

Biocratic Celebration as the Benchmark of Being Blessed

A Triadic Perspective on Covenantal Community Consciousness

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Introduction

The Nicene symbol of faith commences with the beautiful unfolding of life with an incredible masterstroke, “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.” Life made its footprint magically and magnificently, tracing its origin in God, the source and summit of life in manifold forms and names under the canopy of heaven and earth. Life was in the beginning. Life was God. Life is made manifest in the course of moments but in the providence of God. From life springs forth life; it thirsts for and moves to life in fullness, temporal and eternal. Life matters, for thought, Word, and deed have their axis. What to say? The articulation of the life-giving Nicene symbol is the fruit of many heads and hearts put together for the life of the Church; it was for a harmonious and prosperous life of the faithful in the world. Life is the arc of celebration throughout the history of creation, including the Nicene Council and its Symbol of faith. Is this congress not convened because of and for a better life? The Ecumenical Council Nicaea celebrated in Asia in the year 325 inspires and motivates us to reflect, renew, and revive the lifeline of our faith story in Malya Asia, a meaningful act for a third encounter rediscovering the chords of harmony and joy in Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Master.

With the above preliminary note, it is appropriate to clarify a few terms found in the title of this paper. The term ‘biocracy’ denotes the rule by life, meaning life should be given its unique place in governance. ‘Biocracy’ is used in comparison with democracy, which is the rule by the people. It is high time to highlight the significance of the principle of life as the substratum of human flourishing. Majoritarian rule often neglects minority rights and destroys the ecosystem and equilibrium of interconnectivity vital for life, forcing us to pause and revive the care and concern for the community of life, the substratum of human growth and development. Biocratic is the adjectival form of biocracy. This term is not used in opposition to democracy. Instead, it is used to underline the importance of life and the community of life compared to the community of people. Life is the beginning of all. The creation story and evolution theory vouch for the precedence of life to the emergence of human beings. Human beings have to take a call on life, the first and final act of God.

The term celebration refers to relationships. Where there is life, there are relationships. Life springs through the celebration of relationships of all that exists. Over against the dyadic relationships – vertical and horizontal – a triadic relationship – radical, horizontal, and vertical – attracts our attention. To have holistic relationships, threefold realities – God, creation, and human beings – must be recognised, respected and responded to. Triadic perspective, therefore, refers to the threefold relationships with God, creation, and fellow beings, having union and communion with these realities and building up relationality through rationality.

‘Covenant community consciousness’ refers to the biblical and theological notion of community, pointing to the celebration of relationships based on the covenant of God, the totality of the network of the Lord, the land, and people. Such a covenant community consciousness enables and empowers people to befriend everything in the universe as the handiwork of God, naturally promoting a sense of the sacred and service to all in the world, which will impart a sense of reverence and lead people to a mystical encounter with the nature, one of the two books of revelation, as Saint Ephrem exhorts.

I want to discuss the topic under three interrelated sections, namely, 1) Biocratic Vision, 2) Eucharistic Celebration, and 3) Beatific Horizon.

1. Biocratic Vision

Starting from God, the wellspring of life, the lifestream flows incessantly through creation, reaching out to human beings who are part of God's creation; the Nicene Symbol looks for "the life of the world to come." Nicene Symbol is odd to the Lord of life; all things springing from God's making, spiralling up to the mystery of redemption in Christ, who is co-existing and co-eternal with God, showing forth the spirit, "the giver of life" towards the orchestration of "life of the world". The Lord of life and the celebration of life form the arc of the Nicene Symbol.

1.1 "... maker of all things visible and invisible."

The opening sentence of the Nicene Creed vouches for life and its manifold manifestations, "We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." All things visible and invisible are the making of the Lord our God. Admitting God as the Creator, the Symbol proclaims God as the source of life. Life flows from God, or God is life. There is no life without God. Wherever there is life, there is God. According to the profession of faith, we acknowledge the permeating and pervading presence of the Lord in the universe, visible and invisible, because it is the handiwork of God. Does the phrase "things visible and invisible" point to the evolving work of the Lord in the world? Undoubtedly, the seen and the unseen are from God. This belief necessitates a plain and profound admission that everything in the universe shares in the divine life and, hence, is sacred and reveals God's beauty.

In his *Hymn on Paradise*, Saint Ephrem of Nisibis recounts two Books of Revelation: Nature and the Scripture, meaning the faithful should make the best use of both the books for a better encounter with the Lord, though the ways may differ. All beings are epiphanies of God's life, and, therefore, all deserve recognition, respect and response from human beings, the image of God in the universe. Creation's truth, goodness, and beauty lead us to God's truth, goodness and beauty, for one mirrors the other.

1.2 "Through him all things were made."

The statement, "Through him all things were made", is a recognition of Jesus Christ's role in creation, substantiated by biblical and theological perspectives. Moreover, it is a continuation of the first sentence of the Nicene Symbol, which underscores the handiwork of God the Father and emphasises the Son's operation in the present. This sentence comes in the middle of the Symbol. Saint Paul writes, "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . all things have been created through him and for him" (Col 1:15-16). The motif of creation and life is vibrant in these words of the sacred scripture.

As in the first instance of the Symbol, so, too, in the present articulation, "Through him all things were made" invites our attention to develop an adequate reverential and friendly approach and attitude to the world and everything in it, for all things – life in all things – reveal Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master. Jesus, through the mystery of the Incarnation, has further accentuated the importance and relevance of caring for the world and every life form in it. In addition, Jesus picks up things from creation to illustrate the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Jesus takes the imagery of a grain of wheat to unfold the mystery of death and life, a self-portrait of his life and ministry. Whether it is a mustard seed or a grain of wheat, it reveals the beauty and glory of God. By his baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus made water holy, and the heavens mingled with earth, showing the good pleasure of God the Father about Jesus. Using the soil, Jesus manifested the

healing power of the elements of the world. Through his death on the Cross, Jesus raised the Tree of Life in the new garden of God. The garden of Gethsemane gave Jesus an ambience of contemplation of and communion with God.

All things were made through him, and today, they make the Saviour's presence – loving, living, and healing presence – visible and tangible. They sing in unison the hymn of praise and thanksgiving. Don't we have to deal with life and everything in the world – an impression of the Emmanuel – as faithful and friendly disciples of Jesus Christ?

1.3 "... maker of heaven and earth."

The Nicene Symbol professes God is the maker of heaven and earth. The images of heaven and earth cover the whole universe, giving us a profound feeling of the arc of life. They present a complete picture of reality and share the sense of life with all its forms and stages. This comprehensive painting of the universe entails a corresponding comportment with everything in it. All things in heaven and earth belong to God – the Lord of All – and, therefore, to all those who belong to God. Heaven and earth declare God's glory. Are we not called to behold it with our eyes and sing praises with our lips? Participating in God's glory revealed in heaven and on earth, we journey to eternal life, God's gratuitous gift.

The Book of *Genesis* begins with a fitting narrative of the truth of the universe, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). All things in heaven and earth beat with life. The prayer taught by Jesus resonates with the pulsation of life in heaven and earth, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:9-10). There is life on earth, a replica of heavenly reality, for the author of the two is the same. Maybe something is missing on earth compared to heaven. Is the rhythm or harmony missing? Is it due to the lack of a symphony? Alignment is the need of the hour, capable of mingling earth and heaven. To enforce harmony and beauty on earth, we have to imbibe the perspective of the Gardener or the Creator. In other words, to become the image of the children of God, who till and keep the earth to make it a wonderful and fruitful garden for the joy of all.

2. Eucharistic Celebration

The Liturgical celebration's style aligns with the Nicene Symbol's structure. Being a member of an Eastern Church, belonging to the Syro-Malabar Church of the Thomas Christians of India, I will be referring to the liturgical text and celebration of the ancient apostolic Church in India. The Liturgical celebration resonates with biblical insights and theological perspectives synchronising with Asian and Indian ethos. According to the Eastern Churches, the Liturgy is the *locus theologicus*, which celebrates their Christian existence and what they are. The adage of *lex orandi lex credendi* holds good in Eastern Church Liturgy.

As Eastern theology is more symbolic, so is also Eastern Liturgy. The faithful experience heaven on earth in their liturgical celebration, an invitation to immerse themselves in the heavenly and earthly blending. It is a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem while contemplating the Mystery of Christ and committing themselves to the integral development of the whole world. Nothing is alien to Christian worship. We take everything to God in prayer, praise, thanksgiving, worship and adoration.

Merciful God! Bless us. Grant that all of us, as one body, may properly please You throughout our lives by works of justice that reconcile us with You. Make us worthy to offer You never-ending praise, homage, thanksgiving, and adoration. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Lord of all, forever. (39)

I celebrate these divine mysteries for the people, Your flock, for the remission of their debts, the forgiveness of their sins, the salvation of their souls, the reconciliation of the whole world, and for peace and tranquillity of all the Churches. (45)

2.1 Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, hope to human beings.

The angelic hymn at the Nativity of Jesus Christ marks the formal beginning of the Liturgy of the Qurbana (the Eucharistic Liturgy), disclosing the new dispensation with the mystery of the Incarnation. This hymn solemnly and simply presents the roadmap towards salvation inaugurated with the ministry of Jesus. The angelic hymn describes the threefold realities and relationalities: God, earth, and human beings. These relationalities merge and complement each other: glorifying God, establishing peace on earth, and giving hope to human beings. Jesus accomplished this mission, and his missionary disciples must follow in the footsteps of their Master, doing all these three missions faithfully and fruitfully.

Biocratically speaking, the angelic hymn is a blueprint for establishing peace on earth, whatever brings glory to God and hope to human beings through human interactions and interventions as Jesus in his time. Peace stands for all-around holistic progress and prosperity. The Liturgy invites the assembly to fix their gaze on earth while they glorify God in the highest, which, in turn, will guarantee hope to humans. These threefold realities and relationalities are interrelated and mutually complementing; one mirrors the other. Maintaining a balance between God, creation, and humans is the challenge and privilege of the liturgical assembly. There is no watertight compartmentalisation but genuine interconnectivity towards holistic development and full flourishing.

Peace on earth is merely the absence of war. Indeed, the liturgical congregation prays for the closure of all wars. Genuine peace is the well-being or welfare of all things. Keeping nature's rhythm, we must work towards the well-being of everything in the world. The angels brought the message of the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds, keeping watch of their cattle in the field, and the starlit sky communicated the birth of Jesus to the magi. The message of salvation comes to the people in close communion with nature who are at home with heaven and earth.

Soon after celebrating the angelic hymn in the Qurbana, the assembly lifts their heart to God in the prayer Jesus taught with different antiphones. One of the antiphones reads, "Our Father in heaven, heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Angels and people sing out Your glory; Holy, holy, holy are you" (15). The gathering encounters earth, and heaven filled with God's glory by entering the liturgical space-time. Does this liturgical experience inform us that the encounter of the earth and heaven go hand in hand? There is a co-mingling of the earth and heaven, immanence and transcendence; it is a continuum. Does this not indirectly instruct us that to have the sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste of heaven depends on our earthly experiences?

The celebrants hold earth and heaven together in the following *slota* (oration), which is typical, "Lord, our God! May the adorable name of Your most glorious Trinity be always praised and glorified, adored and exalted in heaven and on earth, Lord of all, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, forever" (17). The congregation repeatedly realises the necessity of relating to earth and heaven in one breath. This relationship with the earth and heaven is the Nicene Symbol's legacy and the mother Church's heritage.

2.2 "... thanksgiving from every tongue and praise from every creature"

In the Anaphora, the assembly celebrates the worth and beauty of creation at different moments of the Qurbana. The second *g'hantha* (inclination) prayer is in praise of the most Holy Trinity on account of creation:

Lord of all, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! The adorable name of the most Blessed Trinity is worthy of honour from every mouth, thanksgiving from every tongue, and praise from every creature. For, in your kindness, You created the world and everything in it, and showed humanity Your immense mercy" (Qurbana, 50).

All things in creation praise and worship the Lord God. The gathering remembers the great things of the Lord for his people for the beautiful creation. There is a coming together of all creatures, including humans and creation. In this prayer, we notice the priestly function of human beings praising and honouring the Lord on account of the entire creation. People feel responsible for raising their hearts and minds to God, remembering the immense divine mercy. The above prayer is a sample of several prayers in the Liturgy showcasing our closeness with creation and commitment to the Creator. Are we not called to put on a lifestyle concurrent with the eucharistic mindset towards creation and grow in a symbiotic style?

Another prayer by the celebrant orchestrates the Trinitarian economy, "God the Father, You are holy. You alone are the true Father! All Fatherhood in heaven and on earth comes from you. Eternal Son, You are holy. Everything was created through You. Everything is sanctified through You" (Qurbana, 51). The mystery of the Holy Trinity envelops us, and its impact is tremendous. All things are holy, and they take us to encounter the Holy Trinity. Life in the world springs, sustained, and sanctified by the Holy Trinity, and, therefore, there is no reason to reject life but to rejoice with it in communion with the mystery of the Trinity. Is this prayer not a powerful echo of the Nicene Symbol? Are we not enabled and empowered to continue the Liturgy of praise and thanksgiving even after the Liturgy? Where there is the communion of the Blessed Trinity, there is life in its fullness and bliss.

2.3 "To make us share in Your divine life."

The Liturgy of the Qurbana "gives life to the whole world" (61). Remembering the economic Christology, the congregation acknowledges in adoration, "To make us share in Your divine life, You assumed our human nature, restored us from our fallen state, and brought us from death to life eternal." (54). Jesus, through his Paschal event, blessed humanity to vivify it with divinity. The purpose of salvation is to become whole – to restore the image of God – the divinity mingled with humanity. Life is the substratum of Christ's mystery and salvation history, which the worshipping community solemnly commemorates and celebrates in every Qurbana, enlightening and enriching people with life, human and divine. Is this not the sense of the Nicene Symbol? Does not this celebration impinge on the celebrants to transform into the mind of Christ, who became a servant to save the world? The liturgical assembly commemorates and celebrates the promise of Jesus, "Whoever approaches me and receives me with love will live in me forever and will inherit the kingdom of heaven" (62).

The second Epiclesis in the Qurbana invokes the Holy Spirit on the whole congregation rather than the offerings. It reiterates the accompanying fellowship of the Holy Spirit in the community and the liberating people to enter and encounter new life in the heavenly kingdom:

May He dwell on this Qurbana of Your servants and bless and sanctify it. May this Qurbana grant us remission of our debts, forgiveness of our sins, great hope in the resurrection of the dead, and new life in Your heavenly kingdom with all those who have found favour in Your presence (57)

The prayer of Epiclesis anticipates and actualises the mystery of our faith: new life in the heavenly kingdom with all who have found favour in Your presence. Those who have gone astray from the path of life – the new life in the spirit – have to recourse to remission of debts and forgiveness of sins and regain the vitality and vibrancy to celebrate the life of the Lord in the world with all people. Accompanying the faithful in their journey to the new life, the Holy Spirit dwells in the assembly, making it holy to be worthy partakers in divine life for eternity.

Renewing their faith in the promise of Jesus, people flock to the wonderful divine mystery, "Whoever approaches me and receives me with love will live in me forever and will inherit the kingdom of heaven" (62). This aspiration of the celebrants conveys the theme of life, encoding eternal life fully in alignment with the biblical revelation.

Life is the undercurrent of the Qurbana celebration, and the latter accelerates life for the celebrants to be on their faith journey. At the close of the litany in the Rite of Reconciliation, the assembly, in one voice, responds, "May they be the source of life everlasting" (65). To begin the Rite of Communion and to mark the Rite of Reconciliation, the celebrant prays on behalf of the community, "Enable us to stand in Your presence with cheerful faces and pure hearts" (66). The celebrant announces, "For Yours is the kingdom, the might, the power, and the dominion in heaven and on earth. Now, always, and forever" (67).

In all these instances and others of the Qurbana celebration, the theme and vibration of life become fundamental and prominent, a permanent style of the liturgical celebration. The final benediction of the Qurbana makes the theme as eloquent as in the commencement of it, "May He bestow His mercy and blessings on us, the whole world, and the holy Church and all her children. Now, always, and forever" (77). Life in fullness, here and hereafter, is the concurrent theme of the liturgical celebration, unveiling the project of God for the world. Are we not inspired to celebrate life with God in the world in the company of fellow beings? Is this not the will of God for our times?

3. Beatific Horizon

As your horizon, so is your action. Our horizon sets the action plan. The Nicene Symbol presents a panoramic horizon – an integral and inclusive horizon on life – beginning with creation and culminating in the eschaton. The painting on the canvas is colourful and meaningful, comprehensive yet concise. The beatific horizon sketched in the Nicene Symbol resembles nothing less than a beatific vision. Does this not offer a world vision to marvel at, meditate on, and attain a certain amount of mastery? The arc of life is the arc of the Nicene Symbol.

3.1 Unfolding of Life

Life beats in the world as the heartbeat of a human being. The Word, "Let there be . . ." (Gen 1:3) makes life visible in the world. God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind" (Gen 1:24). In the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, the evolution of life is mystically shared, "In the beginning was the Word, . . . through him all things were made; . . . In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (Jn 1:1-4). The eternal Word – life in himself – became the world. The unfolding of life is magical and meaningful. Life fills everywhere, and because it is the light of all, we see the glory of God (Jn 1:14). In other words, the life of God is the light that shines before our eyes. At another level of creation, "the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). The creation of human beings is unique. However, human life is intimately related to earth – landedness – and coupled with the breath of God. Humans are open to the Lord, rooted in the land and associated with each other (Gen 2:22-24).

In the unfolding of life, we notice threefold realities: God, creation, and humans. We are what our relations are. The triadic relationships emerging from threefold realities are vertical, radical, and horizontal. Often, we neglect to highlight the radical relationships of humans with creation. Landedness – the *adamah* motif – of humans is fundamental to their existence and operations, as revealed in the biblical account of creation. This assertion does not mean that there was no radical relationship with creation. Survival of humans is impossible without its rootedness. The

bond of humans with the elements of creation, earth, water, air, fire, and ether, existed from the beginning, but this aspect of humans was not sufficiently and explicitly stated. Given the ecological crises, it is high time to accentuate the landedness of humans without undermining their openness to God and relatedness to fellow beings.

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10). To have life fully flourished, there is the need for these triadic realities, seen at every stage of salvation. Obviously, there are three realities at the moment of creation: God, creation, and people. In conversation with and communion of these threefold realities, we see the garden of Eden flourishing, and there is the thrill of life. The rupture in relationship with creation is detrimental to the garden life, resulting in people being driven out of it (Gen 3:24). More than ever before, striking a balance of the delicate bond among the triadic relationships is a challenge and privilege. Bringing forth life in abundance, the grain of wheat has to die unto itself (Jn 12:22-26). So, too, humans, for their flowering in the garden of God, have to develop a bond with the ground (Gen 2:15) by maintaining a friendship with creation.

We see the same pattern slightly modified in the successive decisive stages of salvation – the Cross of Christ, the sign of salvation, may be a typical example of redemption in Christ. Jesus on the Cross successfully reveals the threefold realities. First, the cross is made up of a tree, symbolising nature, and the tree is rooted in the hill of Calvary, again a symbol of the universe. The wooden cross and its rootedness in the earth refers to the much-needed radical relationship with creation. Second, the outstretched hands of Jesus on the cross embrace all humanity, a typical example of the horizontal relationship with human beings, moved by compassion and forgiveness. Third, the total surrender of Jesus to God on the cross brings the vertical relationship with God. In this manner, the Cross of Christ takes us to the encounter of triadic realities and corresponding relationships, thus making it a symbol of salvation, wholeness and inclusiveness of visible and tangible relationships.

In the phase of the eschaton, we encounter the threefold realities and subsequent relationships. First, the image of the new earth and heaven in the Parousia is typical of our radical relationship with nature. Second, the picture of the assembly of God refers to horizontal relationships with fellow beings. Third, in the eschatological time, we encounter the Lord enthroned, a beautiful symbol of our oneness with the Lord, the vertical dimension of our relationship. Thus, we see the pattern of the triadic realities and corresponding relationships that make our lives whole and blessed, the prototype of which is choreographed in the Nicene Symbol.

3.2 Seeing, Loving, Sending to Preach the Gospel to all creation

The beatific vision is a blessed gaze of the Lord, who has gone before us to show us the path of holistic and integral perspective on life in the world. We believe in God, the maker of earth and heaven, who saw all he had made as “very good” (Gen 1:31). This act of the Lord inspires us to see the truth, goodness, beauty and glory of life in creation. Does this utterance and gesture of the Lord God leave us a command to work in and wonder about the world and its myriad life forms? Can this attitude of God be a game-changer in approaching diverse life forms in the world?

The beatific vision is in imbibing the spirit of the Lord God for the world. We believe in God, who “so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). In this decisive saving act of God, we encounter God, who not only sees and enjoys the beauty of the world he made but also sends his only Son to save the world and become the source of eternal life. This desire and decision to save the world

by giving eternal life through his Son is a clarion call to imitate the beatific vision of God for the world in our lives to be a blessing and to bless the Lord.

At the final leg of Jesus' earthly sojourn and mission, Jesus commissions his disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15). Is this commission of Jesus to us, his missionary disciples, to go forth to preach the good news of life in the world? Should we not be transformed into missionaries of Christ bringing a beatific vision of God to the world? Do we have a gospel to preach to earth and heaven? We are servants of God and friends of Jesus to spread the good news of life in every form and stage.

Filled with the beatific vision of Jesus – the truth, the way, and the life – we human beings – the children of God, the disciples of Jesus Christ, the fellows of the Holy Spirit – are friends of creation, irradiating the true nature of the image of God in the celebration of creation and life. Thus, we might live a faithful and free life of the disciples of Jesus on earth, heralding the good news at every moment of our lives.

3.3 Covenant Community Consciousness

Life thrives in a covenant context, giving partners safety, security, and unconditional accompaniment and support on their journey. The history of salvation is the history of the covenant of faithfulness of God. As long as a covenant community consciousness is alive, the stage for celebrating life will be vibrant and attractive.

Yahweh's blessings to Abraham are threefold: land, people, and the presence of the Lord (Gen 12:1-3), a blessing pattern vital and visible throughout salvation history. The Lord, Land, and People showcase the covenantal community consciousness. However, the bond of the covenant is interdependent and interconnected: God is the Lord of all; creation belongs to God; people are the children of God and servants unto creation, reflecting the image of God in their daily living. Being the image of God means that the children of God have the unconditional love and the faithfulness of God towards land and people. Being created in the image and likeness of God, people must be the loving and life-giving presence of the Lord in the covenant community. There is peace, prosperity, and bliss when all three players are in harmony. Yahweh is the Lord of all things, visible and invisible. When people respect and respond to this fundamental truth, all things flourish in the land, and people are happy. On the contrary, everything goes upside down when the relationship among these realities is ruptured due to ignorance or forgetfulness. The institutions of Sabbath and Jubilee may be seen as devices to restore and revive the covenantal community consciousness.

The Church is the new covenant community. Covenant community consciousness of the Church imbibes the characteristics of the Trinitarian community, the prototype of all communities on earth. Practically speaking, the Church has to present the image of the most Trinity in dispensing the love of the Father, the mercy of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It means being creative as God, the Father, liberating as Jesus Christ, and celebrating as the Holy Spirit. Reinventing the characteristics of the Bride of Christ, the Church has to make the compassionate face, name, and nature of God to the world through her manifold apostolates.

Covenant community consciousness is conducive to nurturing and fostering life, beginning with family, a church in miniature form, and the Church is a family of families. No doubt, family is the way of the future Church. Celebration of life in families is the sure guarantee of the coming Church. Asia, in general, and India, in particular, celebrate family life, though it is undergoing rapid change. Family is the cradle of covenant community consciousness. Playful learning of values and virtues occurs in the family environment, showcasing God's unconditional love and

faithfulness through parent's mutual love, sharing, service, and sacrifice for the culture of love and life.

Conclusion: Celebration of Life in Christ

Biocratic celebration – a celebration of life governance – is the Nicene Symbol's overarching theme. Life is the fundamental principle in the world, and all activities are directed toward attaining life in fullness. Taking a cue from the Nicene Symbol, the hour needs to focus on temporal and eternal life. Life is the link that unites and directs our thoughts, words, and actions, ultimately leading us to abundant life through proper relationships with God, creation, and people. When life gains its rightful place in our theological investigation and liturgical celebration, we will become Eucharistic in our outlook – always praising, thanking, adoring, and honouring the Lord of all – for the beautiful and gratuitous gift of life. As a result of our Eucharistic outlook, we will believe and behave following the beatific vision, where the mystery of faith will shed light on our path of covenant community consciousness, realising the essence of our existence and mission is life as it unfolds on our journey. Life makes the earth and heaven mingle and merge; life becomes sacred, and the service of life is our hallmark. The young man's question to Jesus is still relevant and repeated by many if not all: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Search for life should go on, and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, accompanies us on our pilgrimage.

At this juncture, I am fascinated by Jonas Thaliath's description of theology. Following the frame of Saint Anselm, he writes that theology is "faith seeking harmony of life" (*fides quaerens harmoniam vitae*). According to this Indian theologian, Jesus Christ is the key to theology. This description of theology is Asian in ethos and, ecologically sound and genuinely Christian. Harmony is the heart of Asian thinking and living. The Nicene Symbol was an attempt to bring harmony to the life of the Church. The world requires the gospel of life, *Evangelium vitae*. The powerful method to transmitting the principle of life and transforming the world in the light of life, beginning from family through world family, was and is its celebration. So, accentuating a couple of elements inherent in the above description of theology, I modify it slightly, making implicit explicit: theology is *faith seeking the celebration of life in Christ*.

Celebrating life in the Lord, on the land, and with people, the Nicene Symbol's overarching framework unfolds a broader horizon to address the contextual ecological crisis by embracing life and its governance.

Blessed are those who befriend life; they will be God's chosen possession in the world!