, a military officer and Anthusa. Both parents were noble Christians. His father died while he was young leaving his mother widowed at the age of twenty. Ivanius had an early call to a monastic life but could fulfill his desire only after the death of his mother in c. A. D. 373. He studied law, philosophy and rhetoric under the great pagan orator Libanius of Antioch and theology under Diodore of Tarsus, the leader of the Antiochene School. He was ordained deacon in c. A. D. 381 and served at Antioch under bishop Flavian, who ordained him priest in c. A. D. 386. After his ordination as a priest, he devoted himself to preaching and instruction until he was consecrated as the Patriarch of Constantinople against his wishes in c. A. D. 398 (Joseph, 1969; Cross & Livingstone, 1974; Douglas 1978; Smith & Wace, 1877).

Speeches of Ivanius were rich in the interpretation of the Gospels. His homilies include some on the first and fourth Gospels and eight of St. Paul's letters. His gifted talents and eloquent

rhetoric earned him the name ‘gold-mouthed/ He was a leading exponent of the method of scriptural exegesis (the Antiochean school) that emphasized the literal or natural sense of the text, as opposed to the allegorical sense.

The imperial city, Constantinople, afforded yet more scope for his reforming zeal, but his vigor and thoroughness were not balanced with temperateness and discretion. He gained a large following among the common people. But, he gained the wrath of the wealthy and influential when he castigated them for their misconduct. At about the same time, an unscrupulous alliance was formed against Ivarius between Eudoxia, the wife of the Eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius, and Theophilus, the Archbishop of the rival See of Alexandria. In c. A.D. 403, Theophilus convened a synod to examine a large number of charges, many of which were farfetched. Ivarius refused to appear before the synod, whereupon he was condemned and deposed from his See.

The emperor Arcadius banished Ivarius from the city. He was recalled almost immediately only to be banished again in the following year. He was kept in confinement at Cucusus in Armenia. Ivarius appealed to Pope Innocent I, the Bishop of Rome who, with the help of the Western emperor Honorius, tried to intervene. But enemies of Ivarius thwarted these efforts. He was ordered to be removed to a more remote place at the eastern end of the Black Sea. Ivarius did not survive the journey, dying of exhaustion

at Comana in Pontus on 14th of September, A. D. 407. The official rehabilitation of Ivarius (John Chrysostom) came about 31 years later when his relics were brought to Constantinople and were solemnly received by the then Archbishop Proclus and Emperor Theodosius II, son of Arcadius and Eudoxia.

14. Cyril of Alexandria (c. A. D. 376-444)

Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria is described as the ‘the watchful guardian of the orthodox faith’ (Cayre, 1935). He opened the Council of Ephesus (22nd of June, A. D. 431) in the presence of 159 bishops where he bore witness against Nestorius, who taught the heresy that St. Mary is the mother of only the human nature of Christ.

Cyril was instrumental in adding to the Nicene Creed the phrase ‘the Mother of God’ to describe St. Mary. He succeeded his uncle Theophilus in c. A. D. 412 to the patriarchal See of Alexandria. Cyril’s teachings were based on those of Basil the Great and Athanasius (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

15. Severus of Antioch (c. A. D. 459-538)

Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, was a native of Sozopolis in Pisidia. He studied in Beirut and Alexandria and showed a keen interest in theology at an early age. In c. A. D. 486 he proceeded to Berytus to study law. While on a visit to Jerusalem (c. A. D. 491), he came under the influence of the disciples of Peter the

Iberian and became a monk in Peter's monastery between Gaza and Majuma (*The sixth book of the select letters of Severus*, Vol. 2, 1903).

He was consecrated Patriarch of Antioch in c. A. D. 512. Soon after his consecration he condemned the Council of Chalcedon. Exiled from Antioch in c. A. D. 518 when Justinian I became emperor. He sought refuge in Alexandria where the Miaphysite Patriarch Timothy welcomed him. His doctrine was widely accepted in Syria, and he retained his position of primacy among the Miaphysites until his death. He rejected attempts to separate Christ's two natures and to gloss over his humanity (Douglas, 1978).

Writings of Severus were proscribed. Anyone who possessed his writings and failed to burn them was sentenced (by Justinian?) to lose his right hand. Bar-Hebraeus notes that he died at Alexandria in February, A. D. 543. Severus' concept of the Incarnation was that all the human qualities remained in Christ unchanged in their nature or essence but were amalgamated with the totality of the hypostasis (substance of each of the three persons of the Holy Trinity); that they no longer had a separate existence and having no longer any kind of center or focus of their own, did not constitute a distinct monad (Smith & Wace, 1887).

16. Jacob Baradaeus (c. A. D. 505-578)

Jacob Baradaeus was born at Tella Mouzalat, East of Edessa. To fulfill a vow of his parents, James (Jacob) was placed, at the age of two, under the care of Abbot Eustathius in the monastery of Phesilta, near Nisibis. There he was trained in Greek and Syriac literature, as well as in the strictest asceticism which formed the basis for the severity of his self discipline (Smith & Wace, 1882). In about c. A. D. 528 he went to Constantinople with a fellow monk, Sergis, to plead the cause of Miaphysitism with the Empress and remained there in a monastery for fifteen years until he was consecrated (in c. A. D. 542) as Bishop of Edessa (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

Disguised as a beggar (from which the aliases *Burd'aya* (Syr.), *Barda'tha* (Gr.), meaning 'a coarse horse-cloth' or 'clad in rags') to avoid arrest, he wandered around for many years, preaching and founding churches. He ordained a number of bishops and hundreds of priests. The term 'Jacobites' which is used to refer to the Miaphysites is attributed to Jacob Baradaeus. It is through his labors that the Miaphysites rejected the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon (c. A. D. 451).

He had a reputation of working miracles which became so popular that the sick came from far and near, some even from Persia, to be healed by him. He died in the monastery of Cassianus (Douglas, 1978).

17. Ephraem the Syrian (c. A. D. 306-373)

Ephraem the Syrian, the great classical writer of the Syrian Church, was born in c. A. D. 306 in Nisibis (North-west of Mosul, Mesopotamia). His father is said to have been a heathen priest worshipping an idol called Abnil. But the child Ephraem refused to accompany his parents to the temple of Abnil for which he was severely punished. He was later brought up by St. James, the Bishop of Nisibis (Smith & Wace, 1880). He accompanied St. James to the council at Nicea at the age of 22 (Aphrem, 1963).

Lamy (cited in Cayre, 1935), a noted biographer describes Ephraem as: “From the time he began to lead a monastic life till his death, he ate nothing but barley bread and dried herbs and sometimes green herbs. He drank nothing but water: his flesh had dried up in his bones until he resembled baked clay. His clothing was a mass of patches of the color of mud. He was of small stature; his face always grave that he never laughed; he was bald and wore no beard.”

After baptism in early manhood he was ordained deacon in c. A. D. 338. He probably lived as a monk and apparently never entered into priesthood. Though in the clerical hierarchy he was just a deacon, he is remembered as a great doctor of the universal Church (Aphrem, 1963; Douglas, 1978).

After the death of James, Bishop of Nisibis, Ephraem left

for Edessa (c. A. D. 363) and started the monastic life of extreme austerity during which time he started composing hymns. Some of his works have been translated into English; for example, *Select metrical hymns and homilies of Ephraem Syrus*, translated by Rev. H. Burgess and a sermon against the Jews, *Select works of Ephraem Syrus*, translated by J. B. Morris (Smith & Wace, 1880).

Many of his polemics and ascetic works are in the metrical form *memre* (Syr.). Ephraem's teaching is orthodox, but is conveyed in flowery rhetoric. A definitive study of his theology is still lacking. His poetic gifts were much prized among the Syrians, and he is known as 'the lyre of the Holy Spirit' (Douglas, 1978).

He taught his followers through his songs and revealed divine mysteries in his poetry. About the poet in Ephraem, Lamy wrote, "No other writer has ever possessed the power of bringing tears to the eyes while the reader is profoundly stirred...." Ephraem's teachings are centered on practical Christian life - - free-will, supernatural gift, spiritual combat, and devotion to Virgin Mary (Cayre, 1935).

After the death of Constantine (A.D. 337), Nisibis was invaded by Sapor, King of Persia. The prayers of Ephraem resulted in the withdrawal of Sapor's forces. He died on 9th of June, A. D. 373.

18. Jacob of Sarug (c. A. D. 451-521)

Jacob of Sarug was the Bishop of Batnae and was known as a brilliant Syriac theological writer. He was born as the son of a priest at Kurtnam, and studied at Edessa. In c. A. D. 519, he became Bishop of Batnae, the main town of Sarug in Osrhoene. He died two years later (Douglas, 1978).

Bar-Hebraeus notes (cited in Smith & Wace, 1882) that Jacob employed 70 amanuenses to write his homeletic poems of which 760 exist. The poetic writings include treatises of the great men of the Old Testament, of angels, and of the mysteries of the Son of God. He wrote many letters, sermons, funeral orations, hymns and edifying biographies. Professor W. Wright (cited by Smith & Wace, 1882) comments on his poetic work: "In the wealth of words and ease of expression, he ranks next to Ephraem." Jacob died on the 29th of November, A. D. 521 (Aphrem, 1963).

19. Isaacus (c. A. D. ?-460)

Isaacus was born at Amid (Dierbekir) in Mesopotamia. He was a priest of Antioch. He was under the tutelage of Zenobius, a disciple of St. Ephraem. He died in c. A. D. 460. His feast is celebrated on the 14th of October. He was the author of numerous works in Syriac and is especially known for 104 metrical discourses on a variety of topics, mostly connected with the ascetic life. The seventh discourse speaks of relic and holy days. The sixty-fifth

discourse advises priests to administer physical penances as punishments rather than excommunication (Smith & Wace, 1882).

20. Balai, Bishop of Balsh (? – c. A. D. 450?)

Balai is believed to be a poet, and one of the pupils of St. Ephraem, the Syrian. He was a Corepiscopo of the church at Aleppo. He was a close associate of Acacius, the Metropolitan of Aleppo (d. A. D. 432). According to Bar Shushan (d. 1072), he became Bishop of the city Balsh, today called Maskanah, near Aleppo. In all probability, he died in c. A. D. 450 (Barsaum, 2000). Balai has composed many poems in the five-syllabic meter (*madroshe*). Six of his *madroshe* survive, one on the consecration of a new church in Qenneshrin, and five on the famous bishop Akakios (Acacius?) of Aleppo. Many short liturgical hymns (*bo'vootho*) are ascribed to him. Most of these poems are part of our Church rituals concerning repentance, the dead and other subjects.

21. Barsoumo (c. A. D. ?-457)

Barsoumo, the chief among mourners, is referred to as the violent opponent of the schisms of his time. He was a close associate of Dioscorus, the Patriarch of Alexandria (Smith & Wace, 1877). He was born at Otton to Hanoch and Zachea. His father died while he was a child. He was under the care of his

stepfather until he met an ascetic named Abraham, on the banks of Euphrates, who took him into his monastery. He lived there until the death (c. A. D. 409) of Abraham. Barsoumo attended the General Council at Ephesus (c. A. D. 431) as the delegate of the monasteries in the East. He died on the 3rd of February, A. D. 457 (Aphrem, 1963).

22. Simeon the Stylite (c. A. D. 390-459)

Simeon was the first of the Stylites (the pillar ascetics, originated from the Greek word '*stylos*' which means pillar). He was born as the son of a shepherd at Sisan, a village on the borders of Cilicia and Syria (Smith & Wace, 1887; Cross & Livingstone, 1974; Douglas, 1978). In his teens, he embraced monastic life along with his brother. After living for a while as a monk in the monastery of Eusebona (at Tell 'Ada, between Antioch and Aleppo) he moved to Telanissus. In c. A. D. 423 he started to live on a pillar at Telanissus (Dair Sem'an). Evagrius records that Simeon's pillar was only 3 feet in circumference at the top, which barely afforded standing ground. Asseman has depicted Simeon's column, in his *Life of the Saints*, with a railing or a kind of wooded pulpit. Some such structure was evidently there, not only to prevent him from falling, but also to enable him to write those epistles on all pressing issues of the time. For 36 years, he lived in great austerity on the top of the pillar. The pillar was low to begin with, but he gradually increased the height to 60 feet from the ground,

and lived on the top of it until his death, immersed in adoration and intercession. This novel penance attracted a continuous stream of pilgrims, and he was widely imitated.

A contemporary biographer tells us that Simeon was once seized with an ulcer on his foot which lasted nine months and threatened his penance. The Emperor Theodosius wrote to him and sent three bishops requesting him to descend from the pillar and offered the services of his own physicians to nurse him. Simeon, however, refused to descend from his column and continued with his prayers. He passed the whole of the following Lent without food and on the 38th day was perfectly healed of the ulcer. Simeon was held in great reverence all through his life. Great crowds assembled in July A. D. 459 around his pillar to receive his last words. He died on 2nd of September, A. D. 459. His body was taken with great pomp to Antioch.

After his death a monastery and sanctuary were built on the site of the pillar. There are still extensive remains of the church and monastery that were built around his pillar. A prominent disciple of his was Daniel, the Stylite.

23. Abahai (c. A. D. 345-455)

Abahai, the bishop of Nicea was born in the village of Raksan, in Mardin, probably in the middle of the fourth century. He was ordained priest by Christopher, Bishop of Mardin. He was known as the living saint for his miraculous healing power.

Patriarch Barsoum (2000) records the following about Mor Abahai: “Of the lives of saints and martyrs which we could not ascertain is the history of Abhai the ascetic who came from one of the villages of Mardin. Abhai abandoned the world, became Bishop of Nicea, but had recourse to ascetic life in the mountain of Karkar and built a monastery, where he died in A. D. 455. It bore his name, but was also known as the ‘Monastery of Ladders.’ There is a poem in praise of Abahai said to have been composed in the twelve-syllable meter by Jacob of Sarug or others. Although this bishop (Abahai) was a friend of Theodosius II, according to his anecdotes, none of the old historians bothered to mention him; even the table of the bishops of Nicea does not include his name. Nevertheless, we do not doubt his existence and ascetic life ...”

24. Baselius Yeldho (c. A. D. 1593-1685)

Baselius Yeldho was born in Karakosh (formerly known as Bakudiada or Kooded), in Iraq. He became a monk in Mor Bahnam Monastery in Mosul. He was ordained Maphrian in the year A. D. 1663 by Patriarch Yeshou II. His Catholicate residence was Mor Mathai Monastery in Mosul, Iraq.

In 1684, almost all bishops in the Church gathered at Kurkuma Dayara (the then headquarters of the Patriarchate of Antioch), to assist H. H. Patriarch Abdalmesih I in the consecration of Holy Chrism (*Mooron* - Syr.). After the consecration ceremony, the patriarch discussed the unpleasant situation of the Church in

India and the necessity to send somebody to Malankara (India) so that the Syrian Orthodox Church would not cease. Baselius gladly volunteered for the service and left Iraq in A.D. 1685 by the port of Basra. He was accompanied by his brother Jum'a and three monks by the names of Jowkath, Matthew, and Mor Ivanios Hidayathullah Episcopa (Yacoub, 1958; Aphrem, 1964).

They arrived at Thalassery (northern Kerala, India) and traveled by rough mountains and fearful forests on foot until they reached Kothamangalam. Of the group of five, only three - - Maphrian Baselius Yeldho, Episcopa Hidayatullah Ivanios, and Rabban Matthew reached Kothamangalam.

Foreseeing his death, Baselius consecrated Episcopa Ivanios to the dignity of metropolitan on 14th September, A. D. 1685. And after five days (on the thirteenth day of his arrival) he breathed his last and was entombed in the sanctuary of St. Thomas church, Kothamangalam, Kerala, India.

25. Ignatius Elias III (A. D. 1867-1932)

Mor Ignatius Elias III, the second son of Chorepiscopus Abraham and Maryam, was born in Mardin, Turkey. He was called Nasri. He had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. At the direction of Patriarch Peter IV, Nasri joined the theological school of the forty martyrs. In 1887, he joined Deir al-Za'faran and was ordained Deacon by Patriarch Peter IV. He became a novitiate in 1888 and a monk in 1889 upon which he came to be known as Elias.

Elias was ordained Priest in 1892 by Patriarch Peter IV. (www.sor.eua.edu).

He was later appointed the Chief of the Monastery of the Mor Quryaqos as well as Deir al-Za‘faran. In 1908 Priest Elias was consecrated Bishop of Amid (Diyarbakr) by Patriarch ‘Abded Aloho II and was named Mor Iwanius. Mor Osthathos Sleebea, the delegate of the Holy See of Antioch to India, was also ordained along with Mor Iwanius. In 1912, he was transferred to Mosul. Patriarch ‘Abded Aloho passed away on November 26, 1915, and Mor Iwanius was elected Patriarch and assumed the throne in 1917.

Lord Irwin, then British Viceroy to India wrote to the Patriarch on December 1, 1930 requesting his intervention in person or through a delegate in resolving the schism that had erupted in the Malankara Church. His Holiness responded to the Viceroy’s letter, on December 15, 1930 accepting his invitation.

Mor Elias III left Mosul on February 6, 1931 accompanied by Mor Clemis Yuhanon Abbachi, Rabban Quryaqos and Rabban Yeshu‘ Samuel (later Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel of North America), his secretary Zkaryo Shakir (his brother Joseph’s son) and translator Advocate Elias Ghaduri. They reached Karachi port on March 5, 1931. They were received at Karachi by the Patriarchal Delegate Mor Yulius Elias Qoro, Mor Athanasius Paulos of Alwaye, and several clergymen and faithful. On March

8, 1931 H. H. visited Lord Irwin. He arrived at the Thrikkunathu Seminary in Alwaye on March 21, and offered the Divine Liturgy there on March 22.

On 11 February 1932, the Patriarch arrived at the Manjinikkara Mor Stephanos church. On February 13, Mor Clemis Yuhanon Abbachi offered the Holy *Qurbono*; His Holiness gave the sermon during the liturgy. After the noon prayers and lunch, as was his routine, the Patriarch spent time recording events in his journal; he asked for a dictionary to get clarification for the meaning of a word. Following that, he complained of pain in his head and in a short while entered into eternal rest at 2:30 p. m. On February 14, the mortal remains were interred at Manjinikkara, Kerala, India. On 20 October 1987, Patriarch Mor Zakka I, through the encyclical E 265/87, permitted the Church in Malankara to remember his name in the fifth diptych

26. Gregorius Chathuruthil (A.D. 1848-1902)

Gregorius was born at Mulanthuruthy on 15 June 1848. His parents were Chathuruthil Mathew and Kallarackal Mary. Gregorius was called Geevarghese. He had two brothers and two sisters.

His theological studies were under Rev. Mathen Konatt and more notably under His Grace Mor Koorilos Yuyakim, the delegate of Holy See of Antioch (1846-1874). On 14 September 1858, he was ordained subdecan by His Grace Palakkunnath

Mathews Athanasius. In 1865 he was ordained full deacon by His Grace Mor Koorilos Yuyakim. In the same year he was ordained Priest and subsequently was ordained Corepiscopo.

On 7 April 1872(?) V. Rev. Geevarghese Corepiscopo was ordained Ramban by His Grace Mor Deevannasios Joseph Pulikkottil II. On 10 December 1876 H. H. Moran Mor Ignatius Peter IV (III) ordained Ramban Geevarghese, Metropolitan at the St. Thomas Church, North Paravur and called him Gregorius. On 5 May 1877, H. H. Peter IV appointed Mor Gregorius Geevarghese, Metropolitan of the Niranam Diocese.

On 19 February 1895 His Grace Gregorius started for the Holy Land tour. The group consisted of Deacon Sleeba (later the delegate of the Holy See, Mor Osthathos), V. Rev. Kochuparambil Paulose Ramban, Vattasseril Geevarghese Kathanar, V. Rev. Thoppil Lukose Corepiscopa (South Paravur), Karingathil Skariah Kathanar (Thumpamon) and Puthenpurackal Geevarghese Kathanar (Kadmmanitta).

H. G. Mor Gregorius Geevarghese founded a few schools to facilitate the education of Syrian Christians and to withstand the influence of C. M. S. Missionaries. H. G. Mor Gregorius Geevarghese was a man of prayer and fasting. His Grace emulated the example of St. Antony of Egypt. His Grace was suffering from piles, which became acute by August 1902. On November

2 (morning) His Grace was anointed for the sick and received Holy Qurbono. His Grace was called to eternal rest on 2 November 1902 Sunday (1.00 a. m. Monday?) at Parumala. The Holy remains were interred at Parumala on Tuesday 4 November 1902. As per the Bull of H .H. Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the Patriarch of Antioch, the name of Mor Gregorius was added to the fifth Diptych of Holy Qurbono.

27. Gregorius Abdul Jaleel (A. D.? - A. D. 1671)

Abdul Jaleel was born at Mosul, Iraq. He was ordained Priest upon completing his theological studies. In 1654, Patriarch Ignatius Shem'vun (Simon) I ordained him Bishop by name Themotheos. Until 1664, Mor Themotheos Abdul Jaleel served the diocese of Amid. Subsequently, Mor Themotheos was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem and the ecclesiastical name Gregorius was given as was the tradition.

The Diamper Synod, the Oath of Slanting Cross, and the circumstances in Malankara in A. D. 1653 were known to the Holy See of Antioch. It is at this juncture that the Patriarch deputed Mor Gregorius Abdul Jaleel to Malankara in A. D. 1664. On 1 July 1665, Mor Gregorius ordained Thoma Arkdiyakon episcopa by name Marthoma I. Mor Gregorius and Marthoma I ordained Marthoma II (Curien, 1982).

Mor Gregorius departed for eternal life on 27 April A. D. 1671 and the mortal remains were interred at St. Thomas church,

North Paravur, Kerala, India.

His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas declared Mor Gregorius a Saint vide Apostolic Bull No. 71/2000 dated 4 April 2000. Later, the name of St. Gregorius Abdul Jaleel was included in the fifth diptych of the Holy Qurbono vide Apostolic Bull No. E50/2006 dated 7 February 2006.

Sixth Diptych

For the faithful departed

The sixth diptych is for all the faithful departed. The names of the departed for whom the *Qurbono* is said are remembered, after a silent prayer. The priest draws the sign of cross on the right rim of the paten while remembering the names of the departed.

At the end of the sixth diptych, the congregation asks for the mercies of the Lord, saying: “*Kyrie-eleison*” thrice.

Chapter 12

Prayers for the Faithful Departed

The Church believes that the faithful departed are present in the Holy Mass along with the living faithful. Holy Mass and all prayers of the Church include intercessory prayers for the faithful departed. St. Peter ascertains that the judgement is for both the living and the dead. *“But they will have to give an account of themselves to God, who is ready to judge the living and the dead”* - 1 Peter 4:5. St. Peter explains, why Jesus Christ preached the Gospel to the departed. *“That is why the Good News was preached also to the dead, ...”* - 1 Peter 4:6.

The priest says an intercessory prayer for all the faithful departed: *“O Lord God, Lord of spirits and all flesh, remember all those who have departed from us in the true faith. Give rest to their souls and bodies and spirits and deliver them from endless condemnation, and make them rejoice in the light of Thy countenance. Blot out their offenses and enter not into judgement with them, for in Thy presence there is none sinless except Thy Only-begotten Son, through whom we hope to find mercies and forgiveness of sins for us and for them.”*

The congregation responds saying: *“O God, absolve, pardon, and sanctify both us and them of the sins committed*

before Thee, willingly or unwillingly and knowingly and unknowingly.” While the congregation responds, the priest silently prays: *“Forgive God, our faults committed in word, deed, and thought, those that are manifest and those that are concealed and yet are known to Thee.”*

Having received the body and blood of the Savior which St. Ignatius referred to as “the medicine of immortality,” the faithful departed are living in the hope of Christ’s second coming. The congregation intercedes for the remission of sins of the faithful departed, so that the Lord may make them worthy of inheriting the heavenly kingdom.

Extending and elevating his hands, the priest says: *“Keep us O Lord without sin until the end of our life, and gather us at the feet of Thy elect ones, when Thou will, and where Thou will as Thou will, only without shame by reason of our faults, that in this and in all things Thy all-honored and blessed name be glorified and magnified with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and of Thy Holy Spirit, all-holy, and good, and adorable, and life-giving Who is of one substance with Thee now and forever, world without end.”* The congregation responds: *“As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”*

While remembering the faithful departed, the congregation prays to God to keep the living faithful away from sin and for a

Christian end that befits the truly faithful. Both the living and the departed await the second coming of our Lord. The Church affirms the everlasting nature of God and hopes for the eternal life to come, for which we were made worthy by the great sacrifice of our Savior. *“You, Lord, in the beginning created the earth, and with your hands you made the heavens. They will disappear, but you will remain; they will all wear out like clothes. ...But you are always the same, and your life never ends”* - Hebrew 1: 10-12. The priest greets the congregation, without turning his face or moving, saying: *“Peace be to you all”* The congregation responds: *“And to your spirit.”* The priest blesses the congregation saying: *“The love of great God our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all, my brethren, forever.”* This blessing refers to Christ, in contrast to the other blessings which refer to the Holy Trinity. This is because of the importance of the redemptive passion, which is commemorated in the succeeding prayers.

Chapter 13

The Fracture and Commixture

The fracture and commixture commemorate the redemptive passion of our Lord. According to Ignatius Aphrem Barsaum (2000), the prayer of fracture was written by Jacob bar Salibi, followed by four supplicatory verses by Mor Jacob.

The veil is pulled over the sanctuary before the prayers of fracture and commixture as a reminder of the time of His redemptive passion, death, burial, and resurrection, when the earth was engulfed in darkness (Luke 23:44; Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

The priest, while breaking the host with his hands, says silently: *“Thus truly did the Word of God suffer in the flesh and was sacrificed and broken on the Cross; and His soul was departed from His body, while His Godhead was in no way departed either from His soul or from His body.”* The priest cleaves the host along the center into two halves, though not separating it at the bottom end and then joins the top while separating the bottom. He continues, saying: *“And He was pierced in His side with a spear and there flowed out blood and water for the atonement of the whole world, and His Holy Body was strained therewith.”* The priest dips the top edge of the right half

of the host into the chalice, while making the sign of the cross with the host. To symbolize the flowing of blood, the left half of the host is splotted at five points along the symbol of a cross, with the edge of the right half dipped in wine. Then to symbolize the bathing of His body, the edge of the right half is again dipped into the chalice while the priest makes the sign of the cross, and the symbol of the cross is drawn completely on the left half. The priest continues: *“For the sins of the whole world, the Son died on the Cross.”* The two halves of the host are held together and turned counter-clockwise, a half turn, to symbolize our sinful nature. The right half is then dipped into the chalice, and it is used to make the sign of the cross on the left half. The priest turns the host clockwise to symbolize our redemption from sinful life. While doing so, he says: *“And His soul came and was united with His body and He turned us from the wrong practice to the right deeds.”* The priest then joins the two halves and says: *“By His blood He reconciled and united the heavenly hosts with the earthly beings, and the people with the gentiles, and the soul with the body.”* Then raising the host to symbolize the resurrection, he completes the prayer saying: *“The third day He rose again from the sepulchre, and He is One Immanuel, and is indivisible into two natures after the unity. Thus we believe and thus we confess and thus we confirm that this Body is of this Blood and that this Blood is of this Body.”* The two halves are held in the left hand with the right half over the left. The upper sector of the right half is separated and put into the chalice. This is symbolic

of the proclamation that the Body is of the Blood. The upper sector of the left half is then separated and dipped into the chalice while the priest makes the sign of the cross, and the wine is smeared on both halves at the top.

The fracture is completed in different patterns, based on the Church calendar and the number of hosts used, as shown in figures 1-7. During the fracture, the priest silently sings the metrical homily composed by Mor Jacob of Sarug (c. A.D. 451-521): *“O Father of Truth, behold Thy Son, the well-pleasing Sacrifice. Accept Thou Him who died for me and may I be forgiven through Him. Receive this offering at my hands and reconcile unto Thee. And remember not the sins I committed before Thy excellence. Behold His blood shed on Golgotha by the wicked, pleads for me; for its sake receive my petition. As great are my offenses, so great are Thy mercies. Thy mercies would weigh down the balance than the mountains that are weighed of thee. Look upon the sins and look upon the offering for them, for the offering and the sacrifice are far greater than the sins. Because of my sin, Thy beloved One bore the nails and the spear. His sufferings are enough to reconcile Thee and by Them may I live. Glory be to the Father, who delivered His Son for our salvation, and adoration be to the Son who died on the cross and restored life to all of us, and praise be to the Holy Spirit who began and fulfilled the mystery of our salvation. O Trinity exalted above all, have mercy on us all.”*

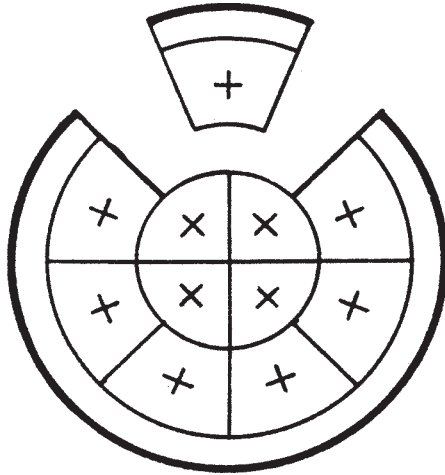


Figure - 1

Lamb Pattern

to be used from *koodash eetho*
(Sanctification day) to Easter.

This pattern is also used on
Maundy Thursday and Gospel Saturday.

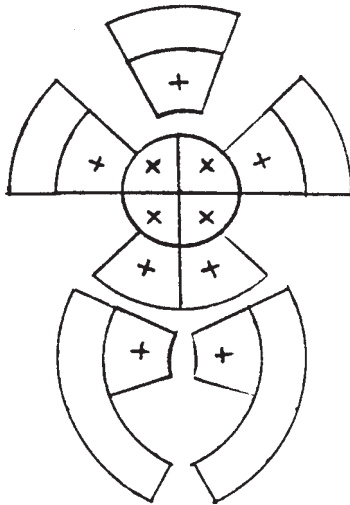


Figure - 2

Crucifix Pattern

to be used from Easter

to the feast of Holy Cross

(Some teachers of the Church are
of the opinion that this pattern should be used
in the Holy *Qurbano* for the departed souls)

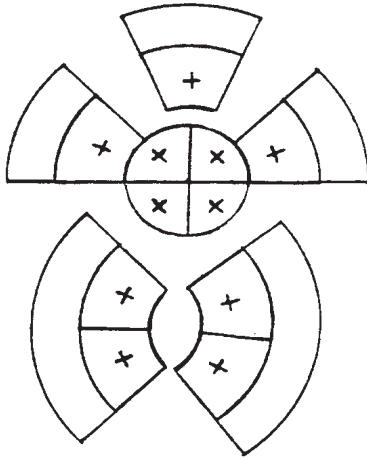


Figure - 3

Cross Pattern

to be used from the feast of Holy Cross to *koodash eetho* (also used in the Holy *Qurbono* for the departed souls)

When there is large number of faithful to receive Holy communion, more than one host is used. However, if it necessary to use more than two hosts, an odd number of hosts such as 3,5,7,... *etc.* should be used.

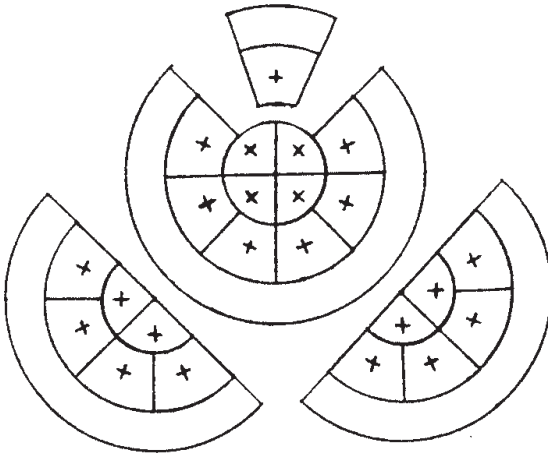


Figure - 4
Pattern of Two Hosts

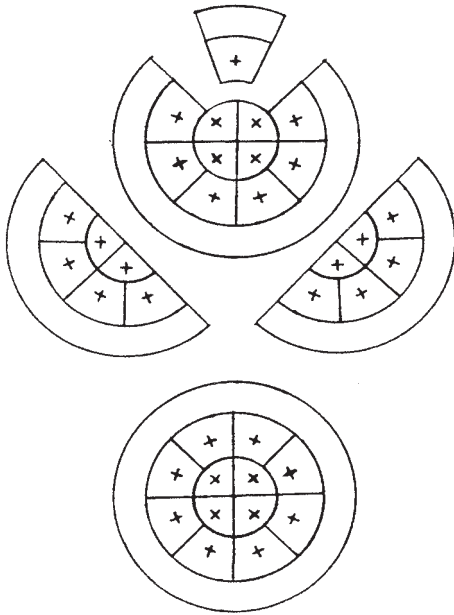


Figure - 5
Pattern of Three Hosts

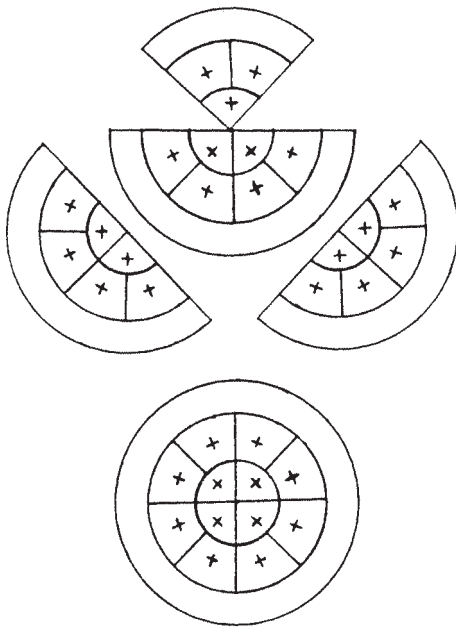


Figure - 6
Pattern of Three Hosts ('Alternative')

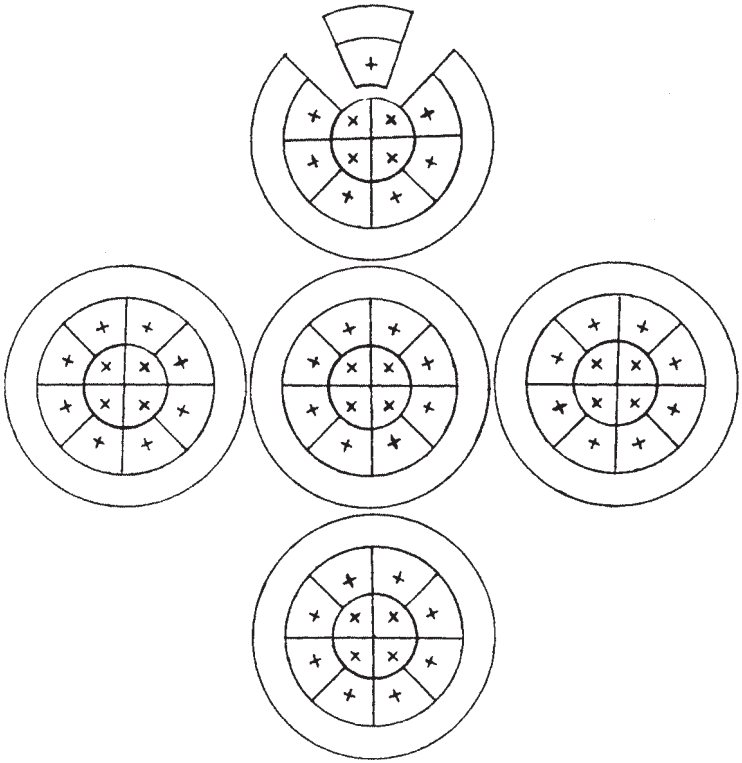


Figure - 7
Pattern of Five Hosts

The priest completes the fracture and commixture with the silent prayer: *“Thou art Christ the God who was pierced in His side on the heights of Golgotha in Jerusalem for us. Thou art the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Do Thou pardon our offense and forgive our sins and set us at thy right hand.”* The piece of the host dipped earlier in wine, is again dipped thrice into the Chalice and is used to smear wine over all fragments of the host—twice clockwise and once counter-clockwise.

The congregation sings a song appropriate for the day during these silent prayers by the priest. Following the song, the deacon leads the Litany of Supplications. These prayers are optional and are often used to allow time for the priest to complete the fracture and commixture.

Chapter 14

Lord's Prayer & The Elevation

The veil concealing the sanctuary is withdrawn following the prayers of fracture and commixture to symbolize the days before the Pentecost, when the resurrected Christ appeared to His disciples several times. *“To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days ...”* - Acts 1:3.

The priest, extending and elevating his hands, prays: *“O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who art blessed by the Cherubim, and glorified by the Seraphim and exalted by thousands of thousands and myriads of hosts rational and heavenly, Thou who sanctifies and makes perfect the offerings and fruits offered to Thee for a sweet smelling fragrance, sanctify our bodies, our souls and spirits, that with pure hearts and with faces unashamed we may call upon Thee O God heavenly Father, and pray saying: ‘Our Father, who art in heaven.’”*

The congregation continues: *“Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day the bread we need: and forgive us our debts and sins as we forgive our debtors. Let us not into temptation,*

but deliver us from the evil one; for Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen””

The meaning of ‘hallowed be Thy name’ is that His name be hallowed in our minds (cf. Leviticus 11:45). And the word ‘hallowed’ is used in the sense ‘be glorified’ (cf. Matthew 5:16). (also see, Mose Bar Kepho, 1988, p. 57; Dionysius Bar Saleebi, 1990, p. 105). The prayer, ‘Give us this day the bread we need,’ means that we should not be anxious about tomorrow (cf. Mathew 6:34) and that we need the ‘living bread which came down from heaven’ (John 6:51) for our spiritual life in this world. A detailed interpretation of Lord’s Prayer is beyond the scope of this book.

Our right to be called the children of God is a gift of grace which we receive through the Sacrifice at Golgotha. “... *but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’*” - Romans 8:15. It is apt that the Lord’s prayer follows immediately after the commemoration of His sufferings. Clement of Jerusalem (c. A. D.313-386) expounds on the right of sonship to God that is received through baptism. The baptized become the children of God (as before the fall from the Garden of Eden). The prayers of the sacrament of baptism elaborate on the sonship to God in great detail.

The priest, as a reaffirmation of the Lord’s prayer, says: “*Yes, O Lord our God, lead us not into intolerable temptation, but deliver us from evil and prepare us for a passage out of*

temptation that we may offer unto thee glory and thanks, and to Thy Only-begotten Son, and unto Thy Spirit all-holy and good and adorable and life-giving, who is of one substance with Thee, now and forever, world without end." The people respond saying: "Amen."

The priest greets the congregation saying: "*Peace be to you all.*" The congregation responds: "*And to your spirit.*"

The deacon exhorts the congregation to bow their heads before the merciful Lord, before partaking of the divine and holy Mysteries. The priest, then again extending and elevating his hands, says a prayer seeking absolution: "*O Lord, Thy servants have bowed down their heads to Thee awaiting Thy abundant mercies. Sent for Thy blessings and sanctify our souls and bodies and spirits that we may be worthy to partake of the Life-giving Mysteries of Christ, Our Savior. So shall we offer glory and thanks to Thee and to Thy Only-begotten Son and to Thy Holy Spirit, all-holy, good and adorable, life-giving and of one substance with Thee, now and forever.*" The people respond saying: "Amen"

The priest greets the congregation saying: "*Peace be to you all.*" The people respond: "*And to Thy spirit.*"

The priest touches with his right hand the *tablitho*, the paten, and then the chalice. Making the sign of the cross on himself, and then on his left and right, the priest turns to the congregation and

blesses the people saying: *“The grace and mercies of the Holy Trinity, glorious, uncreated, self-existent, eternal, adorable, and of one substance be with you all my brethren, forever.”*

The blessing (*rooshmo* - Syr.) has its roots in the blessing that Christ gave his disciples before His ascension. *“... and he lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came about that while He was blessing them, He parted from them”* - Luke 24:50,51.

The prayers following the third blessing commemorate the ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven. The deacon alerts the congregation to attend with reverence and fear. This pronouncement is ascribed to Mose Bar Kephso (King, 1947). The congregation commemorates His ascension with reverence. The people beseech the Lord for mercy and compassion.

The two deacons, standing with lighted candles on either side of the priest, remind us of the two men dressed in white who proclaimed on our Lord's ascension: *“Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? ...”* - Acts 1:11.

The priest, lifting the paten ceremoniously with both hands, says: *“It is right that these Mysteries be given only to the holy and to the pure.”* Only those who have received the first fruit of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:23) are worthy of receiving the Holy communion. *“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the*

body and the blood of the Lord' - 1 Corinthians 11:27. The people respond saying: "*None is holy, save the One Holy Father, the One Holy Son, and the One Holy Spirit.*"

The priest slowly places the paten down on the *tablitho* and, as he lifts up the chalice, the people say: "*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Living Holy Spirit, Who are One, for ever and ever Amen.*"

The priest holds his hands crosswise with the paten in his right hand and the chalice in his left. His right hand is above his left as they are held over the *tablitho*. The priest then says: "*The One Holy Father with us, Who, by His mercy, created the world.*" The people respond: "*Amen*" The priest continues: "*The One Holy Son with us, Who by His own precious sufferings, redeemed the world*" The people respond: "*Amen.*" The priest completes the prayer saying: "*The One Holy Spirit, with us, the perfecter and fulfiller of all that has been and all that will be. May the name of the Lord be blessed for ever and ever.*" The people respond: "*Amen.*"

The holiness and unity of the Trinity are reaffirmed in this prayer which proclaims the dwelling of the Trinity, particularly of the Holy Spirit among us. "*But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you*" - John 16:7.

Chapter 15

Hymns of Eucharistic Devotion

The Church commemorates the saints and seeks their intercession in the hymns of eucharistic devotion (*quqal'yon* - Syr.). The hymn that immediately follows the elevation exhorts the congregation to remember our fathers who taught us to be the children of God. The congregation beseeches the Son of God to grant them rest with the righteous and the just in His eternal Kingdom.

The veneration and love with which Christians regarded the martyrs fervently grew even beyond the periods of persecution. The teaching of the Church regarding the communion of saints developed into a living reality in the lives of faithful. The remains of martyrs were given special honor because curative and other miraculous powers were ascribed to them. This had its roots in the Old Testament tradition of venerating the remains and relics of the prophets and holy fathers. “... *and as they were burying a man, behold they saw a marauding band; and they cast the man into the grave of Elisha. And when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet - 2 Kings 13:21. “And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick and the diseases left them*

and the evil spirits went out” - Acts 19:11,12. Devout persons especially travelled long distances to visit the tombs of specially-revered martyrs, and called upon their intercession in time of need. The holy relics were transferred, especially of newly-discovered ones was celebrated with colorful religious ceremony (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958).

Prayers of Devotion and Intercession to St. Mary

The Church venerates the memory of the Ever Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God, who is most exalted among the saints. The Church rededicates itself as the bride of Christ and prays for intercession through St. Mary. The congregation joins the priest in singing the hymn based on Psalms. *“Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear; Forget your people and your father’s house; Then the King will desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, bow down to Him” - Psalm 45:10-11. Several alternate hymns are used in seeking intercession of St. Mary. The theme of these hymns is the immaculate conception of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Hymns of Devotion and Intercession to Saints

The Church reveres the memory of the saints singing the hymn based on Psalms. *“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our*

God. They will still yield fruit in the old age; they shall be full of sap and very green” - Psalm 92:12-14. Other hymns commemorate the patron saint of the parish or the saint whose feast is being celebrated. The people beseech the saint to intercede as the head of the congregation, just as Moses interceded for Israel (Psalm 34:15; Genesis 18:32; James 5: 17-18).

Prayers for the Departed Clergy

The congregation intercedes for the departed clergy singing the hymn based on Psalms. *“Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy godly ones sing for joy. For the sake of David Thy servant, do not turn away the face of thine anointed. If your sons will keep my covenant, and my testimony, which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever” - Psalms 132: 9-10,12. The congregation prays for the departed clergy to make them worthy of the heavenly abode, and of the crown that the Holy Spirit plaits for those who gave unblemished offerings to God.*

Prayers for the Faithful Departed

The congregation intercedes for the faithful departed, singing the hymn based on Psalms. *“Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes” - Psalm 103:13,15.*

Hymns sung by the congregation pray to the Lord to awaken His servants, who with trust and confidence have fallen asleep, by His life-giving voice, from the graves to Paradise. “... *for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement*” - John 5: 28, 29.

All the hymns sung are based on the Lord's second coming and the eternal life. “*Truly, truly I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live*” - John 5:25. “*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first*” - 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

Chapter 16

Prayers in Anticipation of the Second Coming

The priest turns to the west and asks for the intercession of the congregation, saying: “*My brethren and my beloved, pray for me.*” The veil is then pulled across the sanctuary to symbolize the age in which the Church awaits the second coming of our Lord.

The congregation awaits for the second coming of the Lord and in the hope of the resurrection of the departed. “*The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes*” - Joel 2:31; “*But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken*” - Matthew 24:29.

The priest kneels down before the altar and says a silent prayer beseeching the Lord to make him worthy of receiving the Holy Body and Blood. Then, standing on the *durgo*, he partakes of the Holy Eucharist, saying two silent prayers.

If a prelate is present, the celebrant steps down from the *durgo*; the prelate then partakes of the Holy Eucharist. The attending clergy also receive the Holy Eucharist from the celebrant.

The veil is then withdrawn to symbolize the second coming of our Lord and the day of judgement. The priest, carrying the paten in his right hand and the chalice in his left hand, turns counter-clockwise to face the congregation to specially signify the coming of the Lord of Judgement. This is in contrast to the usual clockwise turn, which is symbolic of the first coming of our Lord as the Redeemer. The priest, standing on the *durgo*, blesses the congregation saying: *“From Thy atoning altar, may remission descend (the priest descends from the step) to Thy servants, O Son of God, Who came for our salvation and will come again for our resurrection and restoration of our kind, forever”*

The priest then proceeds west in a procession which signifies the anticipated second coming of our Lord (from the East). *“For just as the lightning comes from the East, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be”* - Matthew:24:27. The accompanying deacons with lighted candles, *marvahtso*, and bells represent the tumultuous second coming of the Lord with trumpets and accompanied by the angels. *“And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other”* - Matthew 25:31. *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up”* - 2 Peter 3:10.

Before proceeding west, the priest takes a forward step and invokes the Lord to bless the congregation saying: *“Stretch out, O Lord, Thy invisible hand and bless this assembly of Thy worshippers who are prepared to receive Thy precious Body and Blood for the remission of debts and for the forgiveness of sins, and for confidence in Thee, our Lord and God forever.”* The congregation responds: *“Amen.”* The priest continues the invocation: *“May the mercy of the great God, and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, be upon the bearers of these Holy Mysteries, and upon those who receive them, and upon all those who have labored and shared and share in them. May the mercy of God be upon us and upon them in both worlds forever.”* The congregation chants the hymn: *“O Lord, have mercy upon us. Our Lord, spare us and have mercy upon us. O Lord, hear us and have mercy upon us. Glory to God on high, exaltation to His Mother, a crown of praises to the martyrs and compassion and mercy to the departed, Halleluiah.*

Some authors mention a practice of giving the Holy Communion at this time. There is a strict injunction against this practice. The Holy Communion should be given only after the final blessing (Hudaya canon, 1974; Patriarchal Bull, n.d).

The priest before returning to the altar stretches out his hands and says: *“Glory be to Thee, Glory be to Thee, Glory be to Thee our Lord and God for ever. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, let not*

Thy body, which we have eaten, and Thy atoning Blood, which we have drunk, be unto us neither for judgement nor for condemnation, but for the life and redemption of all of us. And have mercy upon us.” The congregation chants the hymn: “The world shall kneel to Thee and worship Thee, and every tongue shall praise Thy Name, for Thou art the Raiser of the dead and the good hope to those who are burried, Halleluiah.” The priest returns to the altar where he sets the paten and chalice on the *tablitho*.

Chapter 17

The Conclusion

All the prayers of the Holy *Qurbano* are addressed to the Father. However, the very last concluding prayer, known as prayer of thanksgiving, is addressed to the Son (Mose Bar Kefho, 1988, p. 66). The priest thanks the Father on behalf of the congregation for having considered us worthy of partaking of His heavenly table. The priest beseeches abundant blessings for the assembled faithful. After the prayers of thanksgiving, the faithful are dismissed.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

The priest, with his hands crossed, says: *“We give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for the abundance of Thy mercy by which Thou has accounted us worthy to partake of Thy heavenly table. Grant, my Lord that our participation in Thy Holy sacraments be not a cause for our condemnation and that being accounted worthy to partake of Thy Holy spirit we may find a share and an inheritance with all the righteous for ever. We offer up glory and praise to thee and to Thy Only-begotten Son, and to Thy Holy Spirit forever.”* The people respond: *“Amen.”*

The priest greets the congregation, saying: “*Peace be to you all.*” The deacon then exhorts the people, saying: “*After having received these Holy Mysteries that have been administered, let us bow our heads before the merciful Lord.*”

The priest continues the prayer of thanksgiving: “*O God, who art great and marvelous, who did descend from heaven and came down for the salvation of our human race, have compassion and mercy upon us, that at all times we may glorify Thee and God the Father who bore Thee and Thy all-holy with good and adorable and quickening Spirit of one substance with Thee, now and forever, world without end.*” The people respond: “*Amen.*”

The priest then chants the concluding song (*huthomo* -Syr.) appropriate for the day of the offering.

The Dismissal of the Faithful:

The priest dismisses the congregation saying: “*Our brethren and beloved, we commit you unto the grace and mercy of the Holy and Glorious Trinity with the blessings and food for your journey which you have received from the atoning altar of the Lord; depart now in peace. The far off and the near, the living and the departed, saved by the victorious Cross of our Lord, and inscribed with the seal of the Holy Baptism, may the Blessed Trinity redeem your debts and forgive your*

sins, and grant rest to the souls of your departed. And may I, the weak and the sinful servant, be favored and helped by your prayers. Glad and rejoicing go now in peace, and pray for me always.”

The Holy altar is again referred to as the source of all graces. The blessings of the Trinity which are common to other blessings are again invoked. The teaching of the Church regarding the continued spiritual growth of the faithful departed is once again proclaimed.

The congregation responds: “*Amen. May the Lord accept your offering and help us by your prayers.*” The veil is drawn across the sanctuary denoting the conclusion of the public celebration of the Holy *Qurbano*.

The priest gives the sacrament to those prepared to receive it. The priest, while saying the post-communion prayers, stores a portion of the sacrament in the pyx and consumes the remaining. The priest washes the altar vessels while reciting the appropriate prayers.

The celebrant takes leave of the altar, stepping down from the *durgo* and kissing the middle of the *tablitho* thrice, saying: “*Farewell, O Holy and divine altar of the Lord. Henceforth I know not whether I shall return to Thee or not May the Lord make me worthy to see Thee in the Church of the Firstborn*

which is in heaven, and in this covenant do I trust. Farewell, O Holy and atoning altar. May the Holy Body and the atoning Blood that I have received from Thee be to me for remission of debts and for the forgiveness of sins and for confidence before the awful judgement-seat of our Lord and our God, forever. Farewell, O Holy Altar-Table of Life and entreat our Lord Jesus Christ that my remembrance may not cease from Thee henceforth and forever, world without end, Amen.”

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Author Index

A

Anson, P. R., 11, 15, 22
Aphrem, P. Ramban., 122, 124, 126, 129

B

Barsoum, Aphram. H. H., 79, 125, 128
Bihlmeyer, K., & Tuchle, H., 8, 12, 71, 102, 104
Blunt, J. H., 94

C

Cayre, A. A., 103, 107, 108, 123
Codrington, H. W., 7
Comfort, 115
Connolly, R. H., 81
Cross, F. L., & Livingstone, E. A., 107, 109 - 127

D

Douglas, J. D., 108, 110 - 124
Dionysius Bar Saleebi, 22, 93, 150

E

Eusebius., 103, 106 - 107

F

Ferguson, S. B., & Wright, D. F., 114
Fuller, T., 64, 103

J

Jean-Nesmy, C., 1
Joseph, P., 117

K

King, A. A., 20, 40, 82

Queen of the Sacraments

M

Mingana, A., 65, 67, 71, 104
Moolaveetil, L. Fr., 45, 49, 54
Mose Bar Kephos, 93, 150, 162

P

Paul, B.D., 4
Pullock, J., 99 -101

Q

Quasten, J, 110 - 113

R

Rajan, K. M., 106
Roulin, D. E. A., 27

S

Salaville, P. S., 6, 10, 19, 29, 30, 35
Samuel, A. Yeshu. H.E., 18, 24
Schmidt, H., 38
Smith, W., & Wace, H. , 108 - 127

V

Verheul, A., 1, 2, 36

W

Webb, G., 11, 19
Wace & Piercy, 115

Y

Yacoub III, Ignatius. H. H., 3, 67, 69, 129

Z

Zakka I, Ignatius. H. H., 3, 97, 131, 133, 134

Subject Index

Abahai, 127 - 128
Alb, 27
Altar, 8, 19
Altar Cloth, 20
Altar Canopy, 11
Altar Table, 19
Altar Stone, 20
Anaphora, 79
Anthimus, 116 - 117
Antioch, 2, 3
Athanasius, 109 - 110
Baldachin, 11
Baldachinum, 11
Balai, 125
Baptistery, 8
Barsoumo, 125 - 126
Baseleus Yeldho, 128 - 129
Baselius of Caesarea, 111 - 112
Batrasheel, 32
Bells, 17
Book of Life, 94
Cabalana, 25
Candles, 14
Caso, 22
Catastroma, 7
Censer, 13, 62-64
Chalice, 22
Chasuble, 30
Chithol 20
Chiton, 27
Church, 1-5
Ciborium magnum, 11

Ciborium, 11
Clemis, 108 - 109
Council at Ephesus, 105 - 106
Council at Nicea, 102 - 104
Council at Constantinople, 104 - 105
Cross, 12
Crown, 58 - 60
Crozier, 33
Cyril of Alexandria, 119

Dionysius, 109
Dioscorus, 114
Diptychs, 94 - 134
Durgo, 12

Ephraem, the Syrian, 122 - 123
Esphugo, 23
Eucharist, 21
Eucharistic bread, 21, 141 - 147

Fan, 16
Finger-bowl, 24

Girdle, 29
Gogultho, 18
Gomourto, 24, 90
Gregorius Chathuruthil, 131 - 133
Gregorius Abdul Jaleel, 133 - 134
Gregory of Nyssa, 113, 114

Hamnikho, 27-28, 57
Hand Cross, 33
Holy Spirit, 71 - 73
Huthro, 34 - 35

Icons, 33
Ignatius, 107 - 108
Ignatius Elias, 129 - 131
Incense pot, 14

- Issacus, 124 - 125
Ivanus, 117 - 118
Jacob of Sarug, 124, 140
Jacob Baradaeus, 121
James, brother of Christ, 106 - 107
Julius, 111
Kaukbo, 23
Kesthrumo, 6 - 7
Khazaranion, 34 - 35
Kiss of Peace, 79 - 80
Koobatho, 30 - 31
Kutino, 26 - 27
Kyrie-eleison, 54
Lahmo, 21
Lectern, 18
Lord's Prayer, 149 - 150
M'shone, 26
Madhb'ho, 7 - 8
Marvahtso, 16
Masnaftso, 31
Narthex, 6
Nave, 6 - 7
Nicene Creed, 64-75
Paten, 22
Pectoral Cross, 33
Peelaso, 22
Phaino, 30
Pheero, 26
Philoxenus of Mabug, 115 - 116
Phirmo, 13
Prayer table, 18
Pre-anaphora, 61
Preparatory Prayers, 45-51

Proemion, 48 - 49
Pyx, 25
Sakro, 32
Sanctuary, 7 - 9
Second coming, 158 - 161
Sedro, 49
Severus of Antioch, 119 - 120
Sheelamudi, 31
Shoes, 26
Shushafo, 24, 83-85
Simeon, the Stylite, 126 - 127
Sleebo, 12
Sleeves, 29 - 30
Sponge, 23
Spoon, 23, 91
St. John, the Baptist, 98 - 99
St. Mary, 98, 155
St. Paul, 100 - 101
St. Peter, 99 - 100
St. Stephen, 99
St. Thomas, 101
Star, 23
Stole, 27-28
Symbolism, 36 - 37
Synods, 102 - 106
Syrian Orthodox Church, 1 - 4
Tabalitho, 20, 96
Tester, 11
Thalbestho, 24
Tharvodo, 23
Timotheus, 114 - 115
Thiraseela, 10
Thronos, 7, 8, 19
Thuyobo, 45
Trinity, 67 - 68

Trisagion, 53 - 54

Uraroh Raboh, 32

Uraroh, 28

Vilo, 10

Virikkoottam, 24

Zendo, 29 - 30

Zunoro, 29

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Glossary of Syriac Words

<i>Beth-mamodiso</i>	<i>baptistry</i>
<i>Cabalana</i>	cover of chalice/paten
<i>Caso</i>	chalice
<i>Durgo</i>	step
<i>Esp hugo</i>	sponge of fine texture
<i>Gogultho</i>	pulpit
<i>Gomourto</i>	Cushion
<i>Hamnikho</i>	Stole worn by priest
<i>Kasheesho</i>	priest
<i>Kaukbo</i>	star
<i>Koobatho</i>	headdress of monks
<i>Korooyo</i>	deacon of fourth order
<i>Kutino</i>	white suplice
<i>Lah'mo</i>	Leavened bread
<i>M'sone</i>	shoes
<i>Madhb'ho</i>	sanctuary
<i>Marvahtso</i>	fan
<i>Masnafso</i>	head cover worn by bishops
<i>Moorone</i>	Holy chrism
<i>Mooroneeso</i>	crozier
<i>Mshamshanitho</i>	finger-bowl
<i>Peelaso</i>	paten
<i>Phaino</i>	chasuble
<i>Pheero</i>	skull cap
<i>Phirmo</i>	censer, Incense

Queen of the Sacraments

<i>Proemion</i>	introduction
<i>Sakro</i>	a square piece of cloth, Shield
<i>Sedro</i>	expiatory prayer
<i>Shamshono</i>	full deacon who assists priest
<i>Shushafo</i>	veil/piece of cloth
<i>Sleebo</i>	holy cross
<i>Tabalitho</i>	alter stone
<i>Thakso</i>	Order, rite, etc
<i>Thalbestho</i>	piece of cloth covering altar stone
<i>Tharvado</i>	spoon
<i>Thronos</i>	altar
<i>Thuyobo</i>	preparation
<i>Uraroh</i>	stole worn by deacon
<i>Vilo</i>	curtain
<i>Youphidakino</i>	deacon of fifth order
<i>Zendo</i>	maniples (sleeves)
<i>Zunoro</i>	girdle

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