

# **SYNAXIS THEME - 2009**

## **VINCENTIAN CALL TO EVANGELIZATION**

**Fr. Joseph Erambil**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

When the angel Gabriel said to Mary that “you will conceive in your womb and bear a son...” then “Mary said to the angel, ‘How shall this be, since I have no husband?’ And the angel said to her, ‘the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God’ (Lk. 1:31-35). Impossible things happen in the life of a believer without even his own previous plans or calculations. This is true, I think in the writing and publication of this book, “The Vincentian Call to Evangelization.”

To publish it, seems to be the clear will of God and which is absolutely revealed by the general administrative body of the Vincentian Congregation. The mysterious intervention of God in our life and actions can be discerned and learned only by a humble and simple mind enlightened by faith. “How shall this be?” The answer is “the Holy Spirit will come on you”, thus we have this book in our hands. I bow down therefore with deep gratitude before the Most High God. “I will thank thee for ever, because thou hast done it. I will proclaim thy name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly” (Ps.52: 8-9).

The invitation to mission and the help of grace to accomplish come totally from God it reaches our mind and heart through our fellow brothers and sisters. “The Vincentian call to Evangelization” a well planed decision of God, becomes a reality for us, because of the help of several persons. In a special way I thank the general administrative body of the Vincentian Congregation for their encouragement for writing this book. I admire and thank Very Rev. Fr. Varghese Puthussery for his constant support to prepare this book and his kindness to write a foreword to the same. My confreres at the Generalate house deserve unfathomable gratitude for their cooperation and support to finish this work.

Fr. George Appassery was always available and ready to read and correct each part of this book. Dear Father most sincerely I thank you for your generous co-operation. Fr. Varghese Thurithichira and Mr. Sijo Sunny made the beautiful cover page of the book and my thanks are due to them. To the manager and staff of the Divine Press, I owe much gratitude to them. At last but not least I am indebted to my

family, the members of the Congregation, my friends, benefactors and well wishers for their prayerful encouragement, and to all of them I express my deep gratitude. “A hymn of praise should be uttered in wisdom, and the Lord will prosper it (Sir. 15:9).

## FOREWORD

“Vincentian Call to Evangelization” is the theme selected and presented for our study during the coming months before the General and Provincial Synaxes. It will enlighten us and be a guide for our life of commitment in the Vincentian Congregation. Fr. Joseph Erambil has undertaken a scholarly exposition of this theme and I am happy to present it to all our members. This scientific and short book gives a brief explanation for the wholesome understanding of the theme. It explores the various aspects of the theme of evangelization and inspects it in the context of the charism and ministry of the Vincentian Congregation. It is also a practical guidebook that examines various challenges and difficulties of evangelization and discusses their solutions. It also shows the way forward in presenting the future vision of our evangelization and mission.

Let us make this book the subject of our personal study and common discussion at various levels and consequently we will make our ministry of evangelization more effective.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Fr. Erambil and express our indebtedness to him for undertaking and publishing this study.

Yours in Our Lord

Fr. Varghese Puthussery VC  
(Superior General)

De Paul Nagar, Edappally  
July 28, the Feast of Bl. Alphonsa

## INTRODUCTION

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith” (Rom. 1:16). But how can people believe in him without preaching and witnessing of the Gospel? (Rom.10:14-15). To learn and live “the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil.3:8), his *Abba* and the Holy Spirit, constant evangelization is a must. St. Jerome reminds, “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Evangelization is intended to help people to know, see, love, and speak to God more intensively. It gives all people triumph over all forms of sinfulness and slavery. The Word of God delivers us from all wickedness and evil (2Thess. 3:1-2).

Mission leads to faith, hope and love, and enables people to share divine life and become mature in their own manhood.<sup>2</sup> Realizing this fact Pope Benedict reminds the faithful: “The mission to evangelize humanity remains urgent and necessary.”<sup>3</sup> All priests and the religious have the responsibility to reflect seriously on these prophetic words of the Pope. At this situation I would like to refer to a few comments of Victor Piovasan, an Italian Jesuit professor and Indian missionary for fifty eight years, who worked in the Indian Church: “Too many priests and too many institutions have stagnated the Church’s growth. Many priests have forgotten their call as pastors and missionaries, and reduced themselves to mere managers, directors and organizers.” He has called on them to “become more missionary-oriented, more humble, more witnessing, more spiritual, and more passionate for Jesus.”<sup>4</sup> This comment of a zealous missionary in India is a challenge to and a reminder of our task to evangelize India, Asia and the whole world.

Called and anointed by the triune God, the Vincentian Congregation, together with the universal Church and the particular Syro-Malabar Church, takes up seriously the mandate of the Lord to evangelize the world and decides to study its nuances deeply and commits itself fully for it in the power of the Holy Spirit. For the Vincentians evangelization is not simply a mandate from its Head- Christ but an intimate and intensive love-response to Christ who loved us unto death on the cross (Phil. 2:8).

This book, *Vincentian Call to Evangelization*, comprises three chapters with an introduction and conclusion. The first chapter highlights the Trinitarian beginning,

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<sup>1</sup> DV (*Dei Verbum: The Declaration on Divine Revelation*), 25.

<sup>2</sup> DV., 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>BENEDICT XI, “Let Charity Impel Your Missionary Mandate”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 4 (2008), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Staff Reporter, “Too Many Priests a Bane”, *The Hindu*, India’s National News Paper Since 1878, June 26 (2008), 2, (From an interview given to Catholic News Agency, UCAN).

growing and actualizing of the work of evangelization. The mission of the God the Father is fully taken by God the Son and perfects in and through his paschal mystery and continues God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ according to the will of the Father entrusted the work of evangelization to his Mystical Body to extend it to each generation of God's creation especially to human beings in the Holy Spirit. This mysterious plan of God to save the world through the mystery of the Church, the basic sacrament is the central theme of the second chapter.

The third chapter deals with how the divine work of evangelization revealed and entrusted to the Catholic Church is carried out by St. Vincent de Paul in the particular situations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and following his model how Fr, Kattarath and the members of the Vincentian Congregation is radiating it in the context of Kerala and other parts of the world.

This book will be a *lineamenta* (guidelines) and *instrumentum laboris* (working document) to all the missionaries particularly to the evangelizers of the Vincentian Congregation who are seriously reflecting on it in connection with their forthcoming synaxis on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2009. This is because *Vincentian Call to Evangelization* gives us in its depth a clear picture of the work of the Triune God to evangelize and redeem human beings and the world by their compassionate love and self-emptiness. This book leads our heart not only to understand and appreciate the basic nature of the Church but also to take an active part in her evangelizing mission, by facing all the challenges and set backs in it, with a new vision and enthusiasm in the Holy Spirit. Just like the life of St. Vincent and Fr. Kattarath, *Vincentian Call to Evangelization* will surely urge and inspire us to explore, experience, and radiate the mystery of God, his Word, his sacraments, and his charity in heaven and on earth. "For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts. 4:20).

## CHAPTER 1

### THE TRIUNE GOD AND EVANGELIZATION

From the beginning of his creation the triune God through his self-communication, Word, and Person evangelizes the world in order to lead it to its maturity and perfection. The Word of God sanctifies, enlightens and nourishes the created world and moves it to fullness of the Trinity. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was ...the light of men and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn.1:4-5). In fact evangelization was the work of the Trinity and it was there from the beginning of creation itself to lead the creation to the divine milieu.

#### 1.1. MEANING OF THE TERMS

The terms mission, evangelization or first evangelization, new evangelization or second evangelization are mutually related. Mission is the “outward” movement of the believers toward non-believers to announce the kingdom of God and to establish the Church. Evangelization has both outward and inward dimensions. It implies the attempt of the faithful to reach out to the non-believers, to proclaim the kingdom of God and to implant the Church and to reach out to the believers for their renewal and re-conversion.

At present, in order to convey this inward dimension of the evangelization, the Church uses the term new evangelization.<sup>5</sup> H. Carrier makes it clearer: “First evangelization is that which makes known the newness found in Christ the Redeemer, who comes ‘to the poor’ in order to liberate, convert and baptize them and to implant the Church... “A second or new evangelization is directed to populations that were Christianized in the past but are now living in a secularized world that denies religion any value and simply tolerates a private religion or sometimes directly attacks even this or hinders it indirectly by policies and practices that marginalize believers and their communities.”<sup>6</sup> We use these terms in this paper simultaneously to emphasize the necessity of kerygmatic and dynamic ministry of the Church for the purpose of its implantation and renewal.

#### 1.2. CONCEPT AND NATURE OF EVANGELIZATION

Evangelization is the entire work of the Church to announce the saving power of God, to proclaim Jesus Christ, to unveil the presence of God amidst the people, to

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<sup>5</sup> FRANK DESIANO, “Evangelization”, In P. E. Fink (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1990, 464-65.

<sup>6</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, In Rene Latourlle & Rino Fisichella (eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York: Crossroad, 1990, 287.

point out God's grace existing within mankind, to reform what is deformed by sin of man, to reach out the unchurched –to those who are not Christian, to receive individuals into full communion with the Mystical Body of Christ, to nourish and deepen the Gospel among those already committed to it, to make sure the ongoing renewal, formation and growth of the Church, to convert individuals and society, to liberate the oppressed, to establish the kingdom of God, to make sure the salvation of the mankind and of the universe.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of evangelization is to take away the sins of the world and to anoint it with the Holy Spirit. Evangelization is intended to proclaim that Jesus is the Lord and it is oriented to establish the Kingdom of the Father, Abba revealed by Jesus Christ. According to Pope Paul the VI, “Evangelization means, first and foremost, to bear direct and simple witness to the God whom Jesus revealed in the Holy Spirit: witness that in his Son he love the world and that in the Incarnate Word he gave existence to all things and called all people to eternal life...”<sup>8</sup>

Thus evangelization is the work of bring the Good News, the kingdom of God to the poor. It is to make sure the salvation of all human beings. Pope Paul VI teaches, “Evangelization is the grace and vocation of the Church. The Church exists in order to evangelize.”<sup>9</sup> It is her deepest identity and nature.<sup>10</sup> In fact evangelization proper to the Church is the sharing of a deep experience of Christ which the individual members of the Church realized at their encounter with Christ (Jn. 4:1-30; 20: 24-29). The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach that “missionary activity is nothing other and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history; that by which God, through mission, clearly brings to its conclusion the history of salvation. Through preaching and the celebration of the sacraments...missionary activity makes present, he who is the author of salvation.”<sup>11</sup>

### **1.3. WORD IS GOD**

The Bible teaches us that God is Word. “The Word of God par excellence is Jesus Christ, God and Man. The Son is the Eternal Word, ever-present in God, because he himself is God...The Word reveals the Mystery of the Triune God.”<sup>12</sup> “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, as glory of the only Son from the Father” (Jn.1:1,14). The Word of God reveals God's mind and deeds. The Word is the self-communication of God to human beings for their salvation. “In the sacred Scripture, God speaks through men in human fashion.”<sup>13</sup>

### **1.4. PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

<sup>7</sup> LOUIS MCNEIL, “Evangelization”, In J. A. Komonchak, M. Collins, D. A. Lane (eds.), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1987, 357-58.

<sup>8</sup> PAUL VI, EN (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntianti*, December 8 (1975), 25-26.

<sup>9</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 14.

<sup>10</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 8.

<sup>11</sup> AG (*Ad Gentes Divinitus: The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Instrumentum Laboris*”, (*Working Document: The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*) *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 25 (2008), (Special Insert), 1.

<sup>13</sup> DV., 12.

Yahweh called and anointed the patriarchs, the judges, and the prophets first and foremost to proclaim his precepts to the people of God. The entire Old Testament reveals this reality to the world (Ex.3:1ff. Jer.1:10). “These books, even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional, nevertheless show us authentic divine teaching.”<sup>14</sup>

The chosen one of God in the Old Testament time proclaimed the Word of God through their life, words and deeds. So that the people of Israel were able to experience the ways of God with men, to understand his ways more fully and more clearly, to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ (Ps. 95:1-3; Is.2:1-4; Jer.3:17; Lk. 24:44; Jn. 39; 1Pet.1:10; 1Cor. 10:111). St. Paul makes it clear: “For whatever has written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). In short the Old Testament books “give expression to a lively sense of God, which are a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound wisdom on human life, as well as a wonderful treasury of prayers; in them, too, the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way.”<sup>15</sup>

### **1.5. JESUS CHRIST THE EVANGELIZER**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...(Jn.1:1,14). “Christ established on earth the kingdom of God, revealed his Father and himself by deeds and words; and by his death, resurrection and glorious ascension, as well as by sending the Holy Spirit, completed his work. Lifted up from earth he draws all men to himself (cf. Jn. 10:32, Gk. text), for he alone has the words of eternal life (cf. Jn. 6:68).”<sup>16</sup> As the text reveals Jesus the Evangelizer came to the world to evangelize people and to redeem them. The Word was made flesh in order to proclaim the Good News to the poor. His entire life was a proclamation to establish the kingdom of God and the new way of transformed and covenantal existence (Lk. 4:16-18; Mt. 11: 4-5; Lk.7: 22; Mk. 1:15; Mt. 4:17, 23; 9:35; Lk.9:6).

Jesus communicated the Good News while mingling and interacting with all categories of the people – social outcasts, slaves, gentiles, widows, illiterates, sick, sinners, tax collectors fisherman, poor, prostitutes...His approach towards people as friends, lovers, equals, children of God, lost sheep, little ones, and his readiness to share their emotions, hopes, poverty, burdens, sufferings, and setbacks and his sharing of his Abba, the compassionate face of Father helped lot to lead them to the kingdom of God.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.6. HOLY SPIRIT, INSPIRING POWER OF EVANGELIZATION**

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<sup>14</sup> DV., 15.

<sup>15</sup> DV., 15.

<sup>16</sup> DV., 17.

<sup>17</sup> JOSEPH VALIAMANGALAM, *Community in Mission*, Vadoddara: GVD, 2008, 65-82.

The Holy Spirit on Pentecost sent by the Father through the Son is the inspiring force and source of the evangelization.<sup>18</sup> The work of evangelization is totally urged by the triune God and based on the love for the Trinity. Just like in the whole life of Christ, the *Pneuma* directs Church's mission and makes its members witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8; 2:17-18; 8:26-40; 13:46-48; 15:5-11, 28). The Holy Spirit enables the members of the Mystical Body to assume the responsibility to bring the Gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth and to lead all persons to the Church. At the same time the Spirit renews and sustains the evangelizers and fortifies the evangelized.<sup>19</sup>

Evangelization is possible only with the power of the Holy Spirit. The *Pneuma* through the believers brings about the flourishing of the Gospel message. "The Holy Spirit is the transcendent and principal agent of the Church's evangelization...through his action the Good News takes shape in human minds and hearts and extends through history." "The Holy Spirit makes the whole Church missionary." "Under the impulse of the Spirit, the Christian faith is decisively opened to the nations." "The Spirit transformed them into courageous witnesses to Christ and enlightened heralds of his Word. It was the Spirit himself who guided them along the difficult and new paths of mission."<sup>20</sup> The revelatory Word of God and the entire history of the Church make it clear that the missionary task entrusted by the risen Lord to the Church can be fulfilled only with the help of the *Paraclete*.<sup>21</sup>

## 1.7. EVANGELIZATION CENTRED ON TRINITY

The Church's work of evangelization is centered on the Trinity. The missionary activity of the Church is deeply rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. The triune God ardently desires the redemption of all mankind. In order to save mankind God the Father sent his only begotten Son to the world. The eternal Son of God brought the salvation for all through his paschal mystery. God the Holy Spirit enables the human beings to experience the salvation brought by Christ in their whole life.

The *Pneuma* does this by animating and guiding the Church to continue the mission of Christ on earth. "Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany, realization, in the world and in the history; that by which God, through mission, clearly brings to conclusion the history of salvation."<sup>22</sup> Thus the Church's work of evangelization is the continuation of the mission of the triune God to save mankind.

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<sup>18</sup> E. TIMIADIS, "The Centrality of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Worship", *Ecclesiasticos Pharos* 60 (1978), 326; JOSEPH ERAMBIL, *The Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, and the Church*, New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 2004, 238.

<sup>19</sup> E. La VERDIERE, "Eucharist, the Sacrament of World Mission", *Omnis Terra* 223 (1991), 478, 485-486; J. BETZ, "Eucharist: Theological", In K. Rahner (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, London: Burns & Oates, 1986, 457; J. KAVUNKAL & HRANGKHUMA (eds.), *Bible and Mission in India Today*, Bombay: St. Publications, 1993, 178-79.

<sup>20</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM (*Redemptoris Missio*), December 7 (1990), 21, 25-27, 87.

<sup>21</sup> X. KOCHUPARAMBIL, *Evangelization in India: A Theological Analysis of the Missionary Role of the Syro-Malabar Church in the Light of the Vatican II and Post-Councilar Documents*, Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1993, 145; G. W. PETERS, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1993, 300; JOSEPH ERAMBIL, *Parisudhatma Darsanam*, Muringoor: Divine Printers & Publishers, 2003, 88-96.

<sup>22</sup> AG., 9.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE CHURCH AND EVANGELIZATION

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, and entrusted the Word of God to the Church in order to evangelize the world and make it an acceptable sacrifice to God. The Lord anointed the Church with his own Spirit and blessed and ornamented it with his own Word. The Church is here to show the reconciling and compassionate face of God to the world and to fashion it in accordance with the values of the kingdom of God through her mission. Christ entrusted the task of evangelization to the Church to form the world anew. So evangelization is a Divine gift and task to the Church to help man to born again in the likeness of Jesus Christ (Jn. 3: 1-8). “Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph.4:22-24). Thus Jesus Christ established the Church and blessed it with his on Spirit in order to help people to renew their mind and to grow in the knowledge and image of the creator through the work of evangelization (Rom.12: 2; Col. 3:9-10).

#### 2.1. APOSTLES MEN OF THE WORD

Jesus called the Apostles to carry out his work of evangelization. He anointed them with his Spirit to accomplish his mission on earth. “As he had been sent by the Father, the Son himself sent the Apostles to evangelize the world (Mt.28:18-20; Lk. 24:48; Jn.20:12, Acts 1:8; 1Cor. 9:16).<sup>23</sup>

The Pentecostal experience energized the Apostles to go all over the world and witness to Christ (Acts 2:1ff; 3:15; 10:39-43; 13:31; 15:8). They continued the work of evangelization zealously and built up the Church (1Cor. 1:17; 2Cor.5:14)<sup>24</sup> “The Apostles, on whom the Church was founded, following the foot-steps of Christ ‘preached the Word of truth and begot Churches’.”<sup>25</sup> By the power of the Holy Spirit the Apostles lived in the world like a city on a hill, like salt to season food, like a light (Mt.5:13-16); like a covenantal community – Church of God (1Cor.15:9’ Gal.1”13),

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<sup>23</sup> LG (*Lumen Gentium: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*), 17; AG., 5.

<sup>24</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 15; 59.

<sup>25</sup> AG., 1.

community of loving, sharing, helping, teaching, proclaiming, worshipping, fellowship, communion, and inclusive (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-14; 10-11; 15; ).<sup>26</sup>

## **2.2. WORD OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

The Word of God and the Church is reciprocally interrelated. This intimate relationship between the Word and the Church can be elucidated in the following words.<sup>27</sup>

### **Church, the New People of the Word of God**

Deuteronomist considered the people of Israel as the people of the Word (Deut. 4:33, 36; Gal. 6:16; 1:1-2). “Did any people ever hear the voice of a God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live?...Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you; and on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire...” (Deut.4: 33-37). “Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). God formed his people through his Word and they walk, live and love by the power of the Word of God (Gal.1:1-2).

Today the Church is the new people of the Word of God. Christianity is not just like any other religions, it is not a religion of the book, but a religion of the Word of God, incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ, who remains in the world as a sacrament.<sup>28</sup>

### **Church Lives by the Word of God**

The Church is born by the living Word of God (Acts 2: 41; 14:27; 15: 12). She lives by the Divine Word. In the history of Christendom the Word of God stands as the source and centre of her liturgy, prayer, catechism, theology, spirituality, pastoral work, mission etc.<sup>29</sup>

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council clearly declare the importance of the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. “The Church has always venerated the divine Scripture as she venerated the Body of the Lord...She has always regarded it ...as the supreme rule of her faith...all the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture. Through the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them. And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigour, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life (Heb.4:12; Acts 20:32).”<sup>30</sup> Through the revealed Word of God the Church realizes the plan of God about herself, the human beings and the entire universe.

### **Word of God and Sacraments**

<sup>26</sup> JOSEPH VALIAMANGALAM, *Community in Mission*, 84-85.

<sup>27</sup> Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Instrumentum Laboris*”, 8-14.

<sup>28</sup> Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Lineamenta*” ((*Guidelines: The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*), Palarivattom: KCBC Bible Commission, POC, 2008, 30.

<sup>29</sup> Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Lineamenta*” 17-24; CCC., 115-119. Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Instrumentum Laboris*”, 4.

<sup>30</sup> DV., 21.

The sacraments of the Church are centered on the Word of God. Through the sacraments the faithful experience the sweetness of the Word in its totality (Ezk. 3:1-3). The liturgy of the Church is the privileged moment of the Word of God where the Bible is received by the faithful and the *Ecclesia* is build up in to Christ its Head (Eph.4:15).

### **Word of God and Theology**

The Word of God is the foundation of the Church's theological reflection, spiritual life, pastoral life, and renewal programme (2Tim.3:16-17).

### **Word of God and Activity of the Church**

The Word of God gives life, vitality and energy to the Church for her various activities in the world (Heb.4:12-13). Truly the revelatory Word of God permeates and animates every aspects of the Mystical Body through the power of the *Pneuma* (Acts 20:32; 1Th.2:13).

### **Word of God and *Diakonia***

The charitable work of the Church is based on the Word of God. The work of *caritas* is a creative response of the Church to the Word of God. In the history of the Church saints like Vincent de Paul, Fr. Damian and Mother Theresa of Calcutta attested that the Word of God inspired and influenced them very much to dedicated their life totally for the cause of the poor.

### **Word of God and *Martyria***

The Word of God is the source of the Church's *martyria*. Through the proclamation of the Word of God the Church builds up new Christian communities and establishes the kingdom of God.

### **Word of God and Moral Life**

The Word of God forms the Church's values, morals, and conscience. "The Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline" (Mt.28:19-20; Mk.16:15).<sup>31</sup> The Word of God is the source and principle of the Church's dialogue with other religion and people. The Good News is the salt and leaven of the Church and its culture.

### **Word of God and Healing**

The Word of God continuously gives joy and healing to the members of the Church (Jer.15:16). Moreover the Word of God satiates the hunger and thirst of the members of the Mystical Body for God and heaven.

### **Word of God and *Koinonia***

The Word of God first and foremost unites the Church to the Trinity and to the heavenly beings. Then it brings fellowship between the members of the Church. Further God' Word sustains the Church throughout history.

## **2.3. OUR APPROACH TO THE WORD OF GOD**

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<sup>31</sup> DV., 7

We should approach the Word of God with faith and reason, with desire and determination to understand experience and witness its sweetness and richness in our own and others life.

### **Love the Word of God**

Those who preach and teach and those who hear and learn the Word of God should have a creative approach to the revealed Word of God. They should approach Word with heart full of love (Deut.11: 18; 30:11-14; Mt 11:15; Lk. 8:8; 14:35).

### **Celebrate and Taste the Word of God**

The evangelizers should first taste it in their own life in order to break it to others in an experiential way (Deut. 8:3; Jer.1:9, 15:16; 28:11-12; Ezk.3:1-3). When we celebrating the Word of God (Hos.4:6; Amos 8;11-12) with deep faith then the Word makes our life more colorful and meaningful.

### **Imbibe the Word of God in Fasting and Prayer**

They need proper preparation to receive it. Imbibe the Word in fasting and prayer which will help us understand it more meaningfully (1King 19: 12-13; 19:8; Jer. 28:12; 36:27; Lk:3:2; Mt.4:2; Acts 10:3, 30; 30: 9-16). To get into the depth of the Word to listen it with the help of the Holy Spirit is necessary (Jn.14:26; 16:13; Rev.2:7, 11, 17; 3:6, 13, 22).

### **Meditate and Marvel at the Word of God**

Read and meditate the Word of God with deep care and concentration will enable the missionaries to understand its inner strength (Deut. 17:19; 31:11; 2:44-45; Lk.2:9-11, 18, 51).

At the same time we should like a child amaze and Marvel at the Word of God then we can experience the presence of God in it (Deut. 8:3; 4:1, 33; Ezk. 20: 11; Jn.5:25; 6:63, 68; Jer.15:16; Ps. 50:7; 119:103, 111; Acts 8:4-8).

### **Live and Practice the Word of God**

We should not be a man of self - seeking in the ministry of the Word of God (Hos.4:8, 2King 5:15-16; Acts 20:34; 2Thess. 3:7-8). Instead approach the Word of God with the desire and determination to live and put it into practice in our life in the Holy Spirit (Deut.4:6; Mt.7:24-25; Lk.6:47-48; Jn.2:5). That means get ready to keep the inner spirit of the Word in our whole life (Deut.4:2, 40; 5:10, 29; 6:2, 6). That will bring us blessing and success in our life. (Deut. 6:4-11; 11:18-21; When we try to observe the Word in our life (Deut. 6:1 11:22; Deut.26:17; 28:13; Lk.1:27) it becomes the lamp to our feet and light to our path (119:105; cf. Jn.1:4-5).

### **Teach and Interpret the Word of God**

Be heralds of the Word of God, teach and interpret it authentically in accordance with the faith of the Church (Lk.24:13-35; Acts 8:26-40; 20:24; Rom. 1:6;

Jn.6:63; Lk.4:18; 5:36-43; 8:42; Mk.16:15).<sup>32</sup> Then surely the Word will guard us from all kinds of dangers coming from in and outside the Church.<sup>33</sup>

#### **2.4. EVANGELIZATION THE VERY NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

Evangelization is necessarily ecclesial. The Church is the fruit of the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father in heaven. She is born from the mission and exists for the mission. “The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>34</sup> The Church receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God from her founder Jesus Christ.

The Church teaches that as followers of Christ we are duty-bound to propagate the faith and salvation, the mysteries of the triune God and God’s Word.<sup>35</sup> “It is the duty of the successors of the apostles to carry on the work of evangelization so that ‘the word of God may run and be glorified’ (2Th.3:1), and the kingdom of God proclaimed and renewed throughout the whole world.”<sup>36</sup> The commandment of Jesus Christ the evangelizer, to his disciples, to preach and witness the Good News to the entire universe is applicable forever and to all the faithful (Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46-49). Pope John Paul II reminds us, “The moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*.”<sup>37</sup> Then only the Church can remain in the world as the universal sacrament of salvation.<sup>38</sup>

#### **2.5. TEACHING OF THE FATHERS AND SAINTS ON EVANGELIZATION**

The actions and words of the saints and martyrs of the Church always give us an impetus to evangelization. St. James reminds: “My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (Jam.5:19-20). This word reveals the necessity and reward of evangelization.

St. Augustine asserts, “If you spend your life to help and console a soul in need, surely then the Lord at the time of your death will enlighten your soul and save it from eternal death.”

Jesus Christ assures that “whoever teaches the commandment of God shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:19; cf. Is.58:10-11; Mt. 25: 31-46; Rom. 2:7). The Holy Spirit reveals through St Paul that the names of those who laboured for the Gospel are in the book of life (Phil.4:3).

The life and words of St. Francis Xavier “give me the souls and takes away the rest” encouraged many to carry out the work of mission, ‘*ad gente*’s. While

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<sup>32</sup> DV., 10, 12.

<sup>33</sup> JOHN KURICIANIL, “The Church, A People of the Word”, Kakanad: Paper Presented at Mount St. Thomas, May, 2008, 10-20; Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, “*Instrumentum Laboris*”, 6-7.

<sup>34</sup> AG., 2.

<sup>35</sup> LG., 5, 17, 35; AG., 5, 23.

<sup>36</sup> AG., 1.

<sup>37</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 3.

<sup>38</sup> LG., 48.

empowering the missionaries St. Thomas Aquinas says, “In saving a soul thou hast predestined your own.”

St. Lawrence Justinian says, “To work for the salvation of the souls is the best way to respect and please God.” According to St. Bernard “a soul is more precious and worthy than the entire world.” Therefore, he requests all the faithful, “without thinking of the success of mission, work constantly for the salvation of the souls.”

## **2.6. DIRECTIVES OF SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH FOR EVANGELIZATION**

The Syro-Malabar Church imbibes its missionary zeal from its head Christ and its founder St. Thomas the Apostles of India. The missionary zeal of the Apostle is based on his personal experience of the risen Christ- “My Lord, my God!” (Jn.20:28) and the anointing by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:13). The missionary zeal of St. Thomas our Apostle always inspires and urges the St. Thomas Christians in their work of evangelization.<sup>39</sup>

Following the missionary zeal of St. Thomas the Apostle, “it is the duty of each and every member of the Syro-Malabar Church, to bring the Good News of salvation to the nations.”<sup>40</sup> The Syro-Malabar Synodal Fathers remind us that “Having an Eastern ecclesial tradition and socio-cultural heritage, the Syro-Malabar Church has an added responsibility to evangelize India and to spread the Good News throughout the vast continent of Asia.”<sup>41</sup> At the same time the Fathers of the Synod acknowledge the responsibility of go out of the continent of Asia to carry on the work of evangelization. But it should be in accordance with the directives and guidelines of the Synodal Fathers.<sup>42</sup>

Just like the East Syrian tradition of the beginning of its missionary work, St. Thomas Christians followed monastic type of evangelization. “The monks from monasteries went to different places and wherever they were accepted, formed small monasteries of their own. Here through an intense prayer life and evangelical style of living, they inspired those around them to come to them. Gradually the people who flocked to the monastery were led to the faith, step by step...Once a community was well established then some monks would move from there to other places”<sup>43</sup> Thus in a unique way through their life witnessing St. Thomas Christians tried to spread the Good News among the people and build up the Church in different parts of Kerala.<sup>44</sup>

## **2.7. AIM AND SCOPE OF EVANGELIZATION**

The aim and scope of evangelization is to lead people “to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ...to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ.”<sup>45</sup> Evangelization intends to renew humanity in its totality. Pope Paul VI affirms it: “In the Church’s mind, to evangelize means to bring the Good

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<sup>39</sup>The Synod of Bishops Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, The Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Archiepiscopal Church, Kakanad, Mount St. Thomas, (Here after used the short form, MPS), 7.

<sup>40</sup> MPS., 11.

<sup>41</sup> MPS., 9.

<sup>42</sup> MPS., 9, 35.

<sup>43</sup> MPS., 22.

<sup>44</sup> MPS., 22-23.

<sup>45</sup> AG., 5.

News to all the strata of humanity and through its influence to transform humanity from within and make it new.”<sup>46</sup>

The primary aim of our evangelization is the proclamation of the person Jesus Christ, his Good News to the poor, his kingdom of God and his unique role in salvific history.<sup>47</sup> At the same time evangelization prepares the ground to form Christian communities where it was not yet established, to renew the already existing communities and to transform humanity as a whole in and around the person of Christ. It means that evangelization has not only an external realm but also an internal effect: “Missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentives. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others.”<sup>48</sup>

According to the teachings of the Fathers of the Syro-Malabar Synod “The Church’s evangelizing mission does not simply imply the geographical expansion with the visible boundary and increasing number of her members, but it includes proclamation, witnessing, building up of the Church, works of charity, dialogue with non-Christians, inculturation, preferential options for the poor, the marginalized and the other subaltern groups, apostolate among the migrants, new evangelization, human promotion, actions on behalf of justice, peace and integrity of creation etc.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus aim of evangelization is to proclaim the kingdom of God to all mankind, to transform human relationships, to realize the liberation of all peoples, to promote human values, to lead the people to profess that Christ is Lord and God (Mk. 8:29; 15:39), to form or found communities of believers (Mt.18:19-20), to lead people to eternal life (Jn. 17:3; 6:54-54).

Through the work of evangelization we should be able to show to the world that there is a unique Christian way of living as a family, loving as brothers and sisters, serving one another, educating children, working, running a school, managing various endowers, cherishing the common good, engaging in politics, defending human rights and redeeming human souls<sup>50</sup>

The range of evangelization reaches both Christians and non Christians, theists and atheists, religious and secular, rich and poor, man and women, and the universe. The magisterium of the Church always reminds that the attempt to evangelize minds and mentalities should not be limited to places where Gospel is not yet preached but extended to countries and cultures which were once gospelized and now Desacralized and dechristianized.<sup>51</sup>

In this attempt to evangelize all human beings the evangelizer should concentrate to convert “both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.”<sup>52</sup> H. Carrier

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<sup>46</sup> EN., 18.

<sup>47</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 22, 63.

<sup>48</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 2.

<sup>49</sup> MPS., 14.

<sup>50</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “Evangelization of Cultures”, In Rene Latourlle & Rino Fisichella (eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York: Crossroad, 1990, 285.

<sup>51</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, 285.

<sup>52</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 18.

demands, “The Gospel must exert an influence on the key areas of collective activity, such as the family, work, education, and leisure, and on social, economic and political environments.”<sup>53</sup>

We do evangelization among various peoples, non Christians, the neglected and forgotten, and in different socio-cultural situations where Christ and his Gospel are not yet known and in places where the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are absent or insufficient, places where the Church has not yet taken root.<sup>54</sup> John Paul II reminds the faithful, “We need therefore to direct our attention towards those geographical areas and cultural settings which still remain uninfluenced by the Gospel.”<sup>55</sup>

Then evangelizer attends Christian communities which are not sufficiently matured, communities which lost their living faith in Christ. Of course new evangelization is needed for the living Church’s continuous faith formation. According to H. Carrier new evangelization is needed among people who are satisfied with their wealth and possessions, who failed to nourish their faith, rejected and repressed their faith, or have forgotten their faith, and lost their moral and spiritual structure, and who are aspiring for a new hope and meaning for life.<sup>56</sup>

## **2.8. INTERNAL CRISIS IN EVANGELIZATION**

Of course from the beginning of the Church’s missionary activities she faces enormous tasks, setbacks and failures from within herself (*ad intra*) and from outside forces (*ad extra*). Pope John Paul II says, “Both internal and external difficulties have weakened the Church’s missionary thrust towards non-Christians.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Questions and Doubts of the Faithful**

Within the Church there are a lot of difficulties to carry out evangelization effectively. The believers themselves ask several questions in connection with evangelization:

- “Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant? Has it not been replaced by inter-religious dialogue?
- Is not human development an adequate goal of the Church’s mission?
- Does not respect for conscience and for freedom exclude all efforts at conversion?
- Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion?
- Why then should there be missionary activity?”<sup>58</sup>

These questions of the believers in itself are not out of place. But very often they fail to find out answer for it from the Word of God, traditions of the Church and the teachings of the Church and saints of the Church. Consequently they cannot take seriously the work of evangelization in their concrete life situations.

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<sup>53</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “Evangelization of Cultures”, 285.

<sup>54</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 33-34.

<sup>55</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 40.

<sup>56</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, 288-89.

<sup>57</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 2.

<sup>58</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 4.



## **Denial of Rights and Rivalry**

Besides the above mentioned reasons there are certain ecclesial and social problems within the Church which harms the smooth running of the mission work: In the name of territorial jurisdiction the right of individual Churches even though it was accepted in the Second Vatican Council to 'ad gentes' mission is denied. Because of the same reason the right to provide pastoral care to the emigrants of the particular churches in different parts of the world is also not properly respected. All these are serious setbacks within the church to the smooth functioning of evangelization.<sup>59</sup> Moreover rivalry between Churches, divisions among them and their counter witness affects negatively the mission 'ad gentes'.<sup>60</sup>

## **Dormant Faith**

In the globalize world idol worship of money, prosperity, comfort and pleasure destroys faith day-by-day. Many people have only a dormant or rootless faith. They failed to develop and deepen their initial faith by personal encounter and experience of Christ through reading the Word of God and sharing the sacraments. In other words many people's faith is dormant, inactive, and buried by their selfish interests and concerns. Yet another group rejected or repressed their faith totally. They often fail to follow the Gospel values and virtues of Christ in their lives. Instead they give counter witness to the reality of the kingdom of God. It affects the work of evangelization negatively.

## **Indifferentism and Relativism**

Because of the influence of the secular world there is wide spread indifferentism to missionary work among the Christians. They are least bothered about the commands of Christ to evangelize the world. More over the concept of religious relativism, that is, one religion is as good as another affects lot the missionary work.<sup>61</sup>

## **2.9. SOLUTION TO OVERCOME INTERNAL CRISIS IN EVANGELIZATION**

### **Jesus Christ the Only Saviour**

The primary answer to this question is centered on the person of Christ the only saviour. The Bible reveals: "No one comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6). "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." (1Cor.8:5-6). Christ is "the true light that enlightens every man" (Jn.1:9). "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all..." (1Tim. 2:5-7; cf. Heb. 4:14-16).

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<sup>59</sup> MPS., 29-30; UR.(*Unitatis Redintegratio: The Decree in Ecumenism*) 23; OE (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum: The Decree on the Catholic Oriental Churches*), 2-4; CD (*Christus Dominus: The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*), 23.

<sup>60</sup> HERVE CARRIER, "A New Evangelization", 288.

<sup>61</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 35-36.

Christ is the “only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn.1:18). Christ is “the beloved Son, in whom we have redemption...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his Cross” (Col.1:13-14, 19, 20). In Christ “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9). He is the “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (rev.22:13). In him, “unites all things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph.1:10). Highlighting the magnitude of Christ’s divinity and humanity, in one word his personhood, Pope John Paul II says “It is precisely this uniqueness of Christ which gives him an absolute and universal significance, whereby, while belonging to history, he remains history’s centre and goal.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Total Redemption of the World**

Since Christ is the only saviour and mediator between God and man, and all other realm of mediations are dependent on him, to evangelize the world is a must for its total redemption. Pope John Paul makes it clear: “Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value only from Christ’s own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his.”<sup>63</sup> Further the Pope argues that the urgency of missionary activity derives from the *radical newness of life* brought by Christ the saviour and lived by his followers in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>64</sup>

### **Esteem Freedom and Conscience**

The Church highly esteems the right to freedom and respect for the conscience of each individual.<sup>65</sup> But as the Pope argues “Proclaiming Christ and bearing witness to him, when done in a way that respects consciences, does not violate freedom. Faith demands a free adherence on the part of man, but at the same time faith must also be offered to him, because the ‘multitudes have the right to know the riches of the mystery of Christ – riches in which we believe that the whole of humanity can find, in unsuspected fullness, everything that it is gropingly searching for concerning God, man and his destiny, life and death, and truth...This is why the Church keeps her missionary spirit alive and even wishes to intensify it in the moment of history in which we are living.’”<sup>66</sup>

### **Church, Universal Sacrament of Salvation**

The Church’s missionary zeal comes from its Head Jesus Christ who founded it as the universal sacrament of salvation. It is her right and duty to mediate for the salvation of all human beings.<sup>67</sup> The Council Fathers of the Second Vatican firmly declare that “the Church has been established by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth; it is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all; as the

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<sup>62</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 6.

<sup>63</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 5.

<sup>64</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM, 7.

<sup>65</sup> DH (*Dignitatis Humanae: The Declaration on Religious Liberty*), 2.

<sup>66</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 8; cf. PAUL VI, EN., 8.

<sup>67</sup> LG., 48; GS, 43; AG, 7, 21.

light of the world and salt of the earth (cf.Mt.5:13-16) it is sent forth into the world.”<sup>68</sup> It is the God-given duty of the Church to make concretely available to all the salvation offered by Christ. God gives us the divine filiation and membership in the Mystical Body of Christ through the sacrament of Baptism. “This grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8).<sup>69</sup>

### **Proclamation of Faith**

Evangelization is nothing but the proclamation faith. “Mission is an issue of faith, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us”<sup>70</sup> “The love of Christ compels us” to continue his mission (2Cor.5:14). “The Church cannot fail to proclaim that Jesus came to reveal the face of God and to merit salvation for all mankind by his Cross and Resurrection.”<sup>71</sup> The Church cannot but proclaim her faith in the Good News. St. Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Rom1:16). As the Word of God reveals, the Church’s mission in fact is derived not only from the Lord’s mandate but also from the profound demands of God’s life within us.

### **Response to God and Service to the Brethren**

According to the Pope bearing of witness to the faith and to the Christian life is not only a fitting response to God’s love and grace but also a service to the brethren.<sup>72</sup> The concluding answer from John Paul II to the question “*why mission?*” is that true liberation consists in opening oneself to the love of Christ and his Gospel and that we are able only in him and through his Good News to be free from alienation and doubt, from slavery to the power of sin and death. Only in him we can find meaning of our life and joy.<sup>73</sup> Let us remember the words of the Pope, “It is only in faith that the Church’s mission can be understood and only in faith that it finds its basis.”<sup>74</sup>

### **Remove Contradictions**

Further in order to overcome internal challenges in the field of evangelization we should remove contradictions like casteism, rivalry, luxury, moral laxity etc, and re-conscientize the Churches and Christians of their prophetic roles.<sup>75</sup>

## **2. 10. EXTERNAL CHALLENGES IN EVANGELIZATION**

### **A New Kind of “Rich” Person is Poor**

They are the self-sufficient people who focus on their possessions, authority, comfort, and self-fulfillment. They are seemingly self-satisfied people but in their heart they face spiritual poverty and “they are poor of the Gospel.”<sup>76</sup>

### **Psyche without Moral Structure**

<sup>68</sup> LG., 9.

<sup>69</sup>JOHN PAUL II, RM., 10, 11.

<sup>70</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 11.

<sup>71</sup>JOHN PAUL II, RM., 11.

<sup>72</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 11.

<sup>73</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 11.

<sup>74</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 4.

<sup>75</sup> SEBASTIAN KIZHAKKEYIL, “The Proclamation of the Word of God and Evangelization”, Kakanad: Paper Presented at Mount St. Thomas, May, 2008, 11-15.

<sup>76</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, 288.

As a result of aradical demoralization tendency of the modern world many people lost their moral and spiritual structure. The affluent world caused the poor people to distrust every ideology, every belief, every great cause that forces them to go out of themselves. It further forced them to withdraw into an illusory moral self-sufficiency.<sup>77</sup>

### **Social Problems**

Various social problems like races, caste, tribe, language, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment etc affect negatively the work of evangelization. Some nations and states declare the work of evangelization and conversion as illegal and crime.

### **Other Religions**

Mounting opposition from different religions. In certain countries missionaries are denied entry and in some other places evangelization and conversion are forbidden. The attacks of atheists and materialists, and fundamentalists like RSS, BD, VHP, ABVP on the Church and its institutions paralyze the work of evangelization.<sup>78</sup>

### **Consumerism, Materialism, Secularization**

Pope John Paul II highlights certain challenges: “The tendency to reduce man to his horizontal dimension alone”, the tendency “to build a new humanity without God”, “the temptation to reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being”, “the gradual secularization of salvation” (pay and use spirituality),<sup>79</sup>

### **Complex and Ever Changing Social and Religious Realities**

Rapid changes due to urbanization, mass migration, flood of refugees, de-Christianization of nations, proliferation of messianic cults and religious sects, religious and social upheavals, new world phenomena in language and climate, world of communications and mass media and new social tendency to concentrate on big cities, cultural centers and sectors affects negatively the work of evangelization.<sup>80</sup> We can summarise these in the words of Pope Paul VI, “the split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our time.”<sup>81</sup>

## **2.11. WAYS TO OVERCOME EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IN EVANGELIZATION**

### **A Latent Hope and Spiritual Hunger**

At the bottom of every human heart there is a thirst for hope, meaning, reason for living and above all for the absolute being, God. The inner heart of every person is aspiring for justice, dignity, shared responsibility, brotherhood and sisterhood. To bring to light this latent need of hope and spiritual hunger is the first important step in evangelization. It will help them to lead life according to the Gospel message.<sup>82</sup>

### **Faith**

<sup>77</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, 288.

<sup>78</sup> SEBASTIAN KIZHAKKEYIL, “Proclamation of the Word of God and Evangelization”, 11-12.

<sup>79</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM, 8.

<sup>80</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 32, 37-38

<sup>81</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 19.

<sup>82</sup> HERVE CARRIER, “A New Evangelization”, 288-89.

We can face all difficulties with faith in the triune God. Christ with his Spirit is the principal agent of mission and we are only co-workers. “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty” (Lk.17:10).<sup>83</sup> We can fulfill all the tasks of evangelization when we are ready to “go the same road that Christ went, namely a road of poverty, obedience, service, and self-sacrifice even unto death, from which he emerged a victor through his resurrection.”<sup>84</sup>

### **Convincing People**

We should convince people that we are not imposing on them anything but only proposing to open the doors to Christ; we are not restricting their freedom and conscience but only promoting both to the fullness.<sup>85</sup>

### **Give and Take Attitude**

To face the task of evangelization we need to cherish the attitude of give and take spiritual and material goods.

### **Reciprocal Relationship**

We have to cherish reciprocal relationship, continuous contact and communication with our brothers and sisters in the faith in order to face the difficulties in the mission field.

### **Open the Doors**

It is necessary to provide opportunities for all kinds of people to encounter with the Word of God. Remember when Magid Allam gets into contact with Gospel message and the Church he committed himself to Christ and received Baptism from Pope Benedict XVI and became Magid Cristiano Allam.<sup>86</sup>

### **Avoid Selfishness**

To face the challenges in the field of evangelization we need to avoid all forms of parochialism, provincialism, exclusiveness, and feelings of self-sufficiency<sup>87</sup> At the same time the Church should be ready to void the evil spirit of casteism, rivalry, luxury, and moral laxity exist within her own life context. Then only she can proclaim the Word of prophetically and boldly.

### **Empowerment of the Poor**

Take up a crusade against all forms of corruption at every level of the society is essential to confront the difficulties in the field of mission work. Readiness of the Church to take up Jesus’ liberative role and options for the poor is always an effective way to face the difficulties in mission and to spread the Gospel of Christ Active involvement in education of the poor, empowerment of women and lower classes helps us to face the challenges in evangelization and to light the lamp of Christ in the heart of the people. Just like Christ, Church should project herself as a champion for

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<sup>83</sup> JOHN PAUL II, 36.

<sup>84</sup> AG.5.

<sup>85</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 39.

<sup>86</sup> SEBASTIAN KIZHAKKEYIL, “The Proclamation of the Word of God and Evangelization”, 11-15.

<sup>87</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 85.

the poor and the oppressed and defender of their rights. That will help the Church to make the Gospel alive in the life situations.

### **Liturgy, Study Classes and Seminars**

Rconscientizing the Christians of their prophetic roles in the Church through catechesis, retreats, study classes and seminars are the need of the time. Church should facilitate it at all stages of the life of the faithful. It is the duty of the pastors to make sure of effective proclamation of the Word of God through liturgy. More over church should encourage deeper study of the Bible and the learning of original biblical languages as far as possible to all categories of the faithful. For a better understanding of other religions and their spirituality it is good to conduct inter-religious seminars and encourage inter-scriptural encounters under competent persons of the Church both in and outside the Church. It will help to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of our own faith in Christ and witness it boldly in the world.

### **2.12. FORMATION FOR EVANGELIZATION**

Formation for missions is an essential task of evangelization. Only then can the evangelizers can carry out their missionary activities effectively. Pope John Paul says, “Missionary formation is the task of the local Church... and this work must be seen not as peripheral but as central to the Christian life.”<sup>88</sup>

Almost in the same manner the Syro-Malabar Synodal Fathers insist, “In the challenging missionary context of today, the Church has to give greater emphasis for adequate missionary formation...A realistic formation process demands a formation in the field itself”<sup>89</sup> Whenever possible the missionaries should be trained in the mission context. There they should have adequate exposures and interactions with the local people and their culture, customs, language etc.<sup>90</sup> They should be formed in different fields of mission and through various activities aimed at to promoting their interest in the missions.

### **2.13. MEANS FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELIZATION**

The Church carries out its work of evangelization through her life and various apostolic activities according to the local needs and situations in which the mission is situated.

#### **Encounter with Christ**

One’s personal experience of Christ ipso facto leads him to the mission of Christ. Encounter with Christ leads one to the kingdom of God and its values (Rom.14:17). It is the paramount moment of one’s joy on earth and it will force him to share it to others. “There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ.”<sup>91</sup> St. John attests the internal power to share the Christian joy: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands,

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<sup>88</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 83.

<sup>89</sup> MPS., 55-56.

<sup>90</sup> MPS., 56.

<sup>91</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84.

concerning the word of life...proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us...And...that our joy may be completed” (1 Jn.1:1-4).

### **Ardent Love of Christ**

The love of Christ always gives impetuosity to the faithful to mission that is, to live not for themselves but for Christ and his people (2 Cor. 5:14-15). The one who is overwhelmed by the love God naturally moves to others to bring them also to the same love. “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1Jn.4:7-11). Evangelization is an inner expression of love of God and love of our fellow beings. “The more ardent the love for the Eucharist (Christ) in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: to bring Christ to others.”<sup>92</sup>

### **Sacraments**

From the very beginning of Christendom the sacraments of the Church served as a means of salvation. Pope Paul VI emphasizes the necessity of witnessing, proclaiming and forming the community in and around the sacraments.<sup>93</sup> The Council Fathers of Vatican II acknowledged it and declared that Church carried out its works of evangelization “by the sacraments and other means of grace.”<sup>94</sup> This is above all true to the sacrament of the Eucharist. The sacrament of Eucharist is sacrament of mission. Eucharist in fact is the source centre and summit of the mission of the Church. Pope Benedict XVI teaches that “‘An authentically eucharistic Church is missionary Church.’ The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all.”<sup>95</sup>

### **Proclamation**

Evangelization always demands proclamation of the Good News and conversion and Baptism. Proclaim the Word of God is the inner result of receiving the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation. It is the most gracious and meaningful work in the life of a believer and it beautifies his and others inner heart and soul. “There is nothing more beautiful than to know Christ and to speak to others our friendship with him.”<sup>96</sup> To make Christ known to others will double our own joy and that of our fellow brethren.

### **Witness**

The first form of evangelization is witness of life (Jn.15:26; Acts 1:8; Rev. 1:5; 3:14). “The first and fundamental mission that we receive from the sacred mysteries we celebrate is that of bearing witness by our lives.” Here the Pope wanted “witness even to the offering of one’s own life, to the point of martyrdom.”<sup>97</sup> The pope

<sup>92</sup>BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 86.

<sup>93</sup> PAUL VI, EN., 21-23; JOHN PAUL II, RM., 42-45.

<sup>94</sup> FRANK DESIANO, “EVANGELIZATION”, 465, AG.5.

<sup>95</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84.

<sup>96</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84.

<sup>97</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 85. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, EA (*Ecclesia in Asia*), 9.

reminds the Christians the necessity of become “God’s wheat” and “Christ’s pure bread” in the world.<sup>98</sup> Witness to Christ will bring us the Joy of the kingdom of God.

### **Religious Formation**

Formation in Catholic doctrine is essential for effective evangelization. For that we should establish informal catechetical schools and give teachings according to the convenience of the people. For instance, the pioneers of the Ugandan missionaries and their catechist taught the people catechism even at midnight.<sup>99</sup>

### **Lay Catechists**

Catechists have a tremendous role to mission ‘*ad gentes*’. It is important first to prepare the local catechist for an effective evangelization. They will help to instruct the catechumens the basic Christian doctrines and moralities. Lay catechist prepares the people to receive Baptism and later other sacraments of the Church. Thus catechist has an important role in forming and nourishing Christian communities.<sup>100</sup>

### **Moral Teachings**

Dechristianization affects the decline or obscuring of the moral sense of the people. Therefore, evangelization also includes the proclamation and presentation of Gospel morals, ethical values and the Christian way of life – the life of love, fellowship, goodness and holiness (Act.2:37-41; 3:17-20).<sup>101</sup>

### **Promote Bible Studies**

Foster a biblical movement among the laity by giving them more opportunities to study Bible and witness to Christ. Here a special concern for the involvement of the youth is necessary,

### **Distribute Bible in All the Regional Languages**

To print, publish and make the Bible available in all the local and national languages is an effective way to transmit the Word of God to all the peoples.

### **Formation of Local Churches**

Formation of local Churches, basic ecclesial communities and liturgical celebrations are part and parcel of evangelization.<sup>102</sup>

### **Use of Media**

It is necessary to transmit the message of the Gospel through all communication media such as radio, TV, theatre, cinema, music and songs, CDs, DVDs, internet, news papers, magazines.<sup>103</sup> When knowing about the Malayalam edition of the *L’Osservatore Romano* began on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2008, Pope Benedict VI remarked: “It is my hope that this new translation of the English edition, which now takes its place alongside the other language editions of *L’Osservatore Romano*, will

<sup>98</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 86.

<sup>99</sup> A. TARCIS NSOBYA, *The Uganda Martyrs are Our Light*, Isbn: Marianum Press Ltd., 2006, 7-88,

<sup>100</sup> JOSEPH VALIAMANGALAM, *Community in Mission*, 54-55.

<sup>101</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Veritatis Splendor (The Splendor of Truth)*, Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, 106.

<sup>102</sup> AG., 2, 13; 19-22.

<sup>103</sup> Synod of Bishops XII Ordinary General Assembly, *Lineamenta*, 26.



prove a voluble source of instruction and enrichment in the faith, an incentive to ever greater fraternity and cooperation within Kerala's richly diverse Catholic community, and an indispensable aid to the continuing work of evangelization."<sup>104</sup> Media can play an important role in making known the Good News, in spreading the life of the universal and particular Churches, in voicing the experience of missionaries. For this purpose we should give training to our students and devote persons and resources for these undertakings.

### **Inculturation**

Evangelizing the culture is an integral part of mission work. Inculturation means the transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christian culture in various human cultures... Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples together with their cultures, into her own community. The Church transmits to them her own values; at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. Evangelizing a culture means to transform the mentality, collective attitude, and life-style of the people according to the values of the kingdom of God.<sup>105</sup>

Pope Paul VI elucidates it well. "For the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation."<sup>106</sup> As the Pope's words make it clear, constant evangelization of culture is a must to radiate the civilizing power of the Gospel to the entire people and to the world. Thereby the Church can enlighten purify, elevate, save and glorify human mind, conscience and soul.

### **Dialogue**

Inter-religious dialogue with our brethren which will enrich each other is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission. This dialogue should be conducted with the conviction that salvation comes from Christ, and the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that the Church alone possess the fullness of the means of salvation. Dialogue will help the Church to uncover the "seeds of the Word", a "ray of that truth which enlightens all men."<sup>107</sup>

### **Developmental Works**

The Church continues its mission '*ad gentes*' through various activities for the liberation of the oppressed people, and the integral development of all people. For instance. Give legal aid, form co-operative societies.

### **Diakonia**

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<sup>104</sup> BENEDICT VI, "Indispensable Aid to Kerala's Evangelization", *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 25 (2008), 1.

<sup>105</sup> HERVE CARRIER, "Evangelization of Cultures" 283.

<sup>106</sup> EN., 19; cf. JOHN PAUL II, EA., 21-23.

<sup>107</sup> NA (*Nostra Aetate: The Declaration on the Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions*), 2; LG., 16; AG., 9, 11, 15, 41; JOHN PAUL II, RM., 55-57; EA, 5.

The Church considers true charity as the source and driving force of her mission and works of apostolate, and establishes more homes for the marginalized and downtrodden.<sup>108</sup> Truly the love of the Triune God which the Christians experience from the Word of God and sacraments energizes them to love their neighbour even unto death. Being loved and served by Christ the Christians are able to love and serve others. “By sharing in the sacrifice of the Cross (the Eucharist) the Christian partakes of Christ’s self-giving love and is equipped and committed to live this same charity in all his thoughts and deeds...A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.”<sup>109</sup>

The love of the Lord urges all his followers to work constantly for the transformation of the people and the world. Union with Christ prompts the Christians to enter union with brethren, to work for the transformation of unjust structures, to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, to promote peace and justice, to eradicate extreme poverty, to reduce the problem of malnutrition, to solve illiteracy and ignorance, to irradiate addictions to drugs, sex, wealth, media, and ideologies, to work tirelessly in the service of the civilization of love and hope, and to protect the original beauty and integrity of the created universe. The extension of love of Christ to others is clearly reflect the story of the tax collector Zacchaeus, who after welcoming and experiencing Christ in his inner heart and home totally turn to the brethren and decided to give half of his goods to the poor and to repay fourfold those whom he had defrauded (Lk. 19:1-10).<sup>110</sup>

### **Introduce More Monastic Life Style**

Contemplative or monastic life is the traditional means to intensify the work of evangelization. The life of prayer, asceticism, and togetherness of monks and nuns and their witness of evangelical counsels will attract even non-Christians to the majesty and love of God.<sup>111</sup> In this context it is good to remember a few words of Pope Benedict XVI: “Though they provide many services in the area of human formation and care for the poor, education and health care, consecrated men and women know that the principal purpose of their lives is ‘the contemplation of things divine and constant union with God in prayer.’ The essential contribution that the Church expects from consecrated persons is much more in the order of being than of doing.”<sup>112</sup> Life and prayer of the monks and nuns always strengthen and intensify the mission ‘*ad gentes*.’

### **Read the Signs of the Time and Follow Different Approach**

For an effective evangelization we should study well our mission context and follow different approaches according to situation of the particular places. Evangelizer should be ready to give authentic and meaningful homilies and sermons. They can start more educational centers for giving education in accordance with the message of the Gospel. Whenever there is an ecclesial programme try to start it with Bible

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<sup>108</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 60.

<sup>109</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 82.

<sup>110</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 82, 89-93; JOSEPH ERAMBIL, *The Eucharist and Human-Christian Existence*, 224-244.

<sup>111</sup> AG., 40., GS., 3, 29-34, 41- 43, EN., 45. RM., 37; MPS., 35-45.

<sup>112</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 81.

consecration. In the world of media it is necessary to proclaim the Word of God through TV and other means of communications. We should publish more biblical and spiritual books and encourage reading and sharing of the Bible and spiritual insights. For an effective evangelization to begin more Bible colleges Bible correspondence courses retreat centers and to form more Bible animators are necessary. To start a study forum for Bible scholars, arrange celebration of Bible Day, Bible week, Bible Sunday, website of the Bible and conduct Bible celebrations-kalolsavam, Bible literary competitions and Bible quiz will surely intensify our commitment for the evangelization of the Church and of the world. Among all these different means and ways to carry out effectively the work of evangelization, proclamation of the Word of God and administration of the sacraments stand out as the summit of Church's mission.<sup>113</sup>

#### **2.14. ROLE OF LAITY IN THE PROCESS OF EVANGELIZATION**

From the beginning of Christendom the Church considered evangelization as the task of all the faithful. Pope John Paul II makes it clear, "All the laity are missionaries by Baptism. The mission '*ad gentes*' is the incumbent duty upon the entire people of God."<sup>114</sup> The laity has the obligation and the right to the spread of the Gospel so that the divine message of salvation may be known to and accepted by all people throughout the world.<sup>115</sup> "For each believer, as for the entire Church, the missionary task must remain foremost, for it concerns the eternal destiny of humanity and corresponds to God's mysterious and merciful plan."<sup>116</sup>

The laity has a predominant role in Churches' missionary activities and the spread of the Word of God (Acts 12:24). The magisterium acknowledges it, "Some Churches owe their origins to the activity of lay men and women missionaries."<sup>117</sup> The laity as "living members" of the Church has a special and indispensable role in the salvific mission of the Church. They have "the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and all over the earth."

The laity has a "special vocation to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth. Thus, every person, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal' (Eph.4"7)"<sup>118</sup>

The lay people should exercise their apostolate of evangelization through the renewal of the temporal order, through their life of witness, through the vigour of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world, through their charitable works and social aid done in a supernatural spirit, through their active participation in the liturgical life and

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<sup>113</sup> JACQUES DUPUIS, "Evangelization and Mission", In Rene Latourlle & Rino Fisichella (eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York: Crossroad, 1990, 288-89.

<sup>114</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 71.

<sup>115</sup> AA (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), 6, 13; BENEDICT XVI, "Let Charity Impel Your Missionary Mandate", *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 4 (2008), 7.

<sup>116</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 86.

<sup>117</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 71

<sup>118</sup> LG., 33.

activities of the parish, through their constant effort to safeguard the values of the Christian families.<sup>119</sup>

## **2.15. QUALITIES REQUIRED IN AN EFFICIENT EVANGELIZER**

### **Experience of Christ**

The missionary should experience in their heart the consoling and strengthening presence of Christ - “do not be afraid...for I am with you” (Acts 18:9-10). When the faithful love the Church and humanity, as Christ did, then they will be able to work zealously for the salvation of all (Jn.11:52; 10:1-10).<sup>120</sup>

### **Spirit of Sacrifice**

The missionary is required to “renounce himself and everything that up to this point he possessed as his own, and to make himself all things to all men” (1Cor.9:22-23).<sup>121</sup>

### **Witness**

Leaders and workers in the missionary apostolate shall reflect the Gospel through their life. Without witness there can be no mission (Acts1:8; 3:15; 5:30; 10:39-41; 1Jn.1:1-4). According to K. Rahner, if we fail to live what we have preached, we are sowing the seeds for atheism. That means our life should be our message to our fellow brethren. “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” (2Cor.2:15). “The memory of Josiah is like a blending of incense prepared by the art of the perfumer; it is sweet as honey to every mouth, and like music at a banquet of wine” (Sirach 49:1). Just like the life of St. Paul and Josiah, the life of an evangelizer should be sweet to others.

### **Reciprocal Help**

Both the older and younger Churches help each other and draw on the riches of the other Churches. “Each particular church must be generous and open to the needs of the other Churches.”<sup>122</sup>

### **Courage**

Missionaries must not allow themselves to be daunted by doubts, misunderstanding, rejection, failures, difficulties, fear, and persecution. They should have the courage to face all oppositions and setbacks on their way to establish the kingdom of God.

### **Love and Zeal for Souls**

Evangelizer should have that readiness to go anywhere and do anything that may procure the glory of God and the good of the souls (Jn.2:16-17; 2Cor. 9:16; 5:14; Phil.1:20). The missionary should love his people and their land. The success of the mission reminds Fr. Mathew Naikomparambil, depends on the intensity of the love of the preacher to the people: “The most important influencing factor for a fruitful and

<sup>119</sup> AA (*Apostolicam Actuositatem: The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*), 1-2, 6-12

<sup>120</sup> AG., 24; JOHN PAUL II, RM., 88-90.

<sup>121</sup> AG., 24.

<sup>122</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 64, cf. 62.

effective retreat is the ‘person’ of the preacher himself. If the preacher of the Word of God is having a genuine and real love for the people, the self-same love of Jesus himself- anointed by the Holy Spirit-coupled with the Word of God, it really touches the heart of the people.”<sup>123</sup>

### **Awareness of Anointing for All**

“Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them” (Mk.16:50). “And he said to them, ‘go into the entire world and preach the gospel to the whole creation... and they went forth and preached everywhere...’” (Mk. 16:15-20). As the word of God reveals the missionaries need to cherish the awareness that they are called and anointed for all nations and for all people. Just like St. Paul, the evangelizer should become all things to all men and women (1Cor. 9:19-23).

### **Preparation**

The missionaries should be able to read the signs of the time in a situation. They must study the environment, culture, language, religion, leaders of the locality and his working place.

### **Ongoing Formation**

Missionaries need to continually keep up and enlarge their knowledge of the Word of God, doctrinal teachings and apostolic traditions of the Church and information about the current affairs of the Church and the world. For this they should be ready to undergo ongoing formation.

### **Unity and Co-operation**

There should be basic unity among the evangelizers and no rivalry between the particular Churches. Jesus Christ earnestly desires and prays for the same. “I am praying for them... Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou has given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (Jn.17: 9-11). The fellowship which Christ wishes and prays to be in his evangelizers is a unity which exists within the Triune God: “That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17: 21). The success of evangelization depends on the reciprocal unity and co-operation between the missionaries and of the particular Churches of Christendom (cf.Jn.15:5).

### **Prayer and Contemplation**

The missionaries should follow the path of prayer and contemplation. The Gospel very clearly attests that Jesus the evangelizer was a man of prayer and he taught his apostles how to pray to do the mission effectively. (Lk.11: 1-13; 17: 1-8; 26:36-46). Prayer transforms and strengthens the missionaries for their work of evangelization (Acts. 2: 41-47; 4:23-31).

### **Desire to Convert**

“There is no greater joy than to baptize a convert.” (St. Augustine).

### **Readiness to Work as a Team**

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<sup>123</sup> JACOB KANIYARASERIL, *Divine Experiences: An Inquiry into the Charismatic Renewal*, 138.

As our Lord revealed through his selection of the disciples to be sent for preaching, evangelization is the work of a team, not to be the work of individuals.

### **Communication and Use of Gift and Talents**

Evangelizer should learn to communicate effectively and utilize personnel in and outside his mission team. The evangelizer should know the gift and talents of his team and his people around the mission area. For instance some can speak in public; others can write or build or administer, sing and dance. The success of the mission depends on how the evangelizer is able to make use of these and other gifts and talents of the people for the establishment of the kingdom of God.

### **Sharing**

The evangelizers should be ready to share among themselves both personnel as well as wealth to make the Gospel alive quickly in all parts of the world.<sup>124</sup>

### **Obedience to the Promptings of the Holy Spirit**

Evangelizer should be attuned to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### **Attitude of a Guru**

The heart of the evangelizer needs to be burned by the virtues of faith hope and charity. The missionary should be a model – poetical, loving, devoted, humble, modest, inspiring, spiritual, open-minded, patient, and exemplary. He requires enthusiasm to receive the faith, to make the sacrifices, to adjust in the team and with the members. At the same time the evangelizer needs the gift of prudence which will teach him to be discrete, gentle, humble, etc, not to antagonize groups or societies, not to irritate those who do not favour his works.

The apostles of the word of God require sufficient knowledge on various subjects especially in theology, spirituality, liturgy, psychology and sociology.<sup>125</sup> To reach the aim in the field of mission evangelizers need deep trust in the providence of God. They need to rely more on God than various agencies, funds, buildings etc. A gradual and personal approach, a slow and steady attitude from the part of the evangelizers to everything and everyone will make sure the growth and stability of the mission.

### **Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary**

Mary is the first disciple of Christ and the first missionary of the Church and so she can help the evangelizer the best way.

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<sup>124</sup> JOHN PAUL II, RM., 77-82.

<sup>125</sup> E. LE JOLY, *Evangelization, Theory and Practice*, Bandra: St. Paul Publications, 1986, 1-193.

## CHAPTER 3

### VINCENTIAN CALL TO EVANGELIZATION

To proclaim and witness the unique mystery of God and his redemptive plan in the world Yahweh specially called and blessed a few people, Israel and they were known as God's own people. From among them God of Israel selected leaders, prophets and priests to inform his precepts and will to his people, to guide them on his way and to offer him acceptable sacrifice and prayer. Salvific history is the history of God and man. Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God following the footsteps his *Abba* has chosen and anointed the twelve Apostles to continue the redemptive work of God.

Thus selection of particular persons and people according to the signs of the time for the work of evangelization is part and parcel of God's self-communication to man. God wishes the creative and active response and co-operation of man in the renewal and fashion of man in his image and likeness. God called and anointed Vincent de Paul in a special way in the dark stage of French Church to renew it totally in the Holy Spirit. Inspired by the *Pneuma* St. Vincent renewed the Church both internally and externally by the Word and sacraments and answered and satiated both the physical and spiritual problems and hunger of the people through the work of charity.

The Holy Spirit acts beyond time, place and persons. It is explicit in the life and mission of the founder of the Vincentian Congregation, Fr. Varkey Kattarath and revivers of the Congregation. The *Paraclete* opened the mind of Fr. Varkey Kattarath to the charism and spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Moved by St. Vincent's specific way of evangelization in the Holy Spirit, Fr. Kattarath established the Vincentian Congregation in 1904 to carry on the same mission here in Kerala, India, Asia and the world at large.

The work which the Holy Spirit began with Fr. Kattarath is growing in its richness and beauty through its members in a unique and amazing way for the greater glory of God and for the goodness of man and of the world. "Speaking the truth in love, we are growing up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..." (Eph.4:15).

### 3.1. ST. VINCENT AND EVANGELIZATION

#### **Making the Gospel Alive**

During the Medieval period St. Vincent made the Gospel alive in several ways. He did the evangelization both by kerygmatic and dynamic ministry. To carry on this ministry effectively he founded the Congregation of the Mission and that of the Daughters of Charity, also he used the media to carry out this mission.

#### **Novelty of St. Vincent's Mission**

Mar Abraham Mattam the 7<sup>th</sup> member of the Vincentian Congregation and the 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop of Satna summarizes the uniqueness of St. Vincent's way of evangelization: "St. Vincent, as the messenger of Christ, went to the villages and to the slums in towns where people lived in misery and ignorance. Living as one among them, he preached the Good News of salvation. He followed the footsteps of Jesus Christ his Master, in poverty, simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for the souls. As did the Master so he spent long hours in conversation with the heavenly Father. Vincent wanted to help the poor, but had no means. Seeing this man of God, the well to do and the wealthy came forward with money and materials to support the downtrodden. People could see Christ in him and admired him. Yes, the Church proclaimed him as a hero, a saint, a model for his time and for our own times."<sup>126</sup>

### **Powerful Preacher**

Very often the Christian artists present St. Vincent as a zealous missionary for all time. The world famous St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is renowned for its many lively statues of saints and other works of art like the 'Pieta'. The nave of the Basilica is overlooked on either side by gigantic statues of saints who are founders of various religious communities. On the right side, as one enters the Basilica, the middle niche of the three is occupied by the statue of St. Vincent de Paul, depicted as a powerful preacher. He is presented as a person on the move, adorned by surplice and stole, and holding a crucifix in his right hand. St. Luke in his Gospel presents Jesus whole life as a journey to evangelize and save the world. When the artists picture St. Vincent in moving form they clearly points out the evangelizer within him and so was exactly St. Vincent in Christendom.

### **Share the Mission of Christ**

Evangelization is truly a sharing the mission of Christ the saviour in order to liberate the poor from their bondage to sin and evilness. The following words from the heart of St. Vincent will clarify his concept of evangelization. "We are called, yes, our Lord invites us to preach the Gospel to the poor. This is what he did, and this is what he desires us to do."<sup>127</sup> "To know God, to announce Jesus Christ to the poor, to say to them that the kingdom of Heaven is near, and that the kingdom is for the poor, how great a mission!..Yes to evangelize the poor is such an exalted function because it is the very work that the Son of God carried out..."<sup>128</sup>

Evangelization according to St. Vincent is an attempt to share the mission of the Son of God. It is a personal and collective commitment to become an instrument of the Son of God to continue his mission on earth. It is a special grace from heaven to reveal Jesus Christ to the poor, to tell them that the kingdom of God is at hand. This inner conviction of evangelization radiated always in St. Vincent's personal and community life. As Thomas McKenna comments, "evangelization stood at the core of

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<sup>126</sup> ABRAHAM MATAM, From the Written Note on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

<sup>127</sup> ST. VINCENT de PAUL, Conference of December 6, 1658, 108-109.

<sup>128</sup> ST. VINCENT de PAUL, Conference of December 6, 1658, 115.



Vincent's spirituality...preaching the Gospel to the poor became the passion of Vincent's life."<sup>129</sup>

### **Salvation of the Poor**

His concept of evangelization is very clear in his letter to Pope Innocent X, "Most Holy Father, the end of our institute is the salvation of poor country people. For this purpose we go about teaching in villages and towns, hear general confessions, settle quarrels and disputes, and assist the sick poor. These are our works in the rural areas. At home we give spiritual retreats, prepare the ordinands for the worthy reception of Holy Orders, and instruct clerics in the seminaries in good morals, ecclesiastical discipline and sacred rites."<sup>130</sup> These words of St. Vincent elucidate his strong conviction and commitment to the mission of Christ and that of the Church.

### **Form and Renew the Clergy and the Laity**

For the effectiveness of evangelization action in collaboration with local clergy and faithful is a must. The best model to this type of collaboration in action is Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:1-15) and St. Vincent. He not only incorporated both clergy and the faithful in his mission but also renewed and formed them to serve the poor. The Church always accepted and encouraged the special charism of St. Vincent to preach the Gospel to the poor in collaboration with all categories of people.

This is explicit from the message of Pope John Paul II to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission on the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> General assembly held in Rome from 5 to 29 July 2004. "Responding generously to the needs of the Church in his day, St. Vincent de Paul placed the evangelization of the poor and the formation of the clergy at the centre of his vision for your Congregation. As you have grown in number and spread throughout the world, your apostolate has naturally taken on many new forms, but these two aspects remain central. Your founder was deeply convinced of the fruitfulness of divine charity (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, n. 75) and encouraged all his spiritual children to see, love and serve Christ in the poor. I am confident that, by remaining true to Saint Vincent's vision, you will be better enabled to form others, laity as well as clergy, for the task of preaching the Gospel today."<sup>131</sup>

St. Vincent concentrated to form and renew the clergy and laity in order to serve the poor and to save them. The notable thing in St. Vincent's way of evangelization was that he concentrated very well on both the physical and spiritual needs of the people. He blends together proclamation and serving, contemplation and action in his mission work.

### **Explore New Ways**

St. Vincent always searched for new ways and means to carry on the mission effectively and to get new insights he spent hours in prayer and meditation. He

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<sup>129</sup> THOMAS McKENNA, *Praying with St. Vincent de Paul*, Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1994, 52-53.

<sup>130</sup> ST. VINCENT de PAUL, Letter to Pope Innocent X, August 28, 1650, 107.

<sup>131</sup> JOHN PAUL II, "Message to the Congregation of the Mission: Remaining True to St. Vincent's Vision", *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 5 (2004), 5.

insisted on the same from his spiritual sons and daughters and that is summarized in the following words, “Carthusians at home and Apostles at abroad”.

John Paul II insists on the followers of St. Vincent to carry out the mission as St. Vincent did. Vincent emphasized both the personal and liturgical prayer for making the Gospel alive. For St. Vincent evangelization is the work of Christ to satiate the spiritual and physical hunger of the people. As a Spirit-filled person he always searched for something more in the field of evangelization. That helped him to carry on the work of evangelization effectively in different parts of the world. Realizing it, Pope John Paul II reminds the Vincentians: “Your Congregation is called to explore new ways of conveying the liberating message of the Gospel to our suffering brothers and sisters.”<sup>132</sup> It is the God-given responsibility of the Vincentians to search after new ways and means to the mission ‘*ad gentes*’. In this task the pope encourages the sons and daughters of St. Vincent, “Do not be afraid to venture forth, to put out the nets for a catch. The Lord himself will be your guide!”<sup>133</sup>

### **Take the Cross**

The primary purpose of the evangelization according to St. Vincent is to make the Gospel alive. “It may be said that ‘coming to evangelize the poor’ does not mean to come merely for their salvation but also to fulfill the words of the prophets of the Old Law and for the purpose of making Gospel alive.”<sup>134</sup> Persecution and suffering are part and parcel of the mission endower and missionaries should be ready following their Master Jesus Christ to take the cross for the liberation of the poor and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

St. Vincent’s boldness and readiness to make the Gospel alive at the cost of life is evident from his words to the missionaries whom he sent to different parts of the world. When the missionaries, sent to Tunis, were persecuted by the enemies, Vincent encouraged them through his personal letter: “This is only a beginning of their persecution. If God did not change the mind of Pasha (the authority of Tunis), there may come constant persecution. Then the missionaries become true missionaries. They are only going to follow the suffering Christ. St. Ignatius the martyr becomes their models.”<sup>135</sup> Here St. Vincent treats evangelization and the consequent suffering as a means to imitate closely the crucified Christ. For Vincent mission ‘*ad gentes*’ is a white martyrdom.

### **Shine Forth the Virtues of Christ**

According to St. Vincent to do the mission successfully the missionary should imitates the virtues and character of Christ. They should have the readiness to humble themselves and move down to the very realm of the poor. When they approach the people they should avoid all the negative attitudes like curse, frightening, ridiculing etc. Instead the missionaries should preach to the poor with a positive mind of compassion, love, respect etc. St. Vincent requests the missionaries to do

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<sup>132</sup> JOHN PAUL II, “Message to the Congregation of the Mission: Remaining True to St. Vincent’s Vision”, 5.

<sup>133</sup> JOHN PAUL II, “Message to the Congregation of the Mission: Remaining True to St. Vincent’s Vision”, 5.

<sup>134</sup> ST. VINCENT de PAUL, Conference of December 6, 1658, 23.

<sup>135</sup> MATHEW KACHAPPILLY, *Vincent de Paul*, Angamaly: Vincentian Generalate, 1970, 408.

evangelization with boldness, faith, intimate love towards the brethren, zeal, prudence, calmness, and with readiness to offer themselves to God and men.<sup>136</sup>

### **Move with the Power of the *Pneuma***

St. Vincent the evangelizer was not an ordinary missionary but a prophet with new vision. He always energized the members of his ‘Company’ to continue the mission even at the risk of their life. He realized and taught the significance of the cost of discipleship.

When some of the pioneer missionaries of Madagascar died, Vincent wrote to the rest: “The Catholic Church was instituted in the blood of the Son of God. The martyrdom of the Apostles, Popes, Bishops and the faithful empowered the Church constantly. Her number increased day-by day in spite of the persecution. The blood of the martyrs is the germs of the Church. God tempts his chosen people. Therefore, we should not leave our mission endower. Every where we should establish the kingdom of God. If one of our priests could convert six hundred people at Madagascar, it is not reasonable to leave the missionary field of Madagascar.”<sup>137</sup>

These words point out to us a prophet like Jeremiah in Vincent who continually inspires his people to go forward to the mission ‘*ad gentes.*’ According to him challenges, setbacks and even martyrdom was an essential part of evangelization. The evangelizer should face it boldly with the power of Holy Spirit like our forefathers, the prophets and above all our Lord and Apostles did.

### **Surrender to the Will of God**

When the Madagascar mission was in trouble and caused the death of many missionaries, St. Vincent surrendered himself to the will of God and wanted the rest of the ‘Company’ to commit themselves to the plan of God. He wrote to them: “Many of the people who started their journey from Egypt to Canaan under the leadership of Moses did not reach the expected land. God did not allow even Moses to enter at Canaan. We do not know God’s will. God invites and gave us the grace to preach the Kingdom of God and we went there. But some of them died on the way and others after reaching there. We have to submit ourselves to God’s way, holy and amazing! Even though some of us died during our missionary journey, we should not be frightened. We should move forward to our mission.”<sup>138</sup>

St. Vincent wanted his co-workers in the mission to seek after the wonderful and redemptive will of God in the work of evangelization. He considers missionary activity as a mystery and only God knows its full significance and its ups and downs. As faithful children of God the evangelizers should surrender themselves to the will of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the forerunner of all missionaries. Vincent firmly believed that God the Father behaves towards each and every missionary exactly as he behaved towards his only begotten Son Jesus Christ. The Father in heaven established the Church through the paschal mystery of his Son. In the same way God sends the missionaries to establish his kingdom among the poor through

<sup>136</sup> MATHEW KACHAPPILLY, *Vincent de Paul*, 411-413.

<sup>137</sup> MATHEW KACHAPPILLY, *Vincent de Paul*, 415.

<sup>138</sup> MATHEW KACHAPPILLY, *Vincent de Paul*, 416.

their suffering and witness. Thus God through the evangelizers reveals the mystery of salvation to the ends of the world.<sup>139</sup>

### **Gratis**

St. Vincent the evangelizer focused to break the bread of the Divine Word to the little ones in the towns and villages. He carryout his mission by administering the Divine Liturgy, by preaching and catechizing, by urging people to make their general confessions and hearing it, by setting quarrels and disputes, by serving the poor as if they were his masters, by helping the ecclesiastics in acquiring the knowledge and virtues necessary for their state, by conducting retreats, by convoking Tuesday conference to clerics, by praying for the conversion of sinners, and by giving counsel and admonition to the poor.<sup>140</sup> Thus in an enormous way St. Vincent fulfilled his call from God to evangelize the poor.

The note worthy things in St. Vincent's work of evangelization is that even in the midst of utter difficulty to find out money he did all his missions without seeking or receiving any reward from the beneficiaries. "Following the example of St. Paul, who, to avoid being a burden to anyone, worked day and night at manual labour to provide what was necessary for himself and his companions, *we will be a burden to no one in giving missions*. We will give all our service gratis, without any recompense or temporal support."<sup>141</sup>

## **3.2. SAINTLY KATTARATH AND EVANGELIZATION**

### **Moved Around to Preach**

Saintly Kattarath proclaimed the Gospel as thunder and fire and prayed constantly for the mission '*ad gentes*'.<sup>142</sup> To continue the work of evangelization in the Church, especially of India and Asia, he started the Vincentian Congregation. He himself went to several parishes to preach the Good News to the poor and urged several people to do the same.

### **Missionary in Life and Action**

I was really amazed by the statement of Fr. George Mannara, one of the three revivers of the Vincentian Congregation in 1927, about Fr. Kattarath. He certifies that "Fr. Varkey Kattarath was always a Vincentian in his life and actions."<sup>143</sup> All those who know St. Vincent will agree that only a good evangelizer can be a good Vincentian. When Fr. Mannara witnesses that Fr. Kattarath was a "Vincentian in life and action", it signifies that he was a true missionary.

From his letter to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1928, it is clear that he had a deep desire "to lead a community life in order to serve the Lord more perfectly" and to die as the true son of St. Vincent de Paul."<sup>144</sup> He

<sup>139</sup> MATHEW KACHAPPILLY, *Vincent de Paul*, 417.

<sup>140</sup> Vincent de Paul, *Common Rules* (New edition), Edappally: Vincentian Generalate, 2007, 11-12.

<sup>141</sup> Vincent de Paul, *Common Rules*, 68-69.

<sup>142</sup> JOSEPH ERAMBIL, *Sukruthavazhi*, Edappally: Vincentian Generalate, 2008,

<sup>143</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, Angamaly: Vincentian Generalate, 1983, 28, 39, 144.

<sup>144</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 40-41, 141.

cherished that desire from the early stage of his priesthood till the last moment of his life. In fact he has not only kept up his desire to become a Vincentian but also began to live it fully before he took the vows in the Vincentian Congregation. It means that knowingly or unknowingly Fr. Kattarath followed the footprints of St. Vincent exactly. Therefore unlike other ordinary diocesan priests he spent his time and energy to preach the Gospel to the poor and to console them in their difficulties.

The history of the Vincentian Congregation and its revivers attest that Fr. Kattarath and his companions led a religious life in accordance with the Common Rules or Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission and in the spirit of St. Vincent.<sup>145</sup> Truly they lead a religious life in accordance with the spirit of St. Vincent and of his Rules; it means they lead a life of mission. The parish retreats they preached and the various helps they gave to the poor in and around Thottakam and the neighbouring places, as attested by many people of their time were in fact their mission ‘*ad gentes.*’

Fr. Kattarath’s constant effort to eradicate poverty and illness, ignorance and illiteracy of the people, reveals that he was a real evangelizer of his time. As an authentic missionary he worked hard for the well being of ordinary people: he preached the Gospel lovingly and prophetically, consoled people in their difficulties, brought the scattered sheep into the fold of Christ, established educational centers, settled quarrels and cases, led people from their despair to hope, and cast out demons and healed diseases by his spiritual power.<sup>146</sup>

This kind of involvement and activity for the well being of the people is evident from the letter of the trustees and committee members of the Forane Church of Vaikom dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 1898, to Mar Louis, the Apostolic Vicar of Ernakulam; its demand is not to give transfer to their favourite Vicar: “It is only 3 years in this September since he came here. Within this period there was no complaint, quarrel or case among the people about the church affairs (matters). Formerly there were many quarrels and rivalries with the church, and always complaints to the Episcopal Curia, with great loss of money both to the church and to the people. ... Now we hear that there is a plan (consideration) for the transfer of our Vicar, Fr Varkey (Kattarath)...By the virtuous example and good advice of our Vicar we are living together in unity and cooperation... Therefore we request your Lordship not to transfer him from our parish at least for five years.”<sup>147</sup> All these things point out that it is reasonable to say that “Fr. Kattarath was always a Vincentian in life and action.”

### **Awareness of the Presence of Christ**

Fr. Kattarath’s spirituality and work of evangelization were fully centered on Christ. He was keen to radiate and witness to the mystery of Christ’s unique way of presence in the Church especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist. For instance, during the homily in connection with the blessing of the Carmelite convent chapel at Vaikom on March 19<sup>th</sup> 1899 he said: “Then, dear sisters, today we have to learn from

<sup>145</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 4.

<sup>146</sup> VARGHESE PARAPURAM, *Fr. Varkey Kattarath: Vincentian Sabhayude Arambhakan*, Edappally: Vincentian Generalate, 1998, 17-27.

<sup>147</sup> From the file of Vaikom Church kept in the Archives of the Arch dioceses of Ernakulam transcribed by Fr. Jacob Kallarackal and Published in the Family Bond of the Vincentian Congregation, V. XIX no.5 (1985 December), 199-200.

our hearts to praise God in a special way for several reasons. Because, as we reflect (remember) how small this building is, where we live and offer *Qurbana*, etc., it seems that, just as our Saviour was born in a manger and saved the world, so he has deigned to bless this new chapel and to be born in the house of each one of us, his brides, and to call us to love him. Ha! A few years ago this compound of the Komarthanmar was a place where ajnanigal (ignorant-pagans) played ball, and sang their ajnanapattu (pagan songs) and did their ajananavandanam (venerated their pagan idols) during the festivals like Onam, Vavu (ndarkmoon), etc. But today it is the chapel (sanctuary of the Lord), where Holy *Qurbana* is celebrated.”<sup>148</sup>

According to Fr. Kattarath, just like Jesus of Nazareth born in the manger at Bethlehem was present there, he is taking birth and dwelling in the newly consecrated chapel of the convent, especially in the form of the eucharistic bread. Christ is present in this chapel to bless and redeem us and the world. It is an amazing and wonderful presence of divine condescension. From our part therefore, we should in a special way love and praise him incessantly. Fr. Kattarath’s experience of the presence of Christ in the Church and in the Eucharist enabled him to carry out the mission entrusted by Christ effectively. In fact he teaches us that consciousness of the presence of Christ in and around the evangelizer is his inner strength and spiritual success.

### **Radiating Christ and His Gospel**

As an evangelizer of the Kerala Church Fr. Kattarath had his own approach to radiate Christ and his Gospel.<sup>149</sup> Fr. Kattarath considered the healing of the diseased as a means to radiate the personality of Christ and the power of Word of God into the heart of the poor. Through the prepared homilies, sermons and week-long retreats Fr. Kattarath was proclaiming the Word of God. By celebrating the liturgy and administering the sacraments he revealed to the faithful the creative love of God the Father, the redemptive love of God the Son and the sanctifying love of God the Holy Spirit. He has special devotion to the Triune God. Trinity was his point of reference in his personal work. He tired his best to convey the message of the Gospel through his teachings and writings especially among the Adoration sisters.

Fr. Kattarath helped the people by his spiritual power to find out their lost or stolen things. It was an occasion for him to speak to them especially to the outcast about Christ and his unique way of saving human beings from their bondage. He was able to cast out demons and all kinds of harmful bacteria and virus from man and from the agricultural land. In this way he revealed to all people that the kingdom of God was in their midst. As a good and caring pastor he often visited the houses of both Christians and non Christians and was involved in the day-to-day affairs of the people. For him this was a means to evangelize people in a very personal way. By erecting shrines, chapels and crosses on way side Fr. Kattarath turned the attention of ordinary people to Christ the Saviour.

### **Sense of Self-esteem and Success**

<sup>148</sup> *Centenary Souvenir (1892-1992), Carmela Madam, Vaikam*, .46; cf. Chronicle of the Carmelite Convent Vaikom, Old one, 104-105 & ; New one ,54-55).

<sup>149</sup> VARGHESE PARAPURAM, *Fr. Varkey Kattarath: Vincentian Sabhayude Arambhakan*, Edappally: Vincentian Generalate, 1998, 13-28.

Fr. Kattarath as an evangelizer had good self-esteem and deep sense of success. As a pastor he did his work successfully under various prelates: his Grace Leonardo de Mellano, Msgr Marcellino Berardi, Msgr. Charles Lavingne, Mar Louis Pazheparambil, Mar Thomas Kurialacherril, and Mar Augustine Kandathil, the present Archbishop of Ernakulam.<sup>150</sup> As a pastor Kattarath affirms in an through his life the necessity of self esteem and a sense of success for the effectiveness of evangelization. In his letter to Fr. George Mannara on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1927, Kattarath attests that he worked for God for twenty years at Vaikom. During this period he renewed the church building, and built the Carmelite convent, its chapel and St. Louis primary school.<sup>151</sup> All these things show that he was a efficient and successful pastor. The founding of the school and such other creative activities indicate that he was ahead of his time in thinking and action.

### **Zeal for Souls**

The heart of Kattarath was aflame with the love of God and love of the poor. This zeal for souls, an essential quality of an effective evangelizer, was always burning in his mind. He wanted to live fully for the Lord and the people of God. The following words make it explicit: “Soon after my ordination to priesthood, I was burning with a (fervent) desire to serve the Lord more ardently (closely) by leading a life in common (in a community). As time went on, this desire grew stronger and I was humbly and earnestly asking the Lord for help and light (enlightenment) and, as I could, I was looking for the means (chances) of satisfying (fulfilling) this will of God.”<sup>152</sup> The zeal for the souls is implanted in the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit. Being aware of it Kattarath prayed and patiently waited for the help of the *Pneuma* to fulfill his desire to serve God and his people more ardently and earnestly.

### **Discernment**

Kattarath was not moved by a hurry-bury culture; instead he patiently waited for the intervention of God in his life. He always discerned his inner movement and by the Holy Spirit he decided his future plans. “In the year 1904 (Jubilee of Immaculate Conception) it seemed to me that the time mercifully assigned by the Lord has come. Because, as soon as I mentioned my desire to my Bishop, Mar Louis, he gladly approved it and encouraged my proposal. Therefore with the full approval and counsel of the Bishop, we – I along with 3 secular priests of the same mind and spirit – came together in 1904, and in spite of various difficulties, we acquired some land for us at Thottacome (Vaikam, Travancore), and built a small and temprary chapel and house that we could lead a community life.”<sup>153</sup> Discernment according to Kattarath is an essential quality of an evangelizer and it will help him to reach his goal providentially.

### **Darkness and Temptation**

Kattarath was guided by the Holy Spirit and in the *Paraclete* he established the Vincentian Congregation. But as in the case of Jesus Christ (Mt.4:) the Tempter led the soul to darkness and temptation: “The ancient enemy of man, however, was not

<sup>150</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 141.

<sup>151</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 44.

<sup>152</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 141.

<sup>153</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 141.

sleeping. He greatly weakened the infant Community with death and other (similar) adversities. Meanwhile, Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, Bishop of Changanacherry, asked me to take (the spiritual) care of the nuns (sisters) of the Blessed Sacrament for a time and appointed me as the Superior General of that Congregation, as it was newly formed [founded in 1908].”<sup>154</sup> Kattarath’s spiritual journey reveals that various crises are an essential part of the life of an evangelizer. No body knows when the missionary may be led to the experience of the dessert but surly it will come in his or her pilgrim path. The only remedy or solution is after the example of Fr. Kattarath to abandon oneself fully to the eucharistic Lord and wait patiently for his own time and intervention.

### **Realistic Outlook**

When we analyze Kattarath’s personality, as an evangelizer we find that he was well aware about his own limitations and potentialities. He was conscious of his last stage of his life. “I am advanced in age,... and suffering from various diseases, I may not live long enough...”<sup>155</sup> These words show that he was aware of his weakness in the old age. Therefore he wanted to take vows before the canonical procedure was complete. “Therefore ...grant me the privilege of taking the vows.” To take vows and “die as a son of St. Vincent” was his “ardent and long preserved desire”. Only that will give him satisfaction, fulfillment and peace of soul.<sup>156</sup>

### **Lively Hope**

As in the case of Patriarch Abraham hope in hopelessness was the characteristics of Fr. Kattarath. He has sure hope about the good future of the Vincentian Congregation. He firmly believed that one day the Vincentian Congregation will shine forth in the Church and in the world but he may not be able to see it. “I may not live long...to see that happiest day on which our small community will be shining...”<sup>157</sup> The notable thing in his words is that the Vincentian evangelizers require at all times and in every circumstances a realistic outlook about mission and an unending hope about its success in future.

### **Prophetic Vision**

A real evangelizer is a prophet who is not much concerned about the past but the present and always looks forward to the future. This is true also with regard to the life of Fr. Kattarath. “All the present circumstances promise a good future to this small Community...”<sup>158</sup> As it is clear from the words of Kattarath he has a strong orientation to future and it helped him to face courageously and take positively all the difficulties that rose in his life.

### **Vivid Dream**

The life of Fr. Kattarath reveals that God never leaves forever the soul of the evangelizer in utter loneliness and emptiness. The compassionate Lord visits her again

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<sup>154</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 142.

<sup>155</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 142.

<sup>156</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 143.

<sup>157</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 142.

<sup>158</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 142.



and enlightens her again more vigorously. This is explicit from the words of Kattarath in connection with the revival of the Congregation: “Today by the help of the merciful Lord, that seed of the Congregation of the Mission, already sown in our soil 24 years ago, germinates with a new vigour. Because under the direction and with the advice of our Archbishop, Mar Augustine Kandathil, some young secular priests, bidding farewell to all their possessions in the world and desiring to lead a community life according to the Rules of St. Vincent of Paul, consecrated themselves to God and now they live in a community together with me here.”<sup>159</sup> One thing is clear from the witness of Fr. Kattarath that God will illumine the soul of his servant after its purification. For God for whom nothing is impossible, will allow the heart of the evangelizer to shine forth in this world and in heaven.

### **Boldness to Start Afresh**

The Holy Spirit, the guiding force of evangelization, always gives vitality and power to the missionaries to move forward to the inner most realm of practical faith. As a result they enter into the difficult place and situation to witness to the Gospel message. The Spirit empowers an evangelizer to take new ways and means to establish the Kingdom of God. This is true in the life of Fr. Kattarath, the Spirit-filled evangelizer of the Syro-Malabar Church. Inspired by the Holy Spirit Fr. Kattarath dared to start a new Congregation at Thottakam in the Arch diocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly for the effective evangelization of Kerala, India and the world at large.

In fact that goal is being realized today by its members. Fr. Kattarath’s Spirit inspired daring is explicit from the letter of Fr. George Mannara one of the revivers of the Congregation: “He was the first [and chief member] and the principal cause [main founder] of the Mission House at Thottacom. Fr. Kattarath had really worked hard for the building of the House, Chapel, etc.”<sup>160</sup> As it is evident from the above words, Fr. Kattarath was blessed by the gift of courage to start afresh the work of evangelization. A true missionary needed this gift of starting anew the work of mission ‘*ad gentes*’ in accordance with his new circumstances or culture of the place and people.

### **Obedience and Commitment**

Christ the evangelizer was obedient unto death to his Father in heaven in his salvific ministry and committed himself to the work of human salvation in the divine plan of the Father. Following the Lord, Fr. Kattarath surrendered himself totally to the will of God and entrusted himself fully in the hands of God to do his work. Fr. George Mannara attested it: “Although, being forced by the [unfavourable] circumstances [at Thottakam] and called by [his] Bishop, Mar Thoma Kurialacherry, he assumed and perfectly fulfilled the office of the first Superior General of the Nuns [Sisters] of the Blessed Sacrament, he remained a [true] Vincentian in life and manners (behaviour). That was the reason why he was so earnest to come, though (while) he was not fully recovered from his sickness, to this recently built House, and started to live with us.”<sup>161</sup> An evangelizer has no vested personal interests or hidden plans; he is open to God and to man, and always ready to fulfill the mission of Christ. Submissive

<sup>159</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 142.

<sup>160</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 144.

<sup>161</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 144.

commitment to the call and work entrusted is a basic characteristic of a true missionary.

### **Fasting and Prayer**

Jesus Christ sent by the Father from heaven and anointed by the Holy Spirit, has shown the way to all his followers to be a model to pray and fast for the intervention of the Father in heaven in carrying out the mission successfully. The Lord's way is the only true way for all his disciples in the field of evangelization. Fr. Kattarith patiently waited for a long time to see the divine providence and intervention through his prayer and penance and he experienced it in a special manner when his health was improved while he was thinking about going back to Thottakam: "A special providence, I dare to say, can be seen in his life. He was so seriously ill that there was no hope he would come back to life, much less to this house. Now, in fact, he has regained his health to a certain extent, and is leading a regular life with an ardent desire to die as a son of St. Vincent."<sup>162</sup> A missionary is always moved not by his own power but by the power of the Lord and he is doing not his own pleasure but the will of God. Fr. Kattarith realizes this divine intervention through prayer and penance.

### **A Spiritual Man**

Fr. Kattarith was a spiritual man who lived in the peace and joy of the Kingdom of God. He spent his life for the glory of God and for the welfare of the people. He was quite calm and peaceful in the ups and downs of his life. Both in the success and failure of his life he tried to see the will of God. At all time he gave thanks and praise to God for all graces or difficulties of his life. As a true spiritual master he surrendered himself totally to the plan of God. He did his best for the uplift of the poor. His spiritual maturity is very well reflected in his reply dated 17<sup>th</sup> August 1927 to Fr. George Mannara's letter:

"Very dear Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Mannara,

I got the letter you sent [to me]. I read it with joy and gave thanks and praise to God. I did all the works there for God and our brethren. So I was gladly submissive (obedient) to the will of God. With joy I departed from there. I know from your letter that the Congregation (sabha) started there is the Congregation of the Lazarists, founded by St Vincent de Paul. Its Constitution [Common Rules] can be found in the Metropolitan House of Ernakulam. Very Rev. Fr. Vicar General [Thomas Nedunkalle] and I lived together at Thottakam for about two years [1913-1915]. Only later on I left Thottakam, after entrusting it to V. Rev. Vicar General. I worked for God at Vaikom for twenty years [1895-1915] for the building (construction) of the [Carmelite] Convent at Vaikom, and of the Koventha (monastery) at Thottakam.

Joyfully I left [Thottakam], since I had firm faith (was convinced) that nothing would be done without the will of God. All the priests there, especially the Metropolitan Father, are convinced (duly aware) of the works I did there and the difficulties I suffered. Now I am 78 years old, and in a state of helplessness – unable to do anything. I am just like a dead body (person). Yet, infinite praise be to God who willed this much to be done. I am like a dead person (man). The works at Thottakam

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<sup>162</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 144.

were done in two years. May the Lord bless you and (confirm) your good will. I am old. Death is (at hand) near (to me) due to my old age.

I remain, / your unworthy servant, / Kattarath Gheevarghese Pattakkaran / (sd).<sup>163</sup>

As a spiritual man he was not at all ready to disturb others for any of his personal needs. He was ready to carry joyfully the cross of his life. At the same time in the midst of all suffering and difficulties he totally put his trust in God and expected always his good will, “everything will end well.” This is explicit in his letter to Fr. George Mannara dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 1927:

“Very Dear Rev. Father,

I got your letter. Thank you very much. I am not feeling well. Somehow I manage my life (I just pull through life, up and down in spirit). Due to my fatigue (tiredness) I am not able to do anything. I fear (doubt) if I would be a burden to you. I give you my whole hearted blessing. The Holy Family will make everything right (well). God willed that this be done now only. I trust that everything will end well (come to a good end).

I remain, / your humble servant in Christ, / Kattarath Gheevarghese Pattakkaran.<sup>164</sup>

As the life and mission of Kattarath reveals, a Vincentian evangelizer should be a spiritual man, and live and move in accordance with the values and principles of the kingdom of God which Christ the evangelizer revealed through his paschal mystery.

### **3.3. GUIDE LINES IN OUR CONSTITUTION**

Religious communities are essentially missionary and they exist in order to evangelize the world. This fact is very well reflected in the Statutes and Practical Norms of the Vincentian Congregation. Called by God, the Vincentian Congregation commits itself “to preach the Gospel to the poor, especially the more abandoned and to help them in their integral development...The specific and pre-eminent purpose of our Congregation is the evangelization of the poor. It is realized in our Popular Missions, retreats, missionary works among the non-Christians as well as in our charitable, educational and social apostolate. A whole-hearted commitment to the evangelization of the poor and their human and Christian advancement is the identifying mark of our Congregation. That is our charism.”<sup>165</sup> The constitution is very clear that the Vincentian Congregation is a religious community founded to continue the work of Christ that is to evangelize the world.

### **3.4. UNIQUENESS OF THE VINCENTIAN WAY OF EVANGELIZATION**

The Vincentian way of evangelization which is a God –given ministry in and through St. Vincent de Paul is unique in its nature and structure. This gift of God is continuously growing and bearing fruit of the Holy Spirit in and through the founding Father Kattarath and the members of the Congregation.

<sup>163</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 44-45.

<sup>164</sup> GEORGE APPASSERY, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, 45-46.

<sup>165</sup> *Statutes and Practical Norms of the Vincentian Congregation*, Edappally, Vincentian Generalate, 2002, 4-5 (art.2, 4, 5).

## **Gift to Glorify God and Dignify Man**

The Popular Mission of the Congregation is a unique and effective way of evangelization. The Potta-Divine ministry of the Word developed and spread in different parts of the world through the power of the Holy Spirit is something spectacular. The Vincentian style of the *kerygmatic* and dynamic ministry to glorify God and to dignify humans is a continued action in collaboration with the ecclesiastical authorities and lay people of the place. It is a popular and participatory mission in which everybody has a role to play for the establishment of the kingdom of God in their heart and in their midst.

## **Word, Sacraments and Action Blend together**

The Vincentian way of evangelization is centered on the Word of God, sacraments, traditions, teaching of the Church and the fruits of modern sciences like psychology and sociology. We preach the Word of God radically and fight against all kinds of slavery, injustice and addiction harmful to the society. We do our mission in close co-operation with the Bishops, parish priests and lay people. According to A. Vallooran the Vincentian movements of renewal insists on people to be filled and led by the Holy Spirit in and through the sacrament. In our preaching of retreats “emphasis is given to the sacramental spirituality. It is here that our way of renewal different even from the charismatic renewal, which may not give so much importance to sacramental life of spirituality. Our retreat structure itself is sacramental; the framework is sacramental.”<sup>166</sup>

Sacraments are the God-given means to experience the redemption realized in Christ. We start our retreat by proclaiming the compassionate and reconciling love of God. Then we lead people to experience it in the sacrament of Confession. The reconciliation with God experienced by the participants of the retreat at the confessional is intensified during the celebration of the Eucharist. The forgiving and self-giving love of the Lord which the retreatants experienced at the *Qurbana*, leads them to forgive and give love with everyone even to their enemies.

The retreatants experience the meaning of total self-giving in the practical level at the family relationship especially the marital relationship in the renewal of consent of Marriage. Through the healing ministry at the retreat the faithful realize the importance of the sacrament of the Sick. Since all these sacraments are administered by priests and other services during the retreat are under the leadership of priests the faithful will understand well the importance of the sacrament of the Holy Order. The retreatants are further led to experience also the greatness of the sacrament of Baptism and of Confirmation during the anointing prayer service at the last part of the retreat. Thereby they are enabled to proclaim it more deeply and witness to Christ more ardently.<sup>167</sup> Thus the Vincentian way of evangelization, centered mainly on the Word of God, sacraments of the Church, and service to the brethren leads the retreatants to continue this mission in their parishes and other circumstances of life.

## **Contemplation and Action Unified**

<sup>166</sup> JACOB KANIYARASERIL, *Divine Experiences: An Inquiry into the Charismatic Renewal*, Delhi: Meida House, 2006, 131.

<sup>167</sup> JACOB KANIYARASERIL, *Divine Experiences: An Inquiry into the Charismatic Renewal*, 132-133.

In the opinion of Fr. Mathew Naikamparambil, one of the pioneers of the Potta-Divine ministry of the Word and the international evangelizers, the speciality of the Vincentian way of evangelization comprises has two aspects: First of all prayer- they are trying to evangelize the world by their commitment to prayer- personal prayer and community prayer, specially prayer in a team, prayer with the Word of God, and prayer by reflecting on the life of saints. Secondly the work of evangelization by their preaching and witnessing as Christ did (Lk. 4:16-21). They witness to the kingdom of God in this world by practicing the five special virtues of St. Vincent de Paul, simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for souls, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The Vincentians through their proclamation enable the people of God to imbibe and possess the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in an experiential way and be prepared to take part in the mission of Christ, especially the evangelization of the gentiles for the salvation of souls. In brief Vincentian way of evangelization is centered on contemplation and action, and oriented to initiating lay people for the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.<sup>168</sup>

### **Oriented to Man and to God**

Since the aim of Vincentian way of evangelization is to reform in Christ what is deformed, to conform to Christ what is reformed, to confirm in Christ what is conformed, to transform into Christ what is confirmed, and to glorify in Christ what is transformed, it is oriented to the total development, healing and redemption of all human beings.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, it is right to say that the Vincentian mission ‘*ad gentes*’ is fully centered on people earth and in heaven; it is man-oriented and God-oriented; it nourishes both humaneness and divineness; it gives both earthly life and eternal life to mankind.

This is rightly derived from the motto of the Congregation, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk.4:18-19).

### **Simple, Popular and Catholic**

According to Fr. Michael Panachickal, the director of the Depaul Media Mission, and a well known musician, the Vincentian way of evangelization is specifically different in its “simplicity in expressin, diversity in the popular appeal, and integrity in the Catholic teaching.”<sup>170</sup>

### **Setting the Humanity Free of All Evils**

Dr. Augustine Vallooran, professor of philosophy in the Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Alwaye, and the director of Divine Retreat Center, English Campus opined that “Vincentian way of evangelization is based on Lk. 4:18-21, which is the motto of St. Vincent de Paul. The mission of Jesus was to set free the

<sup>168</sup> MATHEW NAIKAMPARAMBIL, From the Written Note on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

<sup>169</sup> JOSEPH ERAMBIL, “Transforming and Glorifying Power of the Eucharist”, *The Living Word*, 106 (2000), 317-325.

<sup>170</sup> MICHAEL PANACHICKAL, From the Written Note on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

humanity from the misery of the captivity of sin, oppression of sorrow and the blindness of the rejection of God. By preaching Jesus as the Saviour and Lord, we lead the people to commit their life totally to him in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is their faith-surrender that sets them free from all forms of slavery, oppression and blindness.”<sup>171</sup>

### **Gift of God to the Church and the World**

When I interview Fr. George Panackal, who was the former Popular Mission director, and one of the pioneers of the Potta Divine Ministry and is at present the director of Divine Retreat Center Muringoor, shared his vision of the uniqueness of Vincentian way of evangelization: “Primarily the Vincentian way of evangelization is a gift of God to the Church and the world at large. God himself reveals, selects and gives us certain spot and place for the mission ‘ad gentes’”.<sup>172</sup>

### **Gift for All Peoples**

The Vincentian evangelization is a task not limited by time, place or person. It is not for a few hours or days but for all days, weeks, months and years. It is not limited to certain states or nations or to any particular Church. Vincentian evangelization is by its very nature a gift for all times and for all places and for all Churches. God gives us this gift precisely for Mass evangelization. Therefore for the Vincentian evangelization is to save not a few but to redeem all people- irrespective of language, caste or creed (religion).

Our target and range in evangelization is not the boundaries of our country (India) or our particular Catholic Church but extends to all countries and all peoples believing in Christ or not. Our God-given guiding principle is not to exclude any one but to include every one in our retreat. We conduct Popular Mission Retreat in different centers outside the parish Church. In order to convene all people and to facilitate the participation of both Christians and non-Christians in our Popular Mission we write down and stick the Word of God in every place and corner of the parish, communicate about the retreat in and out side the parish using the media of the time. We open the gates of our retreat centers to all people at all time and allow the poor to take part in the retreat without any fee. Since evangelization is a free gift of God to us we preach the Popular Mission without any reward or remuneration.

### **Redemption and Sanctification**

In the work of evangelization Vincentians concentrate on the sanctification and redemption of all categories of people because they are all precious to Jesus Christ especially the new born babies, the sick and old people as equally important for us. Therefore we insist on their participations in our retreats. More over, we build them up in accordance with the values of the Gospel through our Bible nursery, Bible College, and homes for children, the mentally sick, AIDS patients and old people as a part of our evangelization.

The speciality of the Vincentian work of evangelization is that it is a mission not merely for others sanctification but primarily for our own sanctification. Therefore

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<sup>171</sup> AUGUSTINE VALLOORAN, From the Written Note on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

<sup>172</sup> GEORGE PANACKAL, From personal Interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008.

we spend much time in prayer and meditation, and do fasting, penance and mortification.

### **Reconciliation and Renewal**

Fr. Panackal has opine that charismatic retreat gives more importance to charisms, where as our evangelization work aims at mainly for the renewal of the persons, families, parishes and the Church herself. The goal of our mission is to establish reconciliation and good relationships among families, between neighbours, parishes, dioceses, and the whole Church through the breaking of the Word, and Bread and life based on the Gospel message.<sup>173</sup>

### **Gift to Build up *Koinonia***

The Vincentian mission is oriented to fellowship. Today there is a tendency to compartmentalization and division among families, parishes, dioceses, and religious congregations in the name of institutions, language, charisms, culture and rituals. They try to grow as if they are an island. Through our evangelization we prophetically insist on the necessity of *koinonia* inside and outside families, parishes, dioceses and congregations. That is, through our mission we are trying to block the danger of division and cherish the beauty of unity. We prepare the ground for expressing and experiencing the basic fellowship of Christians (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-36). It will help the faithful to value their faith joyfully.

### **Gift to Develop the Total Person**

God gives this gift of mission to us to touch and heal the total person. Through our dynamic and kerygmatic ministry we convey the message of God in all the spheres of life. In our proclamation we like John the Baptist concentrate not merely the sin of man and conversion but as Christ we care to improve all the areas of human life. We witness to the world that God is compassionate and cares for our life, involve all the aspects of our life and he is present in our midst to save us. God in fact through our ministry with deep sentiments attend, consider, console, and take care of all the affairs and problems of man and anoint with the Spirit of the Lord. Hence our mission is to heal the people totally in the greater plan of God.

### **Gift to Radiate**

Vincentians are anointed with a special mission to radiate the message of the Word of God not merely in the normal situations but even in the adverse situations of life. Therefore we witness to the Gospel values even at the risk of our own life. We are committed to die for Christ who died for us.

### **Gift to the Community**

Vincentian call to evangelize the world is a gift for the community. Through this mission we not only build up community but also experience the beauty of community life. Our mission is a community exercise and like sharing the life in the Trinity.

### **Gift Actualizes with Others**

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<sup>173</sup> JACOB KANIYARASERIL, *Divine Experiences: An Inquiry into the Charismatic Renewal*, 131.

The specific call of the Vincentians to evangelize the world is a call to be realized in collaboration with others. Our evangelization is not an act of the members of the Congregation alone but a communitarian work involving all diocesan priests, nuns, and the laity. All of them have a definite role to play in this mission. Therefore people called it Popular Mission. We convince our co-workers that they too have a definite role and an important share in our mission 'ad gentes'. At the same time we inspire and empower them to take their role courageously for the establishment of the kingdom of God. We are not only inviting others to take part in our mission actively but also preparing them to take the responsibility of evangelization in different places and their particular life situations. That is, we give special emphasis to prepare people for the evangelization ministry, preaching the Word of God and giving witness to Christ through their life. Consequently, there are at present a number of lay evangelizers and institutions to radiate the message of the Gospel to the poor and the little ones of the Lord.



## CONCLUSION

The work of evangelization is a God-given gift and a task to the Church, to build up the entire human beings into Christ. St. Paul makes it clear, “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph.4:11-12).

To fulfill the Christian responsibility to evangelize the whole world, St. Paul wants the believers, “Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him” (1Cor. 7:17). A fervent listening, meditating and living of the Word of God with a heart full of gratitude inspires and energizes the faithful to continue the salvific work of Christ by all means in every where. “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col.3:15-17). Then God will accompany and reward the evangelizers wherever they go. “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you” I will give “good success wherever you go” (Josh: 1:5, 7).

Evangelizers are God’s own chosen engineers and artists to re-structure and beautify the creative image of God within man which is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. God send the evangelizers to fashion a new manhood in the believers and make them contemporaries of Christ. God is just and generous to reward properly to the labourers of his vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16). Jesus himself revealed to them that “their names are written in heaven” (Lk.10:20). Realizing this in the Holy Spirit St. Paul says, “As it is written, ‘how beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!’” (Rom.10:15). Thus blessed are those who publishes the message of the Word of God and who publishes salvation to the poor of Yahweh (Is.52:7).

God blesses here on earth and in heaven those who carry out the mission of Christ through the proclamation of the Word, administration of the sacraments and work of charity. Jesus promises it several times: “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time...and in the age to come eternal life” Mk.10:29-30). In a special way God will lead the evangelizers to his kingdom of joy, peace, comfort, enlightenment and eternal life.

The evangelizers who spend their life for the poor of Yahweh are guaranteeing their glorious life in heaven. “For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life” (Rom.2:6-7). The praiseworthy things in these revelatory words is that evangelization is a God-given call to make sure the total healing, liberation, redemption and eternal life of the evangelizer and of the faithful in Christ. Those who

died and buried with Christ by Baptism shall be raised and live with Christ, those who preached with Christ shall be blessed with him in glory, those who united with Christ in death shall be united with him in resurrection, those who served the poor with Christ shall live with him in heaven (Rom.6: 3-5, 8; Mt. 25:31-40). This is the free gift of God our Father to the evangelizers and their followers in Christ Jesus our Lord in the Holy Spirit our Counselor (Jn. 14:15, 25; Rom.6:23).

## Questions

1. What is the meaning of the terms-mission, evangelization and new evangelization?
2. What is the aim and scope of evangelization?
3. Who is the inspiring force of evangelization?
4. Do you think that evangelization is the very nature of the Church?
5. What are the directives of Syro-Malabar Church for evangelization?
6. What did our heavenly patron St. Vincent say and do for evangelization?
7. What does our founder Saintly Kattarath teach about evangelization?
8. What are the guidelines in our Status and Practical Norms for evangelization?
9. Do our mode of life and conduct help evangelization?
10. How are the poor people helped materially and spiritually through our works of evangelization?
11. Are we building up the Church of Christ by our personal life and apostolate?
12. How is our spiritual life in relation to our works of evangelization?
13. Can we say that we bear witness to Christ by our prayer life and works of mercy?
14. What are the internal and external crises in evangelization?
15. What is your solution to overcome internal and external difficulties in evangelization?
16. How far we have succeeded in our formation for missionary work?
17. What are the means for effective evangelization?
18. What should be the attitude of and qualities required in an efficient and effective evangelizer?
19. How far do we allow the laity to involve in our work of evangelization?
20. What is the uniqueness of the Vincentian way of evangelization?
21. Give an assessment of our evangelization.
22. What is your future vision of evangelization?

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