



The Feast of Pentecost: The Feast of the Holy Spirit in the Syro-Malankara Liturgy

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Introduction

Feasts and festivals are ancient as humanity¹. Josef Pieper gives a substantial definition in his philosophical study on the concept of festivity. He says “to celebrate a festival means: to live out, for some special occasion and in an uncommon manner, the universal assent to the world as a whole”². Therefore, even though feasts are varied in their occasions and forms, they are always a celebration of events that call for remembrance and gratitude³. In the Christian liturgical tradition, feasts are celebrated during the liturgical year. The liturgical year as an ecclesiastical institution which finds its foundation in the New Testament⁴. The liturgical year focuses on the anamnesis of God’s work of revelation and redemption in a rhythmical sequence⁵. Christian feasts commemorate the

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¹ Cf. A. ADAM, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, Pueblo Publishing Company, New York 1981, 23.

² J. PIEPER, *In Tune with the World: A Theory of Festivity*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1953, 23.

³ Cf. A. ADAM, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, 24.

⁴ Cf. E. CARR, “The Liturgical Year in the Syriac Churches: Adaptation to Different Ecclesial-Liturgical Ambient”, in *L’adattamento Culturale della Liturgia: Metodi e Modelli*. Atti del IV congresso internazionale di liturgia (Rome, 6-10 may 1991), ed. D. SCICOLONE, *Analecta Liturgica*, Roma 1993, 47-59.

⁵ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, Ashgat, Burlington 2004, 135.

saving acts of Jesus; the whole mystery of Christ, from the Incarnation and Nativity to the Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord, performed by the Church over the course of a year⁶. Therefore, the yearly liturgical celebrations of the church are attuned not only to the events of the past but also to future events as well. Moreover, every liturgical celebration looks forward to the Lord's return. It has an eschatological aspect as well⁷.

This article focuses on the celebration of the feast of Pentecost in the Syro-Malankara liturgy. It will analyze this feast from the background of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy as well as in liturgical prayers of the feast of Pentecost from a biblical and patristic background. From available sources, it can be seen a common origin for the celebration and development of the feast of Pentecost in the Christian tradition. Thus, this article explains the origin of this feast in the Christian liturgical tradition and how it relates to the Jewish Tradition. Since the Syro- Malankara rite belongs to the Antiochene family of the Oriental rite, follows West Syrian liturgy. Moreover, this paper will also deal with the historical origin and development of the celebration feast of Pentecost in the West Syrian liturgy. This study will consider liturgical texts used by the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church in the celebration of the feast of Pentecost, concentrating on the theological richness of the celebrations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Feast of Pentecost in the Jewish Tradition

The Greek word *πεντηκοστή* (*Pentecoste*) refers the 50th day after the celebration of Pasch or Passover⁸. This title first appears in the Apocrypha, in the book of Tobit, which mentions the feast of Pentecost, the holy feast of the seven weeks (*Tob 2,1*). For ancient Israel, the second great annual pilgrim feast was the Feast of Harvest (*Ex 23,16*), which was celebrated in Palestine after the wheat harvest⁹. It was called

⁶ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 102-106 (ed. A. FLANNERY, Costello Publishing Company, New York 1996, 28-29).

⁷ Cf. A. ADAM, *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, VIII.

⁸ Cf. J.G. DAVIES, *A New Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, SCM, London 1986, 429.

⁹ Cf. In OT we find different names for this feast: Feast of Weeks (*Ex 34,32; Deut 16,10*), Harvest Feast (*Ex 23,16*), Feast of fruits (*Num 28,26; Ex 34,22*).

the feast of weeks and later, it was simply referred to as the 50th day or Pentecost, since it occurred after one week of weeks after Passover ($7 \times 7 = 49$)¹⁰. In the Bible, there is a clear usage of the word fifty (50) in the context of the feast. We read, “Beginning with the day after the sabbath, the day on which you bring the wave-offering sheaf, you shall count seven full weeks, and then, on the day after the seventh week, the fiftieth day, you shall present the new cereal offering to the Lord” (*Lev* 23,10-16). Here, we have a very substantial liturgical unit, that of seven weeks of the harvest. Therefore, the feast of weeks, celebrated fifty days later, is called Pentecost¹¹.

Additional evidence comes from the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Dead Sea Scrolls* and Philo which reveal that Pentecost also came to be considered as a commemoration of the giving of the Law on Sinai, but only after many centuries. Not until second and third century A.D. we do find a clear association of the Exodus with Passover¹². This reveals, a clearer picture of the meaning and relevance of the number fifty in the Jewish Tradition and how the feast of Pentecost was originated and was celebrated in the Jewish Tradition.

The Feast of Pentecost in the Christian Liturgical Tradition

The influence of Jewish liturgy was evident on the earliest forms of Christian worship because the mode of worship to which the earliest Christians were accustomed had been altered¹³. The available sources indicate that the Christian origin of the celebration of the feast of Pentecost is also related to a parallel feast of the Jewish tradition¹⁴. This we see from the very first Pentecost after Christ’s Ascension: “when the day of Pentecost had come, they were together in one place.” (*Acts* 2,1). According to Thomas J. Talley the concept of the Christian reference to

¹⁰ Cf. J.P. LANG, *Dictionary of the Liturgy*, Catholic Book Publishing Co, New York 1989, 503; also, in J. DANIELOU, *Bible and Liturgy*, University of Notre Dame, Indiana 1956, 320.

¹¹ Cf. J. DANIELOU, *Bible and Liturgy*, 321.

¹² Cf. J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost: The Great Fifty Days in the Liturgy*, The Faith Press, London 1967, 18.

¹³ Cf. W.O.E. OESTERLEY, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, Oxford University Press, London 1965, 84.

¹⁴ Cf. A. KAKKANATT, *Christological Catechesis of the Liturgy: A Study on the Great Feats of our Lord in the Malankara Church*, Mar Thoma Yogam, Roma 1996, 59.

Pentecost must begin from the understanding of the Feast of Weeks in the first century¹⁵.

The name ‘Pentecost’ appears in the New Testament and in other Christian writings as well, starting in the latter half of the second century. This name is used to refer to the Christian celebration as distinct from Jewish one¹⁶. Towards the end of the second century, different Christian communities celebrate a festival, called “Pentecost” fifty days after Easter Sunday¹⁷. This practice is confirmed in sources from different parts of the world at this period such as the *Acts of Paul* from Asia minor and Irenaeus of Lyon¹⁸. In the writings of Irenaeus (in his book called *Pasch*) he mentions that at the time of Pentecost we do not kneel¹⁹. The apocryphal book, *the Acts of Paul*, also says that since it was Pentecost, worshipers do not mourn or kneel, but just bowed and prayed in standing position²⁰. Tertullian gives the earliest exposition of Pentecost as a Christian festival²¹. In his *Homily on Baptism*, (*de baptism*) he points out that the most proper day for the administration of the baptism is on the feast of Pentecost²². These testimonies give a clear picture of the celebration of the feast of Pentecost at that time.

More evidence can be found in the Reports of Eusebius of Caesarea, when he spoke of the death of Constantine. He reports that Constantine passed away on the feast of Pentecost and that the emperor received the blessings from this feast (a period of seven weeks) before his depar-

¹⁵ Cf. T.J. TALLEY, *The Origins of Liturgical Year*, Pueblo Publishing Company, New York 1986, 57.

¹⁶ Cf. J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost: The Great Fifty Days in the Liturgy*, 21-22.

¹⁷ Cf. C. LEONHARD, *Pentecost and Shavuot: Holy Spirit and Torah*, in *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity*, edd. R.W. BISHOP – J. LEE-MANS – H. TAMAS (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae: Texts and studies of early Christian life and language*, 136), Brill, Leiden 2016, 220. 224; also, in J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost: The Great Fifty Days in the Liturgy*, 21-22; also, in T.J. TALLEY, *The Origins of Liturgical Year*, 61.

¹⁸ Cf. P.F. BRADSHAW – M.E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts, Fast and Seasons in Early Christianity*, SPCK, London 2011, 69.

¹⁹ Cf. J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost*, 21; also in T.J. TALLEY, *The Origins of Liturgical Year*, 61.

²⁰ Cf. E. HENNECKE, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II, Lutterworth Press, London 1963, 370.

²¹ Cf. J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost: The Great Fifty Days in the Liturgy*, 22.

²² Cf. P.F. BRADSHAW – M.E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts*, 70; also, in J. GUSTONE, *The Feast of Pentecost: The Great Fifty Days in the Liturgy*, 23.

ture to God²³. Additional evidence comes from Egeria. Even though she gave details about the celebration of the feast of the Ascension, one can gather information about the celebration of the feast of Pentecost from it as well. Egeria wrote that in the morning a service was held related to the outpouring of the Spirit and that the celebration on the Mount Olives recalled the Ascension of the Lord held on the afternoon of the 50th day²⁴. This shows that both the Ascension and the gift of the Spirit were celebrated together on the 50th day²⁵.

Thereafter, there was an additional focus on the importance of the Spirit in the life of the church. Beginning with the fourth century, a division of the celebrations of the feasts as unique developed. Danielou writes, “Easter day is connected with the Resurrection, the fortieth day with the Ascension, the fiftieth with the outpouring of the Spirit”²⁶. The Synod at Elvira, at the very opening of the fourth century, emphasized the importance of celebrating the feast of Pentecost on the day of fiftieth day²⁷. These developments show that by the fourth century, the feast of Pentecost was celebrated as a distinct feast on the fiftieth day after Easter Sunday.

The Feast of Pentecost in the West Syrian Liturgy

“The West Syrian liturgy belongs to the Antiochene family of liturgies”²⁸. It has its origin and growth around the city of Antioch after the Council of Chalcedon (451), when many of monks and clergy from Alexandria and Antioch were not ready to accept Dyophysite Christology and came to be known as Monophysites or non-Chalcedonians²⁹.

²³ Cf. E. PAMPHILIUS, *Church History: Life of Constantine the Great, and Orations in Praise of Constantine*, NPNF, New York 1890, 557. 844.

²⁴ Cf. EGERIA, *Diary of a Pilgrimage*, New Man Press, New York 1970, 118-120; also, in P.F. BRADSHAW – M.E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts, Fast and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 74.

²⁵ Cf. P.F. BRADSHAW – M.E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts, Fast and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 71.

²⁶ Cf. J. DANIELOU, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, 319.

²⁷ Cf. T.J. TALLEY, *The Origins of liturgical Year*, 61; also, in P.E. BRADSHAW, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources for the Study of Early Liturgy*, SPCK, London 2002, 81-82.

²⁸ B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 1.

²⁹ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 1; also, in P.F. BRADSHAW (ed.),

And “these non-Chalcedonians of Antioch were known as Jacobites after Jacob Baradeus known, the sixth century reorganizer of the West Syrian church or ‘Syrian Orthodox’ in modern times”³⁰. There are five churches that follow the West Syrian Liturgy including Syro-Malankara Catholic Church³¹.

Studies of the early history of Syriac Christianity reveal that it had a Judeo-Christian origin. By the fourth century, they had separated from the Jewish communities. But in the certain things, Syriac Christianity still remained spiritually close to the Synagogue³². The influence of the Jewish background in the liturgy is clearly manifested in the night prayers said on the feast of Pentecost in the Syro-Malankara liturgy. There the faithful prays:

Today when we celebrate the spiritual and evangelical feast of the gifts of the Comforter, we recall also the Feast of Weeks, its foreshadowing, established by Moses³³.

Towards the end of the fourth century, a separate celebration of the Ascension on the fortieth day emerges in a number of places such as Antioch, Nyssa and northern Italy. It became also universal in the in the fifth century³⁴. It can be also seen at the fiftieth day endowed with an Octave, is well established in Antioch at the time of John Chrysostom³⁵. There are sermons of Chrysostom given on the day of Ascension³⁶ as

The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, SCM Press, London 2002, 472-473.

³⁰ J.G. DAVIES, *A New Dictionary of Liturgy*, 541; see also in B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical*, 1.

³¹ Cf. B. VARGHESE, “The Liturgies of the Syriac Churches”, in *The Syriac World*, ed. D. KING, Routledge, London 2020, 391.

³² Cf. R. MURRAY, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, T&T Clark International, London 2004, 3. 17.

³³ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit: vol. IV: The Crown of the Year Part III; The Prayer of the Church for Sundays and Feasts in the Syro-Antiochene Tradition, Evening Prayer and Night Vigil*, C.M.S Press, Kottayam 1966, 198.

³⁴ Cf. T.J. TALLEY, *The Origins of Liturgical Year*, 66-69; also in P.F. BRADSHAW – M.E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts, Fast and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 74.

³⁵ Cf. N. RAMBAULT, “Pâques et l’Ascension au temps de Jean Chrysostome”, in *Jean Chrysostome, un évêque hors-contrôle. Actes de la Septième Petite Journée de Patristique (Saintes, 21 mars 2015)*, ed. P.-G. DELAGE, Caritaspatrum, 73.

³⁶ Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *De Sancta Pentecoste*, in *PG L*, 441-452.

well as the feast of Pentecost³⁷. These sermons are the key testimonies about the entire Easter Festival cycle outside of Jerusalem, from the Holy Week to Pentecost. Athanasius from Egypt in his canon he repeatedly speaks of the three feasts of Epiphany, Pascha and Pentecost. The feast of Pentecost, which the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church was celebrated fifty days after Easter³⁸. Then there is also the sermon of Narsai of the feast of Pentecost³⁹.

There are also four homilies and eight hymns given on feast of Pentecost by Severus of Antioch⁴⁰. These, plus those given by Jacob of Serugh, and Cyrus of Edessa, clarify the independence of the Ascension Day on the 40th day within the theological development of the entire Easter festival cycle in the West Syrian Tradition⁴¹. *The Apostolic Constitution*, the 5th book based on the Didascalia, also mentions the feast of Pentecost⁴². *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*⁴³ speaks of the celebration of the feast of Pentecost and its importance in the church. It was noted therein that the weddings were not held during these ten days of preparation. Also, the Synod of Bishops was held during the period of the Feast of Pentecost⁴⁴.

³⁷ Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *De Sancta Pentecoste*, in *PG L*, 463-470.

³⁸ Cf. H. BUCHINGER, "Pentekoste, Pfingsten und Himmelfahrt: Grunddaten und Fragen zur Frühgeschichte", in *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity*, edd. R.W. BISHOP – J. LEEMANS – H. TAMAS (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae: Texts and studies of early Christian life and language* 136), Brill, Leiden 2016, 29-30.

³⁹ Cf. I. ARICKAPPILLIL, "Mar Narsai, the Charismatic: A study based on Mar Narsai's Homily on Pentecost", *The Harp*, vol. XIII, edd. G. PANIKER – J. THEKEPARAMPIL, Gorgias press, Kottayam 2000, 125-134.

⁴⁰ Cf. P. ALLEN, *The Pentecost Feast in Sixth-Century Antioch: The Evidence of Patriarch Severus*, in *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity*, edd. R.W. BISHOP – J. LEEMANS – H. TAMAS (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae: Texts and studies of early Christian life and language* 136), Brill, Leiden 2016, 324-333.

⁴¹ Cf. H. BUCHINGER, "Pentekoste, Pfingsten und Himmelfahrt", 34.

⁴² Cf. I. CHASE, *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, vol. V, Appleton&Company, New York 1847, 127-129.

⁴³ Cf. *Synodicon Orientale* is the collection of reports and canons of the synods of the churches of East held between the year of 410 and 775/6. There are great Synodicon as well as the Synodicon Orientale proper. According to Sebastian Brock Synodicon Orientale is an extremely valuable source for the study of the history and the theology of the Church of East in the Sasanian and early Islamic period. S. BROCK – A.M. BUTTS – G. KIRAZ – L. ROMPAY (edd.), *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, Gorgias Press, New Jersey 2011, 387-388.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. VOOBUS (ed.), *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, vol. I, Syr 367/161, English tr., 368/162, Secretariat Du CorpusSCO, Louvain 1975, 45, 69, 117; A. VOOBUS (ed.),

It can be concluded, based on available information, that by the end of the fourth century onwards the celebration of the feast of Pentecost was celebrated on the day of 50th day after the Resurrection of Christ, in the West Syrian liturgy. This also confirms that the Jewish elements are reflected in the West-Syrian liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Feast of Pentecost in the Syro- Malankara Liturgy

The Syro-Malankara liturgy, follows the West Syrian Liturgy. The West Syrian liturgy was introduced to Kerala for a number of reasons⁴⁵. It was the Jacobite Bishops who introduced West Syrian Liturgy to Kerala. The first Jacobite bishop to visit to Kerala was Mar Gregorios, who came in 1665⁴⁶. He gradually introduced West Syrian liturgy to Kerala⁴⁷. When Syro-Malankara Church reunited to the Catholic Church from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church on 20th September 1930 Syro-Malankara Catholic Church maintained the West Syrian liturgical tradition⁴⁸.

The preparation for the celebration of the feast of Pentecost is given extra emphasis in the Syro-Malankara Liturgy. The sacrament of marriage is not performed during the ten days leading up to the feast of Pentecost. This is because it is a period of prayerful waiting with a prayer to receive the Holy Spirit. The Apostles likewise did as the preparation for the Feast of Pentecost⁴⁹.

The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition, vol. II, Syr 375/163, English tr., 376/164, Secretariat Du CorpusSCO, Louvain 1975, 233. 248. 255.

⁴⁵ Cf. The Christian community in Kerala traces its origin from an apostolic tradition. This tradition claims that St. Thomas the Apostle came to Kerala in AD 52. The liturgical tradition among St. Thomas Christians in the first century is hard to determine since their activity is not well documented in writing. It can be seen that from the seventh century onwards a connection with Persian Church was established. On January 3, 1653 this community divided into two. The Syro-Malabar Church of today is one group that still uses East Syrian Liturgy. Another group, which later associated with the Jacobites, was exposed to the West Syrian liturgy. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was part of this group. Cf. G. CHEDIATH, *The Malankara Catholic Church*; English tr.: A.J. ANGEMADATHIL, OIRSI, Kottayam 2012, 9-20. 49.

⁴⁶ Cf. C.M. BASELIOS, *The Syro Malankara Church*, St. Joseph Press, Trivandrum 1973, 33.

⁴⁷ Cf. P. PALLATH, *The Catholic Church in India*, HIRS Publications, Changanacherry 2019, 272-273.

⁴⁸ Cf. C.M. BASELIOS, *The Syro Malankara Catholic Church*, 156.

⁴⁹ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Tukāsā: The Book of Rubrics*, The Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum 2014, 141.

Pentecost Sunday in the Syro-Malankara Liturgy is very long service compared to the liturgy of other Sundays. The liturgical preparation for the feast begins on Saturday with the evening prayers, night prayers and followed by the morning prayers. The *Prōōmion*⁵⁰, *Sedrō*⁵¹ and *Etrō*⁵² used in all these hours highlight the importance of the feast in the life a Christian and also the role of the Holy Spirit in the feast of Pentecost⁵³. The Pentecost service has three parts; prayers addressed to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. The liturgy of Pentecost takes place within the Eucharistic celebration. It begins at the conclusion of the hymns addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary during the celebration of the Eucharist. Then, a bowl of pure water and a bundle of walnut leaves are placed on the step of the Altar⁵⁴.

The Pentecost liturgy begins with the first service which is addressed to the father⁵⁵. The service begins with an opening prayer, followed by Psalm 51, *Enyōnō*⁵⁶, Prayer, *Prōōmion*, *Sedrō*, *Qōlō*⁵⁷, *Etrō*, Gospel reading and litany. After the litany, the deacon proclaims in a loud voice: “Let us beseech the Lord and kneel”⁵⁸. The celebrant kneels before the altar and says the prayers in silence. During this time of kneeling, the community chants *Kyrie elaison*⁵⁹ repeatedly until the celebrant concludes his prayer loudly. The priest then proclaims in a loud voice to the whole congregation that “Stand up by the power of God”. They all stand up reverently in their respective places. One of the deacons or altar servers holds the bowl of pure water and stands at the

⁵⁰ Cf. “*Prōōmion* means Preface/ Introduction”, in *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J.P. SMITH, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Oregon 1999, 458.

⁵¹ Cf. “*Sedrō* means Series, Order, and Prayer”, in *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J.P. SMITH, 362.

⁵² Cf. “*Etrō* means Incense prayer”, in *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J.P. SMITH, 410.

⁵³ Cf. F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 187-204.

⁵⁴ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, The Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum 2019, 249.

⁵⁵ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, 249.

⁵⁶ Cf. “*Enyōnō* means an antiphon”, in *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J.P. SMITH, 420.

⁵⁷ Cf. “*Qōlō* means a chant properly one strophe with a versicle prefixed, a Hymn”, in *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J.P. SMITH, 505.

⁵⁸ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, 261.

⁵⁹ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great*, 252-255. 265-267. 276-278.

right side of the celebrant. The celebrant takes the bundles of walnut leaves from the bowl and sprinkles the water with them crosswise in the sanctuary as well onto the altar servers. Then the celebrant goes down from the sanctuary and sprinkles the congregation with the blessed water. This signifies the gifts of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the disciples in the upper room. Once the celebrant has finished with the sprinkling of the water on the community, he returns to the altar⁶⁰.

The seconds and the third services those are addressed to the Son and the Holy Spirit then take place. Even though the liturgy of the first service is repeated in the following two services, the prayers which are used in the other two service are particularly addressed to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Once these three services are finished, the Holy Eucharist continues as usual manner⁶¹.

The uniqueness of Pentecost liturgy of the Syro-Malankara liturgy in the prayers especially, in the *Prōōmion*, *Sedrō* emphasizes the unity of the three persons of the Trinity. Moreover, each service accentuates the uniqueness of each person. The third service, highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in the other services as well⁶². It can be also noted here that the structure of the service of the Pentecost liturgy is same as the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours⁶³ in the Syro-Malankara liturgy.

The Symbolisms on the Feast of Pentecost in the Syro-Malankara Liturgy

The main characteristic of Syriac theology is the use of types and symbols to explain the Christian realities. The Syriac Fathers were very particular in using type and symbols in their writings. According to Sebastian Brock, types and symbols express relationships and connections

⁶⁰ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, 249-262.

⁶¹ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, 262-286.

⁶² Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great feasts*, 252-255, 265-267.

⁶³ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Shimo: The book of the Liturgy of Hours*, The Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum 2009, 47-53.

and give meaning to everything. In the Christian context, they function in different ways, between this world and the heavenly, between the New Testament and the Sacraments and between the Sacraments and to the eschaton. He continues that in every time they are used, they reveal something that would otherwise be hidden⁶⁴.

In the narration of the Pentecost liturgy, the symbolism of the act of kneeling and repeating *Kyrie elaison* while the celebrant prays silently were noted⁶⁵. This is one of the peculiarities of the Pentecost liturgy in the Syro Malankara liturgy. Kneeling is important because it symbolizes the penitential dimension in the liturgy. According to Baby Varghese, in the Syrian liturgy, there is always a link between kneeling and fasting, because both are the expressions of repentance⁶⁶. By kneeling, the faithful requests God's mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and shows repentance as a corrective measure⁶⁷. It was already seen that until Pentecost there is no kneeling and fasting. But since the Pentecost liturgy is part of the Eucharistic liturgy, fasting is obligatory⁶⁸. Participation in the Eucharist is done with fasting, which is an act of preparation. Its meaning is impossible to separate from penitence. Other examples could be found in the liturgy of the ordination rites as well as in the monastic consecration, the normal posture of the candidate is to kneel, to symbolize both repentance and humility before God of the one to be ordained⁶⁹.

The late famous orthodox theologian Fr. Alexander Schmemmann spoke about the act of kneeling in the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost. He explains: "We are invited to kneel. This is our first kneeling since Easter. Together, bowing-low, we bow our hearts and bring to God our repentance, and hope for forgiveness of sins"⁷⁰. This is very clear in the

⁶⁴ Cf. S. BROCK, *St. Ephrem Syrian: Hymns on Paradise*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York 1900, 42.

⁶⁵ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 260. 272. 284.

⁶⁶ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 115.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. MATHEW, "Body as the Offering Gift in the Performance of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Malankara Syrian liturgical Rite", in *Studia Liturgical*, vol. 52, ed. P.C. BOWER, Dorchester 2022, 239.

⁶⁸ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 115-116.

⁶⁹ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 115.

⁷⁰ A. SCHMEMMANN, "Pentecost the Feast of the Church", in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, ed. G. FLOROVSKY, New York 1953, 41.

preaching of the John the Baptist “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand”. His baptism was a baptism of repentance, as well as a preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (*Mat* 3,1, 11; 4,17). In the Gospel of John, the mission of the Holy Spirit is to be a mediator who leads men to repentance (*Jn* 16,8-9). Here we can conclude that repentance is an expression of the one of the fundamental principles of prayer⁷¹. Therefore, in fasting, kneeling and crying *Kyrie elaison* in the liturgy of the Pentecost is a most genuine and powerful expression of real repentance. Asking for the mercy of God is clearly reflected in the in the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost. The first service begins with Psalms 51. Each service concludes with the litany and response to each litany is *Kyrie elaison*. In the first service after *Enyōnō*, the celebrant prays:

Awaken our hearts from the slumber of sin and enlighten our consciousness with the inner rays of Your Holy Spirit⁷².

Likewise, in the *Etrō* the community asks God’s mercy for their sins⁷³. The theme of repentance is very evident in the *Sedrō* of the first service. There the celebrant prays:

Uproot from us all the defilement of sin, raise us up pure temples and presentable habitations for your dwelling⁷⁴.

The disciples prepare themselves to receive the Holy Spirit in the first Pentecost in prayer and with proper preparation. Here, the community prepares itself in fasting and kneeling, which signifies an act of asking the God’s mercy as a preparation to receive the Holy Spirit. It can also be seen in the silent prayer of the priest in the second service before the sprinkling of the water,

You commanded the Holy Apostles to refrain from going afar until

⁷¹ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 113.

⁷² THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 249-251.

⁷³ Cf. THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 257.

⁷⁴ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 254-255.

they have received the Divine Power from above. They obeyed, waiting for your unfulfilled promise. Today, the Holy Spirit fulfilled that promise by dwelling among them in the likeness of fire. Therefore, we worship you and kneel on the ground before You⁷⁵.

It can be also noted here that even in the prayer it is mentioned that kneeling is an act of preparation to receive the Holy Spirit.

We do not bow our knees in prayer until Pentecost. We are singing against our enemies, with David the divine singer. They fell to their knees, while we rise up and stand. When the Holy Spirit appeared to us in the form of fiery tongues of flames, we kneel before God, as we are incapable of receiving His vision⁷⁶.

Another symbolism in the liturgy of the Feast of Pentecost is in the sprinkling of the water over the faithful. Water is pictured as one of the ancient and universal symbols for all religions, particularly in its use for the sacred bath⁷⁷. In the Christian tradition, we find the presence of water in first book of the Bible itself, as a vehicle over which Holy Spirit works. (*Gen* 1,2). There we see that the life had its origin in water, for the water creatures were the first to be created (*Gen* 1,20). Alexander Schmemmann wrote that, water can be seen as the principle of life, life giving power; as the principle of purification and therefore of regeneration and renewal⁷⁸. The Gospel reading in the second service is *Jn* 4,13-24. The Syrian father Apollinaris of Laodicea commented on this Gospel passage and said “Holy Spirit is what is freely promised here and the spiritual water is spoken here corresponds with the physical water spoken of...”⁷⁹. In the gospel of John 4,10, we read, “Jesus answered her, if you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, give me the drink, you would have asked him, and he would have been given you living water”. St. Augustine interprets this passage by

⁷⁵ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 273.

⁷⁶ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 274.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. CHALASSERY, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation in the East Syrian Tradition*, Mar Toma Yogam, Rome 1995, 136.

⁷⁸ Cf. A. SCHMEMMANN, *Of Water and the Spirit*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York 1995, 39-40.

⁷⁹ J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV a, John 1-10*, Inter Varsity Press, Illinois 2006, 153.

asking a question “whether water is called the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit?”⁸⁰. He answers the question by saying that water is called the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit⁸¹. St. Paul also says “and we all been made to drink into one spirit” (*ICor* 12,13). In this context, water becomes a symbol to represent the Holy Spirit.

Sprinkling the water on the faithful occurs in the Malankara liturgy immediately after kneeling. As seen during the kneeling, the community is requesting the mercy of God with repentance in fasting. This can be interpreted as a preparation to receive the Holy Spirit. Finally, sprinkling water over the faithful indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit during the liturgy and also showering of the grace over the faithful.

The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Prayers of the Feast of Pentecost

Pentecost brought the Church into a new situation. Primarily, the feast of Pentecost established the law of the Spirit. On this day, the old Law was changed and a new Law given to the disciples. At the Jewish Pentecost, Israel was established by the Mosaic law, while in the Christian Pentecost, the New Israel is established through the outpouring of the Spirit. The Spirit of Yahweh comes on the disciples and purifies the New Israel (*Ex* 24,16-18. 33-34)⁸². Therefore, she lives in the Spirit and worships God in Spirit and Truth, which makes her the new Israel and the bride of Christ (*Rev* 21,1-2)⁸³.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. In the Creed, we profess Him as proceeding from the Father. In the Gospel, we read that He is sent by Christ (*Jn* 16,13)⁸⁴. In the same Gospel, we read that the Holy Spirit is given fully, abundantly, overwhelmingly. “God gives not the Spirit by measure” (*Jn* 334) and “of His fullness have we all received, and grace of grace” (*Jn* 1,16). Hence, it is the goal of each Christian life is to receive the Spirit. In the prayers on the feast of Pen-

⁸⁰ J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV a*, 149.

⁸¹ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV a*, 149.

⁸² Cf. A. KAKKANATT, *Christological Catechesis of the Liturgy*, 63.

⁸³ Cf. B. VARGHESE, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 75.

⁸⁴ A. SCHMEMANN, *Of Water and the Spirit*, 103.

tecost of the Syro-Malankara liturgy, these themes are very evident. In the *Sedrō* of the third service, in the prayers addressed to the Trinity, the celebrant prays:

He is the beneficent Spirit; the omnipotent Spirit; the Spirit by whom the Father is known; the Spirit by whom the Son is believed; the Spirit who alone is worshipped with the Father and the Son; the Spirit who possesses all the Father's attributes except Fatherhood; the Spirit who owns the Son's qualities other than birth and the Incarnation⁸⁵.

Therefore, here after, this paper concentrate on the presence of the Holy Spirit as reflected in the prayers of the feast of Pentecost. This study will also consider the biblical references and the teaching of the Fathers as well.

The Holy Spirit as a Teacher

In the Bible, Jesus Himself gives this testimony of the Holy Spirit “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (*Jn* 14,26). We believe that when the Holy Spirit descended up on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, they were completely transformed. They were filled with wisdom and enabled to understand the divine mysteries. In his Homily on the feast of Pentecost, Jacob of Serugh presents, the Holy Spirit as the hidden teacher from whom all instructions proceeded. He continued to say that as a teacher, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit taught the disciples a new speech, without the reading or writing. The simple apostles who were the fishermen became the rich in the wisdom⁸⁶. In his Homily on Pentecost, Narsai commented that on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit revealed His wisdom to the apostles in the likeness of fire and taught them a new book which they did not know before, and they distributed it according

⁸⁵ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Pernunnalkual: Book of Great Feasts*, 278.

⁸⁶ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, vol. II, ed. P. BEDJAN, Gorgias Press, Piscataway 2006, 679; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select Festal Homilies: On the Sunday of Pentecost*, ed. T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, Center for Indian Religious Studies, Rome 1997, 361.

to what the receivers heard. In the brightness of fire, they possessed the wisdom of all languages; and gave sweet flavor to the ignorant Gentiles⁸⁷. Commenting on St. John, St. Augustine said: “So the Son speaks, the Holy Spirit teaches. When Son speaks, we take in the words; when the Holy Spirit teaches, we understand those words”⁸⁸. This idea is also emphasized in the prayers of the liturgy on the feast of Pentecost. In the evening prayers of the feast of Pentecost the community sings:

The Spirit that searches all things was suddenly heard, the Teacher,
He taught them all tongues. As He was aglow with fire of the Father,
He illumined them and they began to speak all tongues⁸⁹.

In the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit is seen as the Spirit of Truth who guides to all truth (*Jn* 16,3); ultimately to Christ, and testifies to Jesus (*Jn* 15,26), who is the way and the truth and the life of Christians. This is clearly reflected in the *Sedrō* of the first service.

He is the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of might,
the Spirit of knowledge, the perfecting Spirit, the performer Spirit,
the non-qualitative Spirit, the nonquantitative Spirit⁹⁰.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit as a teacher enlightened the minds of the Apostles and revealed to them the ultimate Truth that is the Christ Himself and equipped them to testify to Him.

Hence, the faithful one who participates in the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost will receive the gift of wisdom, the same wisdom which was received by the Apostles, for the same Spirit and guides towards to Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life.

⁸⁷ Cf. A. ISAAC, “Mar Narsai, the Charismatic: A Study Based on Mar Narsai’s Homily on Pentecost”, 129.

⁸⁸ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV b, John 11-21*, Inter Varsity Press, Illinois 2007, 151.

⁸⁹ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 193.

⁹⁰ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 254.

The Holy Spirit as a Comforter

The Holy Spirit is presented as a Helper and Comforter is noticeable in the prayers of the feast of Pentecost. Jesus himself refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Advocate, whom I will send to you from the Father” (*Jn* 15,26). In this context the Advocate is also as a comforter⁹¹. In his *Catechetical Lectures* on the same gospel passage, Cyril of Jerusalem says that the Holy Spirit is a Comforter because he comforts and encourages us and helps us with our infirmities (*Rm* 8,26). He not only helps us to pray and about what we should pray, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us⁹². Didymus the Blind also remarked on the same point when he said that Holy Spirit is another comforter, differing not in nature but in operation. He is comforter in a sense that is consoling in our grief⁹³. Origen wrote, “The Paraclete must be understood in the sense of comforter because he bestows consolation on the souls to whom he openly reveals the apprehension of spiritual knowledge”⁹⁴. Gregory Nazianzen also calls the Holy Spirit a comforter because He lifts with the hope of pardon those who lament for the sins, they committed⁹⁵. This perspective is apparent and manifested in the prayers, the Holy Spirit has entitled as Comforter. And also, *Qōlō* of the third service the community sing:

Bless us, O Comforter, Holy Spirit, who descended upon the holy Apostles in the likeness of fiery tongues in the Upper Room and enlightened their minds with divine wisdom. May we glorify You and the Father from whom You proceed, and the Son from Whom You take, now and always, and forever⁹⁶.

Holy Spirit Comforter, on this most holy feast day, as tongues of fire (you) came down and dwelt upon the Apostles⁹⁷.

⁹¹ Cf. *The Holy Bible, The New Standard Version*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore 1997, 110.

⁹² Cf. *Jn* 11-21; also in J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary IV b, John 11-21*, 185-186.

⁹³ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV b*, 186.

⁹⁴ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary IV b, John 11-21*, 186.

⁹⁵ Cf. M.F. TOAL (ed.), *The Sunday Sermons of the Great fathers*, Henry Regnery Co, Chicago 1959, 3.

⁹⁶ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 274.

⁹⁷ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 279.

Therefore, the divine liturgy of Pentecost reminds the faithful to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit as the comforter who helps and encourages them to fight with the infirmities. Moreover, it presents invitation to them get to be consoled by the Holy Spirit in their griefs.

The Holy Spirit as a Spirit of Prophecy and Third Person of the Trinity

We read in the Bible “no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2Pet 1,21). The Holy Spirit is at very heart of Divine Revelation and of Christian life⁹⁸. Prophecy is a gift of Holy Spirit (1Cor 12,10). According to Andrea⁹⁹ prophecies are inspired by the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁰. In his *Hymns on Mary*, Ephrem writes that the Holy Prophets were the vocal advocates of the Spirit. He said that the prophecy of Isaiah about the birth of Jesus from the virgin is itself is a proof for this¹⁰¹. And as can be seen in the prayers of the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is presented as the Spirit of Prophecy. In the *Sedrō* of the first service the celebrant prays:

He is the Spirit Who spoke in the law through the prophets and the disciples¹⁰².

Another one of the main characteristics of the liturgy of Pentecost is the emphasis given to the Holy Trinity. As has been mentioned, there is special service to each person of Trinity in the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost. In his farewell discourse, Jesus Himself revealed the union between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father sends the Spirit in the name of the Son (Jn 14,26), the Spirit bears witness to the Son

⁹⁸ Cf. A. SCHMEMANN, *Of Water and Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism*, 104.

⁹⁹ Cf. Andreas was a monk who lived in the seventh century. He collected commentary from earlier writers to form a catena on various biblical books, in G. BARY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament XI, James, 1-2Peter, 1-3John, Jude*, Illinois 2000, 271.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. G. BARY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament XI*, 42.

¹⁰¹ Cf. S. BROCK, *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem*, SCM Press, Maine 1983, 60.

¹⁰² THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 254.

(*Jn* 15,26). Jesus' baptism is significant in that occasion the union between Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is witnessed (*Mat* 3,16-17). St. Ephrem also defines the Trinity using symbols. He says "God is a single substance, A flower is threefold; Stone is a single substance, but fire is threefold; for flame, heat, and light are mingled in it"¹⁰³. This theme of Holy Spirit as a third person of the Trinity is reflected in the *Prōōmion* of the third service. The celebrant prays:

Glory to the Lord, the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the invisible Father and takes from the adorable Son; Who performs all that He wills and works all things by His mighty power; Who, from ancient times, spoke by the prophets the things to come and the mysteries; Who, at last, proclaimed by the apostles the hidden secrets and the concealed knowledge¹⁰⁴.

Here, it can infer that the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost is an occasion for the faithful to have a clearer understanding about great mystery of the Trinity and the prophetic nature of the Holy Spirit as well.

The Holy Spirit as a Dispenser of Gifts

The Greek word *χαρίσματα* (gift of the Holy Spirit; spiritual gifts) is recurrent in the New Testament as well as in the early Christian tradition¹⁰⁵. St. Paul called it a "diversity of gifts" coming from the one Spirit, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (*ICor* 12,4-6). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit becomes the distributor of gifts. In his *Homily on Pentecost* Chrysostom comments on the same biblical passage and says that the Holy Spirit is the distributor of the gifts; even of the gifts bestowed on each one. The gift varies, but the Giver is the same, and therefore each one has honor with him¹⁰⁶. He continued to write that gift of the Holy Spirit contains the means of our salvation. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit imparted thousands of gifts from heaven. But

¹⁰³ S.M. BURGESS, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts 2000, 179.

¹⁰⁴ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukakl: Book of Great Feasts*, 276.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. A. SCHMEMANN, *Of Water and Spirit: A liturgical Study of Baptism*, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. G. BRAY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VII, 1-2Corinthians*, Inter Varsity Press, Illinois 1999, 119.

all these gifts contain within them the gifts of our soul's salvation¹⁰⁷. In his *Commentary on the Acts*, Ephrem adds that the several gifts of the Spirit were theirs. These gifts of the Spirit were given without any measure. Peter became the treasurer of priesthood, prophecy and was given the keys of the gates of heaven and hell¹⁰⁸. In the *Anaphora*, St. Basil, says that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are "the gift of sonship, the pledge of future inheritance, the first fruits of eternal blessings, the life creating power, the fountain of sanctification"¹⁰⁹. This image of the Holy Spirit as distributor of gifts is comprehensively highlighted in the prayers of the liturgy on the feast of Pentecost. Particularly we see it in the *Sedrō*, when the celebrant prays:

We pray You, O God, the Comforter Spirit, by this sweet incense, imploring the abundance of your incomprehensible richness, that even now, you be pleased to renew your divine gifts, and to rest upon us, as you did upon the holy disciples in the Upper Room¹¹⁰.

This is a clear indication and a reminder for each Christian, as they participate in the divine liturgy of the feast of Pentecost, that they also receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are the means of salvation. Thus, the church invites the faithful to the liturgical participation.

The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Unity

At Pentecost, the disciples gathered together in the Upper Room to receive the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus' promise had to be fulfilled, the Holy Spirit would teach them the truths (*Jn* 16,13). In the Acts of the Apostles, we read "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place" (*Acts* 2,1). In his *Homily on Pentecost*, Jacob of Serugh says that when the disciples gathered in the upper room, the Holy Spirit made that upper room a school for the sons of light, and that they learned the speech of the nations and their tongues in that school. He further says that the arrival of Holy Spirit, all the nations were gath-

¹⁰⁷ Cf. M.F. TODAL (ed.), *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. S.M. BURGESS, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*, 186.

¹⁰⁹ A. SCHMEMANN, *Of Water and Spirit: A liturgical Study of Baptism*, 80.

¹¹⁰ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 278.

ered in the upper room¹¹¹. John Chrysostom spoke on this quality of the Holy Spirit. He asks what is the purpose of the Spirit? He says that just as the body's living spirits holds all its members together, in the same way, the Holy Spirit brings unity to all who are still separated by different ethnic and cultural divisions like young and old, rich and poor, women and men¹¹². Cyril of Jerusalem also compared the incident at Babel to Pentecost. He said in at Babel there was confusion of tongues. Pentecost brought restoration and union of minds, since the object of their zeal was righteous¹¹³. It is very clear in these prayers that the intension behind the union of the disciples was to receive the Holy Spirit. This theme is also reflected in the *Qōlō* of the evening prayers, when the community sings:

When the chosen apostles were gathered in the upper room to receive the Holy Spirit, He descended and rested on them in the form of tongues of fire, and they broke out to singing, You are blessed, Lord, God of fathers¹¹⁴.

The same thing happens in each liturgical celebration of Pentecost which happened at the first Pentecost. The faithful gather as a community and pray to receive the Holy Spirit. As at the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit unites everyone as they participate in the liturgy of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit as a Life Giver

In the creation narrative of man, is “and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (*Gen 2,7*). Chrysostom comments on this passage with the words “in breathing, God communicated to the one created out of earth the power of life”¹¹⁵. In the Gospel of John, we read, it is the

¹¹¹ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 678; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select Festal*, 361.

¹¹² Cf. M.J. EDWARD (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VIII, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, Chicago 1999, 159.

¹¹³ Cf. F. MARTIN (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament V, Acts*, Inter Varsity Press, Illinois 2006, 24.

¹¹⁴ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 188.

¹¹⁵ A. LOUTH (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture Old Testament I, Genesis I-II*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, London 2001, 50.

Spirit that gives life (*Jn* 6,63). In his *Discourse on Faith* Philoxenus of Mabbug says it was through the Holy Spirit that the first creation was brought into being. And he continued saying that the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead will raise the one who is spiritually alive¹¹⁶. Cyril of Alexandria mentions that it is the Spirit that makes the body life-giving¹¹⁷. This is expressed in the *Qōlō* of the evening prayers and in the intercessory prayer of the evening service, when the community prays:

When the Holy Spirit the giver of life and full of beauty, dwells in the Holy Apostles in a manner proper to God alone ¹¹⁸.

Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life, Source of all energy, renew your Churches that they may instill divine life into the hearts of all people¹¹⁹.

These identify the Spirit as the giver of life and as source of energy, who enlightens the life of the Apostles and who will enlighten each of the faithful who participates in the divine liturgy of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit as a Spirit of Purification

At the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit showed up as fire (*Acts* 2,3). In his *Homily on Faith* Ephrem says, fire is the symbol of the Spirit, it is a type of the Holy Spirit¹²⁰. In the same vein, St. Chrysostom said that these names of the Holy Spirit as water and fire are not descriptive of essence but of its operation. As fire has the capacity to burn, the Holy Spirit burns sins¹²¹. Jacob of Serugh declares that it is the fire enlightened the souls of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. He continues to say that they were not burned up by the fire, instead they were enlightened by the flame¹²². Therefore, as a fire, the Holy Spirit purified

¹¹⁶ Cf. S.M. BURGESS, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*, 194. 199.

¹¹⁷ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV a*, 246.

¹¹⁸ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 189.

¹¹⁹ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 194.

¹²⁰ Cf. EPHREM THE SYRIAN, *The Hymns on Faith*, 40:10 (English tr. J.T. WICKES, The Catholic University of America Press Washington 2015, 227).

¹²¹ Cf. J.C. ELOWSKY (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament IV a*, 153.

¹²² Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 677-678; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Se-*

the souls of the Apostles. It is the Spirit of Purification. This is clearly manifested in the evening prayers on the feast of Pentecost.

On that day the Apostles were purified like gold on that fire of the Spirit and their beauty shone in the four quarters as they proclaimed the name of Jesus all over the world¹²³.

In the Christian tradition, the purification effected by the Holy Spirit which begins at baptism¹²⁴. Ephrem in his Nisibene Hymns says that on the day of Pentecost the apostles were baptized in the Spirit¹²⁵. Cyril of Jerusalem expresses the same idea, that Pentecost was the moment of the disciples' baptism. The upper room became a vessel of spiritual water in which they were baptized. He remarked that the apostles received the saving fire that absorbs the thorns of sins but gives luster to the soul. As a flaming sword blocked the entrance to heaven, so a flaming tongue restored salvation¹²⁶. In the *Sedrō* of the evening prayer, that the Holy Spirit is as a Spirit of sanctification on the feast of Pentecost is clearly emphasized. In the liturgy the celebrant prays this in the *Sedrō* of the first service for the community:

On this glorious feast of Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit descended upon the holy apostles, we beseech you that He may also descend upon us, Your servants and worshippers, so You may fill us with His holy gifts. Uproot from us all the defilement of sin, raise us up as pure temples and presentable habitations for Your dwelling¹²⁷.

As a result, the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of purification purifies the faithful who participate in the liturgy. Moreover, it is also an occasion for each one of the faithful to have a second spiritual baptism by the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost, the community pray to God for the spiritual baptism.

lect Festal, 360-361.

¹²³ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 199.

¹²⁴ Cf. S. BROCK, *Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway 2008, 79-80.

¹²⁵ Cf. S.M. BURGESS, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*, 186.

¹²⁶ Cf. F. MARTIN (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament V, Acts*, 22.

¹²⁷ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 254.

The Holy Spirit as a Spirit of Courage

We read in the Gospel of John that after the death of Jesus “the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked fear of the Jews.” (*Jn* 20,19). But after the Pentecost the disciple became fearless to witnesses of Jesus (*Acts* 2). Finally, they gave up their lives for Jesus, because after receiving the Spirit, they became fearless. In his *homily on Pentecost*, Jacob of Serugh presents the Holy Spirit as the armour of the Son¹²⁸. He says that the Upper Room became a school and treasury of arms, where the apostles became equipped to fight any wild things in the world. “You (upper room) became like an armoury to the apostles, and they were clothed with the power of the Spirit to tread wild beings underfoot”¹²⁹. In his *Homily on the Acts* St. Chrysostom remarks on this passage to highlight the apostles becoming fearless after Pentecost. “He (Peter) raised his voice” (*Acts* 2,14). He says that, Peter, who was not even not ready to answer to the question of the poor girl, after the Pentecost was fearless to witness to Jesus. He raised his voice and addressed the people with every confidence¹³⁰. Theodore of Mopsuestia states that, the apostles who had been afraid to face the death, after Holy Spirit descended on them, they were happy to confront the trials and tribulations. He says that the Paraclete who is gives instructions in distress and fear¹³¹. Severus of Antioch says that, early Christian martyrs were strengthened and heated by the Spirit so that the waters of grace did not chill them when their hour of testing came¹³². The Holy Spirit as a Spirit of courage is manifested in the second service of the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost. There, the celebrant prays silently on behalf of the community in these words:

Today, the Holy Spirit fulfilled that promise by dwelling among

¹²⁸ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 675; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select Festal*, 359.

¹²⁹ JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 679; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select Festal*, 361.

¹³⁰ Cf. F. MARTIN (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament V, Acts*, 27-28.

¹³¹ Cf. T. MANNOORAMPAMPIL, “The feast of Pentecost in the Syro- Malabar Church”, in *The Harp*, vol. XXXVII, edd. J. THEKEPARAMPIL – B. VARGHESE, Gorgias press, Kottayam 2021, 260-261.

¹³² Cf. S.M. BURGESS, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition*, 207.

them in the likeness of fire. So, they were equipped, and were able to preach publicly to all nations and peoples the great mysteries of the Holy Trinity in every language under heaven, and to perform great signs and wonders ¹³³.

Thus, the faithful who participate in the divine liturgy of Pentecost also hope to be equipped to fight against the evils of the world. Moreover, like apostles each of the faithful become empowered to be available themselves to dedicate themselves to the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit as Spirit of Babel and Upper Room

In the Old Testament, we read that God confused the language of men at Babel and scattered them all over the world (*Gen 11,7*). In his *Homily on Pentecost*, Jacob of Serugh speaks about the people of Babel (*Gen 11,17*) and about the disciple at the Pentecost (*Act 2,4*). Peter, too, called the beloved group of disciples the Church-elect in Babylon (*IPet 5,13; 2,9-10*). Jacob notes that Peter referred to their assembly as Babel, where they all spoke in all kinds of tongues as in Babel. He goes further and says that the Church-elect in upper room learned “the speak of the nations and their tongues”, a new alphabet, without learning to read and without need of any teachers. Finally, he adds that the Church resembles Babel in voice and speech in tongues¹³⁴. Therefore, Jacob continues:

Babel I shall call you, not that it was confusion that has happened in you. You (Upper Room) have conquered Babel in the benevolent speech of all tongues. On the former occasion their tongues were confused in a sentence; But in you the Spirit divided all tongues in love. Therefore, I am calling you spiritual Babel, and the Church-elect¹³⁵.

He allied the church as a second Babel which was born in the upper room. He continues by saying that the apostles in Judea and the people

¹³³ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 273.

¹³⁴ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 674-675; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select*, 357-358.

¹³⁵ JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 679; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select Festal*, 62.

in Babel learned from the same teacher who is the full of wisdom¹³⁶. Therefore, it is clear that the same Spirit was active in Babel as well as in upper room. This image of Holy Spirit in the upper room as the same Spirit at Babel is clearly emphasized in the *Sedrō* evening prayer on the Feast of Pentecost. There the celebrant prays:

Today by the coming of the Spirit, the Comforter, the upper room becomes another Babel, not as in that first Babel when tongues were divided by way of publishment, but by the power of the Holy Spirit the room is filled with the light of grace and the holy apostles are given understanding to proclaim the truth¹³⁷.

Hence the community who celebrates the liturgy of Pentecost represents the community in Babel as well as the apostles in the Upper Room. Here the faithful stands as a Second Babel, which is, the Church itself.

The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Evangelization.

In the prayers of the feast of Pentecost there are explicit references to the mission of the Church for evangelization. The first preaching by Peter is itself an example of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of evangelization. Three thousand people were baptized after that preaching. There we see Holy Spirit is animating the hearts of the listeners so that they became Christians. (*Acts 2,37-42*). In his *Homily on Pentecost* Chrysostom writes that when the Holy Spirit came on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost He assigned them to the world, where each should preach by the means of the tongue, they had been given¹³⁸. In his *Homily on Pentecost*, Jacob of Serugh also says that the Holy Spirit initiates the mission. He says that the upper room became a fountain. Twelve streams were distributed from the upper room, and those burst forth to go to all regions¹³⁹. In the *Qōlō* of the first service of Pentecost the community sings:

¹³⁶ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 682; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select*, 364.

¹³⁷ F. ACHARYA (ed.), *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. IV, 190.

¹³⁸ Cf. M.F. TOAL (ed.), *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 120.

¹³⁹ Cf. JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homiliae Selectae*, 688; English tr.: *Jacob of Serugh Select*, 369.

When the Consoler came from above and dwelt upon the apostles, they began to speak new tongues and received new strength new invisible that was hidden. They went forth to all creation and proclaimed a consoling mission and made disciples of all nations disciples and gave baptism to them in the name of Trinity¹⁴⁰.

Therefore, it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is as the Spirit of evangelization. He animated the souls of the apostles for this mission. Hence, the divine liturgy of the Pentecost is also an invitation to the faithful to participate in Church's mission to evangelize the whole world.

Conclusion

The celebration of feasts is essential among humans. Feasts carry the messages of remembrance and gratitude. In the Christian liturgical tradition, feasts are the occasions of commemoration and gratitude for the saving acts of Jesus. Since the feast of Pentecost has a common origin and development within in the Christian tradition, the concept of the Christian Pentecost begins with an understanding of the Feast of Weeks in the first century Jewish tradition. From the second century onwards, the celebration of the feast of Pentecost begins in the Christian liturgical tradition. Initially, both the feast of Ascension and the feast of Pentecost were celebrated on the 50th day after Easter. Later, in the fourth century the feast of Pentecost began to be celebrated as a distinct feast on the 50th day after the Easter Sunday. By the end of the fourth century the same developmental pattern is seen in the West Syrian liturgy.

The feast of Pentecost is a feast of the Holy Spirit in the Syro-Malankara liturgy. The significance of the liturgy of Pentecost is evident in the three services: addressed to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although the third service highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit, emphasis is given to the Holy Spirit in other two services as well. Symbolisms in the divine liturgy of Pentecost also play an important role in the liturgy of Pentecost. Through keeling, fasting and proper repentance, the faithful request the mercy of God. In the same way, the apostles prepared themselves to receive the Holy Spirit. Finally, the symbol of sprinkling water over the faithful is a perfect symbol of the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the faithful who participate in the

¹⁴⁰ THE SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR LITURGY, *Perunnalukal: Book of Great Feasts*, 256.

liturgy. These symbols emphasize the inevitable role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the feast of Pentecost.

After an in-depth analysis of the prayers of the feast of Pentecost from the biblical and patristic background, it can be established that the celebration of the feast of Pentecost is also the feast of the Holy Spirit in the Syro-Malankara liturgy. As a teacher, the Holy Spirit enlightens the minds of the faithful, reveals the ultimate truth about Christ Himself and equips them to testify to Him. As a comforter, the Holy Spirit helps and encourages them to fight in spite of infirmities. Moreover, liturgy of the feast of Pentecost is an invitation to the faithful to be consoled by the Holy Spirit in their griefs. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of prophecy, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, leads the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Trinity. As a dispenser of gifts, the faithful receives the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are the means of salvation. As a Spirit of unity, He gathers everyone together to participate in the liturgy. As a life giver the Holy Spirit becomes the source of energy, and a Spirit of purification. He purifies the faithful from all infirmities and invites them to a second baptism. As the Spirit of Babel and Upper Room, the Holy Spirit makes the Church to be a second Babel and entrusts to the Church and its faithful the mission of evangelization. Hence, we can conclude that the feast of Pentecost is the feast of Holy Spirit in the Syro-Malankara liturgy.

Summary: This article focuses on the celebration of the feast of Pentecost in the Syro-Malankara liturgy. It analyzes this feast with a focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit reflected in both the liturgy and the liturgical prayers of the feast of Pentecost, from a biblical and a patristic perspective. This article also examines the origin of this feast in the Christian liturgical tradition and how it relates to the Jewish tradition. Since, the Syro-Malankarite belongs to the Antiochene family of the Oriental rite, this paper also deals with the historical origins and development of the celebration feast of Pentecost in the West Syrian liturgy. This study will consider liturgical texts used by the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the celebration of the feast of Pentecost, concentrating on the theological richness of the celebrations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Christian Liturgy, Antiochene Liturgy, Liturgical year, Feasts, The feast of Pentecost, Holy Spirit, Syriac Theology, Syriac Fathers, Syro-Malankara Liturgy.

Sommario: Questo articolo si concentra sulla celebrazione della festa di Pentecoste nella liturgia siro-malankarese. Analizza questa festa concentrandosi sulla presenza dello Spirito Santo riflessa sia nella liturgia che nelle preghiere liturgiche della festa di Pentecoste, dal punto di vista biblico e patristico. Questo articolo esamina anche l'origine di questa festa nella tradizione liturgica cristiana e come si relaziona con la tradizione ebraica. Poiché la

Siro-Malankararita appartiene alla famiglia antiochena di rito orientale, questo lavoro tratta anche delle origini storiche e dello sviluppo della celebrazione della festa di Pentecoste nella liturgia siriana occidentale. Questo studio prenderà in considerazione i testi liturgici utilizzati dalla Chiesa cattolica siro-malankarese nella celebrazione della festa di Pentecoste, concentrandosi sulla ricchezza teologica delle celebrazioni dell'effusione dello Spirito Santo.

Parole chiave: Liturgia cristiana, Liturgia antiochena, Anno liturgico, Feste, La festa di Pentecoste, Spirito Santo, Teologia siriana, Padri siriani, Liturgia siro-malankarese.