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Kottayam (Indie)

AN OUTSTANDING FIGURE OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN INDIA **On the Fiftieth Death Anniversary of Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1882-1953)**

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church celebrated the 50th death anniversary of Archbishop Mar Ivanios of blessed memory on July 15, 2003. He gave leadership to the world-famous and historic „Unity Movement” (commonly called „Re-union Movement”) in India in 1930 and thereby brought the Malankara Orthodox-Jacobite churches to the full, visible and canonical communion with the Catholic Church. He appeared in the ecclesiastical horizon as the prophet of unity and peace. He had the leadership qualities of the great Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land. He inherited the courage of St. Thomas the Apostle, who dared to come to this distant land. He had the universal missionary vision of St. Paul who dared to remove the human fences in order to receive the non-Jews into the Church. By his life and apostolate, Mar Ivanios opened a new chapter in the history of Christianity in India. God chose this prophet for the reunion of the separated St. Thomas Christians to the Catholic Church and together with that, conversion to Christ of thousands of non-Christians in India. He believed firmly that God calls him for this purpose and that he had a God-given task to fulfill. He regained the aspect of Catholicity for the Malankara Church, lost since 1653, and together with that, all the blessing that accompany the Catholic communion. In short, the earthly life of Mar Ivanios was the perfect expression of the merciful divine providence. He was a man of wisdom and holiness. He was filled with Christian piety. He had a very strong life of faith. This article is a further peep into the life of that great Church leader of the 20th century¹

Preamble

1. The original Christian community in India, having its beginning with the preaching of St. Thomas, had in use the liturgy of the Persian or East Syrian

¹ May I invite the attention of the reader to the two articles published in this periodical: *Ecumenism in India*, „Studia Oecumenica” 1 (2001), 143-154; *Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Ecumenism*, „Studia Oecumenica” 2 (2002), 243-257.

Church. This One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ in India remained undivided for 17 centuries, enjoying some kind of hierarchical communion with the Persian Church.

2. The Western Portuguese missionaries, who came to India during the 16th century, saw the bishops from Persia here and noticed that their liturgy and theology were different from the one they were acquainted with. According to their mentality, they tried to latinize this Catholic Eastern Church, assimilate it to the Latin Church and make it part of their (Roman Catholic or „Latin”) Church. In their ignorance of Eastern Christianity, they accused it of Nestorianism. They adopted various means to implement their plan. They held a Synod at Udayampalur (Diamper) in 1599, mutilated the liturgy, made a lot of changes in the church life, appointed Latin bishops in the place of the Syro-oriental prelates, and took complete control of the Church.

3. Thus the Church of the Thomas Christians came under the direct rule of the bishop of Rome in 1599. The situation continued till 1653. In other words, through the Padroado jurisdiction of Portugal, all the Thomas Christians were directly put under the Pope of Rome for 52 years².

4. There was very strong reaction to the activities of the Western Portuguese Jesuit missionaries who interfered in the daily life of the Church³ It reached its culmination in the Coonan Cross Oath (1653), at which they all took an oath that they would never remain under the then ruling Jesuit bishops. It was not an act against the Catholic Church nor against the Pope of Rome, but against the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries⁴. It is clear from the fact that when Rome sent Carmelite missionaries to reconcile this community, the vast majority accepted the rule of the Carmelites and continued to be under them. The Carmelites, under the Propaganda Fide, in the place of the Portuguese Padroado, ordained and appointed in 1663 a native priest, Palliveetil Parampil Chandy Cathanar, as the bishop of the Thomas Christians.

5. But a group under the Archdeacon Thomas, whom the leaders of the community elected as their bishop, continued to remain separated. Eventually that group came into contact with the Syrian Jacobite bishop of Jerusalem and slowly went closer to the Jacobite non-Chalcedonian Church in West Asia⁵ Thus they

² This is a fact, which many Orthodox and Jacobites in Kerala often forget conveniently.

³ The three Jesuit missionary bishops who ruled the undivided Thomas Christians since 1599 were Francisco Roz (1600-1624), Stefano de Britto (1624-1641) and Francisco Garcia Mendez (1641-1659). The Coonan Cross revolt in 1653 was a reaction to the activities of these Jesuit prelates, especially those of Garcia..

⁴ The Oath was: *We would never obey the Sampalur Pathiris*; i.e., we would never obey the Fathers or priests of St. Paul's. St. Paul's was the name of the Jesuit house. In the local language it was known as Sampalur. F. Roz and other Jesuit bishops were known as Sampalur Pathiris (priests or Fathers of St Paul's).

⁵ Today in the ecumenical world, the Syrian Jacobites are called Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. But in Kerala, a group of Syrian Orthodox call themselves explicitly Jacobite Syrian Church. They call their parishes Jacobite Churches.

lost their centuries old East Syrian liturgy, full Catholic communion with the Church of Rome, and became part of the Jacobite Church. Since they abandoned the centuries old liturgy and traditions, they came to be known in history as the Puthenkuttukar (people of the new allegiance). Here we find the beginning of the split of the Church of the Thomas Christians. Those who continued to be Catholics under the local bishop Parampil Chandy were known as the Pazhayakuttukar (people of the old allegiance). Today Pazhayakuttukar are known as the Syro-Malabar Church and Puthenkuttukar as the Syrian Orthodox or Jacobites.

6. Ever since the division occurred, there were attempts from both sides for reunion. Both the communities, under two leaderships and owing allegiance to two Churches, knew that their Church was one till 1653. Even after the division they used the church buildings in common, continued the East Syrian liturgy in the corrected version of the Jesuit bishop Roz, and had inter-marriage and common social life. They knew very well that there were no dogmatic issues involved in the division. From 1653 till 1799⁶, there were continuous efforts for reunion⁷ After that date the *Puthenkur* community moved closer to the Anglicans and later to the Jacobites. Eventually that community became part of the Jacobite Church in West Asia. This all happened in the 19th century.

Confrontation with the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch

The Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch had no authority whatsoever over the Church of the Thomas Christians for 19 centuries. It was just accidental that the Puthenkur community got in touch with the Syrian Jacobites in 1665 and later became part of their Church in 1876 at the Mulanthuruthy Synod. During the course of time, there emerged various groups in the Puthenkur community and it was the factionalism in the community, especially in the 19th century that enabled the Jacobite Patriarch to interfere in the Church and to become the leader of this community. Still there was strong opposition to his leadership and activity because of his demand that all the temporalities of the Church be submitted to him; it led to the split of the Jacobite Puthenkur community into Jacobite and Orthodox in 1912. The local leader of the Jacobites in India, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, was not prepared to surrender the temporalities of the Church to the Patriarch. So the Patriarch, Mar Abdallah II⁸ Sattuf (1906-1916) came to India in 1909, deposed and excommunicated the local leader and appointed another one in his place. Since then, all through the 20th century, the local leadership

⁶ In 1799 Mar Dionysius I of the Puthenkur community formally became Catholic. But the missionaries who were the rulers of the Pazhayakur community (Catholics) did not favor it. So after six months, he went back to the Puthenkur side.

⁷ S. KANJIRAMUKALIL, *Punaraiikya Rekhakal*, Kottayam 1999.

⁸ He was a Catholic between 1895 and 1906, but reverted to the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church to become Patriarch. See E. TISSERANT, E.R. HAMBYE, *Christianity in India*, Bombay - Calcutta 1957, 197.

was in conflict with the Patriarch, with some periods of agreement⁹ The conflict continues even today. In 1912 the deposed local Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius, managed to establish a Catholicate for his group. From this time his group began to call itself Malankara Orthodox Church.

Autonomy: Mar Ivanios' goal (1912)

Mar Ivanios, as a priest on the side of the local leader Mar Dionysius, was the chief instrument for the establishment of the Catholicate. When Mar Dionysius was excommunicated by Mar Abdallah II, it was Mar Ivanios who invited Mar Abd-Mšiha (Abd-ul-Masih) II, the senior Patriarch residing in Tur-Abdin in South Eastern Turkey¹⁰. He brought him here, received him in Bombay, and made all the arrangements for the establishment of the Catholicate. Its establishment took place in 1912. The late Mar Ivanios did all this in view of regaining the autonomy of his Church from the Syrian Jacobites in West Asia and of getting absolved from the excommunication of Mar Abdallah. He believed firmly that the Puthenkur community should get rid of the attachment to the Jacobite Patriarch and become an autonomous Church. But Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, the local leader, was not prepared to break the ties with the Patriarch. He wanted to keep the relationship with the Patriarch and to continue as part of the Jacobite Church and to remain as its local head. The Puthenkur community split into two factions in 1912 with the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by Mar Abdalla and the establishment of the Catholicate by Mar Abd Mšiha. Thereupon started the civil litigations in 1913. When the first Catholicos died shortly after his enthronement, the Orthodox group did not appoint another one to succeed him till 1925, chiefly because of the litigations over the temporalities of the Church with the other faction in the civil courts. The case is known as Vattippanakkes¹¹

Mar Ivanios at Serampore (1913-1919)

Mar Ivanios, as a priest (1909), collaborated very closely with Mar Dionysius. He witnessed the arrival and activities of the two rival Patriarchs, the excommunication of Mar Dionysius and the establishment of the Catholicate. When he got a chance to be away from the ensuing civil litigations (1913), with the permission and blessings of Mar Dionysius, he went to the Serampore Col-

⁹ The temporary union was in 1958. It lasted externally till 1970.

¹⁰ He was the acting Patriarch of Antioch from 1896 till 1906 and was deposed by the civil authorities on the instigations of his successor. He never accepted his deposition. He became Catholic in 1913 and died in 1914. See *ibid.* 197.

¹¹ The word meaning is „money deposited for interest in the bank” There was some money in the East India Company belonging to the Syrians. When there were two groups, the legitimate owner had to be determined. So there arose an inter-pleader case over this money. Ultimately the case was meant to decide the ownership of the temporalities.

lege in North India, to teach Church History. He taught there till 1919. There he had ample opportunity to get acquainted with the Anglican High Church leadership and with Indian monastic ways of living. He had the opportunity to read and study intensively Church History books and reflect over the situation of his Church in Kerala. There he could go into the sources of Church History. These opened his eyes. The period in Serampore was very decisive for him. He brought with him a large number of young men and women there from his homeland thus giving them the opportunity for higher education. He got the idea of an Indian way of monastic life in Kerala. The preparations were already started there at Serampore. He decided to keep away from the civil litigations.

Mar Ivanios and Bethany Monasticism (1919-1930)

When he returned from Serampore in 1919, he started the Bethany monasticism for both men and women at Perunad, in a mountainous region in Kerala. There he entered into an intense prayer life and contemplation. He thought that interior conversion, newness of attitudes of mind, self-denial and unstinted love are prerequisites for the reformation of the Church. He believed that this change of heart and holiness of life can be achieved in the monastic set up and that it is the only way to renew the Church. With the permission of the local leader, Mar Dionysius, he started parish conventions and preaching of the Word of God, leading the faithful to sacramental life and more intense spiritual life in accordance with the Gospel values. He showed them another better way of Christian life, than the life in constant civil litigations with the brothers of the same faith. He started a reform movement within the community. And it bore ample fruits.

Crucial year for the Orthodox (1923)

In 1923 the civil verdict over the litigation of 1913 with the Patriarch's fraction was unfavorable to the Orthodox. So Mar Dionysius made another attempt for reconciliation with the Patriarch. He went to Mardin, Turkey, and met the Patriarch, but it did not bring about any tangible reconciliation. On his way to the Patriarch, Mar Dionysius had the opportunity to meet a Catholic bishop, and there was some kind of talk about the possible communion with the Catholic Church. When the Orthodox gave the review petition, Mar Ivanios and their advocates had to go deep into the sources of Church History to assess the authority of the Patriarchs. It revealed a lot of things to them. They realized that the history as taught by the Jacobites is far from truth and objectivity. They found in the *Hudōyō Konūnē*, the official canon law of the Jacobites, itself evidence for the precedence of the Patriarch of the West, namely the Pope of Rome.

In 1925 there was a temporary victory of the Orthodox. In that year they installed the second Catholicos, Mar Baselios Geevarghese I, without the cooperation of the Patriarch, and the following day Mar Ivanios was ordained as

Bishop of Bethany. At that time Mar Ivanios urged the newly installed Catholicos to take up the leadership of the entire community of all the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala. He acknowledged that all had been culpable. The second Catholicos was in favor of the proposals of Mar Ivanios.

Mar Ivanios started Bethany parishes, which were neither under the Patriarch, nor under the Catholicos; i.e., they were independent establishments. Mar Dionysius gave his blessing for such an arrangement. The civil litigations, however, continued. In the meantime, in 1926, the Orthodox bishops met in Synod at Parumala and discussed ways and means for a communion with any of the ancient Apostolic Churches other than the Jacobite Church. Since Mar Dionysius was a party in the civil litigation, he did not take part in it personally. But the other bishops did it with his blessing. There were three bishops present including the second Catholicos.

The ecumenical negotiations (1926-1930)

The first ecumenical contact having in view the communion with the Catholic Church was with the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Ignatius Ephrem II (Rahmani). The patriarch was very positive in his replies. In the second stage, Mar Ivanios, in the name of the Orthodox bishops, entered into direct negotiations with Rome, through the Apostolic Delegate in India and through a retired Roman Catholic priest Father Ribeiro. In all his correspondences Mar Ivanios requested that in an eventual Catholic communion the Oriental traditions should be preserved in their integrity. Since the Catholicos had to take the lead for the full communion, his position as Catholicos as well as that of the Synod had to be recognized. Rome accepted every condition except the position of the Catholicos and the Synod. Mar Ivanios was very much distressed at this refusal. In his subsequent letters to Rome, he asked whether it was possible then to ask the Catholicos to enter into communion with Rome, if his position as Catholicos was not recognized. In 1928 the second Catholicos suddenly died. In 1929 Mar Dionysius won the civil litigation and he, together with Mar Ivanios, installed the third Catholicos with the name Baselios Geevarghese II. The ecumenical negotiations continued. But the Roman officials refused any kind of recognition of the Catholicos. There was long delay in getting the reply from Rome. Among the members of the Synod of 1926, who decided and authorized Mar Ivanios for ecumenical negotiations with Rome, apart from the third Catholicos, the only person left in the scene was Mar Ivanios.

In spite of the refusal from the part of the Roman officials to recognize the Catholicos and the Synod and the withdrawal from the part of the other prelates including Mar Dionysius, Mar Ivanios entered into full visible, canonical communion with the Catholic Church in 1930. Thus the division of a group of Thomas Christians and the separation from the full Catholic communion came to an end in 1930. It was a historical event both inside and outside India and stirred

a commotion all over the world, because this was the only successful ecumenical event in the 20th century that established the corporate unity of a Church with the Catholic Church. Since 1930 all those who thought that the communion with the See of Peter in Rome and through that with the worldwide Catholic Church is necessary for the full ecclesiality of the Church of Christ, followed Mar Ivanios and became part of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Although Mar Dionysius was behind the ecumenical negotiations undertaken by Mar Ivanios, he was not a committed ecumenist. Perhaps he thought of possible communion with the Catholic Church, only in case he lost the civil litigation. If this is true, it is not at all a sufficient motive for a communion. So when he won the civil litigation, he withdrew from the ecumenical field. Later Orthodox writers put forward other reasons for his withdrawal. But all the same they recognize the fact that he withdrew¹²

The case of Mar Ivanios was different. Mar Ivanios, in the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, was „a tireless Apostle for Unity”¹³ He wanted that all the St. Thomas Christians should become once again one united Church. He wanted to reestablish the full, visible, canonical communion, lost in 1653. He wanted to maintain the integral Oriental traditions. He aimed at Corporate Unity, i.e., mutual recognition and mutual acceptance. He wanted to put an end to sectarianism and an isolated existence of his own Church. He wanted to have an honorable existence for his Church in the one Catholic Church of Christ. This he thought could be achieved only by breaking the ties with the Jacobites in West Asia. He was far ahead of his contemporaries, and even of the Roman officials. But since he lived during the pre-Vatican period, there were hurdles for the realization of his vision of Christian unity. He could not convince the then Roman officials of his rather „post-Vatican II” ecumenical ecclesiology. But he stood for it till the end. He did not lose hope. He continued the path shown by God and succeeded in bringing about the full communion and acceptance of his Church as an individual Church (an *Ecclesia sui iuris*, as we would say today) in the Catholic communion. In those days this was a great achievement.

Strong opposition

There arose very strong opposition and hatred against him from his Malankara Orthodox brethren themselves. They made use of every means to make his communion with Rome a failure. There were also attempts endangering his life. They pretended that „Rome would abandon Mar Ivanios” and „he would go around begging with his beggar’s bowl” In another stage they claimed to be sure that „the Malankara Church would be absorbed into the Latin Church”; „there would not be a Malankara liturgy nor Church any more” They also propagated

¹² V. C. SAMUEL, *Truth Triumphs*, Kottayam 1986, 64-65.

¹³ See „L’Osservatore Romano” N. 21: 21 May, 2003, 5

that „Rome would latinize this church” They even instigated the civil authorities against the Reunion Movement. There was a secular ruler, like a minister, C. P. Ramswamy Ayer. He was brought from Chennai (formerly Madras) by the Patriarch’s faction in order to plead their case against the Orthodox. He eventually became a minister (Divan) in Travancore, a part of today’s Kerala. He was a committed anti-Christian¹⁴ He did not permit Mar Ivanios to construct chapels or churches. He would not give permission for burial places. He tried to acquire the properties purchased by Mar Ivanios in Trivandrum. But, by divine providence and prophetic vision, Mar Ivanios succeeded in coming to terms with him and continue his apostolate of unity. But in his heart, C.P. Ramaswamy Ayer remained always hundred percent a committed, fanatic anti-Christian.

Mar Ivanios had to bear patiently all the false accusations and calumny leveled against him by his former friends and co-workers, who had had an almost adoring attitude towards him when he was in their Church. Once he was considered as one of the greatest leaders of their Malankara Orthodox Church; he was the first one to get an M.A. degree from a university. But after his establishing full communion with the Church of Rome, he was depicted as a betrayer and deserter. One may not get words to explain the difficulties encountered by Mar Ivanios in those early troubled days.

But Mar Ivanios was correct in bringing his church to full, visible and canonical communion with the world wide Catholic Church, headed by the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. History proved that he was correct in following his conscience and his assessments were correct. History proved that he was right, that he did not betray his church, but brought its ecclesiality to perfection. He was right in the evaluation of the history of his church. He was doing the right thing in leading thousands of the faithful, entangled in civil litigation to the full Catholic communion and to the true sheepfold of Christ and to peace and prosperity.

It was definitely a reunion, a reunion of brothers and sisters separated in 1653. The forefathers of Mar Ivanios were Catholics from the Apostolic times till the 17th century. He believed firmly peace and concord among brothers and among all men. He believed that the Church has a mission in the world. He aimed at peace and prosperity for his community and for people at large. And with the communion, he aimed at a great missionary enterprise.

He was a visionary. He was an instrument of the Holy Spirit. Unity among the believers and followers of Christ is God’s gift to His Church. Division is sin, a grave sin, and a sin for which all are culpable. When Mar Ivanios prepared himself and his few followers in the Bethany monastic establishment

¹⁴ In 1938 during an interview with Mr. Sen, editor of the Hindustan Times, Calcutta, Mr. Ramaswamy said, „I am a Hindu firmly entrenched in the Hindu faith; I believe in militant Hinduism. My mission in Travancore is to crush Christian influence and position in the state.” See M. GIBBONS, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Kottayam 2002², 106.

through intense prayer and conversion of heart, God in His abundant mercy showered his gift of unity among them. The reunion movement and the achievement of Mar Ivanios is nothing but God's gracious gift for his Church, shown to the Thomas Christians. Those who followed the guidance of the Spirit became Catholics. He sought the Truth and he found it in the communion with the Catholic Church and he embraced it. He did not hesitate nor repudiate the Truth, which he found out. He, as an instrument of God, was a great man before God. He was an extraordinary person. He is an example of all who seek earnestly the unity among the followers of Christ. He listened to the prayer of the Lord, „that all may be one” He realized that Christianity has a mission in India and in the world. His conviction was that it could not be fulfilled in sectarian or isolated existence, or in a Church constantly entangled in civil litigations and strife. Divided Christianity is a contradiction. The mission of the church can be achieved only in communion. Communion does not take away the autonomy and individuality; on the contrary, communion is enrichment for all the churches, entering into communion. Anybody who has some knowledge of the history of the Churches in Kerala for the last 70 years, can make his judgment, whether Mar Ivanios was correct or not in his decision to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church and with the Successor of St. Peter in Rome.

Those who accused Mar Ivanios since 1930 should reflect over the terrible history of division of their community even after 1930. They should open their eyes to the fact that during the past 73 years, there was no period in their history, where there was no strife and civil litigation. They should also see the present situation of conflict within their community and see how it affects the Christian cause¹⁵ It may be better for them to put an end to the calumny against Mar Ivanios. Was it wrong to have asserted that the beginning of the Coonan Cross Oath was on false assumptions?¹⁶ Was it wrong to have said farewell to the civil litigations and strife? Was it wrong to have accepted the Successor of Peter in Rome? Was it wrong to have entered into full, visible, communion with the world wide Catholic Church? Was it wrong to have reestablished the lost communion in 1665? Was it wrong to have followed one's own conscience? Was it wrong to have listened humbly to the Lord's Prayer, „that they all may be one”? If these were the wrongs that Mar Ivanios did, let our Orthodox brethren pardon him in the name of the Risen Lord.

¹⁵ Mar Ivanios prophesied long before that unless the Orthodox and the Jacobites enter into full Catholic communion, they are going to meet terribly the division, causing great scandal to the people in India. And in fact it has happened during the last few years, especially in 2002.

¹⁶ Mar Dionysius himself asserted it once: „After the Coonan Cross Oath, Ittithomman Cathanar produced a fabricated document, saying that twelve priests could ordain the Archdeacon as bishop. From that time onwards till the rumor (circulated in 1912) that the senior Patriarch Abd Msiha was deposed by the Synod, our Church is based on false assumptions and false documents. Unless we rectify them and build on new foundations, there is not going to have lasting peace in our church”(T.V. JOHN, *Malankara Sabhayude Bhaavi*, 8-9: quoted by V. KILICHIMALA, in: *Ormayude Chitrasala*, I, Tiruvalla 1996, 127).

A Sacerdos Magnus

Mar Ivanios was a *Sacerdos Magnus*, a great High Priest. He was a pillar of the Church in India. He was a lover of Truth: religious truth and historical truth. He realized that monasticism had a vital role to play in the renewal of the Church. He realized also that communion with the See of Peter is the only way to lasting peace and prosperity for his church. He found truth not in the civil litigation nor in his church entangled in petit quarrels and sectarian violence. He had in his heart, even 40 years before the Second Vatican Council, the two aims of the Council: *aggiornamento* and ecumenism. Through the renewal and communion, he aimed at the Church's wider missionary commitment in India. He had a great missionary dimension and he urged every Christian community in India to proclaim the Gospel to those who never knew our Lord before.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his allocution to the Malankara Catholic Bishops during their *ad limina* Visit in 2003 (May 13) referred to Mar Ivanios and spoke very highly of the Apostolate of the Malankara Church: „Indeed, it is fitting that as your community celebrates the Fiftieth Anniversary of the death of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, a tireless apostle for unity, you find yourselves at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul praying with Christ „ut omnes unum sint...” We are also mindful of the multiple blessings that have been bestowed on your church in a relatively short time. You have become one of the fastest growing Catholic communities in the world, boasting large numbers of vocations to the priesthood and religious life”¹⁷

When His Holiness the Pope came to India in 1986 he spoke also in very high terms regarding the Malankara Catholic Church and of Mar Ivanios: „It is a joy for me to visit Saint Mary's Cathedral in Trivandrum [now Thiruvananthapuram]. Although my visit is briefer than my heart would wish, I am very happy to be able to come to this Mother Church of the Metropolitan See of the Syro-Malankara Church. In coming to this Cathedral, I pay honor to the memory of Archbishop Mar Ivanios who is buried here. Among the many apostolic endeavors of this zealous Pastor of souls, none was dearer to him than the promotion of unity among Christians. And this remains an important priority in the Church. Our Lord might himself, on the night before he died, prayed „that they may all be one”(Jn 17:20) and he gave his life „to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad”(Jn 11:52). We must never tire then in our efforts to work for unity among Christians and to further harmony and peace in the world. May Mary the Mother of God assist us by her prayers. And may the Lord bless you all with his abundant joy and peace”¹⁸

During another speech in Trivandrum Holy Father spoke thus: „At this stage of my pilgrimage through India, I wish to avail myself of this visit to Trivandrum to address a particular word of affection to the Syro-Malankara

¹⁷ „L'Osservatore Romano”, N. 21: 21 May, 2003, 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Feb. 17, 1986, 8. *The Pope Speaks to India*, Bombay 1986, 146.

Church of which Trivandrum is the principal See, under the guidance of Archbishop Mar Gregorios. Your Church, beloved brothers and sisters, traces its origin to the Apostle Saint Thomas. You possess a very ancient liturgical tradition, which had its origin in Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). For more than sixteen centuries your community remained in unbroken communion with the See of Peter. Then there was a series of difficulties, which interrupted that communion. But this century has been indelibly marked by the luminous figure of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, who found wisdom and sensitivity to the cause of Christian unity in my predecessor Pius XI, to whom he made an historic visit in 1932. I am very pleased to know that the latest period of your Church's history has been a time of growth and vigorous Christian life. The establishment of the Major Seminary dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church, is a sign of your vitality. It offers great hope of further strength and consolidation in the future.

In 1980 I had the great pleasure of sending Cardinal Rubin as my personal representative to the Jubilee celebrations. And today I have been given the grace to visit you personally. Today I wish to encourage you in your faith, in your fidelity to your ancient traditions, in your sincere efforts to promote fraternal relations with your brothers and sisters of the Jacobite and Orthodox Churches and other ecclesial communions. May your constant aspiration be that the time will soon come when the prayer of our Lord for perfect unity among all his disciples will be realized (Jn 17:21), so that the Church in every place and in every age may shine forth as „a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”¹⁹

During the previous *ad limina* visits of the Malankara and Malabar bishops also, His Holiness Pope John Paul II referred to Archbishop Mar Ivanios with a joyful heart. During the 1980 *ad limina* visit, referring to the Golden Jubilee of the „Unity Movement” going to be celebrated in December in that year, Pope said, „You are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of that spiritual movement of which the late and esteemed Mar Ivanios was a pioneer and which brought into full communion with Rome himself, other Prelates, and the communities which he founded: the brothers of the Imitation of Christ and the sisters of Bethany”²⁰ During the 1996 *ad limina* Visit, the Pope said: „Present in our thoughts at this happy moment are the figures of two unforgettable Pastors, Mar Ivanios, who led you on the path of rediscovered full communion with the See of Peter, and Mar Gregorios, who so wisely directed the development of your Church”²¹

In his last message in 1952 to the Malankara Catholic community, Mar Ivanios said before his death: „I have great sorrow about the non-Catholics in Kerala, who are the bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh. We desired very earnestly their

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

²⁰ P. PALLATH (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Church in India*, Changanassery 1996, 61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

reunion. We tried our level best for that purpose. But we are not blessed to see their full communion. We hope and pray that our earnest desire become a reality”²²

Mar Gregorios († 1994), the successor of Mar Ivanios gives the reason why the reunion was not fully achieved: „The effort for corporate reunion with the Catholic Church was thwarted by the desertion of most of the Orthodox leaders from their original proposal of entering into communion with the Catholic Church. The reasons that prevailed with these leaders, who went back, were merely human and personal considerations and not motives of faith or religion... The realization of the dream of the Church unity required heroic efforts on the part of Archbishop Mar Ivanios and his few companions”²³

The last message of Archbishop Mar Ivanios was touching. He told the faithful: „Be proud of being Catholics. Let your sanctity of life and good example be a light for the non-Catholics. Let each one of you become another Christ. Let your families be like the holy family at Nazareth, as abodes of grace, peace and prosperity. Let Christ reign in your heart and in your families”²⁴

Wybitna postać XX wieku w Indii

W pięćdziesiątą rocznicę śmierci arcybiskupa Mar Iwaniosa (1882-1953)

Streszczenie

W kontekście obchodzonej 15 lipca 2003 r. przez Syro-Malankarski Kościół Katolicki pięćdziesiątej rocznicy śmierci jego pierwszego biskupa Mar Iwaniosa, Autor artykułu podejmuje refleksję nad osobą i dziełem tej wybitnej postaci. Wychodząc od opisu trudnej i skomplikowanej historii chrześcijaństwa w Indii, koncentruje się on na przedstawieniu Mar Iwaniosa jako zdecydowanego orędownika komunii z Rzymem, wizjonera i apostoła jedności oraz narzędzie Ducha Świętego. Autor opisuje drogę życiową Mar Iwaniosa jako kapłana i biskupa oraz okoliczności zawarcia przez niego unii z Rzymem w 1930 r. Wskazuje przy tym na jego niezłomną postawę w dążeniu do pełnej, widzialnej jedności z Kościołem katolickim i następcą św. Piotra w Rzymie. Wielkość osoby arcybiskupa Mar Iwaniosa wynika z jego ekumenicznego otwarcia i wizji odnowy Kościoła, która czterdzieści lat później doszła do głosu na Soborze Watykańskim II. Zasługi pierwszego biskupa Syro-Malankarskiego Kościoła Katolickiego podkreślił także Jan Paweł II w czasie swej wizyty w Indii w 1986 r. oraz w czasie wizyt *ad limina* malankarskich biskupów katolickich w Rzymie.

R. Porada

²² *The Last Message*, Trivandrum 1952, 12-13.

²³ K. V. KOSHY, *St. Thomas and the Syrian Churches of India*, Delhi 1999, 76-77.

²⁴ *Last Message*, 14.