



EPHREM'S
Theological Journal

Demonetisation

Loving the Enemy: Footwashing

Personhood of the Holy Spirit

Altar of the Lord

Communion and Uniformity

Cultural Matrix of Ethical Behaviour

Book Reviews



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Editorial

The announcement of Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 8th November 2016 was unexpected and unprecedented. Through demonetisation 86% of all the bank notes in circulation in the country was declared invalid. The citizens of the country, especially the poorest of the poor, were hit hard and more than a hundred people died. Having no money, the poor in the informal sector lost all means of livelihood, job and earning. Unskilled labourers became unemployed. Economic growth was revised downward. The huge social cost of demonetisation is immeasurable; thousands of crores are its actual financial cost. As days pass by, the failure of the stated objectives of the "surgical strike" becomes a proved conclusion. Frantic efforts are there for making it appear successful. The claim of stopping black money has been rendered futile because most of the demonetised notes have returned to the banks. Where is the black money? It is common knowledge that major chunk of black money has been changed into real estate, precious metals and building. The rest is secured safely abroad. Why no move to bring it back? The producers of counterfeit currency became active in the next instance. Corruption among the high officials of Banks, money laundering, ostentatious and vainglorious marriage extravaganzas of the political class, unholy alliance between them, bureaucrats etc which came to light were so disgusting. Banks have taken no serious efforts to collect the bad debts. The hollowness of various proclamations is obvious from the free hand given to plastic, gutka, tobacco and liquor lobbies! Who controls rivers, forests, mines etc?

As the authorities smell failure, a new goalpost was set, i.e., digital economy or cashless society. As in the case of demonetisation, there is every chance for the poor to become victims of this experiment too. Think of the thousands of villages in rural India where the basic amenities like electricity, running water and toilet facilities are unavailable. Banks and post offices are far away from them. We have seen how the people suffered in withdrawing their truthful money from the Co-operative Banks. As it has been already noticed, it is easier in a cashless society to exert state control over the citizens. The state can find out the regime critics, whistle blowers and all those who do not fall in line as the government tunes. The privacy of the individual will be lost and a tendentious government can in every possible way harass those citizens who disagree with it and its policies. Guarantee of the money of the common man and the security of his deposits are also issues to be discussed. It should be also noticed that no developed country has become a cashless country yet.

Exploitation by banks has increased after demonetisation. As all the transactions become digital, all those companies in the fields of ATM machines, debit and credit cards, swipe cards, computer companies etc. also can amass money. People will naturally turn to cashless transactions as infrastructure and digital literacy grows. This is the experience of developed nations. India needs lakhs of new ATMs and high speed internet connectivity before e-payment becomes the standard. There is another reason why people resort to cash. The fees charged by card providers are high. For small scale consumers this is too much. It has been

Loving the ‘Enemy’: A Reading of John 13:1-38 ¹

Bincy Mathew

Sr. Bincy Mathew belongs to the Nirmala Province, Mananthavady, of the Sacred Heart Congregation. She holds a PhD in Biblical Studies from the Catholic University, Louvain, Belgium. Currently, she is teaching in various theological institutes and contributes papers to various theological journals. In the present article the author analyses the meaning of the footwashing in Jn 13:1-38, which is one of the contested issues in the Gospel of John. Among the numerous historical-critical interpretations of the pericope, only a few studies explain the meaning of the footwashing and its implications in interpersonal relationships. Sandra M. Schneiders particularly analyses human interrelationships in the footwashing and proposes that a friendship model will explain better the footwashing. She explores the footwashing narrative vis-à-vis the story of Judas, a story which is often neglected in the interpretation of Jn 13:1-38 and attempts to elaborate further on Schneiders’ analysis of the footwashing by looking at the interaction between Jesus and Judas. The footwashing narrative, when read in the light of the story of Judas, can reveal a Johannine ethics of the “love of enemy” in exemplary form.

Keywords: Footwashing, Peter, Judas, love for enemy, Johannine ethics, Sandra M. Schneiders

Jesus washing the feet of the disciples is very often interpreted from the perspective of the characters, Jesus and Peter, without any mention of Judas. From the very beginning of Christianity, the Christian imagination branded Judas with the ethical category of ‘bad,’ and Peter and all the other disciples with the ethical category of ‘good.’ However, recently, this ethical categorisation of Judas under the label ‘the most heinous human person’ has been remarkably challenged. A re-reading of the text from the perspective of the interaction between Jesus and Judas²

¹ An older version of this paper was presented at the International Conference on “Bound of Ethics in a Globalized World” in Christ University, Bangalore, India, January 06-09, 2014.

² Because this paper is limited in terms its focus, it intends to explore mainly how Jesus deals with Judas and how this becomes an example for the disciples. For a detailed analysis of the footwashing, see Bincy Mathew, “‘He Loved Them Perfectly.’ The

God the Holy Spirit: Consubstantial with the Father and the Son

Grace Koovayil

Sr. Dr. Grace Koovayil belongs to the Krupadham Province, Wardha, MS, of the Sisters of the Destitute. She has her BA and BEd from Nagarjuna University, Vijayawada and MG University, Kottayam respectively. She studied philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, Rome and Theology (BTh, MTh, STD) at PUG, Rome. Presently she is working as the Postulator for the cause of the founder of her congregation in Rome. In this study, she tries to gain a deeper understanding of what the revelation says about the person of God the Holy Spirit with special reference to the insight of Jean Corbon. The Christian tradition presents the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity who is to be worshipped and adored with the Father and the Son. But a well-established pneumatology is lacking in the theological enterprise even today. Moreover, in the traditional western models of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is considered as the love bond between the Father and the Son and thus, he appears less clearly as a person. The dearth of scriptural data is often attributed to the lack of a deft theology of the Holy Spirit. Jean Corbon, a bi-ritual theologian strikes this grievance by contributing a solid pneumatology with scriptural foundations and tries to fill the lacuna.

Key Words: Trinity, Pneumatology, Person, Divinity, Consubstantiality, Jean Corbon

Introduction

“... these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:10-11).

The mystery of God is unfathomable and not reducible to words, but our understanding of that mystery could be expressed in words. We can fathom the mystery of God as much as God enables us to know him through revelation and

Altar of the Lord: Symbolism and Significance

Naiju Jose Kalambukattu CMI

Fr. Naiju Kalambukattu belongs to the St. John's Province, Bijnor, of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. He holds an MA in English from Garhwal University, Uttarakhand, LTh from DVK, Bangalore and a doctorate in Liturgy from PIO, Rome. This article looks at the altar of the Lord in order to comprehend its various symbolisms and expounds its significance in the life of the Church. The Syro-Malabar *Qūrbānā* consistently proclaims the purity and holiness of the altar, for it is the throne of the Trinity, the sepulcher of the Lord and the table of atonement. Each symbolism gives emphasis to one or other aspect or importance of the altar. The sacredness of the altar is emphasized by the consecration ceremonies, which consists of washing, anointing and sacrificing. It may be observed that the altar of the Lord has a magnificent significance in the life of a believer and an in-depth comprehension of the varied symbolisms attached to it entitles the believer to approach it with awe and reverence.

Keywords: Syro Malabar Qurbana, altar, liturgy, sacred symbols

1. Introduction

The altar is the most significant, central and sacred part of a church in all the ecclesial traditions, for it is the dwelling place of the Trinity. The word "altar" is a translation of the Hebrew word *mizbeah*, meaning a place for the slaughter of animals for sacrifice.¹ In the Scripture, the altar is first mentioned explicitly in the sacrifice offered by Noah on leaving the ark: "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord... offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20). Varying Church traditions deploy different terms to denote the altar. The Syriac tradition in general employs *Madbhā* to designate the altar, and the term *Madbhā* is used to denote both sanctuary and place of the altar and the altar itself.² In the Syro-Malabar liturgical

¹ P. Little, *The Meaning of the Altar in the Sacred Scriptures and in Some Early Christian Writings*, Excerpta Ex Dissertatione ad lauream (Melbourn, 1965) 14.

² P. Maniyattu, "East Syriac Theology of the Eucharist", in *East Syriac Theology. An Introduction*, ed. P. Maniyattu (Satna: Ephrem's Publications, 2007) 279.

Communion- Some Musings Again

Thomas Neendoor

Fr. Thomas Neendoor is a priest of the Archeparchy of Tellicherry, Kerala. Besides being a parish priest he teaches Systematic Theology in various Theological Institutes in India. He had his dissertation defended at PVP, Kottayam in 1997. In this article he responds to a recent study which deals with the need of communion among the three *sui juris* churches in India. The author examines the meaning of communion from patristic, conciliar, liturgical and theological view points and concludes that the author bypasses sound principles for favour of “Indian Reality” which is left unexplained. Unity in diversity is the key for understanding India and not uniformity in everything.

Keywords: communion, inter ecclesial issues, liturgy, Indian Reality, multiple jurisdiction

The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed a series of discussions among the theologians of India about inter ecclesial issues. These discussions between the Latins and Orientals were intended to sort out the differences existing among the churches in India and to seek the possibilities of reaching some solutions. The Orientals were not confident about the net outcome of the implementation of the documents like OE, UR and LG and were preoccupied with many other concerns; hence, the preservation of their traditions and self-governance eluded them. The Latins, however, were groping in the dark to cope with the reality of diversity in ecclesial existence; a responsibility to be different. They could not agree with the plurality in the various ecclesial tasks like evangelization, liturgy, theology, etc. The CBCI had been discussing the matter right from the second half of 1970's. With the formation of three separate Conferences of Bishops in the CBCI, these discussions seem to have lost their intensity and vigour at present.

All the ecclesiological discussions underscored the need for unity among the churches; however, they differed on the notion of unity and the mode of attaining it. After a relentless effort for years, they had only one consensus; they will have no consensus at all. Once again we are invited to have a remembrance of

Pertinence of Culture in the Moral Choices of a Person: in Pursuit of an Ethical Culture

Rengith Chakkummoottil

Fr. Rengith Chakkummoottil is a priest of the Eparchy of Thamarassery, Kerala. He holds Licentiate and Doctorate in Moral Theology from Alphonsian Academy, Rome. At present he is serving St. Ephrem's Theological College as professor of Moral Theology and Dean of Studies. In the present article he discusses the relation between the culture of a person and his moral choices. Culture is 'cultivated behaviour'; the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour through social learning. In the moral choices and development of a person, certainly, culture has an important role to play. In other words culture has the proper responsibility in guiding the moral growth of persons. In the study of moral theology, it is also important to ask 'whether there are any objective moral values which can be applied to all human beings, who belong to different religions, races and cultures.'

Keywords: culture, moral choice, ethical culture, moral development, norms and values

Introduction

Culture is a specific way of man's existing and being in the society. The concept of culture has become central and of primary importance to the social sciences in recent decades. The title of this article, 'the Pertinence of Culture in the Moral Choices of a Person' points to two different, albeit inter-related, questions: first, what role does culture play in the moral development of human persons; and second, what is the proper responsibility of culture in guiding the moral growth of persons. We know that these subjects are debatable. At the same time, we take it for granted that inevitably the social universe which the young generation encounters, for better or for worse, influences their moral growth and that the community needs to view itself as responsible for the moral growth of its members. This communal responsibility can be adequately fulfilled through institutions in the society like family, religion etc., if they are capable of playing a significant and positive role in the process of the moral growth of its members.

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