



Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

Lineamenta

The Response of the Church to the Challenges of Today:

Simplicity in Life, Witness in Family
and Mission of the Migrants

“Let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Mt. 5: 16)

Major Archiepiscopal Curia

Mount St Thomas, Kakkanad, Kochi - 682 030

15 March, 2016

Title:

The Response of the Church to the Challenges of Today: Simplicity in Life, Witness in Family and Mission of the Migrants (English)

Published and distributed by:

The Secretariat, The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly-2016
Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, Kochi – 682 030, Kerala, India

Layout and Printing:

Viani Printings, Kochi - 682 018
Ph.: 0484 2401635

(For private circulation only)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION	7
----------------------------	---

SECTION ONE

SIMPLICITY IN THE CHURCH AND IN INDIVIDUAL LIFE

INTRODUCTION	11
--------------------	----

1. THE SIMPLE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS	
1.1. Jesus Christ: The Incarnation of Simplicity	12
1.2. The Inner Freedom of Jesus: The Height of Simplicity	13
1.3. The Simplicity of Jesus and the Disciple's Call to Share	15
2. SIMPLICITY IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH	
2.1. Holy Simplicity and Practical Christian Life	17
2.2. Simplicity in the Use of Human Resources.....	19
2.3. Simplicity and Eco-Spirituality	20
3. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO SIMPLICITY	
3.1. Consumerism and Human Progress.....	20
3.2. Obsession with Luxuries in Daily Life	21
3.3. Extravagance in Celebrations and Religious Practices	23
4. THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF SIMPLICITY - PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS	
4.1. Pastoral leadership	26
4.2. The Religious	27
4.3. Parish and Pastoral Life	28

4.4. New Challenges in Pastoral Care	29
4.5. Christian Homes	30
CONCLUSION	30
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	31

SECTION TWO

WITNESS IN FAMILY

INTRODUCTION	33
--------------------	----

Part I

1. THE GOSPEL OF FAMILY	
1.1. God's Plan for Family	34
1.2. Family as the Domestic Church	37
1.3. Family as the Basic Cell of Society	38

Part II

2. CHALLENGES OF THE CONTEMPORARY FAMILY	
2.1. The Structure and Sustainability of the Family...	39
2.2. Affectivity and Emotional Maturity	40
2.3. Social, Cultural, Economic and Ecological Challenges	42

Part III

3. PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENRICH THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE TODAY	
3.1. Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family	44
3.2. Accompanying Families and Young Couples	47
3.3. Family and Christian Formation	48
CONCLUSION	50
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	51

SECTION THREE

MISSION OF THE MIGRANTS

INTRODUCTION	53
1. Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Migration....	54
2. The Nature and Complexity of Migration	56
3. The Syro-Malabar Migration: History and Growth.....	57
4. The Challenges of the Syro-Malabar Migration	61
5. The Prospects of Syro-Malabar Migration	65
CONCLUSION	77
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.....	78
GENERAL CONCLUSION	81
ABBREVIATIONS	84



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Major Archiepiscopal Assembly of the Syro-Malabar Church is a restored and updated form of an ancient ecclesial institution of the St. Thomas Christians called Yogam. Ordinarily, the Major Archbishop convokes the Assembly every five years and “reviews the various areas of the Church’s apostolate and service to the world and explores more efficacious ways.”¹ For the forthcoming Assembly, to be held from 25 to 28 August 2016, the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church held in January-2015 decided to invite themes from the faithful to understand better ‘the signs of the times’ and to be more efficacious in her ways of being in the world today. Accordingly, themes were received from eparchies, religious institutes, migrant communities and individuals. The Synod of Bishops held in August-2015 selected the most suggested triple themes from the faithful, namely, Simplicity in Life, Witness in Family, and Mission of the Migrants, understanding them as The Response of the Church to the Challenges of Today. The triple themes were studied by three preparatory committees separately as well as jointly; and, their findings are now gathered in the three sections of this Lineamenta. The theme-wise sections in the Lineamenta do not offer an exhaustive review or renewal-plan of

1. “Preamble, Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly,” in *The Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Part II, Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2013, p. 100.

the related areas of ecclesial life. However, they are capable of initiating discussions which in turn will lead to “mutual sharing of ideas, experiences and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4,28; Eph. 4:11)”² in our Church in general and among the participants of the Assembly in particular.

The first in the triple themes is “Simplicity in Life”. The Church as the community of Christ’s disciples has to constantly convert to a simple way of life following the example set by Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles. In our times, Pope Francis has become an icon of simplicity, keenly awakening our perceptions of the core gospel virtues. Simplicity is the spiritual ability to say “enough” when one has not gained even the minimum. All the same, simplicity does not mean ascetical frugality; rather it calls for just as well as moderate use of earthly resources for oneself and a generous sharing of one’s provisions with the needy. Ultimately, simplicity is cultivated and sustained by a joyous attachment to God who created everything and to whom everything belongs. Christ wishes, so does the world today, that Christians become simpler in attitudes, actions, styles, structures and so on. In a culture of affluence, one needs rare sincerity and audacity to contemplate on the virtue of simplicity in the life of Christ vis-à-vis styles and ways of one’s own actual daily life. The first section of the Lineamenta, entitled “Simplicity in Life,” will lead us through the rough ground of self-reflection and renewal in a world infected by consumerism and individualism.

The second in the triple themes is “Witness in Family”. As everyone knows, family has been the key pastoral concern of the college of bishops around the globe for a couple of years. Two recent Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome, one from 05 to 19, October 2014 and the other from 04 to 25,

2 “Preamble, Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly,” in *The Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, p. 100.

October 2015, discussed various issues surrounding Christian families today. Following the Synodal discussions in the Universal Church, the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Bishops deemed it necessary that the next Major Archiepiscopal Assembly continues to reflect on the theme of Christian witness in family. The section on the theme of family in this Lineamenta, first of all, reiterates and reinforces God's vision of family as found in the sacred scripture, magisterial teachings, and ecclesial traditions. This first part invites us to re-envision family as a theological reality, meaning that family embodies Trinitarian love, as an ecclesial reality, meaning that family is a domestic church, and as a political reality, meaning that family is the basic unit of society. While the second part of the section makes an effort to identify the crucial challenges of contemporary families, the third part proposes some practical ways to enrich the quality of family life today. It is expected that the discussions on the Lineamenta will help us to identify more challenges of contemporary families and discover more practical ways to make our families holy families.

The third in the triple themes is "Mission of the Migrants". The Syro-Malabar Church is a global Church today thanks to the mission and migration of the Syro-Malabar faithful to different parts of India and abroad. In principle, mission and migration are like two sides of the same coin. The migrants are seen, in the light of Biblical and theological perspectives, as God's people chosen with a purpose to be witnesses, spreading the Good News of our Lord, which they inherited from St. Thomas the Apostle, their Father-in-Faith, in the multi-cultural-linguistic and religious contexts of the world. The challenges the migrants of our Church face in matters of transmission of faith and tradition and family relations show that a meaningful and authentic Christian life for the migrants of our Church necessitates better provisions of pastoral care across the globe. Pastoral care, given by the Syro-Malabar

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

pastors, is essential for the migrants to grow in their unique ecclesio-cultural identity, which is often sadly eclipsed by jurisdictional handicaps. However, doors are being opened: the erection of the eparchies of Kalyan and Faridabad and other mission eparchies as well as centres of pastoral care budding forth in India, Eparchies of Chicago in America, and Melbourne in Australia and the Exarchate of Mississauga in Canada have been rightful missionary openings in global outreach of the Syro-Malabar Church. The section on “Mission of the Migrants” in the Lineamenta makes an effort to open an array of issues for the whole Syro-Malabar community represented in the Assembly expecting that the Church as a whole will understand the hopes and fears of the migrants.

The Major Archiepiscopal Assembly is an occasion for ecclesial self-reflection and self-renewal at personal, familial and institutional levels. May a careful study and open discussions of this Lineamenta, which offers, as its title indicates, “The Response of the Church to the Challenges of Today”, especially in regard to simplicity in everyday life, Christian witness in our families, and the mission of Syro-Malabar migrants across the globe, lead us to fruitful Assembly sessions in August 2016.



SECTION ONE

SIMPLICITY IN THE CHURCH AND IN INDIVIDUAL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

1. We live in a world of consumerism. What we see around us is the spread of an industrial culture that is focused on the production of things that make life more comfortable. This is seen in the rise of many sprawling homes, high-flying life styles, expensive cars, costly house hold articles and expensive celebrations. Hence it becomes very difficult to adopt a simple way of living that satisfies the ordinary needs of life.

2. Many have expressed their anxieties about the spread of a mentality that focuses on extravagance and luxury among the Syro-Malabar Catholics. Hence the Synod has chosen “Simplicity in Life” as one of the themes for the Assembly, taking into account the ever-growing obsession of the community with a luxurious way of life. Though it is true that the ideal of a life of simplicity is desirable for all in all places, the challenges highlighted in the paper may not appear to be very evident to the nascent Syro-Malabar communities that are getting organized in different places outside Kerala.

3. This section titled, “Simplicity in the Church and in Individual Life”, is presented under four main headings, besides the introduction and the conclusion: The first part of the section presents the simple life of Jesus Christ and his teachings as a source and call for his followers to opt for simplicity in life and in the Church; the second part brings out the teachings of the Church on simplicity, highlighting its various aspects, such as the practical Christian life, use of human resources, and eco-spirituality; the third part explicates the contemporary challenges to simplicity and the fourth part puts forward certain practical suggestions for a spirituality of simplicity in the Syro-Malabar Church.

1. THE SIMPLE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS

4. Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is his body (Eph.5, 23). What prompts us to move away from a life style that is opulent is the simple life and teachings of Jesus.

1.1. Jesus Christ: The Incarnation of Simplicity

5. Even though he had everything, he emptied himself, accepting the life of a servant (Phil.2, 6-7). Word was born as an infant (Jn.1, 14). He was born in the manger as the incarnation of humility and simplicity (Lk.2, 7). The Son of Man had no place to lay his head even though foxes had their lairs and the birds of the air had their nests (Mt.8, 20). Jesus was poor in his birth and death even though he had everything.¹

6. The teaching method of Jesus was very simple unlike that of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The stages from where he preached were the humble hill valleys, homes, fields and temple precincts. All the ordinary and humble things of life like leaven (Lk.13, 20-21), wine skins (Lk.5,37), oil lamps (Lk.8,16; 11,33), oil to heal wounds (Lk.10,34), torn pieces of cloth (Lk.5,36), seeds

sown in the fields (Mt.13,4-9), and the birds of the air (Mt.6,21-27) formed the parts of his teachings. Even though he spoke with authority and a clear vision of his mission, it was felt as simple and related to the daily lives of the people.

7. His simplicity did not end with his incarnation and death on the Cross. He humbled himself so much as to become transformed into a simple piece of bread. In every Holy Qurbana, what is being celebrated is the greatness of this simplicity. He wants us to adopt this way of simplicity as our life-principle in the Eucharistic celebrations.

1.2. The Inner Freedom of Jesus: The Height of Simplicity

8. Simple life provides inner freedom. It is a liberation from wants. It offers the inner freedom of the mind that finds satisfaction in the essential requirements of life without getting bogged down to anything else in life. Inner freedom helps one to love without conditions. Jesus was not subject to anything – to power, to recognition, to wealth or even to his own life. This freedom enabled for him to reject everything that was against the kingdom of God and to open new paths.

9. The friendships he fostered were the results of this inner freedom. He did his ministry through his friendship with the twelve apostles. He called them “friends.” (Jn. 15, 15) He never ran away from the common people. Instead, he asked everyone to experience the friendship of the Kingdom of God. Large crowds always followed him. His simplicity helped him to find a place for friendships.

10. His inner freedom enabled him to invite the poor and the rich, the righteous and sinners to the Kingdom of God as well as to His love. He did not hate the rich and the powerful. He went to their banquets when he was invited (Lk.14, 1; 5, 29; 7, 36; 11, 37). He taught them, of course, that human life did not become rich just by amassing wealth (Lk.12, 15).

11. He loved especially all those who were rejected or treated as refuse by the society. He became friends with them in order to liberate them from their bondages to sin. He healed lepers, the lame, the blind, ate with sinners and lived with the poor. He shared his meals with people belonging to all sections of the society and treated them as equals and brothers. He asked his disciples to invite the poor, the lame and the blind when they offered dinners (Lk.14, 13-14). He also made them realize that unconditional love would enhance the greatness of mankind.

12. His criticism of Sadducees points to his vision of simplicity. The Sadducees enjoyed to the maximum their wealth and its advantages as they did not believe in a life after death. They treated the poor and the ordinary people with contempt (Lk.7, 34). Unlike them, Jesus loved the poor and sinners. But he told them that it won't be possible to love God and the mammon at the same time (Lk.16, 13). His driving away of the merchants from the temple was also a reply to the Sadducees (Jn.2, 13-22). His words that the Temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed totally and that no stone upon another would be left (Mt.24, 2) were a warning to those who resorted to ostentatious celebrations and mercantile attitudes in their pastoral ministry.

13. His attitude to the Pharisees also deserves special attention. The Pharisees sought security in rituals and traditions in order to safeguard their faith from the onslaughts of changing times and circumstances. They did not associate with ordinary people nor did they share meals with them. In order to preserve the 'purity' of their faith, they were praying and fasting (Lk.20, 4; Mt.6, 16) in public, were praising their self-righteousness and looking for places of honour (Lk.11, 43; 14, 7; Mt.23, 6-7). They were so literal in their observance of their Sabbath that their ritual regulations placed a heavy burden on the ordinary people (Lk.11, 46; Lk.13, 40).

14. Jesus did not hate the Pharisees nor did he see them as enemies. He received their hospitality (Lk.7, 36; 11, 37; 14, 1). Some people like Nicodemus became his followers in secret (Jn.3, 1). But Jesus opposed their self-justification and imposition of regulations on the people. He also protested against their neglect of human dignity and the mercy of God the Father. According to him, the celebration of the Sabbath and the observance of ritualistic regulations should be for the good of the people (Mk. 2, 27; 3, 4). Viewed from the narrow angle of the Law, people would not be seen as the images of God and would often be dealt without mercy. What our Lord did was to resurrect in the poor and the rejected their God-like nature and thus to make them the inheritors of the Kingdom of God (Mt.21, 31; 8, 11; Lk.7, 29-30). The God that Jesus revealed was humble. We are invited, hence, to an unostentatious life of simplicity because of His simplicity.

1.3. The Simplicity of Jesus and the Disciple's Call to Share

15. Only those who are poor in spirit can live the simplicity of Christ. The Beatitudes in St. Mathew (5:3-12), which is the summary of the message of the Gospel, are in fact the re-presentation of Psalm 37 (Ps.37:1-11). The background for this is to be found in the concept of 'the little ones of God' (Anawim Yhwh) of the O.T. The poor of God are those who have only God to depend on. They are the lowest ones in the society. For, these are the only people who cry out to God for help. God will never abandon them (Ps.9:18). He will hear their call and teach them His ways (Ps.25:9), will satisfy their desires (Ps.22, 26), will support them (Ps.147:6), will do justice for them (Is.11,4), and they will find joy in the Lord (Is.29:19). In short, those who are poor in the spirit are those who depend on God totally and are enriched by God. He is their only share and fortress.

16. Those who are materially rich or poor have to be poor in spirit. Those who are materially rich have to share their wealth like Zacchaeus in order to be poor (Lk.19, 8). Pope Francis sees such sharing and dependence on God as sharing in the poverty of Christ.² In this sense, those who follow the simplicity of Christ should share what they have with the poor of Christ (Mt.25: 45).³

17. Almsgiving is not just giving what is left after our use. On the other hand, it involves giving up what is needed for one's sustenance (Mt.12:44). The disciple of Christ is called to this sharing. The Greek word, "haplotes" denotes the simplicity that involves sharing. This word is being used to refer to the simplicity of the early Church. The early believers formed one single community and treated everything they had as common possessions. They sold their wealth and property and shared them with the needy. They gathered in the temples with one mind, broke bread in their homes and participated in meals with joy and simplicity (Acts: 2, 44-46). The early Christians shared everything they had and participated in prayers, the breaking of the bread and communion, which were the signs of their Christian life, experiencing joy and simplicity of heart. Unity, sincerity (Eph.6,5; Col.3,22), truthfulness, generosity are all implied in the word "haplotes", meaning simplicity. Those who gave alms are asked to give it with generosity (Rom.12, 8). Generosity – simplicity – enriches almsgiving. Generous giving when one is poor will become overflowing wealth for the giver (2 Cor. 8,2; 9,11). Simplicity and holiness in Christ will help us from falling into accepting wrong teachings (2 Cor.11,3).

18. Simplicity in life does not mean that it is a world devoid of any celebrations. It involves an attitude where deeds and thoughts are in congruence. It is a sharing according to one's convictions. Simplicity means innocence where the interior and the exterior are unified. Mercy is the expression of the love of God that is flowing from simplicity. Those who receive mercy see the face of God

through the one who offers mercy. Those who are merciful experience the mercy of God through the grace of God that is reflected through them. Thus simplicity and mercy help humanity to grow in the experience of God internally and externally. All the earthly things lose their luster for one who discovers the treasure of Christ's attitude and life-style. The awareness that whatever we have is to be shared will help us to experience joy in simplicity. It is this attitude that is needed in the Church.

2. SIMPLICITY IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH

19. What we see in the teachings of the Church and in the Church life is the continuation of the message of the Gospels on simplicity (*sancta simplicitas*). The Gospels offer us the greatest incentive to lead a life of simplicity. St. Basil teaches us that it is not the words that come from man but his simplicity of life that is valued by God. The holy virtue of simplicity is based on the virtue of humility and total dependence on God. St. Chrysostom is very eloquent about simplicity: "Those who spend their time in peace, those who do not act unjustly, those who lead their lives with clear conscience, those who are not ashamed of working hard, those who are ashamed of laziness which is the source of evil, those who are not attracted by external appearances, those who find joy in the interiority of their hearts..."⁴

2.1. Holy Simplicity and Practical Christian Life

20. **Moderation and Simplicity:** The Shepherd of Hermas speaks about the transformation that is effected in life through simplicity: "Self-discipline comes from faith. Simplicity comes from self-discipline. Innocence is born out of simplicity."⁵ Simplicity and self-control are mutually related. The virtue of temperance is a fellow-traveler of simplicity. It is not something

that limits us; but, instead, it is aimed at our internal peace. It enables us to free ourselves from the compulsiveness to amass wealth, to recognize the good in our lives and to enjoy it without trespassing the natural boundaries.

21. **Simplicity and Enthusiasm:** Some may say that they are simple but they are very slow-witted. St. Augustine reminds us that simplicity does not mean laziness. The descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove in John 1, 32 is a sign of simplicity. In St. Augustine's view, those who are seeking things connected with Christ, ignoring one's own personal comforts, are people with the simplicity of a dove. But the risen Lord has given the Holy Spirit to the disciples in the form of tongues of fire. Christians have to be people of great zeal even when they try to be simple like doves. St. Stephen who was filled with the Holy Spirit was full of zeal. That is why those who were listening to him wanted to stone him to death. St. Augustine sees in him the simplicity of a dove when he was kneeling in the midst of the stoning. That is why he prayed just like his Master: "Lord, don't impute this sin to them."⁶

22. St. Chrysostom teaches that the Christians became filled with great zeal because of the simplicity practiced by the apostles who were sinners, fisher-men or tent-makers.⁷ He explains in the following words why a luxurious life-style distracts one from the spiritual battles that one is engaged in: "How can one who wears cloaks that reach up to the ankles, silk clothes and jewelry fight against the enemy who is very athletic and agile? His attention would be more focused on keeping his clothes unspoiled than on defeating the enemy. We can achieve victory over evil forces when we concentrate our attention on the inner state of the soul instead on external appearances."⁸

23. **Simplicity in the Interpretation of Doctrines:** St. Basil reminds us not to spoil the simplicity of doctrines through the use of highly specialized and technical vocabulary.⁹ It is not with

flowery language but with humble dialogues that God is pleased.¹⁰ “Simplicity is the companion of Truth.”¹¹ Pope Francis attracts the attention of the world through the simplicity expressed in his words and actions.

2.2. Simplicity in the Use of Human Resources

24. “Those things that man has acquired legally as his own should not be treated entirely as his but are to be used for him and others.”¹² That God is the owner of the earth and man is only a tenant which is the teaching of the OT forms the basis of such a vision (Lev. 25, 23).¹³ That is why, Paul VI teaches that right to own private property is not an unconditional right nor is it totally beyond any regulations.¹⁴

25. Christians are obliged to share whatever they have with the people who are affected by violence or by poverty. Just as Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for mankind which was tainted with sin, so also a Christian is obliged to alleviate the sufferings of his brethren with great compassion.¹⁵ That is why St. Ambrose says the following: “You are not giving alms to the poor but are returning what is due to them. You were retaining in your possession whatever was given for common use. Earth belongs to everyone and not just to the rich.”¹⁶ St. John reminds us that we commit a sin when we don’t help those who are in need (1 John 3, 17).¹⁷

26. The Church teaches us about virtues that help us to handle wealth with simplicity.¹⁸ The first one helps us to control our desire for the things of the world. We have to practice the virtue of justice that enables us to protect the rights of others and give everyone what is due to him. The third one is compassion. It is the same attitude that made Jesus who was perfect in everything to sacrifice himself to make us rich (2 Cor. 8, 9). It is the call to help our brethren in distress by leading a simple life even when we can live lavishly.

2.3. Simplicity and Eco-Spirituality

27. The transformation of nature that is taught by Pope Francis in “Laudato Si” is the magnanimous phase of Christian simplicity. We have to put an end to the exploitation of nature. Eco-spirituality involves such a strong commitment and conversion. Its basis is the vision of St. Francis who sees everything in the universe as his brethren. Mountains, rivers, trees and animals should not be destroyed as they are related to us. We need use only what is needed for our sustenance. The basis of Eco-spirituality is the recognition that the Lord who created man is the same one who created the Universe and everything in it, and the risen Lord is present in everything that is created.¹⁹

28. Another principle of Eco-Spirituality is to find joy in the humbler things of life. It is a way of life that finds satisfaction in the minimum of life.²⁰ The reason for such a spirituality is the awareness that the resources of the earth are limited. Instead, use them only to satisfy the needs. Eco-spirituality is born from the awareness that we are not owners but only custodians.²¹ We are obliged to protect the earth and all its resources for the well-being of generations to come after us.²²

3. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO SIMPLICITY

3.1. Consumerism and Human Progress

29. The awareness of human needs grows deeper depending on the growth of knowledge and education. It is easy to satisfy the essential needs of a human being; but it is much more difficult when it comes to satisfy his social and mental needs which are ever expanding. Although it is easy to buy clothes which are necessary for human protection, it is much more difficult to afford clothes which suit one’s position in the society or dignity.

So too a man spends a lot of money to build very expensive houses even though such houses may not be needed for the basic need of protection from the weather or security of life. In these circumstances, one gives more importance to a luxurious way of life than to simplicity.

30. Today people in the developing world want the same consumer goods that the people in the developed world want. Even in the same community, those who are in the lower rungs of the society want to have the life style of those who are in upper echelons of the society. They become dissatisfied and filled with despair when they cannot have the luxuries of life that they want in life. Thus, the disparity between the rich and the poor is fast increasing as well. This increases the depth of the dissatisfaction and despair of the poor.

31. It may be pointed out whether there is any relevance for simplicity when human progress is measured through the satisfaction of ever increasing needs. Social studies prove that the emotional and social needs of man will never be satisfied. In one sense, they are infinite. Power, position, comfort, etc., are some of the social-emotional needs that man is always seeking for. Hence, the desire for a luxurious life style will never be satisfied. Only when one develops self-control to put a stop to the obsession with such excessive luxuries of life that one can lead a life of simplicity. That means, simplicity arises when one rises above such expressions of wanton luxury and not through the satisfaction of those needs.

32. Popes Francis and Pope John Paul II have always asked the faithful to create a counter-culture of simplicity in order to fight the onward rush of a consumerist culture: "The simple life based on the Gospel message is the best remedy against bitter criticisms, deep doubts and the dominance of money over human relationships."²³ The ever increasing obsession with luxuries is becoming an obstacle to a life of simplicity. This is seen in the lives of many of the faithful.

3.2. Obsession with Luxuries in Daily Life

33. It is true that mobile phones, the internet and the TV are helping our lives in ways which were unthinkable in the past. But they have led us to ways of life focused on excessive luxury and abundance. We are thus slowly becoming subject to attractive appearances and luxuries than to the satisfaction of our essential daily needs.

34. In the construction of houses too, this excessive show of wealth is reflected. The houses show more of one's wealth and glory and are excessively beyond the necessary conveniences needed in life. A few have incurred great debts because of the loan taken for building huge mansions. The same attitude is being seen in the construction of churches too.

35. Many of the institutions of the Church too have become instruments promoting glory and prestige. Sometimes unhealthy competitions thrive among them. We have to examine whether these institutions succeed in conveying Christian values in their rush to excel in quality. We have to accept the fact that our institutions and religious houses remain far removed from the lives of the poor. We have to do some self-analysis to see whether we are getting distracted from our primary mission of being faithful to the One who called us and to the people whom we are bound to serve. Are we neglecting the poor and the weak in our rush to ascend the steps of the ladder of success? Should not the poor who were the recipients of the ministry of Jesus continue to be the focus of our ministry? Our ministry should extend to the poor as well as to poor neighborhoods as desired by Pope Francis.

36. Our attitude to work should also be examined. We have forgotten to see work as a gift given by God as an embodiment of creativity and not as a means to amass wealth or achieve glory. Employees have lost their sense of commitment to their jobs as well as to their places of work. So too, the employers have lost

the sense of family feelings towards the employed. When the employees are thinking of getting maximum wages for a minimum amount of work, the employers are devising strategies to make the maximum profit by employing a minimum number of workers. Laziness and luxurious life-styles have reduced the work atmosphere to a level of inefficiency and instability.

37. Higher education and good jobs have enabled some of our families to reach a higher standard of living. But it is doubtful whether that has led our community to a level of mutual sharing. We know that there are people who work hard in order to amass wealth but at the same time pay the least amount of time to help one another and to strengthen family relationships. People do forget the responsibility for sharing in their eagerness to secure financial security. As it is a luxurious life style that is responsible for such attitudes, it becomes clear that a simple way of living is a great antidote to this. Those who lead a simple life will find ample time to devote themselves to the Church and to the society. Those who enjoy high standards of living in Kerala should pay attention to helping the development of migrant communities outside Kerala.

3.3. Extravagance in Celebrations and Religious Practices

38. Consumerism has spread to all walks of life and has even made inroads into practice of sacred rituals and traditions that essentially connect the different phases in human life from birth to death. The false values of this consumerist culture have now taken the garb of the true values of Christian lives and families.

39. Even though rituals are associated with prosperity and better life, in this age of consumerism they have been seen as capital investments. People look for material benefits that would accrue from the observance of these rituals which shows how the Church has become a prey to this culture. Consciously or unconsciously, the pastoral ministry too has absorbed this culture. It looks like

that our pastoral ministry is interested in introducing novelty and diversity and is focused on getting more attention. We see the encroachment of this consumerist mentality in the proliferation of retreat centres, celebrations of Church feasts and in the presence of large crowds at novenas. We have to find out whether these celebrations and publicity stunts do in fact foster our life of faith.

40. It appears that the reception of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Marriage, Priestly Ordinations, profession and renewal of religious vows, death anniversaries, etc., are becoming occasions to display wealth and power. Celebrations thus lead us to seek false prestige and glory. These attitudes will lead the Church later to the experience of the loss of faith even though people in great numbers may show up in these celebrations. Hence, we have to evaluate properly our pastoral ministry and liberate our religious practices from superstitions. It is the duty of the Church to offer a counter-culture against the extravagant and spend-thrift nature of the society.

41. Our retreat centres, monasteries and parishes sometimes become exclusively centred on the preacher or the priest. The hierarchy and the religious have to become good examples of transparent and simple life styles. The celebrations of the profession of religious vows and of the ceremonies of ordination have become spectacles of extravagance. We pay more attention to decorations and event arrangements that are externally very impressive. The celebration of the Church feasts has become scandalously unchristian because of the various spectacles associated with the celebrations. We have to ask ourselves whether these feast celebrations are becoming commercial enterprises and not occasions of spiritual awakening. There is no cultivation of a sense of community fellowship or fraternity.

42. Marriage celebrations have become opportunities to publicize the status and wealth of families and of their relatives. The number of people attending the wedding celebrations and the beauty of the invitation cards have become the standard of measuring the success of a wedding. Very lavish wedding dresses, elaborate and expensive jewelry and event management have made weddings a spectacle of waste and extravagance. The danger is that some people who are not wealthy are affected by these attitudes and have fallen into great debts.

43. The huge amount of money spent for enhancing the external beauty of churches is not helpful in preserving their spiritual atmosphere. The presence of many priests and bishops at a wedding shows the enormous waste of time which could be used for other pastoral assignments. In many Western countries, only one priest is present to bless the marriage.

44. When we waste our time and resources for extravagance, we lose the opportunities to help the poor. It is reported that in Kerala more than 800 tons of gold are bought for marriages when many poor girls find it difficult to be married of on account of their poverty. The Commission for the welfare of women recently asked why the marriages could not be conducted with ten sovereigns of gold. We do also have to limit the number of invitees for the wedding celebrations. Won't it be more attractive if we have only 200 invitees instead of 1000 or 1500 ?

45. It may appear to be difficult to simplify our celebrations. Some people see the spending of wealth as a sign of the freedom of individuals. This spending may be related to place, time, circumstances and status. What is needed is to introduce changes through personal interventions. There should be a collective evaluation of the expenses incurred for the celebration of major events in the Church. When we try to hold grand celebrations,

we may have to think of their impact on the poor. The wealthy should realize that the value of their celebrations is dependent on its being shared with the poor. It is only then that simplicity gets introduced in our celebrations.

4. SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF SIMPLICITY - PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

46. As we have exposed the spiritual side of simplicity, its source and strength in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as well as in the teachings of the Church, and the contemporary challenges to simplicity, it is time for us to consider its external forms. How can we produce the simplicity of Christ in the Syro-Malabar Church? Pope Francis through his words and actions is giving a strong witness to the simplicity of Christ. Now we have to start using a simple life style from the top of the leadership down to the lower rungs.

4.1. Pastoral Leadership

47. Our bishops, priests and seminarians have to adopt a simple life style, reflecting the different phases of the life of our Lord. We have a lot of shepherds in our midst who follow the simple life style of Christ. Still, we need to put into practice a few practical steps.

1) Availability

48. To be available to all is a sign of the simple life style. Our bishops should be available always to people especially to the poor. The life and ministry of our priests should always be giving special consideration to people in the lower strata of the society. Priests in their pastoral ministry should be available to the poor so much so as to be recognized as friends of “tax collectors and sinners”.

2) Simplicity in Personal Life

49. Pastors have to exemplify in their lives the life style of simplicity. Only then will they be authentic in their ministry. They

have to follow simplicity in their dress, meals, travel and in the gadgets they use. We see very glaring disparity among priests because of the expensive cars some use or of using facilities that are employed by the rich. It would be good for the pastors to use public transportation at least occasionally. Those who minister in the Church should find time to be available to ordinary people and engage in pastoral ministry like Pope Francis.

3) Pastoral Approaches

50. There should not be any arrogance in our dealings with people. We should be compassionate. We have to examine our dealings with people. Are we neglecting ordinary people? We witness to the simplicity of Jesus when we hold that the Church is poor and is for the poor.

4) Sharing

51. We shall not miss any opportunities for sharing our lives with the poor. We have to make our people aware of this and share our resources with the poor especially during the construction of churches and the celebration of church feasts.

5) Stand for Justice

52. The ministers in the Church should be actively interested in the fight for justice. They have the obligation to participate in the fight for justice not only for Christians but also for others.

4.2. The Religious

53. Every religious congregation is called to live out the life of simplicity practiced by the Lord. The religious should bear witness to a life that is conscious of the fact that nothing would be missing in their lives if God is the portion of their lives. They have to take a few practical steps:

1) Return to a Simple Life Style

54. The religious and their superiors should assimilate the simple life style of Christ. "Our faith and poverty are intimately related."²⁴ The Holy Father is asking the Church to make this clear to the religious.²⁵

2) Identification with the Poor

55. The religious are called to identify themselves with the poor, the sick, the rejected and the forgotten in their work of evangelization.²⁶ They should be living examples of a life that is devoted to the poor and should be living like them in uncertainties. Thus we can be witnesses to the joy of the Gospel by becoming brothers and sisters of the poor.

3) Not to be bound to Institutions

56. The religious should not be confined to the security of their institutions. We will have to examine whether our educational institutions can shun the secular spirit of extravagance and competition. They should never exploit the anxieties of the helpless and the emergency needs of the poor.

4) The Wealth of the Religious is for the Common Good

57. They should foster the thought that the wealth of the religious is meant for the common good. Feel the joy of life in working for the poor with a prophetic mind-set. Those who help the poor and the sick and offer shelters and security are actually expanding the horizon of Christ's kingdom.

4.3. Parish and Pastoral Life

58. Parish is the presence of the Church in a locality.²⁷ The providence of God and the mercy of Jesus reach the hearts of the faithful and of the non-Christians through the local parishes. A change in the working style of these parishes will have far reaching effects and the parishes become more meaningful.

1) The pastoral activities of the parishes have to be prioritized. Simplicity and spiritual development have to be the prime aims of parishes. They have to be expressed as acts of mercy to the poor. Thus, the parish should appear like an open door to the people in the locality.

2) More attention is to be paid to pastoral ministry and the priests have to reduce the time and energy given to extravagant

celebrations and huge constructions. We have to change our paths if our activities do not strengthen family relationships. Our pastoral activities should appear as the responses that God gives to the complaints and cries of the people of our parishes.

3) The Church authorities have asked the parishes several times in the past to reduce the importance given to fireworks. We have to remember that the sanctity of the church and the atmosphere of silence around the church are more important than fireworks.

4) Parishes that are wealthy should come to the aid of the poor parishes. A certain percentage of the money that is collected for parish celebrations should be set apart for helping the poor.

4.4. New Challenges in Pastoral Care

59. The parable of the Good Samaritan is to be a good motivation for pastoral care. Like the Levite and the priest, we often become guardians of established organizations and institutions and forget the wounded man who is crying for help. The Samaritan was thinking only of the suffering of the wounded traveler. He took him to the inn and made arrangements to take care of him. The Sacrifice was offered here in the street. The Holy Father is asking us to go beyond the boundaries of institutions and to take care of the poor and the wounded.

60. There are many pastoral initiatives of this nature in our Church. Prison Ministry, Care for the street children, Market Evangelization, Donation of organs, Ministry for the out of state laborers etc. are some of the noteworthy pastoral initiatives. All are now joining together to help the poor.

61. Hence the institutions of the Church are not to be abandoned. The working of the institutions has to undergo changes depending on the changes happening around them. Our educational institutions should never abandon those who are in the lower strata of the society.

4.5. Christian Homes

62. The teaching of the Church that the family is a domestic church underlines the irrevocable bond between the Church and the family. Family is not just a social organization. Instead, it is the door to the kingdom of God that was begun in Christ. The values of the parents will have a positive impact on the lives of the children and will motivate them to uphold right moral values in their lives. Family celebrations should be moderate so as to spare a certain percentage of the money to take care of the needs of the poor.

CONCLUSION

63. The stamp of holiness of St. Francis, Blessed Mother Teresa and of other saints was derived from the simple life style that was born from their inner spiritual freedom. The religious are trying to lead their lives, seeking this inner peace and joy, by forsaking everything that the world offers them. It should be possible for Christians to enjoy this interior simplicity in the midst of the present consumer culture. Only then can we grow into a Christian love that thrives on sharing.

64. Simplicity helps us to see extravagance and selfishness as sins. Actually, an extravagant life style presents us anxieties and lack of peace. When the peace that God has given us disappears from our lives, we become filled with anxieties and worries. Simplicity will help us to live without any anxiety, trusting in the providence of God like the lilies of the field and the birds of the air (Mt.6: 25-34). Man is searching for new ways to seek peace and joy. But it is those who are humble in the eyes of God who do attain peace in their lives.

65. Simplicity has to become the life style of the Church just as it was for Christ. It is only then that the Church can present Christ to the world. Then losses become gains and we begin to live in the

simplicity of Christ. Let there be a striving on the part of every one to seek simplicity in the midst of the plenty offered by a consumer culture. The simplicity of Christ has become the basis of Christian life and has to flower as the mercy of our Lord. “Be merciful as the Father is merciful” (Lk.6, 36). Then, Church becomes a prophetic sign today.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you understand by Simplicity in Life? Which are the contemporary trends found in the Church and in individual life against Simplicity? What shall we our approaches to those trends?
2. Compare the teachings of the Gospel/Jesus Christ and the views of Modern Society and Individuals about a meaningful human life.
3. How consumerism affects the individual, family and parish/ religious community/ society? How can we overcome the bad effects of consumerism in human life?
4. Do you think that ecclesiastical and religious institutions are barriers for the propagation of simplicity in the Church? Give your views.
5. What are the concrete steps that you propose to ensure Simplicity in the Church –pastoral leadership, religious communities, parish, family and individual life?

End Notes

1. Pope Francis' Speech on 20/07/2015.
2. Pope Francis' Speech on 16/06/2015.
3. *Evangelii Gaudium* 179.
4. Chrysostom, "Twenty-one Homilies on the Statues, Homily XIX, 2-3", in *NPNE*, First Series, Vol., XIX, p. 465.
5. Shepherd of Hermes, 15 – ANF, II, p. 16.
6. Augustine, "Tractates on the Gospel of St. John, Tractate 4", in *NPNE*, First Series, Vol. VII. p. 40.
7. Chrysostom, "Twenty-one Homilies on the Statues, Homily XIX, 5", in *NPNE*, First Series, Vol. XIX, p. 465.
8. Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles. Homily VII on Acts 2, 37", in *NPNE*, First Series, Vol. XI, pp. 48-49.
9. Basil, "On the Spirit, VI, 13", in *NPNE*, Second Series, Vol. VIII, p. 8.
10. Otloh von St. Emmeram – ca. 1020, *Rustica humilium dicta*, *PL* 146:246.
11. Gilbertus of Hoilandia (1150), *PL* 184: 115.
12. *Gaudium et Spes* 69.
13. CCC 2402, 2403, 1409, 1942.
14. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 23.
15. Pius XII, *Summi pontificatus*, Oct. 20, 1939 in AAS 31 (1939) 423 ff., CCC. 1939.
16. *De Nabute*, c. 12, n. 53: *PL* 14.747.
17. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 23.
18. CCC 2407.
19. *Laudato Si'* 221.
20. *Laudato Si'* 222.
21. *Laudato Si'* 67.
22. *Laudato Si'* 68.
23. John Paul II, *Homily*, 2 October 1979, Yankee Stadium, New York, No. 6.
24. *Evangelii Gaudium* 48.
25. Pope Francis' Speech on 24/05/2015.
26. Pope Francis' Speech on 24/05/2015.
27. *Evangelii Gaudium* 28.



SECTION TWO

WITNESS IN FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

1. “A man and woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family.”¹ “A Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.”² Family has a special place in God’s plan for the world. The sweet fellowship in a Christian family is the first intense actualization of ecclesial communion.³ Family is the most natural society, and thus the “life of relationships within the family constitutes the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society.”⁴ Nevertheless, the contemporary family is facing many challenges which may be conveniently grouped into three: first, challenges of structure and sustainability of the family; second, challenges of affectivity and emotional maturity of the family members; and third, social, cultural, economic, and ecological challenges. Each family and Church as whole has to find practical ways to enrich the quality of family life today. Practical steps in the renewal of family life are to be taken mainly in three areas: first, we need

to find effective ways and means to proclaim the gospel of family; second, we need to identify successful ways and styles of pastoral accompaniment of families and young couples; and third, we need to update the concept and practice of Christian formation of families.

PART I

THE GOSPEL OF FAMILY

1) God's Plan for Family

2. Creating human beings male and female (Gen 1:27a) and, again, blessing them “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28) God founded family. Giving oneself and accepting the other, man and woman “became one flesh;” (Gen 2:24) and, thanks to God’s help (Gen 4:1), they began to bring forth children. Two things deserve our special attention here: first, God seals the couple with His image and likeness (Gen 1:27). Pope Francis explains this point thus: “man alone is not the image of God nor is woman alone the image of God, but man and woman as couple is the image of God. The difference between man and woman is not meant to stand in opposition, or to subordinate, but is for the sake of communion and generation, always in the image and likeness of God.” The dignity and vocation of a person in the family has to be understood in reference to “the specific diversity and personal originality of man and woman.”⁵ Further, as we find in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, “Male and female differentiate two individuals of equal dignity, which does not however reflect a static equality, because the specificity of the female is different from the specificity of the male, and this difference in equality is enriching and indispensable for the harmony of life in society... Woman is the complement of man, as man is the complement of woman: man and woman complete each other mutually.”⁶ Indeed, as St. John Paul II said, “The woman is ‘a helper’ for the man, just as the man is ‘a helper’ for the woman!”

3. Second, the complementary nature of the unitive and procreative aspects of marriage is part of God's plan revealed in the creation of human beings. Marriage is both a physical and a spiritual union. The union of man and woman maintains its full significance as far as it is a principle of expansion, a source of life, and when the intrinsic structure of the conjugal act is retained. The dignity of the conjugal act is based on four fundamental aspects of the act: (i) conjugal act is a simultaneous cooperation of the spouses with each other and with God; (ii) conjugal act has various ends – the principal one being its openness to the life, i.e., its procreational dimension where the intrinsic structure of the act as designed by God is maintained, which the Second Vatican Council qualified as the crowning glory of marriage; (iii) conjugal act is basically a moment of a mutual and reciprocal donation or becoming one in intimacy of the soul, body, tenderness and affection; and (iv) the beauty and holiness proper to the conjugal act derive from its substance, namely, genital intercourse, and from the manner of performing as a responsible and spiritual act.

4. **Conjugal Act is a Holy Act:** According to the biblical and magisterial teachings conjugal act is a holy act. It is an expression of couple's loving and indissoluble bond. It strengthens the conjugal bond. The desire for becoming one is inscribed in the heart of couples by God. The act of becoming one with mutual self-donation is a carrying out of the will of God and the fruitfulness of the act either as conception or stronger intimacy of the bond between couples is the gift of God. The true, responsible and affectionate conjugal act between the partners is thus not only an expression but also an experience and enrichment of love in the design of God, which, thus, becomes a holy act. Therefore seeking holiness in marital life in no way promotes avoidance of sexual act.

5. **Unitive and Procreative Dimensions:** The God who creates is also a God who cares; therefore, the procreative aspect in

marriage has to be understood in realistic relationship with the demands of responsible parenthood. However, the historical reality of marriage and family went astray from the divine plan due to sin. In the history of salvation, commandments (Dt 5:1-21) and concessions (Dt 24:1-4) were granted in order to safeguard the original theological integrity of marriage, family, and all God's people; but, a definitive restoration of marriage into its original form (Mk 10:1-12) was effected by Jesus Christ through whom grace and truth reached everyone (Jn 1:17).

6. Indissolubility of Marriage: Spousal relationship, realized in the sacrament of Matrimony, receives its full meaning in the covenant between Christ and Church (Eph 5:32). Uniting the spouses coming together in marriage as well as all members of the family in the Holy Spirit, Christ enables each family to witness to the love and life of God on earth; thus Christ restores the family in the image of the Holy Trinity. Since "only in the mystery of the incarnate Word is the mystery of the person enlightened,"⁷ one has to use a Christocentric key to understand the meaning of personal life, the mysterious depth of marriage, and the true beauty of familial relationships. Referring to the original divine plan, Jesus reaffirms the indissolubility of marriage (Mt 19:6). Couples who fully and joyfully live their Christian marriage witness to the value of indissolubility and marital fidelity, which finds practical expression in each spouse's enduring love for the other as well as their common commitment to God who united them and all that God entrusts to them, especially their children.

7. Marriage as the Communion of Total Life: The sacrament of marriage invites the couples to lead a communion of total life (*Consortium totius vitae*) which includes: Oblatory love that provides for the welfare and happiness of the partner; respect for conjugal morality, respective responsibility of both husband and wife in establishing conjugal friendship, in providing for the material welfare of the home: stability in work, budgetary foresight

and mastery over irrational passions, impulses or instincts which would endanger conjugal life and harmony.⁸

2) Family as the Domestic Church

8. The call and accompanying grace to enter into marriage leading to family life is granted by God (Mt 19:11). The couple united through the sacrament of Matrimony “share in and symbolize the unity and fertile love between Christ and the Church,” (Eph. 5:32) and “from this married life comes the family, in which are born new citizens of human society.”⁹ The vocation to family life is a divine invitation to holiness. Family is the domestic church in which parents not only preach faith but also discern and promote the vocation of each member. Family is, indeed, “the way of the Church” as St. John Paul II said. The gospel of the family refers to its source in the Trinitarian love and life, its continuity with and self-reflectivity of the Church, and its unfailing solidarity with humanity and nature, especially the poor and the variously marginalized. Although the gospel of family is lived in ever so many new diverse ways in different local ecclesial contexts, all families receive the inner motivation for the same from the daily family prayer, wherein the sacred reading of the Word of God has a special place. The inner spiritual life flourished by the family prayer motivates families to celebrate the most holy Qurbanawith their local ecclesial community. Family spirituality, thus, leads to Eucharistic spirituality, which in turn nourishes the former.

9. Family is the first ecclesial space where each child of the holy Mother Church becomes “aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love.”¹⁰ Parents and elders in the family give the primary as well as ongoing catechetical training to each new-born member in the Church to live a life of faith, hope and charity. Just as each local Church community lives in and evolves through families, each family finds its Christian origin and communal

identity in the Church. Church community, be it at the parish level or eparchial as well as universal level, is not simply a centre where families can go for spiritual and social services; rather, it is the place where families are born and nourished through sacramental grace, pastoral ministries and social sharing. The catholic families of the St. Thomas Christians in India and abroad embody the unique ritual and cultural specificities of their Syro-Malabar ecclesial tradition in various domestic para-liturgical practices. Just as the Church is missionary by nature, families also have evangelizing and missionary task.¹¹

3) Family as the Basic Cell of Society

10. Family, as the Second Vatican Council teaches, “constitutes the basis of society.”¹² Young and old, men and women, all happily live together and grow together in the family; and in that sense, “it is a school for richer humanity.”¹³ In the family persons find themselves related to each other, and thus they learn to appreciate relatedness as a gift. In the family persons feel accepted and cared for, especially when one becomes vulnerable due to disabilities, sickness, old age, etc. The cultural nobility of the people of a place is greatly determined by the quality of the families in that locality, which is expressed in the concrete ways of ensuring dignity of each and every person. It is, therefore, the duty of all socio-political bodies to acknowledge, safeguard and promote the true nature of marriage and the spiritual as well as cultural functions of families.¹⁴ A state that makes adequate public policies in view of improving the quality of families by establishing welfare systems, ensuring education and healthcare for all, minimizing social, economic and gender inequalities, creating job opportunities for young people, and maintaining religious freedom is, in fact, investing in its own bright future.¹⁵

PART II

CHALLENGES OF THE CONTEMPORARY FAMILY

1) The Structure and Sustainability of the Family

11. The vast majority of the Syro-Malabar faithful live, support and encourage the Catholic Church's teaching about marriage and the family, seeing in it the love and providence of God's creative plan. However, there is a variety of unwholesome tendencies that some men and women seem to develop, and which lead to non-sacramental matrimonial practices, practical breakdown of marriages, shrinking of family size and disintegration of families. The Extra-ordinary General Assembly of the Synod on Family, held on October, 5-20, 2014, with the theme, "Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization," and the 14th Ordinary Assembly of the Synod, held on October, 5-20, 2015, with the theme, "Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World" in Rome discussed at length and depth the various issues surrounding the Christian family. The synodal assemblies identified secularization of marriage and family as the chief cause of the problems in the family today. A recent sample survey conducted by the Syro-Malabar Family Commission is another eye opener. As the survey-results indicate, factors and tendencies that challenge the very structure and sustainability of Christian family, such as civil divorce, cohabitation, sterility, situations of single parenting due to death of one spouse, divorce, etc., are on increase. The decline in family-size in Syro-Malabar communities is quite disturbing; the size of this already minority community is shrinking. More and more couples seem to be unwilling to accept God's gift of children and to assume the responsibility to raise them. Many Syro-Malabar families may go extinct because of the new tendency of limiting the number of children.

12. The young men and women in our Church live in a global context of multi-religious as well as secular ideological competitions. Sometimes one may even wonder if notions of normalcy and normativity in marriage and family are slowly undergoing a new-generational transformation in our times. Classical Syro-Malabar notions of normative behavior, civilized person, well-arranged marriage, happy family, faith-life, etc are to be protected against the unspiritual tendencies prevalent in the commercialized cultural zones. Nevertheless, the primary challenge of the Church is not to magnify and, then, fight against the ills of our youngsters and families but to acknowledge and make known the ideal families and imitable lives of many committed youngsters in our Church. The Church which has been often paying attention more to the weeds than to the yields has to now on “look around” and “see how the fields are ripe for harvesting” (Jn 4:35).

2) Affectivity and Emotional Maturity

13. The experience of unfailing love and affection is the unique hallmark of a true Christian family. Most of the Syro-Malabar families witness to the merciful love of God which they happily share in the reciprocity in spousal-parental-filial-grandparental relationships. The weak, sick and disabled ones in the families are given more love and special care. However, due to various personal as well as socio-cultural reasons there is loss of affectivity in contemporary families. Instead of gradually growing in affectivity some spouses experience gradual loss of mutual love and care; there are families where parents do not find time to spend with their children; there are children who starve for parental love and warmth, and there are parents who practically miss their children completely after their marriage; and, there are grandparents whose old age is clouded by lack of love and understanding from the part of their children and grandchildren. There is a non-negligible

number of single-parent families and single-child families in our Church. There are some unfortunate situations in which the mentally disturbed, physically disabled, terminally sick, and variously underprivileged members of the family are deprived of care and affection. As a matter of fact, everyone in the family, especially the seemingly less-gifted ones, is a gift to each other. There are many exemplary families in our Church which adopt and take care of many abandoned, sick, and elderly people. On the other hand, there are some real situations in which some families cannot adequately take care of the vulnerable ones in their families due to lack of sufficient financial and human resources. In such situations, local parishes or charitable institutions run by lay as well as religious men and woman come to their assistance.

14. No one chooses one's own family; everyone is born into a family. Grateful and loving acceptance of each individual member in the family and one's family as whole as a one-time gift from the good God is the foundation and direct motivation for a warm, affective life in the family. Just as the emotional flowering of our faith provides us with a deeply devotional relationship with God, the quality of emotional life of the family members determine the strength of affectivity in the family. Therefore, proper emotive maturation is the key to the formation of affectivity in family. Knowledge of the distinctive spirituality of the family and the psychology of the family is of great importance in transmitting a Catholic understanding of affectivity and emotional maturity. The Church cannot ignore the cultural tendencies that hinder her children from growing to familial affectivity and personal maturity. Indiscrete subscription of TV channels which provide twenty four hours cinema, serials, and such programmes, misuse of internet and mobile phones, etc not only lead many to remain at the early stage of their affective and sexual life but also take away family times when members could come together to talk and listen to each other.

3) Social, Cultural, Economic and Ecological Challenges

15. The contemporary society is characterized by a variety of new tendencies. Pastoral experience tells us that every parish, be it in the rural area or urban area, is far from homogeneous in all respects. Not only the parishes but the families are also becoming less and less homogeneous; the members of the same family have begun to exhibit different social and cultural tendencies. Social and cultural changes in our times influence our families both in positive and negative ways.

16. **Some Core Challenges:** Positive challenges include growing equality of educational and professional opportunities, recognition of the rights of women and children, wide appreciation of participatory decision-making at all levels, etc. The families have to allow themselves to be reshaped by such genuine socio-cultural changes in the contemporary times. On the other hand, we have to take note of some negative challenges as well. Individualism and consumerism are two basic challenges that can take different forms. Individualism lives out the myth of total self-sufficiency that is supported and fuelled by modern ideas of absolute personal rights and economic independence. Lack of communication among family members, loss of intimacy between spouses, exaggerated notion of privacy which insists on non-intervention by other family members, separation of human sexuality from family in general and procreation in particular which leads to misappropriation of one's sexuality, misuse of one's financial and human resources, etc., are some forms of the troubling individualism in families. Every human being is a consumer who can gratefully own and make use of various goods and services in the world given to us in God's providence. But consumerism which promotes unthoughtful acquisition of things and services has to be resisted. Consumerism implies irresponsible use of

money and it leads to a throw-away-culture. The challenge before every family is to identify and correct their unfavorable consumer behaviours that deny equitable opportunities for other families, especially the poor ones, state revenue, and the well-functioning of the eco-system.

17. Special Issues: There are a number of other social, religious and cultural challenges that the family face today: (i) Due to various reasons the number of interreligious and civil marriages is on slight increase. There are Christians who prioritize practical convenience over sacramental effectiveness. Contextual reasons, positive effects, inherent stakes, religious identity questions, etc, surrounding interreligious and civil marriages are to be studied and assessed honestly. (ii) More and more families are becoming nuclear for various reasons. Experience has taught us that the size of the family has impacts on stability of marriage, human formation of children, financial strength of the family, etc. (iii) The number of young men and women who delay or, in some cases, avoid marriage is increasing. The reasons for this new cultural feature include lack of faith, lack of awareness about the distinct vocation to family life, negative examples from parents' married life such as mutual lovelessness, domestic violence, mutual betrayal, etc., scrupulous search for the most suitable proposal, and gender role confusion. (iv) A set of addictions makes family life difficult and fragile in different degrees depending on what each addiction destroys in family life. In any case, addictions can be overcome through psychological and spiritual treatments and accompaniment. Some of the addictions that require urgent attention are: addiction to smoking, alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, social networks, TV serials, etc.

18. Many families suffer from dehumanizing poverty which has many causal factors. There are economically backward families, there are families that live in unspiritual situations, and there are

families that suffer from intellectual poverty. Attempts to eradicate the conditions of multi-faceted poverty and unfailing compassion towards the poor are to be natural features of Christian families. As Pope Francis has clearly brought out, in our times the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are related. The Pope says: “We can see signs that things are now reaching a breakdown, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation; these are evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises.”¹⁶

PART III

PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENRICH THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE TODAY

1) Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family

19. The above mentioned recent Bishop’s Synods on Family, held in Rome in 2014 and 2015, attempted to re-establish the gospel of family and address the challenges of the families on that solid basis. In a similar vein, through homilies, catechesis, and other formal and informal means, each local church has to teach the sublime theology of family with direct reference to its fundamental nature and Christian specificity as succinctly presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Church needs to proclaim that “in creating man and woman” it is God who “instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution” and that “its members are persons equal in dignity.” A family becomes typically Christian when it “constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion ... a domestic church.” Families are to be reminded that each family “reflects the Father’s work of creation” when it cooperates “in the procreation and education of children in it;” and that “it is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ.”¹⁷

20. Pro-life Attitudes and Activities: Pastors have to exhort couples to “increase in number; do not decrease” (Jer 29:6). In a socio-political context where laws concerning medical termination of pregnancy are relaxed without any scruple the Church has to proclaim ever more powerfully the inviolable value of life from the moment of conception till natural death. Church has to offer wholehearted support to pro-life and pro-family efforts to end abortion, to increase the family-size and to restore respect for life. Preaching the gospel of family also means that the Church plays her pro-active role, first, in supporting parents to overcome the social, economic and spiritual difficulties related to their concrete parental work of raising their children, and second, in accompanying through personalized pastoral programmes and catechesis the children, adolescents and young people through their developmental stages in life.

21. Family Prayer: The practice of daily family prayer and reading of the Word of God are to be encouraged. However, taking into consideration the different features of urban and migrant families pastors need to assist the faithful to develop family spirituality fitting in each context. Pastoral care of inter-religious families, and that of the divorced and the remarried as well as their children is an important area that needs urgent attention.

22. Duties of Children: The Church has to teach the duties of children and parents in the Christian family. Children’s respect for their father and mother is required by God’s commandment (Ex 20:12). Filial respect “derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom and grace.”¹⁸ Docility and obedience are the signs of filial respect. Grown up children should express their filial respect by giving their parents “material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness or distress.”¹⁹ Reverence and gratitude

towards parents and grandparents have a great role to play in promoting harmony and affectivity in family life.

23. Duties of Parents: The Church has been giving clear directions about the main duties of Christian parents, which are to be further highlighted in our times when parenting is facing serious challenges. The most important duties of Christian parents include: (i) educate children to fulfill God's law, (ii) provide for children's physical and spiritual needs, (iii) create a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule, (iv) choose schools that will best help parents in their task as Christian educators, (v) educate children in the right use of reason and freedom, (vi) teach children to subordinate the material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones, (vii) evangelize children and associate them with the life of the Church, (viii) initiate children into communal responsibilities in the local as well as wider society, (ix) educate children in virtues which requires sustained practice of self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery, and (x) respect children's genuine choice of profession and state of life, especially their vocation to consecrated or priestly life.²⁰ Christian parents may learn from the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Louis Martin (1823-1894) and St. Marie Zélie Guérin Martin (1831-1877) who serve as an extraordinary witness of conjugal and family spirituality as well as Christian parenting. Moreover, a careful study of the wise exhortations given to families by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara has to be undertaken by all Christian families. Acknowledging and making known exemplary families through Christian journals is an indirect yet effective way of proclaiming the gospel of Christian family.

24. Ecclesial Vocation of Family: It is through marriage and family that a human person gets introduced into the human family and into the family of God which is the Church. The essence and the role of the family are to safeguard, reveal and

communicate love. As the recent Synods on Family held in Rome exhorts, the families are to be trained to be prototypes of the Church – faith communicators. Family is part of God's plan for both keeping faith alive and in the current generation and passing it on to the next. The four ways indicated by Pope St. John Paul II in which the family fulfils its ecclesial vocation are: forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society and sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

2) Accompanying Families and Young Couples

25. While proclaiming the gospel of family and promoting Christian marriage, the Church should also encourage pastoral accompaniment of wounded families and young couples who begin to build up families. Periodical house visits and house blessing, two effective aspects of the ministerial spirituality of parish priests, continue to be fruitful methods of pastoral accompaniment. In addition to this traditional approach, religious sisters have developed practices of family counseling and home missions in many dioceses. Problems of wounded families and needs of young couples are diverse, and, therefore, a family counseling approach which pays attention to individual cases would be an adequate way of specialized accompaniment of families in our times. This helps couples to understand and accept oneself and the other. Family counseling can help couples not only to untie the emotional knots and then work together towards achieving a greater level of satisfaction and emotional bond but also to identify deeper issues related to faith, ecclesiastical discipline, and spirituality, sexuality, sterility, if any, and get directed to proper places and persons where they may find answers. It is recommended that there should be at least one family counseling centre in each Forane in our dioceses. In some places, parishes seem to take over many family customs and celebrate them at the parish level, which deprive families of their traditional familial celebrations (for instance, breaking of

the paschal bread is now arranged in some parishes under the leadership of family units' central committee). The domestic churches should not be allowed to be fused into parish churches. Families should not lose their identity and functional specificity in the parish level celebrations. The fine balance between ecclesial identity at the parish level and family identity in each family's particularity has to be carefully maintained.

3) Family and Christian Formation

26. It is high time that the dioceses revised the marriage preparation course. While doing this local and global issues and trends in marriage practices and family life are to be taken into consideration. It is recommended that, at least, one sponsor couple from the parish, or, if possible, a team of two or three married couples, together with a priest and a religious sister, be involved in the preparation and ongoing formation of each new couple. Just as God-parents in the sacrament of initiation do, let the sponsor couple have a special place in the immediate marriage preparation, liturgy of the sacrament of Matrimony, and the early years of the family life of the newly wedded couple. Wherever a trained team can provide ongoing formation and guidance to couples, let the team also invite married couples, three or more months after their marriage, to share their matrimonial experience and to help them solve difficulties, if any. In many parishes lay persons take praiseworthy initiatives to help families, especially to solve conflicts within and between families. Pastors may encourage, guide and join hands with these new apostolic initiatives.

27. The Church needs to prioritize family apostolate in the pastoral ministry of priests as well as religious men and women working in the parish. In order to be skillful and fruitful in their future ministry to families it is recommended that subjects such as 'approaches in Catholic family apostolate' be made part of the curriculum of

our seminaries and religious formation houses. More importantly, priests and religious currently in ministry should also be given short-term advanced courses in family apostolate so that they may update their knowledge and skills in family ministry and share the renewed zeal and commitment of the universal Church in family matters. Institutes like CANA: Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, Changanassery and FATRI, Family Apostolate Training and Research Institute, Velloor, Trichur will be of great help in this regard. Having said this, one should not forget that every Christian, too, has a responsibility to work towards the renewal and holiness of families. Mature and zealous couples can be chosen and trained in family ministry in order to carry out the mission of family apostolate. As a matter of fact, some dioceses in our Church have already developed successful formation programmes for apostolic couples.

28. A proper sex education is an urgent need of the time. In this cyber and digital era, children get more than half of their sexual information from the internet, which does it often through pornographic materials. Pornography is a toxic counterfeit and misuse of the sacred and powerful divine gift of human sexuality. If parents and the Church shy away from the important task of imparting proper sex-education, children will get it from elsewhere.

29. The Church can effectively help families to claim common governmental aids. Most of our families are unaware of the fact that there is a number of national, state and Panchayat level governmental assistance programs which they can validly claim. Let social welfare service centers of each diocese look into this matter and thus help our families to become economically stable and socially well-placed. Church has to empower and train families to give integral ecological education to all its members. Let us recall the words of Pope Francis: “In the family we first learn how

to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say ‘thank you’ as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings.”²¹

CONCLUSION

30. “Family is the image of heaven on earth,” as St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias has said. We thank and praise God for the beautiful testimony of mutual love and care given by many Christian families. An example of a truly Christian family after the image of the Holy Family of Nazareth and a truly Christian marriage after the image of the most holy Trinity perfectly exemplified in Christ’s love for his Church are the light and salt of the world that is badly infected by individualism and hedonism. All the same, the Church is sadly aware that many Christian families have issues that hinder them from enjoying what God offers His children along with the sublime vocation to marriage and family life. The decline in personal faith and enthusiastic embrace of a totally secular vision of life are deepest reasons why marriage and family fall short of God’s plan. Therefore, a correct understanding of God’s plan for family and sincere efforts to reshape life according to God’s dreams are urgently required. In this effort, the gospel of family succinctly presented in the first part of this section of the Lineamenta, an analysis of the challenges of contemporary family offered in the second part, and an indicative and non-exhaustive list of practical ways to enrich the quality of family life today given in the third part will be great help.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are the families aware of the biblical and magisterial teachings on Christian family? Which are the aspects of the theology of family that need to be emphasized today?

2. Is everyone in the family aware of the equal dignity of man and woman? Give your views.

3. How can we address the question of the shrinking of the family-size in the Syro-Malabar communities?

4. What are the major challenges of contemporary families? List them according to their seriousness and urgency.

5. Do the families have a true family-prayer experience? What are your suggestions to improve the quality of family times, especially family-prayer?

End Notes

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), 2202.
2. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2205.
3. Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, (1981), 21.
4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2207.
5. Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), 10.
6. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), 146, 147.
7. Vatican Council Second, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.
8. “The Consortium Vitae Coniugalitatis: Nature and Application” in *Studia Canonica* 6, 1972.
9. II Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 11; *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.
10. Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, 53.

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

11. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2205.
12. *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.
13. *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.
14. *Familiaris Consortio*, 45.
15. *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 252-254.
16. Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 61.
17. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2202-2205.
18. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2215; Sir 7:27-28
19. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2218.
20. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2221-2233; *Familiaris Consortio*, 71.
21. *Laudato Si'*, 213.



SECTION THREE

MISSION OF THE MIGRANTS CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

INTRODUCTION

1. In the divine providence, the Syro-Malabar Church has grown to a global Church mainly due to the migration of the 20th and 21st centuries. The adventurous movements of the Syro-Malabar faithful, in search for greener pastures, have often been compelled by the scarcities in the homeland and been inspired by the perceived opportunities in the distant regions and countries. The contribution of the educational institutions in Kerala equipped them to go far and wide across the globe. The migrants, who were settled in different places across the globe, have grown to the second and third generations so as to become sons and daughters of the respective countries of their settlement. Hence thanks to migration, Syro-Malabar Church, which was earlier confined to the territorial limits of Kerala, has grown now to a global Church, spreading the Good News of our Lord, which she inherited from St. Thomas, the Apostle, in the multi-cultural-linguistic and religious contexts of the world.

1. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION

2. **The Biblical Views:** The Bible is a book of migration, a history of people on the move. Each character journeys towards eternity, experiencing success and failures, happiness and sorrows, trials and tribulations, aspirations and disappointments. The OT classic examples of migration such as the mystical call of Abraham to move according to the design of God; Isaac to leave his home and seek a living in the land of the Philistines; the mistrust Isaac encountered and his experience of rejection from his host country; Joseph, the stranger managing to save Egypt from famine and appointed as Egypt's administrator; the patriarchs, who were led out of familiar surroundings on to an unknown road; etc.¹ are prototypes of the situation of migrants today. These experiences take us to the plan of God and the divine providence. The migrants are in this sense God's people, chosen with a purpose.

3. Jesus' entire life is a testimony for human mobility. Jesus together with his parents had to move to Bethlehem, then to Egypt; his public life in Palestine, imprisonment and death verdict in different places. Jesus identified himself with the uprooted ones in the society. Disciples of Jesus travelled far and wide to preach the Good News as itinerant missionaries. The early Christian community took special care of the well being of the migrant population and they proclaimed equality and justice for all people in the name of God.² In the early Church, people were instructed to love strangers and to extend hospitality towards them. Welcoming strangers was a matter of justice.³

4. **Ecclesiastical Provisions:** Provisions of proper pastoral care have been a serious concern of the Church from the beginning itself. The power of the Patriarchs and Bishops over the faithful of their own Churches in respective places was legislated in the

early centuries. In the canons of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325), we read, "The ancient traditions of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis shall be maintained" (C.6). As per the Canons of the IV Lateran Council (1215), "Since in many places people of different languages live within the same city or diocese, having one faith but different rites and customs, we therefore strictly order the Bishops... to provide suitable men who will do the following in various rites and languages: celebrate the divine services for them, administer the Church's sacraments and instruct them by word and examples" (C. 9).

5. Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia*, of Pius XII in 1952 is considered as the «*magna carta*» on caring for the migrants. The Second Vatican Council,⁴ *Motu proprio Pastoralis migratorum cura*, both the Latin and the Oriental Codes of Canon Law and the Instruction - *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*⁵ by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People explain further the same topic elaborately. The Christian faithful have the right to worship according to the prescriptions of their own Church *sui iuris*. Wherever there is sufficient number of the faithful living in the territory of another *sui iuris* Church, their pastoral needs have to be taken care of by providing with priests, parishes or Episcopal Vicars of their own rite.⁶ Such provisions have to be done with the mutual agreement between the concerned Local Ordinary and the Major Archbishop. Canon Law prohibits anyone to induce someone to change membership to another Church *sui iuris*. The spirit of the law does not allow faithful to easily opt for any Church *sui iuris*. The faithful have an obligation to know, retain and preserve their own rite.⁷ In short, pastoral accompaniment along with the migrants is legislated as the responsibility of every Church *sui iuris* which includes the administering of sacraments and sacramentals, faith formation of children, youth and adults, organizing and facilitating the functioning of pious organizations, etc.⁸

2. THE NATURE AND COMPLEXITY OF MIGRATION

6. Principles of Migration: The history of humanity has been a history of migrations. The reasons for migrations are generally the desire for improvement of one's own life situation, a search for new goals, an attempt for survival, quest for a new meaning and fulfilment in the transitory existence on earth, etc. Migrants include refugees, permanent workers, seasonal migrants, sailors, multinational executives, nomads and so on. The migrants from the Syro-Malabar Church are mostly those who left their homes for better education, employment, business or agriculture. They had to opt out of the pastoral care of the Mother Church in Kerala to settle down in other states of India (Internal Migration) or outside India (International Migration). Internal and International migrants have striking similarities regarding adaptation and integration.

7. Adaptation of First Generation Migrants: A migrant is transplanted into another culture, language and environment. He/she loses his/her friends and relatives. But this sense of loss is substituted by the inner urge for economic success. The first generation migrant works hard and is ready to bear hardships so that one can get settled in the new situation. Adaptation and integration take place more easily in the developed countries than in other places. At this stage, normally he/she tends to lose or willingly lose his/her former cultural identity which he/she thinks would be a hindrance to his/her future progress. And yet, he/she is nostalgic of the past and cherishes his/her previous identity. Mostly, a first generation migrant got adapted to the new context and though not integrated fully.

8. Integration of the 'Children of the Soil': The second and further generations of the migrants who speak the new mother tongue and possibly use the language of their parents at home could be living in two worlds. They are forced to grow with two allegiances. Often parents speak of their old tradition and

customs with great pride and instruct the children of the 'lost values'. At this level, integration is often found difficult and the children face a cultural dilemma. In this situation, the children themselves learn to take a middle position, incorporating the demands of the new environment and retaining a core experience from their parents' identity by not losing their parents' identity fully and by not wholly merging with the new culture. Even though the second generation goes through this problem severely, for the third and further generations, integration becomes easier.

9. Complexity of Migration: Both internal and international migrants face enormous social and political problems. While internal migration faces the issues related to differences in religion, language, culture, etc., international migration is seen as a problem before the world nations as it can affect the economic, social and cultural life of the nation. The following are some of the problems faced, by and large, by the international migrants: (1) local population perceives the migrants as a threat to their economic stability; (2) there is discrimination due to race, ethnicity and harassment both physical and mental because of colour, race and ethnic background; (3) many migrant workers face the issue of long working hours, inadequate working conditions, insufficient wages, lack of nutritious food and accommodation etc.; (4) some of the migrants suffer mental strain and psychological deprivation; (5) there is unrest between 'children of the soil' and 'outsiders' on the question of job opportunities; and (6) in some countries, the migrants do not have any civil rights.

3. THE SYRO-MALABAR MIGRATION: HISTORY AND GROWTH

10. The number of internal migration in the colonial times was rather very small, i.e., 3 to 4 percent of the total population of India. But millions of unskilled laborers from North India were taken by the British to their colonies outside India. The post-independence

scenario was very different. In the late 1950's, the Syro-Malabar faithful started migrating and this gathered momentum in the 1960's and peaked in the 1980's. While those migrated in the early 1950s were agricultural and unskilled workers, those who migrated up to early 1960s were mostly semiskilled, high school educated population. From the 1970s, nurses, engineers, doctors and IT professionals migrated in large numbers. In early stage migration was internal but later it was extended to USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and so on. With the onset of oil boom in the 1960s a bigger flow of migration took place into Gulf countries. The unskilled and semiskilled migrants neither had the required language skills nor the economic power to build a distinct identity within the community they migrated to. But the skilled professionals with their educational qualifications and economic status could build a better standing in the place of their migration than those of the previous generation.

11. In the late 1990's, migration attained a plateau level. However globalization finds its ways to accelerate migration. It is difficult hence to make presumptions regarding the future of migration. In fact, from early 2000 there appeared some signs of reverse migration. If lack of industrialization in Kerala was a major reason for migration from Kerala, the starting of several service industries, opportunities of workforce in the unorganized sectors, natural ageing and retirement of active professionals have been pointed out to be the main reasons for reverse migration.

12. **The Categories of Syro-Malabar Migrants:** At present there are three categories of Syro-Malabar migrants: (1) those migrated from the 1940s; (2) young families migrating constantly in search of better job opportunities; and (3) students, unmarried working men and women, migrating for study or job purpose. From among the first category faithful, their children have grown to second and further generations and they do not feel they are

migrants but they feel and claim that they are sons of the soil. The second and third categories consist of the youngest portion of the Syro-Malabar Church. The average age of the present Syro-Malabar migrant community all over the world is around 40 years only. These facts indicate that the families in Kerala are likely to stay elderly in the near future, whereas our migrant communities stand young.

13. **Statistics:** Today the total strength of the membership in the Syro-Malabar Church is about 49,00,000 of which more than 13,00,000 are migrants outside Kerala. There are, at present, more than 550,000 migrants in India, outside Kerala, and 750,000 outside India. Presently there are more than 200,000 migrants outside the Syro-Malabar Eparchies in India, and they need to have proper ecclesiastical circumscription. The same is needed for the 550,000 outside India which includes Gulf countries,⁹ Europe, United Kingdom, Singapore, Africa, and so on.

14. **Concrete Steps Taken for the Pastoral Care of Syro-Malabar Migrants:** Despite many limitations, the Syro-Malabar Church has been trying to be proactive in the issue of migrants and has taken a number of steps for their pastoral care. From the time the migration started from the South Kerala to the North Kerala, the Church with her creative intervention took effective pastoral care and the Eparchy of Thalassery was erected in 1953, which got later divided into other 5 more eparchies. After II Vatican Council, influenced by its teachings especially on communion ecclesiology, the Syro-Malabar Church became greatly conscious of her own ecclesial identity and of her responsibility to provide proper pastoral care to her own migrant sons and daughters living in Diaspora especially outside Kerala and abroad.

15. From the very beginning of migration, the Syro-Malabar Church has been aware of the need for proper pastoral care of migrants and has made constant requests to the Apostolic See for necessary provisions in this regard. From 1978 onwards, Apostolic

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

Visitors were appointed for settling the needs of the migrants. As a result, the Eparchy of Kalyan was erected in 1988, Eparchy of St. Thomas in Chicago in 2001 for the whole of United States and its Bishop as the Apostolic Visitor to Canada, Eparchy of Faridabad in 2012, Eparchy of St. Thomas in Melbourne for the whole of Australia and its Bishop as the Apostolic Visitor to New Zealand in 2014, Exarchate of Mississauga for the whole of Canada in 2015 and extension of the territory of the Eparchy of Mandya including the ten civil districts of Latin Archdiocese of Bangalore in 2015. In all these places, a very cordial relationship with other sui iuris Churches has been maintained.

16. Pastoral Care in the Diaspora: The Syro-Malabar Church, besides implementing various ecclesiastical circumscriptions through the Supreme Authority of the Church, has taken some stern steps. Priests are assigned to different countries like Europe, United Kingdom, Gulf Countries, important cities of India etc; in most of the places, clerical or lay coordinators are appointed; the responsible bishops have been conducting pastoral visits; the representatives from migrant communities were invited to the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St Thomas, Kakkannad, for Global Meet; Pastoral letters are sent to all the migrant centres; Liturgical and Catechism books are prepared and distributed to them, etc., are some of them. Since many years, the Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants works out activities for the migrants residing outside India, while “Santhom Mission India” under the leadership of the Apostolic Visitor cares for the needs of the migrants in India.

17. Contributions of the Migrants: The Syro-Malabar migrants have come together and formed associations and they replicated our social and cultural life in their respective places. The conspicuous role of the second and further generation in these efforts is praise worthy. They influence effectively the social, civil and political life

of the secular community. The places of migration offer increased opportunities for inter-ecclesial, ecumenical, and inter-religious activities. There is a positive attitude in the foreign countries to share the Church facilities with other communities belonging to different ecclesial traditions.¹⁰ Migrant communities at large can collaborate in the social charitable activities and upliftment of the society where they live.

18. While the migrant communities continue to prosper in life, the earnings they send back to their homes have definitely contributed to the prosperity of their families, parishes, local villages and even the State of Kerala and our country at large. Thus, the migration of the Syro-Malabar members has not only contributed to local communities where they are planted but also to the Mother Church with their generous contributions.

4. THE CHALLENGES OF THE SYRO-MALABAR MIGRATION

19. **Transmission of Faith and Tradition:** Migrant families that have been transplanted to a new soil, different from that of their birth, require to be specially nurtured for their growth since the new soil and circumstances need not necessarily be favourable always. In the past, migrant families have had tremendous difficulties to live their faith in accordance with the traditions of the Church. In spite of that they used to foster their faith through their family traditions and prayers, family value system, cultural traditions and ritual practices. In the absence of proper pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar Church, such families feel obliged to attend Holy Qurbana and be part of other spiritual activities in the local Church, irrespective of the rite. However, the obligation to reach out to a Syro-Malabar community is not forgotten. It's important to keep away from un-authorized gatherings and prayer meetings,

especially those organised by various sects. They need to be aware about such groups operating in the living vicinity and to be extra careful to keep away from their traps.

20. The celebration of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy and Sunday Catechism are effective means for the transmission of faith and tradition among the migrants. It is seen that those migrants who attend the liturgical celebration of the Syro-Malabar Church in migrant places for a long period get better into and live as one community. In order to accommodate well the faithful of different eparchies in migrant communities, it is important that the liturgy is celebrated as per the Synodal formula. The Guidelines for the Pastoral

Care of Migrants says: "The sacred liturgy and the sacraments celebrated for our migrant communities shall always be the Syro-Malabar liturgy using the approved texts and adhering to the rites and the mode of celebration approved by the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church."¹¹ Since many migrants might have left their native places at their 20s, a good many parents themselves may not have sufficient knowledge about many traditions and their meanings. The traditional method of catechesis may not always cater to the needs of the migrants, and hence we will need to broaden the horizons to effectively carry out this mission. Wherever there is not an organized programme of catechesis, the parents will need to be responsible for teaching their children catechism, using the Syro-Malabar Text Books. To renew the faith and spirituality of the elders in the family, adult catechism could be implemented as well.

21. Youth and young families most often constitute the majority among the migrants. They are easily attracted to and influenced by modern communication systems, lifestyle, entertainments etc. Very often there is anonymity in the cities, and hence the Church is unable to identify the migrants in their respective areas, as it lacks in-

formation, infrastructure, systems etc. The young men and women may not take initiative to look for the nearby parishes, as their priority is often their jobs, financial stability and social living status.

22. Family Relations: Most often migrant families are small in size. They suffer from lack of family bonds and hence lack mutual support. The parents have to depend totally on their grown up children as they may not have other relatives in the close vicinity. This situation affects the growth and progress of their children who are married. The strain and stress of the job situations, increased financial burdens and loans, absence of other family members for assistance, etc. contribute tremendously to the pressure of the young families, and they struggle to cope with the demands of life. Retuning late from work also forces them to neglect their prayer life and family obligations.

23. Role models and life witnesses have their unique place in the sharing of faith to the younger generation. Faith used to be handed down from grand-parents to grand-children. Very often young migrant families live in small flats or houses, separately from their parents, and hence the children miss the chance to be in company with the grandparents.

24. Marriages: Syro-Malabar Church has a very rich tradition and patrimony regarding the marriage customs and family life which our forefathers treasured, preserved and handed down through centuries along with their unwavering faith. By upholding the sanctity of and fidelity in marriage and maintaining family ties and reputation, they carried forth this legacy even to the multi-cultural situations of the migrant areas. However, the absorption of the evolving global cultural trends like consumerism, nuclear family culture, imitation of the western culture, development of technology and the resultant misuse of it, work holism, etc., have shaken the family roots of the migrants in cities. The Church needs to address these issues to safe guard the noble family values.

25. Mixed marriages and disparity of cult marriages are on the increase among the Catholic migrants. Traditional arranged marriages, where parties have the opportunity to reflect about the qualities of the other party, are reduced to 60-70%, and the love marriages are considered as signs of individual freedom in making the choice about the partner. The minority catholic youngsters attend schools and colleges where girl-boy friend system is in practice. There are also other problems like difficulty in finding a suitable partner from own community, uncertainty about getting married even in forties, absence of a proper vision about life, attraction to luxuries and frequent weekend vacations with friends, serious laxity of human and family values, egoistic and self centred life, etc., have their negative impact on the migrant younger generations.

26. Restrictions of Pastoral Care outside the Proper Territory: Restricting the Syro-Malabar Church into her five metropolitan provinces as proper territory is a hindrance for the Church to give effective pastoral care for her sons and daughters across the globe. Although sufficient guidelines and canonical provisions are envisaged by the Holy See, a good number of the faithful do not get adequate pastoral care. Lack of opportunity for liturgical life and catechism, and alienation from the ecclesial and family faith traditions are serious problems faced by the migrants. In the Indian scenario, the anomaly of being a migrant in one's own land is yet another grave problem. Regarding the number of the migrant faithful, neither the Latin Church nor the Syro-Malabar Church has correct and accurate statistics. However, praiseworthy cooperation is rendered by a good number of Latin Bishops who provide adequate pastoral care to Syro-Malabar migrants, and the faithful fondly cherish such generous gestures as a blessing. Those Bishops, who have taken steps to implement the norms of the Church in this regard in their correct perspective, have made necessary provisions and are well appreciated by the migrants. However,

some Latin hierarchs and priests have apparent ignorance about the provisions of the Church and they think that proper pastoral care to the Syro-Malabar faithful is something that will create disunity. Only through dialogue and collaboration with Latin ordinaries can such situations be remedied effectively. Bringing back the migrants who are partially incorporated into the local Latin parishes would also require such united efforts.

27. Migration to Kerala: Another issue of recent origin that calls for our special attention is the unprecedented inflow of migrants from other states to Kerala. They constitute about 7% of the total population of Kerala State. The same scenario is seen in other states, also where there are mission eparchies and eparchies for migrants exist. Our Church should be prepared to handle the inflow of the migrants. The Catholics of other sui iuris Churches from around the globe and non-Catholic Christian migrants from various groups need pastoral attention.¹² The Syro-Malabar Church needs to prepare its pastors and faithful to embrace the 'other', respecting their traditions and ecclesial identities, keeping in mind their culture, language and rite.

5. THE PROSPECTS OF SYRO-MALABAR MIGRATION

28. From a Migrant Church to a Global Church: Through migration, within the span of 75 years, a Church that was confined to one of the smallest states of South India has spread to all the continents of the world with substantial number of faithful everywhere. This migration was never a pre-planned, concerted effort of the Syro-Malabar Church. In the divine providence it has happened to be so. As years pass by, the migrants become the sons and daughters of the soil, getting deeply rooted in where they are planted. The responsibility of the Syro-Malabar Church is now

beyond the need of the pastoral care of the migrants, transcending to the exigencies of the global Syro-Malabar Church. Reading the signs of the times, their global identities are to be emphasized in all levels of the Church life including the cultures, languages, religious backgrounds, etc.

29. Migrants in the Multi-Cultural-Linguistic-Religious Contexts: The preservation of the ecclesial identity is to be distinguished from the preservation of the cultural identity. While the former stands for the essentials of one's Christian faith, the latter for the expressions of day-to-day life. The Church laws insist that each Church *sui iuris* should preserve its rite. As the faithful are living in varied cultural contexts, the ecclesial and other activities also should be befitting and appropriate to the new contexts of the migrants, and, as far as possible, be made sensible and relevant to the new cultural situations. The language, the food habits, work ethics, costumes and very many other living styles would differ in the new places of settlement. But such elements do not necessarily stand as obstacles to keep one's ecclesial identity.

30. The ecclesial identity has always been lived and expressed in particular cultures.¹³ But it should also be kept in mind that the ecclesial identity cannot be exhausted by any particular culture. No culture is static nor perfect but in need of transformation and refinement. A migrant can live the ecclesial identity in any culture of the place of migration. The early Christian communities witness to the same attitude in living their faith.¹⁴ Living the ecclesial patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church can bring forth varieties of versions of it. In the Gulf countries for example, the Lord's Day is celebrated on Friday. The dress codes in Europe and America can help keep up the formal appearances of the faithful and the priests in official functions. The allegation that the expansion of the Syro-Malabar Church beyond Kerala often replicates the Kerala culture in the ecclesial life is not to be ignored as silly. Introspection is desired to judge whether the adherence to the Kerala culture is becoming a hindrance to the flourishing of the Syro-Malabar Church outside Kerala.

31. **Interculturation:** Rather than inserting the migrants into the new culture of the place of migration, what indeed takes place is the process of interculturation, the on-going and mutual cultural interactions between the original culture of the migrant and the new cultures. This reciprocal activity is vibrant in the cultural garbs of every migrant. The best way to suit well to the new situations and to retain the identity is to let oneself be transformed by this on-going reciprocal process. If the priests or the communities are reluctant to undergo this process, the ecclesial identity can be found irrelevant for the young generations. The language and practices of the Syro-Malabar communities are to be made sensible to the new situations which would need on-going dialogue with the emerging cultures and trends of the place. Growing ideals of gender sensitivity, freedom of expression, participatory planning, transparency in team work, etc., are some of the essential values in the developing cities and countries, and the pastoral leadership should be prepared to appreciate and accommodate such social values in the ministry. Towards this, the priests and community leaders should develop a broad mind to be able to explore meaningful ways of being the 'Syro-Malabar Church in the evolving contexts'.

32. **Evangelization through Migrants:** In the history of the Church, mobility became opportunity to spread the Good News. Christian migrants through their life and witness have been instrumental to the propagation of the Gospel. The spread of the Church to every nook and corner of the world is due to the enormous missionary journeys of the sons and daughters of the Church. God has ordained every migrant with a spiritual responsibility to proclaim Jesus to those who have not heard and to reawaken the dormant Christian conscience through renewed witnessing. It is desirable that the migrants keep St Paul's words resonate in their hearts: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). Like St. Thomas the Apostle was sent to India, the Syro-Malabar

migrants are sent out across the globe. This migration is not only for their survival or economic stability but also for fulfilling the mission entrusted to them to build up the Church globally.

33. The very presence of the Syro-Malabar migrants among the Hindu-dominated north Indian states, Muslim-dominated Gulf regions and Christian-dominated European or other countries is a significant mode of evangelization as well. The Syro-Malabar Church is duty bound to help these faithful to witness creatively where they are planted. If this is not done, the ultimate loss will be for the Church of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they become mature Christians to dialogue with the pluralistic, multi-cultural and secular society.

34. **Family Value Education:** In the city culture 'other voices' seem to drown out the voice of the Lord. The children are provided with everything. They are not given opportunities to take up hardships. They are unaware of the pain and hard work and even about the value of money. The life time hard work of the parents is lavishly wasted by some irresponsible children. Parents with their hopes and dreams for their children's future hardly reserve a little space for their spiritual life. The younger minds are allured by the secularised mentality around them, and they imbibe only secular values. Children are not trained to share their time, talents and gifts with the less privileged brethren. Regular and daily family or personal prayer, frequent celebration of the sacraments like confessions and the Holy Qurbana, annual blessing of home, participation of members in the family activities, family meal, sharing and entertainments, pilgrimages and picnics, etc., become fast declining.

35. **Ecclesial Identity:** There are migrants who strive to preserve and cherish the ecclesial identity and the spirituality handed down through the centuries. There are various elements in our ecclesial identity. Apart from what is essential, other practices of the place

can be adapted. Some of the family rituals related to house blessing, child birth, marriage, pregnancy and death are specific to the Thomas Christians. The unique domestic celebration of Pesaha, the observation of 25 and 50 days of abstinence together with 15, 8, and 3 days fasting, the profound tradition of pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas and to other renowned saints of Catholicism, etc., were also prevalent among St. Thomas Christians. All such occasions of ritualistic practices at the homes of St. Thomas Christians were opportunities for teaching faith and tradition to themselves and to others which continue to serve as a vehicle for faith formation, sharing of values and expression of the ecclesial identity.

36. For the migrant families it is a big challenge to bring up their children in the traditional way. The new generation experience conflicts between the value system of the place and of their parents. The first generation migrants might have practiced many family rituals of Syro-Malabar community rooted in Kerala. The subsequent generations who grow up outside Kerala either do not practice such rituals or even if they practice, do not really understand the deeper significance of those rituals. They are inclined to get integrated to the larger world. To remedy this, books on family liturgy, along with catechesis, are to be prepared in the local language and adapted to the new situation.

37. For every trend there is an opposite trend. Along with the strong winds of globalization there emerges an opposite trend, the trend to go back to one's roots. Syro-Malabar Church should take advantage of this trend that is emerging worldwide: to return to one's own original culture, one's own roots. The new trend will be based on the principle of 'glocalization', meaning the simultaneity of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies. Syro-Malabar Church while it develops its strategy for migrants needs to focus on perfecting its 'glocalization' strategies to address this emerging trend.

38. An organized pilgrimage to seven Churches founded by St. Thomas, along with other most famous pilgrim places, could be a spiritual journey to the roots. In preparation for the Jubilee in 2022 related to St. Thomas, the pilgrim centres could be set up. Our faithful are to be encouraged to visit these pilgrim places at least once in their life time. The Syro-Malabar saints like St. Alphonsa, St. Chavara, St. Euphresia and the Blesseds of our Church are to be popularized meaningfully by our migrant communities.

39. **Inculcating a Sense of Belongingness:** One of the major challenges of the pastoral care among the young migrants is their lack of sense of belongingness to Syro-Malabar Church. As a result many migrants frequent Latin parishes in their vicinity, some of them even to non-Catholic Churches or sects. Even when they are told about the existence of our Church across the globe, they prefer to continue their allegiance to their eparchy in Kerala. A united effort is required to bring up the young generation in the ecclesial tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church.

40. Today a good many Syro-Malabar youth migrate for higher education as the gates of national and international higher study opportunities are wide open to them. A system is to be evolved to identify the students and the youth who leave their mother parishes for studies and employment, may be, by keeping a register for migrant members and issuing a letter to the priest-in-charge of the migrant place. Mobile applications can be developed so that those migrants may be able to find the Syro-Malabar communities in the places of migration.

41. **Migrants' Expectations from the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy:** An often heard complaint from elderly migrants is that the Syro-Malabar Church has been very late in the search for her sheep. They had wanted the ministry of the Church so badly in their early stages. Now generally, their children, as they say, have gone out of their control, and have very much acclimatized to the way they were

brought up, and they do not want to follow an 'alien Syro-Malabar liturgy'. Here the question is of either existence or extinction. Presently in a number of places, our migrants are in the settling stage and they expect the Mother Church to procure land for them and to construct churches. In many places, the people want to register as legal entities which are necessary to raise funds, purchase lands and for other administrative procedures of the community.

42. People expect their mother Church to be more migrant friendly. There have been times they faced hurdles from the parish priests of their local parishes in Kerala in relation to officiating sacraments and sacramentals. There have been occasions when the migrants were forced to take a new membership or pay huge amounts for some constructions to obtain certain certificates or to receive sacramental blessings. Some of these migrants have constructed churches in their localities and others are in the process of the same. These factors are not at times taken into due consideration. It seems that some migrants are given special consideration in their Kerala parishes because of their financial contributions even though they do not follow the Syro-Malabar Church in their migrant places or some of them even work against the Syro-Malabar migrant communities. Certificates or letters from the Syro-Malabar priest-in-charge are not asked when these migrants come for the reception of the sacrament of marriage back home. Rules regarding the free-state certificate from the migrant priest-in-charge must be made compulsory. The laws regarding the domicile and quasi-domicile need to be followed as we have now pastoral arrangements for the migrants across the globe.

43. **Organizational Set up:** While working out serious plans, the Church shall take into consideration also the situation of reverse migration, global migration of the students, immigration, etc. Similar studies are needed about the life of those who make second or third migration, their liturgical language, inculturation, intercultural,

their missionary enterprise, etc. In order to face the complexities involved, simple pastoral care solutions may not be enough. They are to be under the constant vigilance and permanent observation of the Church and hence an office is to be set up for the same. The provisions of Law on Major Archiepiscopal Visitor, with the consent of the Apostolic See, can be a solution to this problem.¹⁵

44. The integration that is necessary for the sons and daughters of the soil may be resisted by the first generation migrants as they would like to see their children to live in the same pattern that they lived. But the Church will have to help them opening up its horizons in order to seriously accommodate these children with new vigour and passion. A research centre for catering to their needs, especially in language, culture, catechesis, liturgy, etc., shall not be delayed. A catechetical department is to be opened targeting the migrant children and youth with a new and appealing pedagogy of teaching. The liturgy and the Church communications are to respect the language of the place, giving due recognition to the migrants and the newly converted.

45. “The lost sheep” shall not be left on the way. They are to be searched, found and brought back to the fold. Wherever new communities are not yet formed, assistance of the teams of experts can be made use of, also applying modern techniques. A theological committee can be set up to help with the aim of bringing back the distanced faithful to the main stream and to update our theological and catechetical heritage. The central office can effectively coordinate these activities.

46. Reinstating the past territorial freedom of Syro-Malabar Church in India is purely a matter of justice. All available means and opportunities may be used to get established the concept of the equal rights of sui iuris Churches, fight against injustice and discrimination towards the Syro-Malabar Church. Necessary jurisdiction for the pastoral care of our faithful globally also would be a necessity.

47. United Efforts for Building up the Global Church: Globalizing our Church is a duty of the Mother Church. Migrants living in important cities, especially in India, need help in order to have churches, schools or centres for which the concept of adoption/partnership could be followed. Financially sound institutions, parishes, foranes and eparchies, both from India and outside India, can be part of this venture. The Syro-Malabar Church has been rendering financial help to the needy migrants through ASSM (Association of Syro-Malabar Supporters of the Mission) especially in their settling stage.

48. Apart from financial help, sharing of materials and technical knowhow is to be encouraged. Developing the practices of involving distant lay missionaries and field missionaries for the growth of migrant communities is also a need of the hour. Retired hands, the youth and others could serve as field missionaries and extend help in construction work, education, etc.

49. Eparchies as Agents in Globalizing the Church: It is opportune to reflect upon the possibility of the existing Syro-Malabar eparchies for migrants, along with the mission eparchies, to play a leading role in globalizing the Syro-Malabar Church, since they are already familiar with the language and culture. The present mission eparchies do have some migrants in most of them. Following are some of the suggestions: (1) Syro-Malabar communities that are taking shape in new areas should spearhead evangelization and inculturation safeguarding the spirit of the Church documents; (2) In collaboration with these eparchies, the Church needs to take initiative to conduct Syro-Malabar liturgical celebrations in all major seminaries and formation houses of other sui iuris Churches. The Church can also take initiative to see that oriental liturgy, canon law and ecclesiology are taught in those institutions; (3) These Syro-Malabar eparchies are to be more aware of their mission of being bridge builders in the society; (4) Syro-Malabar liturgy needs to be celebrated in

local languages and further adapted to the second and further generations; (5) A serious and multilingual news bulletin cum magazine is to be published to unite the migrants and to inform them about their growth and development; and (6) Latin Bishops and other hierarchs of the migrant communities are to be invited for festal celebrations, conventions and other gatherings especially to preach on such occasions.

50. Training of Leaders for Pastoral Care: The migrants are in need of active and dynamic priests and religious to lead them. In order to encourage the practice of the faith traditions and spirituality of the Thomas Christians in the newly organized migrant communities, the assigned pastors and the religious are to be persons with convictions and zeal for the ecclesial patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church. They should also be trained to appreciate the changed circumstances and cultures of the people, so that they can help the migrant communities to accommodate to the new cultural situations of the places without alienation.

51. The priests who manage the affairs of the migrants mostly come from Kerala. This is something positive when it comes to dealing with the first generation migrants from Kerala. But the same factor can become a weakness when it comes to dealing with the sons and daughters of the soil. The priests from Kerala need to have sufficient proficiency in the language of the place of their ministry and a better understanding of the life and struggles of migrants. Timely training programmes for priests, religious and lay leaders in order to guide the younger generation are a must.

52. Unavailability of knowledgeable lay leaders in many of the migrant communities poses big challenge. Educational qualifications of the migrants have undergone drastic changes along with the passage of time. Advance of migrants from unskilled and semiskilled workers to skilled professionals poses new responsibilities to the Church. The approach of the Church with

the globalised professionals may have to be different from that of the past. Ways and means are to be found to effectively utilize their abilities for the various activities of the Church.

53. The Priests and Nuns amidst the Migrants: Some clarity is required about those priests and religious, who while serving in the Latin dioceses or Religious Congregations, get involved in the ministry among the migrants. There could be two scenarios: (1) Priests originally belonging to the Syro-Malabar Church but presently ascribed to a Latin diocese or Latin religious congregation; (2) Priests originally ascribed to a Syro-Malabar diocese or a Syro-Malabar religious community and presently lending their service to a Latin diocese or religious congregation.

54. Following issues can be raised as to the status of the religious in the context of globalization of the Syro-Malabar Church: (1) The Church is missionary by nature and so is the Syro-Malabar Church. The question of proper territory can pose a problem for those who wish to be missionaries outside Kerala as they may be asked to join another *sui iuris* Church for the same. Syro-Malabar Church, in spite of its numerous vocations, is the most affected among the Oriental Churches in this regard. If evangelization is interlinked with pastoral care, is it enough that the Syro-Malabar Church gets only freedom for pastoral care of migrants and not for evangelization? (2) The global nature of our Church is to be ascertained also by our missionaries. (3) As the Syro-Malabar religious are already having global nature, what can be their involvement in and contribution to the pastoral care of the migrants? (4) In the Syro-Malabar provincial houses and the houses under them, but serving in the Latin dioceses, can we have Syro-Malabar liturgy and other ecclesial identity lived with some regularity? (5) Can the Church also get the involvement of the Syro-Malabar priests and religious who have joined the Latin dioceses or Religious Congregations into the ministry of pastoral care of migrants? With the indications given by the Church laws, suitable solutions can be proposed.

55. Promotion of Vocations: Vocations increase in the places where the migrants are getting proper pastoral care and attention. A parish community is a fruitful womb capable of giving human and spiritual formation to the migrant children and youth. Good vocations from the migrants will be helpful to give effective pastoral care, in their own language and culture. Every member of the Church, especially the parents, needs to feel consciously the responsibility for promoting vocations from the migrants. We need to think seriously about giving formation for permanent deacons in order to cater to the needs of the global Church. If we strive to channel our youth resources towards missionary activities, it could strengthen Syro-Malabar global community.

56. Use of Modern Technologies: As the Syro-Malabar migrants live very much exposed to the fast developing communication and technological systems, it is very important that the essential teachings required for the preservation of our own rite are instilled very profoundly and clearly into the hearts and minds of the migrants across the globe. Effective and interactive communication systems should be developed so that people may know the teaching of the Church and follow it with openness to the truth. Exploring the internet and smart phone opportunities, properly laid out website, WhatsApp, Twitter, Face book etc., when properly handled, could be exciting tools for effective bond and communication in the Church. This will enable the Church also to listen better to the younger generations.

57. Issues Related to Different Countries: (1) In the developed countries, before chalking out plans and methods of bringing up the young generation of our Church, we should be able to go into the depth of the problem with utmost readiness to face surprises. The question of religion and faith is the first one to be settled before dealing with their Church identity. (2) Most of the elderly people from Gulf countries will return to Kerala. But their children might

stay there or might migrate to somewhere else. The complexity of this problem needs to be carefully analysed. (3) Enough preparation and proper strategy are needed to help the families of our Catholics who have been left out of our pastoral care. (4) The emergence of India as an economic tiger is a great wave for Syro-Malabar Church. A Church built upon Indian culture can easily convince the highly educated younger generation of its relevance for them.

58. General Issues: The following are some of the general concerns: (1) In the globalized Syro-Malabar Centres, archives and documentation of history are to be given special focus since this movement is gaining strength on a daily basis. (2) Exploitation of Syro-Malabar associations of the migrants for political, business or personal benefits is an increasing risk as well as challenge. Though this risk is to be prudently handled by individual migrants on each situation by its merit, selfish objectives by a selective few virtually damage the spirit and unity of Syro-Malabar community. (3) Success stories of migrant locations can be published in the Church magazines. Similarly success stories of the migrant lay individuals and the missionaries are to be popularised and awarded.

CONCLUSION

59. It is a God given opportunity to bear witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth. Globalized Church is like a torch lighted on the mountain giving light to the whole world. Addressing the problems of the Syro-Malabar migrants and acknowledging and appreciating their endeavours for the Church and the society in the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly will set an important milestone in the history of our Church. The migrants of the Syro-Malabar Church are capable of giving impetus and strength to take participatory leadership in making the Universal Catholic Church grow and

progress. The Syro-Malabar Church is to sprout globally expressing its individuality, simultaneously mutually helping, respecting, understanding, caring and nurturing the other ecclesial traditions. We have to accompany the migrants and their further generations and facilitate the globalizing of the Syro-Malabar Church and thus evangelize the whole world.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are the migrants satisfied with the pastoral care they get from the Syro-Malabar Church? What are the ways and means to reach out to the Syro-Malabar migrant communities?

2. What steps can be taken to prepare the priests and other ministers engaged in the pastoral care of the migrants so that they can be made better equipped and efficient to address the needs and challenges of the migrant community?

3. How to bring about adaptation, integration, inculturation and interculturalization effectively among the global migrants, especially in the value system, rituals and family traditions?

4. What is the identity to be kept by the Syro-Malabar migrants? What are the essential and accidental elements the first generation migrants as well as the second and further generations are expected to live as their ecclesial identity?

5. How can the migrant communities participate meaningfully and actively in the evangelizing mission of the Church? What are the challenges? Suggest ways and means to encounter them.

End Notes

1. Gen 12:1; 50:23; 26:16; 41-42; Ex 1:9-10, 1:11-14, 3:8; Deut 28:48; Ps 137; Neh 1:9; Rut 1:7; Tob 14:12. The success story of Isaac and Joseph is also the story of the well-established migrants in the developed countries. The reunion of Jacob and his sons is the model of family reunion of migrants and refugees in the modern world after long period of suffering and isolation. When the Israelites increased in number the new Egyptian king

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

felt threatened. Sentiments like “sons of the soil” from different parts of the nation and abroad are the signs of vulnerability of aliens in any foreign land. Once problems appear, the first to be blamed are the immigrants who are either expelled or subject to rigorous control.

2. Mt 2:1&13; 25:34-35; Lk 2:4; 9:58; Rom 12:13; 1Tim 3:2, 5:10; 1Pet 4:9; 2Cor 8:9; Act 8:1; Eph 2:19; 1Cor 12:13-14; Gal 3:28.
3. Lev 19:33-34; Rom 15:7; Mt 25:31-45; Act 10:34-35.
4. LG 23; GS, AG 38; CD, 23, 27; OE 2-4.
5. Pope John Paul II, *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, 2004, nos. 52-54.
6. Letter of Pope St. John Paul II to the Bishops of India on 28th May 1987. The Holy Father insisted the same also in his address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, 1st Oct, 1998.
7. CCEO 17, 21, 29, 31, 32, 128, 38, 39-41, 213, 148, 588, 193, 1465; CIC 112, 383, 476, 518, 112, 111, 214.
8. Pope John Paul II, *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, 2004, nos. 52-55.
9. There are two Apostolic Vicariates in the Gulf countries: The Southern Vicariate - the territories of the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Yemen and the Northern Vicariate - Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.
10. In many of the migrant communities in India and abroad, Syro-Malabar liturgical celebrations are conducted in the Latin Churches. Qatar, the only country in the Gulf where there is an independent Syro-Malabar Church, our people began their community life by sharing a place of worship with the Malankara Orthodox Church. This situation continued until both Churches constructed individual independent churches on a land provided by the government.
11. “Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Migrants” Part III, in *The Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, 2013, p. 146.
12. LG 13; CIC Can. 844, §§3-4 and CCEO Can. 671, §§3-4.
13. GS 58-59.
14. Christian faith with all its Jewish cultural garbs were not essentially to be carried forth (Acts 15). The first four books of the apostolic canon of the New Testament contain four different versions of the story. Their titles imply that there is one Gospel, related to four different writers (Lk 1, 1-4).
15. CCEO c. 148.



GENERAL CONCLUSION



The Syro-Malabar Church continues to be the seed of the Kingdom and offers the Gospel as meaning and hope to the people. Major Archiepiscopal Assembly is a golden opportunity in this regard under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, former Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church of fond memory, qualifies Assembly as “the collegial communion of a cross-section of the Church. These are the sacred days to discern what the Holy Spirit speaks to the Church”.¹ In preparation for the Assembly, *Lineamenta* reflects upon various aspects of the three important themes of the Assembly, each bringing to light the strengths and challenges of the Syro-Malabar Christian life in the contemporary society. The themes express the interest of the Syro-Malabar Church to reach out to the lives of its faithful. The Church wishes to listen to their concerns and challenges in witnessing Christ in family and society, thus looking forward to the Assembly as an event of ecclesial communion. The Assembly equips the Syro-Malabar Church to continue to live its apostolic heritage and to contribute to the universal Catholic communion. The themes also express the Church’s eagerness to encounter the challenges of the time as well as to contribute to the nation-building process wherever she is.

1 Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, “Inaugural Message” in Acts of the Third Major Archiepiscopal Assembly, edited by Fr. Justin Vettukallel MST, Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, 2010, p. 20.

The simple life of Jesus Christ and His teachings call for initiating practical steps to transform our way of life in order to resonate the Gospel values. The first section, “Simplicity in Life”, of the Lineamenta, engages in a critical look at the present culture, marked by consumerism, individualistic attitudes towards religious and social practices and mistaken presumptions on progress. The discussions at various levels need to reflect on how Christian spirituality of simplicity can touch upon various aspects of the Syro- Malabar Church such as personal life, family and social life, pastoral attitudes and the structures of the Church.

The second section, “Witness in Family”, invites the faithful to recapture God’s plan on family and strengthen the rich family traditions of Syro-Malabar faithful in the face of contemporary challenges to family life. The various tendencies in the society that undermine the structure and stability of family pose serious threats, not only to the family life but also to the composition of the Syro-Malabar communities. One cannot ignore the shifts in the socio-cultural setting of contemporary families that result in an imbalance in the emotional and affective dimensions, leading to instability and breakdown of families. The assembly hopes to reflect further on ways and means the Church’s family apostolate can enhance the family relations with a Catholic understanding of affectivity and personal maturity. The deliberations on the Lineamenta needs to discuss how concerted effort of faithful in various walks of life can initiate and accompany families and young couples to live out the gospel of family.

The third section, “Mission of the Migrants”, focuses on the challenges and prospects of the Syro-Malabar migration. The transmission of faith and tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church in the changing linguistic, cultural and social contexts of the migrant families and communities has been a major concern of the Church in recent decades. However, the Assembly needs to

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016

take further practical steps to empower the migrant communities and other faithful in Diaspora to live their faith as well as to become evangelizers in their respective contexts. These contexts are also opportunities for Syro-Malabar Church to grow into a global identity, towards which the migrant communities are to be properly oriented and the faithful in the proper territory are to be rightly prepared.

The Lineamenta is published in order that the Church may respond to these challenges in a collegial way. The term 'Lineamenta' literally means "outline" in the Latin. It is a broad outline of the topics of the Assembly aiming at eliciting a wide range of observations and responses. In order to facilitate discussions in various levels - diocese, presbyterium, pastoral council, parishes, religious communities, migrant communities, family units and individual - a series of questions are given at the end of each theme. The responses to these questions at various levels hope to reflect the views of the Syro-Malabar faithful. These responses form a major source of the Instrumentum laboris, the working document of the Assembly as well as the discussions in the Assembly. Therefore, the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church admonishes all the faithful to invest careful reflections into the themes discussed in the Lineamenta.



ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	: <i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AG	: <i>Ad Gentes</i>
ANF	: Ante-Nicene Fathers
CCC	: Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCEO	: <i>Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium</i>
CD	: <i>Christus Dominus</i>
CIC	: <i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i>
EG	: <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
EMCC	: <i>Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi</i>
FC	: <i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
GS	: <i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LF	: <i>Lumen Fidei</i>
LG	: <i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LS	: <i>Laudato Si'</i>
MD	: <i>Mulieris Dignitatem</i>
NPNF	: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
OE	: <i>Orientalium Ecclesiarum</i>
PFS	: Pope Francis' Speech
PL	: <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PP	: <i>Populorum Progressio</i>



Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly - 2016