

themselves in this ministry with due respect and regard, and work for the same with a divine motive. The parish priests and the parents have to honour them by encouraging and appreciating their service. This will help them to work sincerely for the good of the Church and enable them to remain faithful in their ministry. Apart from this, they have to be given proper training and formation in catechetics in order to enable them to exercise their ministry effectively.

### III. FORMATION OF CATECHISTS

100. Formation of catechists is an important concern of the Church. As the catechists play a major role in the catechetical ministry of the Church they have to be given proper orientation and training to carry out their task.. The *General Catechetical* Directory says: "It is necessary that the ecclesiastical authorities regard the formation of catechists as a task of the greatest importance. This formation has to be given to all catechists, both lay and religious, and also to Christian parents" (GCD 115). Hence, the catechists need to be formed in all the aspects of their life.

#### **The Spiritual Life of the Catechists**

101. To be a catechist is a special vocation from God. One can take up this responsibility only with the inspiration and grace of God. The spirituality of catechists should spring from the awareness that it is the Lord Jesus who invites them in a special way, to follow Him and to be a teacher and formator of His disciples. This awareness about the personal call of Jesus Christ and the experience of one's personal relationship with Him should be the true moving forces for the catechetical activities of the catechists (GDC 231). Regarding the spiritual life of the catechists the *General Catechetical* Directory says: "The function entrusted to the catechist demands of him a fervent sacramental and spiritual

life, a practice of prayer, and a deep feeling for the excellence of the Christian message and for the power it has to transform one's life; it also demands of him the pursuit of charity, humility, and prudence which allow the Holy Spirit to complete his fruitful work in those being taught" (GCD 1 ~ 4). Since spirituality is the most important aspect in the life of a catechist, this aspect has to be given serious attention in the selection, preparation, and appointment of the catechists in the parishes.

Together with the formation in spiritual life, proper intellectual and pedagogical formation has to be given in order to equip them with necessary knowledge and know how about the content and method. Then only their formation will be integral and holistic. Such a formation has to be given at two levels, namely, basic formation and ongoing formation.

#### **Basic Formation for the Catechists**

102. As has already been mentioned, formation is important to make catechists competent and efficient. Therefore, it is better to have at least a basic formation in catechetics before one is appointed as a catechist. The basic formation should include formation in the spiritual, doctrinal, anthropological, and methodological aspects. First and foremost, it should be a spiritual formation since it is a spiritual ministry of the Church. By this formation they should be made aware of their divine vocation and their responsibility before God and the Church. Formation in the doctrinal level is also important in order to make the catechists capable of transmitting the content of faith in its integrity and totality. Catechesis is a practical science which demands much interaction with persons of all age levels. Hence proper formation has to be given to them in the anthropological (human) sciences. This will help the catechists to maintain good relationships with the catechized, especially with the children. Finally, the

methodological formation helps the catechists to become efficient tutors and formators of Christian faith. This type of general and basic formation will help the catechists to get introduced into the field of catechetics and catechesis.

### **Ongoing Formation for the Catechists**

103. Besides the basic formation, catechists also need an ongoing formation because catechesis is a practical science in which various developments take place. Their knowledge and know how need to be updated in order that they may become competent to meet the needs of the time. This ongoing formation should also to be given in all the aspects which affect the ministry of the catechists. They need to be also spiritually renewed in order to maintain their spiritual attitude towards the ministry. Updating in the doctrinal level is needed in order to keep their knowledge fresh with regard to the content of faith. Since ever so many developments are taking place with regard to the human sciences, an ongoing formation in this level will make them always competent for better inter-personal relationships and for the management of the catechism classes. Finally, the current information with regard to the means and methods of communication will equip them for an effective handing down of the content of faith.

Considering the importance of integral formation for the catechists, the ecclesiastical authorities have to take necessary steps to organize courses and training programmes both for beginners and seniors. However, even as they undergo these formative courses, they should not forget the fact that more than any art or science catechesis is a divine ministry or charism, which one can develop only with the help of the Holy Spirit.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **THE MAIN CATECHETICAL SYSTEMS IN THE CHURCH**

104. In the Syro-Malabar Church, there exist different catechetical systems which make her catechetical ministry effective and fruitful. These systems are actually the different ways of doing catechesis, and they differ one another on the basis of the means and methods which are used in the catechetical action. In the Syro-Malabar Church, catechesis takes place mainly at two levels: the family and the parish. At the family level, catechesis is more personal and informal, while at the parish level it is quite formal and systematic. Within the family, the children spontaneously learn many aspects of faith from their parents: they learn to pray, to behave properly according to the Word of God, and learn the precepts of the Church. But at the parish level there exists different catechetical systems which make catechesis at this level effective and fruitful.

The main catechetical systems prevailing at the parish level are the celebrational catechesis, instructional catechesis, and apprenticeship catechesis. Among the above mentioned catechetical systems, the first uses the language of symbols, the second the language of words, and the third the language of actions. In the same way, the method used in these systems are celebrational, instructional, and actional. Each of these systems plays a dominant role in satisfying and fostering a particular aspect of the human person, namely, the experiential, intellectual, and behavioral respectively.

### **Catechesis through Celebration**

105. By celebrational catechesis, we mean the liturgical catechesis. This catechesis is done mainly in the context of a Church using the language of symbols and images. Liturgical catechesis plays an important role in the catechetical system of the Syro-Malabar Church. From the very early times, as was the case with all other Churches, liturgical catechesis was the most powerful means and method in the catechetical system of our Church. This mode of catechesis extends from the very beginning till the end of one's life, since almost all the main aspects and moments of one's life are actively or passively related to the liturgical celebrations of the Church.
106. The celebrational system of catechesis has a long history. It has its beginning in the time of the Exodus, especially in the first Passover celebration of the Jews. Moses asked the Israelites to celebrate the Passover Feast each year with certain rites and rituals. He asked them to do this as a means to remember what the Lord had done for them, as well as to instruct the coming generations about the great things that the Lord had done for their ancestors. Moses said to the elders of Israel, "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance ..... And when your children ask you, what do you mean by this observance? you shall say, it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of Israelites in Egypt, he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses"(Ex. 12: 14-27). Moses considered the celebration of Passover as an occasion and a means to introduce and to interpret the faith experience to the new generation. Therefore, for the Israelites the festal celebrations were privileged occasions to remember what the Lord had done for them and were means to hand down their faith to the coming generations.

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107. In the New Testament period also, from the very beginning of the early Church, this system of celebrating the faith continued in the Church. The commandment of the Lord at the end of the Last Supper "Do this in memory of Me" also motivated the early Church to continue with the celebration of their faith. The Universal Church as well as the Syro-Malabar Church consider liturgy as a privileged occasion as well as a preferential means to hand down the faith experience of the salvific events in its totality and integrity. Among the liturgical celebrations of the Church, the Holy *Qurbana* (Holy Eucharist) is the most powerful and important one. The liturgical celebration was also considered to be the best occasion to give special instruction to the faithful. Most of the catechetical teachings of the early Fathers of the Church were the catechetical teachings or homilies given in the context of the liturgical celebrations. All these refer to the fact that, for centuries it was the main means and method of catechesis in the catechetical ministry of the Church.
108. The celebrations of the Church are mainly the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the celebration of the sacraments, sacramentals, liturgical year, liturgical feasts, liturgy of hours, popular pieties and devotions. Of these the Holy *Qurbana*, which is an *anamnesis* or commemoration of the whole salvific event, is of prime importance in the liturgical catechesis. The liturgical year is also a recapitulation of the salvific events in and through different seasons of the year. For example, in the Syro-Malabar Church, it is divided into nine periods: Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Apostles, Summer, Eliah-Cross-Moses, and the Consecration of the Church. The main liturgical feasts are the feasts of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. These are special days of commemoration for the Church. The feasts of the Lord are mainly the Nativity, Epiphany, Presentation, Holy week celebrations (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good

Friday, Easter), Ascension, Pentecost, Exaltation of the Cross. Then come the feasts of Holy Mary, St. Thomas the Apostle, and other Saints. The liturgical feasts are considered by the faithful as occasions to remember and revitalize their faith experience. The faithful usually prepare for the celebration of these feasts through fasting and special prayers.

109. Besides the liturgical celebrations, the sacraments are also means for catechizing the people of God. Sacraments are the means and occasions by which the Church celebrates and sanctifies the important moments in a person's life. Together with these, the sacramentals like, blessings, funeral services, devotions to the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Cross, devotions to the Saints, popular pieties like the way of the cross, the rosary, .etc. also help to enrich our people in the Christian experience of faith. Hence, it is up to the Church to safeguard this valuable and ancient system of catechesis, which contributes a lot to the faith nurturing of our people.

#### **Catechesis through Instruction**

110. Another system of catechesis prevailing in the catechetical heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church is instructional catechesis. This system facilitates the systematic transference of the Christian faith. It follows pedagogical methods and makes use of instruction as the basic means. This system of catechesis takes place mainly within the context of a school setting. By this, the faith of the Church is communicated in a systematic and comprehensive way to the new generation and they are helped to personalize the same through learning. The Sunday School system of catechesis followed in the Syro-Malabar Church is based on this type of catechesis. Instruction, based on the principle of teaching and learning, is the best means to communicate an idea or concept in a systematic way. Since Christian faith has an intellectual

dimension, this system of catechesis has a vital role in handing down the content of faith from one generation to the next.

111. In the Syro-Malabar Church, instructional catechesis is given mainly in and through the Sunday Schools which form an essential part of the parish catechesis proper. Since the faith-community is responsible for the sharing of their faith with the new generation, it has to give due regard for instructional catechesis by safeguarding and promoting the Sunday School System of catechesis in the Syro-Malabar Church.
112. Instruction is a means of sharing one's knowledge; the knowledge of and about the Church's beliefs, values, and customs. In this sense, the catechetical instruction is a sharing of the faith experience, faith understanding, and faith praxis of a Church or faith community. When the faith sharing is separated from the faith community it becomes a mere education about faith. Such an education will not contribute to the faith formation of the faithful. Hence, the ecclesiastical authorities should give due importance to instructional catechesis in the parishes and sufficient care in the selection and appointment of the catechists.
113. In order to make a catechetical instruction effective, it should have three essential moments or parts, namely, the presentation, explanation and application. The catechists should keep in mind the importance of these three moments while giving their catechetical lessons.
  - a. In the first moment - the presentation - the teacher has to introduce the content of a lesson in such a way as to move the imagination of the recipients, especially using narrative language which follows the *logic of imagination*. This can be done by narrating some stories, events, showing some pictures or charts, acting out some parables or events, etc. It is the moment in



which one has to introduce the content of the lesson to the recipients.

- b. In the second moment -the explanation- one has to explain to the recipients the content of the lesson. In this section, the teacher has to explain the content of the lesson by moving the intellect of the recipients by using the language of explanation which follows the *logic of reasoning*. The human reason has a logic which follows an order and system, either numerical or syllogistic. Hence the content of the lesson has to be explained according to an order and sequence.
- c. In the third moment - the application - one has to move the will of the recipients by using the language of suggestion which follows the *logic of volition*. This can be done by suggestions and appellations. The sharing of the life stories of saints and great personalities will also help the recipients to take positive and practical decisions for their life.
- d. All these three moments are very important for an effective catechetical instruction. Other pedagogical and communication methods are also helpful for the faith formators to communicate the content of faith in a more systematic and meaningful way. Hence, this is an important system of catechesis which makes the catechetical ministry of a Syro-Malabar Church more effective and fruitful.

### **Catechesis through Apprenticeship**

114. Apart from the celebrational and instructional catechesis, Syro-Malabar Church also gives importance to apprenticeship catechesis. It is actually an activity-based catechetical system. Apprenticeship is a term which one uses to denote the training dimension of a practical science. Since catechesis is related to the faith formation and character formation of the members of



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the Church, an apprenticeship model of catechesis is very important. One can catechize children, youth, and adults not only through celebrations and instructions but also through training and apprenticeship.

115. This system of catechesis is done mainly by helping the faithful to participate in the community services and activities. The involvement of the recipients in the activities of the Church, both religious and secular, becomes a learning for the catechized. When we help children to participate in the charitable activities of the Church, we are actually introducing them to practise the Christian life of service. In the same way, children who are brought to the church and helped to participate in the liturgical services, are actually trained in the practice of Christian prayer life, even if they cannot understand its meaning fully. Moreover, the Church has to take the initiative and make provisions to help the members of the Church to participate actively in the manifold activities of the Church. Only then can one cultivate a positive Christian character and an affective relationship with the Church.
116. This system of catechesis is normally given in and through the associations, movements and groups of the Church. In the Syro-Malabar Church, especially in the parishes, there exist different associations, movements and groups of christian faithful. These groupings are made on the basis of age, charism, or activities. In the parish communities of the Syro-Malabar Church, normally there are groups like Holy Childhood, Marian Sodality, c.L.c., Mission League, KCYM, Jesus Youth, Vincent de Paul Society, Legion of Mary, Charismatic Prayer Groups, etc. All these groups help the members of the Church to practise religion in their particular life situations. They also teach them to lead a Christian life in every situation of their lives. In this system of catechesis, the behavioral sciences play an important role. Therefore, if

one wants to reform the character or behaviour of a person, he has to be given proper experience, understanding, and training which may cause such a behavioral change in that person. From this it follows that the Church, which is the ambient and agent of catechesis, should take utmost care in giving an apprenticeship-centered catechesis for the members of the Church, especially for children and youth in order to develop in them the Christian character.

117. All these three catechetical systems together form the catechetical system of the Syro-Malabar Church. Actually, it is the secret of the success of the catechetical structure of the Syro-Malabar Church, since it consists in the harmonious blending of these three catechetical systems, which contributes to the integral Christian formation of the faithful. In this sense, the catechetical approach of the Syro-Malabar Church can be considered as a holistic one.



## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **DIEFERENT FORMS AND WAYS OF CATECHESIS**

118. Catechesis takes different forms and ways like child catechesis, liturgical catechesis, instructional catechesis, etc. according to the change in its objectives, age of the recipients, contents, loci, means, and methods. All these forms and ways of catechesis are developed according to the special emphasis given in the catechesis proper.

#### **I. CATECHESIS ACCORDING TO AGE LEVEL**

119. One of the important factors which has to be considered in catechesis is the age of the recipients. Since the capacity of understanding and way of understanding changes according to the age level, there comes the need for adapting the content and method of catechesis according to the age group. For example, one cannot teach the same content to the infants and to the youth using the same method, since their capacity of understanding and way of understanding are different. Therefore, catechesis can be divided into age groups like infant catechesis, child catechesis, adolescent catechesis, youth catechesis, adult catechesis, and catechesis for the aged. In the same way, adaptations should be also made in the mode of catechesis given to the adolescents and youth who are living in particular situations or who are encountering particular problems. Due attention is to be also given to the catechesis for the handicapped, mentally retarded, illiterate, etc. **In** all these, the general principle is that, catechesis is to be adapted according to the age group, but with a view to arriving at the basic objectives of catechesis.

## II. CATECHESIS ACCORDING TO THE CONTENT

120. Catechesis also takes different forms according to the change in its content. In general, it can be divided into holistic and subjectwise. In the holistic catechesis, all the subjects of the content of faith, especially the beliefs, values, and customs of faith are given in their totality, while in the subjectwise catechesis the content is given under particular sections and areas like liturgical catechesis, sacramental catechesis, biblical catechesis, catechesis on the commandments, ministries of the Church, etc.
- a. Holistic catechesis follows an integral and comprehensive approach in presenting the total content of catechesis to the faithful; and thereby an individual faithful is gradually initiated, matured and sustained in the faith of the Church. In the first level, the level of initiation, the faithful are introduced into the general content of faith, namely the beliefs, values and customs of the Church. In the second level, the level of maturation, the faithful are introduced more into the meaning of their faith, by explaining to them the meaning of their beliefs, values, and customs. And in the third level, the level of sustaining, the believers are taught mainly how to preserve their faith especially in the particular situations of their life .. At all these levels, the basic objectives of catechesis are to be strictly adhered to.
  - b. The subjectwise catechesis is more centered on a particular subject or area of the content of faith, namely, the catechesis on the Sacraments, the Liturgy, the Bible, the Commandments, History of the Church, etc. In this system, the content of catechesis is dealt with in a detailed and systematic way, and each subject is given in its integrity and totality. This way of catechesis helps the faithful to understand in a deeper way the special areas and subjects of the content of faith. Therefore, in the catechetical system of the Syro-Malabar Church due attention should be given

to the holistic and subjectwise catechesis in order to help the faithful to develop their faith in its totality and integrity.

### III. CATECHESIS ACCORDING TO LOCI

121. Catechesis can also differ according to the place where it is taking place. In a general sense, catechesis takes place in the context of the family, parishes, ecclesial communities or associations. The CCEO says, "Besides the Christian family, the parish itself and every ecclesial 'community have to ensure the catechetical formation of their members and their integration into the same community, by assuring those conditions in which what they learn can be lived to the full" (CCEO. 619). Again it says: "Associations, movements and groups of the Christian faithful, which pursue the practice of piety or direct the apostolate or charitable works and assistance, are to ensure the religious formation of their members under the guidance of the local hierarch" (CCEO 620). Besides these loci, which are common and general, there are also other important loci for catechesis namely, the schools and family units. They need also to be given special attention in order to be made use of as privileged situations for catechesis. All these situations can be considered as special loci for imparting faith formation to the members of the Christian community.

### IV. CATECHESIS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

122. Catechesis differs also according to the particular occasion in which and for which it is given to the faithful. Sacraments are particular means and occasions which sanctify the important moments of one's life. All these occasions are to be considered as the privileged situations for the formation of Christian faithful. Hence, the Church has to give special catechesis to the faithful who are aspiring for the reception of a particular sacrament. In the context of our Church, the first Holy Communion, Confirmation,

Marriage, etc. can be considered as the important occasions in which special catechesis can be given to the faithful. The Church has to prepare them with proper catechetical instruction. This will help the faithful to receive these sacraments with due regard and respect as well as to nourish their faith life.

123. In our Church, there already exists a system of catechesis for the sacrament of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. In the case of adult baptism, a special catechesis becomes necessary for the preparation of the candidate to the reception of the sacraments of initiation. The marriage preparation course conducted by the dioceses can be considered as the special catechesis for the sacrament of Marriage. Therefore, all these special occasions and situations are to be properly made use of for the faith formation of the members of the Church. With this end in view, the preparations for these sacraments should be properly done and special courses are to be organized with a catechetical perspective.

#### **V. THE MEANS, METHODS, AND MEDIA OF CATECHESIS**

124. In catechesis, the means, methods, and media of communication play important roles. The efficacy and efficiency of catechesis depends a lot on the means and methods which the Church utilizes in the catechesis. By means of communication we mean the ways by which one communicates his idea or feeling with the other. There are different means for communication: speaking, writing, singing, painting, drawing, acting, etc. All these means, together with their different forms and expressions, can be utilized for catechesis.
125. Besides the means of communication, there are also methods of communication which make catechesis efficacious. The method of communication is mainly concerned with catechetical

instruction or teaching. In general, there are three basic criteria for determining the method of catechesis: what to teach, whom to teach, and with what objective to teach. An apt combination of these three aspects help one to develop a viable method suitable to each and every form of catechesis. Regarding the conditionals which determine the method of catechetical teaching the Second Vatican Council says, "In imparting this instruction the teachers must observe an order and method suited not only to the matter in hand but also to the character, the ability, the age and the life style of their audience" (CD 14). According to this the main conditionals to be noted for determining the method are what we teach and whom we teach. Besides this, the Council stresses also the importance of the objectives in the catechetical teaching namely, to make the faith of the people living, explicit, and active (CD 14).

126. The aspect 'what to teach' refers to the content of catechesis. The method of teaching need to be adapted according to the changes in the content. For example, the method used in teaching the commandments may not be same as the method used in teaching Church history. In the same way, the method used in teaching catechism to the children may not be the same as the method used for the catechesis of the adults. Similarly the method used to teach someone to memorize the commandments may not be the same as the method used in teaching them to observe these commandments. Hence, in any catechetical teaching due consideration should be given to the three basic aspects in determining the method of catechesis.
127. Some of the pedagogical methods commonly known are the inductive and deductive methods, the question and answer method, the memorization method, story telling, etc. All these can also be used in catechetical teaching depending on the need



of the situation. These methods are also applicable to the other systems of catechesis like celebration and apprenticeship. In all these, the basic motto in selecting the means and methods should be the efficacy of catechesis in achieving its basic objectives.

128. Besides the methods of communication, the media of communication also play an important role in the catechetical ministry of the Church. The media extends and expands the possibility and process of communication; and brings persons, people, and cultures together and nearer. By the advancement of the communication media the world is growing into a cosmic village. It has opened the ways for the people to know and to let to know. The personal communication media brings persons closer and more intimate, while the mass communication media make the communication faster and more effective. Considering the importance of the mass communication media like press, radio, television, internet, etc. the Church always fosters their use in the propagation and nurturing of faith. Hence, the Syro-Malabar Church should give due importance to the mass communication media and make use of them for the effective facilitation of the catechetical ministry of our Church.



## CHAPTER NINE

### **THE CATECHETICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH**

129. This being the Catechetical Directory of the Syro-Malabar Church in it a clear mention of the organizational system of catechesis in this Church is very important. The' catechetical system of the Syro-Malabar Church is organized in four levels: Synodal, Eparchial, Forane / regional, and Parochial.

#### **I. AT THE SYNODAL LEVEL**

130. At the synodal level the organizational system has three main factors: i. the Synodal Commission for Catechesis, ii. the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Committee which serves as an advisory body to the synodal commission, and iii. the catechetical centre which functions as the catechetical office for the whole Syro-Malabar Church.

#### **The Synodal Commission for Catechesis**

131. This commission consists of three bishops appointed by the Major Archbishop for a period of five years. One of them serves as the chairman of the commission as designated by the Major Archbishop himself. The main function of this commission is to coordinate, animate, and foster the catechetical ministry of the Syro-Malabar Church. This commission shall have a secretary appointed by the chairman, in order to assist the commission in its functioning.

#### **The Syro-Malabar Catechetical Committee**

132. **In** order to assist the commission, there shall be a committee consisting of representatives from each eparchy. This committee

is known as Syro-Malabar Catechetical Committee (SMCC). The committee shall include from each eparchy the eparchial catechetical director and two representatives of the catechists, one religious sister and one lay catechist, together with the catechetical experts nominated by the synodal commission. This committee has to meet at least once in a year, in order to evaluate the catechetical activities of the Church, to find out solutions for the problems in the catechetical ministry of the Church, and to plan the catechetical programmes for the future.

#### **Syro-Malabar Catechetical Centre**

133. Besides the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Committee, both the Synodal Commission and the SMCC shall have an office at the Major Archbishop's Curia, Kakkanad. And this office shall be known as the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Centre. The secretary of the Synodal Commission for the Catechesis shall be responsible for the management of this centre. Its address shall be Syro-Malabar Catechetical Centre, Mount St. Thomas, P.B. No.7, Kakkanad, Kochi 682021, Kerala, INDIA.

#### **II. AT THE EPARCHIAL LEVEL**

134. Apart from the synodal level, catechetical ministry of the Church is also organized at the eparchial level. It is actually at the eparchial level that the catechetical ministry is in its real action. At the eparchial level also it is organized under a department headed by a director and a council which assists the director to co-ordinate the catechetical activities of the eparchy.

#### **Eparchial Catechetical Department**

135. Each eparchy should have a catechetical department in order to co-ordinate, animate and foster the catechetical ministry in the eparchy. This department should have a director appointed by the Bishop, and adequate staff for the running of the department.



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The eparchial catechetical department shall be responsible for the animation of the catechetical activities of the eparchy, especially - in the parishes and the schools. It shall also be responsible for the formulation of syllabus and curriculum for the year, for conducting examinations and issuing certificates at the eparchial level, and for the formation of catechists in the eparchy.

**Eparchial Catechetical Council**

136. The diocesan catechetical director shall be assisted by an eparchial catechetical council consisting of forane catechetical directors, forane secretaries, representatives of the promoters and headmasters, and five nominees of the Bishop. This council shall meet at least once in an year to evaluate, plan, and organize the catechetical activities of the eparchy.

**Eparchial Catechetical Centre**

137. Each eparchy should have a center for the efficient conduct of the catechetical department. This centre shall be known as the eparchial catechetical centre. At this centre the catechetical department functions under the directorship of a priest appointed by the Bishop, and with the help of the staff working at the centre. It functions as the animation centre for the whole catechetical apostolate of the eparchy.

**III. FORANE / REGIONAL LEVEL**

138. Within the eparchy, catechetical activities can be further organized under the forane or regional levels as per the need and size of the eparchy.

**Forane / Regional Catechetical Director, Secretary, and Promoters**

- a. Each forane or region should have a director appointed by the bishop, after getting the opinion of the priests from the forane.

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In order to assist him in the catechetical activities of the forane there should be a secretary, preferably, a religious sister. In order to help them promoters may be appointed by the eparchial catechetical director after getting the opinion of the forane regional catechetical council. The director, secretary, promoters, and the representatives of the headmasters together with the forane vicar shall be responsible for the co-ordination and animation of the catechetical activities of the forane or the region.

### **Forane / Regional Catechetical Council**

- b. In order to assist the catechetical activities of forane or region there shall be a forane or regional catechetical council. The council consists of forane vicar, director, secretary, two representatives of the parish priests, catechism promoters from the forane, and all the headmasters of the Sunday Schools. Other representatives may be coopted if need arises. They have to organize catechetical activities within the forane / region according to the directions given from the catechetical department of the eparchy. This council has to meet at least once in six months and have to evaluate, plan, and organize the catechetical activities of the forane.

### **IV. AT THE PARISH LEVEL**

139. At the parish level, catechetical activities are organized under the directorship of the parish priest. In order to assist the parish priest in the co-ordination and animation of the catechetical activities, every parish should have a team of zealous and competent catechism teachers. In the same way, every parish should have also a Headmaster or Headmistress in order to facilitate the catechetical activities of the parish. The parish priest and all the catechism teachers together form the staff council of the parish.

**Director, Headmaster, and Teachers**

- a. The parish priest by his office is the director of catechism at the parish level. He has to co-ordinate and animate the catechetical activities of the parish in accordance with the directions of the eparchial catechetical department. In order to help the director in the catechetical activities of the parish, there shall be a team of catechism teachers appointed by the director. In order to co-ordinate and facilitate the catechetical activities of the parish as per the eparchial customs a capable catechism teacher is to be selected and appointed as the Headmaster or Headmistress of the Sunday School by the parish priest after due consultation with the staff council. Besides, another teacher is elected by the staff council as its secretary. He / she will be in charge of the official correspondence and keeping the minutes of the council meetings.

**Parish Catechism Council and Office**

- b. The parish catechism Council consists of the parish catechism director, assistant parish priests (if any), headmaster / headmistress, secretary, kaikars of the parish, superiors of the religious houses, at least two representatives of the catechism teachers, and a minimum of two representatives of the parents. This council has to meet at least twice in a year in order to plan and to evaluate the catechetical activities of the parish. Besides the staff council, there can be a Parents Teachers Fellowship (PTF) or Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in order to promote the catechetical activities of the parish.

In the same way, every parish shall have a catechism office in order to keep the catechism registers, charts, teaching aids, and other reference books. Together with this, as per the eparchial regulations, a particular percentage of the income of the parish is to be set aside for promoting the catechetical activities of the parish.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

140. The directives and guidelines given in this directory of the Syro-Malabar Church are based on the general directives of the Universal Church. These directives and guidelines are based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, General Catechetical Directory, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, Catechism of the Catholic Church, General Directory for Catechesis, the particular traditions of our own Church, and the decisions of the Syro-Malabar Synod.
141. This directory is made to orientate the catechetical ministry of the Syro-Malabar Church with the involvement of priests, the religious, the lay catechists, and the whole community of the people of God. The faith formation of the whole Church, especially that of the children and the youth, is the prime duty of bishops, priests, the religious, catechists, parish council and the parents. Unless and until all these agents of catechesis work together in a spirit of cooperation the catechetical ministry of the Church will not realize its goal.
142. This directory wishes to state emphatically that the catechesis in our Church has to be in accordance with the faith tradition and practise of this Apostolic Church. Therefore, the directory has taken up for consideration the specific elements of our Church namely, the community and family centred catechesis by means of liturgical celebration, catechetical instruction and customary practices. The catechetical process that developed in our Church through different catechetical text book series and the catechetical tradition that have come down to the present day through the

catechetical practices of different dioceses in our Church were also examined closely in order to give guidelines for the preparation of the new text books.

143. The missionary thrust of our Church is also brought out in this directory. The fact that the Church has treasured its faith all through the centuries in spite of counter influences, challenges and provocations, the contribution of the missionary personnel, priests and the religious, to the other individual Churches and the missionary work of the Syro-Malabar dioceses outside the territorium *proprium* are factors that are reckoned with. Taking into consideration the multi-ecclesial and multi-religious situation in India, the directory emphasizes the ecumenical and dialogical aspects of catechesis.

Over and above the doctrinal aspects, the directory lays emphasis on the life-oriented faith formation of the faithful, proper training for the catechists, and organization of the catechetical apostolate at the parish, forane, eparchial, and synodal levels. The light of faith that we have received from St. Thomas our Apostle has to be lived in our times and to be faithfully transmitted to the coming generation. Let this directory help us to fulfill this responsibility as best as possible.