

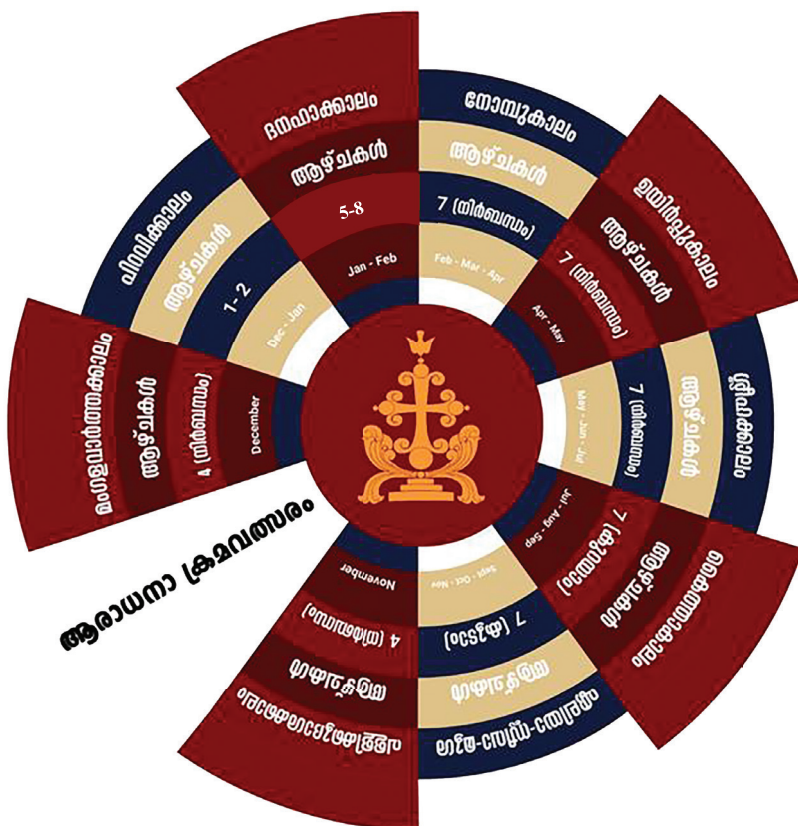
## Chapter 4

# Christian Life: Celebration of Faith



Recollect the occasions of receiving holy sacraments in your life. Share your memories.

(For example, the day of receiving the solemn Holy Communion).



“God our saviour  
desires everyone to be  
saved and to come to  
the knowledge  
of the truth”  
(1 Tim 2:4).

### The Liturgical Calendar of The Syro-Malabar Church

Worshipping God is the celebration of faith in Christian life. Liturgy is the most established form of worship in the Church. We commemorate the divine mystery of Jesus in the liturgy. The established forms of worship in the Church are sacraments instituted by Jesus, Sacramentals instituted

by the Church and devotions and rituals evolved in various regional cultural backgrounds. Liturgy of the hours prepares us for the solemn worships. All these have one objective - our salvation.

### The Celebrations of Faith in the Church

Every celebration of faith is an expression of adoration and thanksgiving of the people of God to the merciful God for all His good deeds.

#### Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Mystery is the salvific work of the Messiah for the redemption of humanity. Paschal Mystery includes the blessed passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus to heaven. Church proclaims this in the liturgy (CCC 1067).

#### Mysteries of Christ

Mysteries of Christ include the preparation for his arrival, two phases of his life – hidden and public, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension to heaven and his second coming.

Jesus attained the salvation of humanity through the paschal mystery. **St. Paul describes this mystery of Christ, realized in history as 'mystery hidden for ages' (Eph 3:9).** Liturgy in the Church is the proclamation and celebration of the paschal mystery.

#### Liturgy

The word "liturgy" originally meant a "public work" or a "service in the name of/on behalf of the people." In Christian tradition it means the participation of the People of God in "the work of God." Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church (CCC1069).

The twelve doctrines of faith in the Apostles Creed teach us what the Catholic Church believes. This is proclaimed in the Church during the liturgy - the greatest celebration of faith.



Prepare a chart of places related to the liturgical calendar.

Nativity	Bethlehem
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



What is liturgy?



Eph 3:9

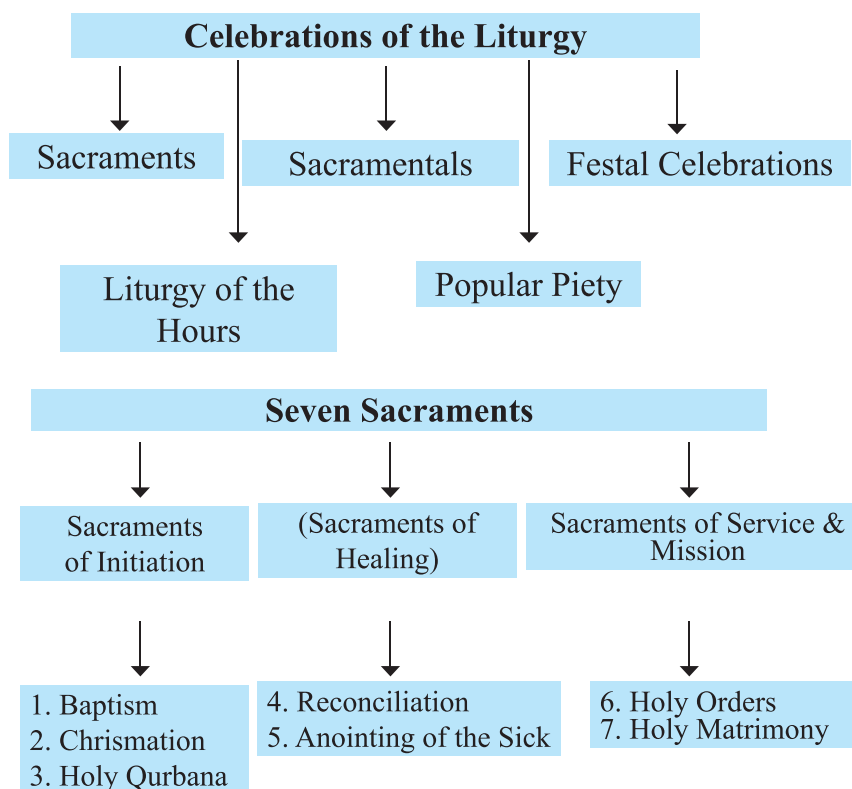


Why Paschal Mystery?

### Reasons for Celebrating Paschal Mystery

- As Jesus is the path of salvation for all the people
- To continue the work of salvation till the end of the world
- As our saviour and high priest, Jesus continues the work of salvation in the Church, with the Church and through the Church
- As the Church demands the conscious, lively and fruitful participation

### The Domains of Celebration of the Liturgy



The sacraments are the visible signs and means of divine grace. The sacraments, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, provide us divine life. “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify humans, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God” (CCC1123).



Can we increase or decrease the number of sacraments?  
Why?



“Not to go to Communion is like someone dying of thirst beside a spring”  
(St John Maria Vianney).

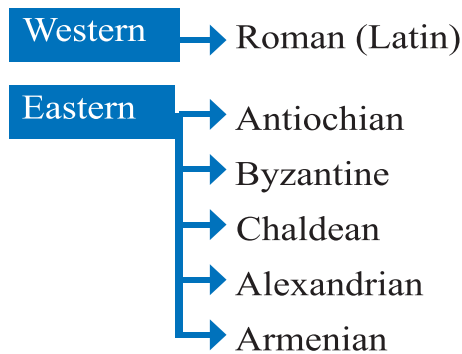


Why should I receive the sacraments?  
Discuss  
YOUCAT 174

## ? Why are Sacraments Administered in Different Ways?

Sacraments of the Church have a common structure but different forms of celebration. In different liturgical traditions, though the way of administering the sacraments differ, the overall structure remains the same. For example, the mystery celebrated in the Holy Qurbana is the same in every individual Church (*Sui Iuris*) though the prayers and rituals are different. The administration of sacraments entrusted to Church for its preservation has elements instituted divinely and elements that can be altered.

### Liturgical Traditions



The criterion that ensures unity in spite of the diverse liturgical traditions is the faithfulness to the Apostolic Traditions. This is the faith passed down from the Apostles and the sacraments celebrated by the Apostles.

### 1. Sacraments

The sacraments operate not by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God. When a sacrament is celebrated according to the order of the Church, the power of Jesus and Holy Spirit works in it and through it, irrespective of the personal purity of the celebrant. The efficacy of the sacrament depends on the preparedness and the attitude of the recipient. The purity in personal life of the celebrant can help the preparedness of the recipient.



“Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the blessed sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us”  
**(St Alphonsus Ligouri).**



Discuss if the spiritual blessings from sacraments is affected by the degree of holiness of the priest? Why?



Prepare a chart on sacraments and sacramentals

## 2. Liturgy of the Hours

The objective of Liturgy of the Hours is to divide a day into seven units (yama) and purify each unit via praise and worship. Every day at specific intervals, the Church offers her praise, worship, thankfulness, adoration and requests to God through this official prayer. Through the liturgy of the hours, the Church worships the Lord incessantly and intercede for the entire world (Sacred Liturgy 83). The entire liturgy of the hours is offered in the monasteries. All other places three of them are offered mainly in the evening, morning and night.

The Liturgy of the Hours	
Ramsa	Evening Prayer (6 pm)
Subba's	Night Prayer (Post Supper) (9 pm)
Leliya	Midnight Prayer (12 am)
Qalad 'Sahra	Early Morning Prayer (3 am)
Sapra	Morning Prayer (6 am)
Qutta'a	Forenoon Prayer (9 am)
Endana	Noon Prayer (12 pm)

## 3. Sacramentals

Sacramentals are the signs derived from the sacraments which are instituted by Christ. They prepare the members of the Church to receive the fruits of the sacraments and purify the different occasions of life. The Church aims at the purification of its people, objects and places through sacramentals. With the support of the praying community, sacramentals also help us to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit and prepare us to cooperate with it.

Different Forms of Sacramentals	The Structure of Sacramentals
Blessing of the Myron (Oil)	Prayer
Religious Vows	Laying on of hands
Blessings	Sign of the Cross
Blessing of Articles	Sprinkling Holy Water
Exorcism	
Funeral	



What is Liturgy of the Hours?



What is the difference between Sacraments and Sacramentals?

The Greek word 'Myron' means oil. Myron blessed by a bishop is used in sacraments involving anointing and consecration of the Church.

'Exorcism' means casting demons out. Though all priests, through holy orders, are empowered to do exorcism, some are specially entrusted with this responsibility by the bishop.

#### 4. Popular Piety

Popular piety finds an important place among the liturgical celebrations. Several devotions and rituals are part of this.

##### Devotions

Acts of devotions help us to learn in depth about the mysteries of Christ's life—his birth, life, death and resurrection—and enable us to participate in the liturgy of the Church actively. Observing lent, honoring sacred relics, reciting rosary, participating in the way of the cross, and taking part in pilgrimages are some important examples of acts of devotions. All these lead us to the liturgy of the Church. The grace acquired through acts of devotion helps us progress in our spiritual journey while we lead by example and inspire others.

##### Rituals

Rituals are different traditional practices carried out in faith with the aim of spiritually enriching the members of the Church. There are many traditional practices associated with the birth and death of members of the Church. All these rituals have the objective of spiritual enrichment of the faithful. Most of the rituals associated with birth have evolved as a blend of religious faith and regional culture. Naming children after biblical persons, designing ornaments with holy cross, seeking blessings and prayers of godparents are some of the rituals.

Commemorating the deceased is another significant and widespread tradition. Fasting for a designated period and making sacrifices are ways to express love and respect for the departed family member.

Special prayers for the deceased on the seventh day, forty first day, death anniversaries, prayers conducted



What is the difference between Devotions and Rituals?

at home and in the cemetery are some of the rituals practiced by Christians..

## 5. Festal Celebrations

We have a tradition of celebrating feasts according to the liturgical calendar. **These celebrations of the Catholic Church help the spiritual growth and fellowship of the faithful in Jesus. Festal celebrations lead us towards fullness of holiness.** Feasts in the Church are divided into three categories according to their importance: Feasts of the Lord (Maranaya), solemn feasts and ordinary feasts.

### Feasts in the Church

#### I. Feasts of the Lord:

1. Christmas (December 25)
2. Naming of Jesus (January 1)
3. Epiphany (January 6)
4. Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (February 2)
5. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter
6. Ascension (Sixth Thursday after Easter)
7. Pentecost
8. Feast of Transfiguration (August 6)
9. Exaltation of the Cross (September 14)

**II. Solemn Feasts:** Feasts of Blessed Virgin Mary, memorials of saints

**III. Ordinary Feasts:** Feasts in oriental tradition, feasts as per the calendar of the Universal Church

#### ? What Unfolds During the Celebrations of Faith?

- Reenactment of the mysteries of God
- We receive blessings of God
- We worship God
- Prepare the faithful for communion with Jesus

#### Relevance of Celebrations of Faith

"Liturgy, the celebration of the mystery of Christ, is the fulfillment of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. "From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the



What are the objectives of feasts?



Jn 6:54

Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way” (Sacred Liturgy 10).

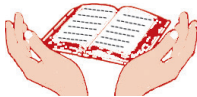
Through the active participation in the Holy Qurbana, the people of God experience the various dimensions of mystery of Christ.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy (Sacred Liturgy 14). Along with the Church, we should strive to lead a life of faith through active participation in liturgy in union with Jesus.

### My Convictions



1. The liturgy and all celebrations of faith are not mere rituals, but are the proclamations of my strong Christian faith.
2. Celebrations of faith help to glorify God and purify myself.
3. The Church desires my active and fruitful participation in the liturgical celebrations.



### Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to  
Matthew Chapters 22-28



### Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day” (Jn 6:54).



### My Resolution

I will participate in the holy sacraments and all acts of piety with preparedness and faith.



Discuss if the present way of celebrating feasts in the Church are helping the growth of faith and sense of fellowship? Do you suggest any changes?