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[AP 75 - Fr. Bijo Kochadampallil speaks on three-day lent of the St. Thomas Christians with Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI.](#)

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Call Number	AP 75
Part Number	Part I – Syro Malabar Church
Title	Fr. Bijo Kochadampallil speaks on three-day lent of the St. Thomas Christians with Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI
Duration	22:20
Place of Recording	St. John Damasceno College, Via Boccea, Rome.
Date of Recording	21-March-2017
You tube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWR4QLZ1bdk
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

Fr. Bijo Kochadampallil speaks on three-day lent of the St. Thomas Christians with [Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI](#)

This conversation on Mūnnu nōmbu (Malayalam, three-day lent/fast) of the [St. Thomas Christians](#) is a useful resource for researchers on the history of Indian Christianity, Eastern Syriac liturgy, as well as [Syriac](#) music. The three-day lent consists of fasting, prayers, readings, chants, and genuflections with an all-embracing theme of repentance. The time frame of three days is in reference to the time prophet Jonah spent inside the belly of the whale, during his reluctant mission to Nineveh to announce the message of repentance (Jonah 2:1-11). The prayers and chants are taken from the Hudra (book of the Hours in Syriac). The observance of the three-day fast/lent takes place in the form of a preparation (18 days) before the great fast/lent leading up to Easter. It is not yet clear at what point in history the [St. Thomas Christians](#) in Kerala adapted this pious practice of the [Syriac Christians](#) in West Asia. We have several documents from the sixteenth century indicating how the Portuguese missionaries were surprised by the asceticism associated with this ritual of the [St. Thomas Christians](#). Until the second half of the nineteenth century, most of the Syriac churches of the St. Thomas Christians observed the three-day lent. At present, only the [Assyrian Church of the East](#) (Thrissur) and the [Knanaya](#) communities follow the tradition. During this period, the [Syriac prayers and chants](#) were translated into Malayalam. The Malayalam versions of the hymns are set to the original melodies associated with the Syriac texts. My interest in this topic increased during a conversation with Fr. Saneesh at the Damasceno College in Rome; on 18 March 2017 (I was at the College to conduct a one-day seminar on the Syriac heritage of the [Syro Malabar Church](#)). Fr. Saneesh shared his experience of conducting the service for the [Knanaya](#) community in Rome (the video includes except from the recording of the service on 5 February 2016). I had already recorded songs of the three-day lent in the [Assyrian Church of the East](#) in Thrissur in 1996, during fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation. I intend to upload those melodies on the [CMSIndia](#) channel in the near future.

The following questions may be useful for future researchers.

How similar or different are the melodies of the Malayalam version from the original [Syriac](#) version?

How similar or different are the melodies available in the recorded versions from the [Knanaya](#) community and the [Assyrian Church of the East](#)? How similar or different are the melodies from those of the Hours and [Qurbana](#)?

Do the Chaldean Christians in West Asia continue the tradition? If yes, how similar are the texts and music from those of the [St. Thomas Christians](#) in India?



What are the reasons for the gradual disappearance of this tradition from the [Syro Malabar](#) community in the second half of the nineteenth century?

Answers to these and other questions might enhance our understanding of the Christian musical history in India. Meanwhile, we are grateful to Fr. Bijo Kochadampallil for sharing the fruits of his studies so far on this topic. Meanwhile,

Resources:

- Vellian, Jacob. 2005. “Prayer at the Foot of the Open-Air Cross at Kaduthuruthy in Connection with the Three-Day Fast.” In Marganitha Kyananaitha **Knanya Pearl**. Edited by George Karukaparambil. Kottayam. Jyothi Book House. 437-441.
- [Three-day lent prayers in Rome:](#)
- [Kaduthuruthy Valiyapalli Purathu Namaskaram:](#)

Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI

New York

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