

JAPAN VICE PROVINCE

KOREA MISSION

SPRING MEETING

LITURGY

Input

Franco Sottocornolla, SX

SCRIPTURE/MIDRASH

Input

Dudley Perera, OMI



Munakata

Fukuoka

March 28-31, 2000

OMI JAPAN
Spring Meeting, March 28 – 31, 2000
SCHEDULE



March 28, Tuesday

7:30AM	Morning Prayer	(In common)
8:00	Breakfast	
9:15	Opening Prayer	
	Introduction	
	CONFERENCE 1	Fr. Franco
10:30	Break	
11:00	CONFERENCE 2	Fr. Franco
12:00	Lunch	
15:00	CONFERENCE 3	Fr. Franco
17:00	Eucharist	Fr. Franco
18:00	Supper	
19:30	Provincial Council Meeting	
20:00	Provincial Council and District Superiors'Mtg	

March 29, Wednesday

7:00	Morning Prayer – Eucharist	
8:00	Breakfast	
9:15	CONFERENCE 1	Treasurer
10:30	Break	
11:00	CONFERENCE 2	Treasurer
12:00	Lunch	
15:00	CONFERENCE 3	Fr. Perera
17:30	Evening Prayer and Adoration	
18:00	Supper	

March 30, Thursday

7:00	Morning Prayer – Eucharist	
8:00	Breakfast	
9:15	CONFERENCE 1	Fr. Perera
10:30	Break	
11:00	CONFERENCE 2	Fr. Perera
12:00	Lunch	
15:00	CONFERENCE 3	Fr. Perera
17:30	Evening Prayer and Adoration	
18:00	Supper	

March 31, Friday

	(Morning Prayer in Private)	
8:00	Breakfast	
9:15	CONFERENCE 1	Provincial/Gen Councilor
10:45	Eucharist	
11:30	Lunch	

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy¹

PAUL, BISHOP

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

TOGETHER WITH THE FATHERS OF THE SACRED COUNCIL
FOR EVERLASTING MEMORY

1. It is the goal of this most sacred Council to intensify the daily growth of Catholics in Christian living; to make more responsive to the requirements of our times those Church observances which are open to adaptation; to nurture whatever can contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ; and to strengthen those aspects of the Church which can help summon all of mankind into her embrace. Hence the Council has special reasons for judging it a duty to provide for the renewal and fostering of the liturgy.

2. For it is through the liturgy, especially the divine Eucharistic Sacrifice, that "the work of our redemption is exercised."² The liturgy is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.³ It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it. She is all these things in such a way that in

1. This document, promulgated on Dec. 4, 1963, was the first Constitution published by Vatican Council II. It came at the end of the Council's second session.

2. *Secret* (prayer in the Mass now called Prayer over the Offerings) for the ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

3. Liturgy is seen as something profound rather than merely external. In many ways this Constitution is the germ of the Constitution on the Church, promulgated on Nov. 21, 1964.

her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek (cf. Heb. 13:14). Day by day the liturgy builds up those within the Church into the Lord's holy temple, into a spiritual dwelling for God (cf. Eph. 2:21-22)—an enterprise which will continue until Christ's full stature is achieved (cf. Eph. 4:13). At the same time the liturgy marvelously fortifies the faithful in their capacity to preach Christ. To outsiders the liturgy thereby reveals the Church as a sign raised above the nations (cf. Is. 11:12). Under this sign the scattered sons of God are being gathered into one (cf. Jn. 11:52) until there is one fold and one shepherd (cf. Jn. 10:16).

3. Therefore this most sacred Council judges that the following principles concerning the promotion and reform of the liturgy should be called to mind, and that practical norms should be established.

Among these principles and norms there are some which can and should be applied both to the Roman rite and also to all the other rites. The practical norms which follow, however, should be taken as pertaining only to the Roman rite, except for those which, in the very nature of things, affect other rites as well.⁴

4. Finally, in faithful obedience to tradition, this most sacred Council declares that holy Mother Church holds all lawfully acknowledged rites to be of equal authority and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way. The Council also desires that, where necessary, the rites be carefully and thoroughly revised in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times.

4. The rites of the Eastern Church, which are in no way inferior to the Roman rite, are envisioned here only in the broadest principles; for details, they follow their own venerable traditions.



CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESTORATION AND PROMOTION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

I. The Nature of the Sacred Liturgy and Its Importance in the Church's Life

5. God, who "wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), "in many and various ways . . . spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). When the fullness of time had come He sent His Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart (cf. Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18), to be a "bodily and spiritual medicine,"⁵ the Mediator between God and man (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).⁶ For His humanity, united with the person of the Word, was the instrument of our salvation. Thus in Christ "there came forth the perfect satisfaction needed for our reconciliation, and we received the means for giving worthy worship to God."⁷

The wonders wrought by God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death and, rising,

he restored our life."⁸ For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church.⁹

6. Just as Christ was sent by the Father, so also He sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This He did so that, by preaching the gospel to every creature (cf. Mk. 16:15), they might proclaim that the Son of God, by His death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan (cf. Acts 26:18) and from death, and brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose was also that they might exercise the work of salvation which they were proclaiming, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. Thus, by baptism, men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him (cf. Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:11); they receive the spirit of adoption as sons "by virtue of which we cry: Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15), and thus become those true adorers whom the Father seeks (cf. Jn. 4:23). In like manner, as often as they eat the supper of the Lord they proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). For that reason, on the very day of Pentecost, when the Church appeared before the world, "those who received the word" of Peter "were baptized." And "they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers . . . praising God and being in favor with all the people" (Acts 2:41-47). From that time onward the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery: reading "in all the scriptures the things referring to himself" (Lk. 24:27), celebrating the Eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present,"¹⁰ and at the same time giving thanks "to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in

8. *Easter Preface in the Roman Missal.*
9. Cf. St. Augustine, "Enarr. in Ps. 138" 2, *Corpus Christianorum XL, Tournai, 1956*, p. 1991, and prayer after the second lesson for Holy Saturday, as it was in the Roman Missal before the restoration of Holy Week.
10. Council of Trent, Session 13, Oct. 11, 1551, *Decree on the Holy Eucharist*, c. 5: *Concilium Tridentinum, Diariorum, Actorum, Epistolarum, Tractatum nova collectio*, ed. Soc. Gesseiana, VII, *Actorum pars IV, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1961*, p. 202.

His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same one now offering, through the ministrations of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,"¹¹ but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes.¹² He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the church. He is present, finally, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in the truly great work of giving perfect praise to God and making men holy. The Church is His dearly beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.

Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of man is manifested by signs perceptible to the senses and is effected in a way which is proper to each of these signs in the liturgy full public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.¹³

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can match its claim to efficacy, nor equal the degree of it.

8. In the earthly liturgy, by way of foretaste, we share in the heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, and in which Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle (cf. Apoc. 21:2; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:2); we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them

11. Council of Trent, Session 22, Sept. 17, 1562, *Decree on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, c. 2: *Concilium Tridentinum*, ed. cit., VIII, *Actorum pars I, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1919*, p. 960.
12. Cf. St. Augustine, "In Ioannis Evangelium tractatus VI," c. 1, n. 7; *PL* 35, 1428.
13. Another important encyclical of Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943) stressed the fact of the Church as Christ's Mystical Body. This has been incorporated (and in some ways greatly surpassed) by the present Constitution and the Constitution on the Church.

- Revised Standard Version (Confraternity: "at sundry times and in diverse manners").—Ed.
- St. Ignatius of Antioch, "To the Ephesians," 7, 2; ed. F. X. Funk, *Patres Apostolici I, Tübingen, 1901*, p. 218.
- The central position of Christ as our Mediator is the theme of Pius XII's important encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, which was the Magna Carta of the liturgical renewal (1947). The present Constitution, however, goes far beyond its development.
- Sacramentarium Veronense (Leonianum)*; ed. C. Mohlberg, Rome, 1956 n. 265.

we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory (cf. Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4).

9. The sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church. Before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: "How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear, if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15).

Therefore the Church announces the good tidings of salvation to those who do not believe, so that all men may know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and may repent and mend their ways (cf. Jn. 17:3; Lk. 24:27; Acts 2:38). To believers also the Church must ever preach faith and repentance. She must prepare them for the sacraments, teach them to observe all that Christ has commanded (cf. Mt. 28:20), and win them to all the works of charity, piety, and the apostolate. For all these activities make it clear that Christ's faithful, though not of this world, are the light of the world and give glory to the Father in the sight of men.

10. Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows.¹⁴ For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become "of one heart in love"¹⁵ when they have tasted to their full of the paschal mysteries; it prays that "they may grasp by deed what they hold by creed."¹⁶ The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a fountain, grace is channeled into us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to

14. This solemn paragraph represents the core of the Church's official teaching on the liturgy. It is thus something central, by no means secondary or peripheral.

15. *Postcommunion in the Easter Vigil Mass and the Mass of Easter Sunday.*

16. *Collect (prayer) of the Mass for Tuesday of Easter Week.*

which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their goal, are most powerfully achieved.

11. But in order that the sacred liturgy may produce its full effect, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their thoughts match their words, and that they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1). Pastors of souls must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully.¹⁷

12. The spiritual life, however, is not confined to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is assuredly called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father in secret (cf. Mt. 6:6); indeed, according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, he should pray without ceasing (cf. 1 Th. 5:17). We learn from the same Apostle that we must always carry about in our body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus too may be made manifest in our bodily frame (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-11). This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, "receiving the offering of the spiritual victim," He may fashion us for Himself "as an eternal gift."¹⁸

13. Popular devotions of the Christian people are warmly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church. Such is especially the case with devotions called for by the Apostolic See.

Devotions proper to individual churches also have a special dignity if they are conducted by mandate of the bishops in accord with customs or books lawfully approved.

Nevertheless these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.¹⁹

17. This theme of awareness and active participation by the faithful is another basic theme of the Constitution. It reinforces recent papal teaching on the meaning of liturgy.

18. *Secret (prayer of the Mass) for Monday of Pentecost Week.*

19. While liturgy is not the whole of the Christian life and does not supplant personal prayer, all devotions must harmonize with its spirit.

II. The Promotion of Liturgical Instruction and Active Participation

14. Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. Therefore, through the needed program of instruction, pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it in all their pastoral work.²⁰

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this goal unless the pastors themselves, to begin with, become thoroughly penetrated with the spirit and power of the liturgy, and become masters of it. It is vitally necessary, therefore, that attention be directed, above all, to the liturgical instruction of the clergy.²¹ Therefore this most sacred Council has

20. Again the emphasis on active and conscious participation by the whole Church. Liturgy is thus not a clerical preserve. Rather, the whole people of God has a priestly function which must not be treated as unimportant.

21. The Council anticipates the danger that some priests, used to different patterns of thought and behavior, may not grasp the central position of worship. Accordingly, priests and future priests are required to become deeply imbued with the liturgical spirit. This section of the Constitution may, in the practical order, prove the most momentous of all.

Scholar claims pope's visitation slate is based on wrongly held beliefs



The Baltimore Sun

JERUSALEM — Of the Holy Land stops on Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage this week, the site of the Last Supper is most likely the wrong place, the Mount of the Beatitudes is a "complete fake" and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is a dark, cramped disappointment. As for Nazareth, it's best just to skip it altogether.

And this isn't the opinion of some jaded atheist. It's the strongly held conviction of a Dominican friar and biblical scholar who has studied, worshipped and marveled at Christian shrines here for 36 years.

The assertion was made by the Rev. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 64, a scholar in residence at Jerusalem's Ecole Biblique et Archeologique. He is an expert on how tradition, blind faith and religious jealousy trample historical fact and peaceful worship, and he doesn't hesitate to set the record straight.

Long a favorite guide for European and American diplomats here, Murphy-O'Connor has lately been a sought-after source for journalists preparing for the pope's visit and will give expert commentaries to an international audience watching the pope's visit on Sky Television.

The belief that Jerusalem's tucked-away Cenacle, where John Paul will say a private Mass, holds the site of Jesus' last supper with his disciples is, according to Murphy-

'Never ask a guide a question. If they don't have the answer, they'll make one up.'

O'Connor, "unreliable" and based on assumption.

On the dispute between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel over which bank of the Jordan River is the place where Jesus was baptized, he sides firmly with the Hashemites. The pope is more diplomatic, for he will visit both sites.

Murphy-O'Connor's published guide to the Holy Land gives a miserly paragraph to the Mount of Beatitudes, where the pope will celebrate Mass before the biggest crowd of his trip, including tens of thousands of young people.

"The Mount of Beatitudes is a complete fake. I mean that was just made up," he said. Its value lies in the view it offers of the Sea of Galilee and the sites where Jesus really worked and lived.

The Sermon on the Mount was neither a sermon, nor was it delivered on a hilltop, he went on.

"Every scholar knows that the Sermon on the Mount — of which the Beatitudes are the opening part — was put together from bits and pieces of speeches given in all types of different circumstances. That's a creation of Matthew," Murphy-O'Connor said. Luke uses some of the same lines, "but there it's the Sermon on the Plain."

As for the "great crowds" from all over the region that Matthew describes following Jesus, this is "complete propaganda," Murphy-O'Connor said. Jesus' message drew little support in his work as an itinerant preacher walking from village to village in Galilee, and none at all in Jerusalem. His immense fame and following came later.

Murphy-O'Connor reserves his most withering comments for Jesus' boyhood hometown of Nazareth. Dominating the center of the city is the Basilica of the Annunciation, commemorating an angel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she will give birth to the son of God.

"I recommend that people not go there," he said. "I think the church is awful. I think it's triumphalist, and it tries

to be a church and a museum at the same time, which I don't think works."

Mary was most probably in Bethlehem at the time of the Annunciation, he believes; the Holy Family moved to Nazareth when Christ was young. "Scholars say the angel is literary fiction."

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is probably the place where Christ was crucified and buried, said Murphy-O'Connor. Yet for all that, its atmosphere is "very un-Christian."

He wrote: "One looks for luminous light, but it is dark and cramped. One hopes for peace, but the ear is assailed by a cacophony of warring chants. One desires holiness, only to encounter a jealous possessiveness."

That final observation is thanks to the six rival Christian sects occupying the sepulcher.

Murphy-O'Connor's really not cynical. Historical accuracy may be important, but it's not all that matters, he notes.

"A place is important because it was visited by thousands of pilgrims. No place is holy in itself. Places are made holy by veneration," he said. Whether historically correct or not, religious sites become shrines over time because word gets around that they are places where prayer works, where pilgrims feel close to God.

And he has nothing but admiration for the pilgrims who, over the centuries, have made the arduous journey here to retrace what they believe were Christ's footsteps.

Up to the beginning of the 20th century, he said, "You came at the risk of your life. There was a 2-to-1 chance you wouldn't get home alive."

Murphy-O'Connor joyfully describes the sites he cherishes, like Jerusalem's crusader-era Church of St. Anne's, "certainly the loveliest church in the city," or the ruins of the home of St. Peter in Capernaum, where he says Christ lived while preaching in Galilee.

Murphy-O'Connor's favorite venue for expounding his views are the tours he leads of the Old City and other Holy Land sites. His irreverent jibes, manifest knowledge and passion for bringing history to life have drawn an international following and made him the chosen guide for such visiting dignitaries as Ireland's Prime Minister Bertie Ahern.

"The great thing about Father Jerry is that he's a serious scholar," said British Ambassador Francis Cornish, who has joined Murphy-O'Connor's tours. "What I like about him is that he has the courage not to be fearful about debunking myths."

"He knows what he's talking about and tells it like it is, with great Irish eloquence."

One recent Saturday, the crowd hurried to keep pace with the tall, gray-bearded priest as he marched assuredly around the Old City walls and through throngs of tourists and hawkers.

He admitted that guides over the centuries contributed to the myths and distortions.

"Never ask a guide a question. If they don't have the answer, they'll make one up."

Born in Cork, Ireland, to a family boasting a number of priests, Murphy-O'Connor joined the Dominican order at 18 and was ordained two years later.

Now his home is a Spartan but pleasantly arranged book-lined room. He gets the equivalent of \$25 a month in spending money, a stretch for someone who enjoys a good martini.

Murphy-O'Connor focuses his work on uncovering Jesus' human dimension: a young man growing up amid the bustle of a construction site in Zippori, where his father likely worked as an artisan.

"He would have had the corners knocked off. He would not have been naive, not have been a country bumpkin and not at all sheltered."

Midrash in the Bible.



What is midrash?

The Hebrew verb *daras* means to seek. In the OT context it can mean seeking an answer from Yahweh through an oracle. According to the pattern of Hebrew noun formation the noun *midrash* designates a type of writing based on a distinctive Jewish use of the OT. What then is this distinctive usage? Different scholars offer different suggestions. Here are some of their views. When one studies how an ancient tradition functions in relation to the needs of the community, he is studying midrash (Sanders). For Sanders 'any definition of midrash which limits its scope to the citation and use of an actual biblical passage is deficient'. Hence for him even biblical tradition is the starting point of midrash. However, most descriptions of midrash have the biblical text as the starting point. Midrash is an attempt to make the biblical text contemporary and relevant (Bloch). The basic midrashic structure...is merely that one begins with a text of Scripture and proceeds to comment on it in some way (Wright). Taking all these functions of midrash into consideration one can attempt at a definition of midrash: It is a type of literature, oral or written, which has its starting point in a fixed canonical text, considered the revealed word of God by the midrashist and his audience, and in which this original verse is explicitly cited or clearly alluded to. Another definition of midrash is given by Wright: A midrash is a work that attempts to make a text of Scripture understandable, useful and relevant for a later generation. It is the text of Scripture which is the point of departure, and it is for the sake of the text that the midrash exists. The treatment any given text may be creative or non-creative, but the literature as a whole is predominantly creative in its handling of biblical material. The interpretation is accomplished sometimes by rewriting the biblical material..

Different types of midrash

There are many types of literature similar to midrash which may not interest us here. But there are two major divisions of midrash in post-Christian Judaism. There were works which gathered the legal statements, stories and homilies of the rabbis around the biblical text, especially the text of the Pentateuch (*Torah*). Halakic midrash (*halaka*, rule, law) was a term used to designate interpretation by way of legal statements. Non-legal interpretation was called haggadic midrash (*haggada*, story). Eventually midrash came to designate a free, homiletic exposition, with haggadic midrash having the connotation of fables, or folklore used to illustrate the Bible. (Usually in post-Christian Judaism, midrash is called rabbinic midrash. From the 2nd century A.D. on there are preserved midrashim (plural of midrash) wherein there is a line-by-line commentary on a book like Exodus or Numbers in the style: Rabbi X said this...and Rabbi Y said this.)

Midrashic activity in the Hebrew Bible

Modern scholars have pointed to a variety of biblical books as examples of midrashic activity. Vermes has claimed that Deuteronomy is partly the result of midrashic enterprise. Since laws are made only to be applied, these have to be adapted to the changing conditions of place and time. This explains why we find elements of great antiquity side-by-side with formulations or provisions which reflect the preoccupations of a later age. As an example one can cite Dt. chapters 12-26. This is called the Deuteronomic code. This code reflects social conditions later than those of the period of Moses. Dt. 12 prescribes only one place of worship whereas the people had not even stepped into the promised land and sanctuaries were not yet built. Life during the time of Moses was a nomadic way of life whereas the legal codes represent codes adapted to a more advanced and social way of life. Hence in Dt. ancient codes are mingled with more recent codes. The latter therefore can be considered as midrashic elements within the book of Deuteronomy. Another clear example is the laws concerning the sabbatical year. Dt. 15:7 speaks of town life which town life did not exist during the time of sojourning in the desert. Psalms 78, 105 and 106 are also midrashic retellings of the history of Israel. Psalms generally suppose a context of worship. But the same type of midrashic retelling is found in another context that of wisdom literature. Wisdom literature supposes a different context. Scholars call it natural theology or creation theology. The covenant relationship or the intimate relationship between God and mankind is hardly mentioned in this type of literature. Book of Wisdom chapters 16-19, Ecclesiasticus 44-50 are examples of this type of literature. These chapters are a free interpretation of the ancient biblical narratives in a midrashic manner. Narratives such as Jonah take some principle of Jewish belief and adapt it to the contemporary situation in a fictitious narrative (elaborate). The LXX is often more a paraphrase than a translation, this comes not from ignorance of the Hebrew language nor from negligent or deliberate infidelity to the original text but from a desire to reinterpret and explain the text so that it would be more meaningful for the Hellenistic Jews living in the diaspora in the 2nd century BC. (We can think of the American and British translations of the Bible).

✕ The NT exhibits no small amount of midrash. We are more familiar with the text of the NT. We are also generally aware of the connexion between the OT & NT. However we may not be too aware of the many precise references in the NT to the OT. The infancy narratives in Mt. & Lk. are excellent examples of midrash. (elaborate). One can cite many particular references: Mt. drew from midrashim on the birth of Moses, Nm. 24:17, Ho. 11:1. Luke draws upon many OT figures such as Abraham, Sarah, the parents of Samuel and Eli. Lk. bases himself on their call narratives and their faith. His hymns may be based on OT psalms of praise. An example of *halaka* (midrashim on the law) would be the sermon on the mount. Many more examples could be adduced from the NT for midrashim applied to the public ministry of Jesus. One can think perhaps of the miracles of Jesus: the multiplication of the loaves, the calming of the storm etc. (elaborate). Of special importance, but often overlooked are the passion narratives. They are full of OT references. One can read Ps. 22 and see how much of it is applied to the suffering and dying Jesus, not to mention also the references to the suffering servant in deuterio-Isaiah. ✕

The use of midrash for contemporary theology.

Usually theology has as its vehicle a broad philosophical system including some type of anthropology. One can think of the cosmology of the OT and even of its anthropology. It is only against the background of this ancient cosmology that one can understand the creation account in Gen.1. (explain) According to its anthropology one can divide a human being into *Ruah, nephesh and basar*. (Hebrew). These 3 terms correspond very roughly to spirit, soul and body in English. In Greek they may correspond to *Pneuma, psyche and soma*. My point is that to make the biblical texts relevant to modern times we have to make use of some type of modern cosmology and anthropology as contemporary theology does. We are very much used to the usage of Aristotelian philosophy in Thomistic scholastic theology. Can we do away with this type of philosophy in our theologising today especially in the East? The answer is that in some sense the documents of Vatican 2 succeeded. It tried as much as possible to avoid even the commonly used Thomistic terminology. One clear example can be cited where the document on Revelation *Dei Verbum* refrained from using the terms principal and instrumental causes in referring to God and man as authors of the Bible. It is the same with the Eucharist; the word transubstantiation is not used. Let us take some examples of how midrash can work in a contemporary context without having recourse to any traditional philosophical framework.

God.

The existence of God is the starting point of Christianity. It is the central concept and reality in the Bible in both testaments. All religions of the East do not believe in God as Christians do. However the existence of God is the primary presupposition of the Bible. It is never proved but presupposed. How can we in a modern context of Buddhism where God is not at all the central concept or where God is totally overlooked or not affirmed, speak about God or explain this concept to the Buddhists. If midrash is making the biblical ideas relevant to the modern contemporary scene now can we make God understood to the Buddhists? One way is to speak of the Buddhist meta-cosmic reality which is nirvana. This state of nirvana is a sort of absolute which does not share in the vicissitudes of the cosmic order. However life in the cosmic order has a bearing on the metacosmic reality, nirvana. This idea comes quite close to the final definitive state of the Kingdom of God where for the Christians God is central. This final state of God's Kingdom does not suffer the vicissitudes of this life but this life has a bearing on the final state. In this manner of presenting God and his Kingdom a Christian approach can be made to Buddhism even though there are differences amidst the similarities. What is important is that an 'absolute' is being affirmed by both religions. In both these religions this 'absolute' is a metacosmic reality. In theistic religions such as Hinduism and Islam the 'absolute' does not pose a problem. It is traditional and fashionable to say that in Christianity the 'absolute' is personal and in Buddhism it is not. It must be said that in making these affirmations we are talking from two different philosophical presuppositions. In short it means that the concept of 'person' or the composition of the human being is viewed differently in the 2 religions. Of course when God is affirmed there is worship in the

strict sense. In Hinduism and in Islam there is worship of God or gods. In popular Buddhism there can be worship of the Buddha. Not however theoretically, because Buddha does not claim to be a God.

Jesus Christ

With regard to God one can come to terms with a religion that does not affirm God if that religion affirms some type of absolute, be it a person, a state or a value. However with Christ it is different. The NT affirms that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of humankind. How can a Christian basing herself/himself on the Bible (NT) adapt this faith affirmation to the contemporary times especially in the Asian climate? Asia is strongly religious with religious beliefs that antedate Christianity. Most of the Asian countries after gaining independence have become strongly nationalistic. With nationalism has also come the revival of their religiosity with a certain pride. In this atmosphere it is extremely difficult for the Christians to profess and to proclaim openly that Jesus Christ is the only saviour of humankind. This I would say is the most difficult theological problem that the Christians are faced with in Asia. Moreover the NT is quite explicit and direct in its affirmation about Jesus Christ as the only saviour. Among ourselves we can speak of the fulfillment theory, of anonymous Christians etc. But how can these theories be spoken of in an open dialogue with the adherents of other religions? We can speak of the word and the spirit of God that were operative in the cosmos before the incarnation. At the incarnation the Word became flesh in Jesus. After the resurrection the Word is Jesus the Christ, the Risen Lord, with his glorified humanity. He is the Lord of the cosmos. Cosmic Lord is not a scholastic term. It is a term used in deuterio-Pauline epistles: Ephesians 1:3-14, Colossians 1:15-29. Jesus the cosmic Christ is the sacrament of the Word who is God. Divinity dwells fully in Jesus the Christ. Hence Jesus Christ and Word are identical. Much more than before the resurrection when the Word was with the earthly humanity of Jesus. The earthly humanity of the Word was limited. Not however the glorified humanity of the Cosmic Lord. In Mt's Gospel the Risen Lord is the Lord of heaven and earth (Mt. 28). From this perspective the Cosmic Christ, the Word, who is God can be operative in other religions. The human Jesus is now the Cosmic Christ. The Cosmic Christ is the Word and the Word is God.

Hence in our dialogue with other religions we can agree that God is working in all religions. But in our dialogue will we be denying that Jesus Christ is the only saviour of humankind? Not necessarily. Before the Word became incarnate the Word was operative in other religions. After the Word became incarnate, and after the resurrection Jesus the Christ is fully identified with the Word. And the Word, Jesus Christ is God. We Christians then can retain our affirmations and beliefs in Jesus the Christ and still affirm this Word who is God is operative in all religions. I repeat, we Christians can hold salvation is through Jesus Christ and in our dialogue speak of God, the Word equal to the Absolute, working in all religions. In our popular and devotional language we are not careful with these distinctions but in a more technical level we should be.

The mystery of the Incarnation is unique. The human Jesus is assumed by the Son of God, the Word. Jesus is the Word made flesh. However, other 'salvation figures' can be illuminated by the Word so as to become signs of salvation for their adherents. This as we see is God's general plan for the human race. According to the first apologists, not only could individuals— Socrates, Buddha and others— receive divine truth from the Logos, but human enterprises— philosophy, Greek or Asian wisdom—

were also channels of divine light (Dupuis). This is veritable midrash— application of the Bible to contemporary situation, even though the Bible both the OT& NT had negative attitudes towards other religions. The position of the NT can be understood as somewhat limited. Because of the imminent expectation of the parousia the Christians were so much taken up with the second coming of Christ that all had to be converted to Christ before the end. Hence evangelization took place with much urgency and enthusiasm.

That is why other religions were looked down upon by the NT authors and the early fathers of the Church. The Fathers and apologists however, gave some value to the philosophies of these peoples.

Today as we value positively the other religions, dialogue can be for mutual enrichment. Dialogue can lead to common social action, taking a common stand on some common issues etc.

One can value some aspects of the other's religion such as meditation, of the inspiration of the other's sacred scriptures, of educating people in faith in a multi-religious context etc. (More of this later)

The Church

Another belief to which we were tied down was that there was no salvation possible outside the Church. This is a corollary of the belief that Jesus is the only saviour. He founded the Church which is the community of salvation. Hence there is no salvation outside this community the Church. Outside the Church there is no salvation is not strictly a biblical statement. When first used this statement meant (in Cyprian) that those who left the Church, namely apostates had no possibility of being saved. However the idea behind this statement understood as it sounds can be taken to be biblical. This concept can be found in the OT where God's people were God's chosen ones. They alone enjoyed God's favour. In the NT the prominent idea is that those who believed in Jesus Christ must be baptized into the Christian community of salvation, the Church. Subsequently membership in the Church became important. A necessity for salvation. The missionary thrust in the Church was to plant the Church and the means for this was baptism. At one stage baptism became an end in itself. Even baptisms on the sly became quite common especially of helpless infants born even of parents of other faiths! This idea worked according to the theology of the time. If the infant died it could go to heaven. But what if the infant survived and lived an adult life practicing another religion! Of what use would have been baptism?

All these attempts, one could say, were means to translate biblical concepts into life and situations. Biblically these attempts could be termed midrash. However when life situations change, then midrash means how to make the Bible relevant to the changed times? How then can we apply the concept 'extra ecclesiam nulla salus' to our situation in Asia? Officially the Church seems to be still speaking of planting the Church as one of the principal objects of evangelization. This is very much a biblical concept. Those who believe and are baptized are saved. This cannot be denied by a Christian. This, however, can be the 'ideal end' of evangelization. There may be practical obstacles to be overcome especially in Asia to attain this ideal. But

there may be also other scriptural texts that could be taken into consideration in our Christian missionary endeavour.

One important text adduced by Indian theologians, especially George Soares Prabhu is the one taken from the sermon on the mount in Mt's Gospel: 5:16: *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.* In this text Christians are called upon to live, to let the light of their life shine before others so that others may glorify the Father in heaven. Here there is no question of others believing in Jesus Christ, no question of the Church directly but only the Father.

(Of course Mt speaks of belief in Jesus Christ and baptism in chapter 28) But 5:16 is also an important text because it is from the Sermon on the Mount, the most important sermon among the 5 sermons contained in the Gospel of Mt. When Christians live well before others it is the heavenly Father who is glorified by others! One can interpret this text by saying that when Christians live well naturally they glorify the Father in heaven. But by living well the Christian life they make it possible for others to glorify the Father in heaven. How? Naturally by making others live well after following the example of the Christians. There is then a conversion of the Christian to the Father, to His kingdom and the values of the Kingdom. This requires conversion on the part of the Christian also. Conversion is not a once-for-all event. One can be a baptized Christian only in name. Conversion can take on many aspects. Every season of Lent we speak of conversion. We can speak of daily conversion. We can also speak of conversion by others to the values of the Father's kingdom because of our example. Others may not necessarily become Christian! This is an aspect which we in Asia must explore and must be conscious of. Here we are not denying the aspect of conversion to Jesus Christ and to the Church. It still remains the ideal end. In Asia where Christians are in a very very small minority one cannot envisage the total conversion of Asia to Christ in the foreseeable future, barring only a miracle on the part of God. The imminent Parousia, urgent conversions were the order of the day in early Christianity. However the world has lasted for more than 2000 years after the event of Christ and there are no signs of the imminent end of the world except for some fanatical Christian sects that shout from housetops about the imminent end of the world. Other Asian religions are taking deeper roots in Asian soil and also in other parts of the world. We Christians cannot say that these phenomena are beyond or outside God's providence for humanity. Hence the planting of the Church and belief in Jesus Christ become very distant dreams in Asia. It is in this context that we have to turn to the Father and the Kingdom to make some sense of the Asian situation and to make our Christian lives and the lives of the non-Christians more meaningful. This brings us to the next question of evangelization.

Evangelization

Another moot point in contemporary Christian living is evangelization. Especially in Asia, Christian Churches are regarded with great suspicion because of evangelization which is often identified with conversion. When we go back to the Bible, to the OT, we see that evangelization was concentric. What does this mean? God's people were chosen so that through their witness others may recognize Yahweh, turn to Him and come to Him. This recognition did not come from God's people going out to others (eccentric evangelization) but others coming to them to

their God. That means concentrating (at the centre) in Jerusalem where Yahweh dwells and is worshipped. But as time went on, especially after the exile, the people of God came to believe that Yahweh dwelt not only in Jerusalem but also outside Jerusalem. Yahweh appeared to Ezechiel in a foreign land during the exile. His transcendence over space was clearly seen by the people. From this time onwards there was a change of missionary perspective among the people of God. The book of Jonah addresses this problem. Jonah is reluctant to obey God's Word to go to the pagan country Niniveh. However, God sees to it that he somehow or other goes to Niniveh. To his utter consternation Jonah experiences the utter goodness of the so called pagans whom Jonah with his own people looked down upon. The Ninivites were converted to Yahweh at the preaching of Jonah. This is the beginning of the change of perspective in the missionary activity of the People of God. The start of the eccentric missionary movement- going out to others instead of waiting for others to come to them. Hence there is a change of vision in God's plan of salvation, in the inspired Word of God-the Bible. It is God adapting to a new situation. He appeared to Ezechiel in a foreign land. The People of God adapt themselves to a new situation after the exile. They come to realize the intrinsic goodness of others.

In the NT there is a similar situation. Jesus the missionary par excellence comes from the Father to this earth. But his missionary activity is restricted to his own country and mostly to his own people and also out of necessity for a very short period of time- 3 years or less. However after his resurrection he sends disciples to the then known world to evangelize all peoples. This mandate was taken over by all the subsequent missionaries. It can be said that you and I are Christians because of missionaries. Today however a change of perspective has taken place. There are theological reasons for this change. The "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" theological principle was at work then. This meant that peoples of other religions had no chance of been saved. These religions were considered man made attempts to reach up to God - the Absolute. These peoples were looked down upon as pagans! This theological stand could be said to be based on the Bible-both the Testaments. If midrash is applying the Bible to contemporary situations, what is the changed contemporary situation? How did it come about? If the purpose of this seminar is to apply the Biblical doctrine to the contemporary situation without having recourse to any theological jargon, how can this be done?

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what brought about the change of situation. Perhaps it is a deeper study of the Bible. The Bible tells us that all men and women are made to the image and likeness of God. Because they are the image of God they can yearn for the very reality of God in their lives. Indeed it is in God that the image will find his/her fulfillment. This has deep theological consequences. Then the sacred books of other religions can in some way be inspired. What is written in them are their groanings for their creator. Then the religions are not man made. They have traces of revelation in them, however one understands revelation. This means these religions are not simply man made religions. They are a response to a divine initiative, the divine imprint in them. If so these religions can also lead their people to salvation. We may explain how of this many ways. (I have spoken of this above in the section on Jesus Christ) But the fact of salvation in other religions is accepted officially by the Church. What then is evangelization in this changed theological perspective? Pope John Paul 2 has said that one of the primary purposes of evangelization is the planting of the Church. This is very biblical point of view. Mt 28

speaks of Jesus commanding the disciples to go and baptize. Peter says in the Acts: repent, believe in Jesus Christ and be baptized, Acts 2. The Church is the community of the baptized. Have we to ignore this Biblical data in the new situation in Asia. Not necessarily. We can still claim that to be baptized and become a member of the community is a grace. This means in the Church one can consciously and knowingly acknowledge, worship and praise God. This can remain still the final goal of mission. But before this final grace there are other graces that all people can receive. There are common values that all religions uphold. Values such as honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, tolerance, kindness towards others etc. What Asia needs today is for people of all religions to be commonly converted to these values and to work together for the building of a just society. This is our common mission. Christians can continue to be converted to Christ and bear witness to Christ. Buddhists can do it their way and become better Buddhists etc. In our encounters we can be mutually enriched, and converted to common values while working for a just society. Buddhists and others can be taken up with our witness to Jesus Christ and be converted to Christianity, if it is God's will. However it is also God's will that we live in peace and harmony with others. Because the other world religions are here to stay. In fact they are earlier than Christianity. Then with our common Asian religiosity we can face the other problems of poverty, injustice in society etc. with a common front. One important NT text which can be considered parallelly with the command to baptize in Mt 28, is Mt.5:16: *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.* This is an important text coming from the Sermon on the Mount the core sermon in Matthew's Gospel. Here it is not a question of Baptism but for others to glorify the Father. Is not the Father glorified when they work with us for the building of His Kingdom and its values here on earth? Is this not our common mission? It is spelt out to us in the sermon on the Mount.

Problems of syncretism

If we evaluate other religions positively we can honor them and respect them.

1- Can't we use them in the liturgy. Not exclusively but as we use the OT before the NT can't we use other books before we use the OT. In the Bible there is a negative attitude towards other religions. Hence accommodation is necessary in this area. especially in the East.

2- It is also necessary to distinguish between culture and religious rite. We must be able to incorporate cultural rites in our liturgy. The best judges of this are we ourselves who are on the spot. We are the best people to explain this to our people. Of course we will have to get the necessary approval for these. In the Bible there is not much difference between religion and culture. Is it the same even in the East.

3- We will have to have a more positive view of mixed marriages. The Bible does not approve this very much. Girls and boys belonging to different religions study together, grow up together. Hence more than before there is understanding, tolerance among them regarding religious and cultural practices. Perhaps these boys and girls can also inter marry and beget children who in turn will live in a mixed religious atmosphere.