

Clarifying Facts on Knanaya Racism

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I would like to follow up on my last posting which pointed to Pope Francis's recent reflection about not preselecting our neighbors into the Church or family. Doing so is pagan not Christian said the Pope. Let us remember that he also said a few days ago that inequality in the Church and society is the biggest sin, crying to heaven for retribution. And yet, inequality in the Knanaya Church is blatantly practiced, even encouraged by Bishops and priests. They even have asked the racist members to defy changes made. Pastoral work is the "care of souls" not the "care of blood".

As early as 1982, The Indian CBCI also said this:

We state categorically that caste, with its consequent effects of discrimination and "caste mentality", has no place in Christianity. It is in fact a denial of Christianity – because it is inhuman. It violates the God-given dignity and Equality of the human person. God created man in his own image and likeness. He accepts and loves every human being without distinction.

The Knanaya Bishop Mar Kunnachery was a signatory to this statement. Yet nearly 40 years after, has the CBCI in India taken any action on the racist practices of the Kottayam Diocese and community? This is similar to the ways the Church has not taken any action on the sexual abuse cases reported even more than 40 years ago. As the Church finally tries to come to terms with its handling of these abuse cases today, even at the recent

Synod of Church leaders in Rome, media reports suggest that the Cardinal of Mumbai was not transparent. Also, the region of Kerala, India is listed as one among the 31 countries required to regularly report on such issues to Rome. One wonders why The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar church did not even attend this Synod.

I also happened to read “Dwell in the Love”, a pastoral letter on racism written by the late Cardinal Francis George. He said racism contradicts God’s will. We cannot love God without loving our neighbor. People who are racist are trapped, not free. He called on the Church to lay out a welcome mat that embraces cultural differences and take corrective action to combat the notion of racial superiority without considering the moral implications or the psychological and moral wounds inflicted on others. This community of faith cannot become private clubs. In the Knanaya parishes and missions, these “clubs” do not admit exogamous children, family members and even adopted children. How unfortunate that pastors and Bishops actively support such exclusivity, including inciting people to rebel against established ecclesiastical authority.



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