

**ENHANCING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC LITURGY THROUGH ART FORMS IN
INDIA**

To make a contribution to inculturation through *Bharathanatyam*

By

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Abstract

This study explores the possibilities of incorporating Bharathanatyam into the Roman Catholic Holy Mass in South India to enhance the liturgy. This thesis argues from the stand point of theology of inculturation, Pope's encyclicals and Vatican I and II documents on culture, liturgy and the Church. It also looks into the history of the use of dance in the liturgy. A study is undertaken on Bharathanatyam to show that this is one of the Indian indigenous art forms with appropriate dance techniques to interpret the Gospel and the related messages effectively and creatively. The theology of dance discussed in this thesis forms the base for liturgical dance. This will help the congregation for active participation, to celebrate the Holy Mass more meaningfully and to make it relevant to their context. This thesis answers many questions in regard to liturgical dance. During the research, it is found that when the culture is integrated into the liturgy, it is not only the liturgy that can transform the culture but the culture can also transform the liturgy. The incorporation of Bharathanatyam in the Holy Mass can bring transformation in the local communities by bridging the gaps between the religious communities, caste identities and gender.

Dedication

To Fr. Thomas D'sa & Fr. S.M.George

To My Mother Jebamalai Sebarachakam Sinniah

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Abbreviation

<i>AD</i>	Ad Gentes
<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<i>EM</i>	Eucharisticum Mysterium
<i>GS</i>	Gaudium et Spes
<i>LM</i>	Lumen Gentium
<i>NBCLC</i>	National Biblical Catechetical and liturgical Centre
<i>OE</i>	Orientalium Ecclesiarum
<i>RS</i>	Redemptionis Sacramentum
<i>RCC</i>	Roman Catholic Church
<i>RCs</i>	Roman Catholics
<i>SVC</i>	Second Vatican Council
<i>SC</i>	Sacrosanctum Concilium
<i>VQA</i>	Vicesimus Quintus Annus

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

For Roman Catholics (hereafter RCs), liturgy is the centre of their spiritual relationship with the divine. It is the source of spiritual life in the form of the Eucharistic celebration. Through Bible readings, sermons and other elements, liturgy contributes to their understanding of life as RCs, both spiritually and socially. While the Church remains universal, since 1965 there has been greater acceptance that a shared universal understanding of God through the Roman Catholic Church (hereafter RCC) does not necessarily have to be experienced in the same way in different cultures [*Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)* 1963: Para1]. Indeed, using existing cultural practices and symbols to express biblical and social values may help people to understand the universal messages of Christ more effectively. Bringing local cultural elements like dance into the liturgy can make the latter relevant to the Indian context. It will enhance the liturgy by helping people to contribute to it as well as to take active participation in it. This enhancement can bring transformation to their local society.

Liturgy is the living voice of the Gospel; Christ is present and active in the liturgy [Davies 1986:329]. It ‘enables us to celebrate the expressions that are related with people’s life such as joys, liberations and victories which are experienced as God’s doing as God’s people’ [Clarke 1985:64]. In this dissertation, the word ‘liturgy’ refers to Holy Mass (Eucharistic celebration) of the Latin Rite, while the discussion about dance in the liturgy or liturgical dance means using one of the Indian classical dance forms called *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass/Eucharistic celebration of the RCC in South India. For RCs, it is an obligation to attend Holy Mass every Sunday and all the RCC festivities. Ideally, both the Mass and the festivities should inspire the local people to attend, relate to their life and find expression in it [Jeyakumar 2004:60], which might encourage participation and enable the celebration to be more meaningful. In order to

make it a people's Holy Mass, although I recognise there may be other options, for the purpose of this dissertation I propose to use the local cultural dance expression of *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy, since it is very much associated with Indian culture and has a transformative aspect.

I have nearly fifteen years of experience as a *Bharathanatyam* dance choreographer, teacher and lecturer in different RCC institutions in India. During the last six years, my experiences with liturgical dance have motivated me to attempt this research. I was a liturgical dance choreographer, performer and head of the Cultural and Communication Department at the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore, when Fr. Thomas D'Sa was Director of the Institution (2002 to 2008). I was invited to the Edinburgh 2010 Conference by the World Council of Churches to present the event 'Woman at the Well from the Gospel' in *Bharathanatyam* dance form with my dancing students from Birmingham [Appendix4 Video:3]. I have presented dance shows at churches in other Christian denomination in India, as well as abroad. I was also invited by the Church of South India Theological Institutes and educational centres in India to teach and perform *Bharathanatyam* and other dance styles to proclaim the word of God. One of the villages in Mizoram, belongs to Presbyterian church, in Northeast India accepted Christ because the word of God was proclaimed to them through their local dance by the members of the church. [Fernando and Sauch 2004:153].

From my experience, I learned that dance could take theology in a simplified manner to ordinary people in India. So using dance in the Holy Mass would enhance it, by interpreting the Gospel and transforming the local communities. This will help to bring them closer to the Church and would make worship more relevant.

1.1 Background of the Study

Using dance in the liturgy has been taken as a serious issue by the Vatican since 1975 [*Notitiae* 11 1975:202-205]. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments¹ has published a commentary on 'religious dance' in an essay in *Notitiae*² for guidance to those

who use dance in the liturgy. The essay is considered to be ‘an authoritative point of reference for every discussion on the matter’ [O’Connor 1975:78-82]. The article says that if dance is part of the local culture or ritual, the local Bishops’ Conference has the authority to decide whether to use it or not with the consent of the Vatican. In some parts of the Americas, dance is allowed in Holy Mass by their local bishops if it is sacred or ritual dance [Murray 2000:7]. However, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the RCC says:

Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit [SC 1963: Para37].

From this passage, it could be presumed that certain art forms including dance patterns, which are indigenous in a culture, could be introduced into RCC liturgy. Furthermore, the *Fourth Instruction on Sacred Liturgy* has made provision to incorporate the local cultural elements as a process of inculturation [*Varietates Legitimae (VL)* 1994: Para1].

In India, attempts have already been made to integrate local cultural elements into RC worship with the consent of the Holy See [Amalorpavadass 1973:32]. More often, those who support presenting the Gospel in the local culture as a process of inculturation argue that the Gospel transforms the culture. The Vatican also points out that ‘Inculturation is not simply an outward adaptation; it is an intimate transformation of authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the planting of Christianity in the different human cultures’ [*Redemptoris Missio* 1990:52]. Cultural transformation is necessary where Christian values do not match with that particular culture, but this is not necessary with all cultural elements in all contexts. Sometimes

the local culture also can transform the local Church so as to make it more relevant to the context.

However, the goodness existing in the culture is not always recognised for its transformative capacity to bring change. Inculturation signifies ‘an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity’ [VL 1994:Para4]. Hence, the local cultural elements which are introduced in the liturgy as a process of liturgical inculturation need to bring out the meaning of inculturation that is transformative. Indian culture is associated with caste, class, gender and religious issues in the society. For instance, Sanskrit text is associated with high caste Brahmins. Therefore, using it in the Holy Mass may imply that the Holy Mass is exclusively the domain of the elite. Those who have appreciated inculturation and introduced local cultural elements into the liturgy did not give much importance to study whether the elements they introduced were participatory or relevant to the local context, or whether they brought any benefit to ordinary people, rather than using it only for the sake of cultural expression. They are not yet able to argue whether what they introduce can transform the culture as well as liturgy. Hence, some local cultural elements could cause discrimination in the society; those who appreciate transformation may not appreciate inculturation on these grounds. There is a common understanding that inculturation means using the Brahmin culture in the liturgy [Schmalz 2006:217-219], which only helps to widen the gap between the castes and affirm Brahmin dominance. When cultural elements are brought into liturgy without much study and attention to its meaning within the society, then it runs the risk of being understood differently by different cultural groups. In a culturally diverse country such as India, the cultural values of one community may not be perceived as having any importance to the other local communities. So, those seeking social reform argue that the incorporation of local culture into the liturgy is not making much progress in the Church or difference to the local community. Thus, I have recognised that there is tension between those who talk about solving social issues and those who support inculturation [Amaladoss 1998:12]. Incorporation of local cultural elements is mostly

seen as the translation and adaptation of local cultures into the liturgy. Inculturation, however, goes beyond these ideas.

There are many local cultural elements that have a transformative aspect which could be used to affirm the identity of the nation. Dance that is appreciated by everyone, regardless of their background, has not been sufficiently encouraged, beyond cultural expression, to be incorporated into the Holy Mass. A study on this has not been done, so its power to transform is not currently recognised. Often, those who are in favour of liberalising society are not able to see this transformative side of local culture and its use in the Holy Mass. Such proponents tend, rather, to appreciate the European way of celebrating the Holy Mass as well as preferring its way of life [Smith 2011:69-73]. In my research, I found common ground for the two schools of inculturation and transformation to have a dialogue using *Bharathanatyam*. Therefore, this study will show that these different schools of thought and their manifestation within the Holy Mass can inspire the congregation to live out its message in the local community.

When Christianity is integrated into a culture, transformation takes place in cultural values. So, Christianity is also likely to undergo changes when a particular culture interacts with it [Amalorpavadass 2004:18]³. Similarly, when the culture is integrated into the Holy Mass, it is not only the Holy Mass that can transform the culture but the culture also can transform the celebration of the Holy Mass and make it relevant to the context. This is essential in a multicultural context such as India. Proposing the insertion of local cultural elements into the Holy Mass is not merely cosmetic but has deep significance.

In India, only a few RC institutions that promote local art forms as a process of inculturation have tried to use dance in the liturgy on special occasions, for example, during the papal Mass in India, and at the NBCLC Mass [Appendix 1 Picture:4]. This has raised some of the doubts about its relevance. Therefore, many bishops in India would like to have clarity on this issue. Hence, in this dissertation I will highlight the broad understanding of using dance in the Holy Mass from

the Vatican perspective, and the transformative aspect of using *Bharathanatyam*, as it is one of the current debates in India.

1.1.1 Dance in India

In the Indian context, dance is seen as an integral part of the local culture. Traditional dances are always associated with Hindu gods and religious rituals, and interpreted with religious connotations [Vatsyayan 1977:241]. The RCC uses dance for various purposes, including evangelisation, as dance is seen as an effective medium for conveying a message in India [George 2007:129]. Indian classical dance, like *Bharathanatyam*, has been used as a medium to proclaim the Gospel by various RCC institutions such as Kalai Kaviri, Navasadhana, NBCLC, Nrityarpan and Pavalam, to mention just a few, as well as used in the Holy Mass occasionally. Apart from classical dance, there are huge varieties of folk and tribal dances [Vatsyayan 1987:1]. Dance plays a vital role in the life of Indians. Throughout the year, varieties of dances are used across the country for different religious and cultural festivals as well in Hindu worship [Vatsyayan 1987: Passim]. Dances are associated with different stages of Indian life, including at the moment of grief to comfort the affected family and at the funeral service [Vatsyayan 1987:127]. Dances, including contemporary styles, are also used for joyful occasions, spiritual purposes, social events such as political meetings, school/college functions, nationalistic functions, and in sports and cinemas, to name a few. So, in the Indian context, using dance for any social event is a common practice. Dance is not only popular in Indian movies, but many dance reality shows are telecasted even today. Therefore, dance has a great role in Indian culture and people are passionate about it.

There are dances that can communicate religious or spiritual ideas in interesting and creative ways. Classical dances are considered as being divine, as these dances are always woven around Hindu religious themes [Khokar 1984:151]. For more than two decades, Christian themes have also been used in *Bharathanatyam* [Barboza 1990:3]. In South India, most of the RC dioceses

have dance institutions as part of their communication centre, which promote a variety of art forms including dance. This encourages the children and youth, regardless of their economic or religious background, caste or disability, to learn dance and to develop their hidden talents. I find dance to be a common ground that crosses the barriers of religion, caste, colour and class. It is possible through the medium of dance to effectively reach out to people with the message of the Gospel, to enhance the liturgy, and potentially to create harmony and peace among the local community. Moreover, dance is also seen as an essential part of giving praise and thanks to God in the Bible. For this purpose, an appropriate dance is needed to use in the Holy Mass that could make a significant and relevant contribution. Since some local cultural dances have their own meaning [Amaladoss 2005:179], the dance has to be chosen according to the region and local community. *Bharathanatyam* has a distinct style, its gestures, facial expressions and body movements help in communicating the message [Kothari 2000:88], regardless of language, class, caste and religion. Techniques of this art form can be helpful in rousing the imagination and making a message come alive to the spectators [Kothari 2000:19]. It is also a popular art form easily recognised as representing Indian culture, yet when integrated with Christianity this art form can take a new life and bring another dimension. Using it in the Holy Mass could make it more of an Indian way of worshipping, as *Bharathanatyam* is already seen as a form of worship in the South Indian context.

From my experience, I found that there are established beliefs and attitudes regarding *Bharathanatyam* and the use of dance in the liturgy. I would suggest that *Bharathanatyam* is not properly understood among Christians in many places. Many assume that *Bharathanatyam* belongs to the Brahmin community (supreme social order in India). Since this dance is developed in the temples, its themes woven around Hindu religious stories and the gestures used in the dance denote the Hindu gods, the assumption of members of the RCC is that the movements of *Bharathanatyam* may be understood only by Hindus or the dancers themselves, and not by everyone. I also learnt that the Christian God is always understood as being serene

and gentle. Therefore, RCs find it difficult to consider the Christian God as a ‘God of Dance’ in like manner to one of the aspects of the Hindu god Lord Shiva as the ‘Lord of Dance’. A justification from the perspective of Christian theology is necessary. Unless these perceptions are tested, the issue will remain unclear. In order to clarify these problems, systematic research is needed.

RCs are accustomed to the RCC tradition which they received from European missionaries. These inherited traditions have caused them to perceive their local cultural elements as non-Christian and disruptive to worship. The laity have not realised that their own cultural elements may provide or even enhance the Eucharist and provide meanings relevant to their worship. Therefore, a study is necessary before introducing a cultural element, including understanding the perspective of the RCC (both clergy and laity), and, if necessary, clarifying any questions related to the study in a multi-cultural and multi-faith context, as is the case in India. Hence, I have proposed a field study.

In my field research, one member of the hierarchy declared that ‘research studies are needed to untie many doubts and explore how to go about using dance in the liturgy’ [Appendix 3 Participant1:13]. At this stage they could not refer to any arguments other than a cultural role for using dance in the liturgy. The Church could use local dance and answer some of the challenges from critics of Christianity. My task is to respond to this position through a theology of dance and thus explore possibilities of encouraging the RCC to include dance in the liturgy.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

In light of the above mentioned reasons, the aim of my research is to explore the cultural, historical, theological, ecclesial and practical reasons for the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass within the given Vatican strategy to celebrate liturgy. I have used *Bharathanatyam* as an example to show a dance which has appropriate dance techniques, and

which would interpret the Gospel and related messages effectively, creatively and culturally in order to enhance the liturgy.

To achieve my aim, I have explored various possibilities in support of my proposal, and have conducted a qualitative, empirical study to understand and articulate the views of the RCC in India in order to broaden the understanding of the concept of liturgical dance and further the research accordingly.

My research will address five objectives. 1) To understand the beliefs and opinions of the clergy and of lay people around using dance in the liturgy, including their views on *Bharathanatyam*. 2) To analyse the collected data and identify the methods that are needed to incorporate dance into the Holy Mass. 3) To explore a theology of inculturation, including those Vatican documents related to culture, liturgy and art forms, in order to find an appropriate way to incorporate dance into the Holy Mass. 4) To review the use of dance in the history of the RCC's liturgy. Additionally, I have looked at the historical study of *Bharathanatyam* to clarify questions and concerns regarding the dance. 5) To explore the theological justification for dance from a Christian perspective.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study analyses the Indian local cultural element *Bharathanatyam* using theological hermeneutics to interpret and critique for the purpose of developing a relevant theology of dance. In addition, this research will be significant for future generations who will engage in theological studies to form a local Church/contextual theology. In doing this, a new framework is provided which proposes a theological paradigm shift in the liturgy. It helps to celebrate the Holy Mass along with ordinary people rather than the priest being the centre of the Holy Mass, which could lead to a community action.

This study suggests a new approach in the theological evolution of the Indian RCC in the field of dance called *Bharathanatyam*. My research study encourages the Indian RCC to use dance in the Holy Mass more relevantly and meaningfully. It contributes to analysing the *Bharathanatyam* dance as a form distinct from the Latin Rite liturgy, creating a local cultural Church, and changing the idea that Christian worship and liturgy is European in culture. It inspires younger generations to take part in the Holy Mass, and bridges the gap between caste, gender and multi-religious communities in the south of India. I also anticipate that the research questions and interactions around them may motivate the participants to think about the transformative side of the local cultural art form *Bharathanatyam*. It can contribute significantly to the development of an Indian liturgy, and through this the social values can be deepened within South Indian Christian communities.

1.4 Research Methodology

I have used a multi-disciplinary approach in this study. It is qualitative research. The research is further conducted on the basis of statements made by the RCC with regard to the use of cultural dance in the Holy Mass. Holy Mass is for the people and the local cultural art form is from the people. The RCC's hierarchy is concerned about liturgy, and any integration in the Holy Mass has to come through the bishops and through the recommendations of the appropriate specialists. Therefore, I engaged lay people and the clergy of the RCC in this study, through in-depth interviews with semi-structured research questions, to understand their views on using dance in the Holy Mass. My experience as a dancer in the RCC, along with the interviews, helped me to find different methods in order to introduce *Bharathanatyam* into the liturgy. To incorporate *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass, I used several research methods, namely interviews, literature review in relation to inculturation, history of *Bharathanatyam*, liturgical dance, and theology of dance, and self-ethnography each of which were essential and useful to analyse the research problem to arrive at the conclusion.

As a first step, I used inculturation as a method to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass. Historical study is required to show that using dance in the RCC's Holy Mass is not a new concept. I have also explored the use of the term 'liturgy' and the theology of Eucharistic celebration to demonstrate the relevance of using dance in it as a second step. I looked into the historical development of this art form to prove that it is a local cultural element with essential techniques to interpret the Gospel, and to prove that it is part of the local culture of South India and does not belong to any particular group of people. To validate the use of *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass, I have also explored the Biblical⁴ and theological basis. Finally, I sought to justify the use of dance in the Holy Mass with the help of a theology of dance. I detailed arguments from the RCC's foundational theology, God and movements, aesthetics of beauty and dance from the Christian theological perspective.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The study on introducing *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass is a new approach. Hence, there are very limited resources available in this area of study. However, I did find some Indian theologians who have tried to see God as a dancer using existing metaphorical ideas [Amaladoss 2005:179-194]. Fewer theological arguments have been handled to justify either God as dancer or dance in Christian aspects, especially for the incorporation of dance in the Holy Mass. Indian theologians or artists who support *Bharathanatyam*, or any Indian dance, argue from a local cultural and Indian spirituality point of view [George 2007:129].

There are many resources available on inculturation, contextual theology, and writings on using culture to present the Gospel to the people and on transforming the culture through the Gospel. However, there are very limited resources on incorporating local cultural elements into the Holy Mass of the RCC's Latin Rite. Moreover, those who have argued for liturgical dance have not justified their position from the local cultural aspect or a model for the incorporation of dance. Even though G.J. Davies, a theologian and a liturgical dance researcher, has argued from the

perspective of dance history, sacramental theology and practical experiences, I am not able to use his work completely because my study is exclusively concerned with a contextual, particular pattern of worship and using a particular dance style. RC dance scholars and theologians in the West have based their arguments on dance in the Bible and propose suggestions to shape liturgical dance in general for Western congregations. This understanding of liturgical dance is new to the Indian context.

Members of the RCC of India commented about using dance mainly from a Hindu perspective. Though the clergy participants seemed to be positive about dance, many were not able to support its use as being relevant in the Holy Mass. Many of the participants seemed to be interested in knowing about how to use it in the worship rather than giving more information about it. From their interviews, the lay people from the Tamil Nadu Dioceses gave the impression that they did not have a proper understanding of *Bharathanatyam*, so I could not obtain more information about *Bharathanatyam* from them.

1.6 Overview of the Study

The first chapter forms the introduction to the whole dissertation. The second chapter will present the structure of the field study, including a description of the participants and the opinion of the RCs with regard to the use of dance in the Holy Mass. It highlights the common understanding of *Bharathanatyam* and reasons for using dance in the Holy Mass. It also explains the methodological tools used to collect the data from the participants.

The third chapter forms the methodology for incorporating dance in the Holy Mass. It argues that culture played a significant role during Old Testament times, the New Testament period, the early Church period, and it continued to be important through different periods of Church history, though not always universally and explicitly. It discusses the provision given by the Church to use cultural elements in the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council (here after SVC). The chapter details evidence that in India, giving importance to the culture was in practice even

before the SVC by the missionaries. The SVC, which encouraged Indian theologians to attempt liturgical inculturation, is discussed. The chapter also looks at the implication of inculturation in India. It argues for the inclusion of the local culture with appropriate study. Hence, this chapter provides the method to use the local cultural elements, including dance, in the liturgy.

The fourth chapter discusses the use of dance in the liturgy since the time of the early Church until the 18th century. The main argument of this chapter is that liturgy itself is a drama that enacts the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and helps us to remember our bond with the heavenly Father, and that dance could possibly be used in the Holy Mass because symbols, postures and codified movements are used in the liturgy. The arguments for using dance are not as a performance but to highlight the hermeneutics of the Gospel. The discussion on the definition of liturgy gives space to argue for the inclusion of dance, which makes it a public worship rather than a ritual by the religious priests. A theology of liturgy, Holy Mass, its significance, and the Church's (Vatican's) expectation in celebrating the Holy Eucharist also helped in supporting the study. It also analyses the context in the Bible for using the word 'dance'.

The fifth chapter forms a historical study on *Bharathanatyam* to show that this dance form is a local cultural art form and has rich techniques to interpret the Gospel message through a visual form. It is the dance of ordinary people and its technique is from a non-religious background. It has been seen as an elite dance since early the 20th century and the reasons for this are highlighted. It demonstrates that *Devadasis*, who were very much associated with this art form, had a respected life. They did not have any connection with the present understanding of the term so-called *Devadasis* in India. All *Devadasis* of the past were not the dancers. The difference between the folk and classical dance of India is discussed to show that a dance form like *Bharathanatyam* is suitable to use in the worship.

The sixth chapter presents the theological basis for the use of dance in the liturgy from a Christian perspective of God as dance and dancer, with the help of existing Christian theology. I

have used St. Thomas Aquinas's arguments from *Summa Theologica* to justify that God is the prime mover of all movement. God being the prime mover of the movements, He becomes the prime dance and the dancer as dance consists of movements. I have illustrated that God has used culture to communicate with people in the Old Testament, so it would be appropriate to respond to God through culture. I have used Balthazar's theology of beauty in connection with *Bharathanatyam*, beauty and the manifestations of God.

The seventh chapter gives the result of my dissertation and is split into two sections. The first critically analyses the opinion of the participants. Some of the questions that are raised in the interviews are answered in light of the study made and its findings. The second section examines the different effects of transformation (i.e. personally, ecclesiastically and socially, in gender and caste, and within a multi-religious context) arising as a result of using *Bharathanatyam*. It describes and argues that inculturation and transformation can be brought together through *Bharathanatyam* which will lead to a new local RCC which is more relevant to its context.

The last chapter concludes the dissertation with a summary of the research, future proposals and practical suggestions to use dance in the liturgy. Presently, this dissertation attempts to bring *Bharathanatyam* into the liturgy through inculturation and is dealt with in the following chapter.

Chapter Two

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE USE OF DANCE IN THE LITURGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the phenomenological understanding of the use of dance in the Holy Mass. The Holy Mass is celebrated by the priests for the people of the RCC, and any cultural inclusion is permitted with the consent of the RCC hierarchy of India. My intention was to get in-depth views on using dance in the liturgy, including views on *Bharathanatyam*. I have used a descriptive analysis research method to present my findings. I conducted in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions in South Indian dioceses and with members of the RCC hierarchy, whose work is related to liturgy and inculturation. I will provide below the interview questions, the number and reasons for choosing the participants, and the method that I used to gather the data to find the answers to my questions. I hope, therefore, that in the future similar studies may more easily be developed to ascertain the propriety and usefulness of other local dance or art forms in the liturgy, in order to enhance it in a particular culture.

2.2 Research Approach

I understood from my experience as a liturgical dancer that some of the problems in using dance in the Holy Mass are not based on the interest of the worshippers, but rather stem from a lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. My research questions, therefore, cover people's opinions on culture, theology, life experiences and faith, as well as the social context of all these areas. This research is an attempt to engage with a wider community in search of answers to the research question: what is their opinion of using dance in the Holy Mass in general, and their views on *Bharathanatyam* in particular? The field study

involves four stages: planning for research, research design, data gathering, presentation and analysis [Saravanel 2008:37].

This study is not intended to increase the number of members in the Church but to enhance the Holy Mass and invite people to engage in the activity, which can be said to be praxis. Unless the intention behind using dance in the liturgy of the Holy Mass is made clear, it is likely that any effort to introduce it may be unsuccessful. First of all, it is necessary to get the opinion of the people concerned with this, such as the laity and the clergy of the RCC, as the study is related to them. Ultimately, it is knowledge of the subject which helps to remove false understandings of the subject of my research. This knowledge cannot be measured, but can be examined qualitatively. Qualitative research helps in finding out the in-depth understanding people have of social phenomena [Lincoln 2005:53].

Almost every interview was unique because of the background of my research and the participants. The participants were clergy and laity, some with significant theological background and training, and others with no theological background, some with book knowledge and some with social, experiential knowledge. The interviews helped me to understand the subject from the subject's point of view and to uncover the meaning of their experiences [Kvale 2007:2]. It allowed people to convey the situation from their own perspective and in their own words. For example, the interviewees were allowed to speak from experience and the knowledge which they have about *Bharathanatyam*. These interviews helped me to evaluate questions such as how far the documents of the Vatican which deal with introducing local elements into the liturgy can be used, and on what basis dance can be introduced.

This method gave valuable insights which may have been missed by any other method like questionnaires, as I was directly involved with the samples chosen. Direct involvement with the samples helped in clarifying the responses to my questions in terms of the subject's

knowledge behind their response. The following paragraph will explain my research method further.

2.3 Interview Method

An interview is a conversation with purpose [Cauvery 2005:93]. In my research circumstances, it was very important to have conversations with RCC members in India. It is argued that during an in-depth interview ‘it is possible to have open conversation as this method’s key feature is integrative in nature’ [Lewis 2003:141]. This helped me to search for the answers by conducting the interview on the research subject. This type of interview develops a sort of open-ended conversation in order to find the answer which lies at the depth of the participant’s experience with their local world and faith. Therefore, having a conversation with them is indispensable. It also helped me to observe what they felt and thought, and how they behaved in terms of responding to the questions.

Gordon and Langmaid define qualitative research as being ‘centrally concerned with understanding things rather than with measuring them’ [Gordon and Langmaid 1988:2]. They say that ‘the pursuit of understanding is a complex “searching” procedure which cannot be rigid’ [Gordon and Langmaid 1988:2]. My research is not to measure the findings, but rather to gain from qualitative responses what the participants say from their understanding and faith experience. Hence my interviews could not be structured interviews as they varied from person to person.

I chose semi-structured interviews in order to reveal the often complicated views of the people being interviewed. I wanted to find out detailed, in depth information about the participants’ knowledge regarding my research questions. This provided a context to the answers to my questions [Boyce 2006:3]. This in turn helped in bringing out valuable insights directly from the subjects. This method allowed the interviewees to speak spontaneously from their experience and without any difficulty in answering particular questions. It is more

casual than the aforementioned interviews. Interviewees were encouraged to speak openly, honestly and to give as much detail as possible [Kajornboon 2005:6].

Methodologically, the in-depth interviews proved a very successful device for this research for three reasons. Firstly, in-depth interviews enabled me to gain a detailed and expansive picture of people's views of *Bharathanatyam* and dance in the liturgy. This was very useful because these are subjects about which many people proved not to have fixed answers, since they were not accustomed to formulating their thoughts in a structured way. For the interviewees, the process of in-depth interview may have provided an opportunity to consider these questions further and to broaden their views on the possibilities of using dance in the liturgy. Finally, I believe that in-depth interviews also provide an excellent tool for any researcher tackling a subject area about which there is limited knowledge in society and a danger of people rushing into unconsidered judgements. This is because participants and the interviewer both have space to consider the questions and the answers on an individual basis, as well as when a wider perspective is required for understanding a certain matter, and to explore matters of disagreement or confusion instead of simply committing to antagonistic viewpoints. I found that this research method more easily handled the research in an ethical manner through its attempt to find out the phenomenological understanding of the people or society in a particular subject.

2.4 Ethical Review

Research ethics is an important factor when human beings are involved in any research. I have gone through the proper channels for fulfilling ethical procedures for conducting these interviews in India after receiving an expression of concern from the ethical committee of the Theology Department at the University of Birmingham. I have presented to the committee the reasons for the need to conduct the research in India and provided the participants' details, the

places to conduct interviews and the consent form sheet with necessary information for the participants, including a statement of consent of the interviewee to record the interviews.

I contacted the participants six months before conducting the research after choosing them according to my research criteria. I issued details about the research and the consent forms. The laity was chosen through the diocese with the help of the Bishop of the chosen dioceses. Except for four participants from Tamil Nadu, all others used English during the interviews. I have translated the four Tamil Nadu interviews into English and transcribed the interviews. The sample interviews are attached in the Appendix for reference.

2.5 Locating the Field Studies

The SVC document on *Sacred Liturgy* says that ‘the primary aim is to help the people to participate actively in the liturgy, for the liturgy is the indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit’ (SIC) [SC 1963:14]. Incorporating local elements into the liturgy helps to achieve this primary aim, which is to bring the Church closer to the local cultural context and to help people more actively to participate in the liturgy [SC 1963:19, 37-40]. This means that local cultural elements are not necessarily to be incorporated into the liturgy simply because a certain percentage of the community is in favour of it. This dissertation is in accordance with Vatican policy and, therefore, offers a theological and spiritual justification for liturgical dance, which emphasises the quality of such a development, not the quantity of the support in favour of it.

My research participants can be divided into two groups: clergy and the laity who form the Church. I selected sixteen participants with clear criteria as to their expertise and authority to speak on this topic. Another concern was geographical, since the RCC has a presence throughout India. *Bharathanatyam*, however, is mainly from Tamil Nadu, though it is practised all over the country. Since the RCs in Tamil Nadu are vast in number, around 2.5 million, I chose only two dioceses: Trichy and Tuticorin. The Diocese of Trichy founded the

first RC fine arts college called Kalai Kaviri among Christian educational institutions, and offers doctoral degrees in *Bharathanatyam* for the purpose of mission. The dance group of this college travel across South India to perform in various places, including rural areas. Trichy Diocese is built on rural, urban and *dalit* areas. The people around this college and environ of the Cathedral are familiar with the work of this institution, which has used dance in the liturgy; hence, I chose the laity of this place to interview.

The second diocese, Tuticorin, is in a coastal area. It has a part-time dance school, as well as a communication centre which uses dance as a medium for the proclamation of the Gospel. Since the people in these dioceses know about dance and the popularity of its use in evangelisation and for other social purposes, I chose the participants from these places. Bishops, two lay men, and two lay women, were chosen from each dioceses.

The chosen participants were representative of my entire research area: South India. This is because the responses of the participants did not reflect their place of living, but rather showed the experiences of the participants in relation to the Holy Mass and *Bharathanatyam* or dance. My research records what they understood by the term ‘dance’ and their understanding of using it in the Holy Mass, because the majority of the RCC in South India follow the Latin rite [Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) web site]⁵. There is no policy or rule for using dance in the liturgy by these dioceses, which might lead to the suggestion that participants from other dioceses might give different responses to the same interview questions.

These laity participants are closely associated with the Church in general, and they play an important role in reaching out to people in the rural areas in catechising them, as well as illustrating the position of the diocese. There are different levels of meetings conducted for the laity by the Tamil Nadu Bishops, which enable the laity to discuss on-going matters in the RCC. The same meetings are also conducted in other parts of South India by their regional

Bishops' Councils, but in their regional languages. However, the RCC in India functions particularly with regard to the local Church (the language and culture), as well as nationally. Thus, the laity participants become a representative of the RCC laity of South India. Moreover I chose these areas for the research because of my proposal to use *Bharathanatyam*, which is one of the popular dances of South India, in the Holy Mass. I speak my mother tongue Tamil and the people of this region speak the same, so it was easy for me to conduct the interviews in this area, especially with the laity, and to understand their views, even if they did not speak English.

The clergy chosen for interview, apart from the bishops chosen from the designated dioceses, were more widely spread throughout India. Almost all the RC clergy in India work all over the country, according to the needs of the Church. I chose the clergy participants who are relevant to this research from different parts of India. The subjects of my interviews were the President of the Liturgical Commission in India, cardinals whose work relates to the liturgy, theologians who are well known in the area of inculturation, directors of the *Bharathanatyam* and communication centre who use dance for the purpose of mission, and the director of a centre for inculturation. I had an in-depth interview with each of these people to collect the data.

2.6 Structure of the Interview

The clergy who were interviewed for my research were posted all over India. I travelled to different places in Northeast India, North India and some parts of South India. The members of the laity were interviewed in their dioceses. All the laity was contacted with the consent of the bishops of the respective dioceses, including the congregations' superiors and the directors of communication centres. The office room or the meeting room in the local bishop's house was used to conduct the interviews. The interviewees were left to answer questions independently without prompting. Only the interviewer and interviewee were in a spacious

room with good ventilation and a quiet situation. The interview was taped and some notes were taken. Consent forms were filled in and signed by the interviewee and by the interviewer at the beginning of every interview. The interviews were planned and organised six months in advance through emails and phone calls to the bishops and the concerned clergy to find out the dates and times suitable for interviews. Each interview with members of the clergy lasted between 30 minutes and 100 minutes. There was enough time given between the interviews for relaxation.

Due to my dance experience and career in the church, some of the laity and most of the RCC hierarchy in India had heard, or seen, or knew about me. Kalai Kaviri, NBCLC and Navsadhana are some of the institutions which use dance for evangelisation and in the liturgy. I worked in these institutions, and the participants who had already witnessed my dance programmes recognised me during the interview. Some of the laity participants had also witnessed my dance programmes and seen my choreographies on Compact Discs. I observed that this recognition did not disturb my interviews; rather, it gave subjects an opportunity to discuss with me. In my experience as a dancer and choreographer I have, of course, come across both criticism and encouragement. Some of the responses from the participants were familiar to me, as these had been given to me earlier by many other viewers who witnessed my performances, including dancing during the liturgy at NBCLC. Fr. Thomas D'Sa, former Director of NBCLC and Navsadhana who is at present Director of Sugranth Subodhana (The Regional Bible Institute – North India), uses dance for evangelisation and occasionally in the liturgy [Appendix 4 video: 5]. He encouraged me to do this study, so that it would help dance to be used in the Holy Mass with better understanding and meaning, in order to encourage local churches to use it wisely.

I formally interviewed eight lay people but I had informal interviews and discussions with around seventy-five lay people and twenty priests while attending the church during my field

study in different parts of South India. I also met the final year seminarians (around 40 in number) at St. Peter Seminary, Bangalore, but did not include them for analysis as these participants had the same opinion as the other chosen sixteen participants.

The interview process aimed to develop the understanding behind using dance in the liturgy. Therefore, questions from the interviewee to the interviewer were less expected, but did spontaneously occur due to the nature of the study. I modified the research questions according to the background of the interviewees with the same objective. For example, my research focused on South India, but because the hierarchy of the RCC is one throughout India, some of the participants were not from South India. With these participants, I did not ask specific questions about *Bharathanatyam*, because it is a South Indian dance style. Instead, I asked about liturgical dance more generally. The *Bharathanatyam* concept was answered by the Tamil Nadu (South Indian) participants, as this dance is familiar in this area.

After describing the organisation of the interviews, I now venture into analysing the interviews to present the phenomenological understanding of the study. The following section attempts to assess and analyse the data collected during the field interviews before starting to analyse the interviews. This will be followed by a summing up of the RCC opinion on using dance in the liturgy, and highlighting the unexpected results.

2.7 Analysing the Data Collected

From the interview responses, I observed what was going on in my interviews, what my participants were doing with my questions, how they were developing their responses, what their background was, and what responses they gave from their life experiences, faith experiences, or from literature sources including theological education [Charmaz 2006:94-95]. I have highlighted the views from the transcriptions. In the entire interview, the views which are similar, unique, expressed only one time, or negative, are put together under different headings.

Some of the purposes of descriptive research are to ‘collect detailed factual information which describes existing phenomena, to identify problems or justify conditions and practices, and benefits from their experience in making future plans and decisions’ [Vyhmeister 2008:152]. In my case, this method helped me to identify the issues which lay behind the opinions with regard to my research. First, I will present the opinions which I have gathered, and then discuss the issues behind the opinions. I have identified different understandings of the phenomenon which are most relevant to my research. They are ‘popular understandings of dance and the reasons to use it in the liturgy’, ‘different notions on *Bharathanatyam*’, ‘dance for the sake of dance’, ‘practical consideration for using dance in the liturgy’, and ‘dance and theology’. The following are the opinions which I found in the interviews.

2.7.1 Popular Understandings of Dance and its Use in the Liturgy

Under this title I will discuss those opinions held by clergy and lay people on using dance in the liturgy which are exclusively relevant to my dissertation. I have transcribed the interviews, which provide the source material for some of the quotes in this section (2.7.1). One participant summarised a common view that, ‘In India dance is started in the temple and holy places so it is considered sacred, and all gestures and dances are in praise of Hindu gods or their companions; therefore, it is definitely sacred’ [Appendix 3 Participant 4:27]. One of the clergy said, ‘In India, dance is an expression of transcendence’ [Appendix3 Participant 4:27]. The interviews showed there are some who appreciate classical dance and its significance. One of the clergy participants said:

Dance is so important for the common man in India. It got an appeal much and also because of the film and media, the film world has got lots and lots of dance in India. It became popular, without dances there is no film in the Bollywood. People appreciate it. That is one thing that the fact dance is popular [Appendix3 Participant 2:18].

The same participant continued:

In India there is a great development of dance, a classical dance especially in South India. It is not just body movement but they put meaning and also it has significance and conveys a message. And also the difficulties which they demonstrate indicate the effort they put in it. It gives a message. The life of Jesus and his message would be very effective when this is transmitted through this dance media. Dance is a medium which will make the message attractive, which will make the message effective. The message which is given through this will be remembered by people because this image remains in the memory of people [Appendix3 Participant 2:19].

The participants had different opinions on folk and classical dances of India. One of the participants said:

The music of the folk dance itself will be very different and energetic. Certain folk dance has its own meaning and reasons to use it and those who are listening to the music or dance of any folk dance, first the meaning or the reason for what that folk dance is performed will come to mind. For example Tappu dance, its music is very loud as they beat the drums and dance. And as soon as one listens to the music, it can be understood oh! This is the dance performed in a house of mourning or at the death of someone. So such dances, folk dances, will remain for the particular purpose for which it is performed. In such a situation, I think Bharathanatyam is good to perform [Appendix3 Participant 14:94].

A theologian participant said that ‘dance is one way can bring people together for some project’ [Appendix3 participant 6; 43]. Dance is common to all Indians; a participant said this with an appropriate example as follows: ‘Dance is part of the local culture of India and it not only belongs to Hindus, it is common to all people’ [Appendix3 Participant 12:88]. The participants continued:

Most of the Hindu people may think that Christians have taken the Hindu dance and are using it. Religion is different and culture is different. But, as far I understood is that they have combined the culture and religion. Since they used it first, so they may speak or think like that. They think dance of Hindus have been adapted by Christian. In fact this may not be the truth. Dance is part of the local culture of India and it is not only belongs to Hindus. It is common to all people. For example, Pongal festival is the festival for all Tamilians. So I may celebrate Pongal and people throughout Tamil Nadu may celebrate and no one can say that is not right. I may not have used to celebrate those festivals once, but now I celebrate it. Likewise, using dance in the Holy Mass also [Appendix3 Participant 12:86].

Now let us examine the reasons for using dance in the liturgy. One of the participants said that the local cultural elements such as *arathi*, keeping *pottu* (a red dot on the forehead), and garlanding are already used to welcome people in the liturgy in some places. So dance, which is part of Indian culture, could also be used for the same [Appendix3 Participant 10: 75]. The opinions included examples from the Bible:

In the book of Samuel from the Bible, David danced before the Ark of the Covenant when the tabernacle was brought in procession into the city of Jerusalem. So dance can be used in the liturgy. But care has to be taken while doing dance in the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 14:92].

One of the laity said that the RCC institutions such as Kalai Kaviri and NBCLC are using dance to proclaim the Word of God. So it can also be used for liturgy [Appendix 3 Participant 10:74]. Another participant is of the opinion that since there is no written document to say that dance is prohibited to use in the liturgy, when music is accepted and practised in the liturgy then dance also can be used. Therefore, there is no objection to use it in the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 12: 86].

While talking about using dance in the liturgy it was common for the participants to point out processional dance, recessional dance or offertory dance. They gave examples of this by pointing out that the ‘Solemn Mass in a tribal community is always celebrated with dance during the entrance, offertory and recessional. So dance can be used in liturgy’ [Appendix3 Participant 1:14].

The views included the kind of dance which would be appropriate to use in the liturgy. One view is that:

Dance can be used in the Holy Mass but it should not be scandalous. Those who are using should differentiate the dance the kind of dance they use from the cinematic types of dance. I feel using dance in worship is not new. We can see examples in the Old Testament [Appendix3 Participant 12:83].

Another participant said that ‘Jesus was also welcomed with palms and leaves, and all Christ events are integrated in it. It is not only the sacrificing of the cross but His life is celebrated’ [Appendix3 Participant 3:12]. So dance can be used in the liturgy.

One of the lay participants doubted if dance could be used successfully in the liturgy. She said,

Bringing dance into the liturgy may attract people and it may be possible and people may accept it. But will it be possible for this work to be done? It is sure; a message can be given very easily not only through preaching. There are also other media along with the preaching to reach the message effectively to the people. For example, on a feast day a priest cannot keep on preaching for a long time, maybe ten minutes. More than that, the people will not have the patience to listen to the sermon. So the situation demands this [Appendix3 Participant 14: 92].

The above mentioned are some of the common views on dance and the reasons to use it in the liturgy. Now I shall view the attitudes on *Bharathanatyam* below. Some of the participants appreciated it, while some raised questions about it.

2.7.2 Different Notions on *Bharathanatyam*

I have proposed to use *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass. Hence I have asked questions about it and its use in the liturgy. A lay participant said:

The Bharathanatyam costume is such that the body is fully covered. So this dance or the way it is dressed will not disturb or distract the viewers. Not only the costume is very modest, but the dance movements will be very graceful and delicate. Even the dance steps will convey the message. My daughter was learning Bharathanatyam when she was a child. I have seen many Bharathanatyam dances and I observed these things in it. So I think Bharathanatyam dance is good [Appendix3 Participant 14:93].

Another lay person expressed the view that:

Bharathanatyam is seen as Hindu dance. Actually I think this dance is used by the Hindu people and in the course of the time it has got the name Hindu dance. I think this dance is part of our culture. Also, Bharathanatyam will help to direct the minds of the people toward God than any other dance form, I think. This dance can be used and this dance can help in reaching the message to people in an easier way. So dance can be used [Appendix3 Participant 12:84].

This dance form is from the local culture, a participant continued:

The Hindus who used the local dance also linked it with the religion and connected with Lord Nataraja, the Hindu god Lord Shiva. I don't think it is written anywhere that Bharathanatyam is Lord Shiva's dance. It is we who use it say that it is Lord Shiva's dance. Secondly, when the art forms are given a religious picture then it will

be taken care to preserve, develop and use it. So we can't say that it is Hindu god's dance [Appendix3 Participant 12:86].

However, the participant also stated that 'this dance style is not used in the villages'. It is because, she said, '*Bharathanatyam* does not belong to ordinary people and it belongs to the elite, a Brahminical dance form. It has come from outside the society of Tamil people' [Appendix3 Participant 15:98]. One of the reasons to say that *Bharathanatyam* is not of the local culture is that 'if this dance form is from the local culture then almost all the people should be able to use this art form' [Appendix 3 Participant 15:98]. The understanding of this dance seems to be that '*Bharathanatyam* is imposed in the name of the religion on the people' [Appendix3 Participant 7:47]. Participants also expressed the opinion that:

All the dance costumes, make-up and things required for the performance are not of the ordinary people or it won't suit the life of the ordinary people. It would take three or four years to train the dancers. Therefore, Bharathanatyam does not suit the marginalised society, which forms the majority of the Church [Appendix 3 Participants 16: 98].

One of the lay participants said that *Bharathanatyam* was practiced by the *Devadasis* who had a very low status in the society. This participant continued that:

Devadasis were the one who learn different art forms and used in the temple including dance. I don't know the history in regard to this, but this dance is not for women of good morality or woman from a good family and this would have been the opinion of other people also [Appendix3 Participant 15:96].

Another participant expressed similar reasoning that it is:

...not belonging to women of moral standing and the dance is only used and practised by the Devadasis who were married to the deity and lived in the temple for God. Their

lifestyles were not like the monks of Buddhism or the nuns of the RCC. They had an illegal lifestyle and are forced to depend for their life on the priests who made them as common women for society (a prostitute). Also that is the only way that they could survive. They could not lead a life like a normal woman. Because of such reasons, this dance did not gain a good reputation among the good/disciplined family people. I think because of this reason, this dance is not familiar among the common people. People also will have doubt about how to give the 'good news' through this type of dance [Appendix3 Participant16; 99].

Thus, I found positive and negative opinions about *Bharathanatyam*.

2.7.3 Dance for the Sake of Dance

Most of those who spoke in favour of using dance in the Holy Mass felt it should be used merely for cultural expression. From some of the clergy responses, I understood that as India has many forms of dances and music, dance should be selected according to the region to be used in the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 9:63]. A lay person expressed that:

Sometimes the parents of the children who perform this dance may be proud of their children dancing and they will accept the use of dance in the Holy Mass. On the other hand, those who do not have any connection with the dance will not accept the incorporation of dance [Appendix3 Participants 16:99].

Those who supported folk dance gave the reason that '*Bharathanatyam* could only be performed by the individual and that this dance does not represent a community action because the folk dances are performed in a group' [Appendix 3 Participant 16: 98]. They added, '*Bharathanatyam* by itself is not a group dance. It is a much more classical and individual dance. So folk dance like *Kummi* and *Kollatam*, which are group dances and community oriented, should be used' [Appendix3 Participant 16:98].

The participants from South India were in favour of using dance in the liturgy, but suggested the use of folk dance and not *Bharathanatyam*.

Dance is good and it is in our culture, but to use it in the liturgy, the dances that belong to the local land, such as Kummi, Karagam, Kollatam folk dance, can be used. Bharathanatyam is not the right dance form of worship today....They need to have some other expression to communicate the message to the congregation like folk dance [Appendix3 Participant 13:90].

One of the clergy participants said:

Dance can be used in the places where the people are interested in it and not in the places where the people are not interested. For examples, dance can be used in the liturgy in the village or in the rural areas. People in the cities like Bombay do not like to use dance in the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 2:19].

The participant added that ‘it is because the people in the city practice Western culture, and therefore they do not show that much interest in the traditional dances of India’ [Appendix3 Participant 2:19].

I found two different opinions for the use of dance in the liturgy. While one member of the clergy said that ‘dance can be used in the liturgy in the procession or in the offertory but not in the sanctuary disturbing the Eucharistic celebration’ [Appendix3 Participant 1:17], another clergy participant said that

it can be used either in the beginning of the liturgy or at the end of the liturgy. It is because using dance during the liturgy becomes a patch work. Dance might disturb and distracts the congregation and will take the attention away [Appendix3 Participant 3:22].

Another participant said:

People will think that all the cultures and local practices which are not practiced by the Christians are Hindu culture. At present people are having developed in knowledge and they are aware of certain things. So, people accept nowadays that Bharathanatyam is a local cultural dance. Maybe different people have different opinion and some priests also may be against these things. Nowadays, changes are coming up. But slowly it should be done (using dance in the liturgy) to bring awareness among people and change people [Appendix3 Participant 12:84].

The other view on using dance for the sake of using it, is that ‘as a process of inculturation, dance can be used’ [Appendix 3 Participant 9:63]. When I raised the fact that the *Varietates Legitimae* document speaks about having dance in the liturgy, the response was:

Yes. Yes. So it has to be studied. And go through the Document to go about the inculturation. None of the Vatican documents opposes the use of the cultural expression in the liturgy. Varietates Legitimae says inculturation has to follow the process [Appendix3 Participant 3:25].

2.7.4 Practical Considerations for Using Dance in the Liturgy

While the participants were positive about use of dance in the Holy Mass, with certain reservations on choosing dance styles, they also expressed their view on the dancers. Clergy participants were of the opinion that ‘small children are like angels’, and if they dance in the liturgy it looks beautiful [Appendix3 Participant 1:13]. Secondly, ‘after the Gospel in the Holy Mass, the children can enact or express what they heard’ [Appendix3 Participant 3:22]. Allowing a young woman to dance in the sanctuary is not yet familiar to many people, as the sanctuary is meant only for readings. ‘The sanctuary is not the place to dance. It is the place for the priest and the nuns to read the Bible reading’ [Appendix3 Participant 1:17].

I found from the responses that there was some uneasiness about using dance in the liturgy from the clergy participants. They declared that the ‘lack of a professional touch for the liturgical dance and lack of clarity in expressing the message does not allow it to be used in the liturgy’ [Appendix3 Participant 2:19]. One RC participant also felt:

It is a risk to use dance in the liturgy because a lot of care has to be taken to produce the dance for use in the liturgy. Well-trained and quality choreographers are needed to prepare the dance. The dance has to give the meaning of the themes that are chosen to convey. The costumes and the other preparations have to be done systematically if the dance is used in the liturgy. So using dance in the liturgy is seen as big task. People have to be appointed to arrange for such work to be done or else the faith will not be adequately expressed by the dance, and therefore the message communicated will not reach the people. So, if dance is used in the liturgy, it should be used in a proper method or it should not be used in the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 2:19].

Another practical consideration on using dance is that ‘when children dance it may be acceptable. As they are like angels so it’s fine. But, young girls or teenagers above fifteen years, if they are dancing in the sanctuary, it may not be welcomed and it may be a distraction’ [Appendix3 Participant 15:98].

When children are dancing there will be more appreciation for them. They will be encouraged and appreciated for their boldness to come forward in the midst of the people. The dancers’ parents, relatives and friends will all come to watch the performance. If a child or children from a local group or community perform it, then it will be spoken of proudly spoken, and it will be encouraged and admired as bringing a family together. This will help the people to come together and it will be a way to bring different families together [Appendix3 Participant 14:94].

The above opinions are some of the participants' practical considerations in using dance in the Holy Mass.

2.7.5 Theology and Dance

Another idea relevant for my study is that of the 'theology of dance'. One of the participants responded that 'you are trying to identify God with movement. Some risk is there. I am limited here. You can ask the theologians who deal with it. For me, God is God' [Appendix3 Participant 1:16].

Another opinion is:

Dance is an intimate religious language. It is a most perfect, profound expression of our inner consciousness, inner sentiments. So here dance is not an external action. It is a kind flowing of inner consciousness. That is why when we look at the whole experience, the dancers should generate the real dance. There cannot be a real difference between dancer and dance. There is only one dance; the dancer becomes the dance. He goes beyond the frames. He knows the whole existence, so in that the whole existence, whole cosmos, the whole creation, is a dance [Appendix3 Participant 7:51].

One of the clergy said that 'God is not a dancer, but God is dance. Dance is part of a human expression. God wants to express himself through human beings. Hence, dance could be used in the liturgy' [Appendix3 Participant 7:52]. Yet another expression of the idea was that 'Art leads to Almighty, so art (dance) is good to use for worship' [Appendix3 Participant 10:75]. These are the different opinions I have derived from the interviews.

2.8 Analysis of the Opinion

The above findings show that the RCC is positive about dance, and to some extent positive about *Bharathanatyam*. It also shows that the Church is positive about using dance in the liturgy, but with caution and limits. First and foremost among the findings is that dance can be used in the Holy Mass because it is part of the local culture [Appendix 3 Participant 12:87]. However, there are many qualifications to its use. One qualification states that a certain type of dance can be used when considered as a local art form, but not the elite dance. A second position says that dance used in the liturgy should be able to communicate the Gospel message and should be relevant to the liturgy. The latter suggests that dance which has elements that can communicate a message should be used, while the former suggests the use of dance for its own sake. A third position holds that dance can be allowed either before or after the Holy Mass or during the offertory procession. About the dancer, my findings show a fourth opinion which suggests that children can perform because ‘they are like angels’, but not the young girls (teenagers), whereas others are only concerned about appropriate costumes, colours and music for the dance. A fifth and final qualification from my findings is that dance can be used for those who are in favour of it, or for a tribal culture to which it is more relevant, or if there are ‘captive audiences’ [Appendix3 Participant 1:13; Participant 2:20].

These responses show that participants’ opinions are based on their culture, social beliefs, life experiences and their RC tradition and practices. I found that these opinions were not based on any particular theological orientation, constitution on liturgy, or regulation for liturgical dance. There were also some doubts about accepting the local cultural art form *Bharathanatyam* as part of local culture itself. So clarifications are needed about this art form to prove that it is the dance of the common people. The opinions show that firstly, using dance in the liturgy is often seen as a mere cultural expression and used for its own sake.

Secondly, dance cannot be seen from the Christian perspective of God other than metaphorically. Thirdly, though the RCC hierarchy know about the constitutions and Vatican documents on liturgy, culture and Church, they did not refer to it when they responded positively on the use of dance and liturgy. It shows that the importance of liturgical dance is not recognised, and its use in the liturgy is only appreciated on the basis of local culture. The *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* says that any incorporation should enhance the liturgy and lead to active participation of the people. A proper understanding is required to use dance in the Holy Mass. Therefore, a systematic study is needed to understand the place that dance holds in the liturgy.

A detailed study of *Bharathanatyam* dance in the liturgy is required for the following reasons:

1. The popular understandings shown above may also mean that many people are unsure about allowing dance to be used in any part of the Holy Mass. I observed that this is because there is not much information about using dance in the liturgy at present in India to argue for it. Thus, its use is often restricted to performing for the entrance procession, after final blessings or sometimes in the offertory. All those elements that are used in the Holy Mass should be interconnected and express the theological understanding of Christ's redemption [RS 2004:Para1, 110,145]. So when dance is included in the Holy Mass, it should also be used for the same purpose of developing theological understanding. If dance is included with this purpose – to enhance the liturgy, culturally and hermeneutically – then it would be seen as one of the elements of the Holy Mass. Since dance is not seen as being related to the theological understanding of culture or helping the congregation to participate more in the liturgy of Holy Mass, then it will be seen as a patch-work. Most of the participants were in favour of using dance in the liturgy because it was considered as being sacred. It is necessary

to enhance this idea further with appropriate theological understanding to incorporate dance in the liturgy.

2. The liturgy starts and finishes with the sign of the cross [Crichton 1971:69]. So, when dance is performed before or after liturgy, it does not become a part of liturgy and it does not raise any issue about using dance in the liturgy positively or negatively. This seems to be an understanding which simultaneously accepts and avoids dance in the liturgy. However, using dance in the offertory is in fact in the middle of the Holy Mass. Bread and wine are carried in the offertory procession, and using dance in that place has no difference from using it in the procession or recession. This is because the dancers dance from the back of the church (entrance of the church), to the altar (sanctuary) in a procession to bring the offertory to the altar. So the dancers and the people who bring the offertory are not currently seen as an important part of the offertory because most of the time offertories (bread and wine) are kept near the altar itself. This is why it is primarily seen as acceptable to use dance in the liturgy during the entrance processional or recessional hymn.

I observed that dance may be considered desirable by the priests or bishops, and by the Vatican and the RC tradition, to affirm the local culture without having too much impact on the liturgy. This also may allow the priests or bishops to feel comfortable about introducing dance without feeling they are challenging liturgical practices. This was particularly clear in the responses of one of the participants who explained how the introduction of the vernacular in the liturgy took place in India. The participant explained:

Immediately prior to Vatican II people were beginning to use the vernacular, but because they were unsure of the Church's position, they opted to perform the Mass in Latin but to use signing in vernacular at the beginning or at the end. This was seen as a safe compromise. After Vatican II, the vernacular began to be used in the Mass

itself. Benediction in Latin only, but we were able to sing a song in Tamil when the Mass is over. It is a concluding song, because typically it is outside the liturgy. So in 1963 – 65, however, members of the Church were unsure when to use vernacular language because the Vatican II Council had not yet made a decision on this matter then [Appendix3 Participant 6:38].

Since not many studies have been made in this area, and some of the doubts with regard to using liturgical dance are not clarified, dance is used outside the liturgy in a ‘safe mode’. Therefore, I determined to explore any previous use of dance in the Holy Mass down the centuries.

3. I also observed some reservation in choosing the types of dance to use in the liturgy, though the samples support using dance in the liturgy as a general idea. The classical dance *Bharathanatyam* has many gestures and body movements to communicate the message effectively. However, for some cultures it is seen as the oppressors’ dance, so there is resistance and opposition from those who see it as such. If other dances like folk dance or any other type are chosen, there may be confusion as to whether it is right to use those dance styles, or if those dances will give rise to a negative opinion because of an association with Bollywood or popular film dances. So the churches do not have a clear picture of choosing dance for the liturgy [Appendix3 Participant 7:54]. Hence, there is no systematic study undertaken about what or which dance should be used in the liturgy. There is often a cultural fear in bringing dance into the liturgy because of different attitudes towards *Bharathanatyam*, modern dances and film dances. Some of the participants are of the opinion that folk dance ‘may be a better expression of worship because liturgy is basically the prayers of the people’ [Appendix3 Participant 7:55]. Also, there is a doubt about this dance form because it is not seen for some participants as a well-reputed dance in society. Even today, this dance form is

generally considered to have been developed by the illegal temple dancers called *Devadasis*. Therefore, a detailed study on a dance style which has appropriate elements is required to use dance in the liturgy.

The Christian religion of the missionaries has not always taught people to love their culture [Appendix3 Participant 8:63]. Furthermore, even if folk dances were to be used in the liturgy, the whole congregation could not participate in it. The number of people who attend Sunday Worship is around 500 people in a small parish or substation: ‘Around 500 people for the Holy Mass, so it is a mass production and this kind of community living is not easy’ [Appendix3 participants 6:43]. Even in the usual arenas for folk dancing, it is often not performed with universal participation but only by a group of people. Some folk dances can also be presented as individual performances, such as *Karagattam* or *Paraiattam*. Similarly, in *Bharathanatyam*, a group of people can participate or it can be performed by an individual, but this latter is not generally known. Hence, the reasons that were given in interviews about *Bharathanatyam* reflect a personal, experiential or popular understanding which does not match current scholarly conceptions of dance or the subtleties understood by practitioners. So it is necessary for a study to clarify the doubts that are raised during the interviews before proposing to use it in the Holy Mass. Therefore, I will explore the historical development of *Bharathanatyam* to answer those issues.

4. In addition, the reason given by participants for using folk dance in the liturgy, as we have seen, was just for the sake of using the dance and not for hermeneutical purposes or for enhancing the liturgy. There are many other places for using dance to express culture, which are more appropriate than liturgy. Any element which is used in the liturgy should align with the theme or theology of the liturgy. Liturgical dance is not only for cultural expression, but also to enhance the worship, to lead the people to pray and to participate in the worship in a

better way. So the presentation of dance in any part of the liturgy should be well presented to the people.

The Church generally considers that European practices are appropriate and sacred for use in liturgy; ‘dance in the West is prosaic, but in India dance is a holy act and considered transcendental’ [Appendix3 Participant 4:27]. So it is a fear that ‘anything that will derail from Christian spirituality we should (the RCC in South India) consider something strange’ [Appendix3 Participant 4:27]. *Bharathanatyam* dance is considered as a holy act or as transcendental in relation to Hindu temples and their spirituality, and this could be studied to know how this transcendental or spiritual quality could apply in a Christian context. The opinions showed that to some extent, the clergy participants metaphorically and theologically tried to relate the idea of dance with God. This shows there are possibilities that dance can be seen theologically and thus as suitable to use in the liturgy. This suggests that theology itself justifies the use of dance. However, it is necessary to explore a theology that justifies the practical use of dance. Therefore, the study, reading between the lines, shows that a systematic study from the perspective of Christian theology is necessary to incorporate dance in the Holy Mass.

5. There is a set of fundamentalist elements also in the RCC and they are mostly manifested in terms of traditional beliefs [Appendix3 Participant 4:27]. This element cannot comprehend the idea that dance could be used to build up a local community, and can make a common platform to build an authentic local community without discrimination. If there is a better understanding of how to use dance in the liturgy – what constitutes proper costumes, music, choreography etc. and relevant themes – the Church might allow the use of dance in the liturgy. If using dance in the liturgy could be understood as a means of enhancing the liturgy

and bringing transformation in society, then it would be encouraged and appreciated. The minimal awareness of these ideas confuses people as to whether to use dance in the liturgy or not, whether to ask young girls to dance in the sanctuary or not, and other issues. If the right purpose of using dance in the liturgy were made clear, then these confusions and doubts would not interfere with using dance in the liturgy.

The interviewees did not, however, see dance in a Christian context from the broader understanding of dance as theology, nor a theology of dance in a RC perspective. Theological imperatives will help the Church to concentrate more on using dance in the liturgy. A universal theological idea will make a way for the Church to use it widely in the liturgy. In the interviews, one of the members of the hierarchy said that the Church needs ‘experts and research scholars to do studies in the field like cultures, about people, dance (‘like you’ pointing to me). Maybe your thesis, will help the Church to clear the doubts and might give some more encouragement to use dance in the liturgy’ [Appendix3 Participant 1:13]. Hence, a study is necessary to show that liturgical dance is not only for cultural expression, but can go beyond it to enhance the liturgy.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter stated that my dissertation is based on qualitative research. The in-depth interview method which I chose for the research study is appropriate, as every sample was unique in relation to the Church’s understanding and in its faith experience. These participants represented elements of the RCC of South India and their understanding of dance, both generally, and in particular with regard to certain styles of dance.

Dance is used in the liturgy merely for the sake of culture and it is not regarded as having any necessary or beneficial role in liturgy. Dances used for the sake of culture remains a cultural expression of a particular place and will not align with the liturgy. Here, dance is not seen as a liturgical element. The participants were not able to see dance as a hermeneutic and as a transformative element. This is because there is not much convincing study and the importance of it is not highlighted thus far. Therefore, this dissertation offers researched responses to the concerns raised in the interviews.

The discussion of the opinions disclosed that this study is a new area in India. The chapter showed that the RCC is positive about using dance in the Holy Mass, but systematic study is needed for further clarification to know the place dance serves in the Holy Mass. So my research has helped in finding the different approaches to incorporate dance in the Holy Mass such as local culture which is inculturation perspective, historical study on liturgical dance and *Bharathanatyam*, a theology of dance, and to find out what would be the benefit of using dance in the Holy Mass. I begin with inculturation as a base to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass which will follow in the next chapter. It will demonstrate that the Church does provide space to use dance in the Holy Mass.

Chapter Three

INCULTURATION AND THE LOCAL CULTURAL DANCE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will deal with inculturation as a theological concept, and the incorporation of the Indian local cultural art form *Bharathanatyam* into the RC liturgy of the Latin Holy Mass. Inculturation is a theological and missiological concept used by many theologians and in Church statements to justify the inclusion of local cultural elements, including art forms such as music, architecture, dance and dress, into various aspects of Christian witness and life, including liturgy. In this chapter, the importance and relevance of inculturation will be highlighted in order to support the inclusion of dance in the liturgy of the Holy Mass by which the Gospel is made relevant to people in their own context. Many Indian contextual theologians have argued that the liturgy should be locally rooted to have a church of the local culture; a local Church (Amalorpavadas 1981:171; Saldanha 1997:18; Amalados 2005:152). In response to this idea, I intend to propose dancing, one of the local Indian dance forms called *Bharathanatyam* and a regional art form, to be incorporated into the liturgy to create a local identity within the RCC. Within the South Indian context, *Bharathanatyam* represents a cherished traditional expression of faith and piety through which Christians in India can communicate their faith effectively. Later, this dissertation will give further details about *Bharathanatyam*, and I will discuss the theological basis from the perspective of creation and incarnation as a method to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy.

Dance provides an obvious mechanism for inculturation in an Indian context as it is seen as a part of local culture and is vital to local spirituality. It could, therefore, be used as one of the

elements to create a church that is more locally rooted. Inculturation has become a codified part of RCC policy since the SVC, but it has been embedded in the mission of the Church from earlier times, as I will demonstrate shortly. The SVC has provided space to use local cultural elements in the RC liturgy since 1963. The *Document on Sacred Liturgy* [SC 1963] says:

Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved; and this should be borne in mind when drawing up the rites and devising rubrics [SC 1963:Para38].

Thus, the RCC has allowed the adaptation of things suitable to different people/regions in countries like India into the Roman rite (liturgy) as long as the universality of the liturgy is preserved. This encourages theologians who support inculturation to argue on this basis in favour of incorporating local elements into the liturgy. Vatican II, however, has not used the term ‘inculturation’ explicitly to denote the work of including local cultures in the liturgy. In 1994, the Vatican issued the Instruction *Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy (Varietates Legitimae)* in order to regulate and provide instructions to those who intended to use local culture in the liturgy. Inculturating the local culture, or giving importance to the local culture in Christianity or in worship, has been happening throughout the history of the Church in a smaller way. Inculturation ‘has a special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural situation of Asia, where Christianity is still too often seen as foreign’ [Pope John Paul II 1999:Para21]. Pope John Paul II also urges us to work for an indigenous church so that the people will find the Church at home. He says ‘despite her centuries-long presence and her many apostolic endeavours, the Church in many places was still considered as foreign to Asia, and indeed was often associated in people's minds with the colonial powers’ [Pope John Paul II 1999:Para 9].

One such Asian country in need of Christian inculturation, including the liturgy, is India. A prominent theologian of the RCC's liturgical inculturation in India is Fr. Amalorpavadass, whose pioneer work included the development of twelve proposals, which will be referred to later in this chapter. In light of his work, I will try to bring dance into the liturgy. This chapter takes arguments from such theologians and the directions given by the decisions of Vatican II on Sacred Liturgy to include the local culture in the liturgy. In addition, there is support for this argument in the norms, instructions, decrees and constitutions issued by the Vatican concerning the use of various indigenous local cultural elements for incorporation in the liturgy.

As my research addresses the use of dance in the liturgy, the central focus of this chapter is the inculturation of liturgy and its relevance to the Vatican statements on using dance as a form of local culture in the liturgy. In this regard, I will examine how the liturgical celebration could be seen in relation to an Indian form of expression to make the liturgy closer to the people through the process of inculturation. I will provide a local, contextualised expression of the universal RCC. First, the chapter will offer theological reflection on inculturation in terms of liturgy. It will begin by examining the meaning of inculturation in relation to dance and local culture, as well as its development in the RCC. Second, inculturation through critical engagement with the Vatican documents will be analysed, and finally, the attempts made in liturgical inculturation in India. First, I will consider the term 'inculturation' before going into the theology of inculturation.

3.2 Inculturation

I will begin by exploring the evolution of inculturation as an idea and a conceptualised term within the RCC. This will provide the necessary foundation for an examination of the interplay of dance, culture and inculturation in the RCC in India using the specific example of *Bharathanatyam*. Etymologically, the word 'inculturation' means the insertion of new values

into one's heritage and worldview [Lossky and others 1991:506]. Bringing local culture into the life of Christians is signified by a movement which makes local culture and its values a powerful means for presenting and living out an idea within the context of Christianity. It is an ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures [Shorter 1988:10]. Shorter says that 'it is an honest attempt to communicate Christ and his liberating message and to make it better understood by the people of every culture'. It is 'a creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture' [Shorter 1988:10].

The understanding is that inculturation means applying the Christian message in a particular cultural context by adapting local elements into Christian worship and making the Gospel relevant to that particular culture. According to this definition, it is clear that the elements which are predominantly used in local culture and which are considered vital to the identity of the people should be given consideration as possible vehicles for applying the Christian message to that culture. Julian Saldhana argues that: 'Just as there are Italian, Japanese and Indian ways of being human, there must also be Italian, Japanese and Indian ways of being Christian' [Saldanha 1997:14]. This means living the universal faith in a particular context.

Such a view is, however, a recent development within RCC. When the European missionaries brought the Gospel into different cultures such as India, they were only the givers. They did not have an understanding of the background of the receiver [Saldanha 1997:14]. The space for understanding the receiver's background/culture was not taken into consideration. It may be argued that the missionaries and theologians did not look beyond simply giving the Gospel to the people.

There were subsequently times when the missionaries who brought the Gospel to the non-Christian countries encountered difficulties in conveying their messages. Particularly in pluralistic countries like India, there were many problems associated with receiving the Gospel in the form which was given by the RCC. One example is that of language: Church

policy stated that Holy Masses were to be celebrated in Latin rather than the local languages of the people⁶ [Pope Pius XII 1947: Para60]. As noted above, any culture other than the culture of the RCs (which was understood to be synonymous with European culture), was not accepted in the Church. ‘The Western Churches assumed that they had the best culture and the Gospel must be proclaimed to every nation in the Western cultural forms’ [Mattam 2006:50].

Later, some missionaries and Church members came to an understanding that it is important to know the cultural context to give the Gospel appropriately. This feeling developed slowly from the seventeenth century onwards, and the key figures in the Indian context are considered below. It is the change in this attitude which gives space for the argument made in this chapter – that inclusion of a native cultural element, such as *Bharathanatyam*, into the RC liturgy in India would constitute a form of inculturation.

In the RC context, the term ‘inculturation’ has been used for around fifty years, but discussion on its implications has continued ever since the term came into use. The term was first used during the chapters of the Jesuit Congregation in printed form in 1962 in an article by Belgian missiologist a Jesuit priest named J. Masson [Pathil 2005:136]. The term inculturation was first introduced to the RCC in 1977 by Pedro Arrupe SJ (1907-1991), a former Superior General of the Society of Jesus (SJ) [Wielzen 2009:185]. After that, it was used officially for the first time in the *Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God*, one of the Papal documents published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1979 by Pope John Paul II [Sybertz and Healey 1996:26]. This was made a policy of the RCC in 1994 during Pope John Paul II’s reign. He says ‘inculturation is a neologism, but it expresses very well one of the elements of the great mystery of the incarnation’ [Pope John Paul II 1979: Para1]. This document is still valid. The above information about the initial usage of this term shows that it is not vastly encouraged in the beginning, as we see the time span between the years when the term was first used orally, then used in the printed document, and then included in official

RCC policy. However, it is now a term which is emphasised strongly by the RCC. As an idea, however, inculturation as a practice has always been a part of the Christian mission. This shows that the Church gives importance to the concept inculturation and gradually the importance of it has been understood to bring the Church locally rooted.

When the RCC and theologians argue in favour of the inculturation of liturgy, they use various theological arguments to justify their perspectives. It is essential to examine these theological arguments in order to understand their efforts to make liturgy meaningful and relevant to different worship contexts. I am using Fr. Amalorpavadass' model and theological basis to incorporate dance into the Holy Mass of the liturgy. Fr. Amalorpavadass' arguments on inculturation are based on theologies of creation and incarnation, and on the documents of the RCC [Amalorpavadass 1978:29-38]. I adopt his theological explanation of the need for inculturation as the foundation of my proposal to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* dance into the liturgy. VerEecke, a Jesuit priest, also argued for liturgical dance in light of the incarnation and the theological perspective of creation in the United States [VerEecke 1999:138]. Now I will look at the justification for incorporating local dance into the liturgy on the grounds of creation and incarnation theology.

3.3 Theology of Inculturation

Inculturation provides practical space for the incorporation of local culture into the liturgy in South India. It is nevertheless vital to present a theological justification for its value and importance. The approaches used by RC theologians from earliest times when dealing with the implication of creation and the incarnation both provide fertile ground for exploring the use of dance within South Indian congregations. The theology of inculturation can be driven from the diversity of creation and in the incarnated God in a culture. Culture differs from nation to nation, society to society and community to community. At the same time, the particular cultural heritage of a nation/society/community will have universal value in it

[Lacoste 2005:768]. Cultures have been developed by the human being according to their ecological background. Hence, one can say that there is a close relation between nature and culture. The Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes (GS)* [1965] reflects on culture thus: ‘Man [Sic] comes to a true and full humanity only through culture that is through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. Wherever human life is involved, therefore, nature and culture are quite intimately connected one with the other’ [GS 1965:53]. Hence the dissimilar creation of God and the universality of creation, through the incarnation of God, form the basis for the theology of inculturation in my dissertation.

According to the Pontifical Biblical Commission in a recent document entitled *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*:

The theological foundation of inculturation is the conviction of faith that the Word of God transcends the cultures in which it has found expression and has the capability of being spread in other cultures, in such a way as to be able to reach all human beings in the cultural context in which they live. This conviction springs from the Bible itself, which, right from the book of Genesis, adopts a universalist stance (Gen. 1:27-28), maintains it subsequently in the blessing promised to all peoples through Abraham and his offspring (Gen. 12:3; 18:18) and confirms it definitively in extending to "all nations" the proclamation of the Christian Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 4:16-17; Eph. 3:6) [Pope John Paul II 1994:Para143].

Moreover Amalorpavadass, who introduced some of the local cultural elements in the Latin rite of the RC liturgy in India with the consent of the Holy See, has discussed the theology of creation and of incarnation. This will be taken up in the latter part of this chapter.

Culture is always taken into consideration throughout the Old Testament and continued into the New Testament.

The four versions of the single Gospel (Gospels), written according to the cultural and contextual particularities of local communities; the specific language of Paul's letters, a teaching closely connected to the religious and existential questions of the time; and similar phenomena were all practices of inculturation of the Word of God made flesh into the history of humankind [Lacosta 2005:768].

Therefore 'culture' has always been the vessel to hold the messages of God or the Gospel since the Old Testament. People live the Gospel according to their respective cultural background. Therefore living the Gospel in diverse cultures is a continuous process. It is not only for the Old Testament and the New Testament periods, but to be continued for ever to worship God according to the cultural context. Thus this creates a dialogue between the culture and Gospel, and

...enabling it to come to a better knowledge of diverse cultures, discern their positive and negative aspects, to receive their authentically human contributions, and to develop means by which it can make the faith better understood by the men and women of a particular culture. While it is true that the Gospel cannot be identified with any particular culture and transcends all cultures, it is also true that "the Kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men and women who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures" [Pope John Paul II 1990:Para44].

Hence culture becomes an essential part of human society. Today, the development of society and the idea of respect for one another are challenged by the diversity of cultures. Culture shapes one's life. If people respond to their cultures, then societies will enjoy peace and unity. At the same time it is very essential to identify the goodness of one's culture and appreciate it and to eliminate any false practice in the culture. It is because every culture has its own good and bad attitudes. In a multicultural society like India, it is very important to respect and

foster the local culture in living with the faith, so as to be in union with the local society. In my dissertation, I am trying to raise two points with regards to culture and faith; the first point is how to be RC and also seek identification as part of the local community. The second point is identifying Indian Roman Catholicism within the context of the universality of the RCC.

3.3.1 Unity in Diversity of God

The mystery of a Trinitarian God could lead one to discover a model for theological inculturation to inculturate liturgy in a particular context, to celebrate the Eucharist diversely and to keep up the universality of the RC liturgy [Lacoste 2005:769]. The Trinitarian God is three genuinely distinct persons, they differ from each other but are in communion with one another, ‘in which the specificity of each is as essential as their unity’ [Lacoste 2005:769]. This ‘mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life’ [Pope John Paul II 1985: Para23]. Lacosta understands this as meaning that:

The Father is God only as Father, the Son is God only as Son, the Holy Spirit is God only as Spirit (Holy Spirit). God is God and one God only in the unity of nature and the distinction of persons, in a relation of perfect love (1 John 4:16) that can be characterized as a “communion of differences.” In God, difference is not an obstacle to communion but a demand for perfect communion [Lacosta 2005:769].

Inculturation can be related analogically in the mystery of this Trinitarian God. Inculturation suggests a ‘way of being Christian’ according to a context [Saldanha 1997:14]. Living the Word of God in different ways (culture) but in union in one faith means no matter whether Indian RC, African RC, or Chinese RC, they are all in communion in proclaiming the death, resurrection and the second coming of Jesus Christ through celebrating the Eucharist in the liturgy [Saldanha 1997:14].

Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The primordial and total object of the Christian faith lies in the Trinity. This unity in diversity is expressed in the creation and continued in the incarnation of God. In the liturgy through the incarnated God, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, the creator is glorified. In every Holy Mass the following prayer is recited by the priest, and the congregation endorse it with ‘Amen’: ‘Through Him, with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is Yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever’ [Pope John Paul II 1999:Para4]. Therefore the unity in the diversity of the Trinitarian God provides us with a model to live the Gospel diversely but united in one faith – inculturation.

By agreeing to establish itself analogically in God, the enterprise of inculturation derives its true benefits not primarily from the particularity of a given culture but above all from the inexhaustible mystery of love of the Trinitarian God, the creator of all things [Lacoste 2005:769].

It is not only in the Trinitarian God that one can see unity in diversity but in every creation of God, the Trinitarian God is reflected. First of all, human beings are created in God’s image and likeness but they are not like God in nature, for being human ‘in His likeness and image’ is different from being God. God created human beings, similar in nature and different from one another as male and female [Lacoste 2005:769]. Each human being is different from another yet they form together one community or one society. The nature of creation itself is both identity and otherness. According to one of the entries of the Encyclopaedia of Christian theology ‘...the problematics of inculturation are indeed those of a relationship of unity in diversity, of a communion of differences’ [Lacoste 2005:769]. Every difference needs to be enriched and recognised. God did not choose an individual to experience His love. When God called Moses, he was not isolated. He was bonded with his community, his people. This people of a society (Israel) were called by God, through them to bring salvation to the whole of humanity. ‘So from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as

individuals but as members of a certain community' [GS 1965:Para32]. So every independent RC community is part of the RCC. This can happen when the local culture of any particular community in the RCC is given importance, to be recognised and identified. Therefore the Gospel needs to be inculturated in order to 'transcend the culture and to bring the local culture community into communion with the universality of the Church' [O'Dea 1968:39]. Finally be in union with God because 'every culture is a part of creation and God is present in every culture' [O'Dea 1968:39].

3.3.2 Creation Aspect

In the beginning, God's love was communicated through creation, 'a communication which, out of nothing, brings everything into being' [Pope John Paul II 1999: Para15]. The basic idea of creation is that every human is equal in the eyes of God and is supposed to share resources among themselves and relate to God. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth [Gen. 1]. The creation is filled with Holy Spirit [Ws. 1-7]. 'The presence of the Spirit in creation generates order, harmony and interdependence in all that exists' [Pope John Paul II 1999:Para15]. God made a variety of creations and saw them all as equally good [Gen. 1:31]. In terms of creation, 'the initial presumption is that creation is God's way of expressing God self: it is the way God is manifested as a being-in-relation. God's identity is established as one who communicates with human creation' [VerEecke 1999:139]. God created the earth for human beings to rule over it. Today, the world has been developed and fostered with many things including cultures. Thus the human being 'carries out the design of God manifested at the beginning of time, that he should subdue the earth, perfect creation and develop himself' [GS 1965:Para57].

In the beginning, the response to God's communication was through symbols and actions, which were mainly 'sacrifice'. The first response to God's communication recorded in the Bible is the sacrifice of Cain and Abel [Gen. 1-4]. They sacrificed their vegetables and flocks

to God and God accepted them, this event could be considered as a response to God's call in that context. Later, this response to God through action became part of the Israeli culture as God asked for a sacrifice from Abraham [Gen. 22]. In the New Testament Jesus sacrificed himself for the salvation of all humanity, to redeem them, and in order for them to be united with Him. So God has used the cultural practices of human beings, through which they responded to God's call, to re-communicate with human beings. 'Human beings can relate to reality only by way of their nature and culture'. So they are, 'as it is said, a nature-cultural species'. Hence I argue that human communication with God began with God's invitation and man's response in an action according to the Bible, and later several forms of actions including signs, symbols and rituals are developed and these became part of cultures. Different communities have different cultural practices. Thus, in Indian cultures there are various cultural practices have been in use for many centuries. Dance is one such cultural practice. There is evidence that dance has been used in Hindu worship and Buddhist worship in India [Pal 1997:127].

In the eyes of God, 'every culture is a good culture as he enabled human beings to develop their own culture or cultures' [Amalorpavadass 1985:29]. Since every human culture is part of God's creation, God is active in every aspect of human culture as well. Therefore creation became a medium for human beings to understand God's existence. This same creation will help human beings to communicate with God because creation came into existence via the dynamic effects of the Word of God [Gen. 1:1-31].

3.3.3 Incarnation Aspect

Amalorpavadass argues that inculturation is the logical sequence of the nature of the Church and the incarnation of the Word. 'The choice, therefore, is not whether to use inculturation or not, but whether to be an authentic Church or not. The Church expresses herself in her being and actions through incarnational process, which is inculturation' [Amalorpavadass 1985:30-

31]. Through incarnation, God communicated with human beings by taking the form of a human [VerEecke 1999:82]. Incarnation happened in order to transform the world. Jesus Christ is God's love for humanity. The writer of the Gospel of John clearly refers to the incarnation by saying, 'The word became flesh' [John 1:14], and the Gospel was incarnated in a particular culture in order to transform creation. This means transforming people's lives, once again bringing us back to the idea of creation. Thus, the mission of God on earth was embedded in a particular historical context and culture.

God was changed from the form of the 'Word' which existed in the beginning, into the form of a human being in order to draw closer to people and respond to them in a way that humans can understand. This act of incarnation remains as a model to be imitated in the process of inculturation [Amalorpavadass 1978:29]. Amalorpavadass also points out in the article 'Towards the liturgical indigenisation' that in as much as one yearns for Christ and tends towards Christ for one's fulfilment and needs to be saved, everything belongs to Christ, because everything was made through the Word. Therefore, everything will be restored to Christ and all that is restored, Christ will submit to God His Father. Therefore, he argues, this goal of universal mission could be achieved by way of adaptation [Amalorpavadass 1978:30].

Inculturation is a process of restoring the creation to the Father; it is the fruit of our understanding of creation in the light of the Christian faith [Amalorpavadass 1978:30]. The Word of God has been present in the whole of creation and throughout human history, revealing Himself in various ways to various people. Through Christ, God wants to reconcile to Himself all things 'whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross' [Col. 1:20]. Therefore, inculturation is restoring, through Christ to the Father, those cultural elements and religious realities which have the marks of God's bounty [Amalorpavadass 1978:30].

Christ, who wanted to share our human condition [Heb. 2:14], died for all in order to gather into unity the scattered children of God [John 11:52]. By his death he wanted to break down the wall of separation between mankind, to make Israel and the nation's one people. By the power of his resurrection he drew all people to himself and created out of them a single new humanity [Eph. 2:14-16; John 12:32]. In him a new world has been born [2 Cor. 5:16-17], and everyone becomes a new creature [Pope John Paul II 1994:Para11].

All things were reconciled through Jesus Christ by his death on the cross [Col. 1:20], and once again the world became good [Amalorpavadass 1978:31]. This same seed of the Word is found in every culture in various different ways and is evidence that God wants people to discover Him. 'All cultures contain the seeds of the Word. No culture is foreign to Christ. God's self-manifestation excludes none. In God's salvation, all human beings have the same destiny [1 Tim. 2:3-4] the realisation of the Rule of God' [Mattam 2005:224]. Cultural practices are created by humankind, which is the creation of God. In the light of the Church, an exploration has to be done by human beings to glorify God through the use of the local cultural element. This is because through creation God is already present in the culture. 'In the process of encountering the world's different cultures, the Church not only transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within, but she also takes from the various cultures the positive elements already found in them' [Pope John Paul II 1999:Para21]. It, therefore, becomes the responsibility of the Indian Catholic Church to rediscover the incarnate God within its context. This is clearly defined by Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Redemptoris Missio* when he writes that 'the mission is not completed unless it succeeds in building a new particular Church which functions normally in its local settings' [RM 1990:Para48]. The Indian RCC started exploring the process of localising the church soon after the SVC, and foresaw Pope John Paul II's thoughts [Amalorpavadass 1973:42].

There are several studies and writings on culture and Gospel, including those by Michael Amaladoss, D.S. Amalorpavadass, Archbishop Menamparampil, A. Shorter, and Robert

Schreier. Bede Griffiths also comments on inculturation when he suggests that ‘using the local customs and elements in the worship leads into a new evolving community’ [Sangha 2004:4]. ‘God always arises within the community and expresses itself in the language and the ritual which is a symbolic language’ [Sangha 2004:4]. Hence, we need to identify and explore the presence of God in our midst and worship Him with that identity.

God communicated with us through creation. This communication of God could be understood only through one’s own way of life in a familiar context. God not only wants to communicate with us, but He also wants us to respond to His communication. God took the form of a human being in a particular culture and lived very close to the culture, and through that made us understand that we can communicate with Him through our culture. God is a part of the living experience of all of humanity. Hence, God has communicated with us through a model that we can understand and we can use that model to communicate with Him. This is because God wants us to participate more actively in communication with Him. Worship is one such occasion where people and God come into communication.

For RCs, liturgy is the place where the RC faithful meet God, and God speaks to the RC faithful through the Word of God and through Jesus Christ in the breaking of the bread. It is a symbolic expression for the people to understand God’s presence and His communication with them. As a response to this communication, it would be more appropriate to answer God through local cultural identities, which are familiar to the local communities and, therefore, enable them to give a genuine response, rather than simply learning symbols from another culture. The incarnation demonstrates that God Himself is entirely capable of and glad to communicate through the unique and local contexts of His creation, especially through artistic spiritual expression. This is acknowledged by the SVC:

Holy Mother Church has therefore always been the friend of the fine arts and has ever sought their noble help, with the special aim that all things set apart for use in divine

worship should be truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of the supernatural world, and for this purpose she has trained artists. In fact, the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the right to pass judgment upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws, and thereby fitted for sacred use [SC 1963:Para122].

From the above discussion of the incarnation I have shown that God is present in all cultures.

God is present in Indian culture, including the artistic representations of Indian culture. According to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, ‘the art of our own days, coming from every race and region, shall also be given free scope in the Church, provided that it adorns the sacred buildings and holy rites with due reverence and honour’ [SC 1963:Para112]. As my dissertation is on the spiritual practice of *Bharathanatyam*, it represents for South Indian culture a fully inculturated means of honouring and showing reverence during the holy rites. As all things are part of God’s creation, the cultures which are part of human life are also part of God’s gift. ‘For culture, as the product of the human spirit acting on nature and creating various instruments, institutions, social relationships, ways of living, etc., forms part of God's design of creation’ [Tan 1999:32]. God is listening to His people through their culture, in the concept of the incarnation. Hence, the cultural elements which will be used for His glory will be the appropriate response to His communication with the faithful. Though the term ‘inculturation’ is a neologism, the concept of Christ meeting cultures is as old as Christianity, and can be traced throughout the history of the Church. This is commonly referred to in relation to the concept of inculturation.

3.3.4 Inculturation in the Early Church

Jesus Christ gave the command to his disciples to proclaim the word of God to the whole of humanity [Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1-2 and 8]. These disciples received the word of God from Jesus in a particular cultural context. The word of God was not completely

extracted from that particular cultural context, but rather reflected it. During the period of Saints Peter and Paul [Acts 15], for example, the Bible refers to controversies surrounding the baptism of gentiles. The question was raised regarding whether the gentiles should first be converted to Judaism and undergoes the cultural practice of circumcision, then be baptised, or whether it was acceptable to baptise them as they were. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit enlightened Saints Peter and Paul and they instructed that the gentiles should be baptised without changing their cultural identity [Acts 15:10-18]. This can be seen as the first inculturation to occur in the history of the Church. Many theologians and inculturation scholars have explored this first attempt [Crollius 1984:59; Amalorpavadass 1975:42]. From the above, it is clear that inculturation from the earliest times of the Church has demonstrated the Gospel can be received by any culture within its own cultural context. Inculturation has been in use for over two thousand years in different forms, respecting and using the cultural identities of the particular context to spread the Gospel.

The idea of inculturation continued to be a part of the Church practice beyond the apostolic period and is a model that has been used in various parts of the world to proclaim the Gospel in different cultures [Pathil 2005:4; Amalorpavadass 1981:78]. Since my area of research will attempt to contribute to inculturation in India, in particular to liturgy, I will focus not on a global analysis but on inculturation in India with special reference to liturgy and the Vatican documents which support it, especially in RC liturgy. In the next section, I will review the specific Vatican documents which offer encouragement for the inculturation of liturgy. My focus will fall particularly on the handling of local cultural elements, dance, and inculturation, as these ideas are represented in the Vatican documents.

3.4 Pre-Vatican I and Inculturation

After the SVC the Church insisted upon inculturation. Authentic instructions were produced with the consent of the pope and given to the Church to incorporate local cultures into

Christianity. But the idea and enthusiasm for rooting the Church in particular contexts was visible even before the Vatican I and II Councils, indeed since early Church time. It may not have functioned on a vast scale, but the work of inculturation was there throughout the centuries in the Church's history. This work may be divided into four periods: 'the formation of different individual Churches' (AD 1-800); attempts to make one Catholic Church which resulted in the divisions of churches and different worship patterns according to the local culture and custom (800-1600); western cultural colonialism in the mission of the Church (1600-1900); and 'the rediscovery of the concept inculturation' (1900 onwards) [Pathil 2005:135]. The following example will show the Church's involvement in using local culture in the liturgy.

In the late nineteenth century, a papal letter was addressed to the RCs of Eastern Europe and the Near East endorsing their practice of using their own rites in celebrating the liturgy as an act of encouraging their own ancient cultural practices and respecting the native land from where the Church originated [Pope Leo XIII 1894:4]. The encyclical letter strictly stated that any missionaries who tried to persuade an eastern-rite Catholic to join the Latin rite would be suspended [Pope Leo XIII 1894:1]. Eastern-rite Catholic churches refer to churches predominantly in the Near East which use the Byzantine rite in liturgical practice but accept the authority of the Pope rather than the primacy of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople. This means that these churches practice a distinctive liturgy from the Latin churches of the West, both in the language of the liturgy and in the physical actions which accompany it [Pope Leo XIII 1894:1]. In his papal letter, Pope Leo XIII announced that the native churches, meaning the churches of the East from where Christianity emerged, 'can accommodate non-Christian words and usages to express ideas and practices of their native culture' [Fortescue 1909:18]. The information provided in the Papal Bull mentioned above shows severe action was taken against those who forced native churches to follow an unfamiliar rite in the RCC. One of the reasons for this could be that the Church recognised the virtue of the customs and

local culture of the Eastern Church. In one of Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals called *Orientalium Dignitas Ecclesiarum*, he expresses an interest in taking the initial steps to train students in the eastern rites in the colleges that he founded in different places [Pope Leo XIII 1894: Para2]. This proves clearly the flexibility of the RCC in forming the local church, especially in celebrating the liturgy with the local customs and culture. The culture of a human being should be respected as it is a human right, since human cultures are 'vehicles of divine truth and theatres of God's salvific action' [Shorter 2005]. Local culture is given importance before Vatican I, and its importance continued afterwards.

3.5 Vatican I and the Period up to Vatican II

In 1864 plans were drawn for the first Vatican council, convoked by Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) on 29th June 1868. The bishops assembled from 8th December 1869 and met until 1870. The principal preoccupation of the Council was connected to RC dogma, especially in relation to contemporary rational theory. The Council was not officially closed until 1960, just before the Vatican II Council, but its active period was very short [Kirch 1912:1]. One of the outcomes of the Council was the profession of the RC faith that there is no salvation outside the RCC and that this is the true Catholic faith, as pronounced by Pope Pius IX on 6th January 1870. Inculturation was not an explicit purpose of this Council, but I argue here that it nevertheless demonstrated the developing attitudes towards non-European cultures. European missionaries were replaced by local clergy as the RCC encouraged local people and trained local clergy to assist in the RCC [Ott 1911:1]. Another example illustrating the encouragement of local culture is in the document *Propaganda Fide*, which instructs missionaries to stop forcing the people of mission lands to discontinue their local cultural practises. The document reads 'do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure to bear on the people to change their manners and customs unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals' [Pathil 2005:149].

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XII titled *Summi Pontificatus, On the Unity of Human Society*, which was published by the Vatican on 20th October 1939, encourages the training of local priests and consecration of local bishops in Asia [Pope Pius XII 1939:Para5]. For the purposes of the present dissertation, it demonstrates how the Church has developed respect for the cultural values of Asian countries that are new to the Christian faith. Nevertheless, the Vatican did not bring about much practical change. Rather, the Church was lenient towards existing accommodations within the native churches, which are known as traditional Eastern Churches. The First Vatican Council did, however, bring about some changes in young churches in different parts of the world.

During the period between Vatican I and post-Vatican I, clergy were trained by the Church, and the people of the RCC (in India) followed the liturgy as it was guided by the priest. There were signs, however, of appreciating local cultural elements and their use in the liturgy, but no great changes were brought about in the liturgy up to this point. From the above discussions, it is understood that cultural elements were allowed if they were regarded by the Church as being reflective of moral good and not subversive to RCC doctrine. The precise details of the permitted ‘accommodation’ are not relevant here, but the principle behind the concession is valuable in indicating the interest of the Church in forming local Churches which can live their faith in their local communities. This encouragement towards living the faith within local identities continued through Vatican I and provides on-going support for my argument that inculturation is a longstanding concept within the RCC. Throughout its recent history, the Church has shown a desire to give worshippers some freedom in celebrating the liturgy according to their own customs within the Church constitution.

Since the aim of this study is to explore inculturation and liturgy, I now turn to the evidence for the inculturation of liturgy in the RCC at present. The liturgy of the RCC remained the same throughout the mission lands with only slight changes [Chupungco 1992:42]. For example, children aged seven years are allowed to receive Holy Communion, whereas in

earlier times (for example, during the Early Church), the First Holy Communion was not given until a child was at least twelve years old. The Holy Mass continued to be celebrated in Latin and the liturgy (Tridentine Mass) was celebrated facing the altar and not the people which was promulgated at the request of the Council of Trent [Pope Pius V 1570: Para2]. In continuation of the view of Vatican I, which had enabled engagement with and encouragement of local churches in the mission countries, Vatican II opened up a wide gate for inculturation.

3.6 Second Vatican Council (1963-1965)

Since the 1940s, there has been a steady development in Europe of the recognition of the equality and value of all human cultures, including their local context, traditions and lifestyles [Amalorpavadass 1984:9]. This is reflected by developments in the RCC, most strikingly in the Second Vatican Council⁷, which welcomed delegates from all parts of the world, ‘We see here with you important personalities, present in an attitude of great respect and cordial expectation, having come together in Rome from the five continents to represent the nations of the world’ [Pope John XXIII 1962:5]. The Council called together bishops from across the globe for the purpose of discussing reform and renewal within the Church. This Council prepared sixteen documents⁸ under various topics such as sacred liturgy, communication, ecumenism, and church structure, apostolate of the laity, clergy, the Church and the ordinary people, and relations with other non-Christian religions. These documents form the basis for current Church policy in the light of subsequent expansions and additions to respond to changing circumstances. The most significant one for this study is the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (4th December 1963) which deals with the holy liturgy.

This Council was an acknowledgement, above all, that the diverse ways in which people connect to Christ should be respected in order to ‘promote union among all who believe in Christ’, while retaining the integrity of a universal Church. Hence, authentic changes have to

be made in the liturgy of the RCC according to the needs of the times and for the betterment of the life of the faithful in a particular context [SC 1963:Para1]. So the Church desired to bring some amendments in the liturgy as well as to the Christian life of the faithful, within the context of certain fixed elements which are not considered to be subjected to change. For the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church’ [SC 1963:Para2].

With liturgy being the source and inspiration for every RC, it should therefore be relevant and meaningful in the life of RCs. In order to make it relevant to the life of RCs, the Church desired to adapt liturgy according to the context. Such changes to the liturgy are particularly important because the Church considers the liturgy to be the centre, the main source and inspiration for the life of all the peoples of the Church. The *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says that the Church brought changes because it:

desires to impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ [SC 1963:Para1].

At the opening speech of the Second Vatican Council (hereafter SVC), Pope John XXIII said that ‘the past will never return, so the new situation requires new dispositions’ [Pope John XXIII 1962: Para1]. This statement by the Pope suggests that the Church realised the need to change as the world keeps changing. This change is to provide a space for all humanity to enter the Kingdom of God. In particular, people explore many ideas and thoughts in the light of science and history in the modern West. Their culture and day-to-day life has changed in accordance with modern adaptations and technology. People around the world who belong to

other faiths have come into contact with one another. Believers and non-believers in God are involved in searching for 'God', 'the ultimate truth' and 'love'. Therefore, the Church needed a revision and had to promote new beginnings for RCs with relevance to its period. One of the views of this Council was that the Church needed to adapt more suitably to the needs of the times those institutions which are subject to change. Its aim was to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of humanity into the household of the Church. It was also to encourage and to bring union among all those who believe in Christ in order to bring a new dimension to the life of Christians [SC 1963:Para1].

The RCC before Vatican II was very narrow and imposed a universal pattern for living a Christian life and for worship. Broadly speaking, RC liturgy was seen as a traditional practice all over the world, except in the Eastern (native) churches. The Church regarded these prescribed practices as forming a normative Christian culture, which was a universal monoculture followed by the universal Church. The Church insisted upon uniformity in the functioning of the Church, including worship patterns. The young churches of the mission countries could only receive instructions and could not bring about or suggest any changes in the Church.

Holy Mass, for example, was celebrated in Latin all over the world. In fact, the Church had not used Latin rites at the very beginning. It was in the fourth century that Latin, the local language of Rome, replaced Greek [Chery 1952:34]. From then until 1965, Latin was the sole language of liturgy except in the Eastern-rite churches. Since 1965, as a result of Vatican II, liturgy is celebrated in the vernacular language of the congregation. This means that congregations are able to follow and participate in the rituals of the church and gain a better understanding of the principles of their faith. During the SVC, all bishops were asked to present their proposals to bring about changes in their localities, either in the way of life of the faithful or in their worship [Vorgrimler 1966:8]. This clearly indicates the Church had come

to the belief that every diocese in the world should respect its local cultural context in day-to-day life practices.

As a consequence of the SVC, there has also been more participation by the laity in the Church and in worship. For example, lay Church members have greater freedom to preach the gospel and become involved in church organisation. The attendance of lay individuals at the SVC was a clear indication of the Council's desire to develop the role of the laity in the Church [Shaw 2012:1].

Under certain circumstances, lay people may even be permitted to preach in the Holy Mass, 'according to the prescripts of the conference of bishops and without prejudice to Canon 767, 1' [Canon Law 766]. In such cases, lay people can be involved in proclaiming the message through dance. This inclusion of lay people is also found in Canon Law 528, which states, 'He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, so that the message of the Gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith' [Canon Law 528]. This shows that the Church considers the cooperation of lay people a necessity for the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Though changes were brought about in the Church after Vatican II, some aspects of Church practice still reflected the old tradition of the Church. This shows that the Church is not completely identical with the local community. In the growth of the early Church, for example, Greek and Roman cultures had a great influence. Today, the RC liturgy continues to reflect those early cultural influences, even in its practice in places like India, where such things as the vessels used for bread and wine, the vestments used during the Holy Mass, and the structure of the church building follow the traditional Greek- and Roman-influenced patterns rather than local practices. This shows that the Church in India still follows pre-Vatican II practices. Though the Vatican has given space for change, it is not utilised completely. In India, some churches and chapels associated with Catholic institutions are

using Indian dress (vestments), vessels and architecture, For example, the NBCLC chapel in Bangalore, Shanti Vanam at Trichy, Nava Sadhana chapel at Varanasi and Varanasi Cathedral.

3.6.1 Vatican II and Liturgy

My concern is very much focused on liturgy because, speaking from an Indian context, while RCs live a normal Indian life in accordance with local regional cultural practices, the life and the practice of the liturgy does not reflect this. The patterns of behaviour that are followed in the liturgy are based on traditional and heavily European-influenced instructions. In indigenous Hindu worship, most cultural practices are reflected in the worship. Hence, while Hindus in India are able to express their spirituality in their temples in accordance with their day-to-day life and thereby take their spirituality out into their lives using the same patterns of behaviour, the RC practices make differences in the society. In order to reduce this difference and to feel united in one's way of life in the pattern of worship, local culture has to be inculturated into the liturgy and a local liturgy has to be evolved without diluting the original core of the liturgy, so that it will be universal as well as regional. RCs must translate the infusion of the Spirit of God via the Eucharist into the cultural norms around them, rather than experiencing the Holy Spirit in their own cultural media. This is not an inevitable consequence of membership in a universal Church, since the universal Church herself recognises the value and diversity of all cultures. As Ming Ng puts it,

True Christianity does not destroy any good that is found in other religions. Like its founder, it comes not to destroy but to fulfil, and supplementing what is lacking in other religions, aiming to make its followers perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect [Ng 2007;79].

So, giving importance to the local culture and using it in the worship will enable the people of India to understand the RCC in a better way and bring them closer to the Church. Further, Vatican II has encouraged using local culture in the liturgy [SC 1963:Para37-40].

After Vatican II, the Vatican made it essential for all RC churches worldwide to contextualise their liturgy locally, as this has become a function of the universal RCC [SC 1963: Para1]. It has been said that this evolution could be ‘due to the affirmation of pluralism in culture through the empirical approach and an understanding of the philosophy and sociology of the multicultural world with the help of theological bases’ [Nariculam 2012:1].

It is one of the serious attempts of Vatican II to help the Church grow into a universal fellowship, being enriched by the traditions, moral goods and spiritual values of the various peoples and their cultures within the Church. This is evidenced by the fact that the RCC has not imposed rigid uniformity in the liturgy since the SVC [Chupungco 1989:118]. This document on the Sacred Liturgy clearly shows that the Church has given freedom to the local Church to identify herself with the surrounding community by adapting local elements into the worship.

Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. Anything in these people's way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the liturgy itself, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit [SC 1963:Para37].

This is stated between paragraphs 37 and 40 of the document and is given in the endnotes⁹. These norms have been followed by many churches across the world. Thus the RCC considers inculturation a reasonable instrument in becoming a ‘World Church’. Having shown

the decision of the Church to enable local churches to identify with the universal Church while applying the norms of local inculturation, I shall focus particularly on the liturgy and inculturation in India.

My argument focuses on the space given by the Vatican to use local elements in the liturgy in India. In fact, the Vatican II Council has challenged Roman Catholicism with its strict rules, such as following Latin Mass and not allowing any local cultural elements in the liturgy, to follow Christianity. This created the space to worship God in spirit. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* allows believers to be more personal in terms of local identification rather than being RC in a way that is entirely determined by the historical development of Western Europe. The *Constitution* says that it does not impose any rigid uniformity where changes do not undermine any good of the whole community and it will respect the genuine talent of the various races and people [SC 1963:Para37]. This, therefore, encourages me in arguing for bringing one of the genuine talents of the people of South India, which is dance, into the liturgy. Though changes may be made by adapting the cultural elements to recognise the local Church in the liturgy, the Church still remains universal all over the world in terms of doctrinal belief and in the basic pattern of liturgy. This universality, however, is no longer dependent upon rigid maintenance of culturally specific practices which were aligned to many believers. As the theologian Patton summarises, the Church changed

from a religion of coercion to a religion of freedom, from fear to love, from legalism to personalism, from triumphalism to humanism, from authoritarianism to democracy, from ritualism to service, from dogmatism to openness, and from brutal discipline to compassion and mercy [Patton 2012:2].

This change in the understanding of the Church provides space to argue for the inclusion of local culture dance in the liturgy which will be relevant for the cultural identification of the local church in India.

3.7 Vatican II Documents and Art Forms

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* deals with the norms for adapting the liturgy to the culture and traditions of people, and the Church follows these norms in the preparation and celebration of the liturgy. It speaks about arts, architecture and music to be used in the liturgy. It has seven chapters and the sixth chapter deals with ‘Sacred Music’. It clearly states the importance of music in the liturgy: ‘sacred liturgy is considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action’ [SC 1963: Para112]. It conspicuously does not say anything particular about using dance in the liturgy but encourages cultural expression such as gestures, symbols and arts.

At the same time, however, the Document speaks about using genuine talents and it says that ‘the Church approves of all forms of true art having the needed qualities, and admits them into divine worship’ [SC 1963:Para112]. This lack of specific reference to different art forms shows that dance was considered neither sacred nor important. Therefore, from the above statement it could be understood that any art, including dance, which has the necessary qualities of a genuine art could be used in the liturgy. Dance was not considered sacred or important and relevant for use in worship by the SVC, as it was not understood as a spiritual activity in the customs of Europe and the West. In an Indian context, though, dance and music are seen as very much an integral part of local culture and sacred expression, and both have been inextricably developed in Hindu temples. Nevertheless, the norms say that the Church approves and admits all forms of true art that have the needed qualities to be used in divine worship, thus it implicitly accepts the possibility of true art forms expressing divine worship, even if these are not the art forms traditionally associated with worship in a European context. A clear example of this is dance, which is one of the true and spiritual art forms of the Indian context. The validity of any dance for use in the liturgy would, obviously, first be subject to the approval of local RCC authorities. The *Constitution* clearly states that a priest does not

have the authority to bring any changes in liturgy without the legitimacy of the bishop of that place [SC 1963:Para22].

Moreover theological, historical and pastoral investigation should be made before introducing the new element [SC 1963:Para23]. The *Constitution* also says that if any new forms are adopted into the liturgy then ‘it should in some way grow organically from forms already existing’ [SC 1963:Para23]. This means that the cultural element that is adopted into the liturgy should be from the local tradition in terms of giving meaning to the life of the people of that place. *Bharathanatyam* dance which I proposed to incorporate in to the liturgy is one such local traditional element. I will discuss about this dance in the following chapter. It is a very old, traditional dance of South India, a people’s dance, and differs from dance for entertainment, as well as helping in devotion.

The principle of introducing local cultural and spiritual elements into the liturgy had already been accepted by the Holy See in 1969 at the request of Most Rev. D. Simon Lourdasamy, Archbishop of Bangalore at the time [Amalorpavadass 1978:87]. This acceptance of local Indian spiritual practices, which will be analysed closely later in this chapter, recognised that many of the worshipful symbols, gestures and practices of India are applicable to divine worship in the context of RC liturgy. Although dance was not included in the twelve proposals, what I am suggesting does not introduce a local cultural element into the liturgy for the first time, nor is it a departure from existing Church policy.

Rather, my research takes the position that the reason papal documents dealing with the use of the local elements do not speak about dance being incorporated into the liturgy is due to a lack of understanding and knowledge about spiritual dance and the value of dance in worship. The authors of the SVC *Document on Liturgy* had grown up either in a European context or in the Church outside Europe at a time when the RCC endorsed European cultural values for all of its adherents. For example, there was a requirement in the Indian Church in the nineteenth and

early twentieth century for RC priests to wear European clothing. Thus, the distance in European minds between dance and spirituality ensured that the composers of the Document did not immediately think of dance as an appropriate art form for worshipping God. However, dance is closely connected with such spiritual expression in India and is also one of the important local elements of Indian culture.

These arguments collectively, along with the detailed discussion of inculturation in this chapter, demonstrate that according to the norms laid down by the RCC, *Bharathanatyam* could be used in the liturgy if the local bishops understand its importance and give permission for its authentic use in the liturgy. This means acknowledging the spiritual and expressive value of *Bharathanatyam* and incorporating it into the liturgy for the genuine betterment of local believers, rather than simply inserting dance either at the beginning or at the end of the liturgy as a token gesture towards inculturation. It is this type of casual or unreflective use of dance and other cultural elements in the liturgy which leads to much criticism of inculturation as creating a patchwork or promoting cultural particularism at the expense of a universal Church [Murray 2000:1].

The argument presented in this chapter as a whole is that liturgical dance in a South Indian context does not represent a radical or major change from existing liturgical patterns. Rather, it represents a natural and logical use of the spaces provided, albeit not knowingly referring to dance in the original documents, by the SVC on the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [SC 1963:Para 37-39]. However, should the inclusion of *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy be considered radical, this is still not a bar to its use, according to Para 37 to 40 of the *Constitution*. These say that in some circumstances, in some places, even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is possible. It is possible with the approval of the local territorial ecclesiastical authority to carefully and prudently consider whether the element is from the traditions and culture of individual people and to admit it into the divine worship with the consent of the Pope [SC 1963:Para40].

3.8 Vatican Documents on Inculturation

So far I have considered the possibilities of using dance in the liturgy within the norms that are laid down by the SVC. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the Vatican has prepared instructions for adaptation of the liturgy by the order of the Supreme Pontiff, that is the Pope [*Varietates Legitimae* 1994:Para 3]. This document is called the *Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* (37-40). In the introduction of this document, it says that the differences that were allowed in the past were foreseen by the Vatican II Council in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Latin Rite*. This document further speaks about some of the cultural elements that can be used in the liturgy. This means that this document speaks specifically of the adaptation of the liturgy. Adaptation of the liturgy and the radical change that has been brought during the SVC was for the faithful to take part in the liturgy. The concept of inculturation has therefore been made a policy of the Church to encourage the people's participation in the liturgy, which will also become an inspiration to live their faith in their day-to-day life. Using dance in the liturgy is mentioned in this document as permissible if it is on the part of the participants, if it is in the cultural practices of the local culture, and if it does not take the form of a group of people performing [VL 1994:Para42]. The Para42 of the *Constitution* says that

Among some peoples, singing is instinctively accompanied by hand-clapping, rhythmic swaying and dance movements on the part of the participants. Such forms of external expression can have a place in the liturgical actions of these peoples on condition that they are always the expression of true communal prayer of adoration, praise, offering and supplication, and not simply a performance [VL 19Para 42].

Paragraph 41 of this document says that 'the liturgy is an action and so gesture and posture are especially important'. The end of this paragraph connects this with the spiritual attitudes

of the participants, encouraging them to take more active participation. Presenting the Gospel message effectively through a local cultural form will help the congregation participate more actively. For this reason, using dance will not become merely a performance. I will address this further in the following chapter. Now, let me discuss the work of inculturation in India.

3.9 Inculturation in India

Gerwin Van Leeuwen, a prominent theologian who spent a long time at NBCLC in Bangalore, says that ‘what is needed and on what we should work is a liturgy which is born from the Indian soul’ [Jeevadhara 1987:276]. He continues,

*How will the land of India provide a relevant expression for the Catholic faith? In expressing deep religious realities and sacramental systems through rites and symbolism India shows that it has fertile soil for inculturation in liturgy. The Roman Catholic Church in India has been seeking a God who is *Mysterium Tremendum et Mysterium Fascinosum*’ [Leeuwen 1986:455].*

Hence, it is said that RC worship in India will express the mystery and sense of awe which could meet the demands of the spirit of liturgy. ‘It is evident that Liturgy must favour the sense of the sacred, of reverence, adoration and the glory of God (Relation of the Synod 1985 L’ Osservatore Romano 16th December 1985, p.5)’ [Bhatt 1987:38].

Pope John Paul II, in one of his encyclicals, has noted the above points and emphasised the need for inculturation. He writes

As she carries out missionary activity among the nations, the church encounters different cultures and becomes involved in the process of inculturation. The need for such involvement has marked the church’s pilgrimage throughout her history, but today it is particularly urgent [RM 1990:Para52].

Hence, using local culture in the liturgy will contribute to inculturation. It will not only enhance the liturgy by helping people to become more attentive and thereby lead to active participation, but it will also help the congregation in worshipping God in the culture that has been formed and developed by the people.

Inculturation, the mission of the Church in India, started in India before SVC through the actions of different RC missionaries from Europe. Their experience of contact with Indian cultures created a move towards an indigenous Church for India. The missionaries not only inculturated the Indian cultural elements in the liturgy but also adapted their lifestyle. A similar process can be observed in other parts of the world, such as Brazil, Vietnam, China, Ireland and Eastern Europe. I will examine here how inculturation developed in India in order to demonstrate how the local culture of India has been incorporated into the life and worship of the faith.

India is a vast country and I focus on inculturation in South India for two reasons:

1. The RCC was first established in the southern part of India, and most of the missionaries of the RCC came to India through the south.
2. This dissertation primarily concerns the use of *Bharathanatyam* in the RC liturgy in India. Though *Bharathanatyam* is practised all over India and across the globe, it is most widely practised in the southern region of India. Most of the inculturation of the RCC has emerged so far in the southern part of India as Christianity spread from the south of India to the whole of India. Also, the inculturation process first started in Bangalore (South India), at NBCLC (1966). I, therefore, consider inculturation in South India in order to provide a background for my argument for the inclusion of *Bharathanatyam*. The RCC, however, is considered administratively to be one Church for the whole of India. Therefore, whatever research and/or experimentation is conducted in one part of the RCC of India may be seen as a model for the rest of the country to follow or consider in their regional churches.

At one time, missionaries did not encourage Christians in India to follow the local culture. Later, there were other missionaries who tried to study the local culture and spirituality of India. During the formation of Indian RC Christianity, these missionaries tried to place the Church within the cultural values and practices of India.

Some of the missionaries, like Canstanzo Beschi (1747), Henri Lesaux (1948), Francis (1955) and Bede Griffiths (1958), applied Indian culture in their own lives and were living a life of *saniyasi* (Hindu hermit) [Arun 2007:194-197]. In 1950, the French monks Jules Monchanin and Henri le Saux founded Saccidanadna Ashram in Tamil Nadu and began to adapt the Catholic monastic life to Hindu traditions and to initiate a dialogue with Hinduism [Boulay 1998:28]. They appreciated Indian culture, adapted the Indian way of life and became involved in the process of developing the local Church. Following them, the Indian clergy adapted the same method to inculturate the local culture in the liturgy. But it did not bring any big changes or success among the local communities. One of the main reasons for this could be said, that the missionaries and priests who inculturated the local elements did not choose appropriate elements: they used the elite group/community cultural values. Though there were considerable numbers of missionaries who initiated inculturation, as an example, I shall point out on some of the works of one such missionary (as an example) who contributed towards creating an Indian local Church for the community in the southern part of the subcontinent by adapting the values, culture and lifestyle of the Tamil-speaking people.

One of the European missionaries, De Nobili, made the effort to deeply learn about culture, language and identity in India in order to create a local church for the local community. Though he left great works, the vehicle he used to understand the life of local communities and their religious beliefs might not be accepted by all the people, as Sanskrit and the Vedas are considered to serve the needs primarily of the elite groups in South Indian society. A different message would be required to reach the marginalised and simple, uneducated people of the same region. This is one of the reasons why the faithful of the church think that

inculturation means bringing into the liturgy or Christian life a way of life associated with the dominant-caste Brahmin group in India. However, De Nobili's work to a certain extent helped to present Christ through the local culture. Hence, using elements of the local culture to identify the church with the community represented an important development.

The European missionaries who adapted Indian culture and ways of life also used local elements in the liturgy, for example, using flowers and incense, taking an Indian posture while meditating (folded legs), and sitting down while praying. Amalorpavadass, a RC priest and a contextual theologian belonging to the Bangalore diocese of South India, followed in the footsteps of these missionaries and formed a liturgy which can accommodate some of the local elements into the Latin rite of the RCC. His contribution to liturgical inculturation in India is discussed below. His work on the liturgy inspired this research into using local culture dance in the Holy Mass in South India.

3.10 Liturgical Inculturation in India

A centre for inculturation called the National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), which conducts research in the Bible, Catechism and Liturgy, was founded by Amalorpavadass. He served as one of the members of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship. He identifies himself as a *saniyasi* (a Hindu ascetic in an Indian context), and took the name Swami Amalorananda. He also established the Anjali Ashram in Mysore district near Bangalore. His thinking and work is recognised and taken as a model for theologians doing research in the area of inculturation of liturgy. One of his early articles titled 'Churches towards indigenisation' includes the following, showing his vision of his mission in the Church:

And we hope that in God's own time, which not far off, India will have authentic Indian liturgy; India will be able to worship the Father through Christ in the Spirit by means of signs and forms handed down from generation to generation in the long

cultural and religious history of India as well as signs of no less technological culture
[Amalorpavadass 1981:41].

Thereby, he recalls the words of Jesus: ‘God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth’ [John 4:24] [Amalorpavadass 1981:41]. He worked consistently towards this vision to worship God in signs and practices handed down from generation to generation. Amalorpavadass worked towards an indigenous liturgy. There might, however, still arise questions about the insertion of local elements into the liturgy and their potentially controversial impact on the local church.

Introducing local elements into the liturgy and evolving a local church for the local community will not disengage that Church from the universal Church. Amalorpavadass argues that a church which practices Christianity by adapting the Gospel to its local culture should not be thought of as standing away from the universal Church [Amalorpavadass 1981:43]. The local Church represents the universal Church with all its sacred mystery, though it varies in accepting and practising the Gospel in its own way. This could be compared to a nation which has different states and districts, and different customs among various groups of people within the nation, but which still forms a nation. Therefore he points out that ‘it is the concrete incarnation, actualisation and localisation of all that we mean by the church. It is an event. It is the peculiar characteristic of the Catholic Church that justifies the case for inculturation’ [Amalorpavadass 1978:45].

Attempts are being made to introduce some Indian cultural elements into the Latin Rite that are relevant to a meaningful liturgy and that are participatory in nature. In light of this understanding, Amalorpavadass, empowered by the SVC, formed a committee, studied some of the Indian local elements and then incorporated them into the Latin Rite. His intention was to embrace the culture and make the RCC unified with the nation. The Vatican approved the twelve points of *Adaptation into the Latin Rite* in 1969 [Amalorpavadass 1978:81-88]. These

were passed through the Catholic Bishops Conference of India to get the approval of the Holy See [Amalorpavadass 1978:74]. This is a major milestone. These twelve points use elements from local spiritual practice and offer a model for inculturation of the Indian RCC. Most importantly, the twelve points were presented to the Vatican in 1969 and have been accepted for use throughout the Church in India at the discretion of the local bishops or priests [Amalorpavadass 1978:71]. Official documents of the Holy See approving the twelve points of adaptation are given in the endnote¹⁰.

3.10.1 Using Local Elements in the Liturgy

The aim of liturgical inculturation is to merge Christian tradition with the local culture. In India, the RCC has been viewed as a community which embodies a foreign culture due to the lifestyle of Christians, their beliefs and their way of worship [Kalapura 2007:196]. There has always been a gap between the RCC and the rest of the Indian community. Inculturation helps in bridging this gap between the two groups, and hence, it helps Roman Catholicism in India to be seen as part of Indian culture. The Bishop of Muzaffarpur, John Baptist Thakur, a Jesuit, in a meeting with 29 bishops held in Patna in 2002, said, 'If cultural aspects are not given expression in faith, Christianity would remain an alien faith, a foreign culture. This would help Hindu groups to propagate their theory that Christianity is foreign and should be opposed' [Union of Catholic Asian News: Nov2002]. Hence, the RCC encourages the use of cultural elements in worship. Therefore, my proposal of using the local cultural dance has already been given a hypothetical space in the liturgy. However, when the cultural elements are adapted, they should not be used merely to express faith but should also help people to become involved in the liturgy, thus expanding the Christian community as well as allowing the Hindu community to become part of it.

3.10.2 Reflection on Liturgical Inculturation in India

I address the twelve Indian elements here because although they do not refer to liturgical dance directly, they are of significant importance to liturgical inculturation in India. My dissertation will develop from the same tradition. The inclusion of local elements through these twelve points is deeply appreciated by RCs in India and it has been practised in different RC institutions in India. It is not, however, used prevalently in the parishes, though some elements have been incorporated. These include using *Anjali Hasta* (joining the palms together in prayer: point No. 2 from twelve proposals), greeting each other while sharing peace during the Holy Mass, and sometimes the use of *Arathi* (point No. 12). Oil lamps are used during festivals or feast times. To a certain extent, therefore, the twelve points have made an impact in the local churches. Some Church leaders and theologians, however, have raised the criticism that the inculturated liturgy is a Sankritisation of liturgy or is reflective of elite group (Brahminical) practices [Schmalz 2006:217-219]. This may be a valid criticism of the way in which this inculturation is practised in some churches, but it does not undermine the general argument presented in this dissertation or the wider model of inculturation. There are, for example, some Sanskrit verses used during the offertory but, according to the underlying model of inculturation, there is no reason why these could not be replaced with any other language. The twelve points which are in use provide a broad guide, not a compulsory set of instructions which must be followed in the same way all over the country. They suggest some ways of inculturating liturgy but not all of the possibilities.

3.11 Local Culture and the Church

Following the SVC, serious attempts have been made to root the RCC in the local culture wherever the Gospel is proclaimed or preached. Historically, the Church in India was not rooted in the culture and still does not reflect the local culture. For example, the architecture, symbols, statues of the saints, pictures of Jesus Christ, biblical paintings, the garments of the

priests and all the elements used for the liturgy are reminiscent of European culture. It has been said that the ‘church has to be born in each place, and not merely transplanted or extended as in the case of a branch office’ [Pathil 2005:289], but this is currently not the case. Pathil continues to argue that ‘[t]he local church is the incarnation of the Church in each place, people and in their culture with its own individuality, autonomy and uniqueness’ [Pathil 2005:289]. As the central focus of the church, the liturgy has to reflect the local culture for this vision to be realised.

Contextual theologians argue that people are able to understand the gospel in the context of their lifestyle and their framework better if the word of God is given in a way that the people can understand. By local culture, the RCC, as noted above, understands those elements of regional culture which pre-date the arrival of Christianity in the area or have no inherent Christian element, but which nevertheless reflects moral goodness and spiritual awareness. Such local cultural elements are to be considered valuable expressions of human creativity and may be used in order to evangelise and to embed the Church more firmly into the life of the local RCs. The Church implicitly requires an ‘adoption that preserves the essential integrity of a culture, its values, institutions, and customs’ [Kurgat 2011:92].

From the SVC *Document on Liturgy*, it can be clearly understood that the local church is not a material building but is the Christian community of the locality. The Federation of Asian Bishops *Conference Paper 89* by Jonathan Yun-ka Tan under the title *First FABC Plenary Assembly: Evangelization in Modern Day Asia* (Taipei, 1974) explains the local church as follows:

The local church is a church incarnate in people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions – in brief, with all the

life-realities of the people whose midst it has sunk its root deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own [FABC papers 131 1974:7].

The above explanation clearly emphasises that evolving churches need to observe and reflect the life of local people. This supports the contention in this study that local cultural elements (in the case of this dissertation, *Bharathanatyam* dance) should be given recognition in the Church, especially in the RC liturgy. Dance is used at festivals, including in the church for evangelisation and celebration, and is regarded by Indians as a spiritual art. India is a very diverse and vast country which is home to numerous cultural groups with their own language, style of dress, cuisine and artistic expression. The local church could valuably incorporate elements from these cultures in order to strengthen and expand the RCC in India.

3.12 Local Culture and the Liturgy

For many non-Christians in India, Christianity of any denomination looks as if it is intertwined with and reflects multiple cultures. In particular, Christians are perceived as being under the influence of foreign authorities and linked to Western colonial powers [Bharati 2004:37]. To a large extent, this is a reflection of the fact that Christian tradition came from a Jewish background, includes theology understood in the light of the Greek- and Latin-speaking worlds of the medieval East and West, has an organisation reflective of Roman imperial practice, and is expressive of a more recent, post-Renaissance Western European cultural background [Bouley 1998:108]. This means that the historically inculturated Church often does not appear to non-Christians in India to have anything to do with the cultural forms with which they are familiar. Christianity, when it emerges in Indian culture, should, however, also observe and reflect that particular culture, especially in liturgy.

The Church should be in communion with local culture where it emerges. The Church is a symbolic expression of relating with God because it is 'produced by God's action, and stands as a kind of mediator between God and the world' [Dulles 1976:83]. Further, Dulles argues

that ‘God comes to the world through church and world likewise comes to God through church’ [Dulles 1976:83]. Tremendous changes have occurred in the history of the world and it is ‘increasingly active and independent of the church’ [Dulles 1976:83]. This leaves an invitation ‘to update itself’ according to the changing world in regard to the understanding of the human culture and to make her part of the ‘human family’ [Dulles 1976:83]. So the Church has to take the initiative to be one with the culture because it is a necessity at this point in human history.

In order for this to happen, the Church must train the clergy and the other church leaders who deal with the local church and its liturgy. Schreiter says, ‘local theologies begin with a study of the culture, rather than with possible translation of the larger church tradition into the local circumstance’ [Schreiter 1985:39]. It is because of a lack of this training that the Church in India is not aware of the local dance, *Bharathanatyam*, its purpose and the necessity of using it in the liturgy. This dissertation presents evidence and information for facilitating that process, including how the RCC of India can use the permission given by the Vatican in order to use local elements. This would demonstrate how the RCC can embrace the local culture rather than appearing as merely a foreign element. This will enable RC Christianity in India to be understood more effectively by the people, and help them to accept the Gospel and understand it in the light of their God-consciousness from their life experience. It will enable ‘an inter-culturation, and produce a dynamic relationship between the Christian faith and the culture in which the faith is given’ [Michael 2002:36]. The liturgy is one of the most significant spaces provided for the development of such a local church. The use of local creative and spiritual expression within the liturgy provides the dynamic and dialogic relationship between the universal Church and local culture.

One of the most significant cultural distinctions in India is marked by the linguistic difference between peninsular India and the north. While in the north the majority of languages spoken belong to the Indo-European language family, in the south the dominant languages are

Dravidian, of which the largest is Tamil. The Dravidian-speaking region of India has many cultural practices which are distinct from the north, though within this group there are further cultural agglomerations. The popularity of, respect for, and widespread knowledge about the dance form of *Bharathanatyam* are demonstrated by the comments made by one of the clergy whom I interviewed as part of my field work. He clearly recognised the development of *Bharathanatyam*:

This dance is not just a movement of the body but there is a meaning in every movement, there is significance and conveys a message. The difficulty which the people put to demonstrate the message also indicates the amount of difficulty that they put and also conveys some message to people [Appendix 3 Participant 2:18].

It is clear from this that such a respected spiritual and symbolic art form could appropriately be used in an inculturated South Indian liturgy for the development of the local church.

I have not argued, however, that *Bharathanatyam* should be incorporated into the liturgy merely because this dance is part of the local culture or to bring changes in the order of the liturgy, but to incorporate it in a way that can be more relevant to the local context. The incorporation of local dance would enhance the liturgy for hermeneutical purposes and enable local people to participate effectively in celebrating the liturgy and in understanding its fullest meaning. In India, the liturgy is alien to the local people because it was not developed from within the local cultural practice, but rather, came from outside of India five hundred years ago [Pecklers 2004:15].

Even in the traditional Christian countries, RCs found the culture in the liturgy was alien to the culture of their daily lives. The liturgy, therefore, needed to be adapted to people as they are found in this age, not as they were centuries ago. The Church is looking for ways to make the liturgy locally rooted. Before examining why local culture should be used in the liturgy in the Indian context, it is necessary to define the terms ‘culture’ and ‘local culture’ as

anthropological concepts and as they are understood in the RCC. The definition of culture proposed by Tylor in the nineteenth century provides a general basis for cultural discussions. This definition regards culture as a way of living or the particular behaviour of a community or social group. This may include language, ideas, codes, institution, tools and techniques, works of art, and rituals and ceremonies: ‘knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits’ [Tylor 1871:1].

While this general definition lies behind subsequent discussions of culture, it is the views of the twentieth century American school of anthropology that are of greatest benefit for understanding culture in terms of the present dissertation [Harris 1968:3]:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas, especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning element of future action [Kroeber & Kluckholm 1952:131].

Within any culture, values, goals, worldviews and thought-systems may change only very slowly while other aspects of culture such as technology, habits of clothing, dress, eating, and medicine may develop rapidly according to the time and changes in economic resources [Amalorpavadass 1978:18]. Having defined culture as a universal anthropological concept, it is necessary to consider the specific way in which the RCC understands culture. Since Vatican II, the Church has reached out to and interacted with the different cultures of the world [GS 1965: Para58]. It is important to note that the RCC applies distinct theological categories which are not always directly congruent with anthropological categories. For example, the Church draws a distinction between aspects of a culture which are in concordance with

Christian values and therefore considered valid, and aspects of culture which it sees as reflecting the sinful nature of humanity. Thus, in Pope John Paul II's address to the Pontifical Council for Culture in 1983, he commented that 'Man is also insidiously threatened in his moral being, because he his [sic] subject to hedonistic currents which exacerbate his instincts and fascinate him with illusions of consumption without discrimination' [Pope John Paul II 1983: Para8].

So far, I have shown the space that the Vatican documents provide to incorporate dance into the liturgy, as well as the space that inculturation provides to use local culture in the liturgy, and the practice of liturgical inculturation that is already ongoing in India. I have also outlined the places where dance could be used in the liturgy. Now, moving on from philosophical and theological arguments, let us take the perspective of Cardinal Francis Arinze, former prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in order to establish the possibilities permitted within the Church for the practical incorporation of liturgical dance, especially for the Asian context. While he addressed the issue on using liturgical dance he said that, dance has never been made part of the liturgy at all time. However, if dance is part of the local tradition then it can be used. For example, Arinze continued, Africans; the way of walking is dancing, so they can have rhythmic movements during the offertory procession. Western countries should never use their dance in the liturgy. Further, he remarked that Asia has refined and reverent gestures and body movements to use [Adoremus Bulletin 2003:1]. Therefore they can use dance in the liturgy with the consent of their local bishop [Appendix 4 Video: 8]. However, Arinze did not make any strong statement to use dance but his interview shows that there is space to incorporate dance in the liturgy. The essay on liturgical dance by the 'Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments' of Vatican provides space for using dance in the liturgy. Certain forms of dancing could be acceptable in liturgy if they fulfil the two conditions mentioned below:

The first: to the extent in which the body is a reflection of the soul, dancing, with all its manifestations, would have to express sentiments of faith and adoration in order to become a prayer. The second condition: just as all the gestures and movements found in the liturgy are regulated by the competent ecclesiastical authority, so also dancing as a gesture would have to be under its discipline [Adoremus Bulletin 2003:1].

Bharathanatyam falls within the framework mentioned above because this form of dance is known for its spiritual expression. Using *Bharathanatyam*, which is traditionally linked to the Hindu faith, to express Christian religious beliefs and to incorporate it into liturgy might attract the attention of the Hindu community and invite them to seek communion with the Church. The instructions above do not indicate in which part of the liturgy dance may be used. Neither does using dance in the liturgy oppose the SVC or the policies of the Church since Vatican II; rather, its use would be within the consent of the RC ecclesiastical movement.

Those Vatican documents which allow and encourage art forms and the use of the arts in the liturgy do not mention dance, despite the fact that dance is also an art form. This probably reflects the fact that dance is not given importance or that the authors of the documents were not aware of its possibilities in the liturgy. However, a later view was formed in 1975 when the issue of the use of dance in the liturgy arose, for those who wished to do so. The essay appeared in the *Notitiae* 11 [1975:202-205] of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, and gives clear guidance about using dance in the liturgy. This can be considered an authoritative document and should be referred to in every matter that concerns the use of dance in the liturgy. The essay appeared in, *The Canon Law Digest* Vol. VIII; 78-82 [O'Connor 1975:78-82]. The *Canon Law Digest* is a journal that deals with particular questions regarding Vatican documents, canon law and questions about Church affairs. This journal, therefore, addresses the question of using dance in the liturgy or liturgical dance. It states that if the dance is part of the local culture and has refined

movements and reverent gestures that give the dance meaning, then it could be used in the liturgy. Dancing is explained as expressing a fullness of the love of God. In an Indian context, dance is seen as sacred and has been seen as a means of showing devotion to God for thousands of years. Dance was explained and described as showing the love of God in the RCC through the examples of Saints Theresa of Avila, Philip Neri, and Gerard Majella [*Notitiae* 11 1975:202-205]. Therefore, I see using dance in the liturgy, which can be called liturgical dance, as part of inculturation, since the local culture is used in the liturgy to enhance the worship and to identify the local Church.

The Indian RCC reflected on inculturation within the faith at one of the meetings held by the bishops of North India, who met in Patna in March 1980. They briefly indicated the theological basis for inculturation of the liturgy as follows: ‘We are committed to inculturation of the liturgy for the following reasons: the inculturational dimension of the Redemption, the right of the faithful to worship the Father in a language and cultural expressions that is their own and the specific evangelizing values of the liturgy that is authentically Indian’ [Fernandez 1980:257- 258]. Such a decision not only proves that the Indian RCC intends to worship God indigenously, but also gives space for the researcher to propose dance in the liturgy to worship God.

Sometimes God is expressed in the form of dance to a particular community in a particular context. This is true in the local community of South India. God is seen as a dancer. Lord Nataraja (Lord Shiva) is considered to be a god of dance, and to have created the world through cosmic dance. For Hindus, dance is seen as a vital part of their religious belief. All the Hindu deities are associated with dance and music. One can see the Hindu deities depicted in different dance poses in temples. J.G. Davies, referencing liturgical dances in his book, observes that, ‘according to Plato it is the gods who have given the pleasurable sense of harmony and rhythm’, and cites Lucian’s view that ‘dance came into being contemporaneously with the primal origin of the universe’, and interestingly compares these

two ideas with Indian dance. It is the Hindu god, the manifestation of Lord Shiva, in a dance pose known as *Nataraja*, who most strikingly embodies the understanding of dance expressed by Plato and Lucian [Davies 1984:84]. Therefore, incorporating dance into the liturgy would be appropriate in some contexts in the RC liturgy in India. Dance in South India is an explicitly spiritual mode of expression and, therefore, suited to the spiritual message of the liturgy.

Having argued that dance is an integral part of cultures throughout India and that *Bharathanatyam* is central to the Tamil-speaking cultures of South India, I now turn to the question of the incorporation of dance within the liturgy. This is partly a response to the call by the Vatican II Council *Document for the Development of Practical Inculturation*, as described above, to embed the church locally. It is also, however, a theological response to the needs of the RCC of South India. Changes to the liturgy are not simply actions. Every change brought about in the liturgy must have theological justification and deepen the spiritual experience of the participants. Liturgical dance is a particularly contested area for such discussion because of a common perception in the West that dance represents theatre and performance rather than spirituality and meditation. This, however, is not a universal understanding.

Theologians and liturgical dance scholars from different parts of the world argue that bringing some elements of dance into worship is an essential part of their culture. Dance, they maintain, is an expression of their culture in worship and brings the Gospel closer to people. Fr. S.M. George, Founder of Kalai Kaviri College of Fine Arts, has put into practice the last argument by using dance in the liturgy among the RC institutions in India. He has also led international programmes in which his dance group has participated. Kalai Kaviri dance group performs regularly for congregations in Tamil Nadu and has performed before the Holy See, Pope John Paul II in 1987 [15th October in Vatican City].¹¹

In contrast to this position, other theologians maintain a negative view of liturgical dance and its usefulness within the RCC. A clear example of this attitude is expressed by David Aaron Murray writing in the *Adoremus Bulletin*, a liturgical journal founded to reflect upon the changes in the liturgy brought about by Vatican II and aimed towards seeking a 'more authentic observance of the liturgical norms approved since the Council. The current attempt to promote dance as part of RC liturgy embodies several contradictory tendencies, among them ethnic particularism and the "rediscovery" of a putative collective cultural identity' [Murray 2000:1]. For those who disagree with some or all of the conclusions of the SVC, especially with respect to liturgical reformation such as bringing local cultural elements into the liturgy, the arguments in favour of liturgical dance in an Indian context may represent a difficult position to accept. I hope to demonstrate, however, that using local cultural dances in the liturgy in South India stands firmly within the permitted bounds of Canon Law because, while the Law does not say that dance should not be used in the liturgy, it does state that liturgy is a celebration: 'Since liturgical action by their very nature call for a community celebration, they are, as far as possible, to be celebrated in the presence of Christ's faithful and with their active participation' [Canon Law 837:2]. Thus, the liturgy is described as the RC community which comes under one bishop or priest to celebrate the liturgy.

3.13 Conclusion

The theology of God's creation and His relationship with the world through incarnation provides a model for inclusion of local culture in the liturgy. The unity in diversity of God's creation and the understanding of a Trinitarian God further helps the model to argue for the inclusion of local culture in the liturgy to celebrate the work of redemption. This will make the liturgy relevant to the local culture, and at the same time keep the universality of the liturgy by maintaining the norms given by the Vatican to follow the celebration.

The Church, from its beginning, has taken root in different cultures. Following the Council of Jerusalem, it moved from its roots in Judaism and inserted itself into the life of other people and cultures such as Athens, Alexandria and Rome, and from Rome the great Christian centres gradually emerged up to the time of the Councils of Vatican I and II. The Church which inserted herself into the Greco-Roman culture tried to spread the same encultured Church in the mission lands.

The SVC documents show concern for using local cultural elements in the liturgy and, as long as worship remains within the required practices of the universal Church. Therefore, there can be differences in the Latin rite according to the context. The Conciliar Fathers¹², while making the documents regarding the inclusion of art forms in the church, did not think about using dance. But later, in 1975, there was a debate concerning liturgical dance which concluded in canonical permission for dance to be used under certain prescribed circumstance.

Chapter Four

LITURGY AND LITURGICAL DANCE

4.1 Introduction

The last chapter discussed the possibilities for the incorporation of dance from local culture into the Holy Mass, as a contribution to liturgical inculturation in South India. I argued that bringing the local culture into the Holy Mass would help the local Church to identify with the Indian context. In supporting this, I will argue that the liturgy of the Holy Mass is not merely ritual and a priestly domain but a community action, which is mission-oriented and also catechises the people. These essential elements in the Holy Mass could be carried on vibrantly through incorporation of local cultural dance. I will examine the broad term 'liturgy' and its definition, a theology of Holy Mass, different rites of liturgy to justify the use of gestures, poses and movements, and dance which is part of the local culture. The use of dance in the RCC's liturgy throughout its history will be highlighted to show that using dance in the liturgy is not a recent concept. The final part of the chapter will exemplify dance as mentioned in the Bible. Now I shall discuss the terms 'rites', 'Holy Mass', and 'liturgy' to show the provisions that enable us to use dance. These will indicate the appropriate place of liturgy in which to incorporate dance.

4.2 Rites, Holy Mass and Liturgy

The word 'rite' in English generally means any religious ceremonies, prayers or any functions related to religious customs [Griffin 1912:1]. In a RC context, rite stands for an ecclesiastical tradition in celebrating the sacraments [Colin 2007:1]. The RCC follows certain uniform arrangements of formulae and ceremonies in celebrating the Eucharist in different places. It is a diverse Church which has more than twenty rites for celebrating the sacraments or liturgy

[Colin 2007:1]. These liturgies have been developed according to local cultural contexts. The Church developed in Rome, Antioch (Syria) and Alexandria (Egypt), which were considered to be major cultural centres during the first century [Pathil 2005:143]. In these places the sacraments were celebrated according to their respective cultural understandings. Later, the liturgies which evolved from these places were named after their respective regions: the Roman or Latin Rite, the Syrian Rite (the later Byzantine Rite is derived from this Rite) and the Alexandrian or Egyptian Rite [Colin 2007:1]. When the RCC was spreading outside these areas, those three traditions each introduced their own liturgical rites to the countries they evangelised. The missionaries who came to India were from the near East and Europe, and practised in India the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin Rites of the RCC [Hull 1910:4]. Therefore, these are the rites of the Church which are prevalent in India. Among these rites, the Latin Rite is the most common and the Church is still understood as the 'Roman Catholic Church'. When the Latin Rite, which is in its own particular cultural form, is introduced into the Indian cultural system, it engages in an intercultural encounter [Oglivie 2007:5].

The rituals of the liturgy followed by Christians of different denominations came into practice after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and are used in a symbolic way to reflect the love of Christ for humanity [Gyug 2004:4]. Some of the rituals practised from the Old Testament period [1 Sam. 26:19; Lev. 1-7], were reframed in the New Testament and followed by some Jews who accepted and followed Christ, and have since continued and become known as liturgy [Fortescue 1937:55]. These rituals have continued since the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus Christ at the last supper.

In the time of Jesus, the ritual celebration of the Passover meal comprised principally the eating of the Passover lamb and the blessing of three cups.... This is the context in which Luke relates the eating of the Passover, the sharing of the cups and the hope of

the 'new earth and new heaven', where Jesus will celebrate the eternal Passover with his own. This context also forms a preface for the institution of the supper [Deiss 1996:4].

Jesus 'did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, a memorial of His death and resurrection' [SC 1963: Para47]. This is the source of Christianity: God's union with His people through Jesus Christ. Every Christian liturgical action commemorates this union. Therefore, the word 'liturgy' is used by most Christian denominations to denote the service of worship to God as this is performed in various ways across the world. Within the RCC, there are various patterns of liturgy followed under different rites. Therefore, the liturgy of the Holy Mass, which is also mission-oriented, is expressed in a structured form called 'rite' in different parts of the world, according to the local tradition [Donovan 2007:2].

'Holy Mass' is the term used in the Latin Rite of the RCC's liturgy to signify the Eucharistic celebration. It is a technical term coming from the Latin word *Missa* [Fortescue 1937:126]. The Latin Rite is regulated by the Congregation of the Sacred Liturgy in Rome. The Holy Mass has four parts: the Introductory Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rite [Crichton 1981:68]. The liturgy requires the active, conscious and full participation of all, according to the diversity of Orders and of office' [Vicesimus Quintus Annus (VQA) 1988: Para10]. The laity becomes mere spectators during the liturgy because liturgy becomes more and more the action of the clergy. They are in need of concentrating in popular devotion (e.g. praying the Rosary), in order to satisfy their need for participation during the liturgy [Puthanangady 2005:361]. In order to participate actively, the local cultural elements like *Bajan* singing, and *arati* were introduced in the liturgy by Amalorpavadass in this rite of the Holy Mass. When the Holy Mass is celebrated with the Indian elements attempted by Amalorpavadass, it is understood by those who celebrate it as

an 'Indian Rite' Holy Mass. However, this term does not exist in any of the official Vatican documents or in Indian RCC documents, other than in the books and articles that use this term when liturgical inculturation in India is discussed.

The word 'liturgy' is derived from the Greek root *leitourgia*, which means 'work of the people' [Davies 1986:314]. The elements of this word are *leitōs*, meaning 'public', and *ergo*, meaning 'to do', so the meaning of *leitourgia* is 'public duty': the service undertaken by the people to the state in Athens [Herbermann 2006:799]. It was also understood as a public service rendered by a specific religious group, according to one's tradition, in earlier times¹³ [Malaty 1992:1]. This term is used by the Church to denote the worship and the rituals related to it since the time of the Early Church. It was first used in the Greek Old Testament, the *Septuagint*, to denote the sacrificial rites of the temple in Jerusalem [Davies 1986:314]. Sacrificial rites and other rituals are services rendered to God by the public. By going back to the meaning of the term liturgy, one can see that it supports the idea that liturgy is a locus which can allow ordinary people to celebrate liturgy, rather being merely attendees at the liturgy of a priestly-centred service.

The RCC is one of the Christian denominations which follows a definite universal pattern in worship, and the word 'liturgy' is used to denote all the official services, rites, ceremonies, prayers and sacraments of the Church [Crichton 1981:14]. The seven sacraments, Baptism, Eucharist or Holy Communion, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Anointing the Sick, are forms of the liturgy which are the essence of the liturgical life of the Church [*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* 1997: Para1113]. So each liturgy, in its definitive form, is a patristic synthesis based on the Bible and the Tradition of the early centuries; each rite is a 'theological summation' [Mattam 1991:122]. The rituals of the liturgy (called rites, each according to the region in which it is found) are different across the world according to regional and cultural background. Though originally RC liturgy is from the

Middle East, in Asia it took its shape from the context where it was developed and practised [Pathil 2005:145]. The development of the liturgy was chiefly contributed by the Fathers of the Early Church. [Fortescue 1937:8].

‘Liturgy addresses itself to people within their culture and their circumstances. It is something for today’ [Rouet 1997:10]. So what the people have received by faith and sacrament in the Holy Mass should help them to live it in their life, to build a local community with harmony and peace. It should not be limited to the celebration of the Mass [*Eucharisticum Mysterium* 1967: Para13]. The Church’s doctrine says that ‘no Christian community, however, is built up unless it has its basis and centre in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist; from this, therefore, all education to the spirit of community must take its origin. [*Presbyterorum ordinis* 1965: Para6]. ‘The celebration of the liturgy, therefore, should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples’ [CCC 1997: Para1204]. By making the Holy Mass relevant to the culture, the local community can relate liturgy with their day-to-day life and find expression in it. In order to make the liturgy relevant to the local culture, the Church has allowed certain changes to the liturgy that can suit the local culture. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* says:

The Church desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church [SC 1963: Para1].

The above passage gives space for my proposal. Inclusion of dance in the liturgy would help to bridge the gap between the different religious communities. It also offers an opportunity to reconsider ideas about the Indian RCC and its promotion of European culture. Generally, the Indian churches ‘express the art forms of the Western world through its stained glass

windows, patterns on the altar table and railing and reading desk' [Clarke 1985:68]. Dance involves people, and inclusion of dance enables the local community to celebrate the liturgy. It also helps us to find the meaning of the liturgy as the entire chosen people of the royal priesthood are invited to celebrate as those whom God called them out of darkness into his wonderful light [1 Peter 2:9]. The Church says that liturgy is essential and that through it, the people 'are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church' [CCC 1997: Para1068].

4.3 Theology of Liturgy

There are various definitions given for the theology of liturgy. In general, the theology of liturgy is a study about worship. In worship we meet God [Crichton 1981:4]. Since the beginning of creation, God has taken the initiative to encounter people in different ways. In the Old Testament, God spoke through Abraham, Moses, Noah and many other prophets in order to be in communion with His people. The people were not able to understand Him and His love for the world. People desired God to be "real" and "active". We cannot reach God to experience this reality unless God makes a way for us to reach Him. God, through Jesus Christ, came into union with people and made Himself present to the people. This is symbolically seen in the form of liturgy known as the Holy Mass and it became the place to meet God.

Liturgy is seen as theocentric and has a Christocentric characteristic [Verheul 1969:31]. Firstly, liturgy is a personal encounter with God; it is a joyful movement when God meets people. According to Indian culture, joyful movements are often celebrated with dance and music. Therefore using dance to receive God in the liturgy will express the local cultural identity. Secondly, Christ acts as a mediator between humanity and God [Forrester 1996:41]. God acts through Christ in the liturgy; we cannot act but through Christ and with Him we can respond to God. 'In Christ "the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth, and the

fullness of divine worship was given to us” [SC 1963:Para5]. Through this divine worship is our response to God’s call in the form of praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and repentance. This meeting does not only take place with an individual but with the living community of the Church. This is called the ecclesial aspect of worship. The meeting takes place ‘under the veil of holy signs, of God with His Church and with the total person of each one of her members, in and through Christ and in the unity of the Holy Spirit’ [Verhuel 1969:112]. The signs and gestures also involve the dual unity of body and soul [Verhuel 1969:31]. Therefore, liturgy is for the people and it must reach us in our real lives.

Liturgy is not only a place to meet God and respond to His call, but it also has a strong educational dimension [SC 1963:Para33]. Through the word of God, liturgy calls the worshippers to participate in God’s ongoing mission in the world [Clarke 1985:65]. Therefore, the liturgy can be defined as ‘the worship of the divine majesty’, while it ‘keeps the mission alive’ and ‘catechesis the people’ [SC 1963:Para33]. The SVC states that the liturgy is

the wonderful works of 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 the glorious ascension, whereby “dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life”. 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 of the whole Church” [SC 1963:Para5]

The above passage shows that the mission of the Church starts from liturgy, and that mission was begun by God through His work among the people of the Old Testament. This mission was accomplished by Christ for the whole of humanity and thereafter, the Church was formed. ‘Jesus was on a mission from God’, and the Church ‘continues that mission *in the*

flesh'. The accomplished work of Christ is symbolically represented in the liturgy that is Jesus is 'still proclaiming His gospel to His people' in the liturgy [SC 1963: Para33]. Thus, liturgy is inseparably linked with mission [Clarke 1985:65]. For this reason, the Church wishes to initiate people into this Mystery of Christ 'by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the 'sacraments' to the 'mysteries' [CCC 1987:Para1075].

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that 'the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows. It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God' [CCC 1987:Para1074]. 'Catechesis' means a verbal message, a proclamation of the Gospel, but Pope Paul VI says that people are often tired of listening [*Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)*1975:Para42]. He points out that 'modern man has passed beyond the civilization of the word, which is now ineffective and useless, and that today he lives in the civilization of the image' [EN 1975:Para42]. For catechesis, a shift is needed from culture of word to culture of image [Chupungco 1992:135]. The Church also wishes that 'such catechesis is to be presented by local and regional catechisms' [CCC 1987:Para1074]. Hence, the liturgy which keeps the mission alive requires a celebration which would be relevant to the context [Clarke 1985:65]. The mission of the Church includes concern towards the life pattern of Christian people and their practices. The RCC recognises this and instructs:

Besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals [Sic], catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc [CCC 1997:Para 1674].

The theology of liturgy also explains that liturgy renders a significant worship to God. Professor and theologian Paul Meyendorff states that it is not enough to understand the beauty of worship but one must understand its function within the body of Christ. The liturgy is not just a symbolic action or structural presentation but it has a function and must give a theological meaning to every aspect of it. 'One of the aspects of its function is to transform the world and make it the kingdom of God on earth' [Meyendorff 1997:3]. The kingdom of God entails equality, living in peace, and harmony. This is also implied regarding the necessity of diverse culture and local community. So the kingdom of God aspect should be emphasised in liturgy. For this, the liturgy should help to bring transformation in the local community which participates in the Holy Mass. Especially in the Eucharist, Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of humanity [CCC 1997:Para1074]. Liturgy is an activity of people towards God. However, it is not the choice of the people to form the activity, but God directed the activity towards those whom God has chosen to live and work to His praise and glory [Forrester 1996:40]. Jesus told His followers to do this (last supper), and gave us an example to follow: to serve others and to work towards transformation. Hence, the liturgy could be seen as the dynamic spiritual reality of God in action through His Son, Jesus Christ. [Fowler 1999:201]. 'Jesus' ministry was always associated with movements and actions. He took people by the hand in order to heal them, whether they were an elderly lady or a little girl or physically challenged man [Hathorne 1999:22]. Jesus used the medium (parables¹⁴) to convey his message to the local people. The message about the reign of God is symbolised through action 'in the table-fellowship that Jesus established with all types of people including the marginalised and outcasts of society' [Hall 2007:5]. 'He directly challenged the social and religious attitudes that act to keep the marginalised in their places of oppression. His every action was a deep and fearless challenging of the prejudices and injustices of his day' [Hall 2007:12]. Thus, his message and the action were always related, and were relevant to society.

The liturgy which is celebrated in the remembrance of Jesus and his ministry to the world needs to be relevant to the present society. In order to address the question of how to make more relevant the Eucharist to the sick, physically and mentally handicapped, marginalised groups, refugees and immigrants [Martinez 2005: Para4]. There should be a bond between worship and the problems of society which could be mutually related and realised. The Early Church had this relationship, and liturgy was connected with the problems of the day. This relationship was symbolised in the first liturgy at the last supper. Jesus symbolised the spirit of the liturgy by washing the feet of his disciples while he instituted the Eucharist: a new covenant, God's union with His people through Jesus. The last supper is remembered every time we celebrate the Eucharist. Hence, every liturgical celebration has to portray this symbolism, making it meaningful and relevant to the present society.

It is not only through the mind but also through bodily postures which help people to actively participate in liturgy. It involves the participation of one's whole self. Theologians who support creative or contextual liturgy argue that in worship, the whole of the creation is sanctified. Nature forms part of worship. Theologian Fr. Dhiranand states that it is 'essential that the church should transform these rich religio-cultural values through their integration in the liturgy which celebrates the Paschal Mystery of Jesus. That will give a way for a real Indian Catholic worship celebration' [Bhatt 1987:39]. This is because 'appreciation of beauty in creation and a sense of oneness with nature is part of Indian religious thought. The worship includes the whole creation in singing the praise of God' [Bhatt 1987:39]. Thus, the liturgy 'addresses itself to the whole person, and invites the whole person; the involvement of our bodily nature in the liturgy' [Verheul 1969:19].

In the liturgy the word of God is found, the living truth speaking to the people of today, and the people's response to the word. The response should not be a mere ritualistic action but should be connected with the ongoing life of the people in the local community:

Liturgy is supposed to be aimed at liberating man from everything that dehumanises him and prevents him from living a full human life according to the will of the Father. Liturgy should answer the aspirations of the man of today—such as human dignity, equality, justice, liberation from all alienation and to have a full human life. Liturgy should be a source of strength and a commitment to the just ordering of human society [Bhatt 1987:39].

As I discussed above (pg108), the Christ event which is celebrated in the Liturgy is not merely to establish a personal union of individuals with God, but to form them into a community of love. ‘The ritual action must itself be a symbolic affirmation of the community that transcends and challenges the divisions brought about by economic justice, communalisms of various types and political power relationship’ [Bhatt 1987:39]. For this to happen, ‘creativity in prayers and symbols which express the aspirations of the man of today must be used’, and these must also be relevant to the local culture [Bhatt 1987:40]. Such liturgical celebrations will not only contribute to the traditions of India, but will become an intelligible sign to local people of other faiths that we are united with them in their aspiration. Dance is also a language symbols. The liturgy is full of signs and symbols; music and dance give better expression to these symbols [D’Sa 2006:19]. Art forms help in proclaiming the word of God to people who do not know God. A RC nun said that ‘it’s my apostolic duty to talk about art. If you don’t know about God, art is the only thing that can set you free’; art forms cross the barrier of language, religion, caste and gender [Beckett 2012:1]. The art form of dance is one of the effective mediums used to convey the Gospel and it is very much relevant to Indian culture [D’Sa 2006:20]. One of the local art forms, *Bharathanatyam* dance, is particularly seen as ‘one of the prides of Indian culture and mostly used with a religious distinctiveness’ by the Hindu community [Clarke 1958:50]. It is understood as an art form which could help to ‘retell the drama of the Christian God in relationship with the present ongoing problems of the Indian society’ [Clarke 1985:98]. ‘Art, at its greatest, liberates the

spirit' [Stiehl 2004:301]. Art forms in the liturgy can help to catechise RCs and bring the kingdom of God among the local communities in India. Ultimately, this will lead the RC people to become 'eager to do good works, to please God, and to live rightly, putting into practice what they have learned from liturgy' [*Eucharisticum Mysterium* 1967: Para13].

4.4 Liturgy and Indian Dance

Liturgy is the primary source of the spiritual life of RCs [Schuler 1987:5]. Bringing changes in the liturgy which allow it to identify itself with the culture may help the RCC become united with the Indian local community. In order to create a shift in this tradition and to enhance the liturgy through the work of the laity, I propose the necessity of inclusion of dance with its meaning and not for substitution or changing any elements of the liturgy with dance. Using dance in liturgy could lead to a local cultural identity. Therefore, the Holy Mass would remain specific within its local context and at the same time be universal in the structure of the celebration of the liturgy. The Indian RCC is looking forward to promoting Local Church with local cultural identities, which means a basic Christian community [Pathil 2005:110-112]. I argue that incorporating dance from local cultures in the liturgy will help towards this end, and could be used in different parts of the Holy Mass. (I have provided the list and how it could be performed in the Appendix, and attached a video DVD for examples).

India is a vast country with diversity in culture, race, religion and ethnicity. Christianity is still a minority religion in the country. Fr. George, the founder of Kalai Kaviri College of Fine Arts, asserts that 'the Church is still a minority community in India because she has not yet rooted herself in the culture' [George 2007:128]. He encouraged the dance teacher of his institution to choreograph Biblical dances and dances that are suitable to use in liturgy. His interest in promoting *Bharathanatyam* dance inspired many other clergy from different diocese to start dance institutions in their diocese. At the 1964 International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay, George Proksch, a German priest from the Society of the Divine Word

(SVD), presented the message of Jesus in Indian dance style. The ballet, entitled *Anuttam Prem*, was witnessed by Pope Paul VI. Proksch writes that 300 dancers, 100 musicians and 1000 singers participated in it [Proksch 1964:1]. This event is recorded evidence of the first attempt to use Indian dance and music to proclaim the Gospel and Fr. Proksch was the inspiration for other members of the clergy to encourage and promote local cultural dance forms in the Church.

The RCC is using dance to proclaim the Good News to the people as part of evangelisation. Occasionally, dance is performed in the RCC liturgy. RC institutions like Kalai Kaviri, Nav-Sadhan, Sandesha, Nanchil Nadam, NBCLC, and the communication centres in the dioceses of India, promote Indian classical dance. In these institutions, dance is performed at the beginning of worship during the entrance hymn, at the Gloria, during the readings, homily, doxology and the recessional hymn in the Holy Mass [Appendix4 Video:5]. The Lord's Prayer is also danced during the Holy Mass in some RC institutions like NBCLC [Appendix4 Video:1]. However, using dance in the liturgy is looked upon as a new concept in the Indian RCC [See Chapter Two]. Those clergy or bishops who appreciate local cultural dance use it in the worship. There are many kinds of dances practiced in India, not all of which are suitable for use in the liturgy. For this reason, it is cautioned that 'dance in particular needs to be critically examined because most dances draw attention to the performers and offer enjoyment' [Arinze 2009:6]. This shows that a study is needed to choose an appropriate dance before incorporating it into liturgy. The Church appreciates creativity in liturgy to foster active participation. It allows using actions or movements and gestures, which are 'called to maintain sacred silence at proper times' [*Redemptionis Sacramentum (RS)* 2004: Para39]. 'Ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity aimed at allowing each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to the established liturgical norms' [RS 2004: Para39].

The Church encourages artists and art forms in the churches, considering that they will help people to strengthen their faith and move towards devotion to God. Artists are ‘engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator’ [SC 1963:Para127]. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states that the Church is the friend of all the fine arts and asks the local bishops to show concern to artists and to encourage the genuine sacred art forms [SC 1963:Para122,124,127]. The Church insists that

the liturgical celebration is enriched by the presence of art, which helps the faithful to celebrate, meet God and pray. Art in the church, which is made up of all peoples and nations, should enjoy the freedom of expression as long as it enhances the beauty of the buildings and liturgical rites, investing them with the respect and honor which is their due. The arts should also be truly significant in the life and tradition of the people (VL) 1994:Para43].

This shows that the Church is positive about using appropriate art forms, which are part of the tradition and relevant to the life of the people, in the liturgy and in the Church. This, *a fortiori*, should include liturgical dance, since the Church is positive about using art forms in the liturgy. We will examine evidence of the use of dance in the Holy Mass in the Church in the early periods. Before that, however, I will discuss the term ‘liturgical dance’, as different theologians and dance scholars look at liturgical dance in various aspects.

4.5 Liturgical Dance

Dance can turn into a prayer which expresses itself through a movement engaging the whole being, soul and body [Notitiae 11 1975:202-205]. Such dance in the Christian worship or prayer service or liturgy is termed ‘liturgical dance’ (or sacred dance). Liturgical dance scholars in the West describe it as a Christian expression of prayer or worship through body movement: ‘a dance or gesture used within worship for the glory of God’ [Wellford 2008:1].

Liturgical dances are not merely dance: they are transformed when dance reflects the presence of God in the midst of a celebration. When the dance enlivens and embodies a particular scriptural message, and helps to create and enrich a worshiping atmosphere, the dance which is used for this purpose becomes a liturgical dance [Chesson 1989:3].

It 'is viewed as a living, moving, breathing epiphany of God and creation' [Sola 1993:153]. Such dance 'understands that the art of dance itself is not the focus, but the active expression of God's Words through movements, an act of praise occurring in congregational celebrations of life in Christ' [Abernethy 2008:90]. Liturgical dance is not a dance merely to be added to the liturgy without considering the context or continuity of the liturgy. Rather, the dance needs to be carefully crafted to fit the context of the liturgy [Chesson 1989:3]. Another view on sacred dance is that 'Dance is a language, and because it communicates without much words it can reach those emotions we all think we successfully repress, and by reawakening them, it encourages us to re-present them at the foot of the cross' [Hathorne 1999:34]. . Some of the RCC bishops in Africa are positive about liturgical dance because dance brings a more festive and joyful atmosphere to the liturgical celebration: 'the liturgy is made alive by the songs and dances which Christians weave together at the different moments of the celebration Ramolo 2005:50]¹⁵. Dance fits in well with the Eucharist celebration because

Celebration and adoration go hand in hand. They do not follow each other. The first stresses the festive aspect, the second highlights the Greatness and Holiness of God. We adore the Lord of Glory together with the angels and archangels. During the Holy Eucharistic action Heaven and Earth are in unison to prostrate themselves in adoration before the Majesty of the Triune God. There should be a feeling of wonder and amazement rather than inspiring only fear and despair. Hence we need to stress the unity of celebration and adoration. We have to encourage our faithful to become

an adoring celebrating community, be it during Mass or outside Mass [Teschamariam 2005: Para IN 175]¹⁶.

‘Dance was perceived as one of the heavenly joys and part of the adoration of the divinity by the Angels and the Saved’ [Hedgeman 2007:60]. The evidence for using dance in the liturgy at the time of the Early Church shows, ‘in the two earliest Christian liturgies recorded in detail, dance is used in the order of service’ [Kraus and Chapman 1981:1]. The liturgical records of Justine Martyr (AD 150) and Hippolytus (around 3rd c. AD) show the use of joyful dances, such as circle dances, in the Early Church. Several Western liturgical dance scholars have used this evidence. Universally, liturgical dance is identified as an expression of prayer through body movements. In an article entitled ‘The religious dance: An expression of spiritual joy’, the magazine *Notitiae*, offers an authoritative sketch regarding the use of dance in the RC liturgy, stating that ‘the dance can turn into prayer which expresses itself with a movement which engages the whole being, soul and body. Generally, when the spirit raises itself to God in prayer, it also involves the body’ [*Notitiae* 11 1975:202-5]. It is considered to be a response and thanksgiving to God. Liturgical practices like adoration, praise, repentance and joy are usually delivered through the words of the priest. If those liturgical practices are expressed through movements or gestures, then it may cause a great impact on the worshipers. Kathleen Kline, an ordained minister and dancer and Chaplain at the University of Maryland (USA), argues that

liturgical dance is an invitational art. It invites us to respond to God with our whole being; it helps us to move beyond verbal expressions to a fuller experience and expression of our relationship with God. Liturgical dances are choreographed to bring life and form to the joys, visions and struggles of a searching heart. When the dances are performed with the sincerity and confidence and spiritual discernment that worship requires, the Christian message is brought to life [Chesson 1989:5].

A French liturgical dancer says

if we could learn to interpret the liturgical texts, sacred chants and hymns, by choral speaking, mimes and dances, we should be able to direct the people in rejoicing more wholesome, pure and naively fresh than those to which they are accustomed to today
[Intravaia 1961:2] .

The above discussion shows that there is substantial support from various liturgical dance scholars from Western countries. However, the definitions and discussion of liturgical dance show that there are no definite set styles, dance patterns or traditional dance used as liturgical dance. It seems as if everyone trained and untrained is trying to choreographer or to perform a dance with existing dance style. However, there is no particular style of dance for liturgical dance [Chesson 1989:6]. Dance that is used in the liturgy is called liturgical dance in order ‘to raise it to the level of highest of Christian arts. Dance is the art of ritual and creative movements, the sole art which by its very being claims the power to unify body, mind and emotions’ [Deitering 1984:6]. In the West, the difference between worship dance and secular dance is that the secular dance emphasises and glorifies the body, while a liturgical dance rejoices in embodiment and in the integrity of the whole person [Deitering 1984:6]. It is the liturgical dancer’s ability to shape the dance movements into set patterns or symbols and images, which is basically a choreography, which can help the dance to be an expressive, interpretive and reflective art. Hence, ‘no set styles or movement patterns have yet evolved to form a standard dance liturgy’ [Chesson 1989:79].

In my dissertation, I propose to use the local cultural dance *Bharathanatyam*, which has definite techniques to communicate the message in the liturgy to encourage active participation. For this, it is important to know if the RCC uses or encourages any art forms in the liturgy, because ‘the liturgy belongs to the whole body of the Church’ [VQA 1988: Para10]. It is through the liturgy ‘the mystery of the Church is proclaimed, experienced and

lived' by the RCs [VQA 1988: Para9]. 'The work of salvation is communicated to the faithful through the liturgy by the manifestation of the Church' [VQA 1988:Para22]. Thus, the Church, through her mission, is by nature a Church of communication. The Church communicates by several methods. One of the most effective and lively media of communication is 'art'. It is said that the greatest artist is God and the greatest art is His creation: 'God as a creator, he is an artist, an arduous one, who is immersed in his purpose of creating, destroying, re-creating and so forth' Shenoy 2012:1]. God sets the world dancing, says a Bach chorale. Humanity has emerged out of a divine dance [Rouet 1997:125]. Therefore, liturgical dance is not merely a dance of a dancer, but a 'dance' of the whole Eucharistic celebration.

Dance was also used earlier in the churches during worship. For example¹⁷, 'there was formerly dancing in the Cathedrals of Seville, Toledo, Valencia and Jeres' [Cass 1983:482]. Some of the writings of the Early Church are associated with dancing. One such describes the occupation of the angels in heaven as dancing:

St. Basil, who was so enamoured of natural things, described the angels dancing in Heaven, and later the author of the Dieta Salutis (said to have been St. Bonaventura), which is supposed to have influenced Dante in assigning so large a place to dancing in the Paradiso, described dancing as the occupation of the inmates of Heaven, and Christ as the leader of the dance [Cass 1993:482].

It is argued that 'worship is a dramatic enactment of the relationship that we have with God, a relationship that stems from historical events' [Webber 1994:73]. Also, there are many gestures and postures are used in the liturgy. Hence, dance which includes gestures and postures could be included. Using dance in the liturgy is not a new concept in the Church. Further, a brief history of liturgical dance through the centuries below provides evidence for

using dance in worship in the history of liturgy. This evidence will help to show that dance was part of the liturgy in the Early Church period.

4.6 Liturgical Dance through the Centuries

In the beginning, religion and dance often seemed to be the same activity [Taylor 1950:21]. There are a sufficient number of studies which show that dance or drama had been part of the liturgy, as well as being used during the Christian feast outside the liturgy in the churchyards around the tombs of the martyrs [Hathorne 1999:25]. At times, the use of dance in the liturgy and church was stopped due to a certain form of dance and the way it was used [Taylor 1967:76]. However, there is enough evidence to show that the Church Fathers, bishops and Church Councils have placed importance on the use of dance in the liturgy, and some bishops have choreographed sacred plays and introduced them as part of the liturgy [Taylor 1950:106]. The gestures, postures and symbolic movements that are used in the Holy Mass may have developed from sacred dance and sacred plays that were used in the liturgy and in church during the time of the Early Church and Middle Ages [Taylor 1950:134].

In the first century AD, the Judeo-Christians followed the culture of Hebrew tradition and had dance in their worship. In the second century, there were dances and songs by children in the worship and the adults danced for the recessional hymns in the church [Barboza 1990:1]¹⁸. St. Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-217) describes dance as being ‘acceptable to display physically the longing to enter into heaven during the church worship’, while St. Ambrose (AD 340-397) says ‘to approach the font dancing during baptism’ [Hathorne 1999:25]. The studies from various liturgical dance scholars show that, ‘dance was recognised by the Church as a natural way of expressing joy, a way of gaining salvation and a method of adoration, as illustrated by references to the dances of the holy ones, the martyrs and the angels’ in the early first five centuries [Pardue 2005:77]. The early Christian faith was not just a belief, but an experience of abundant life and spiritual joy, so the believers expressed their joy with

symbolic movements [Gagne 1999:43]. The reason why dance was well-accepted in the churches during these centuries is because it was deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition which had dance as part of its tradition [Gagne 1999:43].

In the third century, the Church Fathers and the clergy at that time stated that the sacred *choras* (a circular movement) was a praiseworthy form of expression of religious feeling [Coleman 1995:36]. The circular movement dance was a part of Jewish tradition. For this reason, it is believed that Miriam would have danced the circular dance [Exod. 20] [Polen 1992:4]. The sacred *choras* are performed around the church during the Easter celebration of Resurrection [Isar 2009:266]. ‘Men and women took part in this circling and processional dancing’, just as the men and women followed Miriam in dancing and singing. Not only dance, but sacred plays were also introduced into the liturgy. ‘The Pantomimic (Roman theatrical performance) dances and dramatic hymns were introduced into the liturgy and were received with great interest’ [Taylor 1967:76]. There was a dance performed ‘commemorating the crucifixion in the liturgy called *Thalia*’ (the name of the religious play) [Taylor 1967:76].

In the beginning of the fourth century, there were more opportunities for dramatic movements in the liturgy. A type of dance called ‘the triumphant ring dance was used to honour the martyrs and saints and to celebrate Easter’ [Taylor 1967:76]. During the patristic period, dance was common in the churches. Many Early Church Fathers appreciated dance; St. Ambrose (AD 374-397) saw dance as spiritual appreciation. He saw dance as a need to fuse the spiritual with the physical. He wrote ‘the Lord bids us dance, not merely with the circling movements of the body, but with pious faith in him. He tried to clarify the values and dangers of the use of sacred dance’ [Taylor 1993:18]. St. Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 325-389) encouraged sacred dances in the church and liturgy [Taylor 1993:23]. In the same way Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335-394) said that, in order to encourage dance in the church, ‘Jesus is the one and only choreographer and leader of dancers on earth and in the Church’ [Coleman 1995:6]. St. John Chrysostom (AD 347-407) ‘appreciated the joy and sense of unity expressed

in sacred dance. He advised the Christians to dance to the glory of God as David danced'. He said God has given us feet so that we might dance with angels [Taylor 1950:101]. St. Basil (AD 329-79), questioned about dancing in the church, replied, 'what is more blessed than to imitate the dance of the angels here on earth' [Nibley 1987:6]. Thus, he encouraged the church to use dance. St. Theodoret (AD 397-457) also said that 'dancing in heaven was the occupation of the angels'. He dreamt of the 'martyrs in their dance in the indestructible aeons', and emphasised 'dance as one of the virtues in harmony with the powers above to encourage dance in the church' [Taylor 1950:105].

In the fifth century AD, a structured Church was gradually developed and had a separate constitution for the liturgy. In some part of Europe, the Church authorities considered dance to be evil and condemned dance in the churches during religious feasts, 'drawing parallels between these practices and the lewd dance of Salome, inspired by satanic forces' [Brooks 1988:2]. This was because of various dance practices in contemporary religions of that time and, so the Church considered dance to be a part of pagan worship and discouraged dance in Christianity. However, dance was not completely stopped in all the churches during the liturgy [Davies 1984:67]. It was continued in a few churches. This could have been due to the personal interest and encouragement of the local priest or bishops of that place. On Christmas day, Epiphany day and in the celebrations of the feasts, dance was even performed by the priests, deacons, sub-deacons, choir boys etc in the churches [Davies 1984:67].

During the early Middle Ages (AD 500-1100), 'Holy Mass was developed with its definite, prescribed, symbolic movements to the accompaniment of Gregorian chant' [Intravaia 1961:2]. At this time, the cultural expressions of the people entered into the Holy Mass and the Church preserved and fostered the religious art forms [Intravaia 1961:2]. 'Pope and theologian Gregory the Great (about AD 540-604) understood that the faithful could experience a joyful religious emotion so strong that words were insufficient to express it. This ecstasy demanded movement – dance – for its release' [Brooks 1988:1].

During the time when dance was very much prevailed in the churches, there were leaders who opposed certain dances in the church for genuine reasons while encouraging other forms of dance. St. John Chrysostom, who appreciated dance in the church, also cautioned against ‘unseemly motions’ like those of pagan dances [Gagne 1999:42]. St. Augustine (AD 354-430) ‘sensed the harmony in the dances and the need for spiritual harmony in the participants’ [Taylor 1950:104]. At the same time he was against ‘frivolous or unseemly’ dances. The liturgical scholars argued that he was ‘more severe to keep the sacred dances disciplined’ [Taylor 1950:105]. In the same way, St. Basil ‘condemned the dances of women who performed frivolous and indecent movements’ [Gagne 1999:39]. For the same reasons, Caesarius of Arles (AD 470-543) strictly prohibited dance in the vigils of saints and described dance as a ‘most sordid and disgraceful act’ [Gagne 1999:43]. There is evidence to show that during the late fifth and sixth centuries, the practice of using dance in the liturgy was not encouraged by certain Roman emperors, but in the course of time it was revived and dance seems to have been used in the liturgy once again [Gagne 1999:45].

With different opinions about dance, the Early Church monitored the use of dance and accordingly encouraged it in the churches. The Early Church was concerned about the focus of the Christian dance and at times, when the dance was focused away from liturgical or religious purpose, helped to keep the proper intention of dance as used in the liturgy or in church by describing the spiritual aspect of sacred dance. This is evidenced by the description by St. Epiphanius (AD 315-403), one of the Church Fathers, of the spiritual elements in the dance and festival celebration on a Palm Sunday in AD 367:

Rejoice in the highest, Daughter of Zion, rejoice, be glad and leap boisterously thou all-embracing church. For behold, once again the king approaches...once again perform the choral dances...leap wildly, ye heavens; sing Hymns, ye Angels; ye who dwell in Zion, dance ring dances [Kraus and Chapman 1981:49].

The above quote shows that though the physical and spiritual aspects of dance are described, the spiritual aspect is emphasised more. The people were thought to appreciate the spiritual aspect of dance as ‘symbolic of spiritual motions of the soul’ [Gagne 1999:43], and so sacred dances were encouraged rather than dance with mere physical movement and without a spiritual perspective.

Further evidence for the prohibition of dance in the church was centred on using dance in inappropriate parts of the service. People performed their ‘customary dances’ in special services in the Church. It was also a custom to celebrate the feast of Saints with some form of dancing in the worship. The evidence shows that there was ‘dance during a day of prayer, silence, and penance’. As dancing was not suitable for the penitential mood, the Third Council of Toledo (AD 589) forbade dancing in church [Taylor 1950:106]. The same Council suggested that Archbishop of Seville St. Isidore presented ‘ritual rich in sacred choreography’. This ritual was incorporated in the Holy Mass known as *Mozarabe* [Taylor 1950:107]. Taylor, a liturgical dancer, writes that this dance was asked not to perform by the choir boys in the liturgy by Pope Eugenius II but again those who understood its need and importance made this dance to perform before pope and got permission to use it again [Taylor 1950:107]. Using dance in the Holy Mass continued throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, and was only forbidden when it was seen as being degraded, as evidenced from Pope Zacharias’ Bull (AD 774) [Taylor 1950:108]. A record shows that in AD 900 a rubric states that the Canon shall dance during psalm reading, using some gestures and symbolic movements [Taylor 1950:108].

During the Medieval period (AD 1100-1500), many plays were introduced into services of the Church to arouse public interest in attending. These plays were performed on the dancing pavement, a space in the front of the church or at the west door, where awnings were hung. The devil had the leading role in the plays, along with other assisting devils, and the acrobatic

dancing of Salome entertained and attracted the people [Coleman 1995:40]. These dances were connected with religious dramatisation but were not devotional.

In order turn the public interest towards church, the *choral* song, picturesque processions, and even ceremonial dances were performed in the choir [Taylor 1950:109]. A religious play called *Planctus* (sorrows of the three Marys: Magdalene, the Virgin and Mary) appeared as part of the Holy Mass. It is recorded that in this play, the performers (nuns, choir boys, or clergy), acting like the three Marys, strike their breast one after the other as they speak the sorrowful lyrics of the composition [Taylor 1950:108].

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the Cistercian monks danced and prayed for the salvation of the universe [Intravaia 1961:2]. ‘According to the *Mitralis de Officio of Sicard*, Bishop of Cremona (1185-1215), composed about 1200, the circular dance (*chorea*) provides a key metaphor for understanding the liturgy of Easter [Mews 2009:512]. The Franciscans called themselves ‘the singing servants of Christ’ because they sang and danced. A dance treatise was written by Friar Marti of Alicante, a monk of Cologne in the Middle Ages. This found a way into the church through choreographed music for the dance by Verna Arvey [Intravaia 1961:53]. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the story of the Nativity, a pastoral play which incorporated music, dance and acting, was used in many parts of Spain during the Christmas liturgy [Brooks 1988:50].

After the Council of Toledo (1582), the Church ‘prohibited dancing and plays in the churches during Divine Office’, and during this period dance gradually stopped being used in liturgy in different churches, which had still been using dance until that time. The reason for the prohibition of the use of dance during liturgy was that there was so much noisy dance in and around the churches that worship was disturbed [Esses 1992:411]. The practice of liturgical dance gradually stopped in the churches. However, using dance in the Holy Mass and church

did not stop completely. Sacred dance during liturgy was spread throughout the 16th and 17th centuries by choir boys in some parts of Europe and Spain [Esses 1992:412].

The Catholic Counter Reformation (1545-1563) removed dancing in the Church and showed a determination to return to medieval liturgical tradition [Adams 1990:23], but dancing continued in a variety of forms. St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) danced with holy joy [D'Sa 2006:18]. Two other noted Carmelite nuns, St. Bienheureuse Marie de l' Incarnation and Anne de Jesus, imitated the Spanish mystic and danced before *Le Saint Sacrament* at the Carmel in Dijon, showing that dance remained an expression of the Christian faith, and that in some way or another religious dance had flourished in the Church from the earliest times [Taylor 1950:122]. There were dances in the processions while the relics of saints or martyrs were carried, which was a part of the church festival. Dance was allowed to be performed at the high altar during *Corpus Christi* in Spain during the 17th century and there is evidence that the practice continued until the early 19th century [Esses 1992:239].

Liturgical dance scholars of the West have argued that Roman culture did not have sacred dance, mediating between God and humanity, in contrast with the Judean culture from which Christianity developed. Thus, the interest of the Church in dance gradually lessened as the centuries passed and Roman culture became the dominant influence [Gagne 1999:43]. It is said that 'in Imperial Rome we find the dance first completely theatricalised, then commercialised; and as the religious life of Rome became orgiastic, so the religious dances became occasions for unbridled licentiousness and sensuality' [Kraus and Chapman 1981:42].

It is argued that the 'dramatic nature of the Eucharist itself created a liturgy which was a fertile soil for the development of sacred drama' [Brooks 1988:79]. The development of the theatre in England after initially being banned by the Church took place as a development of the *Quem Quaeritis*¹⁹ in the Easter liturgy of the Latin Rite. 'Finding its basis in the symbolic nature of the service of the Mass, drama developed out of the desire on the part of the clergy

to place the salient facts of Christ's life more realistically before their congregations' [Nicoll 1927:62-63]. The above discussion shows that before the 17th century, the RCC had a sustained appreciation of the liturgical importance of dance, though in some churches certain types of dance were prohibited which were deemed unsuitable to use in the Holy Mass and churches. However, dance was used in the liturgy because it was part of the Jewish cultural heritage still present during the Early Church period. It was also used to emphasise religious meanings through gestures and movements in order to retain the attention of the people participating in the liturgy. Now I shall turn to the evidence for using dance in the liturgy as seen in the Bible.

4.7 Liturgical Dance in the Bible

The mention of dance in the Bible is often an expression of joy, victory, sorrow, thanksgiving and praise of God. In the Bible, 'dance' and 'rejoice' are mentioned frequently. Dance has been used in worship since the Old Testament. Hebrew words like *Mecholah*, *Chul*, and *Karar* in the Old Testament refer to dance. Of forty-four Hebrew words for dancing, only one refers to a secular dance [Coleman 1995:36]. All other words refer to sacred dancing. This clearly highlights the participation of dancers in worship in the Hebrew tradition.

Dance would have been an integral part of the celebration of the ancient Israelites. There are many references to praising God through dance in the Old Testament. Psalms 149:3 and 150:4 say clearly that the people should 'praise his name with dancing', as well as 'with trumpet, flute and harp, with strings and pipe and cymbals'. Miriam dances to celebrate the parting of the waters of the Red Sea and Israel's rescue from the Egyptians [Exod. chap 15-20], while the book of Judges (21:19) tells about the daughters of Shiloh dancing at the yearly feast. The dance of King David is described when the Ark of the Covenant is brought into the city of Jerusalem [2 Sam. 6:14]. It is said that he danced with all his might. These dances were

performed for the honour of the Lord, and emerged as a means of expressing worship, which is in itself acceptable.

When we look into the dances mentioned in the Bible, they are frequently linked with celebration and, as such, are an expression of praise and thanksgiving. They convey a sense of physical exuberance (stimulation of the Holy Spirit within). This sense of exuberance is transmitted in the metaphorical use of dance language: ‘the mountains skipped like rams, the hills jump like lambs...’ [Psalm 114:4; 98:7-8]. This reflects and extends the experience of dance in worship. At the same time, the metaphor explains the cultural background of these people. From the above references to dance, it is clear that the people used dance movements such as leaping, skipping and clapping as part of the dance in their worship or when praising God through dance.

We can see the same culture in the New Testament as well. Jesus also might have danced since he was a Jew and dance was a part of contemporary Jewish culture, says Anne Barton (referring to a comment by Martin Blogg) in her book “*Shall We Dance?*” [Barton 1991:8]. On the return of the prodigal son, the father gives instructions that they are all to ‘eat and make merry’ and the elder son returns from the fields to hear ‘music and dancing...’ [Luke 15: 25]. Jesus, while speaking through this parable, referred to the joy of the father, expressed by having dance at his house. Since dancing was a natural part of celebration in their culture, Jesus used this expression to explain to the people and help them understand how the heavenly Father rejoices when they repent and turn to God [Luke 15:23-24]. Another reference of this sort of expression in Luke is 6:23 in which Jesus says: ‘rejoice in that day and leap for joy’.

Among the New Testament writers, John and Matthew have significantly emphasized the importance of dance. For example, in John’s Gospel Jesus speaks about ‘joy’. He says that “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be

complete” [John 15:11]. The Greek word used for joy is *Charis*. This literally means ‘joy,’ as a feeling of inner happiness. However, Louw and Nida explain this word as an idiomatic expression of ‘dancing hearts’ [1988: 302]. Jesus refers here the joy that would be experienced by living a complete and fruitful life. In other words, the joy in this verse, which has a specific salvific nature in Johannine terminology, is an expression of ‘dancing of hearts’.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus points out to those who criticise John the Baptist’s way of proclamation of Kingdom of God and Jesus approach to the people by living among them. Jesus says ‘we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn’ [Matt 11:17]. The Greek word used for dance is *Orcheomai*. This means “patterned rhythmic movements of the whole and/or parts of the body, normally to the accompaniment of music or ‘to dance, dancing” [Louw and Nida 1988: 211]. Jesus used the terms ‘dance and mourns’ as it was familiar in the Jewish culture. Through his redemptive work on the Cross Jesus has called us to rejoice and not to mourn. If Liturgy is the place which reminds us the joy of redemption, dance should be an integral part of liturgy to celebrate the salvation. Dance is often always associated with celebration and joy. The martyrs and the saints listened to the joyful sound of the flute that Jesus played and they kept their rhythm accordingly and rejoiced in Christ.

Jesus sacrificed himself for the love of his people and lived a fruitful life and accomplished the mission of the Father Almighty on earth. Jesus wishes that we live a fruitful life with obedience and receive the love and peace to rejoice in him. ‘The joy of Jesus is the joy that arises from the sense of a finished work. It is creative joy, like the joy of an artist. It produces a sense of unexhausted power for fresh creation’ [Avent 2010:995]. Joy cannot be hidden from oneself, it will be leaped out. The action or behaviour of a person indicates it very well. In worship we give thanks and glorify God. Hence it would be appropriate to stretch our body

in rhythm and action to express the experience that we receive in sharing the joy of Christ with us.

Dance is meant for celebration. Therefore, undoubtedly, dance as an expression of celebration and joy can be shown to have been a part of the New Testament, but it was also practised (as seen earlier in this chapter) among the Gentiles (non-Jews who followed Christ and became Christians). When worship moved from house-Churches to the organised Church, the people used dance in the Church as well. Dancing has always been an integral part of Jewish life. Dance heralded new beginnings, celebrated victories, and encouraged God's people to look to the future with hope and energy [Hathorne 1999:34]. Dance can become a common ground for celebration and at the same time, be an action of prayer. 'In the Hebrew tradition, dance functioned as a medium of prayer and praise, as expression of joy and reverence, as a mediator between God and humanity' [Coleman 1995:41]. The words which denote dance in the Hebrew Bible are given in the Appendix.

4.8 Conclusion

Liturgy is a community action, it is mission oriented, and has the capacity to catechise the people. Every liturgy expresses these elements. Hence, these elements of liturgy should be relevant to the people of today and their society rather than merely being a ritualistic celebration of the Holy Mass. Creative and symbolic movements and gestures which are relevant to the context should be incorporated into the Holy Mass to catechise and communicate the relevant message to the local community in the hope that it might lead to transformation. Already dance has been used by the churches in India to communicate the Gospel effectively. As liturgy is the main source of inspiration for RCs and people learn from it, the message and other activities of liturgy also should be effective. For this, dance could be used as a medium of communication.

Liturgy, by its very nature, is a dramatic event. Dance, which is full of gestures, postures and movements, could be used in the liturgy, as there are many gestures and postures ~~are~~ already used in liturgy. Using dance in the liturgy is not a new practice. It has occurred in the history of liturgy through the centuries. At the same time, the dance used in the liturgy should be considered carefully; the dance performed must help people to meditate or pray or understand the Gospel message being communicated. Therefore, liturgical dance becomes an invitational art form, inviting the congregation to praise God as the dancer presents the message through the body and soul.

Chapter Five

LOCAL CULTURAL ART FORM *BHARATHANATYAM*

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed material on liturgy and the use of dance in the Holy Mass between the Early Church and the medieval periods. Dance was seen as part of the local culture of the Early Church and sometimes sacred plays and ritual choreography became part of the liturgy [See Chapter Four]. I also discussed the Holy Mass as a sign and act that recalls the events of redemption and that helps people to grow stronger in their faith. It is an essential source of inspiration for every RC. Therefore, using dance in the liturgy would enhance it. Since the local culture is used, the liturgy becomes a local liturgy which helps to bring the local community closer to the church.

I have shown that dance was used in the Eucharistic celebration to retain the attention of the congregation, enabling them to participate in an active and lively way. Above all, the liturgy uses many symbols, gestures and postures. In India, people use many gestures and symbols in their day-to-day life while expressing a message, communicating with others or at domestic work. This is especially common among ordinary people. *Bharathanatyam* includes gestures and poses as part of its technique to convey a message. It was used to encourage devotion to the Hindu gods, and is used in Hindu worship in an Indian context, so the idea of using this dance for developing faith and enhancing worship is not a new practice in Indian culture.

Therefore, I found that using dance in the liturgy to communicate the biblical message and invite people into active participation would be relevant. For this reason, I propose to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass, which would be appropriate to the Indian cultural context. Hence, in this chapter I shall clarify the questions raised in the interviews

with regard to the use of *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy in order to make a case that this kind of dance has a special technique which would be relevant to use in the liturgy.

Interviews with participants have shown that there is a misconception that folk dance is the local cultural dance, and not the classical dances such as *Bharathanatyam*. This latter art form is considered to be a dance of the elite, including by some theologians and liberationists who are of the opinion that *Bharathanatyam* belongs to and was developed from the contemporary 'Devadasi System'. This term at present denotes immoral women (prostitutes), especially the Dalit women who are so called *Devadasi*. In fact, the present contemporary *Devadasi* and *Devadasi*²⁰ of earlier times have vast differences between them. Hence, I will discuss the history of *Bharathanatyam* and clarify the life of Devadasi who lived in temples and their genuine contribution to *Bharathanatyam*. Often the church uses reasons such as that Bharathanatyam is a Hindu-based dance, it is a Brahminical and Sanskrit-based dance, and it is used by the Devadasis who are understood as immoral women in the society, to resist allowing this dance in the liturgy. From my experience, I have come to understand that the history of Bharathanatyam is deeper and more complex than these simple understandings. Hence, I will also present the other side of the history of *Bharathanatyam*, and its link with the local culture of the Tamizh community will be highlighted. This will enable me to argue that this dance belongs to the local culture through its development, and that although Brahmin culture has taken over this form more recently, its original form can be dated back to 2000 years ago. The cultural customs and traditions which are believed to have been in practice for many centuries need to be analysed historically to understand classical dance, or any art form, better in ways such as their origin, development, techniques, and social significance. Finally, the present use of *Bharathanatyam* in the RCC will be discussed to show the importance given to this dance outside the liturgy. Now I shall discuss the history of *Bharathanatyam*.

5.2 *Bharathanatyam*, an Indian Classical Dance

In India, there are seven forms of classical dances²¹ and many forms of folk dances and tribal dances in practice [Sudhakar 1994:3]. All the classical dance genres are intimately associated with Hindu mythology, Indian sociology and politics [Devarajan 2010:13]. One of the particular features of classical dance is its many hand gestures and limb movements of the body (from head to toe), which, rather than pure rhythmic movement, helps in portraying objects of the imagination or to express any theme [Vatsyayan 1977:28]. According to the different regions in India, the languages, music patterns and the choreography and the style of dancing makes the difference in each classical dance. However, the techniques of Indian classical dance is as ‘complex in nature as the technique of any other art in India and that it grows from the smallest unit of movement into a composite whole by a series of laws applied systematically to evoke a particular state of mind’ [Vatsyayan 1977:32]. The theme of the classical dances and their motivation is to depict the relationship between God and human beings. This could be understood through the lyrics of the song portrayed through dance [Allen 1997:76]. *Bharathanatyam*, which is one of the classical dances, has been practiced for many centuries. It was at its height during the medieval period and was known by different names [Bharati 1999:92], which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

5.3 *Bharathanatyam*, a Medium for Communication

The Hindu mythological origin of dance shows that it was created for the masses—for those who cannot understand or enjoy the Hindu scriptures (Vedas) because the Vedas are too ambiguous. Therefore, an amusement which could be heard and seen was created by Lord Brahma (one of the Hindu Trinity gods), the Creator, for the masses who had gone astray, in order to communicate the divine message [Bharatamuni 2000:1]²². This purpose behind the creation of dance is continued even today in different forms. The origin of *Bharathanatyam* also refers to this mythological story. It has all the communicative elements known as *Abhinaya* (dramatic depiction) [O’Shea 1998:55]. There are four kinds of *Abhinaya* used to

express an idea or message. They are the expression through body movements (*Angika Abhinaya*), lyrics and music (*Vachika Abhinaya*), costumes and make-up (*Aharya Abhinaya*), and the psychic state of mind (*Sattvikka Abhinaya*), which expresses the inner feelings [Hegde 1999:34].

The essential part of *Bharathanatyam* is conveying a theme through facial expressions (*Bhava*) and through body movements and gestures (*Sattvikka* and *Aharya*). *Bhava* (mood) is the most noticeable part of the dance [Bharatamuni 2000:6-7]. 'It manifests the emotions or internal feelings of the poet through acting of involuntary states [Example tears, perspiration etc] and through dramatic representation of words, gestures, bodily movements and facial changes' [Kulkarni 1998:18]. It draws the attention of the people and arouses their desire to travel along with the dancer. *Bhava* serves as an outward expression of inner feelings [Vatsyayan 1977:23-25]. During the performance, the dancer slowly diminishes and is finally transformed into the character being portrayed in order to become one with the message being communicated [Devika 2006:25]. The dancer not only becomes a communicator, but brings life to the message and presents it to the audience in order to enable the people to receive the message. This meeting point of the audience with the dancer helps both to enjoy the state of *Ananda* (bliss).

'*Bharathanatyam* is a dance that consecrates the body, which is considered to be in itself of no value' [Balasaraswati 1978:118]. The dancer, with the help of the gestures and the training undertaken for using body movements, performs the entire theme of the song all alone. Its techniques are structured in a way to express it well [Vatsyayan 1977:28]. When the dance techniques are used in such a way 'it will become communicative both in terms of its aesthetics and its expressive movements and can raise people's minds to a transcendental level' [Meduri 1988:14]. The outstanding features of *Bharathanatyam* are its *Abhinaya*, the facial expressions and finger movements which, though of everyday use, have been invested with different interpretations in dance, artistically and elaborately. These finger gestures and

facial expressions help the dance convey yearning (expressing deep emotions), which is the essence of Indian dance. It helps the spectators at least temporarily to gain control of mind over matter [Balasaraswati 1978:115]. Dance, if properly understood and performed, becomes a bridge between the dancer and divinity [Radhika 2000:5]. This communication between the dancer and divinity will create devotional emotion (*rasa*), leaving an impact on the congregation. It is because of the devotion which could be created in the minds of the viewers that many scholars have argued that *Bharathanatyam* is a form of prayer [Purecha 2003:11]. It is a form of worship for the dancer and may facilitate devotion in the spectator. The delicate body movements of the various limbs with deep divine feeling (to express the biblical message) will assist the viewers to be elevated in union with the dancers to receive the message. This will convert the techniques that are used into sacred movements that communicate the divine message [Vatsyayan 1977:6-9]. Hence, this dance is seen as a sacred art form. This is why all the dance themes of this art form are woven around religious themes to the present day. The theme of *Bharathanatyam* communicates the yearning of the devotee to gain union with God. The dance theme songs are mainly devotional songs, with the dancer being the devotee and God being her beloved. These themes portray the *Jeevatma* (Individual Self) longing for union with the *Parramatta* (Divine Self) [Allen 1997:76]. Through their expression, the dancer tries to awaken the inner feelings of the audience to take them along with the dancer.

The latent basic mental states are roused through imagination of the situations of life presented in the dramatic spectacle. The characters presented and the atmosphere in which they are presented created the illusion of reality. The determinants together with the physical effects of the particular moods of character and the transitory moods create the appearance of life, the poet has tried to depict [Tarlekar 1991:54].

For example, while performing crucifixion of Jesus [Appendix 4 Video:4] the dancer herself imagines to be Jesus and presented herself with appropriate gestures and movements and

creates the illusion that crucifixion is happening actually before the viewers. This experience in the viewers at once awakens the permanent latent moods which are the past of his/her mental make-up, due to past experience about the character in real life. Thus the audience can experience the life in the dramatic spectacle. This is the moment that elevates the spectator's mind, along with the character that the dancer portrays [Tarlekar 1991:54]. A goal of a dance/dancer is to metaphorically 'stretch' the audience out of their seats into space, so that each spectator would be absorbed by the experience and feel like a participant experiencing the dance themselves. This change comes only when the dancer absorbs herself into the character portrayed [Narayan 2005:10]. Therefore, the dance will not become a mere performance but it will become an experience of the people.

Hence, *Bharathanatyam* is very much relevant to use in the liturgy. This helps to retain the attention of the congregation, and to communicate the biblical message effectively. *Bharathanatyam* has numerous body movements and hand gestures, so it gives tremendous scope to bring the imagination alive before them. Thus, it becomes pedagogy, and helps to catechise the people and invite their active participation.

The opinion of one Indian Christian dance scholar and practitioner is that there is a significant problem concerning the hand gestures. Though there are different categories of hand gestures to use, he could not use *deva-hastas* (hand gestures that denote Hindu deities), so he has had to invent new *deva-hastas* to suit the divine personalities of the Christian religion. Thus, he used the single hand gestures of *Bharathanatyam* and formed the hand gestures to symbolise God the Father, Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, Mother Mary and Holy Spirit [Barboza 1990:198]. The hand gestures which depict the Christian personalities are formed with the combination of existing hand gestures. For example, God the Father is depicted with two existing single hand gestures (from *Natyasastra*): the right hand holding *Sighara* hand gesture (folding in all four fingers and stretching out the thumb), and the left hand holding *Thiripataka* hand gesture (joining all the fingers, then stretching together and leaving the ring

finger half bent) [Appendix1 Picture 13: 7]. I found that the gestures are not new, but the way the hand gestures are used to interpret new ideas is an innovative work. This shows that there is tremendous scope to use *Bharathanatyam* techniques to convey any message.

This dance is a local cultural element and was used by the Hindu people to spread their devotional practice. This will be understood from the history of *Bharathanatyam*. Since it is a vast subject, I have used the portion which is relevant to my study. In order to prove that *Bharathanatyam* is a local cultural dance used in Hindu worship and an indigenous devotional dance, I have to explore the development of *Bharathanatyam*, with which the life of Devadasi are closely associated in terms of the development, worship and renaissance of *Bharathanatyam*. The *Bharathanatyam* form which is in use today is not the same form which was used many centuries ago. It has taken a different form over the course of the time, while maintaining its techniques. As part of the *Bharathanatyam* history I shall discuss the form that is in use today.

5.4 *Bharathanatyam*, a Hybrid Art Form

Bharathanatyam today identifies a particular style of dance especially popular in the southern region of India in the state of Tamizh Nadu. This dance is globally known for its popularity [Gaston 2005:16]. It has been introduced in academic courses in the universities and colleges for some decades in India as well as abroad [Meduri 2004:11]. Though this dance belongs to Tamizh Nadu, it is practised across the nation and in many parts of the world²³ [Gaston 2005:66]. *Bharathanatyam* has been known by this name since the 1930s, after the revival of this dance [Gaston 2005:15]. It was called by different names until early AD 19, such as *cina melam* (*Cina* means ‘small’ and *Melam* means ‘orchestra’), *sadir* (during the 17th century this dance got its name *Sadir* during Marthas Rule in Thanjavur²⁴), *Sadiraadal*, *Devadasiattam* (*Deva* means ‘god’ and *attam* means ‘dance’) [Gaston 2005:15]. From this, it could be assumed that this dance form received these names in different reigns for different reasons

and would have developed accordingly. For example, *cina melam* indicates a small orchestra performed this dance using a minimum of instruments, such as a cymbal, a percussion instrument *Mrndagam* (drum), a vocalist, a *tutti* (drone) or a harmonium (used in the 18th century), and a dancer or dancers [Gaston 2005:15]. Now this dance is performed with more instruments and with more than one vocalist during a live concert and the same is used in a recorded form available in compact discs. This is just one example which shows the development that *Bharathanatyam* has undergone, and that it is no longer used the way it was many centuries ago [Raghuraman 2007:209].

Tamizh Nadu was ruled by different rulers with different cultural background, such as the Cholas, Marathas and Nayakas. During the Chola Dynasty, especially under the rule of King Raja Raja Chola, Sanskrit had a great influence and many literature and dance related matters were translated into Sanskrit [Raghuraman 2007:234]. During Maratha Rule between the 17th and 18th centuries AD, this dance was enhanced with a number of Hindu themes²⁵, poetic compositions set to dance. For example, the present method of dance training was given by the Tanjore Quartet brothers²⁶, who were in the court of King Sarfoji II (a Marathi²⁷ king) [Kaminsky and Long 2002:163]. This dance form got its definite shape, as it is practiced today, because of them. They were the disciples of Muthuswami Dikshitar, one member of the famous music trinity²⁸, a Hindu saint of *Carnatic* music who has written poems in the Kannada language [Radhika 2004:1]. Traditional *Bharathanatyam* dancers use Hindu devotional songs and poetry composed in four different languages—Tamizh, Telugu, Kannada and Sanskrit—in the recitals [Kaminsky and Long 2002:163]. However, if one has the desire to follow up any dance, then it is possible to understand it without the constraint of language difference because *Bharathanatyam* is ‘a composite, whose message is not merely to the senses, but to the soul of the dancer and the perceiver’ [Rajarajeswari 2010:2]. At the same time, if the dance performance is witnessed with a negative connotation then the viewers may not be able to follow it up. At present, then, *Bharathanatyam* dance form could be

described as a culmination of more than one culture, religion and language, and it is because of this that people understand this as a dance from outside the Tamizh culture.

This dance form has long been associated with several lineages or schools. There are also some people of the opinion that this dance has facilitated a tendency towards a kind of local hybridisation of what were once distinct styles of this dance form [Pillai 2002:20]. There are different schools of dance which are associated with different dance *gurus* (teacher). For example, the Kalashetra school of dance is associated with Rukumini Devi (a Brahmin), founder of the dance institution Kalashetera in Chennai. The students who learn here follow the technique that is developed from this school. Another style of dance, *Balasaraswati*, was developed by Balasaraswati (a *Devadasi*), and the dancers and the teachers who learned *Bharathanatyam* from her or from her disciples follow the pattern that was developed by her. This school of dance is widely practiced among the *Bharathanatyam* students in the United States [Meduri 2004:16-17; O'Shea 1998:45; Devarajan 2010:181].

One of the contemporary Tamizh scholars from Madras University in India, Dr. S. Raguraman, has argued that 'at any time, art has not been stagnant. In fact art should not be stagnant. If it stays stagnant, then it means that the particular society has not grown' [Raghuraman 2007:209]. There are many changes that have taken place in the history of India due to political and economic situations [Raghuraman 2007:210], so the society in India is not the same as that which existed long before. Certainly there are changes in the lifestyle as well as in the cultural context. *Bharathanatyam* has undergone many changes; however, the basic techniques have retained their essential character. *Bharathanatyam* choreographers and practitioners, to whichever dance school they belong, express an idea or message using the basic techniques in their own developed dance styles, rather than through pure rhythmic movement.

As society develops, changes take place and ultimately many things, including art forms, evidence new growth. When an encounter with such development happens, sometimes a positive impact is made on society and sometimes a negative one is made. This is probably because people in the present day, who have only encountered *Bharathanatyam* in its current developed form, are not aware of the changes that took place earlier in regard to this art form. This perception of society could cause controversial attitudes towards *Bharathanatyam*, especially among those who speak from a liberationist perspective.

Even among dance scholars there are different opinions with regard to the development of *Bharathanatyam*. Some believe that the elements of *Bharathanatyam*, such as expression, melody, rhythm and acting (Sanskrit terms *Bhava*, *raga*, *thalam* and *natyam*, respectively), establish this dance as possessing an ancient spiritual and aesthetic heritage [Coorlawala 2004:53]. This may be a reason but it is not the only reason. The other classical dances of India also consist of those elements which are mentioned above. All the classical dance forms are essentially based upon *Natyasastra* [Massey 1989:1]. Some dance scholars are of the opinion that the renaming of the dance is linked with *Natyasastra*, whose authorship is attributed to the sage Bharata [Coorlawala 2004:53]. However, even the author's name is a debatable topic as many research scholars believe that Bharata is not one person's name, but rather the name of a collection of dancers or actors who have acting/drama/dance as their occupation [Raghuraman 2007:191]. I have reviewed the term *Bharathanatyam* to show that even the name of this art form, if it is not understood in the right way, might make people misunderstand.

The nature of *Bharathanatyam* is such that it is learnt with reverence, and with respect for its techniques and the practise of a spiritual life [Lesmana 2000:1]. It is not merely for pleasure and outward enjoyment, but serves to uplift the soul of the dancer and the spectators. Its purpose in being performed is to give the divine message and urge the soul forward in its search for the supreme. This creative activity of the dancer gives expression to his/her

spiritual experiences in dance and the appreciator experience the spiritual experience by evocation [Barboza 2000:3]. For this reason, it is said that this dance is primarily meant for spiritual expression.

The *Bharathanatyam* repertoire consists of Hindu religious themes. In recent times, Christian themes²⁹ and other religious and social themes have also been used in *Bharathanatyam*. The treatise *Natyasastra* does not mention that *Bharathanatyam* has to be performed only with Hindu religious themes. However the treatise *Natyasastra*, gives strict rules and regulations for using the techniques of dance to use it in the practice [Bharatamuni 2000: Passim]. At present, the source of all classical dances is generally thought to be *Natyasastra*, a Sanskrit grammar work on dramaturgy [Massey 1989: xiii].

5.5 *Bharathanatyam* and *Natyasastra*

Dance scholars presume that the sage Bharata wrote *Natyasastra*, the science of dramaturgy, which includes dance as part of it [Purecha 2003:6; Massey 1989: xiii]. The period of *Natyasastra* is believed to be between 2 BC and AD 2 [Raghuraman 2007:191]. Indian classical dance is included in this work because it uses all those necessary gestures, postures, facial expressions and body movements, as described in *Natyasastra*, which would help to convey a message artistically. It has thirty-six chapters and deals with the mythological origin of drama, its techniques, stage set up, make up, music, musical instruments, types of rhythms and all those factors related to acting.

This treatise does not mention that any particular dance form be followed strictly. It explains regional styles of dance techniques which can be adapted into the dance presentation, different kinds of expression of body movements, and speeches using Sanskrit, colloquial languages or the use of accent called *Vrittis*, each to be used according to the mood and situation or scene depicted [Bharatamuni 2000:302]. Therefore, this treatise refers to drama or dance-drama and does not talk about one particular dance form. It speaks about two

different styles of acting: realistic practice (*Lokadharmi*) and dramatic practice (*Natya Dharmi*). The author of this treatise explains these two different styles of acting in chapter 14.

Verses 63-64 describes *Lokadharmi*:

If a play depends on natural behaviour in its characters; is simple excluding artificiality; has professions and activities of the people in its plot; has simple acting avoiding playful flourish of limbs and depends on men and women of different types, it is called Lokadharmi [Bharatamuni 2000:203].

In the same chapter verses 65-66, the style is described as *Natya Dharmi* if:

speeches and activities are too many; if the Sattva and Bhava³⁰ are of the extraordinary kind; if the acting necessitates playful flourish of limbs (Angahara³¹); if the play has the characteristic features of dance items Svara and Alamkara³² are employed in well-arranged fashion and emotionally carried characters predominate [Bharatamuni 2000:203].

I explained the above two types of acting to show that *Natyasastra*, which is considered the source of *Bharathanatyam*, describes acting which can help depict simple messages, or the divine and spiritual messages, in a simple way as well in an artistic way. Thus, I conclude that *Bharathanatyam* is not a dance which only the elite people or learned people are able to follow, but this dance form also can convey the message in an interesting way to ordinary people in an ordinary dance expression. However, the realistic expression that is described in this treatise seems to fit well with folk dance/theatre. The treatise describes *Margi* as the dance for gods and deities, and dance for the ordinary people is known as the *desi* style of dance [Narayan 2005:12]. In this way, *Natyasastra* also contributes to folk dance, which is generally known as dance for ordinary people.

I intend to explore the beliefs and opinions regarding folk and classical dance from my interviews, which are classified on the basis of castes by the interviewees, and postulate that it is an integral correlated manifestation of traditional Indian dance. It is also important to explain how *Bharathanatyam* techniques could work on both folk and classical dances. For any scientific research the historical evidence is important. The *Natyasastra* is an Indian dance treatise which speaks of the mythological origin of dance and uses different Hindu god's names while explaining the techniques. That is, those techniques are either used or described by the Hindu deities or gods to Bharata, the author, and thus by the author to the world. However, it will be clear to anyone who is reading the *Natyasastra* text critically or as someone who practices the techniques that they are described merely on a technical basis and have been given a religious touch. This is because there is no evidence given for the period or the year of use of the techniques other than denoting it as the 'fifth Veda' by the author of *Natyasastra*. Moreover, Tamizh literature also describes these techniques of dance which are not religious-based. This gives opportunity to argue that the techniques of dance described in *Natyasastra* were compiled by the author or authors of *Natyasastra* using existing dance or body movements from the tradition of the Indian people. Since my area of study is to show that *Bharathanatyam* has rich techniques to interpret the Biblical or any message for use in the liturgy, I have limited myself with providing proofs necessary for my study. The above discussion shows that *Bharathanatyam* is culture-based and not religious-based, but it was used in the temple for worship.

At present, many Indian dancers and Hindu fundamentalist are of the belief that *Bharathanatyam* is traditionally religious based and has always been linked with *Nataraja* and other deities. For this reason, there is a deity placed on the stage for *puja* before beginning the dance recital [Malhotra and Neelakandan 2011:113-120]. Such practices are recent, as indicated by records provided by Gaston, a dance scholar, in her book *Bharathanatyam: From Temple to Theatre* [Gaston 2005:315-320].

During a *Bharathanatyam* recital on stage, a statue of a *Nataraja* used to be placed at the left front corner of the stage [Gaston 2005:315]. This was a recent innovation and ‘no text prescribes this’ says a head of the Archaeological Survey of India, referring to the third chapter in *Natyasastra* [Bharatamuni 2000:22], verses one to ten, which talks about the adoration of gods on stage [Gaston 2005:317]. *Natyasastra* uses the word Lord Shiva but not *Nataraja* or words which describe *Nataraja*. It was Rukumini Devi³³ who introduced the placing of a *Nataraja* statue on the stage to create a temple atmosphere. *Devadasi* and dance exponent T. Balasaraswati, contemporary to Rukumini Devi, commented on that, ‘the religious devotion is in the mind. She preferred to create a devotional atmosphere by using *Abhinaya* rather than by using ritual elements as stage props’ [Gaston 2005:316]. A dance critic and Secretary of the Madras Music Academy, T.S. Parthasarathy wrote in the *Indian Express* newspaper that she never had statues on stage [Gaston 2005:317]. A *Bharathanatyam* dancer named Chandralekha (1950s) says that it is ‘totally phoney’ to put *Nataraja* on the stage [Gaston 2005:338], while non-hereditary dancer Shanta Rao declared that she does not understand ‘why people use *Nataraja* on stage’ [Gaston 2005:323]. Many dance pioneers, scholars and critics strongly opposed this idea while few encourage it [Gaston 2005:317]. This evidence demonstrates that *Bharathanatyam* has only recently been conceptualised in religious terms.

Therefore, from the evidence, I presume that *Bharathanatyam* had a cultural-based origin and took shape over different political periods, adapting itself accordingly. The mythological origin of dance in *Natyasastra* describes this dance as being religious- based. The history of dance shows that this art form is culture-based, a position with which Dr. Raghuraman agrees [Raghuraman 2007: Passim]. Hence, I shall provide evidence to show that Tamizh literature is its source.

5.6 *Bharathanatyam* and Tamizh Literature Sources

Most of the information that is used here about the Tamizh literature source for *Bharathanatyam* is from the scholarly writings of Dr. Raghuraman on the dance of Tamizh people. He refers to sixty-one original texts which include Tamizh literature, epics and devotional poetry [Raghuraman 2007:264]. Some of the *Bharathanatyam* and Tamizh scholars would certainly know that there are sources for this dance in Tamizh literature. However, these sources are not used by the dance students to learn this art form except to refer to them when writing essays or dissertations³⁴. Since these sources are not regularly used, people generally may not know much about it. These sources strongly support the case for this art form belonging to Tamizh culture. The earliest Tamizh source is Tholkappiar's Tamizh grammar work, which also deals with phonology and poetry, called *Tholkappiam*, dated to approximately the 5th century BC [Raghuraman 2007:5]³⁵.

The first part of *Tholkappiam* deals with poetry with regard to the language, and it shows the customs, rituals, manners of the people, and the background of the land of the Tamizh culture and socio-political structure [Manickam 1972:40]. Hence, one can understand the life and the practice of the society at that time from this part of the work, since 'no language can be divorced from society as its very existence depends upon the social intercourse of the community' [Manickam 1972:40]. The poetry which describes the life of the people is in a dramatic analogy. The description consists of expressions and gestures in motion which reminds one of the techniques of *Bharathanatyam*. Moreover, this work explains those expressions and gestures in detail. One who applies it to depict a poem could turn it into a dance. Hence, the source of *Bharathanatyam* could be *Tolkappiyam*, and so could be dated back to this work. I shall explain this point further with evidence from *Tolkappiyam*.

The dance which is mentioned in the Tamizh poetry form which is available at present is assumed to have its origin in an earlier version, since the poems themselves refer to dance and

techniques in a previous work. Some scholars say that the poetry belonging to the age before and immediately after the composition of *Tolkappiyam* is not obtainable today [Thaninayagam 1972:61]. However, there is sufficient evidence to prove that the information about the technique of dance available today is from the oldest Tamizh literature, and that this is the same technique used in the present style of *Bharathanatyam*³⁶.

That the present form of *Bharathanatyam* (not the choreography and the performance style but the techniques and its source) can be traced to the oldest Tamizh literature can be demonstrated through the following information from the sources themselves. The poetry of *Tolkappiyam* is classified as *Agam* and *puram* on the basis of psychological and psychic experiences, respectively [Thaninayagam 1972:2]. The love poetry is called *Agam*³⁷, denoting internal, very personal human experiences which cannot be directly communicated. This is like the expression *Abhinaya* which was explained earlier [See Pg 139]. It deals with the emotions of interpersonal love and related sentiments between couples and the place they live. Usually a character of a maiden or friend is described as a mediator between the lovers [Takahashi 1995:121]. ‘The poem describes the places, the seasons, the appropriate time, the emotion of the lovers when they meet and how nature is to be framed as the background of this human behaviour and emotions are mentioned’ [Meenakshisundaram 1966:61]. The theme of the *Bharathanatyam* songs is also similar to the situation described above³⁸, consisting mostly of the yearning of the heroine (representing the human soul) for the hero (representing the Almighty) [Vatsyayn 1977:339].

Apart from the love poetry of *Tolkappiyam*, all those emotions which do not come under interior experience are called *puram*, meaning ‘external’. T.P. Meenakshisundaram, one of the great Tamizh scholars, explains the *puram* part:

It deals not only with the various aspects of war then practised but also with the phenomenal victory of human life, with the greatness of men who come to be sung by

poets and also with the evanescence of life inspiring man to do great acts and make himself eternal in the memory of men during the short span of his life [Meenakshisundaram 1966:1].

The interior description of human life (*Agam*) is expressed in a dramatic exposition known as *Nataka vazhakku* in Tamizh, and the exterior one (*Puram*) is expressed in a realistic exposition known as *ulagiyal vazhakku* [Raghuraman 2007:5]. *Nataka vazhakku* is a classical type of dancing where defined and codified movements are used, while *ulagiyal vazhakku* is the natural behaviour of the day-to-day life of the people. For example, an action of calling someone is done with a proper gesture, which is codified in the grammar book, to regulate its use for dramatic exposition, whereas in realistic exposition the action used is as a layman would use it in day-to-day life. *Natyasastra* also talks about these two types of dance styles as *Natyadharmi* and *lokhadharmi*, with the same meanings discussed earlier in this chapter [Bharathamuni 2000:203]. So, the life of a person or any imaginary characters can be portrayed either through dramatic or realistic exposition because dance is a communicative medium [Meenakshisundaram 1966:5].

The next section of the first part of *Tolkappiyam* is *Meippattiyal* (verses 1195-1221) [Thaninayagam 1972:66]. It deals with the eight primary emotions, which are corporeally revealed, each of which are further subdivided into four more categories, making thirty-two emotional states to express any idea in dance drama. In *Bharathanatyam*, under the title *Abhinaya*, these eight primary emotions are developed to pinpoint the situation of the message communicated. This is also explained in *Natyasastra* chapter six [Bharathamuni 2000:75]. The movements of the limbs which are explained in *Natyasastra* chapters six and fourteen [Bharathamuni 2000:70-197], and the movements of the limbs which are described in *Meiypaatiyal*³⁹ of *Tolkappiyam*, are basically the same [Raghuraman 2007:8].

Another ancient dance treatise is Arivanaar's *Panchamarabu* (*pancha* means 'five' and *marabu* means the tradition or the style which was in practice). This work talks about the dances that pertain to that period when *panchamarabu* existed, that is during the *Tolkappiyam* period [Raghuraman 2007:10]. The dance techniques it mentions are similar to those described in *Natyasastra*. The next work which has references to what are now present day *Bharathanatyam* techniques is *Koothanool*. It is a completion of nine works on dance, but only two are available at present [Rahuraman 2007:17-18]. The author of *Kootha Nool* is noted as being a contemporary of Tholkappiar a Tamizh scholar and well versed in art forms [Perumal 1981:23].

Tolkappiyam also mentions two divisions of dance, namely *pothiviyal* and *vathiyal*. The former one is the dance of the ordinary people and the later one is the dance of the royal people [Raghuraman 2007:6-7]. These two dances are reflected in a distinction made between literary language and colloquial or non-literary language: *ceyyul* and *valakku*, respectively [Meenakshisunderampillai 1966:1]. Thus, it implies certain literary conventions, not only in grammatical forms but also in literary forms and subject matter, which also exist in the Tamizh language. Apart from the above division, there are also other types of dances, such as those by people who are possessed with spirits (divine), the dances of the people who are drunk, the ecstatic dances of joy by people after the great victories, and some more of these kinds are mentioned in the Tamizh sources [Raghuraman 2007:6-7]. At present the folk dance is looked down upon and connected with people of the lower castes and classes, while classical dance is associated with the elite class [Appavoo 1986:126]. In fact, both the classical and folk dances have their own beauty when they are performed. However, the purpose of using them may differ according to the need because all the dance types may not be suitable for all the events.

5.7 *Bharathanatyam* and Folk Dance

‘The primary impulse of Indian folk dance is rhythm. From the simple beat of the drum to the complex rhythm of a cultivated art, it is the love of rhythm that creates the dance’ [Devi 1990:181]. *Natyasastra* also describes group dances and the dance of different regions, both of which could be understood as folk dance [Devi 1990:181]. Vatsyayan suggests that there is an

intimate relationship of the folk arts with functions of daily life, whether food gathering, hunting, fishing or methods of sowing, grain cultivation and harvesting and collective activity in the context of rites and rituals connected with these functions and the beliefs of the performers in the propitiation of spirits, [which] links them to each other [Vatsyayan 1987:1].

There are a number of folk dances used in the south of India and every dance has its own purpose, reasons and regulations for performance [Vatsyayan 1987: Passim]. It is generally expressive of joy or sorrow, and that is very much distinct in the dance form itself when it is performed. In times past, folk dance was spontaneous and participatory as the whole village or tribe took part, either joining the performers or with the music accompaniments because they were familiar with the dance moves [Vatsyayan 1987:196]. Every dance could be distinct with its dance movements, and the props that the dancers use give the dance its meaning. For example, in the *Karagam* dance of Tamil Nadu, according to the rituals of the Hindu temples, a pot filled with rice or with *neem* leaves and burning coals is kept on the head (decorated pots are used at the present time), and body movements are performed to the rhythm of drums (*Thavil*) and wind pipes (*Nathasvaram*) and sometimes there will be a folk singer accompanying this small dance troupe [Vatsyayan 1987:332]. Usually this dance is performed in the temple festival times as part of the function, and at most of the *Mariamman* (Hindu female deity) festivals. This type of dance is also found many centuries earlier in

Tamizh *Nadu* under the name *Kudak Koothu* [Vatsyayan 1987:332]. It does not communicate any particular message, but rather the dance itself conveys the general message of celebration and of performing the rituals of the temple with devotion.

There are other folk dances of Tamizh *Nadu* such as *Kummi* (clapping dance), *Pinal kollattam* (using sticks and ribbon), *Puli attam* (using a mask or doing make-up like tigers and dancing), and many more which have only the steps (body movements repeated according to the lyrics or drum beat) [Pani 2004:121-128]⁴⁰. *Kollatam*, using only sticks and dancing, is used to express the joy in the story of the gods' victory over the demons [Vatsyayan 1987:337]⁴¹. This dance has particular walking steps to go around in a circle most of the time, and in line and striking the partner's sticks at other times. However, if this dance has to be performed in cultural programmes, it needs proper rehearsal. Folk dance techniques are such that it cannot express any theme or idea through *Abhinaya* like *Bharathanatyam* is able. I have choreographed this dance and other folk dance for several occasions and used *Bharathanatyam* gestures to convey the meaning of the lyrics in the song [Appendix4 Video: 1 and Appendix1 Picture 13:7].

The above discussions show that the dance *Bharathanatyam* communicates the message through body gestures and movements by using the codified techniques of dance, and is not historically related to a religious background. The techniques which were used earlier in the Tamizh community during the *Tolkappiyam* period are the same which are used now, but with some changes and developments. As times change, certain lifestyles, technologies, and cultures also change or develop, and so, accordingly, *Bharathanatyam* also has taken new forms and changed, but the root of this dance remains the same. Those who are in search of truth may understand it in its actual form, but the time gap between the dances of Devadasi and the *Tolkappiyam* and the present form of *Bharathanatyam* makes it difficult to analyse and understand this dance. This dance has travelled through different political reigns whose contribution and involvement might have given multiple dimensions to it [Narayan 2005:21-

25]. Those who could not understand these types of changes to this dance might assume that *Bharathanatyam* is foreign to local culture. Apart from the mythological origin of dance, the historical evidence shows that the *Bharathanatyam* dance form could be merely a cultural element, but today it has become a religious art. *Bharathanatyam* (which was earlier known as *Sadir*) was used in the temple by Hindus to spread devotion during the *Bhakti* Movement [Narayan 2005:30].

5.8 *Bharathanatyam* and *Devadasi*

Bharathanatyam was developed and used by *Devadasi* in the temple by different names, under the patronage of kings of *Tamizh Nadu* (state) [Iyer 1980:9]. Historical examination of the temple culture of *Tamizh Nadu* shows that the occupation of *Devadasi* ‘was to dance before the deity and not before the people’ [Gaston 2005:39]. The following discussion may clear some of the doubts about the life and service of *Devadasi* and their genuine contribution to this art form. *Devadasi* means dancing girls in the temple, servant of God, or handmaiden of gods [Pal 1997:26]. There are several other names for *Devadasi*, and they were each known for different work. A research scholar on dance and *Devadasi* categorises them as the following: ‘*Dali pendugali*’ was the name of the particular *Devadasi* who helped in carving the sculptures to depict the *Puranic* (legend) stories; *Devadasi* who carried the name ‘*Dalilar*’ were those whose home was the temple; *Devadasi* who were called ‘*Rudra Kaniga*’ were the ones who served the temple of Lord Shiva; *Devadasi* who were named after *Sri maanikkam* were the ones who served in the *Vaishnava*⁴² temples [Raghuraman 2007:204].

5.8.1 Duties of *Devadasi*

Devadasi are the ones who dedicated themselves to the temple or were offered to the temple by their parents for some intention. The female children who were dedicated to the temple around the age of nine or eleven became *Devadasi* after certain ceremonies⁴³, and were given education in different fields such as music, dance and languages [Gaston 2005:31]. Between

the King Chola period (10th century AD) and the period of the *Bhakti* (devotion) Movement (17th and 18th centuries AD), the records concerning these Devadasi who served in the temple as dancers were highly respected, and that high regard continued into married life for those who chose to leave the temple [Orr 2000:173].

Not all women who worked in the temples used dance and music. There were other women who did the work such as cleaning, making garlands, washing, cooking, making perfumes, lighting lamps and tasks other than dancing who were also called *Devadasi* [Raghuraman 2007:204]. At the same time, those who study the Devadasi system or the *Bhakti* Movement recognise that there were different women who worked in the temple who were not merely called *Devadasi*. It is argued that Devadasi who were ‘born of [a] respected family would do *nritta* (dance) during temple rituals’ and were called “*Rudra Kanigai*” [Raghuraman 2007:204].

Not only were there divisions in the Devadasi system, but also in the dances in which they performed. There are three types of *nrttanam* (dance) mentioned by a scholar who did a study on *Devadasi*. The dance which expresses the different aspects of Lord Shiva and the goddess Uma (Shiva’s consort) is called ‘*Suddhanrttam*’, a pure dance which consists of different body postures and movements and is performed before the *Sivalinga* (a symbol of Lord Shiva) by Devadasi named ‘*Rudra Ganikas*’. When messages from mythological stories are added to this pure dance and are communicated to other devotees by Devadasi called *rudrakkannikais*, it is called ‘*Misram*’ dance. A third kind of dance is the secular version called ‘*Kevalam*’, which is performed by *rudradasis* [Kersenboom 1987:118].

So far I have described the dancers of the temple. Likewise, there were also *Devadasi* who danced for different occasions. Those who danced before the king in the royal court and in the royal festivals were known as *Rajadasis*. They were of two kinds: those who danced for the royal people were called *Valangai dasi* (right handed), and those who danced for the ordinary

people were called *Idangi dasi* (left handed) and were popularly known as *Kamala Dasi* [Purecha 2003:15]. Devadasi whose profession was to dance in communal functions like birth or marriage celebrations were called *Alangara Dasis*, for dance is considered auspicious and indispensable, and so the common people also included dance in their events [Purecha 2003:15; Devi 1990:47]. The above description of *Devadasi* shows that the term does not merely refer to the dancing women of the temple.

The records show that *Devadasi* were from highly reputable families and belonged to the *Vellalar* caste community (a forward community). Even kings' daughters were given to the temple to serve the gods as *Devadasi*, including Brahmin women. However, they were not forced to take up this service; rather, it was an honour [Rahuraman 2007:202; Gaston 2005:65; Orr 2000:172]. It is because of this high reputation that the names of Devadasi, the year of their service, and the name of the deity or temple they served were inscribed on the temple walls [Guy 1997:28]. From the Tanjavur Temple inscription, one can see that King Raja Raja Chola installed 400 *Devadasi* in the temple to serve the deities through dance and music. They lived in luxurious quarters around the temple and had a high social status [Massey 1989:20]. Hence, this shows that the temple dancers led a highly respected life in the society and did not have the negative reputation of leading an illegal life. In the course of the time, there would have been exploitation of Devadasi due to various circumstances, including the political and economic situation in the country. This is very clear from the above discussion with the evidence from Gaston 2005, Orr 2000 and Kersenboom who have done research on Devadasis. However, there is a vast difference between the life of the contemporary *Devadasi* and Devadasi of the *Bhakti* Movement.

The term *Devadasi* is currently considered a pan-Indian word in South India. The group or the woman who are known as *Devadasi* at present are considered to be prostitutes and mostly from the Dalit community [Nirmal 1987:61]. Young children and women are forced to become *Devadasi* by adopting some rituals [Shinde 2005:130]. These *Devadasis* are not

associated with dance or music. Devadasi of earlier times were from the *Pillais*, *Vellalas*, *Mudaliars* and *Kaikolans* caste communities in South India [Thurston and Rangachari 2001:31]. But some of these communities now deny that girls of their community were made *Devadasi* in earlier times [Thurston and Rangachari 2001:35]. These castes are entirely different from the Dalit community.

From historical evidence and personal interviews with *Devadasi* descendants, Kersenboom argues that the earlier information makes no reference to the caste of Devadasi. It was a very strict custom and long procedure if a girl or her family members wished to make her a *Devadasi* [Kersenboom 1987:179-198]. Only the girls from respectable families could become a *Devadasi*. In cases where it was found that the girl's family members had gone astray, then the girl from that family could not become a *Devadasi*. The ritual ceremonies were conducted by a Brahmin priest in the temple on the day she became a *Devadasi* [Kersenboom 1987:187]. This amply demonstrates that Devadasi who served the temple through dance lead a respected life and had wealth. The picture in the Appendix section shows the rich dressing of Devadasi [Appendix 1 Picture 15:7].

5.8.2 Dance in Hindu Worship

Here 'worship' means the rituals rendered to deities in the temple. Devadasi who danced before the deities were in devotional (*Bhakti*) mood and it is considered part of the ritual.

Johan Guy describes this devotion in his book *Dancing to the Flute*:

At 4.30am or 5am (puja begins)...the dancing girl officiating for the day, with rudrakha beads in place of jewels, dressed up as a Brahmin and her hair uncombed....open[s] up all the doors up to the mahamandapa. Later the god is taken in procession preceded by musicians and attendant dancing girls...the dancing girl at the door repeats a tevera uja or a verse in honour of Shiva [Guy 1997:26].

The above quote shows that Devadasi danced to devotional songs in the early morning with simple dress like a person who has renounced worldly attachments, wearing a *Rudrasha* garland with uncombed hair like a Hindu sage, living a dedicated and devoted life. Devadasi learn this art form with reverence and self-discipline, as they will be using it for worship [Massey 1989:36]. For these dancers, ‘every performance was regarded as a step, taking the dancer on to [a] higher station, nearer to Divinity’ [Purecha 2003:11]. Wide patronage was extended by temples where it was institutionalised as a noble form of worship pleasing to the deities (as *Upacharas*), performed in the sanctuary facing the idol [Gaston 2005:89]. It is performed according to the Hindu rituals called *Agama* and known as *Agama Nartanam*, a spiritual form of dance [Misra and Sadual 2009:78]. *Agama* describes dance as one of the sixteen offerings to the deity [Guy 1997:26]. Dance was performed to the devotional song compositions of Hindu saints [Terada 2008:119-145]. The information with regard to the performance shows that the gestures of this dance portray the spiritual expression in accordance with the religious rituals [Guy 1997:26]. The dances that were performed to educate the society in areas like religion, secular education and social life were performed outside the temple precincts for the ordinary people and were called *Darbari attam*. Skilled dances were performed to demonstrate the dancers’ ability and skills in dance before counsellors and advisors in the royal court, with the accompaniment of *Carnatic* music (Indian classical music), and were called *Carnatagam*. It includes complicated foot work with different rhythmic patterns [Misra and Sadual 2009:78]. At present, classical dances are not seen with these divisions.

Apart from this, during the 18th and 19th centuries, a dance of the male dancers called ‘*Araiyaar Sevai*’ was in use in the *Vishnava* temples (the temple of Lord Vishnu, one of the Hindu Trinity gods) [Cutler 1987:187-191]. Even to this day, this theatrical dance form can be found in *Srirangam*, *Srivilliputhur* and *Alvarthirunakari* temples during special occasions [Cutler 1987:187-191]⁴⁴. The compositions of the Hindu saints, ‘*Nalayira Divya Prabadam*’, are sung

and danced by the *Araiyar Sevai* group from the Brahmin community to worship Lord Vishnu. Gestures and facial expressions are used while performing it [Appendix 1 Picture 11:6].

In almost all the big temples of Tamizh *Nadu* dance was used during the worship and *Devadasi* were appointed for this purpose, in early times [Guy 1997:28]. During the annual festivals in the Lord Shiva temple, *Devadasi* used to perform *Nava Sandhi Nritya*, a dance offering to the presiding deities of the nine junctions (nine junctions in the Indian context refers to nine planets also), which were rendered with symbolic gestures and ritual dance patterns appropriate to each god [Devi 1990:45]. *Devadasi* danced the *Malapu Nrrita* of the *Tandava* (generally known as the dance of Lord Shiva, having dance movements with vigorous actions and postures) in front of the deity while the deity was travelling the road in a procession. There are several inscriptions on the temple walls depicting *Devadasi* with dancing postures, and much evidence which shows Indian classical dance as a form of worship [Gaston 2005:33]. One such piece of evidence is found in the depiction of the temple pictorial arts from the Shunga period (2nd century AD) [Guy 1997:26]. Through the inscription engraved on the Southern Tower (*gopura*) at the *Virattanesvara* temple in Tiruvadi, South Arcot District during the 13th century AD one can see that *Devadasi* in the temple worshipped God through their dance and music [Orr 2000:102]. This is another proof that this dance belongs to the local culture, as the temple of that local place carries this information. The significant contribution of *Devadasi* to dance and the way in which they used dance to reach the divine has paved the way for *Bharathanatyam* to be considered as a form of worship.

To this date, the songs of *Bharathanatyam* are woven around religious themes and express devotion to God (I learned, practised and now teach the same kinds of themes in my own dance classes). In *Bharathanatyam*, devotion is shown using romantic or erotic moods (*srngara rasa*) like *the Song of Songs*, sometimes called *the Song of Solomon*, in the Bible. It

is said that ‘its ultimate goal is realised through ecstatic union with the Almighty... Human love, physical passion, became the perfect analogy for divine love, the spiritual passion’ [Gaston 2005:87]. Those who can understand the local culture and the divinity of dance would be able to appreciate dance. Those who are not familiar with *Devadasi* practices and cannot follow the meaning of their dance, with its many possibilities, may misunderstand it.

5.8.3 Decline of Temple Dance

In the course of the time, due to the economic and political changes, the Devadasi system suffered in the temple. On the other hand, Devadasi who danced in public and in the royal court also started performing in the private houses of the *Zamindars* (rich landlords). Some are of the opinion that Devadasi who danced in the sanctuary, in the course of the time moved to dance in the court and later went to dance in private houses [Soneji 2004:31]. For those who saw them for the first time, it also would have been difficult to distinguish the dances of Devadasi performed in public from those performed in the temple. Hence, any dance which was performed in earlier times was identified as 'Indian dance' [Misra and Sadual 2009:78]. So the colonial rulers had the same opinion about the temple dance as well as the dance in other places⁴⁵. The life of Devadasi had been always an enigma to them [Kersenboom 1987: xx].

Devadasi were forced to leave the temple, and their properties were held back by the temple authorities and they struggled to live. This led them to take different profession to earn their bread. Devadasi who only knew how to dance and sing came to dance before kings and the rich people [Kersenboom 1987:189]. The recorded interviews from Devadasi of early 20th century indicate that some were fortunate enough to get married and lead a fine life, while others lived as concubines for the rich [Gaston 2005:42-43; Soneji 2004:36; Kersenboom 1987:198]. There were also *natuch* girls (*Nautch* means ‘dance’ in Hindi) who danced in the

street to earn money. Simultaneously, Devadasi who were out of the temple also had dance as their profession.

It was the time of the anti-*Nautch* Movement (between 1920 and 1930), and attempts were made by Muthulakshmi Reddy⁴⁶, a social reformer and medical doctor from a *Devadasi* family, to completely abort the dance *Sadir* and the Devadasi system [Gaston 2005:80]. She wanted to ban the religious initiation and dedication of *Devadasi* to temples, which she believed was the root cause of the degradation of her community [Allen 1997:82]. The records and evidence show that the social stigma has only been attached to *Devadasi* in recent centuries⁴⁷. It seems that *Devadasi* who danced only before the deities were confused with other dancers. It was the social issues that caused this dance to be banned officially in the country [Gaston 2005:43].

There are interviews given by Devadasi in the early 20th century which show their struggle to live after the abolishment of *Devadasi* dance in the temple. In one of the interviews, a *Devadasi* named Saride Varahalu said, ‘we are the sisters of the goddess Lakshmi⁴⁸ but we have been treated worse than animals’ [Soneji 2004:36]. My M.Phil *Bharathanatyam* supervisor is a descendant of a *Devadasi* family from the Tanjore District in Tamizh Nadu. I have witnessed her mother’s dance in one of the seminars conducted at my college, Kalai Kaviri in Trichy in 2002. I note this to show that Devadasi of the temple and the contemporary *Devadasi* are not from the same background. However, the Devadasi system was initiated with good purposes, but gradually due to several political, economic and social situations its purpose was changed, which led to the official ban of Devadasi dancing system in the temple.

5.8.4 Revival of *Devadasi* Dance into Brahminical Dance

On the other hand, with strong support from the Theosophical Society of India and their anti-official stance and strong interest in the revival of dance and music, the Hindu revival

movement progressed forward in reviving dance. During this time, E. Krishna Iyer, a Brahmin lawyer, vehemently protested against the abolition of dance, which was then called *Sadir*. He understood the greatness of the art and lamented over the stigma attached to it. He worked hard to learn this art form, and re-established it in the 1930s [Ambrose 1983:34]. He sought to give the dance form a measure of respect by proposing a resolution, in the (1932) meeting of the Madras Music Academy, to change the name of the dance from ‘*Sadir*’ to ‘*Bharathanatyam*’, and encouraged the girls from his community to learn the dance [Khokar 1984:17]. He himself staged the dance and organised public performances with the help of *Devadasi* of that time, and tried to propagate the value of the art [Ambrose 1983:38]. Since a Brahmin who was considered as having a high reputation in the society performed this dance, people began appreciating it once more. Following E. Krishna Iyer, Rukumani Devi (Brahmin) and other individuals⁴⁹ from the Brahmin community started learning it and brought many changes to *Bharathanatyam* [Gaston 2005:82].

The society which encountered *Bharathanatyam* without knowing its earlier use considered it a Brahminical dance. Hence, the general idea slowly started emerging that only Brahmins or rich people were meant to learn *Bharathanatyam*. Thus, the dance of the ordinary people was taken over by the Brahminical community [Gaston 2005:37]. The present form of *Bharathanatyam* and its repertoire has been broadly shaped by Rukumini Devi Arundale (Brahmin), the founder of the Kalashetra Dance School in Adaiyar, Chennai (South India), with the help of the pioneers of *Bharathanatyam*, including *Devadasi* in the 1950s [Gaston 2005:269].

Given the facts about the abolition and revival of this art form, one can understand how difficult it was to convince people to begin to practice this art form and to perform in society at that time. As it is, at the beginning stage of *Bharathanatyam* in its movement from temple to theatre, there were only a few number of dancers who performed it with the support of E. Krishna Iyer who also came forward to perform [Gaston 2005:62-65].

5.9 An Understanding of *Bharathanatyam*

Bharathanatyam dance training is taken by individuals and therefore it is one's own freedom to perform a solo or in a group [Gaston 2005:70-72; Appendix1 Picture 14:7]. This dance has rich techniques that help to bring out more than one character's message by a single artist. For example, the story of Susannah could be danced by one person as Susannah, the elders, a tree, Daniel, and all the characters that the story needs [Appendix4 Video:2]. At the same time, the story of Susannah could be performed by more than one artist. Many Christian themes have been choreographed in a group [Appendix4 Video:4]. Those who could not understand this aspect of *Bharathanatyam* may not appreciate it and presume that it is a solo performance. In my experience as a student in Kalai Kaviri Dance College as well as a choreographer, I have choreographed group *Bharathanatyam* dances apart from simply preparing the students for their dance examinations. After the revival of this dance, the Brahmin dancer Rukmini Arundale, while re-establishing this dance, introduced group performances as Indian ballets in her dance productions [O'Shea 1988:229]. The treatise *Natyasastra* does not mention that *Bharathanatyam* has to be performed by single person.

Dance was used for devotion during the *Bhakti* Movement in India. The period of the *Bhakti* Movement is noted as being from AD 6 to 9 by Tamizh scholars [Jesudasan 1961:73]. It started in South India and spread towards North India [Terada 2008:135]. During this period many Hindu saints composed Tamizh devotional songs such as *Tevaram*, and *Tiruvachagam* were produced by the music scholars to spread devotion among the Hindu people [Purecha 2003:18]. Devadasi danced for the devotional songs in the temple during the worship (*puja*) [Raghuraman 2007:205; Guy 1997:26; Gaston 2007:73]. It was during this time that the concept of dance was seen in relation to Hindu gods such as Lord Shiva and the dances were connected during the 6th century AD [Raghuraman 2007:236]. A research study shows that the bronze statue of Lord Nataraja (King of Dance), the dancing form of Lord Shiva, came into worship during the tenth century AD. However, some scholars push the date back to the

seventh century because there is reference to Lord Shiva's dance in the '*Thevaram*' devotional songs of the Hindu Saint Appar, who lived in the seventh century [Srinivasan 2004:435]. I note this to show the importance given to dance by relating it to devotion and God, though there are different opinions on the dates of existence of the dancing form of Lord Shiva. *Sadir* dance was used to spread the devotion of Hindu gods in South India until AD 18 [Raghuraman 2007:113]. The earliest Tamizh source on dance also speaks about the technical part of dance and its relationship with the society of that time, and not with any Hindu deities. Therefore, it could be considered that the secular art form which belongs to the Tamizh community or culture has been used to spread Hindu devotion. Therefore, there is a possibility that all Indians could use dance.

Having taken all this into consideration, the important thing remaining now is the costumes. The traditionally used *Bharathanatyam* costume looks very attractive and colourful and it is used with a purpose. The dancer is beautifully arrayed as befitting a bride of the deity [Appendix1 Picture 17:9]. This decoration metaphorically attributes to the dancer as the bride the character of one who is waiting to unite with the supreme bridegroom [Ambrose 1983:6]. In other words, it might be appropriate to say that the dancers dance the 'divine love'. Therefore, it is not only the techniques of *Bharathanatyam* but also its presentation and costumes that are used with a purpose. This shows that this kind of dance was for centuries an elegant, refined and highly religious dance which was held in great esteem and seen as a form of worship [Pal 1997:17]. However, although a rich costume is not required to use while performing, a modest costume is necessary according to the dance that is performed [Appendix1 Pictures 6:3]. The costumes of Devadasi were different from the costumes of the *Bharathanatyam* dancers at the present time [Appendix1 Picture 12:6].

One of the four important expressions (called *Abhinaya*)⁵⁰ is *Aharya Abhinaya*, which means expressing through costumes and jewellery. Dress has to be used according to the characters. A king has to be presented like a king and a servant has to be presented like a servant in a dance drama in order to make the message clear to the viewers. Likewise, costumes which are relevant for worship could be chosen for dance. The dance treatise *Natyasastra* does not impose any particular costume to wear and the scholars who have discussed this matter suggest the local costumes [Ambrose 1983:43]. A reviewed interview of *Devadasi* shows that they wore a white sari and blouse with minimal ornaments and no make-up when they danced before the idols in the late 19th century [Gaston 2005:33]. The meaning of the dance is not in the way that the dancer is dressed but in the way the message is portrayed through the techniques of dance.

My proposal to use dance in the liturgy to enhance it is not just for the people to take part in the dance as a group or a community, but to express meaningfully the theme of the liturgy, the word of God, the doxology or the prayers and the intentions of the people through dance. Generally, as I described above, in folk dance there are only technical steps repeated and performed in a group, with attention given to one another in the group. There are very few possibilities to use the gestures and body movements that communicate the message or meaning of the lyrics. Hence, this type of dance could only serve the purpose of performing a dance and not interpreting the Gospel message. If this type of dance is introduced, then the purpose of introducing the dance is not met. However, even in the folk dances like *Kummi*, *Kollatam*, and *Karagam* and in tribal dance, dance colleges like Kalai Kaviri and inculturation centres like NBCLC⁵¹ have used hand gestures and facial expressions so that the message could reach the people effectively [Appendix4 Video:7]. However, the classical dance form Bharathanatyam is actually a more relevant and effective medium than is typical folk dance to communicate the Gospel message in the liturgy.

5.10 Conclusion

The above discussion shows that *Bharathanatyam* is an indigenous sacred dance, with evidence that historically it has been the local cultural element and an ethnically authentic dance of Indian tradition for at least 2000 years. It does not belong to any particular community such as the Brahmin (high caste) community. It is a dance of the ordinary people and used by particular *Devadasi* called *Rudra Ganikais* in Hindu worship as an offering and obeisance to God. It has rich techniques to interpret the biblical message with the help of a group of dancers who are available in the local community, and the dance does not need rich costumes or long periods of training to perform. This dance helps bring to the people the hermeneutics of the Gospel and relevant theological understanding in an artistic manner which will be appropriate to the context. It helps them to grasp the biblical message, enabling them to participate actively in the liturgy. I discussed earlier that the Vatican authority officially states, with regard to the use of dance, that dance is supposed to be part of the local culture, or ritual or sacred dance, for the local Bishops' Conference to consider its use in the liturgy [*Notitiae* 11 1975:202-205]. Therefore, I brought out the necessary discussions on *Bharathanatyam* in order demonstrate that this dance would be possible and better form of dance to use in the liturgy.

Chapter Six

THEOLOGY OF DANCE

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the relevance of the local cultural dance *Bharathanatyam* for use in the Holy Mass through inculturation. In this chapter I will make a theological case for dance. I will draw extensively on the theological concepts of the movement of God and dance, with examples from the Bible and foundational RC theological texts. Such a theology is necessary to convey the value of using dance in the Holy Mass for the RCC in India. An understanding that dance has a theological basis and can deepen the spiritual understanding of the Holy Mass needs to be highlighted. Raising an awareness of the theological validity of using dance in the Holy Mass may encourage the Indian RCC to incorporate it. This argument will be discussed as follows.

First, a theology of dance begins with a belief that God is the source of all creation. God is the prime mover of everything that is in creation according to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in the *Summa Theologica*⁵², which I will develop in greater detail below. In addition, God makes His presence known to human beings through methods of communication which are revealed in and through human cultural codes – languages and other means. That is to say, God uses the cultural element familiar to a group of people in order to guide them to respond to His call and transform them. This will be explored through God's communication with His people, with examples taken from the Old Testament. The use of dance in the Bible is often seen as a response to God's call. Therefore, I will discuss the word 'dance' in the Bible as it relates to the worship of God, and the theological insights which justify the body movements and body language through which God communicates.

The human body is related to dance movements. ‘We cannot consider the body an objective reality outside the personal subjectivity of human beings’ [Pope John Paul II 1981:3]. The human body and the soul (life) together form a human being. Dance is an outward expression of the inner self. Christian life is very much associated with ‘human body and soul’. Hence, I conclude the chapter with a theology of the human body and the aesthetics of dance to develop a theological basis for dance.

6.2 God, the Supreme Movement and Dance

In the beginning God communicated His presence in the form of a movement. Before we could study or know anything about God, God revealed His existence in this universe in the form of a moving Spirit. It is evidentially clear through the biblical verses that God’s Spirit was moving over the face of the waters at the beginning of creation, which had come into existence through the dynamic effect of the word of God [Gen. 1:2]. Thus, it is clear that the Spirit of God was and is the first movement in this universe. God was in motion from the beginning and not static. God made all the existing creation especially for human beings to live and rule over [Gen 1:28]. Since the creator of the creation was and is in motion, so all those who came into existence through that ‘First Movement’ ought to be in motion, and hence creation is in motion. Since human beings are part of this creation, they have the ability to create dynamic motions. Hence, it could be understood that those dynamic motions of human beings also draw them closer to the first movement of God. As God expressed existence in motion, so everything that is in motion in nature could be considered as coming from God. I derived this idea from the arguments that were made by St. Thomas Aquinas for the existence of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas speaks about the existence of God from the viewpoint of science in the *Summa Theologica*. He sought to prove the existence of God through five arguments. One of the first arguments is that God is ‘motion’ or ‘movement’, which is one of the ways to know

God's existence in this universe. He says that all moving objects which are in motion are being moved, 'for motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality' [Aquinas 1947:27]. Everything that is in motion or which changes from one thing to another (action) seems to be converted to the actual from the potential. The 'Actual' is being or existing at the present moment, and the 'potential' is the capacity to develop the actual into something in the future [Aquinas 1947:27]. Aquinas argues from scientific knowledge that anything which is reduced to the actual is from the potential [Aquinas 1947:25], and that the actual cannot further become a potential to act or create further, but it can be when it is dependent on the other to be reduced to the actual [Aquinas 1947:25].

Nevertheless, all that is potential has to be stimulated in order to become the actual. So, 'everything acts in as much as it is in actuality' [Aquinas 1947:504]. However, all those 'act as actual are not actuality because they do not act by themselves as a prime agent. They depend on the other in order to become actuality' [Aquinas 1947:53]. Hence, something which exists in its fullest form or with total completion is from something which has the potential to reduce to the actual. If that thing has the potential, then somebody should stimulate the potential to become its actual, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, and that someone who stimulates the potential is understood as God [Aquinas 1947:23]. Thus, God becomes the actual for all the potentials, the source of all that exists. So everything that is in motion, everything that has to be moved from one action to the other or from one state to the other, is from God who is the prime mover [Aquinas 1947:9].

Rhythmic movement of the body is dance. Every movement of a dance acts as a gesture. 'Gesture which is made, whether it is a natural or a creative gesture, is a centre of vital force, and its expressive movement are seen by others as signals of its will' [Langer 1953:28]. These gestures involve motion in dance in order to communicate with the viewers and create space to bring the viewers into the dance. The essential expression that is produced while dancing is understood 'as a kinetic experience which is action' [Langer 1953: 174]. This movement of

action creates a disturbance in the viewers. Due to the disturbance created in the spectators, the effect of the gestures ‘will appear as a visible motion to the spectators’ [Langer 1953:29]. Hence, dance movement is of two states, each of which has the potential to convert from one to another: ‘it is always at once subjective and objective, personal and public, it evokes and is perceived’ [Langer1953: 29]. Therefore, dance is always in its actuality. The whole of existence is in its actuality that is in motion: the flying of birds, moving of trees, changing from one season to another or from darkness to light. The moment we experience this actuality is ‘the dance’ because it is the manifestation of the existence of God’s creation. Therefore, the creation becomes ‘the dance’ and the One who created it is ‘the dancer’ because one who dances is a dancer.

6.2.1 Supreme Movement, Creation and Indian Dance

Many dancers and scholars have argued that dance is based on movements of the body in accordance with a particular rhythm, time and space [Cass 1993: ix]. God’s creation functions in a particular rhythm, time and space. This is very much evident in the movement of the cosmos. In the galaxy, all the elements that are in motion travel in equal intervals of time in a set orbit. The movements of all creation are well calculated. The motion in the galaxy occupies space. This motion is created, timed and spaced by God, which could be expressed as a rhetorical expression in the cosmos: ‘If we see the universe, it has been always a theatre of action and interaction’ [Uzukwu 1997:2]. The implication of dance is movement, time and space. So the cosmic creation of God is reflected in the dance as well. Hence, I argue that God is the source of all dance forms on earth. This movement, time and space are not only seen in the galaxy, but are manifest in every living being on earth. If one could observe the movements of animals and birds, it would be seen that they move in a rhythmic pattern. This is also very much evident in Indian classical dance.

In *Bharathanatyam*, every gesture, body movement and body posture is set to a particular time. One of the techniques of *Bharathanatyam*, named *Angika Abhinaya* (body movements), helps to express the movements of animals, birds, worms⁵³ and all things that are in motion in creation through gestures, postures and facial expressions [Coomaraswamy 2003:17-51]. For example, the time and rhythm-pattern of the movement (walk) of an elephant differs from the movement (walk) of a peacock. Hence, the elements in dance align with the cosmos, the creation of God. Therefore, God becomes the dancer since the rhythm; timing and space which are the basic elements of dance are the creation of God, because He is the actual who is present in the motion of the moves which are created by artists.

6.2.2 God ‘The Dance’

God is not viewed as a dancer except in the inner life of the Trinity as *Perechoreisis* [Branson and Martinez 2011:65]. Nor through any stories is God related to dancing in the Christian perspective in a way which is comparable to the view, in Hinduism, of *Lord Nataraja*, but God is ‘the dance’ itself. As discussed above, God is a moving God and the source of all that exists. A movement or any action that is happening indicates the time of its present situation, an ongoing matter which is the time of its occurrence. According to English definitions, the word ‘dance’ is a state of an action (‘verb’) that indicates a happening in the present which is in motion, through the dancer, who is the ‘subject’. God said to Moses that God is the God of the present: ‘I am who I am’ [Exod. 3:14]. God was present yesterday, is present today and will be present tomorrow [Heb. 13:8]. So, God is always understood in the present form. Therefore, I suggest that in this way God is being a ‘doer’ and dance represents the ongoing action while it is performed. Hence, God is the ‘dance’ and the dancer (doer). Sydney Carter’s song ‘Lord of the dance’ [Carter 1963] could fit in well here.

<i>I danced in the morning</i>	<i>.....They cut me down</i>
<i>When the world was begun,</i>	<i>And I leapt up high;</i>
<i>And I danced in the moon</i>	<i>I am the life</i>
<i>And the stars and the sun,</i>	<i>That'll never, never die;</i>
<i>And I came down from</i>	<i>I'll live in you</i>
<i>heaven</i>	<i>If you'll live in me -</i>
<i>And I danced on the earth,</i>	<i>I am the Lord</i>
<i>At Bethlehem</i>	<i>Of the Dance, said he.</i>
<i>I had my birth.....</i>	

God is the life that has no end. ‘No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us’ [1 John 4:12] — a present state of action. The above verse says ‘I am the life that’ll never, never die; I’ll live in you if you’ll live in me, I am the Lord of the dance, said he’. Thus God is dancing because God is the ‘dance’ and therefore God is the Lord of dance.

Dance is characterised by movement and movement is controlled by energy and consciousness. Every movement in a dance is codified with rhythm and thus dancing can create a dance, where dance becomes the creation of the artist. So a creation is a dance [Ferlic 2005:3].

Therefore every dance is a creation. The movements in a dance are simply caused by energy transformation because energy is a capacity to do a work, basically to move [Pardue 2005:64].

Dancers expend a great deal of energy on remembering sequences of movement rationally while they lose the dwelling aspects of motion. They work hard to execute difficult or complicated steps and phrases in technically correct ways, focusing on body alignment and shaping of movement [Parviainen 2007:9].

So a movement is caused by the energy within the consciousness of the dancer, i.e. the quality of being aware of what it is. A sequence of such moves makes a dance which

arises from the relationship between energy and consciousness. There are several different ways in which this dance of energy and consciousness can be seen and/or experienced. It can be seen for example as a dance between the feminine and masculine creative aspects of creation [Ferlic 2005:2].

The New International Bible uses the word ‘hovering’ instead of ‘moving’ in Genesis chapter 1:2 to describe the presence of God at the beginning of creation. A synonym for the word ‘hovering’ is ‘balancing’. Control over sustained energy causes balancing. God is that energy, because in the beginning God was in the form of movement. To move the body from one motion to another requires the application of energy. Energy in dance allows fluidity of movement [Pardue 2005:64]: ‘the thrill of vitality is the reason for dance; it helps the dancer to feel life and to live and celebrate the aliveness’ [Aylor 2008:1]. This is epitomised in the dance of Miriam in the Book of Exodus.

Miriam needed this energy to use her body movements to release her emotions concerning what she had experienced during the crossing of the Red Sea. Here, God became Miriam’s force of energy to release her emotions of joy. The Psalmist says that ‘God is my strength and my shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving’ [Ps. 28:7]. When God becomes the energy in a person, then he or she will be able to convert that energy into the emotions of joy in order to express the presence of God within him or herself. Therefore, God is present in dance movements, when a person expresses him or herself to God through the dance movements. God Himself revealed His presence to the universe through movements [Gen. 1:2], and God continues to express Himself through the movements of the universe.

The invisible God who led the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt became visible through the dance movements of Miriam. Exodus, chapter 15 verse 20, says that Miriam danced with timbrels or a tambourine. Timbrels or tambourines are percussion instruments, so Miriam danced to the rhythm of the tambourine. Hence, her dance could be interpreted as a dance with movements according to a rhythmic pattern. Here God did not become a dancer or guide them to dance, but God became a dance itself because ‘God is not the doer or not the done. God is the doing’ [Aylor 2008:1].

In the universe all the powerful energies such as stars, moon, and planets are always in motion. The speciality of their movements is in silence. An explicit characteristic of a movement is to occupy space. The energies that are in motion are well-calculated and move in equal intervals of time. All these energies come into existence through God’s creation [Gen. 1:4-5; 5-19]. God is the source of all these energies and makes the entire cosmos to be in motion. The reference to David’s dance in the second book of Samuel describes how David danced before the Lord with all his might, power and soul [2 Sam 6:14]. The write of the Gospel according to Matthew says that ‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’ [Matt.12:30]. This is evident in the dance of David. The implicit energy moves the body according to rhythm accompanied by dance [Pardue 2005:55].

In the Indian context, the source of this energy and of the rhythmic cosmos in motion is viewed in the form of a dancing god. According to Coomaraswamy, a well-known Sri Lankan author, philosopher, historian, and early interpreter of ancient Indian culture to the West, the significance of Lord Shiva’s dance is threefold. First, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos, which is represented by the arch. Second, the purpose of his dance is to release the countless souls of humankind from the snare of

delusion. Third, the place of the dance, the centre of the universe, is within the heart [Coomaraswamy 2003:65].

From this argument about motion, the invisible God makes Him visible through movements, including the movements of the universe. God is the prime mover and not to be moved. My argument is that a movement reveals the life and existence of the life of the mover. In dance, every movement speaks and supports the actor or dancer in bringing the message from the dancer to the spectators. As the cosmos is in motion and occupies space, in the same way dance occupies space on earth (the platform or the stage). It is the fullest form of a series of body movements to a particular rhythm. The body movements are the base which is well calculated, codified, and regulated in a dance [Pardue 2005:55]. The dancer creates the movement and expresses it for a purpose, so the dancer becomes the source of the body movements. Above all, God created humankind in His own image and gave them dominion over creation [Gen. 1:27]. Therefore, every human shares in God's creative life, which is dance [Deitering 1984:6].

All that God created is not static. Every movement has an aesthetic characteristic. It may be that because God wants to use this aesthetic sense to sustain all that evolves from His creation, that He revealed Himself in the form of a movement during creation. God saw that everything He created was good [Gen. 1:31], including movement; consequently, the same vital movement has been created in humankind. Therefore, that cosmic movement in proper rhythm and with equal intervals of space, applied by humankind to express the celebration of life, becomes a dance. Thus, God becomes the dancer of the dance, as we take His movements into us and He becomes dance. When we offer ourselves selflessly to the creator He becomes one with us in celebrating life. This is very evident in the dance of David in the book of Samuel when he danced before the tabernacle [2 Sam 6:14].

6.2.3 Dance as Celebration of Life

David danced before God in His presence, who is thought of as being present in the Ark of the Covenant [Oesterley 1923:36]. The moving God expressed Himself in David, and with all his might, power and soul David danced; he moved his limbs to the rhythm that had been produced by the musical instruments while the Ark of the Covenant was taken in the procession. Zephaniah 3:17 says that ‘The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing’. So, here was God, rejoicing in dance to celebrate life with human beings. This verse is evidence for showing that God is dance in the Christian context as well. The same verse was referred to by the Indian *Bharathanatyam* scholar, choreographer and dancer Barboza in relation to dance and God in a Christian context. He points out the boldness of the prophet Zephaniah in proclaiming that in Messianic times God himself dances in the midst of his people [Barboza 1990:10]. This shows that God becomes one with the people to share the joy of the people and to accept their response to His call.

6.3 Dance as Communication

Dance becomes an expression of joy. Happiness and gladness are feelings which are created for various reasons and related to the celebration of life. These feelings are related to the emotions of human beings. In general, every person longs to experience this state of joy or happiness (*Anadha*). It is very obvious to see the signs of joy or happiness in a person outwardly through their gestures, through the modulation in their voice while speaking or through other practical actions. Therefore, there will be action or actions to express the inner joy that is being experienced. Dance helps to interpret and express the same emotion in an artistic manner. Since dance communicates feelings or emotions through body movements, it becomes a medium of communication.

It is an art to communicate the emotions in dance to create aesthetic enjoyment. The body movements become a medium to take the message to the spectators; therefore, it can be said that dance or the body movements are a non-verbal communication [Hanna 2008:493]. For example, dancing the scene of the last supper with the washing of the feet of the disciples by Jesus Christ, an event which happened 2000 years ago, could be brought out in a manner lively and effective through body gestures and movement in dance form [Appendix1 Picture1:1]. Communicating this message through body movements and gestures brings the event to life and makes it an activity happening in the present. Thus, body movements help us to understand the presence or existence of life that the dance portrays.

Only a life or a living object can express its being. Hence, the earliest communication of a human could possibly be a movement. A movement of a body is the stretching out of the entire body or any parts of the body. Movements and body language communicate earlier than actual speech. Therefore, the birth of a movement could be considered as the beginning of any 'Dance', because every dance consists of movements to a particular rhythm in a particular style which can reflect its context. 'Dance has purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, and culturally influenced, sequences of body movements that are selected in much the same way as a person would choose sequences' [Finkelman and Wintz 2004:289]. Thus, it could be said that the existence of dance can be traced back to the earliest time of human beings on earth.

The birth of a human being shows the origin of dance (movements). When the baby moves, the mother experiences the new life in her womb, and the baby communicates to the mother through this movement. An example from the New Testament shows this experience, when Mary greeted Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah: 'When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit' [Luke 1:44]. The unseen and unborn human life expresses its existence through movement.

In the example above regarding the unborn baby's movement, the movement becomes communicative element acting in the place of verbal language to communicate. 'Movement is our mother tongue and primordial thought' [Scheff 2004:59]. Language is used for communication. 'What' is communicated will be understood through the modulation of the voice and with body gestures/movements. The body has been used as a medium for communication verbally and non-verbally, including for people who are verbally challenged. On the dance floor, the body becomes the centre for communication.

Every dance speaks, and conveys some message within a context. It depends on the spectator or receiver, in what sense the communication is understood by them. A remarkable feature of Indian classical dance is that it offers an unlimited scope to portray any thought or idea [Vatsyayan 200:41]. At the same time, only those spectators who are eager and who thirst to receive the message might be expected to understand it. However, the dancer through the gestures and expressions, tries to stimulate the spectators to travel and experience along with the dancer. Often people enjoy and take delight in dancing. So everybody who witnesses the dance with a sense of appreciation is inspired by the beauty, charm and elegance of the dancing body, and this will help them to understand the message easily.

Anna Pavlova, the ballet dancer from Russia, when asked what she was saying in a particular dance, retorted: 'If I could tell you I would not dance' [Davies 1984:100]. Dance itself is a language—a language spoken through the body, the universal language: 'Nevertheless it should not be forgotten that all language is in a sense body language' [Davies 1984:100]. Therefore, the body movements become the body language. Hence, dance is a language: a language of movement which crosses the barriers of caste, colour, race, religion and regional verbal languages. It is said that in ancient times dance was used to communicate with the unseen and with the ancestors, crossing the barriers of language [Singh and Brett 2006:2]. All experience that cannot be uttered through words in such moments is expressed through dance. Dance is not an alternate medium to express experience, but the body movement in itself

becomes the language to express the experience of life. Hence, body language can penetrate where words cannot, and is capable of reaching a profound level of being [Davies 1984:101].

Every dance form will express some message. The present form of the traditional dance *Bharathanatyam* expresses the Hindu religious message. All the messages are woven around the relation between the devotees (people) and God [Vaidyanathan 1996:48]. So *Bharathanatyam* is more relevant to God consciousness in an Indian context. Throughout human history, dance has been more or less associated with God or worship. ‘The impulse or urge to unite with God through dance has a long and involved history. It is found in the animism of primitive people, in the Gods of Egypt, Greece, Rome, India and finally in Christianity’ [Barboza 1990:1]. Dance is the richest gift of the muses of humanity and blessed by God: ‘Because of its divine origin it has a place in the mysteries and is beloved by the gods and carried out by men in their honour’ [Serlin 1993:66].

In a Christian context, God communicates through signs and actions which are familiar to the culture of the people. This is evident in some of the biblical events related to dance. The movement of God invites participation, which is essential in communication. Hence, dance is an invitational art form. God’s communication through movement is not unidirectional and one-person centred. Rather, through creation and the participation of human beings, God’s movement becomes an effective way of communicating which transforms individuals and communities.

Dance is an art of discipline. To be a trained dancer requires intensive and comprehensive training. One must be properly taught to use the limbs of the body while dancing. David’s dance is said to be an ecstatic dance [Deitering 1984:27]. It is always a debatable question, when the example of David’s dance is given, whether to argue for incorporating dance into worship. The immediate response for David’s dance is that he danced a spontaneous dance guided by the Holy Spirit.

There is no information about the style of dancing David used, but it is important to know that dance is practised as part of Israelite culture. If we look at the history of Israel in the Bible, we can find that dance has been used throughout. Several places in the Bible make reference to the use of dance in worship. It is said that the Davidic style of worship has been practiced in Israel for many years, even until today [Murphy 19985:2]. At the end of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah at the feast of Succoth in a synagogue all the scrolls of the Law danced around the synagogue. It is known as Rejoicing in the Law [Adler 1990:8]. Barboza discussed David's dance in his research work, and he mentioned that David performed the dance Karar, the dance which is performed by an individual [Barboza 1990:8].

David danced to music that had been produced by lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals [2 Sam 6:5]. Each of those instruments helped the body to move rhythmically and inclusively within time and space. Though it is a spontaneous dance, the movements and gestures that he used could have reflected his culture or ethnic background as dance was used in the sacred processional ritual among Israelites [Oesterley 1923:36]. Worship always involves motion and is never static. This shows that humans move towards God in response to God's movement towards humans. David's worship thus involves motion in response to God: 'The total human person (embodied spirit) makes this gesture towards God and towards other humans' [Uzukwu 1997: ix].

The dances mentioned in the Bible which are related to worship have movements such as leaping, jumping, and whirling. The Bible states that David was leaping and dancing before God (2 Sam 6:16), so he could have used, consciously or unconsciously, the dance movements which were in use at that time in his culture. 'The dance assumes various forms according to the degree of religious excitement engendered' [Oesterley 1923:36]. 'Our motions or gestures, and the way we generally interpret human rhythmic movement, are bound to an ethnic experience' [Uzukwu 1997: ix].

The Bible says that God turned David's mourning into dancing (Ps. 30:11-12). The emotions that were created within him, helped to move his body according to the rhythm of the music that was played around him. God's action towards David was visible through the victory that he received and to respond to that victory he used his body movements through dance. Hence, it would be appropriate to say that in dance, we can find human responses to God physically. So he could perform energetically before the Lord to communicate his gratitude (emotion) towards God. Thus, God took part in celebrating life with His people.

6.4 Dance as the Symbol of Freedom

A dance therapist from India argues that 'emotional, psychological, spiritual, intellectual and creative energies which are unified and harmonised in a unique physical discipline is Dance' [Kashyap 2005:3]. This is evident in the dances of David and Miriam. There are many dances which are shown in the Bible, but in this chapter I will focus on the dances of Miriam and David as examples to argue that God is in favour of response through dance. One of the reasons to use these two people is that often their dances are cited by people in general as examples of either religious dance or liturgical dance in the Bible [Ellis 1993:480: Deitering 1984:21].

It is essential to note dance therapist Kashyap's argument about dance from India: that dance liberates people's bodies and allows them to move in patterns outside the restrictions which they have to face in their life situations. This is made clear in the dance of Miriam and David before the presence of God. Dance is comprised of physically moving the body, twisting the limbs, shaking the hands, making symbols with fingers, leaping, jumping and whirling about. When all the limbs of the body are tied up together, it is not possible to move them.

For dance, it is not only the body but also the mind and heart that should be free to move. When the heart is hardened and tied up with problems and worries, it will not be able to think of moving the body. A movement of the body or the limbs is an expression of the feeling

which is whirling inside the mind. It could be based on any emotion and for whatever reasons. One's consciousness also is used to help respond to the immediate environment in order to live a life in freedom. In the life of a Christian, faith is living in the hope of Christ which in a sense is understood as the communication of Jesus in day-to-day life. This understanding can be called an event, which is a relationship with God.

Moreover, God has communicated with us through His divine self in Jesus Christ. German Jesuit priest and theologian Karl Rahner says that 'God gives us the divine self, for the sake of our ability to know God and to possess God. It happens in the immediacy of experience, i.e. our experience of transcendence, freedom, responsibility, and love' [Fischer 2005:117]. Hence, one is to surrender to God in 'holy and ineffable mystery' [Fischer 2005:42]. God forgave our sins and gave us the freedom to call Him 'our father' and respond to Him. 'Man is created, called, endowed with grace, for the sake of the vision of God, for participation in the inner, triune life of eternal love' [Balthasar 1986:108]. Through liturgy, one responds to this call to take part in the divine love. The call of God can be defined as a 'feeling'. The inherent emotional nature of worship allows the expression of this feeling through the response of the body and its emotions [Voke 2009:17]. In dance, this inner feeling is artistically expressed and helps in going beyond worldliness and in transcending one's individual self [Bhavanani and Bhavanani 2001:13].

An action or a movement is part of the identity of any living thing. God made human beings with beauty and sense, above all the living things. Bodily movement is the most primary language of expression and communication available to us as human beings [Barton 1991:4]. Rahner says that the self-communication of God is transcendent [Fischer 2005:40]. In dance, one can be lifted up to reach and to realise this self-communication of God. God can be recognised and experienced as movement. In the Old Testament, God used the common medium of the people to communicate God's relationship with human beings. God is often a performing God and a moving God. Throughout the Old Testament, God was moving and

leading the Israelites, as well as making the people move. God is an active God, a God of movements. Later, many of God's actions were characterised as dance by Jewish writer Francis Barboza in his book *Christianity in Indian Dance Forms* [Barboza 1990:10].

6.5 God, Culture and Body

Often God is identified and associated with the local culture, and art forms have also been used by the people in relation to worship. Dance is at the heart of almost all cultures and faiths in India [Sahi 2008:79]. Parables, storytelling, poetic forms, music and dance are some of the art forms available for communicating with people in a culture. Every art form is attractive in its own way and has aesthetic elements in it. Parables were a part of ancient Israelite and Jewish culture [Niehoff 2001:210]. Jesus adopted the Jewish cultural device of parables to speak with the people in an effective manner. Thus, God used culture to communicate with people.

The communication and relationship of God with humanity is most often shown through symbols and signs in the Bible, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. When Jesus fed the multitudes he did not feed them by his miracle alone; he asked the people to bring forward what they had, and with that Jesus multiplied the two fishes and five loaves and fed the crowd [John 6:5-14]

Hence, God uses the work of people or the common medium of the people to communicate, and to express His relationship with His people. God wants us to be in action and He uses that action, which involves the body and its movement, to communicate with us. Hence, the body becomes the centre through which one communicates with God and God communicates with us. For Christians, the body is the temple of God [1 Cor. 6:19-20]. Therefore, worshiping God through the body would be a right response to God's call. In the Indian context, dance is a form of a prayer or worship.

God so loved the world that He came down in a human body (Jesus Christ) and showed His love for humanity through His life, death and resurrection. Jesus Christ preached to the people through symbolic means and by using parables. He did not speak to the people merely in words, but rather he chose many different and effective ways of communicating with them. Kathryn, a liturgical dancer, argues that Jesus redeemed the world with the sacrifice of his body, and she raises a question, therefore it would be appropriate to offer the gift of our bodies back to him in Praise [Mihelick 2004:1]. He symbolically gave his body in the form of the Eucharist to be consumed in order to be spiritually strengthened and to live in him. This is celebrated every day in the Holy Mass. Hence, the human body becomes the centre of Christian life. St. Paul says ‘now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it’ [1 Cor. 12:27].

God was in motion in the Old Testament, and He continued to be in motion through Jesus Christ. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, God has continued to be with us in the form of the Holy Spirit [John 14:25-26], which is a moving Spirit, stirring up and helping us to work in God [Acts 2:1-12]. Jesus said ‘worship God in Spirit because God is Spirit’ [John 4:24]. Therefore, worshipping God through rhythmic movements and with emotions can become the basis for a theology of dance. ‘Dancing the theology is the doing of theology as existential poetry interpreting life as willed purpose and satisfying effort’ [Aylor 2003:1]. Theology is the study of God, studying God in a context [Aylor 2003:1]. For Christians, studying the biblical God and the God who was Spirit and became flesh to communicate with humanity is theology. One possible way to arrive at this theology in a concrete way and in an effective manner for the people in an Indian context could be through dance. The artists of Indian dance have only one intention and purpose in creating their works of art, which is to convey the religious message in a concrete form [Rangaraj 1979:18]. In the Indian context, Hindu messages are portrayed through dance, through the movements of the body. Hence, the body becomes the medium of communication in dance.

St. Paul described the body as the temple of God [1 Cor. 6:19], and said that one must glorify God in one's body and in spirit [1 Cor. 6:19-20]. In his letter to Timothy, St. Paul says to lift up one's hands and pray [1 Tim. 2:8]. This shows that the body was respected as a channel for religious expression. 'The circle dance of the disciple around Jesus was described in the apocryphal Acts of John as the "Hymn of Jesus". G.R.S Mead suggested that this hymn was an ancient mystery ritual of early Christianity' [Underhill 1912:283]. The circular form of dance in the 'Hymn of Jesus' is not included in canonical Christian literature. This expression of circular dance shows that the author knows that symbolic movement was employed in the Early Church period. In the Indian context, body-consciousness is given much importance. 'The human body is a perennial object of culture, in the widest meaning of the term' [Pope John Paul II 1981:2]. According to Christian understanding, a person with a body and soul is made in the image and likeness of God [Gen. 1]. So the theology of the body is based on the premise that the human body has its origin in God. Every human being is an interpersonal communion because God Himself is a communion of persons in the Trinity [Pope John Paul II 2003:1]. The human body will be like the body of Jesus, and will be resurrected, transformed and taken into heavenly glory on the Judgment Day.

The Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*, which talks about the Church, explains that Christ loves the Church as his bride. This love of Christ is portrayed as a man who loves his wife as his own body. The concept of the Body, with flesh and blood, is the centre of the Church. In worship, the divine body and flesh is recalled and remembered. In liturgy, through the breaking of bread, one is called to share in His body. Hence, the concept of the Body can be used to respond to God. The love of God could be explained in many ways. In the book of the Song of Songs, God's experience and love is depicted as a relationship between a male and female in love. So the body becomes the medium of expression of the inner feeling, to communicate the self. John says the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us full of

grace and truth [John 1:14-18]—to feel us, touch us and to relate to us. If that is the case, then responding to that Divine grace and truth could be through the human body.

In Indian dance, a dancer has to concentrate on many things while dancing: the body movements: to move perfectly and complete every rhythmic movement to the full, plus the footwork, hand gestures, facial expressions (*Abhinaya*), and the script which is to be depicted. Thus, the mind is completely occupied in being aware of the entire body in order to try to achieve perfection. *Bharathanatyam* themes are woven around religious messages. So when the dancer is depicting a religious character, the dancer has to transform herself or himself into the character. There should be a total surrender in order to create the character and bring it alive for the audience. At such times, the artist is completely changed and the character lives through the artist. Such a thing is considered to be devotion to God in faith and submission. This total surrender is called prayer. ‘Dance is the clearest expression of the body at prayer’ [D’Sa 2004:180]. Thus, dance becomes the prayer.

Bharathanatyam could be one of the examples of non-verbal communication because of the intertwining of different elements that have to be distilled at the same time in order to communicate the message. Nandhikeswara, a Sanskrit dance scholar, puts it in the following way, which has become the tradition followed by every dancer in order to bring the dance to its fullness:

*Having sustained the song in the throat,
its meaning has to be shown through the hand gestures
and the rhythm is marked by the feet for the hand moves,
wherever the hand goes there the glances follow,
wherever the glances goes the mind has to follow and
wherever the mind goes there the facial expression according to the mood of the
character portrait will follow and*

where the moods reaches (go) there the flavour (Rasa) rises [Coomaraswamy 1987:17].

These verses (*Natyakrama slokam*) by Nandhikeswarar were created to maintain the discipline of dance while performing. The spiritual aspirations of the human mind are best represented through dance and music, which become a form of prayer.

Every student who learns *Bharathanatyam* starts with a prayer (*Dhyana slokam*) in praise of Lord Shiva (one of the Hindu Trinity gods). In this *sloka*, God is praised as the embodiment of four types of *Abhinaya* (expressions) for dance. The *sloka* addresses God: ‘whose whole body is the world, whose language is the essence of all the sounds and speech, whose costumes are the moon and stars....and we bow to such Holy benevolent God’. The *dhyana slokam* is in Sanskrit. This prayer says that every dancer has to embody four types of expression: through body gestures, through words and music, through the costumes, and then finally to use the inner self, which is expressed through the *sativka abhinaya*.

In the term *sativka abhinaya*, *Sat* means ‘mind’, so it means to express inner feelings through the psychological state of mind. The spiritual aspiration of the human mind can only be expressed through this state of mind [Coomaraswamy 2003:1-10]. The term ‘spiritual’ is very ambiguous in the Indian context. The spiritual is understood as body and spirit by the philosophical thinkers of India. The word ‘spiritual’ suggests what is mental and it is further connected with all the cravings and aspirations of the mind and the transcendent. The mind and body are distinct from the soul, which is called the *Athma* [Raj and Sarada 2005:49]. The mind (*Athmam*) transcends even the body and psyche and aspires to unity with the Brahman, the Almighty, which Anita a *Bharathanatyam* dancer and scholar from Tamizh Nadu, says is the ultimate reality [Rangaraj 1979:24].

The theology of dance is expressed as one body in Christ, and it is important to be childish or childlike to participate in liturgy, says Deitering [Deitering 1984:121]. Dance is also part of the culture of Judaism. Jesus might have danced since he was a Jew, says Anne Barton,

referring to a comment by Martin Blogg, in her book *'Shall We Dance?'* Perhaps this is true because culture reflects one's faith. So, liturgical dance can be incorporated into liturgy so as to express the context in which the Eucharist is celebrated. It can effectively and persuasively demonstrate liturgy as a communal practice that moves beyond the repetition of the ritual performed in the liturgy.

6.6 Aesthetics of Dance

Aesthetics is the study of beauty and taste, whether in the form of the comic, the tragic, or the sublime [The Encyclopaedia Britannica 1910:277]. The word derives from the Greek *aisthetikos*, meaning 'of sense perception'. Dance is a creative act of a human being. Judith, the dance scholar and choreographer, says that to dance is human [Hanna 1987:3]. Dance is an expression of human feeling; it is especially adapted to signify joy [*Notitiae* 11 1975:1]. Human beings are able to express the experience of life artistically through body movements according to their own context, and with intellectual imagination and beauty. So every artist becomes a creator—one who is creatively able to express the experience of life. But every artist also creates with the help of wisdom, knowledge and an ability which was given by God. The Bible says that God is the place of knowledge [Rom.11:3]. J.G. Davies, referring to liturgical dance, writes that 'according to Plato it is the gods who have given the pleasurable sense of harmony and rhythm' [Davies 1984:69].

This paragraph addresses the theory of beauty according to Ananda Coomaraswamy in his book *Dance of Shiva*. According to him, aesthetics is described as the work of the artist, as every artist discovers beauty [Coomaraswamy 2003:41]. Beauty is not a thing or something which could be contained, but rather beauty is a state. Beauty can be seen everywhere but it can never be measured and cannot have degrees. One who encounters beauty can experience it. A work of art must have the capacity to express something, and in that communication, to transform the person who encounters it. In this process, one who is experiencing or

witnessing beauty may be uplifted or changed [D'Sa 2005:173]. *Bharathanatyam* dance is a work of art. It attracts spectators through its colourful costumes, body movements and facial expressions.

Goodness is praised as beauty [Aquinas 1947:58]. Beauty includes three conditions: integrity or perfection, proportion or harmony, and brightness or clarity [Aquinas 1947:450]. It is, however, manifest that the form which makes a thing actual is a perfection and a good; thus, every actual being is a good, and likewise every potential being, as such, is a good from having a relationship to the good [Aquinas 1947:556].

Dance does not become beauty unless it is perfectly done with all its manifestations. So the beauty is not merely an attraction but is perfection. According to Matthew 5:48, Jesus calls us to be perfect: 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect'. Aquinas argues that 'a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality, because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection' [Aquinas 1947:204]. He proves that God is perfect because existence is the most perfect of all things, and thus, 'All created perfections are in God' [Aquinas 1947:206]. So God is absolute perfection. Complete perfection is beauty. Aquinas says that when something is perfect then it is good [Aquinas 1947:232]. Works of art are good, as are any art forms that are created by the artists, when the works are perfect. Hence, a perfect dance is a thing of beauty and it can only come from the perfection which is God. Hence, God is the prime dancer. The image of a God who is Himself a dancer moving through creation is a sign of the freedom that lies at the source of creation. Thus, we can experience the spirit of God in the creation of every artist in His creation.

It is true that God exists in creation, and those who deliberately and diligently seek Him can experience God. Dance is one of the ways where consciousness of God can be experienced and one can enjoy bliss. Beauty is never seen apart from the artist because, while artists are busy doing the work of art, they concentrate on the work of art and not on depicting beauty.

However, the fullness of the work of perfection reveals beauty and it can be felt and experienced by those viewers who enter into their own experience. The secret of the art lies in the artist Himself. Beauty is absolute and cannot have degrees. The vision of beauty is spontaneous.

The theory of beauty by Coomaraswamy says that the secret of art is to be found in self-forgetfulness [Coomaraswamy 2003:42]. ‘This state of grace is not achieved in the pursuit of pleasure; the hedonists have their reward, but they are in bondage to loveliness, while the artist is free in beauty’ [Coomaraswamy 2003:42]. Artists are able to create beauty from anything, which may allow viewers to forget themselves, and therefore to transcend themselves. In a perfect dance presentation, the dancer and the viewers would be drawn to a stage where they would be reminded of the purpose of life. The dance becomes a source which stimulates the viewer so that the inner eye awakens. Even this experience would happen for only a few seconds, this feeling of transcendence so inexplicable that one would imagine oneself to be hallucinating. This is the aesthetics of dance, because it is not valued in association with anything. External things such as dance, poems and paintings possess the kind of form which reminds us of beauty. The viewers (*rasika*) perceive the beauty of which the artist has exhibited the signs, and this beauty is identified with God.

With these points in mind, we can turn to theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar’s main aesthetic contention that God is supreme Beauty, who dwells in inaccessible light and has revealed Himself, become visible, in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ [Rivera 199:15]. It is of the essence of Christian faith to fix our eyes upon Jesus and in Him to see the glory of the Father. Balthasar points to 1 John 1:1-2.

In this section, I will use Balthasar’s theology in arguing that God is perfection and beauty, and hence, dance could be from God who is one hundred percent perfect and beautiful. Balthasar sees Christian theology under the sign of beauty [Viladesau 1999: 115]. The famous

poet John Keats writes ‘Beauty is truth, truth is beauty’. For Christians, Jesus is the truth. If truth is beauty, then Jesus is truth and beauty. Jesus said ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’ [John 14:6]. Jesus becomes the way for humanity to reach God. The way is love. True love can be understood when one is loyal and truthful to the other. So love is truth. Truth is beauty. God is omnipotent and He is the fullest of the full, so God remains as truth. As I discussed earlier, God is the source of all that happens in the universe. He is the beginning and the end. So God is true. So God is beautiful. If truth reveals a person, beauty must give an experience of the person; hence, God can be experienced in truth and beauty [D’Sa 2004: 173].

The psalmist says, ‘One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple’ [Ps.27: 4]. Essentially, dance is an expression of the aesthetic dimension of a culture [Sahi 2007: 10]. If God has created human beings, including their knowledge and wisdom, then God is involved in everything evolved by human beings such as culture, creativeness and art forms. God Himself is manifested in all His creation, so then, God is involved in those elements which evolved from a definite pattern or culture of a religion. Those elements which disclose God’s presence are unquestionably from Him. One such element from India is dance, which was created to experience the same God who created heaven and earth in the religion of the Hindus. Indian cultural art forms are used for God-consciousness. Dance is a movement. Everything which moves expresses that they have life in them. If there is no movement, then there is no life. So, life can be denoted in the form of a movement.

In a way, the right meaning for the word ‘good’ is beauty: love, truth, justice, wisdom, knowledge, honesty, etc. All these actions are good; hence, they are beautiful because God is revealed in these actions. The Indian classical dance *Bharathanatyam* is a medium to bring this love, truth, wisdom and knowledge, and to bring the realisation of God among the

spectators. So *Bharathanatyam* becomes beautiful. To incorporate it into the Latin Rite is relevant because the Eucharistic celebration symbolizes the love of God for humanity.

6.7 Conclusion

God is the source of all creation. All that came through Him is seen as good. God is the dancer and as well as dance, as God is the prime mover and the source of all that in motion in the creation. God communicates through the common medium of the people, particularly through the cultural context. Response also depends on context. In an Indian context, dance is much more connected with worship and considered as sacred. *Bharathanatyam* has an aesthetic. The philosophy of Indian dance is for the soul to reach and be in union with the Almighty. During dance, the dance helps to lift up the dancer along with the spectators to a transcendental level. Therefore, dance could be an appropriate medium to respond to God's call.

'Theology itself has become a dance. Theology is pattern, steps, leaps, twirls and twists – a danced circle defining a middle and midst around which we dance in worship, surrounding the one before whom we wish to be, surrounding that one with our circling attention' [Aylor 2008:1]. Barboza says that theology has to be taken to the people in a concrete form, and dance is an appropriate form to bring theology to the people [Barboza 1990:216]. In a sense, taking theology to the people is taking God and His love to the people, through the effective means of dance. This might become an invitation to people of different classes and castes to join in celebrating the Eucharist through expressing the joy of being together. This might begin to bring harmony and peace, that is, the kingdom of God among the local communities in the RCC in the south of India.

Chapter Seven

BHARATHANATYAM AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates that *Bharathanatyam* can be incorporated into the liturgy to bring social transformation in the local community. All the findings from my research will be discussed and presented as a result here. This will enhance the reasons for bringing dance into the Holy Mass with further necessary arguments with regard to social issues, to prove that dance is not only integral to Indian society, culturally, historically and theologically, but socially which means it has the capability to bring transformation within the local society of southern India. Transformation means bringing changes in caste discrimination, gender discrimination and multi-faith discrimination through using dance in the Holy Mass.

Therefore, I attempt to argue that liturgical dance can bring about transformation in local society by enabling the participation of women and children in the Holy Mass regardless of their caste, gender and faith. This means allowing gender representation in the Holy Mass, as well as establishing a relationship with the Hindu religious communities (a multi-religious relationship), and also by promoting awareness about particular social issues. Therefore incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass makes it relevant to the culture it indigenises, and this would inspire the congregation to transform their lives. By emphasising aspects of inculturation and transformation my research is able to develop theological and biblical imperatives which will hopefully encourage the churches to consider liturgical dance in their worship.

Now I will critically engage with the opinions of the RCC on using dance in the liturgy before discussing the results of the research. Though I have answered some of the issues that were

raised during the interviews with regard to *Bharathanatyam* and its theological basis in the previous chapters, here I will conclude with replies to those questions in the light of my previous findings.

7.1.1 Clarification of the Opinion on Using Dance in the Liturgy

The interview responses showed that the study of the use of dance in the Holy Mass is very new in India. There are not many research articles or books on the topic of liturgical dance from Indian authors or theologians. A Jesuit priest, Fr. M. Amaladoss, the well-known international theologian, has written about Jesus as dancer. His view of this topic is referenced and argued in support of dance in connection with the ‘dancing Nataraja (Hindu god Lord Shiva), King of dancers, embodying cosmic movement in perfect equilibrium’, Indian spirituality, and referring to David’s dance and the psalmists’ praise of God in dance [Amaladoss 2005:180]. He has also interpreted dance metaphorically in relation to the resurrection of Jesus, liberation and healing. The RCC’s common understanding of the dance always refers to these ideas set out above.

Dance has been used in the liturgy after Vatican II [Amaladoss 2005:181], raising a question about why this study is necessary if dance is already introduced in the liturgy? Dance is not used in the parishes other than the RC institutions, or occasionally in big gatherings such as the Bishops’ Conference or during the Pope’s visit. I found that there is purpose behind using art, architecture and painting in the Church; the vestments of the priest and all the elements including music that are used during the Eucharistic celebration. The best of classical Roman culture has been introduced in the liturgy. For example, Latin was introduced in the ancient church and continued through the ages. Even today it has been encouraged and the Latin Language Mass is identified with the term ‘High Mass’. The architecture, paintings and art in the church helps people to learn more about the faith. If so, then, dance would be used for a purpose and then the RCC would officially make arrangements in the parishes to use it. The

second chapter on interviews indicates that dance in the Holy Mass is not prevalently used, however. Since there is no study or research under taken in the RCC in India, dance is not taken further into the parishes or not given much importance. For this reason, the participants, during the interviews, highlighted those institutions that use dance occasionally in the Holy Mass and the dance used in the Pope's Holy Mass when he visited India, as examples [Appendix3 Participant 8:59].

Though the participants appreciated dance in the liturgy, they could not look beyond its cultural purpose to use it further. The responses suggested that dance could be used in the entrance hymn, the offertory procession and the recessional but not during the liturgy itself [Appendix 3 Participant 8:60]. Generally Indian Classical dance like *Bharathanatyam* is appreciated for its movements, gestures and facial expressions. But there was not much understanding, among the interviewees, beyond its techniques and significance, nor much to argue for its incorporation in the liturgy other than as a cultural expression. Concerning the cultural expression, the Church was suspicious because this is an elite class dance form. So there were suggestions that it would be more appropriate to use folk dance instead of *Bharathanatyam*.

Generally folk dances that are used today can be used only for certain festivals as every folk dance has its own significance and meaning (See Chapters One and Four). In order to communicate certain messages, the dance needs hand gestures, facial expression and certain body movements.

I propose to use *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass to enhance it; that is to communicate the message effectively, so that the congregation could contemplate and listen to the word of God, something which would lead to better participation. I found that there was not much discussion of using dance in the Holy Mass in the RCC in India. This is clearly revealed in my interviews. When I raised questions on the theology of dance, relating to God in a

Christian perspective, or while discussing David's dance in the Bible, there were few responses to these questions. This indicates that for the RCC in India the methods and reasons for incorporating dance in the Holy Mass presents a new area of study other than dance's occasional use for cultural expression. In fact, it can be used for better reasons for the local community also, something which will be discussed later in this chapter.

When the question about the interview with Cardinal Arinze on liturgical dance in 2004 was raised with the clergy participants, and referring to his reply on liturgical dance for the West and his positive reply about Asian dance, there was no clear response to this question and it did not appear to me that this was information about which they had any knowledge. The participant quoted above continued that, 'if Cardinal Arinze has said anything positive about liturgical dance then it can be taken into consideration because he has the authority to say so' [Appendix3 Participant 1:14]. This also shows that the RCC in India will follow if Church authority accepts any innovation in the Holy Mass. Then the Church acts upon it, but it has not fostered research for new ideas to enhance the Holy Mass until now. This gives an impression that using dance in the Holy Mass was not considered an important matter, or it has not been appreciated that using it will have any purpose other than as a cultural expression. This dance form is used to proclaim the Good News by different communication centres in South India (See Chapter One). I also clarify in this section the nature of Bharathanatyam and some of the questions that raised the issues that it is a high caste dance, or a solo dance, an expensive art form and not a participatory dance (unlike tribal dances of India).

7.1.2 Why *Bharathanatyam* in the Liturgy?

From the interviews, I learnt that there is no clear understanding of which dance should be chosen to be used in the Holy Mass. Since India is a vast country with many cultures and beliefs, there are many dances and musical styles used according to the local culture, and

dance is related to the local beliefs [See Chapter One]. Dance in itself is a language that crosses the barriers of different languages spoken all over the world. Dance is used as one of the effective media to communicate the message to people in the Indian context. However, some of the modern film dances create a fear among the RCC members that all those dances would be used in the Holy Mass if dance is allowed in the liturgy. In one interview, a clergy participant, while appreciating the role of dance pointed out that ‘only professional and those who understand the biblical message should be employed for liturgical dance purposes’ [Appendix3 Participant 2:19]. This evidence shows that there is a fear or confusion about choosing dance to use in the Holy Mass.

On the other hand, the article on liturgical dance clearly mentioned that ‘certain forms of dancing and certain dance patterns’ can be introduced. Therefore it is very clear that all kinds of dance cannot be used in the RC worship. Further, the article mentioned two conditions that dance should engage with; ‘to the extent in which the body is a reflection of the soul, dancing, with all its manifestations, would have to express sentiments of faith and adoration in order to become a prayer’ and ‘just as all the gestures and movements found in the liturgy are regulated by the competent ecclesiastical authority, so also dancing as a gesture would have to be under its discipline’ [Notitiae 11 1975:202-205]. *Bharathanatyam* dance style fulfils these conditions. I have discussed its techniques and how it is performed as a form of worship in the fourth chapter. The above article is also discussed in the third chapter. Therefore in order to clarify the doubts that rose in the interviews and to show that *Bharathanatyam* is an appropriate art form which fulfils these conditions while introducing dance in the liturgy, I under took the case study on *Bharathanatyam*. Thus, I choose this art form as it is a dance form which has ideal techniques to serve as an effective means of communication.

One of the clergy participants pointed out that ‘people are very much influenced by the media, so the idea is; when the message is given through such effective media like dance there will be more impact and without any doubt it will reach people’ [Appendix3 Participant 2:20].

Even the folk dance styles can be used by incorporating the gestures and facial expressions of *Bharathanatyam*, because to convey a definite message, gestures, postures and expressions are necessary. I have choreographed such dances to use in the Holy Mass while working at NBCLC. There are also other dance teachers who worked in Kalai Kaviri and NBCLC who have choreographed such dances [Appendix4 Video:7]. *Bharathanatyam* can be performed in a group and I have provided evidence of this in the Appendix. There were 1000 dancers who danced at the Tanjavore Temple in Tamizh *Nadu* to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the temple. This temple has an inscription about dance used during worship, and information about the reputed life of the *Devadasis*. It is said that there were once around 400 *Devadasis* who lived, and served in this temple [Guy 1997:28].

The concept of the *Devadasis* became degraded to such an extent that even Indians accepted the foreign interpretation that *Devadasis* were nothing more than temple prostitutes. Given the facts about the *Devadasis* [See Chapter Four] and their relation to dance, I argue that the possibility of using *Bharathanatyam* in the RC Holy Mass would pave a way for society to learn and understand the difference between the *Devadasis* of the Bhakti movement and the Dalit women who are forced to become *Devadasis* in society at present [Kersenboom 1987:195]. The evidence in the fourth chapter shows that the temple *Devadasis* were skilled and respected religious dancers. As a cultural art form *Bharathanatyam* has already experienced a renaissance, however this has associated the dance with secularism and upper caste or elite groups.

Using *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass presents an opportunity to reclaim the dance art form and the concept of the *Devadasis* for modern spiritual use in India. The RCC using Indian art forms to present spirituality in an indigenous fashion would also create parallels with the Indian Bhakti movement of the 14th to 16th centuries, thereby enabling Indian people to regard the RCC as an inculturated part of the Indian spiritual landscape.

I have demonstrated that *Bharathanatyam* dance is a local art form [See Chapter Four]. None of the literatures discussed in the fourth chapter pointed out that this dance form is a solo performance or that only a single artist can perform this dance. It is necessary to encourage people to understand that the rich culture of *Bharathanatyam* belongs to them. If it is important to the local culture to incorporate dance into the Holy Mass then there will be more opportunities to know about the Tamizh source for *Bharathanatyam*. This will enhance not only the local art form, but also be a contribution to the local language, which will help local people to show more interest in the RCC along with the local RCs. For example, St. Paul used local cultural elements to communicate the Bible to Romans.

St. Paul took the tools of communication that were available in Roman culture and used them to articulate the Christian message. Specifically, he used the Roman road system and he wrote manuscripts that were duplicated by hand copying. The result of this outsider's work was that people living in the Roman Empire could understand and appropriate the message of Jesus [Bedell 1998: 8].

Using dance in the Holy Mass may provide space for local communities to come closer to the Church, and will create a great impact on Tamizh society. This contribution could be set next to Beschi's (Veerama Munivar's) contribution to Tamizh Literature. He is known as the father of Tamizh Prose. He mastered the Tamizh language and gave Tamizh terms to Christian words such as baptism, confirmation etc. [Ramaswamy 1997:192]. Thembavani (*The Unfading Garland*), one of the Tamizh classics, a poetical work on the life of St. Joseph of Beschi, is renowned to this day. It is used as a part of the syllabus in the Tamizh language for middle school children in Tamizh Nadu⁵⁴. His Tamizh terms helped people to understand biblical words in a better way. *Bharathanatyam* plays a vital role in Tamizh literature. Hence, these Tamizh words are there already in use in Christian songs and can be danced in *Bharathanatyam* style which can reduce the gap between *Bharathanatyam* and the Christian world.

I have also addressed the questions is about costumes (See last chapter). Simple and modest costume can be used for this dance according to the message or theme that is communicated. It is not necessary that costumes be very rich. I have shown pictures in the appendix [Appendix1 Picture 9:5]. Appropriate costumes depend on the characters and situation in which the costumes are used. I have attached a compact disc to show how dance can be choreographed to use in the Holy Mass.

The next point to clarify from the interviews is in regard to training in *Bharathanatyam*. The following discussion will show that this dance needs dedication and commitment to perform it, which does not necessarily mean a long period of training in the use of the techniques. Dedicated and committed children, youths or whoever is interested, will be more than enough to prepare the dance under a trained dance teacher, or one who has the knowledge about this art form, to set a dance (choreograph) to the biblical themes that are relevant for use in the Holy Mass. I have attached photos of school-going children from below the marginal level of society. I have trained them in a short time; giving dance training during the weekends. Another example: the girls who are in Nrityarpan Dance Team in Bareilly diocese, North India, under the leadership of Fr. Thomas D'Sa are from the local villages. The girls were chosen because of their interest in dance and were trained for their first performance in three months.

The techniques that are used such as body movements, gestures or postures, when involved in communicating the divine message to viewers, become sacred and leave an impact on the viewers, inspiring devotion in them. This will lead the viewers to unite with the dancers, either to absorb the message, or to be one with the dancers to praise and thank God through the dance. When children and youth are involved in the preparation of the dance then their parents' part also becomes important in preparing the dancers. Thus the local community can also be involved in preparing the liturgical dance. This is how I have found that using dance in the Holy Mass will lead to transformation.

7.2 Transformation

Dance and drama are used as tools for bringing transformation and awareness among people, and have been used by different reformers in different parts of the world. First of all let us clarify what the term ‘transformation’ means in this chapter. The literal meaning of the word ‘transformation’ is an act of changing; according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘transformation is an act of changing into a different form or appearance’. A process of change can be linked to any subject that changes from one state to another. The word ‘transformation’ here refers to the transformation which the Church (liberation theologians) intends to bring to Indian society.

Social transformation was defined as seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually, by recovering our true identity as human beings created in the image of God and discovering our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for our world and its people [Lynn and Leslie 2005:3].

Using dance in the Holy Mass could lead to positive changes in the social life of the local community because of its effective means of interpreting Gospel values through dance in the Holy Mass, and also because the preparation of dance brings transformation among the people, as described above. Holy Mass is the right place to catechise the people.

In many traditional parishes almost 95% of the participant attend Sunday liturgy. We let them go Sunday after Sunday with just ritual celebrations: then call them for adult catechism sessions for which hardly 30 people turn up! Instead why not use the half-hour of the Sunday liturgy regularly to enlighten their life experience? [Gonsalvaz 2002:105-131].

The congregation would be able to grasp attentively the message given through the dance. So this will stir the congregation and help them towards spiritual transformation. We are created

in the image of God. Hence we are all supposed to share an equal identity in God. To bring that equal identity to the local communities in southern India, including removing discrimination and creating space in the Holy Mass for everyone, changing ideas and views on Christian worship, and bringing an understanding between Christians and non-Christians could be addressed through dance. The people of the local community are these who participate in the Holy Mass. Hence some social issues of the society could be addressed because ‘social justice cannot be separated from Holy Mass’ [Gibeau 1993:1]. In fact ‘Holy Mass creates Christian community’ [Gibeau 1993:1]. In order to share an equal identity in God’s kingdom, it is necessary to begin social transformation from the Holy Mass.

In my research I propose to incorporate the local culture in the Holy Mass because I believe it enhances the liturgy by transcending barriers such as class, castes and gender which will enhance the liturgy. I have demonstrated that *Bharathanatyam* is not a sectarian art form, but it is the rich cultural heritage of India, and it belongs to all Indians. It has effective means to communicate values and messages to people, through which the Church can transmit the messages and values that the Church wants to communicate. It does not stop at receiving the message but also puts it into practice in the local community through the preparation of the dance to be used in the Holy Mass.

7.3 Personal Transformation

Bharathanatyam in itself is a transformative element. At the first level of the dance presentation, the dancer is trained to understand the concept and become the character. So dance transforms the dancer to present the dance. Unless the dancer transforms herself/himself into the character portrayed, the message which the dancer tries to communicate will not reach the audience. Dance ‘becomes so personal and intimates an expression that one who sees often becomes one with the one who seeks’ [Sarabhai 1965:2]. Therefore the dancer has to take on the message which is going to be portrayed.

This helps in communicating the message effectively, and helps to retain the interest of the spectators as they receive the message. Even a moment of self-forgetfulness on the part of the viewers while watching the dance, is the beginning of awareness. Coleridge calls this ‘the willing suspension of disbelief for the moment that constitutes poetic faith’ [Coleridge 1997:497]. Therefore the audience travels with the dancer, travel to reach the destination, which is to understand the communication. This is especially relevant for the communication of the Christian message because the model of Christ’s ministry focused on two-way communication with believers. Christ, for example, did not usually enact miracles as a performance or an isolated act. Rather Christ interacted with the faith of the people. For example, Jesus multiplied the two fishes and five loaves from the people’s contribution. A further example, which is very relevant, is Jesus’ curing of the lame man, in which he instructs the man and the man acts by taking his mat and walking away. Thus, in the context of the Holy Mass, the priest communicates the word of God as Jesus instructed the man to walk, but it is the role of the congregation to respond to that message through action along with the priest. Hence the transformation has to be put into practice. This practice has to be started from the sanctuary in order to continue into society, as the congregation is part of the local society. Liturgy is related to life. In Chapter Three I have discussed its definition which emphasises the importance of public in worship.

Liturgical dance including participants within the congregation and involving participation by the congregation enables this reflective dialectic process. Hence the dance helps in transforming the dancer and through that transformation the spectators also receive the message portrayed. ‘Art, at its greatest, liberates the spirits’ [Stiehl 200:301].

These transformative qualities are strongly expressed through the gestures, body movements and facial expressions of *Bharathanatyam*, though they may also be true of other forms of Indian classical dance which may be more relevant in other parts of India.

Practising and learning this dance form also provides students with resources to develop their own life and their own community. As children learn to dance within the Church they will experience the opportunities the Church can provide for them to express themselves. The increased demands for Christian choreographers and dance teachers will also provide new sources of employment, which would give Christians in India the freedom to support themselves while leading a Christian life. There is also an existing demand in South India for *Bharathanatyam* instructors to teach at non-Christian or secular institutions, which can help people from marginalised backgrounds to exploit training opportunities through the Church. The creation of employment and youth engagement with the Church are not the main *foci* of this dissertation. My argument mainly addresses the theology of liturgical dance in terms of inculturation, and the possibilities for transformation of the social evils of casteism, sexism and inter-faith tension. But the additional socio-economic benefits to the RCC in southern India through embracing *Bharathanatyam* as a liturgical dance should not be overlooked. This consideration of the possible economic benefits also addresses some of the practical questions asked by the interviewees during my field study. For example, it was suggested that learning this art form takes a minimum of four years and the cost of this training is very expensive. The costumes and make-up are also expensive, and it is not affordable in poor Church communities. In fact, this is not the situation, as the RCC institutions promote this art form and it is affordable to children from marginalised families. For example, the majority of the students studying at Kalai Kaviri College of Fine Arts, which belongs to the Trichy Diocese, are from below the margins and from various caste backgrounds. I have answered the above questions in detail on Chapter Four. Hence using dance in the liturgy has multi-dimensional benefits.

The dancers learn the gestures and movements to interpret the Gospel and its values to present it to the congregation. This will perfectly reach the congregation when a personal interpretation of the message by the artists happens, and when the dancers enact each word,

either in praise of God or proclaiming the Good News, that they communicate to the congregation. The devoted dancers of the parishes will learn more and more about the Gospel and Church values as they continue to use dance in the Holy Mass. It is because without knowing the Scriptures, or what the priest intends to communicate to the people, the dancers cannot perform the movements of *Bharathanatyam*, and so it will not serve the purpose of liturgical dance. Values and messages that the children or youth are learning to depict through dance will become 'a world of transformative experience to know God and to live a Christian life. This personal transformation of the dancing children or youth will not only make the dancers' lives better, but will also help in a gradual improvement in the spiritual and social life of the future generations of the local society. Learning this art form itself will teach some cultural values, such as discipline, and traditional Indian life-style, as dance teaching includes these values. When the Church takes this art officially into account, to engage with liturgical dance, it will make an attempt to teach the Gospel and Christian values to the dancers of the parishes. Thus, art form is an easy way to teach about God and values to the younger generation.

To bring transformation to society is a process, because social issues can also be seen as the mind-set of the people, due to long term experience, encountering discrimination, and inheriting it down the generations. So a personal transformation is required to change this mind-set rather than a mass transformation. For this the local parishes using dance in the liturgy will become one of the effective means to transform the mind-set of the younger generation, as dance is one of the most effective, popular and interesting art forms in India.

Indian classical dance is created to bring transformation among people in society. The mythological origin of Indian dance explains the reason behind the creation of dance. The story of the origin of dance, according to mythology, was that it was created by Brahma for the welfare of the people who had gone astray in life. *Natyasastra* describes dance being created so that people who could not access the Vedas and could not follow it, can benefit

from the knowledge of Scripture through dance [Bharatamuni 2000:6]. When the world had become steeped in greed and desire, in jealousy and anger, in pleasure and pain, Lord Brahma (Hindu Lord of Creation), the Supreme One was asked by Lord Indra (the Lord who rules heaven and earth according to Hindu mythology) to create an amusement which could be seen and heard by all, for the Scriptures being learned and ambiguous, were not enjoyed by the masses [Bharatamuni 2000:1]. Thus Bharata in his dance treatise called *Natya Shastra* explained the emergence of this divine art of the Indian Dance.

When we look carefully at the origin of 'Natya' (Indian dance), according to Sage Bharatha, one can understand that it was created for a purpose and that purpose is to convey the religious message and other messages by which the people should be able to regulate their life style. This statement can be further supported through examination of the first dance-drama created by Sage Bharatha after the science of dance (*Natyasastra*) had been established in practice. The name of the first play was called '*Amirthamadhana*' (the story of churning the ocean of milk). This dance-drama portrayed the fight between good and evil, and at the end good overcomes evil. Hence according to the dance treatise, dance was created to communicate the message that can motivate the masses, and through that teach morals to ensure a better life. Therefore, according to Indian mythology basically dance was created for the purpose of bringing change among people. I have discussed the purpose of the Indian classical dance in detail in the fourth chapter of my dissertation. So according to the origin of Indian dance, it is basically seen as having a purpose, to bring transformation in society. I am arguing for the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* dance in my dissertation for, because of its rich techniques, it will allow the choreographer to portray these ideas very well.

Using an art form for transformation was already practiced by many artists and liberationists across the world. I have given two examples below, one in a religious context and another in a secular context.

7.3.1 Art Forms for Transformation

George Kuruvilla speaks about using art forms to bring transformation in the Church/faith context. He argues that if worship gives primary importance to transforming lives and to prayer in order to bring transformation in society with its vision of the kingdom of God, then the Church has to look for a relevant medium, like theatre. The theatre is a persuasive medium that appeals to the hearts and the minds of ordinary people. It is a cultural expression that affirms established religious and ethical values in a changing world [Kuruvilla 2002:198]. He suggests that dramatic actions communicate the message rapidly. Therefore, the theatre enables the participants, both the performer and the spectator, to look at reality from various angles. So any message given through this medium has an impact, and, therefore, the Church has to consider using the theatre for bringing about transformation within and outside Christian communities. Kuruvilla particularly refers to the Eucharistic celebration, and says that on account of its dramatic qualities, it has the potential to bring several forms of art into the Church's worship [Kuruvilla 2002:240]. The history of post-medieval theatre in Europe shows that the Church once learned this lesson, particularly in the use of the so-called 'Miracle Plays' that developed out of the Easter liturgy. Therefore the liturgy was once a source to create art forms like theatre. In modern times, also, art forms can become a source to form creative liturgy where people can have more participation.

In order to bring about changes in the Holy Mass it is essential to look for concepts of participation and transformation. Using Paulo Freire's concept of education (*'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'*), Augusto Boal developed the concept and practice of 'the theatre of the oppressed' in which he invited the audience to complete the dramatic performance with their own imaginary conclusions [Freire 2000:87]. He called such practice 'spect-actor', in which the audience will also act along with the other actors. This enabled many audiences to understand their situations, and to develop possible alternatives to bring about transformation in their lives. Taking this concept for the Holy Mass would enable us to challenge the present

models of the liturgies, and to use participatory models for effective communication to the congregation. It can be argued that liturgical dance can bring about such participation and transformation of the people in the Holy Mass and make it relevant, effective and meaningful for the worshippers.

Augusto Boal was the founder of the 'theatre of the oppressed' in 1973 in Brazil. His intention in creating this theatre was to transform spectators into 'spect-actors' and through that to bring transformation in society. He argued that the traditional theatres were oppressive because the spectators did not get a chance to express themselves [Boal 2000:38]. This shows that he believed that art forms can bring transformation in society, and so he developed a different method of using the theatrical art form. He held that acting is something which comes from real life, as does dance, but dance has artistic attributions (movements). For example, he would invite any members of the audience who felt the same oppression expressed in the drama to come forward and express their experience of oppression, In that way, they were given new ways to think creatively about how to resolve the practical issues which underlay their oppression. He believed that the oppressed themselves were able to free the oppressed. [Reddie 2006:143].

One of the changes he brought about by using this art form was to make the voters speak as legislators and to 'establish' laws on some issues of relevance for the citizens. This shows how much more effectively the message reaches the people through acting or practical action than through words. When the lowly and oppressed are brought into the midst of the congregation it will give them extra support, and the new exposure elevates them to access further social freedoms and opportunities. So the Holy Mass will be more relevant and meaningful to those discriminated-against people, as the people take inspiration from it. The Holy Mass, by its nature, is supposed to bring transformation. Dance helps all the more to bring about this transformation in the local Church.

7.4 Ecclesiastical Transformation

The Holy Mass is a place where the word of God is communicated to the people for them to become better Christians, and which leads to building a community of equality in society. God's kingdom is a place of equality. The Holy Mass in practice affirms that all Christians, regardless of gender and caste, are part of the body of Christ. Particularly everyone who partakes in the Mass is an equal being with equal human dignity.

According to the RCC tradition, the Holy Mass is often priest- centred, monotonous and unidirectional in terms of communication. Bringing some changes to the Holy Mass in South India, without diluting the RC liturgy, would pave the way for bringing transformation in a local society. Attempts were made through the so-called 'Indian Rite' (integrating Indian local elements into the Latin Rite) to enable people to participate in various aspects of this Holy Mass. But not much space is created for women and children to participate in leading the worship. This is a one-way communication of the word of God to the people. This present Holy Mass accords with Lasswell's linear model of communication, in which the central role of the sender remains important, and the RCC follows the same method in celebrating the Holy Mass even with the so-called Indian Rite. The linear model can only communicate the particular message but cannot find a response in return. The contribution of the people to the celebration of the Holy Mass is limited and thereby so is the impact of the Holy Mass upon them. Impact, however, is not a particular concern of the Church. Rather the Church is concerned with tradition, and hence, wants the Eucharistic to be celebrated every day.

The priest is trained to interpret the word of God to whoever the people may be, in their own language, with all their best theological knowledge ,whether it reaches the least of the congregation or not, whether or it addresses the ongoing issues. Holy Mass continues the same process. The priest plays the major role in communicating the Gospel to the people through the Holy Mass; the Good News is sent from the priest, through rituals, to the people.

In general, the priest plays a central role in the life of the Christian community [Amaladoss 1988:92]. Holy Mass, celebrated for the local community, should inspire their lives, which would help them to put the faith into practice in their day-to-day lives [Amaladoss 1988:94]. The Holy Mass addresses social issues during the homily or sermon. Nevertheless it would be felt more deeply and quickly if it were communicated more interactively through local cultural elements such as dance. Moreover dance would give space for the local community to come forward in the Holy Mass, in terms of addressing the issues which it is to put into action. This has not only become an initiative to address the problem, but will also promote communal participation along with the priest, as the Eucharistic celebration is the place for transformation.

Proclaiming the death of the Lord “until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26) entails that all who take part in the Eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely “Eucharistic”. It is this fruit of a transfigured existence and a commitment to transforming the world in accordance with the Gospel which splendidly illustrates the eschatological tension inherent in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the Christian life as a whole [Ecclesia de Eucharistia 2003: Para20].

In these post-modern times to make the Church relevant in a pluralistic country like India it is necessary to respond to the signs of the times. There are many models given by different theologians in the RCC. Theology has to be done in relation to that particular cultural context. The models of Stephen Bevans help in doing theology in a cultural context. The practitioner of this model looks for ‘God’s revelation and self-manifestation as it is hidden within the values, relational patterns and concerns of a context’ [Bevans 2002:24]. This model is to take the Bible to the people of a particular culture and to help them to understand the Gospel from their perspective. Though this study is based on the culture of India, to do theology in its context, its priority is not to take the Bible to them but to do theology for the Christians, particularly the Indian RCs who have already received the Bible, to incorporate dance into the

RC Holy Mass, and through that to bring transformation in society. Dance being a medium of communication this study would fit in well with the communication model for doing theology. Dance is seen as one of the effective means of communication in India. So using the medium of this communication helps to involve people and to express the message effectively, and pave a way for society to interact and bring changes.

The Holy Mass is not something that stops within the church building itself, but continues in the community. This is why at the end of the mass the priest takes leave of the people, sending them on mission saying, 'go in peace to love and serve the 'Lord' or some similar exhortation: 'go to proclaim the Gospel 'or 'go to live the Gospel'. This mission is the mission of the people and thus it should be the people's Holy Mass, with their contributions and participation, which will link the local community with the local Church. The full participation of the people enables them to sense their attachment to the Church and, thereby, builds a healthy community. It is right to say that to be fully present in the Holy Mass is to be fully present to the entirety of life, inside and outside the Church building, and to practice the presence of God [Blackstocks 2008:103].

The Church is a union or communion of human beings with one another through the grace of Christ [Dulles 1976:47], which means that it reveals the community of Christians, and their relationships with one another, among those who are closely associated with the Church. What binds Christians together as a community is the Holy Mass. Holy Mass is the place where all Roman Catholics come to profess their faith in union with one another. Those who do not have any business with the Church or its activities cannot be in union with the Church or its community. At present the strategy for conversion in India is antagonistic. How then is the Church to bring people to Christ? In this context, there is always going to be a bipartite society: to be always two sectors, as a Christian community and a non-Christian community, with discrimination and mistrust between them. If, however, there were a way for the people who do not practise Christianity to come into the Church with a purpose such as an invitation

to con-celebrate the worship, such as through dance (which valued from their own culture), then it will have a greater impact on the Hindus especially. This will help them to understand the Church and to be in more harmony. In this way the Christianity community can be extended to non-Christians and then they may also come to know the love of Jesus. This might also help non-Christians to receive the love of Jesus, something which and might be reflected in their lives. In this way they can be in union with one another, through the grace of Christ.

Opening up a way for non-Christian to come into the Church, or to participate in the Holy Mass, is not for the purpose of converting them from their faith but to correct their false ideas about Christianity. They may learn that Christianity is not a foreign missionary activity or an alien mode of worship, nor that to be a Christian requires living in a context associated with adopting Western culture [Collins 2006:112]. The highest percentage of conversions into Christianity in India comes from the poor and needy as a result of Christian Churches and communities helping poor people to have their lives transformed socially and economically. These converts become members of the Christian community, leaving behind their local cultural identity, once they practice Christianity. The partition between Christians and non-Christians thus currently remains the same. The Church should try to bring these two sectors together at one point where they both can seek identity. The common identification of both these groups is their culture.

Dance is part and parcel of their culture and bringing it into the Holy Mass might help to unite these two sectors. Every human being is an image of God [Gen. 1:27]. God is manifested in each culture, and, therefore, also in Indian culture. Mission in India could help in identifying the God manifested in culture, and giving Christianity to the non-Christians through actions.

Dancing is part of the Indian culture, and introducing it in the Holy Mass could make a new community of Christians in communion with non-Christians, to work for the kingdom of God.

Holy Mass can be a place where real transformation begins. All human beings are equal in the eyes of God. To bring this consciousness to people in society, equality should start from the altar through Holy Mass. When the priest shares his role with the poor and the wealthy, the literate and illiterate, male and female, Dalits and those from other castes, and with non-Christians together at the altar to celebrate the Eucharist the real transformation starts. It is not possible for the people to preside at the Holy Mass but it is possible to involve them effectively in communicating the Good News which would encourage full participation.

7.5 Participation as Transformation

The Benedictine, Virgil Michel, started the liturgical movement around 1924 before Vatican II and his ideas later made their way into the Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Holy Mass* [Gibeau 1993:1]. He was ‘concerned not merely with matters of rubrics and language, but with how a greater participation in the Holy Mass by all of Christ’s faithful might bring about the transformation of the world’ [Caruso 2007:2]. Currently, theologians and liberationists are looking for some concrete ideas for social transformation. ‘The Indian Church has neither engaged with the root cause of the discrimination nor come up with a relevant theological or ethical basis to evaluate it and respond to it’ [Kumar 2010:60]. Introducing a local cultural art form would be an answer to the above objection. *Bharathanatyam* dance, which is part of drama, is the key to initiating the transformation. When Balthasar speaks about the theological dramatics he says that,

The special characteristic of drama is to “transform an event into a visual image,” and to force a consideration of personal existence in the light of a “role” and a “mission” that shatters the image of the self as the outcome of pure chance [Lacoste 2005:140].

Thus attempting to transform the Gospel message into visual imagery during the liturgy will create a greater impact on the congregation, especially on the younger generations. It is very difficult to motivate the present younger generation to experience God-consciousness. Giving importance to children and youth in the Holy Mass might create an interest in them to associate with the Church, and through it to come closer to God. People from different classes and castes come to attend Mass. Poor people (economically poor or low caste) naturally hesitate to come forward for any business in any social gathering because of their status. If there could be a space for them to come into the Sanctuary in the presence of God, and to contribute to the celebration of the Eucharist, it might help in developing their personality. This exposure gives them a dignity, as they are present in front of a congregation with a different social status who are gathered for the Holy Mass. This participation becomes transformative and could be identified with the kingdom of God. This develops their confidence and might encourage them to challenge their society.

Throughout the Holy Mass the priest leads the service. The congregation listens and participates through responses, saying 'Amen', sometimes joining with the choir when familiar hymns are sung. Holy Mass uses many gestures and postures and symbolic actions to remember the past events of our Lord Jesus Christ's life [See Chapter Three].

To dance was to praise God with the fullest expression of joy. To kneel and bow down was to show reverence and obedience. In 'The Holy Mass as Dance' Carolyn Deitering writes, "Processions, prostrations, encircling of the altar or Torah, bowing, lifting the hands in prayer, swaying and dancing were all embraced as human actions which assisted the community's prayer to Yahweh"[Chesson 1989:1].

Dance is full of gestures, postures and codified body movement to a particular rhythm [See Chapters One and Four]. *Bharathanatyam* dance techniques help to visualise in a lively manner significant themes or messages [See Chapter Four]. Therefore this art form would be

an appropriate element that can enhance the Holy Mass, which also uses codified gestures and postures meaningfully, to interpret the biblical messages effectively and creatively, to the congregation. It will help the congregation to understand the message attentively and will help them in responding to it more consciously and meaningfully. Therefore, using dance in the Holy Mass will not be a mere performance.

When biblical messages are interpreted through dance, the people's attention is retained and the message can be expressed effectively along with the words. The congregation can thus participate fully by experiencing the lively projected message through *Bharathanatyam* rather through mere words. Using dance in the Holy Mass will bring a connection between the congregation and the priest, through the effective message stimulating their minds and bodies to draw their attention towards the message and readings. This participation does not mean that the whole congregation is taking part in the dance. While their mind and attention is drawn by the dancers, their attention is carried along with the dance to involve them in order to understand the message. Thus they can participate actively, and reflect on the message that is delivered to them through the Bharathanatyam form. Pope John Paul II describes active participation as:

Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the Holy Mass. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty [Pope John Paul II 1998: Para3].

Therefore, attentively absorbing and feeling the message that is delivered through dance is also an active participation in the Holy Mass. 'But full participation does not mean that everyone does everything' [Pope John Paul II 1998: Para3]. Some of the congregation members will certainly be involved practically when dance is used in the Holy Mass. This is taken up later in this chapter.

All those who argue for this dance do so on a cultural basis [George 1995:123], and not on the basis of its historical development or contemporary interpretations. As a result there is no clear understanding as to whether this dance is right to be used in the Holy Mass because of the opinion that it is merely an art form. I have addressed those doubts in regard to dance in the above sections. Hence, using this dance form in the Holy Mass will help to form a local Church, and simultaneously to identify with the universal Church in following the order of the Holy Mass. I make this clear so that if the RCC decides to use dance in the Holy Mass, the Church might take this into consideration in order to use it widely.

Caste discrimination in South India looks at this art form as a sectarian art form, and rejects its own rich heritage. This comes as a reaction to what the higher castes had done. They had made it the dance their exclusive property, as I have explained earlier. The Church aims to remove such discrimination and to give back to the Indian people what is properly theirs through using dance for their transformation. This would show the interest of the local Church in local art and its effort to restore its identity, and this might be recognised as the extended participation of the Church in the local culture and community.

It is important that we do not completely reject the current expression of Christianity in the world. It is also important to learn from the experience of the transformation to a print-dominated era. If we will view the transformation as a faithful response to a change in the dominant medium of communication in the culture, then the transformation of the church can

be a time of developing greater Christian unity and, in the end, a more faithful presence of the body of Christ [Bedell 1998:8].

7.6 Social Transformation

In addition to spiritual and theological transformation there are also practical transformations which can be linked specifically to the use of *Bharathanatyam*. First of all *Bharathanatyam* is currently regarded by many as an elite art form [See Chapter Three]. Therefore bringing it into the Holy Mass where people from different caste and class backgrounds will perform together will help to heal these social divisions. Often art forms are considered as an effective medium for transformation across the world today. Different art forms such as drama, dance, music and paintings can be used to convey social messages to bring changes and transform society. There may be slight differences in using such art forms for the same purpose with modern technologies. There are examples of multimedia programmes – presenting any theme with sound and light-projectors as well as with stage artists, where recorded music can be used instead of live singing etc. Kalai Kaviri College of Fine arts, and NBCLC (National Centre for Inculturation), for example, have produced some dance and dance-drama programmes (I have choreographed and participated in those programmes) which convey messages showing the importance of education, gender equality and the removal of caste discrimination. These institutions explored practically how dance-drama could be an effective means for communicating the message. One of the clergy whom I interviewed pointed out the works of the above institutions in talking about the importance of dance as a means of communication in the interview [Appendix3 Participant 2:20]. At present the dance group, Nrityarpan, in the Diocese of Bareilly in North India, under the leadership of director Fr. Thomas D'Sa uses this art form to reach out to the downtrodden, marginalised, and oppressed, to heighten awareness of the Gospel and social values and to bring awareness among them. Fr. Thomas D'Sa in one of his dance commentaries (on Rainbow) says that 'when the lyrics, colours, music, rhythm and performing artist blend well and work hand in

hand with one goal in mind then it vibrates positive ways in all the corners of the world ' [Bareilly diocese website: <http://bareillydiocese.org/regional-bible-institute/>].

The Church has already demonstrated great openness and initiative in using art forms in combination with modern technology in order to evangelise and spread social awareness. The arts provide visibility for the Church and are a source of joy and entertainment for people. However, they are not necessarily a more effective means of bringing deep and lasting transformation. This is because the scale of the production and the use of technology also create barriers between the spectators and the artists. These shows cost a great deal to organise. They often travel from community to community and when the show has been performed the troupe leaves without giving people the opportunity to reflect with the artists on the messages conveyed. This is clearly illustrated by the attitude expressed by one participant during my field study who said that 'we need to call dancers from outside of our community if we need to arrange any dance program' [Appendix3 Participant 16:98].

My proposal by contrast is for an alternative use for dance which can exist alongside these larger productions but which serves an entirely different purpose in the community. The dance productions I advocate require no expensive technology and will be performed by members of the congregation and the surrounding communities. The only investment required would be a dance teacher, and in many cases the teacher also would be drawn from the congregation. As I said earlier, almost all the dioceses have communication centres and they can assist in finding dance teachers. Also the dioceses can promote the youth who are talented or interested in dance for training from every parish, so that those chosen will not only help the parish but also can earn their livelihood. The great advantage of this type of dance activity is that it comes from the community and remains in the community.

The Indian Church uses dance to communicate the message of social transformation outside the Holy Mass. This might bring some awareness and changes in the life of the viewers. But

when dance is used in the Holy Mass, I believe it gives an impact which could lead to a transformation in the local community, as the local community is involved in the dance. The close involvement of members of the community in liturgical dance within the local church will enable people to respond in person to the messages conveyed, and to shape the message around the unique needs of local communities.

The liturgical dance proposed in this study has the potential both to engage with the root causes of oppression and to eradicate that oppression by empowering the local communities through the Holy Mass to reflect on their own divisions and problems. Bringing dance into the Holy Mass will help the different groups of people to come together, and dance will form a common platform for them. This will forward the eradication of discrimination on the basis of caste and gender, as well as bringing friends of other faiths into the local Christian community.

In particular, dance provides a mechanism for people to represent their own pain and difficulties in the communities in a way that gives others space to reflect on how their own actions may contribute to causing that pain, without making individuals feel ostracised. The role of the priest is obviously of paramount importance in communicating to people the correct theological perspective of the Church and directing worship. However, the role of the priest is also didactic and reflects life experiences that are significantly different from many members of a congregation (for example; being male, unmarried and educated). My proposal for liturgical dance provides priests with an additional set of tools for conveying theological and social messages. The priest may preach the message of Christ and explain the message for the community, but by working closely with dancers in the church the priest may provide a different type of space for the people to reflect on the message given. This may help the people relate the message to their own experience more easily. It is of particular importance that this tool be used during the Holy Mass rather than simply outside the Holy Mass, because Holy Mass is the place where the life experiences of the people comes into most immediate

contact with the Divine. Just as the solution to all sins and social problems lies in God's power, so the opportunity for people to transform society should be incorporated into liturgical encounter with God.

My argument is that when dance is allowed in the Holy Mass with an understanding that the incorporation of dance is for purposes beyond a cultural expression, then it will help to form a local Church as well as to produce a Holy Mass that comes from the people and speaks to the people, where they can find more meaning relevant to their day- to-day lives. More than 75% of the people in a parish may not be able to grasp all the complex theological and biblical values. But when a space is created to bring those values to give an experience, such as they can understand, then it will mean more to the community. In dance-drama, it is the music, lyrics and the dance movements along with the facial expressions that help viewers to sustain their concentration and observation in grasping the message. Moreover, the dancers who are participating will also become part of the praxis of transformation. So using dance in the Holy Mass is not just for cultural expression, but also moves beyond that to bring transformation in the local area around discrimination through participation of those of varying caste, gender and faiths.

7.6.1 Caste and Gender Equality as Transformation

The other impact that a change in Holy Mass can make is to generate impartiality among the people. The RC Holy Mass, as already noted, is often a male-dominated service. Introducing dance into the Holy Mass helps children, youths and women to come into the midst of the church. Liturgical dance cannot be performed by everyone or by any specific sector. Dance is a gift of God and those who have talents or interest can perform. This gift of God can be given to anyone of any religion, caste, gender, colour, race or class. So introducing liturgical dance into the Holy Mass can bring these gifted people from different backgrounds into the sanctuary without any discrimination. Hence the Holy Mass celebrated in the local church

becomes the starting place for social transformation in bringing equality among the people of India through the RCC.

Many feminist theologians have tried to promote gender equality and justice to women. Through writings and various other means this idea has been projected in society. When this idea starts from the altar it will have more impact on the local community. First of all, the woman becomes central to carrying the word of God. The dance will create a space to turn her into an instrument of communicating the divine message. Secondly, by interpreting the biblical message with regard to women or gender equality, the message is communicated through the female to the congregation in the presence of God. For example; in her article entitled 'Reading through the text' Mukti Barton, talks about gender equality by re-reading in the texts of the book of Daniel, the story of Susanna and how woman have been discriminated against by the dominant male society [Barton 1999:120]. In a similar way, gender performances of biblical texts through dance can empower woman to challenge the problems associated with gender in the society. I have performed the entire story of Susanna in one of the Holy Mass celebrated on the event of Woman's day at NBCLC. I have attached the video [Appendix4 Video:3].

Thirdly, in relation to removing caste discrimination, I have trained children to dance in the Holy Mass. In my experience dance troupes which have performed during Holy Mass have included half Christian and half non-Christian participants. Always there are 50% of non-Christians in those dances which are performed during the Holy Mass. 75% of the dancers are from marginalised groups and the legally-defined, so called, 'backward classes'. At times, important characters in the choreography have been performed by Hindu girls, including Dalits and artists from the so-called 'elite' castes. The act of bringing different classes of people together and bringing women into the midst of the congregation presents an important challenge to some of the divisions of a pluralistic and patriarchal country like India. And such change must begin from the altar, in the Holy Mass, where people are supposed to be

identified equally in front of God. The Holy Mass is not something which stops within four walls. Rather, its message is carried out into society. So the changes which begin during the Holy Mass should continue outside the church.

In my experience as a liturgical dance choreographer at NBCLC Bangalore, India, I have performed and choreographed dances at all the parts of the Holy Mass mentioned in the previous chapter. I had the opportunity to bring the street children (cared for by Religious Nuns), Dalits, children belonging to the upper classes and the marginalized together to perform liturgical dance for the Ruby Jubilee of NBCLC [February 6th 2007].

Involving children and youth in the Holy Mass with a specific participatory role might also create interest in them to associate with the Church and through this to come closer to God. Cardinal Toppo, the former chairman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India says that the needs of the region compel the Church to prepare a Holy Mass comprehensible to 'even children and illiterates... The local people yearn to live their faith within their indigenous cultural ambiances' [The Union of Catholic Asian News 2002:3]. Bringing dance into the Holy Mass helps children and illiterate people to take part in the Holy Mass. People from different classes and castes come to participate in Holy Mass. Oppressed people, and also women, naturally hesitate to come forward for any activities in any social gathering because of their status. Eucharist celebration should help them in developing their personality and empower them. It will give the oppressed a dignity if they were to present before the congregation and are accorded a different social status in the eyes of those who are gathered for the Holy Mass. This develops their confidence and might encourage them to challenge their society in other situations where they encounter discrimination. It can be questioned whether there are alternatives to liturgical dance which might bring such changes in these people and in the community, to meet the challenges of society. The answer is 'Yes'. Naturally, there are other ways than liturgical dance to empower these groups. Many government and mission organisations engage in changing the social status of women and the

marginalised, and give them new life. The change which comes through participating in the Holy Mass through dance, however, gives a different dimension to the lives of these groups and may support other institutional methods of developing their confidence and empowerment.

In rediscovering ourselves our experience becomes authentic and we can begin to liberate ourselves from patriarchal structures. In dance we reclaim our power as women; we show the falseness of the claim that we have no religion, because dance is a deeply spiritual experience. In dance we celebrate the most wonderful thing which women experience as we use our bodies as a demonstration of the meaning in our lives [Ralte 2000:1]. The full participation of the people will enable them to have ownership of the Church, and thereby to build a healthy community. It is right to say that to be fully present in the Holy Mass is to practice the presence of God [Blackstocks 2008:108]. Therefore liturgical dance becomes a metonym for the life of the Indian Catholic Church especially in its relationship to Indian local society. It should both serve and challenge the society in which it lives.

7.6.2 Multi-Faith Relationships as Transformation

The Vatican transformed ‘the Catholic understanding of the Mass no longer is the priest leading the people towards, and representing them before, God; instead, the laity gathers before the altar, or sometimes around the altar, and participates fully in the liturgical action’. But still the priest is central. The present Holy Mass shows that the priest is playing the major role in communicating the Gospel to the people. The Good News is sent from the priest through rituals to the people. If the Good News is communicated through the people, then, it would enhance the liturgy as the liturgy is the community oriented celebration. It is not possible for the people to preside at the Holy Mass but it is possible to involve them effectively in communicating the Good News received from it.

Holy Mass is a place where RCs come into communion with God. One can nowhere find it said that Holy Mass is meant only for Christians. It is true that Holy Communion may only be received by some members of the congregation but even this does not discriminate explicitly between non-Christians and Christians; even baptised RCs may not receive communion if they have not performed a valid confession according to the RC faith. But they are still encouraged to attend the Holy Mass and again benefit from listening to the Holy Mass. This space for listening to the Holy Mass and understanding the message of Christianity may also apply to members of other faiths. It is not sufficient, however, simply to say that non-Christians have the right to enter the Church whenever they want to. Instead, making a way and accepting and using a common element of the local society will help them to an easy access to the Christian community.

The Holy Mass remains merely ritual without social transformation. Transformation takes place not by listening (to the message given in the Holy Mass) alone but through action when Christians and non-Christians come together in God's presence and the non-Christians are welcome to participate along with Christians in a multi-faith environment. RC Holy Mass happened to be shaped so that non-Christians could not participate in it. Incorporating dance into the Holy Mass creates a space for non-Christians to participate and through that to understand the word of God.

In order to encourage real multi-faith dialogue a structured contact needs to be provided for non-Christians to feel welcome in the Church. This is not to convert them from their present religion but to help them understand the life of Christians. Panikkar says a Christian will never 'understand' Hinduism if he is not converted to Hinduism never will a Hindu 'understand' Christianity unless he becomes a Christian [Panikkar 1964:11]. Conversion is needed not from one religion to another but the conversion of the heart towards God [LG 1964:35]. It is necessary for the Church to help people to identify Jesus Christ in their religion and by sharing our God-experience in Jesus with them. As Jesus Christ is the motivating force

of other religions, the means of sanctifying their adherence, He is present in all religions and leads them to God [Wingate 1997:234]. Often *Bharathanatyam* is very much integrated into the life of Hindus. Hence using it in the Holy Mass will provide them with an invitation to engage with Christians. Not only the Hindus, for art forms are appreciated by every faith and it is common to all Indians. Therefore, if it is used in a religious context it becomes a common ground for all the faith groups to meet. So there is a space for all kinds of people to come to the Holy Mass. By bringing non-Christians into the Holy Mass in India dance may help them better to understand the life of Christians and could remove the idea that Holy Mass has come from outside their culture. It also helps the non-Christians to understand the love of God and would lead to bring a change in their life style or it may help them to reflect on their thinking. This might lead to the building of a new community outside the Christian community. The Hindutva (Hindu fundamentalists groups) in India is that the attitudes of the missionaries, or any mission work of the Church, is intended for the conversion of people, and to make Christianity the dominant religion to please westerners [Shah 2007:1]. The document on 'Dialogue and Mission' by Vatican says that 'conversion is the return of contrite and repentant heart to God, with a desire to submit to it more generously their lives' [Arinze 1984: Para37]. Therefore, making a space for the non-Christians to participate in the Holy Mass is not to convert them from their religion but to live in harmony and peace with different religion. Therefore the liturgy needs to be celebrated in the context which might in return bring the non-Christians into closer association with the RCC. Since the Church is already promotes awareness of issues such as literacy, health development, human rights, and other social developments, it should also engage the cultural problems and makes the liturgy relevant to the context.

Closer interaction between the priest and congregation will help to narrow the vertical division between the priest who leads the Holy Mass and the people who participate in it. While respecting the position and the training of the priest, if people are able to interact more

with the Holy Mass and do not feel such a division between their position and of that priest, they will be able more easily to receive the message transmitted by the priest. The elevated position of the clergy in the RCC in India also represents a significant difference from the organisation of most of the other faiths of the sub-continent. This also represents a point of division in multi-faith relationships. Holy Mass is considered to be the main source of the Christian's faith formation, and when this Holy Mass is dominated by the priest then the community is also looked at by others as an exclusively religious community. Therefore, a gap comes between the Christian community, Church leaders and the other communities. In order to bridge this gap, the common people must be involved in celebrating the Holy Mass. Current practice may make the Holy Mass a mere ritual without any proper understanding and people just participate as mere recipients only. Thus the Holy Mass loses its original meaning of sharing God's love within the community and of transforming the lives of the people.

If the Holy Mass does not become the people's Holy Mass, then there is no possibility for bringing about transformation [Kuruvilla 2002:30]. In his research Kuruvilla argued that by bringing theatrical elements into the Holy Mass, people will be able to participate and thus the Holy Mass will bring about transformation within the community [Kuruvilla 2002:32]. Only through the participation of the people does the Holy Mass become a space for witnessing God's love in Christ to the world. A change in the Holy Mass might also leave some positive impacts on society.

Amalorpavadass says that 'the Christian community is nothing else but a group of people imbued with the Holy Spirit, transformed by the Spirit, and led by the Spirit. Where there is the Spirit there is Church and where there is Church there is community' [Amalorpavadass 1984:35]. So to have a community, it is important to have the participation of the community. Holy Mass is celebrated with the community. A change in Holy Mass might have some positive impacts on this aspect of society. By bringing a change in the Holy Mass in

accordance with the needs of the present time it might be possible to change this understanding by bringing cultural balance in Christian worship (the Holy Mass).

Bharathanatyam is always accompanied by ‘Carnatic music’ (the South Indian classical music form). When the Christian message is given through that music and *Bharathanatyam*, Hindus might be attracted towards these art forms and might come to participate in dance. Generally non-Christians come to the Church as visitors. Introducing dance into the Holy Mass might help them to take part in the Holy Mass. Introducing the local cultural like dance in the liturgy could remove the idea that the Holy Mass has come from outside their culture. This might lead to the building of a new community outside the Christian circle. This might also remove the false understanding that the Church’s mission is only for conversion, but rather promote the idea of the Church working for the development of the poor and needy. The mission of the Church is also to work for the development of the downtrodden of any community. The development of a new mode of renewal in worship might help in dialogue with non-Christians as they are, and their close association with the Church through dance might help them to understand the Church in a better way, including greater awareness of its nature and the selfless service which it renders to society, such as literacy, health development, human rights, and other social developments. Using Indian dance is not intended to force Hindus to become Christians, but to engage with them in harmony and develop better dialogue through this, and to empower the marginalised and to lift them up. When the people equally share the role of celebrating the Eucharist then the dominant role of the priest might be reduced and the Holy Mass might become the people’s Holy Mass. This might make outsiders look upon Christianity as a genuinely Indian community.

I have argued that liturgical dance can bring about changes in the lives of the people. I have also identified two examples from the Bible to show how transformation has been brought about through dancing among faithful communities.

Miriam, the sister of Aaron, is named only once in the Bible and this is in connection with dance [Propp 1999:547]. Earlier in the Old Testament, she was referred to simply as ‘the sister of Aaron’. Her name has, therefore, become synonymous with dance in a faith context. If it were not for dance, her name would have remained unknown. Commentators argued that Miriam claimed prophetic power. Perhaps her prophetic office is directly related to her musical performance. Therefore, it was the dance and musical performance which brought her status and recognition in society.

Miriam’s name appears in the book of Exodus because of her dancing and singing. She performed dance before the Israelites to celebrate the parting of the waters and Israel’s rescue from the Egyptians [Exod. chapters 15-20] [Durham 1987:209]. This dance marked her place in the history of Israel and by extension into Christianity. The dance marked not only Miriam’s importance but also demonstrated a higher consciousness in communion with God. This allowed other women to gather in dancing and praising God for His mighty deeds towards the Israelites. It was too often the role of men which was highlighted in the process of securing victory over the Egyptians. Dance gave women a role in the liberation of Israel by according them a social status. Miriam’s circle dance is called *Mahol* (in Hebrew) and its movements were the expression of joy and liberation [Propp 1998:546]. The circular movement also symbolically expresses the unity of the Israelites that they are going to realise in communion with God. Moses, by contrast, expresses his thanks through words [Exod. 15:1] and speaks of actions which are going to be carried out in the future. By contrast the dance that was done in front of the golden calf is not viewed positively as an example of biblical dance. Actions can speak louder than words and communicate an exact message. The body’s movements reveal an action which is to be carried out and visually brings it to those present.

The second example is the dance of King David in front of the Ark of the Covenant. King David, after stripping off his royal garments (the symbolic representation of Kingship with all

its mightiness), dances before the Ark of the Covenant as it is entering the city of Jerusalem [2 Sam. 6:14]. David does not strip off his clothing entirely; actually, he strips off the things which identify him as a royal person (belonging to the elite- the high society) and he identifies himself with the common people of his kingdom. This happens because of dance. He wants to express his praise and thanks through his bodily movements to God. He chooses to become one of the common people and to join in their shouting and singing. Here the dance is the means by which King David is transformed, marking a departure from his royal status and making himself one with the ordinary people. His dance conveys a sense of physical exuberance and he becomes humble in front of God in order to express his joy plainly, by jumping and leaping. His dance is described as an expression of joy rather than a prelude to a sacred marriage or a form of fertility rite [Anderson 1989:105]. The dancing took place before Yahweh and before the Ark. Therefore this dance is a liturgical or worship dance [Brueggemann 1990:250]. David's dance movements do not have any form or style; it is a messianic dance, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Saul's daughter [2 Sam. 6:16] does not like King David's actions and she despises him in her heart. She asks King David to explain why he expressed himself in the manner of the ordinary people and stresses that he is a royal king and therefore supposed to distinguish himself from the common people. Here it can be seen that dance humbles a person and causes her/him to be identified with the common people. In both the examples of Miriam and King David, dance is used as a transformative element; it is both an integral part of, and creates, community.

The Holy Mass is a place where people come in search of both reality and peace. The spoken words cannot bring out the whole meaning of the liturgical actions like praise, thanksgiving, joy. These inner feelings could be well depicted through Indian dance gestures and movements. One's feelings cannot always be shared through prayer or words. But those feelings can be given form as faith is celebrated. When we rise above our own feelings to respond to God in prayer then our faith is stimulated [Deitering 1984:11]. Usually the prayers

are recited. or are prayed in the mind, but sometimes the emotions break free and flow through the bodily movements when one is filled with the Holy Spirit. Then one's response to God becomes vibrant. Such actions may include, for example, lifting the hands up while praising, or during intentions praying with open arms, or crying while regretting one's sins. It is common to see these actions in a person while praying in the Church. When one sees these actions in a person while praying then it can be understood that the person forgets him/herself and becomes one with God. He/she forgets the situation which he/she is in, and is only thinking of and speaking to God. Those feelings come out through these actions without her/his consciousness. Liturgical dance helps in bringing expression to this fact in the liturgical dancer, and in the participants during Holy Mass. Liturgical dance may be performed in any style or form depending on the region where it is used. For some regions to use liturgical dance prepared with definite patterns in the Holy Mass may not be a part of local culture. In a South Indian context, however, structured dance is a part of the local culture.

7.7 Inculturation and Transformation

The aim of this chapter is to encourage the inclusion of dance in the Holy Mass not just for the sake of using it, but in order to bring about transformation; to build a community and widen its horizons. Some people have been critical of the process of inculturation as they do not see evidence of any transformation in society and, therefore, question its value. One such person is Michael Amaladoss. He argues that it is not possible any more in a pluralistic context to create a Christian culture or to embody the Gospel in a culture. Instead Christians, by their way of life, he says can challenge a culture without dominating it or claiming an exclusive relation to it. He says that inculturation should not aim to Christianise the culture but that every culture which is challenged by the Gospel should bring transformation to the culture [Amaladoss 1998:24]. Saldanha, a Jesuit priest and contextual theologian, says that 'inculturation encompasses social change'. This means that inculturation has to touch every

aspect of the Church in order to bring about social transformation. The Vatican views inculturation as ‘an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures’ [VL 1994:4]. It is not just using human culture to make the Gospel locally rooted. But it is necessary to go beyond inculturation, rather than merely to incorporate cultural elements into the Holy Mass for their own sake. Amaladoss makes the same point.

Amaladoss says that inculturation is often viewed simply as translation and adaptation. If the Dalits are marginalized and oppressed, and women are discriminated against, in a society, and if inculturation occurs only for the translation and adaptation of the Gospel then the real goal of inculturation cannot be attempted. Inculturation involves a call to turn to God - conversion. The goal of a Gospel-cultural encounter is the transformation of culture through the ‘call’ – conversion of the heart to God [Amaladoss 1998:13]. Transforming culture and promoting justice and equality in society is the need of the present time. It is, therefore, important to focus on inculturation as the transformation of culture [Amaladoss 1998:13]. Amaladoss does not see the point of using Indian cultural elements such as *Arathi* (Indian ritual-flowers/lamps/incense on a plate and waving it in front of the deity as a part of ritual) in the Holy Mass unless they contribute to bringing about transformation in society.

His view is that inculturation is limited by indigenisation. He emphasises social transformation through inculturation rather than bringing local elements into the Holy Mass just for the sake of using them. My response to this statement is that bringing cultural elements into the Holy Mass could be the cause of social transformation. Incorporating dance into the Holy Mass illustrates my argument. The Holy Mass is often male-dominated. Women have little role in Holy Mass. Bringing women to the fore could boost their role in Holy Mass. Women are largely associated with dance and dance is part of Indian culture. Bringing dance into Holy Mass could bring women into the midst of the congregation, and give importance to them, when the Eucharist is celebrated by means of interpreting the Gospel through dance.

This dance is almost equal to the role of the priest of the Holy Mass. This might bring a sense of dignity for women in society as well. The role of the dancer does not stop with the dancer but is linked with the dancer's family, the teacher or the group which trained the dancer, and thereby with ordinary people. Dance can create a platform where high and low class people can participate on an equal footing in the Holy Mass and help interpret the word of God. The Holy Mass does not stay within the church building. The impact of the Holy Mass is supposed to be carried out into society. Thus, liturgical dance can counteract Amaladoss' argument and realise inculturation as transformation.

Even today in India, dance is mainly used as a medium to proclaim the word of God outside the Church rather than as part of the Holy Mass. Many attempts have been made to explore using dance in the Holy Mass in India [D'Sa 2004:179]. Dance could be introduced into the Holy Mass for various purposes, such as to express joy and celebration, or to interpret the Gospel in a particular context. Though dance is used in some parts of the Holy Mass it is only according to the interests of the priest or Bishop. It is not completely accepted and recognised and its purpose and potential is not well-understood. So in this chapter I stress the purpose of using dance in the Holy Mass. Most of the theologians who stand for transformation in the Church do not agree with using dance in the Holy Mass, as they think that dance has nothing to do with the Holy Mass or as part of worship in India. But the Holy Mass is a place where transformation begins, to transform the people. Therefore, the Holy Mass has to be given to the people in their language, and in their identity, which adds more meaning to the Holy Mass.

The day-to-day living of the people is not reflected in the Church, which remains divided from the community as the Church has become alienated from the community. So the Church has to be transformed in itself in order to reach the people. The decrees given by the Vatican document for making the Holy Mass relevant to the people have to be brought into practice, so that the Holy Mass will come from the people and go to the people. Dance has the power to

transform social problems since dance and music bring changes in a celebration/event, to transform the worship by bringing children from different caste groups, different religions, and of different genders together. It also makes the Holy Mass relevant to the worshippers and to their context. The basic Eucharistic celebration is considered to be the source and centre of faith for of every RC. This makes the Holy Mass the ideal locus for beginning transformative processes in the faith/life of believers, and also in their community relationships. Earlier it was argued that cultural elements such as music and the arts are introduced or used as part of inculturation. They are also seen as a local cultural expression of worship and to give a local identity to the Gospel. In India some of the RC Priests and Bishops use dance in their Holy Mass as part of the inculturation process but only occasionally.

7.8 Conclusion

The principal outcome of my research in introducing *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass is recognition of its power for social transformation in the local community. This is also a process of inculturation. Often in India inculturation means, in effect, incorporating higher caste culture into worship or into other Christian activities, while transformation is seen as an act of liberating socially, economically and politically marginalised communities (in India, the Dalits and tribal communities) [John 2007:163, 227 Clarke 1999:35, 44]. Those who talk about inculturation, for example De Nobili [Cornille 1991:163] and Amalorpavadass [1978:26], emphasise the inclusion of local cultural elements in order to make the liturgy understandable, and accessible, to local people. They emphasise the importance of inculturation in worship, thus making the Holy Mass relevant to the Indian context. However, before incorporating these local elements the people's views have not been taken into consideration, nor have sufficient attempts been made to remove any contradictory attitudes towards them, in order to answer possible objections.

Those who are trying to bring transformation among people focus on equality and rights in the society, for example theologians like Nirmal [1998:60] and Kappan [1993:183]. They emphasise the liberative aspect of the Gospel without placing much importance on the potential of local cultural elements which can bring about transformation in the lives of Dalit and Tribal communities in India. The two schools of thought have remained separate, and have not managed to integrate their ideas, and they continue to emphasise their own positions in bringing about transformation in the lives of Dalit and Tribal communities in India. They have not created a shared space which would allow them to meet, particularly in the Holy Mass. These two schools of thought are brought together in my approach: 1. Those who support bringing some of the local cultural elements into the Christian liturgies, including music, drama and dance in order to enhance inculturation. 2. Those who support social transformation, such as gender equality, building relationships between different religious communities, and the elimination of casteism. By combining the two schools, liturgical dance not only becomes culturally relevant and meaningful, but it also has the potential to promote change within the wider community. Thus it enables Christians to communicate the Gospel effectively and to promote harmony among different communities.

Using dance in the Holy Mass will bring about not only an uplifting of the local culture, but it will also transform culture and worship into a meaningful and relevant method of communication; transforming communities by using dance to communicate the hermeneutics of the Gospel effectively. Enabling community transformation is an essential aspect of the mission of the Church today. I propose to use dance in the Holy Mass, first of all because *Bharathanatyam* techniques help to interpret the Gospel effectively, and help the congregation to participate actively, by attentively listening to the message communicated. Secondly, incorporation of dance in the Holy Mass is not only a cultural expression to give a local identity, but it also brings transformation within the worship of the Church and the community at large. It will be especially effective to use dance in the Holy Mass in order to

bring transformation in understanding and attitudes towards gender and caste differences, and would also enhance a better inter-religious relationship among the community towards the Church members of the RCC in and around the churches in southern India.

Ultimately using dance in the liturgy will make the worship community-oriented rather than priest or male centred. Dance in the Holy mass will be a common place for the children and youth from different backgrounds to meet and mix with each other, including different physically-challenged children, enabling those who are interested to learn about the kingdom of God – equality, justice and caring for each other. This will encourage them in their lives to face society with increased courage and confidence. It will also enable their parents to meet other families from different backgrounds. It will lead to interaction and dialogue, thus creating a harmonious local society. The children who are dancing will not only be able to communicate the Gospel and its values, but they will also learn them. These children and young people will become inspiring instruments for the future society of the local Church and will take us forward to a new dawn in society.

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Having discovered the importance of the transformative and cultural characteristics of *Bharathanatyam* to use as liturgical dance in the Holy Mass, I wish to ask the question: where do we go from here. This chapter provides a summary of the research and its future relevance to Church, society and theological education in India, and to some extent in South Asia.

8.2. Summary of the Chapters

In the first chapter, I have introduced my research questions, methodology, and the scope of the study. These relate to the methods that are involved for the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* dance into the Holy Mass. The chapter highlighted the role of dance, and the social issues that were tied up with local cultural elements in Indian society. On the other hand, the chapter weighed the importance of using local cultural elements in the liturgy recommended by the SVC. The rest of the chapter was an attempt to provide sketch of an incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* into the Holy Mass in the light of the findings of the study.

The second chapter is a presentation of the opinions of the clergy and laity of the RCC in India through the interviews I conducted. It explains the method that was used to find the range of opinions about the use of dance in the liturgy, and presents the analysis of the data to illustrate the research problem. This chapter identified the hindrances which prevent the use of dance in the liturgy. It found that the concept of introducing dance in the liturgy was a new area of study in India and indicated that various methods were required to continue the research. This put forward the necessity of taking up a case for *Bharathanatyam*, and to argue that it would be a relevant dance form to use in the liturgy, by clarifying the misconception of this dance form. However, the chapter also discovered that a substantial amount of interest

was shown in using dance in the Holy Mass. Since there is not much knowledge currently prevalent, as the study on liturgical dance is new in India, the Church could not express in detail the function of dance in the liturgy. Thus this chapter emphasised that a study is required to incorporate dance in the liturgy. It also helped to understand and find an appropriate dance form to use in the liturgy. I responded to the questions that were raised during the interviews with substantial answers in order to propose to use *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy. Hence this chapter directed the paths to be explored in order to introduce dance in the liturgy.

In the third chapter, the critical overview of the theology of inculturation, the Vatican Documents on Sacred Liturgy, the Church, the Fourth Instruction on the Sacred Liturgy and some of the Pope's encyclicals with regard to culture and liturgy that provided the space to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass were discussed. The chapter stressed that culture was always taken into account from the Old Testament until now in the Church, including the Gospels which were based on the contextual particularities of local communities of the time. It also emphasised three main arguments in favour of using local cultural elements in the liturgy. They are: that true Christianity does not destroy any good that is found in other religions; instead it encourages and uses culture for people's development spiritually and socially. The use of local cultural elements helps in rooting the Church locally in the culture, to form local Churches of different cultures; and, the third argument explicitly related to liturgy, is that the Church does not wish to impose any rigid uniformity on the liturgy.

However, it was noted that the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)* paragraphs 37 to 40 and the 1994 post Vatican II document on the process of inculturation paved the way for using local cultural elements, specifically art forms, including dance movements. Critical engagement with inculturation in India, and the work on liturgical inculturation of Amalorpavadass, helped in clarifying the necessary points before proposing

Bharathanatyam for incorporation. Thus this chapter provided space to incorporate *Bharathanatyam* as a liturgical inculturation in the south of India, and helped in exploring further details in sustaining the arguments towards the thesis.

While exploring further support for the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam*, the question of whether there was any previous use of liturgical dance in the history of the Holy Mass, and the reasons behind it, formed Chapter Four. The chapter critically engaged with the definition of liturgy and highlighted idea that the liturgy is defined as public worship. This encouraged the local community, through their contributions, such as dance, to be involved in celebrating the Holy Mass along with the priest and to make it an expression of communal worship. It also highlighted the history of the liturgy, different rites of the RCC Holy Mass and the theology of liturgy, and made clear the space for using local culture and community involvement in the Holy Mass. The RC institution that uses dance in the Holy Mass occasionally in India, did not engage with any study or follow any procedure other than using it for cultural expression. Secondly, the subject is not really understood, demonstrating the need for the present study. One of the main points was that many gestures and postures are already in use in the Holy Mass, and, therefore, dance will accord well with the liturgy of the Holy Mass as *Bharathanatyam* is full of gestures, postures and facial expressions to communicate the message. The chapter also referred to the term ‘dance’ and its context in the Bible where dance is used and is closely associated with the life of the Israelites. This helped to explore further the study of *Bharathanatyam* and to shed light on its suitability for incorporation.

Consequently, Chapter Five dealt with the history of *Bharathanatyam*, its origin and its development over time. This chapter proved that it originated and evolved from the state of Tamizh -speaking communities from the south of India by referring to an ancient Tamizh text. Further, it explored how *Bharathanatyam* was taken over by high-caste Brahmins, and became an elite art form. It gives a brief introduction to the life of *Devadasis* during the

Bhakti movement. The difference between the *Devadasis* who were engaged with dancing for the worship and the other *Devadasis* with different works in the temple was highlighted. The study differentiated the contemporary '*Devadasis*' and the *Devadasis* system of the Bhakti movement. The study included the techniques of this art form to interpret the Bible, the simple and modest costumes, according to availability. Elucidating the importance of *Bharathanatyam* and its use to interpret the Bible, I argued that dance also needed a Christian perspective for its use in the Holy Mass.

Chapter Six discussed the theological basis for the use of dance in the liturgy. First of all one of St. Thomas Aquinas' proofs for the existence of God, and the interconnectedness of the Trinity described as '*Perichoresis*' were referred to as an approach to God as a dancer in a Christian perspective. The chapter found that movements were the first communication of God through creation. Bodily movement also became the first communication of the human being while formed in the womb. Thus movement itself became a language for communication. The dancer was compared with the Creator as every dancer creates the movements.

Dance was seen as an expression of joy, a symbol of freedom and part of the culture, with examples from the Bible, and the context of its usage were also taken into account. The aesthetics of dance were seen as beauty and perfection. Different theologians' views on beauty and the term 'perfect' were examined. A theologian like Balthasar who sees Christian theology as the sign of beauty was discussed. God is beautiful. If truth reveals a person, beauty must give an experience of the person; hence God can be experienced in truth and beauty. This experience can be felt while experiencing this beauty as expressed in dance.

Chapters Seven and Eight are the outcome and summary of the dissertation respectively. The outcome of the dissertation is the conclusion to use *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Holy Mass. This chapter found a common ground for the two different schools of thought that are

inculturation and transformation to meet and have dialogue. Chapter Seven further emphasised that idea that using dance in the liturgy can bring social transformation⁵⁵ such as gender equality, the relief of caste discrimination, and the promotion of inter-faith dialogue. Also, personal transformation, ecclesiastical transformation and participation as transformation were brought out because of the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam*. The result of this research also pointed out that *Bharathanatyam* dance is no more an elite group's art form, but it is the local cultural art form of southern India, and, therefore, can be used for the betterment of the life of the people. The dancers who use this art form in the liturgy can also find a future for their life.

8.3 My Contribution

Having reached the result of the incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass through various methods, and answering the questions that arose during the research, I found that this dissertation would help the following areas such as the Indian RCC, theological education, the dance scholars, and society at large. It will help the theologians, nuns, priests and bishops who are interested in using dance in the liturgy, as well as those who are engaged in social transformation, including the scholars and theologians who are interested in promoting local cultural elements. The theological basis of this dissertation helps liturgists and artists who argue for the inclusion of art forms in the liturgy across the world. This study adds a new dimension to *Bharathanatyam*. The Christian artist could use this art form with broader understanding of the worship of God. I have clarified that this art form is based on its techniques and not on any sects either religious or caste or gender-based. So the techniques such as facial expression or gestures could be used by folk dance artists also. This is a new venture, in using dance in the area of liturgical inculturation.

8.4 Future Proposal

I have limited my research to the use of *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Holy Mass in the south of India. But still further research could be carried on in North India and North East India with their local cultural elements to use in the liturgy, as India has different cultural practices and traditions across its regions. The RCC should encourage the liturgists, Tamizh Scholars, and Christian dance scholars, to take up research studies in the area of art and the Church in the history of the Indian RCC. It would encourage scholars to engage in ancient literature studies to find out more about the usage of dance in ancient times. This might help in discovering the art forms that were used only for culture's sake in the community, without any religious connotations. The dioceses should recognise the RC *Bharathanatyam* dance teachers, performers and scholars, and should conduct consultations and seminars to know more about the dances that were used for temple worship, and the *Devadasis* who performed them. In my studies I showed that *Rudra kanikais* were those who were dancing before God, which is a key factor for my arguments. If further research is done then the importance of the different *Devadasis* would be better known, and so wipe out the misunderstanding that the *Devadasis* system was temple prostitution, for which the system was banned in 1922 during the colonial period in India.

The RCC could form a commission for liturgical dance or for local cultural art forms to use in the liturgy, offering appropriate guidelines. Attempts could be made to catechise RCs to be made aware of the use of local cultural elements in the Holy Mass. The communication centres could take up this challenge to reach the people and to offer awareness of cultural elements and identity. Consultation is possible in the form of seminars on art forms that can be conducted at parish and diocesan levels to promote the indigenous cultural elements in the life of Indians, and how to be authentically Indian and Christian.

¹ ‘The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments’ at Vatican is a congregation re-established by Pope John Paul II in 1984 as a separate congregation, in accordance with the new structure of the Roman Curia as laid down by the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*. Earlier it was a two separate congregation which was brought together by Pope Paul VI in 1975. This encouraging pastoral liturgical activities, supporting the various Organisms devoted to the liturgical apostolate, music, song and sacred art, and keeping watch over sacramental discipline. This is a work of importance for it concerns above all the faithful preservation of the great principles of the Catholic Liturgy, as illustrated and developed in the Conciliar Constitution. It is likewise a question of drawing upon these principles for inspiration and promoting and deepening throughout the Church the renewal of liturgical life [Bunson 2009; 256]

² *Notitiae* is the official publication (monthly journal) of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments at Vatican. In *Notitiae* the Congregation publishes editorials, scholarly studies, and new liturgical texts, reports of plenary meetings, speeches or writings of the Holy Father pertaining to liturgy or liturgical law, official responses to questions [Tucker 2011]

³ Anjali Ashram Ashram at Mysore in Karnataka District, south India founded by Amalorpavadass. The present superior priest of the Ashram has published the book in 2004, which is a collection of founder’s speech.

⁴ I have used ‘The New Revised Standard Version – Catholic Edition (2003): The Holy Bible. Theological Publication in India, Bangalore: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ <http://www.cbci.in>

⁶ It is forbidden, therefore, to take any action whatever of this nature without having requested and obtained such consent, since the sacred liturgy, as We have said, is entirely subject to the discretion and approval of the Holy See [Pope Pius XII 1947:60]

⁷ The Second Vatican Council was convened in 1962 by Pope John XXIII on 11th October. However, the Council was partially conducted under the papacy of Pope Paul VI [Wells 2012:1], owing to the death of Pope John XXIII in June 1963 [*L'Osservatore Romano* 2000:1]. This Council was closed on 23rd April 1966 by Pope Paul VI (1897-1978).

⁸ **16 Documentns of Vatican Council II**

1. Sacrosanctum concilium, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963.
2. Inter Mirifica, Decree On the Means of Social Communication, 1963.
3. Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution On the Church, 1964.
4. Orientalium Ecclesiarum, Decree On the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite, 1964.
5. Unitatis Redintegratio, Decree on Ecumenism, 1964.
6. Christus Dominus, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops In the Church, 1965.
7. Perfectae Caritatis, Decree On Renewal of Religious Life, 1965.
8. Optatam Totius, Decree On Priestly Training, 1965.
9. Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration On Christian Education, 1965.
10. Nostra Aetate, Declaration On the Relation Of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965.
11. Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, 1965.
12. Apostolicam Actuositatem, Decree On the Apostolate of the Laity, 1965.
13. Dignitatis Humanae, Declaration On Religious Freedom, 1965.
14. Ad Gentes, Decree On the Mission Activity of the Church, 1965.
15. Presbyterorum Ordinis, Decree On the Ministry and Life of Priests, 1965.
16. Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution On the Church In the Modern World, 1965.

⁹ 37. *Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. Anything in these people’s way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the liturgy itself, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.*

38. *Provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved, provision shall be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries. This should be borne in mind when drawing up the rite and determining rubrics.*

39. *Within the limits set by the typical editions of the liturgical books it shall be for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2, to specify adaptations, especially as regards the administration of the sacraments, sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music and the arts, according, however, to the fundamental norms laid down in this Constitution.*

40. *In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties. For this reason:*

(1) The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 22:2, must in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship. Adaptations which are considered useful or necessary should then be submitted to the Holy See, by whose consent they may be introduced.

(2) To ensure that adaptations may be made with all the circumspection necessary, the Apostolic See will grant power to this same territorial ecclesiastical authority to permit and direct, as the case requires, the necessary preliminary experiments over a determined period of time among certain groups suitable for the purpose.

(3) Because liturgical laws usually involve special difficulties with respect to adaptation, especially in mission lands, men who are experts in the matters in question must be employed to formulate them.

- ¹⁰ 1. The posture during Mass, both for the priests and the faithful, may be adapted to local usage, that is, sitting on the floor, standing and the like; footwear may be removed also.
2. Genuflections may be replaced by the profound bow with the *anjali hasta* (Join palms-like praying).
3. A *panchanga pranam* (prostrate) by both priests and faithful can take place before the liturgy of the Word, as part of the Penitential rite, and at the conclusion of the Anaphora.
4. Kissing of objects may be adapted to local custom that is, touching the object with one's fingers or palm of one's hand and bringing the hands to one's eyes or forehead.
5. The kiss of peace could be given by the exchange of the *anjali hasta* and /or the placing of the hands of the giver between the hands of the recipient.
6. Incense could be made more use of in liturgical services. The receptacle could be the simple incense bowl with /or the placing of the hands of the giver between the hands of the recipient.
7. The vestments could be simplified. A single tunic-type chasuble with a stole (angavastra) could replace the traditional vestments of the Roman rite. Simples of this change are to be forwarded to the "Consilium".
8. The corporal could be replaced by a tray (thali or tham boola thattu) of fitting material.
9. Oil lamps could be used instead of candles.
10. The preparatory rite be used instead of candles:
 - a. The presentation of gifts.
 - b. The welcome of the celebrant in an Indian way, e.g. with a single arati, washing of hands, etc.
 - c. The lighting of the lamp.
 - d. The greeting of peace among the faithful in sign of mutual reconciliation.
11. In the 'Oratio fidelium' some spontaneity may be permitted both with regard to its structure and the formulation of the intentions. The universal aspect of the Church however should not be left in oblivion.
12. In the offertory rite and at the conclusion of the Anaphora the Indian form of worship may be integrated, that is, double or triple arati" of flowers, and / or incense, and / or light.

¹¹ <http://kalaikavirifinearts.com/founder.php>

¹² The fathers who participated in the Vatican II Council in preparation of the documents

¹³ The wealthier people spent money and prepared banquets or they undertook certain civic duties as a free service for a social purpose in the state of Athens. The government could not financially support the public in every circumstance. Therefore, the Athenian government invited the people who were wealthy enough to support some of the public's need. Such people were called '*Leiturgoi* (singular: *Leitourgos*)'. This is equivalent to the Roman title of *lictor*, meaning a special class of Roman civil servant, who served and guarded the magistrate of the Roman Republic [Catholic Encyclopaedia 1997]. There was a special kind of *lictor*, known as a *lictor curiatus*, who did not carry any rods or weapons and whose main tasks were religious. The people who performed the religious tasks were always in a group and they performed all the necessary rituals or sacrifices to their gods. These *lictors* were always at the command of the high priests in Rome. Both Greek and Latin traditions denote the work or service of a group of people, or the person who performs this function by similar names (*leitourgia* or *lictor curiatus*) [Catholic Encyclopaedia 1997]. Later, the word 'liturgy' might have been chosen by the Church in Rome to denote the service to God by Christians, as it was appropriate to be called so according to Roman models. The above definition makes clear that liturgy means the worship rendered by the people to God – a community action.

¹⁴ A parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life [Dodd 1961].

¹⁵ Rosario Pio Ramolo, Bishop of Gore Chad

¹⁶ The doxologies sung during the Holy Mass are but an expression of the intense experiences of this awe-inspiring presence of the Holy: 'Holy, Holy, Holy God of Power and Might. Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory. Hosanna in the highest'. Menghisteab Tesfamariam the Bishop of Asmara in Eritrea.

¹⁷ Another example could be a short hymn performed in the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches that follow the Byzantine Rite in honour of St. Theodore. The 'life after the death' of St. Theodore is imagined as he is dancing with the angels in heaven. The hymn is 'As your fiery chariot, you ascended on the virtues, O God-bearer, mounting up to the dwellings of Heaven; and you were an Angel living on earth among men, and a man dancing for joy with the holy Angels. Hence, O Theodore, you have proved a godly vessel of awesome wonders and signs' [<http://home.iprimus.com.au/xenos/trichinas.html>].

¹⁸ Dr. Barboza references it from Ida F. Chadwick, *Dance, an Agent of 'Ekstasis'* Ed. Dennis J. Fallon and Mary Jane, op. cit., p.6.

¹⁹ *Quem Quaeritis* is a Latin word, meaning ‘Whom do you seek?’ This refers to the passage on visit to the Tomb acted during the medieval Easter Liturgy in 10th Century. By Steven P.C. Fernandez, <http://www.msuiit.edu.ph/ipag/studies/drama/topics/medievaltheater.html>

²⁰ Devadasi are young women who are dedicated to the temple and serve in the temple; they are mainly known for their dancing and singing in the temple. Devadasi means the servant of god, main occupation for Devadasi is to dance before the deities in the temple [Pal 1997:26]

²¹ The Sangeet Natak Academy, which is the national level academy for performing arts set up by the Government of India, currently confers classical status on eight Indian dance forms, as under:-

Bharathanatyam	Tamizh Nadu
Kathakali	Kerala
Kuchipudi	Ander Pradesh
Mohiniaattam	Kerala
Yakshagana	Karnataka
Odissi	Orissa
Manipuri	Manipur (North-East India)
Kathak	Utter Pradesh (North India); Manipuri- Manipur (North-East India)
Sattriya	Assam (North-East India)

²² Natyasastra is generally known as a dance treatise. However, this dance only speak about dance but describes and explains how to use the techniques of expressing the theme artistically through body movements and facial expression called acting or drama or dance or dance drama. The word *Natya* means acting and *Sastra* mean science

²³ The following websites provide the information for promoting this art form across the nation and worldwide. http://kalangan.in/promoters_ragini.htm; http://www.geetachandran.in/Contact_Us.aspx ; http://www.geetachandran.in/Contact_Us.aspx

²⁴ Thanjavur is a place in Tamizh Nadu State of South India

²⁵ The information shows that one of the Marathi King Shahaji (1684 to 1711) wrote nearly five hundred Marathi poetic compositions to dance; this particular poetic piece is called Padams in Bharathanatyam repertoire. King Tulaja (1763 to 87) himself wrote a dance treatise called Sangitasamrita which deals with basic dance techniques. The Saraswathi Mahal Library at Tanjore has the manuscript of these poetic compositions and the dance treatise and other south Indian language poetics used for Bharathanatyam. Tanjore is known as the Birth place of Bharathanatyam as this place has a very big temple and the all the dance poses, leg movements, karnas and Tandavas (poses and gestures) are depicted on the wall of this temple. Every year a big dance festival takes place in this temple and many Bharathanatyam dancers and the other classical dancers come here to take part in this event. King Raja Raja Chola built this temple and he had 400 Devadasi appointed in the temple to dance during worship. There are inscriptions on the wall of this big temple which talk about this incident[Guy 1999, Gaston 2003, Kohar 1987, Rajarajeswari 2010] <http://www.bharathanatyam.com/history.html>

²⁶ The name of the Quartet brothers are namely Chinayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu

²⁷ Marati is an Indian language spoken by the people of Maharashtra state in India

²⁸ The trinity of the South Indian music are Sri. Tyagaraja swamigal, Sr. Shyama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775 to 1835) who lived during the Marathi rule and composed many devotional hymns

²⁹ The following dancers and the institution are practicing Christian themes: Peter Barboza 1999; Fr. Saju George S.J. 2004; Nava Sadhana Kalakendra College of dance and music Varanasi; Kalai Kaviri College of Fine arts Trichy; Kalairani Natya Saalai Maryland-USA

³⁰ *Sattva* and *Bhava* are Sanskrit terms for mind (*Sattva*) and its related expressions (*Bhava*) onwards respectively

³¹ *Angahara* a Sanskrit term denotes the body limbs and its movements

³² *Svara* and *Alamgara* are the Sanskrit terms referring to musical notes and its compositions

³³ Founder of the dance revival institute Kalashetra at Chennai south India

³⁴ I used some of the Tamizh sources while I was preparing for my master’s examination.

³⁵ Some other scholars argue as early as the 3rd century BC [Manickam 1972:39].

³⁶ In my Master of Bharathanatyam, one module is Dance techniques from the Tamizh sources

³⁷ *Agam* (the inner feeling) is further divided into love life (lustful life) and the related moods. They are the meeting and enjoyment of the couple together before wedding, without knowing to anyone, and the life after the wedding [Nayagam 1972:64].

³⁸ The lyrics of the theme will be either for hero or heroine or for the mediator. The hero is metaphorically referred to Almighty (representing *Paramaatma*) while the heroine represents devotees (*jeevatma*, the human soul) and the mediator is referred to the teacher who can helps in attaining salvation (*mukti*).

³⁹ *Mei* meaning body, *paadu* meaning expression and *iyal* meaning branch of study [Rahuraman 2007:8]

⁴⁰ These dances are known for what its purpose. For example dance ‘*mun-ther-kuravai*’ (*mun* means in front *ther* means chariot *kuravai* means the particular is the name for that particular dance movements) and *pin-ther-*

kuravai kuravai (pin means back) are performed in front of and behind the chariot of the victorious king while returning from the war place [Raghuraman 2007: 6]. So the dance name itself says for what purpose the dance is performed.

⁴¹ Vatsyayan a historian and a leading Indian scholar of Indian literature and Classical dance

⁴² Vaishnava temple is the temple of Lord Vishnu (a Hindu deity)

⁴³ The dedicated child was taken to the temple for the *tali* (wedding necklace- instead of ring as in the West) tying ceremony. She sat down in front of the idol and the officiating priest gave her flowers and marked her forehead with sandalwood paste. He then tied the *tali*, which had been lying at the idol's feet, round her neck. Later on, after more training in music and dance, the marriage was consummated by a Brahmin, preferably rich, who represented the idol-[Massey 1989:20]

⁴⁴ During December-January, at Srirangam and other temples in Srivilliputhu in Tamil Nadu district, we can see Araiyar Sevai at its ritual form [Bharati 1999]

⁴⁵ During the British colonial period the foreigners were not able to understand the concept of worshipping God through dance, as dancing concept is understood in a different context in the West. And also there were street girls who were not Devadasi but dancing in the common areas gathering to earn money. Other hand, due to the political situation of that time, some of Devadasi were using dance to earn their daily bread. With the decline of southern kingdom in 18th, 19th century many Devadasi suffered to live their life. Some got married as a 2nd wife to rich Brahmins, some had nice life while most of them suffered. The interviews of Devadasi conducted by dance scholars and historians shows that due to their poverty some had to live a life of concubines [Gaston 2005; Orr 2000; Kersenboom 1978]. The confusion between street girls and Devadasi, and their erotic dance raised the issue and confused the colonial people. The social reformer also wants to stop the Devadasi system due to the exploitation of the system in the society by the rich. After the struggle by the social reformers in Chennai to stop dedicating girls to the temple, the 'Devadasi Act' was passed on 26-11-1947; the full text is found in the archives of the Government of Madras, Law (legislative) Department, G.O. No. 23, January 26, 1948: Acts- The Madras Devadasi (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947, Publ. Madras Act. XXXI of 1947 Kersenboom 1987:xxi].

⁴⁶ She was the first female doctor in 1921s and first woman in the legislative assembly in Chennai. Her mother is a Devadasi and her father is a Brahmin. She is not against dance but as against child marriage and the dedication of the female child to the temple. She is of the opinion that this would exploit the poor girls by the rich and powerful and cause for the prostitution because once the girls are dedicated to the temple the temple authorities take hold of them. This was not the case during Bhakti movement. There are also information recorded that Buddhist nuns were Devadasi who danced in the temple [[Jamanadas 2007](#)]

⁴⁷ Devadasi were at the peak of enjoying their life in the 9th & 10th century AD [Purecha 2003:4]. In the 12th & 13th century AD, with the Muslim invasion (1526 -1857)⁴⁷ Hinduism had undergone a great deal of stress. During the period of King Vijayanagar Hinduism regained its status and the Devadasi system continued [Massey 1989:4]. During AD 14 & 15, in order to spread Hinduism widely this dance was used by Devadasi in Hindu worship and devotional songs were encouraged. This is the period where the divine Tamil songs *devarnam*, *thiruvachagam* were produced by the music scholars to spread devotion among the Hindu people [Purecha 2003:18]. Devadasi were not the Dalits but from various castes⁴⁷. Some studies show that dedication of Devadasi to the temple was a very strict custom and long procedure if one girl or her family members wish to make her Devadasi. The ceremonies and rituals were conducted by the Brahmin priests. These Devadasi were from the local community and were well versed in language and fine arts [Kersenboom 1987:179-198]. Kersenboom⁴⁷ argues that Devadasi are from respectable family. In case if it's to be found that the girl's family members gone astray then the girl from that family cannot become a Devadasi [Kersenboom 1987:187]. At present some of the forward caste people deny that their community never dedicated Devadasi to the temple [Rangachari 2001].

⁴⁸ Goddess Lakshmi is the wife of Lord Vishnu a Hindu deity

⁴⁹ The dancers Pandanallur Jayalakshi (non- Brahmin), Jeevaratnam (non-Brahmin), Balasaraswathi (Devadasi), Meenakshi Sundarman Pillai (non-Brahmin), Ram Gopal, Mirnalini Sarabhai and Rukmani Arundale (Brahmin) whom E. Krishna Iyer helped to learn Bharathanatyam followed him and promoted it.

⁵⁰ There are 4 types of expression such as Angikabhinaya (the dancer employs the body and its limbs for expression). The movements of the different parts of the face and the head, specially eye movements, hands movement or gestures (*hastas*) are used.

The *vadikaabhinaya*, is the music part which accompanies the dance. This mostly consists of poetry or lyrics set to a music and rhythm. It is this poetry which is interpreted by the dancer. Usually the traditional or ancient poets work on praising God or His deeds, the devotee's passion for God or longing to unite with God is usually described in the Indian classical dances.

Aharyaabhinaya helps to communicate the situation or concept in a better way through costumes and make-up. Indian classical dances have always been costume oriented.

Satvika abhinaya refers to the Psychic state of mind. This includes the nine types of emotions of human beings such as love, compassion, hatred, anger, disgust, courage, laughter, fear and peace. These emotions are only described in Indian dancing method [Bharthamuni 2000, Kohar 1999, Ambrose 1983, Nadhikeswar 1992]

⁵¹ In which institution I have choreographed folk dances with Bharathanatyam hand gestures and facial expression to communicate the theme

⁵² *Summa theologica* was written by St. Thomas Aquinas between 1265 and 74. The first chapter gives the five reasons for the existence of God. It is a philosophical and theological work of St. Thomas Aquinas, consisting of an exposition of Christian doctrine. *Summa theologica* is a cyclical pattern; it starts with the existence of God and finish with back to God; existence of God (creations), Man's purpose, Christ-sacraments and back to God [Benziger bros. 1947]

⁵³ This gesture of animals and birds movement is called 'Gatis'. Gati is a Sanskrit term which denotes the different walks or the movements of living creatures on earth [Board of scholars 2000: 189].

⁵⁴ Thembavani was part of my year 8th Tamizh literature syllabus.

⁵⁵ When I was working in NBCLC, I saw in practice the changes that happened in the local community. But it was on a small scale. This change suggested the idea that bringing dance into the liturgy helps the local community to live in harmony, and can result in a church with a local identity. I believe social transformation happens gradually and not as a mass change. I involved children from a slum background (from a low caste family), from a higher caste community, from different Christian denominations, from rich Hindu families, children from the street (taken care of by the RCC nuns in Bangalore) and also Muslim children. The parents of the low caste community who hesitated to come into the dance class became friendly with the parents of the rich, Hindu high caste parents. The children became partners in the dance and the parents who take care of their costumes and other needs have to discuss these with the other dance partners' parents, and it becomes necessary to make their child's dance better. So these necessities brought them closer. The reason is dance.

Glossary

Tamil and Sanskrit Terms

<i>Agama</i>	Rules and regulation for temple tradition worship
<i>Akam</i>	Internal
<i>Alamgara</i>	Indian Classical music compositions
<i>Abhinaya</i>	Expression
<i>Angahara</i>	Denotes the body limbs and its movements
<i>Arati</i>	it consists of a small flame which burns on a wick, Placed on a plate called <i>Tali</i> or <i>Tambalam</i> along with flowers and incense. This plate is shown in reverence 3 times in a circular motion before the person as a sign of welcome or shown obeisance when it is performed before the Holy Bible or altar
<i>Bhava</i>	Expressions
<i>Bhajan</i>	Simple devotional song: repeating a sentence again and again for a simple rhythm and tune. Usually sung in temples during worship by the devotees
<i>Darbariattam</i>	<i>Darbair</i> – common or public and <i>attam dance</i>
<i>Dasi</i>	Slaves or servants
<i>Deva</i>	Gods/deities
<i>Devadasis</i>	Servants of God
<i>Mahamandapa</i>	Maha –big (vast) Mandapa-Hall
<i>Natakavazhakku</i>	Dramatic exposition
<i>Natyam(Natya)</i>	Acting (drama)
<i>Natyasastra</i>	Science of dramaturgy
<i>Nartanam</i>	Dance
<i>Navarasa</i>	Nine emotions (love, courage, compassion, fear, wonder, laughter, disgust, anger and peace) <i>pothu</i> means common (for common)
<i>Pothiviyal</i>	<i>pothu</i> means common (for common)
<i>Puja</i>	Rituals in a Hindu worship
<i>Puram</i>	External
<i>Raga</i>	Melody
<i>Rudra/rudraksha</i>	Seed of a tree - Hindus considered sacred and use it as prayer beads while praying to Lord Shiva
<i>Sastra</i>	Science
<i>Sattva</i>	Mind
<i>Srngara rasa</i>	Expression of love (especially referred to erotic sense)
<i>Svara</i>	Musical notes
<i>Tali</i>	A sacred yellow thread with a pendent bearing a Hindu Deity or a symbol or sign of Hindu deity. It is tied around the neck during the wedding by the bride groom to the bride. It is a symbol of wedded woman like the wedding ring of a west woman
<i>Tambalam</i>	A big bronze flat plate (like a around shaped Tray)
<i>Talam</i>	Rhythm
<i>Thavil</i>	A big drum used as an accompaniment for dance
<i>Upacharas</i>	A Sanskrit term for service (for the deity)

Ulagiyalvazhaku

Ulagiyal means worldly -natural way of expressing the emotions

Vathiyal

King or royals

Hebrew words for dance and worship referred by many Western liturgical dance scholars from Hebrew Bible Concordance

(2342, 4234, 4246, 1801, 2287, 3769, 7540, 6339, 6452, 1523, 5970, 3738, 5525, 4640)

CHIYL	twist or whirl in a circular manner. Judges 21v21
MACHOWL	a round (circle) dance: Psalm 30v11; Jeremiah 31v4
MECHOWLAH	a dance / company of dancers: Judges 11v34; Exodus 15v20
DALAG	to leap or spring: Song of Solomon 2v8; Isaiah 35v6
CHAGAG	to move in a circle / march in a sacred procession/ Celebrate a festival / dance: Psalm 42v4; Zechariah 14v18
KARAR	to dance or whirl; 2 Samuel 6v14
RAQAD	to stamp / spring about / dance / jump / leap / skip 1 Chronicles 15v29; Ecclesiastes 3v4
PAZAZ	to spring or leap; 2 Samuel 6v16
PACACH	to hop / skip over / to dance; 1 Kings 18v26
GIYL/GUWL	to spin round under the influence of emotion (usually rejoice) 1 Chronicles 16v31; Psalm 9v14
ALATS	to jump for joy / be joyful / rejoice / triumph Proverbs 28v12; Psalm 68v3

There are many references to show that dance was part of Israelite culture

Japheth's daughter.....	Judges 11v34
Ladies dancing in the vineyard.....	Judges 21v21-23
Children playing games.....	Matthew 11v17
The return of the prodigal son.....	Luke 15v25
Celebrating victory.....	1 Samuel 18v6-7
Dance is associated with joy and contrasted with mourning.....	Lamentations 5v15; Psalm 30v11; Ecclesiastes 3v4
There is to be dancing (and joy) when Israel is restored.....	Jeremiah 31v4&13
Miriam led dancing, singing and praise.....	Exodus 15v20-21
David danced before the Ark of the Lord.....	2 Samuel 6v14-23; 1 Chronicles 15 and 16
We are to praise God with dancing.....	Psalm 150v4, Psalm 149v3

Other references in the Bible to lively worship included dance. Greek words that have meanings related to physical movement were translated into English as "rejoice".

ORCHEOMAI	to dance; Matthew 11v17
CHOROS	a round dance; Luke 15v25
AGALLIAO	jump for joy / rejoice greatly. Matthew 5v12 and Revelation 19v7
SKIRTAO	jump for joy. Luke 1v41 and Luke 6v23 [Corney2008:34]

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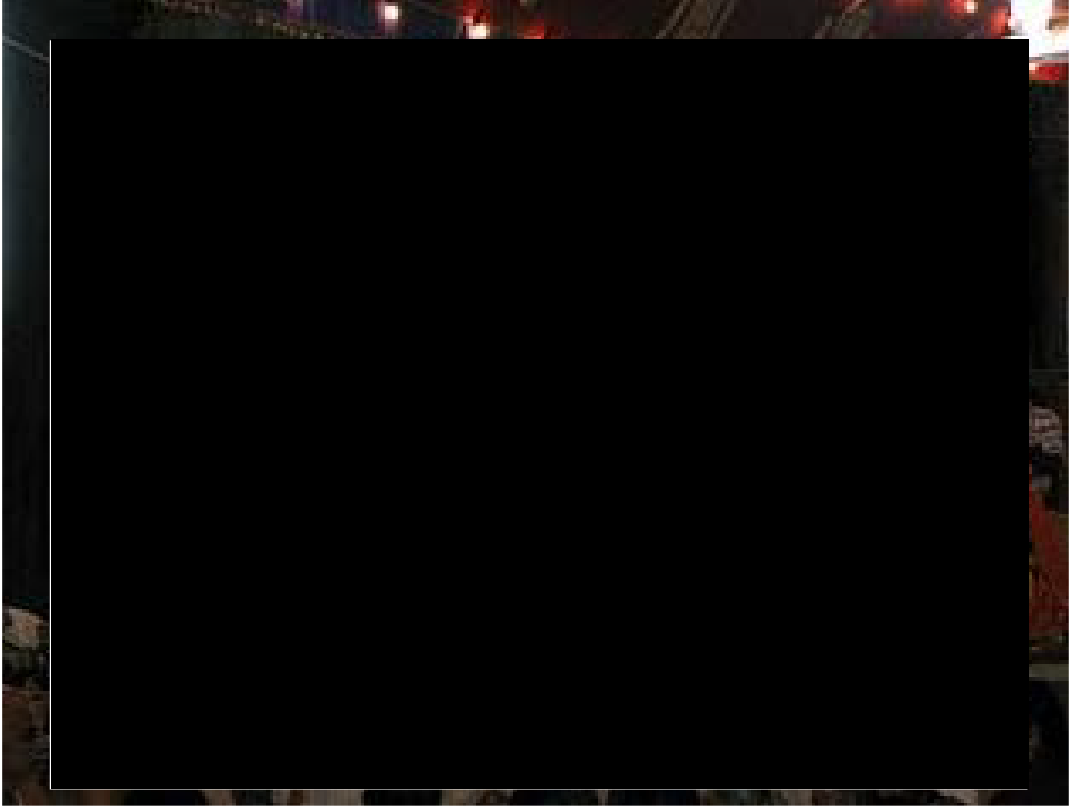
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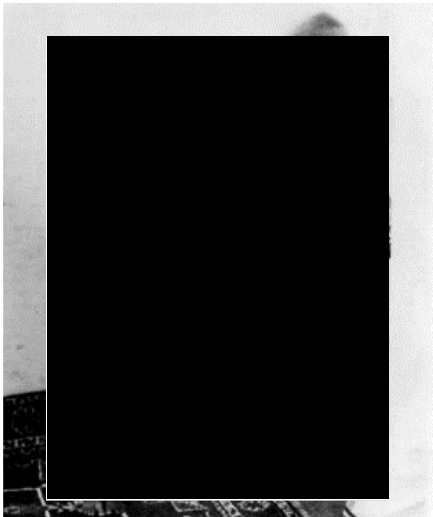
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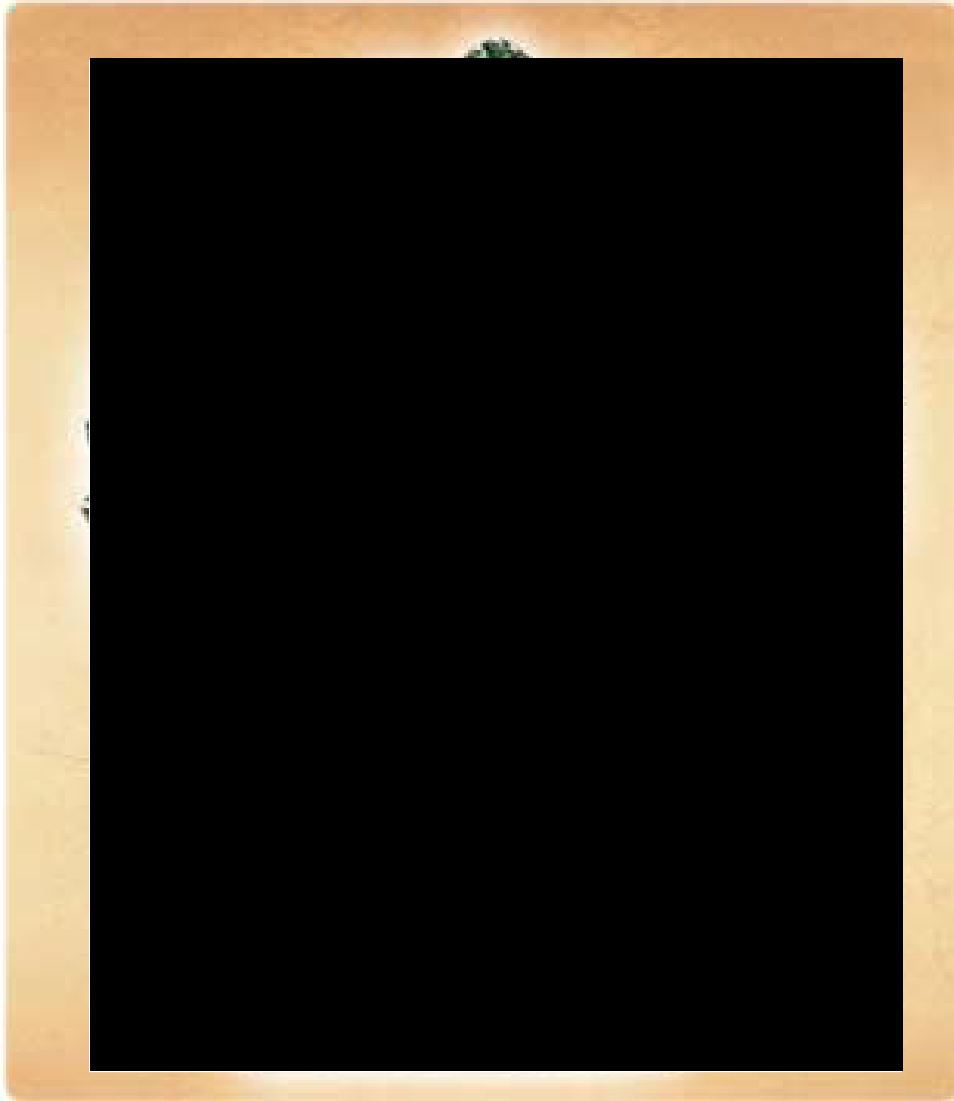
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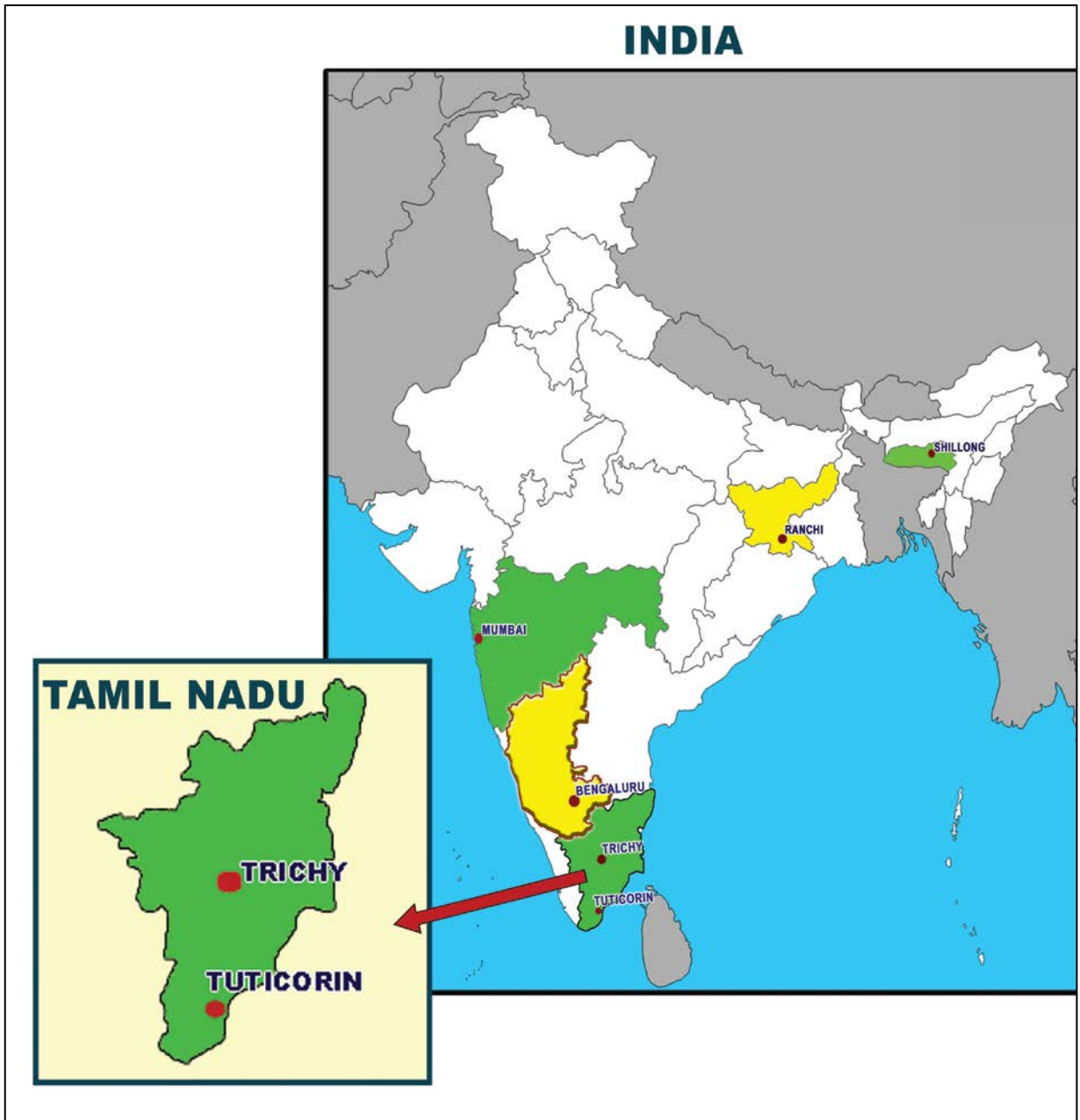


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Appendix 2: Locations of the field interviews are indicated in green and yellow.



Appendix 3

The interviews are transcribed. The questions are typed in bold letters and the responses of the interviewees are not in bold letters.

THE OPINIONS OF THE INDIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ON USING DANCE (BHARATHANATYAM) IN THE LITURGY

Participant One - Cardinal

Thank you so much for accepting to be a participant of my field research. I am doing research on using dance in the liturgy to enhance the worship. I would like to know your view on this matter.

People shouted Holy, Holy when David danced before the Ark of the Covenant; while they carried the tabernacle and his wife condemned him. He was rejoicing in front of the Lord.

Yes. Dance is mentioned in many places in the Bible in regard to worship. In spite of this why our Church is not encouraging to use dance in the liturgy?

Church is worried about misuse or abuse.

Do you have any suggestion how to go about?

See, now church music is different from the Jazz music or disco dance. This is where we have to make distinction. Church music is different. Music and dance that are used in the church are different.

Yes. We are aware of that difference. For example we in NBCLC or Kalai Kaviri we use music and dance that are suitable for the church. But still they say that we don't need dance. Dance is never part of our liturgy. No document presents that the dance is part of the liturgy. Many priests have said that dance in the liturgy is a distraction. They ask; why do you distract the priests on the sanctuary?

There is no question of distraction. The people must worship God as they are. Lord accepts them as they are. For us our people from the tribal background, walking is dancing and talking is singing. That is how the missionaries have described them. So they are singing people, they are dancing people. They cannot live without dancing or singing. They must go as they are, just as God has created them. They should bring their best to God.

Do you advise me to educate our Church so that they might understand this aspect of dance? And so they can incorporate dance in the Liturgy?

You do not need to educate. You do your research beautifully and present it correctly. Make these distinctions. You are aware not every dance can be used in the worship. For us entrance procession, and offertory procession and recessional song are absolutely part of our life. Nobody can stop. In the Vatican Liturgy of Asian Synod dance was beautiful but the difficulty was with dress. Many did not like that dress. Asian culture was not there. It was westernised. You began to show your belly in front of everybody that is not good, no one liked it. That was not liturgical dance. The Liturgist should have taken care of that.

I think that someone should have been appointed to organise such dances in the liturgy

It is the spirit of the liturgy that should be maintained in that. They should know that it is not ordinary place. So people whom you are selecting should have put on proper dress. The problem is that they are degrading the liturgy. Even many bishops and priest had overcoat over the stole. It is not correct. It should be appropriately done. Church should approve it.

The document says ‘swinging your body, clapping and dancing are part of your culture then you could incorporate these elements in the liturgy’. Some of the Archbishops and priests have said that using dance in the liturgy is a patch work. Do you think that it will be a patch work?

It is not a patch work. For us, it is entrance procession, see even in marriage also you welcome such dances. In the same way we welcome the main celebrant. It is not patch work. We welcome him. He is our president. He is coming in the name of Jesus. So we welcome him. Jesus was also welcomed with palms and leaves, and all Christ events are integrated in it. It is not only the sacrificing of the cross but His life is celebrated.

Should the Word of God be proclaimed verbally? Can it also be presented in creative ways using dance and music?

Like music somebody writes and composes it. This is often experimented. In the same way in liturgy, first of all you should know. Now you are doing doctorate so you should know liturgy, the spirit, the content and the meaning of the liturgy and accordingly some dances

can be incorporated. None can stop it. I don't think so, personally for us. In some places 'Our Father' is sung and in some places 'Magnificat' is sung.

Yes. We dance the prayer 'Our Father' and 'Magnificat' as well. But then, why most of the priests are against it?

No, you can't expect everyone to accept it immediately. Don't worry about that. Some will object like the wife of David. So don't worry. If you worry about all these, then you will never do your Doctorate.

One of the reasons why I want to propose dance in the liturgy is for transformation, to bring changes in the local community. Do you think dance will bring together people of different caste or religion or class under same platform?

That is another aspect of it. Few days back I ordained four Jesuit priest in a school. In that school there were very few Catholics. Most of the girls were non Catholics, non-Christians. There were some Muslim girls also. They were coming for practice and their parents were worried. But when the teachers explained they did not object. They did it beautifully. Wonderfully they danced, offertory procession, small girls like angels they danced.

It is an opportunity for the children to participate and also to come to know more about God. This will create an interest on the Christian children to be closer with the church.

They talk big about gender equality and all things they talk one side and another side they don't give chance to appear there. But, I say there should be liturgical dress. They are like any other people in the world.

Do you think the sari suits the liturgical dancers?

Yes sari suits, take those Krisnagar sisters, elegant beautiful, Even Mother Theresa sisters. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever. So you cannot integrate everything in liturgy. Liturgy has its own perspective, Liturgy has its own parameter and liturgy has its own, you can say limitation.

You said it is our spiritual expression or cultural expression of using dance and music. Then why our Church has not taken any steps to promote it. For everything we have a commission. Then, why not for Liturgical Dance?

Church, we have our culture. So we need to have. See, we don't have anybody who has done doctorate in Liturgy among tribals. See, one has to be doctorate in liturgy, one has to be doctorate in Anthropology and the best thing of the culture has to be there. The bishops are the ultimate persons. See, if you do these studies and come.... now, I don't mind if you write my name.

What I am telling is that we should have a commission and they should approve what dance we can use in liturgy. And also they should make a strict rules and regulation in regard to liturgical dance.

No, no, that also will come. There are always some beginners. Church doesn't begin that way. Church has already approved our dances for instances. In Africa they are dancing. And African dance according to me is not very good.

Cardinal Arinze in an Interview has mentioned, Even though he was an African still he has appreciated Asian Dance saying it has got gestures of reverence and devotion and so on.

The dance in Asian Synod was very much appreciated. But only the dress was not appreciated. Some Indians criticised the dress. It looks ugly. You must select the dancers who are going there. It should be classical and good expression should be there.

Dance department in NBCLC is closed and even the Indian rite mass is not celebrated regularly.

Yes. NBCLC, I would say it is wrong place to begin. Why because India is a world in itself. It is a national centre. Not all will like. Best is Varanasi Navasadhana. Similar thing can be done in Patna. In Ranchi absolutely we have tribal thing. Nobody can stop. We are dancing. Solemn Mass in a tribal community is always celebrated with dance during the entrance, offertory and recessional. So dance can be used in liturgy. But again I say 'Our Father' could be very devotionally sung as dance.

Could the readings be interpreted through dance?

In Varanasi that Fr. Father Anil Dev sings it is very powerful. His proclamation of the Gospel is fantastic and the little angels like children could enact. But not all the Gospels could be enacted.

Actually there is scope for dance and music for everything. I have choreographed the book of Joana and Susanna story, no music, instead of reading the passage I perform through gesture and expression while some one reads it or I myself narrate and act it.

Ok. That you can do in Catechism. This is where we are talking of Catechises. Dance drama is another thing and liturgical dance is another thing. So therefore nothing is forbidden. But it has to be selective. It has to be adopted and part of inculturation.

What about NBCLC? Is it not a centre for inculturation?

Yes. But I mean inculturation is part of whole process. But your point of view you are focusing on dance. For them it may not be a priority. So for us tribal' s as I said we cannot do without singing and dancing. Our worship has to be with singing and dancing. So nobody can stop.

Do you like to comment anything about this interview or my work

You publish your doctoral thesis and I am sure God will take care of that. He will touch some of Cardinals, Bishops and Archbishops and even some lay people. I tell you it was very much appreciated by all the Asian Liturgy, the Asian Dance, in Vatican. Only the dress was wrong. Only the Indian part of it, Koreans and Japanese were very beautifully dressed like angels. Only Indian dress was not appreciated by some Indians. I also think they did not make the distinction between liturgical dance and stage dance.

Yes. I think that they wanted to look very modern, probably. I think there should be a commission to regulate the 'Liturgical Dance'. There should be a commission to approve the dance which is to be used in the Holy Mass, both in India as well as the dance which is taken abroad representing India

Yes that is the mistake. For the Indian group I don't know who was in charge.

At present there is nobody to take care of all these.

You can't say there is nobody. We have the Eucharistic conference which is going on here.

Yes conferences are there and like you very few are encouraging it but not all. Then why there is no committee for Liturgical dance?

No, No, don't question the church. Church has committee, the Liturgical Commission is there. Bishop Dominic Jala is there. He is the chairman of the thing.

I already met him he says it is a patch work to have dance in the worship.

No it not patch work. How can it be a patch work?

In Patna they had a conference. I will read out it. Liturgy is comprehensive of even children and illiterate. The local people yearn to live in their faith within their cultural ambience. What you say about it.

Why not? But again you have to understand your own faith and the cultures have to be evangelised. Pope Paul VI has said you know. You can ask Arch bishop Menaparambil. He is the man of culture.

I am looking at the theology of dance as movement; movement of God. In the beginning God was in the form of movement. The movement is life. When there is a movement there is a life. What do you say about it?

No that is little risky because you are trying to defend God himself. Trying to identify God with movement, there I am limited. I am not a great theologian. May be you could ask Bishop Dabre of Pune. He is a theologian and he could explain better. For me God is God.

You told that absolutely there is no resistance for dance. If this is the case, then why they are ignorant about this or any other reasons are there that they don't want to have this dance.

Nobody can say this dance is not right. First of all liturgy itself is the whole life event of Christ. So dance can be part of the worship. But it has to be properly inculturated, incorporated in the liturgy. Of course from the begging the RC Church said not to incorporate those things. That is why after the Vatican II inculturation has begun and there is scope. Space is there and freedom is there. It has to be done properly. It is not somebody expert from Rome is going g to come for inculturation. It is the people who have to express their faith in God and in Christ.

Any time in the meetings or conferences have you discussed about liturgical dance or raised any questions?

Yes they have been talking. Everywhere they are talking about inculturation.

What about Liturgical dance?

Only time I have heard about this is, in the speech of Cardinal Arinze. He is the supreme authority.

He has given a very good positive answer about dance. He says it is a spiritual expression. He says if you have dance in the liturgy you need to keep two things in mind. One is even after the dance that the people should be able to reflect on what is done. It is not only just clapping and going away after the dance.

No, no, for instance today in the Eucharist after singing in the liturgy the Cardinal Oswald thanked everybody. So they were clapping. No you don't need to Clap.

So what do you advise here?

No. 'Liturgy is Liturgy'. Even singing and dancing should help you to elevate your mind and heart to God. I mean you don't need to thank and clap. We are worshiping God. It is not cultural program. It is the whole community worshiping God. In that way the liturgy has to be integrated.

Do you mind women coming to the sanctuary to dance? Or only the children you say.

The sanctuary is not the place to dance. It is the place for the priest and the nuns to read the Bible reading.

Since no place no dance, is it right?

Sanctuary is meant for those who are chosen for that particular thing. The Church is for everyone.

Sanctuary is only for priest?

No. Sisters can go for reading.

Can the dancer can go and proclaim the word of God in the sanctuary?

These are no space for it. The whole structure and the altar is restricted. That is why Magnificent or Our Father has to dance in front.

Then some will complain that the dancers are showing the back.

No. They are facing the audience and doing the priestly work of priests.

Thank you so much for your sharing your views on Liturgical dance.

Participant Two - Cardinal

Thank you so much for accepting to be a participant of my field research. I would like to know how far the incorporation of dance can enhance the Catholic Liturgy especially in India.

Yes. I think dance is so important for the common man in India and it got an appeal much because of the films. The film media, the film world has got the dance a lot of dances in them and this has become popular. You can't have a film in Bollywood without some dance in it. Although it takes time but still people appreciate it now. That is why the dance is popular. Now that is one thing that is the fact to say dance is more popular. Secondly in India there is a great development of dance, a classical dance especially in south India. It is not just body movement but they put meaning and also it has significance and conveys a message. And also the difficulties in which they demonstrate indicate the effort they put in it. It gives a message.

Now given the fact that it is popular, given the fact that it is developed so much in India; I think that since we have the message of the gospel to give, the life of Jesus and his message, it would be very effective when it is transmitted through the dance media. This is a medium which will make the message attractive which will make the message effective, and therefore it will be remembered by people because this image remain in the memory of the people. It might, the message might remind by the people. I think for this reason this dance will be more useful medium, particularly useful medium in India. It is because with the dance and music moves, and also the music added, and the colourful costume, will make more and more attractive.

Could you please tell, if these colours and music support or distract the worship

So far I spoke general about dance. In worship we must be very careful, it should be conveying the message and at the same time not distractive. And therefore the music, the colour and the costume should be appropriate to an act of worship of God. Certain type of music should be used in the church. Certain type of costume should be used and the message should be conveyed, not any message, only Gospel message.

Why our Church is not encouraging it, why it is not prevalently used?

I think there is three or four reason. The first reason is the fact that there are no many people who can professionally do it. It is not done with the professional touch, and then you are not doing a proper service to the medium itself because you will be distorting the medium. The second thing is that we people are not ready to impose it in the liturgy. We have a captivate audience then they are forced and it may not be fare they should be able to understand. We must make sure it is suited to a particular congregation.

Could you please explain the word suited?

Suited in the sense, dance can be used in the places where the people are interested in it and not in the places where the people are not interested. For examples, dance can be used in the liturgy in the village or in the rural areas. People in the cities like Bombay do not like to use dance in the liturgy, the city of Mumbai; my own city of Bombay. If you certainly bring an Indian classical dance there, people have never appreciated it, because they only watched or accustomed to western music, English music. When you bring it there and you say it is an Indian culture. Now it would be ok because they are in Church they are a captured audience. But it is not suited for that particular context.

Ok. You mean to say according to the context it has to be adjusted?

And the act of worship also always keeps in mind it is act of worship in the house of God.

I would like to know if our Church takes it seriously and do something to liturgical dance to be encouraged because we have commission for different things like family welfare, and education. There are so many things you know, to bring up women welfare, women empowerment and for many areas we have communications. Even we have touched even the technologies but this art field is just left out.

Yes, there are two departments in CBCI of the Church which could be really connected with whatever you are saying. One is 'Liturgical Worship' and the other one is the department of commission for liturgy. They should really see how this could fit in the liturgy but speaking more in general there is a media commission and, the Church, there is a communication commission of the CBCI. Now we have made out a pastoral policy last four or six years ago on communication itself. And one of the points we emphasised is that we also in India popularise these different alternative methods of media, folk media dance we mentioned that in the final statement. But they said, therefore this should be promoted. People should be able to understand.

Is it in writing?

It is not. It is really not implemented much. Possibly because I think as far as the Church is concerned there have been some very good institutions which have really given artistic presentations of Gospel message. I am thinking of NBCLC itself. There is one in Trichy also.

Yes. It is Kalai Kaviri. I was a student and also I worked as a lecturer, there.

Very good, very good! I have seen their program very often. Very high standard and the Gospel message are very clear.

These things happen only in certain period. For example now no more dancing.

Yes God has given you a talent because you to develop the talent.

Because I am working for the church, my title is enhancing worship through dance in the Roman Catholic Church of India to make a contribution to inculturation through *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy.

There are some institutions they do.

My thing is that something our Church should do.

That all depends on the context, South India - it is possible. May be for certain extent it is possible, I am talking about my diocese, you know, Bombay. We will have to see. We cannot thrust certain types of dance.

USA Roman Catholic Church is trying to introduce dance in the liturgy. The Vatican has banned liturgical dance in 1975. They can't use. No more western dance in their liturgy. But now since 1975 onwards the research is going on, to prove that dance is important to use in liturgy. Recently there was some letters in regard to liturgical dance from the Bishop's conference of USA to the researchers. I know some of those researchers, due to my research I came to know them. I think once they get it approved, may be, after they introduce dance in the liturgy, we may take it seriously.

We have the advantage. For us it is a means of communication. There it is not necessarily a means of communication. Therefore it is little different than their context. For us it is a possibility.

That is why I request and propose our Church that there should be some initiative from the higher authority of the Church to the parishes or the dioceses.

Yesterday when we went to diocesan pastoral centre of the Bangalore diocese one of the items was dance and they said it was from NBCLC. That is what.

No it was my student. I choreographed it.

Ok. The message was good.

Thank you so much for your time and support.

Participant Three – Arch Bishop

What is your view on using one of the Indian Classical dances Bharathanatyam in the liturgy to enhance it? I am looking it as a form of prayer and my research is to propose it to use it the liturgy for the same.

It is not the question of not appreciated. First of all classical dance is understood only by those who are aware of dance. For example you take the more common population of India, they are not aware of all the things involved in the dance. It is not the question of appreciation but it is the perception and the understanding of the different aspects of the dance. In India if you take Syro Malabar & Syro Malankar definitely not but in Latin rite also, I cannot see any place to substitute to dance for something else.

It is not to substitute but to enhance or to support Liturgy?

Suppose in the larger group of Christian population, how many are aware of dance. Latin rite of Liturgy has got its own dynamic. So dance has got its own dynamics. The merging of these two becomes very difficult. That is the technical point. I am not competent to speak about Bharathanatyam. Liturgy as such, dynamics of it and sense of community that is why it is very difficult field to enter into. It is very easy to do patch work. You can make patch work but it won't lead you anywhere.

So you mean to say how does it fit into that?

So the big question is how you merge these two which are coming from two different distinct traditions. Ok during 'Our Father' you can use some dance as they did in Rome during the beatification of Mother Theresa. One piece here one piece there. When you do that you have the flow of the liturgy and a performance. All are waiting for the performance and after that you are clapping the hands, which is not the idea of worship at all.

Do you think dance can bring a mood of prayer or to develop devotion during prayers?

It can. Those who understand it, to merge in to it, you have to be participant. For example like in Africa the whole community dances with their body movements. Not as a professionals. The congregation is in movement in prayer, in singing and therefore if there

is a group that is doing a dance at one point, the whole congregation participate in some way, know? But which is not possible in *Bharathanatyam*, in our culture know?

Is it possible? If we educate the people to know the importance of dance and using commentary before the dance presentation Also, requesting the congregation to join with music to sing while the dancers dance. Will it work?

The question is it will be only a dance accompanying a sinning. The possibility of integrating, not the full dance, few elements like gesture from dance form you know, into prayer.

For example the story of Susan, the entire story can be in the dance form.

In the liturgy, in any liturgy 'Word' proclamation is very important.

I propose to use dance because I believe that the action speaks better than the words.

But how many will understand. Very few will understand without verbal communication. I cannot ever visualise a scene where somebody really proclaims the 'Word' instead of the vocal. It has got its own power which is unfortunately, not well presented today. Even the latest letter of the Pope it speaks strongly in the favour of preparation verbal proclamation of the 'Word of God'. It is in this way, the dynamics of the 'Roman Liturgy' is present. From the beginning God speaks to us. The verbal proclamation comes there, and then we move on to the worship and, so on, know? So it is, a sort of climax, leading to a climax. But then, the question is, here is a rule where priest proclaims. It is very difficult for people and for us to visualise to move away from the verbal proclamation and bring dance.

Do you think as I said the 'The Word' which God speaks, enhances the youth and the children. If you appreciate and incorporate into the liturgy through dance, then children and women may get a chance for participate and decentralise the Priest dominated liturgy, thus bringing social transformation. What is your opinion?

It is a question of deeper study, how do we merge these two traditions. We are talking of one tradition that is liturgy and, this dance coming from another study or tradition.

What about the Vatican document which says, whatever is good in the culture can be incorporated in the Liturgy for the good of the people?

It is the question of inculturation, where it is a different process. And another reason why these all process of inculturation of dance, music, or whatever it is not so much encouraged in India is because what does mean by Indian? Is there such thing as Indian; there is more than one thousand Indian. For example I am Indian but my culture is not the same culture of the south India. So there is no commonness in Indian culture. So when you talk about the incorporation of this particular dance, it may be relevant to one particular culture. May be for the south Indian culture it will be relevant ant that part of the India should go into deeper and see how it can be done. But it is not possible for the so called Church of India or the Bishops conference to say, let us integrate this dance. Since last seven years I am in the liturgy commission and it is not possible because we cannot talk about one India. Politically yes but not culturally. It has to go through region because of this any kind of inculturation. Even in Northeast India we cannot talk about one culture. There is *Kashi*, there is *Naga*, and there is *Gharos*. There are more than 30 languages spoken in the Northeast India itself but we have a common mass and this mass unites everyone. So, therefore Indenisations if our tradition may be possible for some part of India but not for this region. I cannot see any possibility of integrating dance in the tribal community of ours. For us the tradition of dance is unknown. For us in our tradition of sacred dance as such, for us dance is a community event.

If Church allows incorporating this dance, as dance is deep rooted in our culture for evangelisation

Yes. Yes. So it has to be studied and go through the Documents to go about the inculturation. None of the Vatican Documents opposes the use of the cultural expression in the liturgy. *Varietates Legitimae* says inculturation has to follow the process. Evangelisation and inculturation, that step as I told you is the responsibility of that particular region. That has to be studied deeply and as per the directive given by the Church and if it is done properly than there is a possibility of incorporating dance in to the worship. The door is not totally closed. The Church never closes the door for anything like this. The Church gives more clarification and there is a Document called (*Legitimae*) which speaks about it.

What about your opinion about the girls on the altar? Is it distracting?

I don't have any problem in girls coming to the altar but suddenly if the girls come to the sanctuary with all the costumes then there is possibility of diverting the minds of the people. There should be a deeper study how to incorporate this dance in to worship. It

should not be patch work and it should not be a daily affair. It should be only for a special occasions.

If every parish encourage and organise this dance like catechism classes, it might help the children and they can do it in the children mass. What is your opinion about this?

One possibility is rather than straight away using in the liturgy, Dance can be integrated starting from outside the liturgy. Like lessons of faith and Bible stories, it should be an ongoing process and liturgy is the climax, so we should not start from liturgy. It should be the other way.

Christianity is different than other faith in the form of worship. Though the liturgy has a broader meaning in general it is said mainly the Holy Mass. I think to be one with other faith we need this cultural expression that is dance. So, that is why we need to incorporate dance in the Liturgy.

Your approach should not be immediately speaking dance in the liturgy. You have to go more broad ways. You should start from outside the mass. Otherwise there will be some resistance.

Do you think this dance can help with social transformation? Especially in the villages where there are caste systems, different religions, and difference between rich and poor. Can we bring equality among people which ultimately lead to a social transformation through dance? What is your view?

Of course that should be our ultimate aim to make a community of harmony. Wherever it is possible we should explore and we should go in a proper way. We should not create tension and division. It should be gradual way.

So, on the whole, is there a possibility of doing it?

There is no teaching of the Church saying that the door is closed. Don't contemplate on this. There is no such an indication. Rather the Document *Varietates Legitimae* says you want to do inculturation then do through proper process.

Participant Four - Bishop

Thank you so much for accepting to be a participant in my field research. I would like to know how about using dance in the liturgy, especially in Holy Mass. If you think that dance can be incorporated then, could you please speak about how dance can enhance the Roman Catholic Liturgy especially in India?

If you are rooting yourself in the Indian culture, you know that dance is a sacred art. In India dance is started in the temple and holy places so it is considered sacred and every gestures and dances always are in praise of gods or their companions. Therefore it is definitely sacred. But it is not the same so in Europe. In Europe dance is prosaic and therefore if you mix dance in liturgy it will become very unholy act,

Is it in the west?

But not in the Indian tradition, so therefore, this is the major difference that you have to see. When you speak about liturgy in the western mind; it cannot realise that, but in the Indian context—that can be realised. Secondly Indian dance is basically religious expression. It does not have pure secular symbols. It has religious symbols it can be transported to the secular world. Since the origin and the explanations basically religious and it can be used in liturgical services in India because it can never be provocative or destructive.

Yes it won't be a distraction for the people.

If you follow the spirit of India, because, in India dance is an expression of transcendence also. Is not only Lord's, actually, the incarnation of God and enacted through the dances. And that dance experience can also take you to the mystic of the incarnation. So it depends on the viewers. But it does have neither the costume nor the movement, does not have any provocative sense and elements. Therefore it is elative and it can lead to transcendence that is why they say Indian dance could lead you to transcendence. Actually when correct music and the gesture is well combined with the rhythm, it will create a good effect in the listener and therefore the dance performances are part of religious performance in Hinduism also. So it does not prevent us to have as a part of our own liturgy.

What is problematic in the Church is, we are still puritans who follow a western mentality of liturgy. This is an abomination, and therefore, there are some elements, who like to be

that the Church should be like a foreign plant inside. Like Fr. George use to say, it does not take root in India, it has to be inculturated. It has to observe the true nature of Indian culture. The true nature of Indian culture in dance is transcendence, leading to transcendence and it is used in religious context and not in secular context. And therefore you cannot derail the Indian Christian spirituality, see anything that will derail from the Christian spirituality which we should considered something strange. But it will not do, but there is a suspicion because the western mind cannot comprehend the eastern thing, so because of that suspicion, secondly there is a set of fundamentalist element also in Catholic religion and they are mostly manifested in terms of traditional believes. Even they want Latin liturgy, things like that, so this is a disappearing group and it will have to disappear in the church. And those set groups will be considering this as such, and therefore, but this is not necessarily the mind of the Church in India. In Church in India not only these classical performances like Indian dance and Bharathanatyam, even the tribal dances are today accepted in the liturgy. So the tribal dances are brought for the entrance processions, offertory processions, things like that. Therefore it is not only in Tamil culture but also we see in the tribal culture which is the primitive culture of India. They do not consider it as something very strange to the religious experience and therefore to say the dance will not be fitting for the religious places is not true. It can be really fitting it can be enhancing the spirit of the thing. But only it has to be performed by people who can give that whole significance perfection. Not only the perfection with the knowledge and authentic experience. See it is a discipline; see you have learnt it as a discipline. Simply somebody who has learns it commercially and simply does it without much expression and just shaking of the hands; that also de-sacralised the sacred thing and that type of thing we should avoid.

Even in Indian culture, somebody who does it in a very business type without emotions without getting into the whole ethos of dance will not be able to perform in a religious experience. So there are dangers for that, for anything there are always divisions because of globalisation and commercialisation. So we should not lead to that, we should guard ourselves from there. But we need authenticity in its original expression. It is not excluded from the Christian experience of transcendence; therefore you cannot say it is something strange to Christianity.

How far this helps in our diocese, will people accept dance in the liturgy?

People whether they accept it or not, it depends on the situation in which, this traditional faith is brought. This is very traditional, tradition though they are sometimes even up to, they will say four to five hundred years old Christians, so they would like to preserve the traditional faith. In the traditional faith they have not seen such an expression, when you have not seen such an expression; you do not feel at home. That is the problem, when you have not grown in it.

Is the traditional faith is the European faith?

It not necessarily European faith, it can be without these elements of dance also. Faith experience can include such an experience but may not have the chance to include it. Therefore it can be divided but where people are open and they would accept it with the explanation then it is possible, even in these villages many of the them, many of the things like *arathi*, welcoming people with *kumbum* and *kumkum*, and these are done even for me when I go in this Tuticorin diocese. So it is not very strange, in some place they also have processional dance but immediately there will be voice of protesting,

Have you taken any steps to promote these things in your diocese?

No. The basic problem here is, we need to promote many more things, values of the gospels and so many other types of things. So when you give priorities, these do not become a priority necessarily for today. When it evolves into a new form of a church, definitely we can do it.

So, liturgical dance is still in the list, yet to be decided about it usage?

Yes. There are so many things which we have to do. One of the important things is inculturation of our faith into the Indian culture. So, in that element, this will become one of the priorities, but not immediately, because there is other priority which we are working with. We had a diocesan synod and we decided lot of change in the value system according to the Gospels so that we have to active first and afterwards maybe we can.

Is it bringing dance into the liturgy is bringing Brahminical culture into the liturgy?

Suppose, you are doing PhD in English literature then you speak very good English, and specialised in Shakespeare and big poets like Wordsworth, Keats and other types of poets. But if you are specialising in this culture you must specialise in what English language puts it emphasise, you know, so if this culture has started from particular root, we have to accept it. But which is not today necessarily monopolised it. But why we have to be afraid today education is very much been popularised and therefore you may learn English, it does not mean that English hegemony is there. So same thing also, Brahmins could have started it, they have improvised it by all these things but today others have taken over. Kalai kavir is a classical example, and then people have taken over. Then particular group still cannot hold its hegemony, for it, others also can hold a hegemony for it. And what is important may be in the society, the hegemonic group may not allow the other groups to come up. But it has not prevented other groups from getting expertise in it, today there are very good dancers who are non-Brahmins. Therefore the world is true, they are there. And they may not come into big prominence in the media. This one (*Bharathanatyam*) because they are controlled by the upper class which may be still Brahminical groups

What about ‘*Manin kalai*’? Is it Folk and Bharathanatyam are not Manin kalai.

They say that, you have anything, you may bring a plant from another country and planted it in India today they say this came from Latin America, this came from China, this came from Australia but today when you eat it you don't think they have come from there, it is grown in our soil, if you can grow in your soil what is the problem in it. Suppose it will not grow at all you cannot grow grapes at all in this soil easily, grapes that give wine, so that may be foreign soil or there may be different or you may create artificial condition for that. But when it can grow naturally, grow in a particular climate soil then there is an Indian in it. That is why very often we mix with the Indian and Brahmin. This is one of the techniques of the hegemony group to say whatever good in a culture is there's. It is not necessary, everybody has contributed to that, once you have started and everybody has contributed to it.

Today for example, in English literature the Indians are getting it through. Many foreigners are getting as well, not only the Brahmins are getting the prize. What it shows, hegemony has taken out of their hands and they can equally come to the level of competence and excellence and can be rewarded and acknowledged by the British.

What they say is we are promoting the Brahminical culture and we are not looking for the people who are below the average, where the Church is supposed to bring these people up.

Classical dance is one form; folk art is another form you have nothing to mix with these two forms of art. And you don't need to hate one and have the other form. Both are art form and both have their validity in their own forum, you cannot perform the folk art in a temple, like a very big religion or you cannot take this one and perform in a folk art form. Each one has their own place and meaning, ethos and things like that. May be each purpose is different also there are some folk art which are meant for something. Take for example Karagatam, it is a folk art, but it is also used in a religious ceremonies. So many art forms are also used in religious but certain art forms may not be fitting into this therefore will have to look at it. So which art forms fit into which types of place and which types experience of people? So situation matters. Yes, you cannot, absolutely, take for example the tribal dancers, are they folk dance or classical dances, neither they are art forms of the tribal, This or that, here it is evolved itself and called one part is classical and another form folk. By classical what they meant is one group, monopolised it. If it is popularised it may call folk art also. But it was not popularised, nobody dare to popularise it and therefore it remained a privileged group art. But when it is becoming popularised then the hegemony goes when the hegemony goes, it becomes equal in the eyes of all.

Do you think to promote this art, the CBCI or the Church authority in India comes up to do something?

There are centres in India for music, dance and so many. The problem is those who are specialist can form, and therefore, specialised are very few. It is not forming that's all. And then you need to have an inclination for it and liking for it. The frame of work to understand the aspect of transcendence, and have to deeply study the Indian culture and all these types of things are to be considered, first. If you don't like the Indian culture, how are you to appreciate it? All these things (matters) are there, but Indian Church is not rejected it. It does not come even in the inculturation forms, in the entrance hymns and gospels, these all, are easily accepted in the liturgy, offertory also it is easily accepted.

When dance is used in the liturgy and when it presented to the congregation from the sanctuary, it is said that the dance is a patch work in the Holy Mass. Most of them

think it is just a performance, dancers dance and the congregation watch it. It was said, for these reasons the Church resists it.

There are certain art forms, where all cannot be participate. You have a very good picture painting, do you think all the people start painting it –No. You enjoy it know, enjoying is a very good functions of an art. If you can enjoy an art that is a very good sign you know, that you can also be one with that. Something when you feel that transcendence is a dance form you join it and enjoy, it does not mean unless you participate, you like it. All cannot participate in all art form, all cannot participate. There are some all can participate singing all can participate that also if you go for classical all cannot participate –No. Even in other singing also if you don't know the raga, or whatever is, sometimes it is always the knowledge you know, that does not mean I should not go for a musical performance. I can enjoy a musical performance. So to say you are watching or not, if you can understand and enjoy that then it is fine. That is enough even, priest is celebrating mass, you are only watching then you can say, what else he does, he does not do anything else. So you are also watching, so these arguments are empty arguments. Any art form can be admired, viewed and admired. Any art form; Painting, good painting, good music, any art forms, the architecture of building, you will go and enjoy, how good is the architecture you know. So any art form you enjoy,

So even in the liturgy we can do that. It is a sort of enjoyment, it won't be an entertainment or it can be an act of worship, for example, after they sing 'through him with him' doxology.

They come do the doxology, they do their arathi and all it's an act of praise. People participate in it. You cannot say they are not participating, in this diocese particularly in all parishes they do that. Any feast they singing that and the people come do little bit of dancing also is there, it is there in all, my parishes.

How about in your Tuticorin diocese?

Yes. In my diocese, it may not be in this form. It exists already. The important is what people can easily accept, and that's all. You must make everything acceptable in that way. When people are educated, they will accept it.

Participant Five – Bishop

Thank you so much for accepting to be one of the participants in my field research. I would like to know the role of dance in the liturgy in Indian RC churches. I look at *Bharathanatyam* as a form of worship and using dance in the liturgy can enhance the worship. I would like to know your view on this matter.

I am for using dance in the liturgy, because in the bible, you have heard David danced, while he was praising God. So dance is the expression of one's devotion to God. It is also faith expression; which means, faith expression of all man, you are a specialist in dance, you know that dance is an expression and it expresses through various parts of the body. And really I would say, it is a movement of adoration. You have known that, it is told in the Bible that you have to worship God with whole heart, soul mind and heart. So dance is a very nice vehicle for expression of our adoration to God. In itself dance is an appropriate vehicle, expressing our faith. It comes very well in the liturgy. But we have certain restriction regarding dance. We are following Roman liturgy which means public action. Public action means public official action. Public official action means it has rules and regulation which are controlled by the central authority. You have been to Bangalore and seen NBCLC, and you would have asked people's opinion. So at the same time, many of our dances are connected with Hindu rituals. There is a section of people who are not in favour of dance in the liturgy.

Is it because it is connected with Hindu rituals?

They feel, first of all they feel it is a distraction. Secondly, they feel why at all we should bring here, these dances, because they all are traditional. The new generation may think different. Most of our people belong to old generation. There are centres like NBCLC, who are trying to incorporate but even they will do in limited situation. Though I told it is a

very good way of expressing our faith but there are practical difficulties in having integrated. So here and there you may see some places it is integrated. In fact I also integrated dance in our diocese for the entrance hymn when the priests are coming, we welcome them with *Karagam* dance. Then, afterwards at offertory, procession, then *arati*, in doxology through Him, with Him... Not regularly, but for special occasions. That is because I am the boss over here. So I tell to people if they come to me to ask about the dance in the liturgy, then I will give them answer that why I have introduced it? It is a sign of joy, happiness, but I cannot do everywhere the same. Like outside Trichy diocese. See the Bishops is the controller of worship. So it depends on him whether to use dance or not. But Church allows certain points. For example, in NBCLC they worked out a plan, like taking *arati*, squatting on the floor, certain, few elements on the Indian thing to do it, it is allowed officially, anything else like dance extra will depend on local Bishops. If I take any steps I am responsible to explain to people. And if you don't explain, people will give all kinds of opposition to it. So it depends on the Bishops to be innovative and creative. In Trichy we have this, but not on regular basis, not daily on occasions, there is a dance group that invites the entrance procession. Dance in general; I am not talking about any particular dance like Carnatic, Indian dance. Even when there is dance in Trichy also, many people come and tell why Bishop you are having dance in the Holy Mass. They say that 'it distracts us'. I said 'Yes. Yes'! And, those to whom I can talk I explain to them. And those who are closed minded I don't explain to them because it is waste of time. Also to them, I tell that I will take it, to consideration and with that answer they will go happily.

Do you think using dance in the Holy Mass will bring social transformation to the society?

No. Liturgy for us, we have to prepare the people first. For example when we explain, as I told in the beginning, we have to worship God with all our heart, soul mind, and every body part of our body then they understand. So simply say dance, then they say what this dance is? This is distracting. So we can introduce dance provided we prepare the people. Explain to them. So, many, they don't do that. What they do is, today, immediately they say ok, we have function let us have dance, so people don't understand it. Suppose we have catechises for some time, dance is there, this is worship, this is dance, how dance express the worship. So, even from the beginning, in the catechism class, children onwards they might be told and prepare their minds and hearts, then after that you do they will understand about using dance. The trouble is many of us the priest as such they don't know it and they don't explain. Simply they say for novelty, let us have dance. When that movement rise, if you train the people properly, systematically and when people are trained, they will be interested, we can do it provided there is a good preparation. This art, everywhere they should like it, and then it will spread. They see dance in our context as cultural, because it express the meaning. They see dance in the cultural functions, they won't see connected with church. There is a move that Church making it, what you call it, is inculturate. It takes elements that are not found in the Western Europe, they only found in India, they take the good, for people all those are not Christian is devilish. They don't know that there are various good things in culture. So they don't know, ignorance, we can't blame them. We have one set of formal worship and all know that only. It is all depends on the leaders of the Christian community, to give the people explanation.

There are theological basis to incorporate dance in the liturgy apart of culture. Yes. It is there, Jesus came, and he was inculturated the people here, Indian people, so many

traditions and cultures of Indian people. So Indian people way of worshiping, there is theological basis; the very fact that Jesus became man, incarnation of Christ, he assumed everything that is human. He does not belong to any particular group though he was a Jew and born on particular place. But he was also God. That is the meaning of his death and resurrection and after that he became the lord of all. Before that he was particularly a Jew belonging to Palestine. After the resurrection he became the lord of all, for every culture, for every language, for every way of life. So whether it is China or India, whatever good in the culture is taken and used. So who decide what is good, the Church. They decide. Among them there is also difference of opinion. Church means which comprises people like 'me' and 'you'. We are all one community. So the community must be trained. If they are not trained, they all will say, No, No, it is all wrong. That's why I am insisting for training. You train the people first, that Jesus became man first, and he assumed the thing and all these theology of inculturation. So after the training, catechism is requires. Training the people and the people are convinced then you introduce, then it will be successful. That I give more importance for training and inform them, now and then I have all these sort of things, like people object and I explain. But it won't have a systematic training as such. I think may be after people like you come and give the right training, then we can think. So far we don't have systematic training as such.

Thank you so much.

Participant Six - Priest

Thank you so much for giving a chance to interview you. You are a well-known international theologian. Your writing has inspired many of the Church members and encouraged inculturation. I would like to know how much, or how can, incorporation of dance in the Holy Mass can enhance the Roman Catholic liturgy especially in India. I would like to know your view on using it in the liturgy, as a liturgical inculturation.

No nothing very special I think even before the 2nd Vatican council started we were student interested, promoting Indian culture. So we are student of philosophy already, say in the year 1958, 60 and so on. We had a special academy and you know the series published in a paper called *Sathya bodhini* those days from Trichy, where different articles on architecture, music and dance things like that.

Which year is it?

Somewhere around 60s, in the year 1960 or something, afterwards I myself did some course in Indian music for 2 years. Indian music in Tamil Nadu College of music here, I think 1961 to 63. We were interested in it afterwards what happened is you know we have to sing in the mass and in the benediction in Latin only but we were able to sing a song in Tamil when everything is over. It is a concluding song, because typically it is outside the liturgy. And so we used to make use of it. Or we use to sing *bajans* Tamil *bajans* in public meetings conference and so on.

Was it allowed only at the end of the liturgy?

But then in 1965 the council came so then I remember I was studying theology and overnight instead of singing everything in Latin say on Sunday mass we began to sing in English. The same we began composing a high mass in Tamil. And so, this is about the process of inculturation. At the same time we were also interested in promoting Indian Christian spirituality because the ashram movement was already started and people like swami Abhishktanandha and so on. So I was also interested in the area of Indian Christian spirituality and then of course I went to do my PhD research because the idea of Indianising the liturgy and so on was now approved by Rome after the Second Vatican Council. I focused my thesis on one number in the constitution of liturgy which speaks about the liturgy is made of the elements of which you cannot change and the elements that

you can change. And so I wrote a thesis on what are the criteria which helps you to judge what you can change and what you can't change. And I think my discovery was that only thing you cannot, that has not actually changed in the history, that you cannot change is washing with the water for baptism and eating and drinking together for the Eucharist in the name of Christ. Everything have changed the symbols, words in history and there also people writing the possibility about using eating and drinking together but not necessarily bread and wine. The local bodies have written already some comments on it and therefore we were all open to inculturation and then once when I came back to India in 1973, that was the time we were devising the new Indian rite. The 12 points and so on and I was also in the group.

Was it in the year 1968 the 12 points were devised?

No it came much later. It came only in 1974 or something. And so I was part of the group that try to develop Indian liturgy and the rituals which was afterwards published by Bangalore NBCLC. So I was part of the group that was doing that.

Were you a member of the committee?

Yes. I was a member of the Committee.

Did they choose you because of your study and experience?

Interest in the liturgy and inculturation, we also began Indian prayers in Indian Christian spirituality seminar. It was part of whole movement. The idea of Indian spirituality, Indian liturgy, Indian theology and the whole thing coming together, I was also interested in Indian theology so that way my interest in Indian theology began, not only interest, I tried to do something.

As a priest what you think about present Roman Catholic Church in India?

At present there is no big thing. I already told once the ordinary people have no problem if worship in Tamil, Tamil *bajan* or Malayalam or Hindi or whatever languages. We also use Indian symbols. But we always have one group of people in Church who are grown to identify the Latin liturgy. And whatever we are doing. I always remember there is saying if you light a candle it is Christian and if you light *kuthu vilakku* it is Hindu. Those kinds of identification were there. But there are some people not like that. But very often the kind of people who were not happy with the idea of inculturation I would call them half-educated.

The priests and sisters and not the ordinary people, the ordinary people if the priest says this is what you should do today they will do. The other things whatever happened in the Church but at home they light the lamp and take *arathi*, so the liturgy has not anything new whatever they were doing, at home during the festivals were brought to church. The people have no problem but half educated priests who identify themselves with the Latin liturgy who says candles for Christians and who encourages wearing shoes inside the Church they are the people should be convinced but ordinary people have no problem. The other kind of problem is unfortunately what happened in the beginning is not using Indian rituals, lighting the lamp and sprinkling the waters and so on. But they also started chanting the Sanskrit *slokas* during the mass. And in NBCLC all these things were chanted in Sanskrit that of course opposed by the people who were not used to Sanskrit. In the caste system Sanskrit is identified with Brahmins so Dalits and the tribal's and other backward class people did not accept it. Sanskrit is a foreign to the ordinary people in the villages and to the tribal as on. So you r not improving anything,

So in that sense some of the Sanskrit chants using in the liturgy, so unfortunately the whole thing which were taken not liturgy form but Sanskrit form, some people were opposing it but the reason was not the rituals like *arathi* and so on. I am sure when I was a kid my mother will take *arathi* when I finished first communion when I was seven they took *arathi* to welcome me, it was our custom something common. If you take *arathi* in the Church nobody will bother about it. But the problem of course if you started chanting in Sanskrit, I have done same rituals chanting in Tamil. And they had no problems.

So the language is the problem?

So it was a wrong decision of NBCLC to have all Indian things, and Sanskrit is equally unknown to everybody and therefore using Sanskrit as a national language I think it was a wrong decision and proved the reason for opposing it. But supposing they have used the 12 points with the local language much of the opposing would not have happened so most of the people opposing it, and calling it Brahminical because of Sanskrit and not because of rituals.

You said that you used it in Bangalore. I have seen using Kannada in Bangalore, Hindi in Varanasi, but still why it is not prevalently used, like sitting in floor and so on?

But it is of some other reasons not to do with the liturgy. And the other reason many of the tribal's and the Dalits and other backward community they became Christians not because of the religious reason but for the cultural reasons, so far them Christianity means western way of living.

Why do they want to live in western culture?

Because in our vocabulary Dalits means oppression in the caste system, here they feel liberation from caste system in the western culture, for these reasons people don't want to go back to Hindu Indian, they confuse Hinduism with the symbols. The fact when we see NBCLC took the Indian rite, I can tell you the secret, the introduction of the book was written by me, explaining the rituals was written by me and the argument given bias for precisely to *arathi* and so was not because they are Hindu. Simply because they represent the social right people practice in non – religious situation like marriage and welcoming people. They use things therefore they were used as cultural and social rights and not a religious right. Not particularly Hindu. But the problem of course some Christians not from Tamil Nadu and from the churches not from socially culturally inculturated people coming from Goan background, Portuguese background they confuse Indian with Hindu. They want Christians be westerns, they don't want Christians be Indian and therefore the confusion between the Indian and Hindu is the responsible for the opposition for the inculturation but it is not based precisely what is culturally what is Indian and what is Hindu.

How do you feel, how do you think? First you are an Indian or Christian or an Indian Christian?

No problem, I always felt I am an Indian Christian much before the Vatican II Council.

Why did you choose to be Indian Christian?

I did not chose, I am an Indian, I did not born in a Western family and I did not go to mass wearing a suite and coat. I come from an ordinary village in Tamil Nadu.

First you think you are an Indian then you bring your faith into it, isn't?

It is not the question of 'after that the faith comes' but we are Christians, we are Indians, personally I did not felt that. In a village; we are Indian, some are Christians and some are Hindus, and some are Muslims, and of course, the basic difference that the religion. But

socially and culturally they have no difference. The problem would be, if I am from a westernised situation, because I am Christian, and I dress up wearing a trouser and suits, and playing piano and guitar. This may be true in Bombay and Goa, but in ordinary Tamil village we are, from childhood, listening to Tamil songs except in the liturgy because it was in Latin. I did not feel because I was Christian I should play piano. It may be true for a person who was from Mangalore or who is studying in English Medium School and not for me. I was never a western cultured person. I was an Indian Christian.

Do you think that liturgy is considered very important by the ordinary people or they just come to pray as a custom or practice, what influence will it make in their life unless they come and take part in the liturgy? Why I put this question to you is, I heard, of course liturgy is very important and it is the source of our faith, unless one is baptised he/she cannot take part in the liturgy what do you think about it father?

Yes. The problem of course is that liturgy is Christian, commonly for worship, and you do not accept a non-Christian to take part in the liturgy that does not mean a non-Christian should not pray outside the liturgy, even the Christian community does so many things outside the liturgy. If you go to a village today or to a Church in the village they start saying the rosary and so many other prayers especially during the lent or they will have other prayers and then the liturgy. It is not part of liturgy, it is part of public prayers, they will have morning and every prayers and liturgy and all that. But liturgy is what priest does. It is a different kind and therefore even in the Church people has faith outside the liturgy. Liturgy is only an official prayer of the Church. And it is one of the sacraments. The other sacraments are done only once but liturgy is done repeatedly therefore the crucial and very important prayer is liturgy, the priest presents is very important. But very common question is how much people participate in many places and as it is today people answers all the prayers but many occasion only sisters and religious people replies all the prayers. And the people simply sit and watch what priest does and only receives communion, but ideally ok. I think I am more upset with the people in the west than in India. People in India and Sri Lanka - if you offer the mass in Tamil they will say all the prayers and participate and join in the singing but many places in Europe and west they hardly come to church. They don't know the prayers and do not take part in singing it is not part of catholic life. They come to Church once in a while for the ceremony whereas in India people are practicing and all those who come to the Church they would know the

prayers and all would respond. Most of the singing also they participate they know the songs.

For Roman Catholic, whatever we do, we start with the liturgy. When we start a new business or children going for higher studies or blessing of a house for everything we start with liturgy. Even though there are lots of prayers still people would like to have Holy Mass for every special occasion. There is a satisfaction after attending the mass. So we give lots of importance to mass. So what I want to know is whether this liturgy will bring any changes in the society.

No. In this kind of society and the situation, Mass has simply become a devotional exercise, they think idea of the priest is a mediator between you and God. So presence of the priests adds more value, so we have created a sense of thinking in the people that Jesus is present in the Eucharist. And therefore it is very sacred and important for the common people. So it is nothing to do with the reality of life. It is merely a spiritual exercise.

I personally think that liturgy being centre of the Roman Catholic it could bring some change and transformation in the life of people?

You can bring the people together in the Eucharist and make them participate etc. and etc. When, at the same time you have to rediscover the Eucharist. Just now the Eucharist is more often putting on the place your prayers and to go for communion and so on, it is not seen as you go to mass and attend mass and prayer for yourself. And only time you bother the person in during the time of peace, when the priest say give peace to one another, otherwise you do not know the person. And so you say the Eucharist is sharing the bread, but you don't share the bread, just you go and receive the communion from the priest, the priest distributes you know. The typical idea of prayer, whereas, not community based prayers but in basic communities what happened the people share the scriptures and share the Eucharist among themselves, It becomes a community celebration. Then it can be useful to transform the people. But very often it is not that, especially if you go to the village men on one side or it is divided on the caste system the whole key stone structure there is no community at all.

You mean to say the Eucharist adoration is supposed to bring the community together so do you think some cultural elements are there in that which people are

used to their day today life. You think if we introduce such a thing in the liturgy we could transform them to some extent to come together or something?

What we should do is, may be at least it is easier in Europe here what happens is we have some crowd something to celebrate. In Europe the group is small and some of the European churches after the mass, they gather behind the Church and have a cup of coffee and meet each other and even in the liturgy also, they say hello, here you have huge crowd you know, around five hundred people for the mass so it is a mass production and this kind of community living is not easy. So what we should do is to be a really one with the Eucharist, we should celebrate in the smaller group for the school students or associations or basic Christian communities in the parish where they should have mass once in a month in one of the houses with fourteen or fifteen families in those kind of mass you experience the Eucharist as a community and we should multiply these experiences and not to depend on a mass production on Sunday. I am not against the mass like big crowd participating on a feast day. But that is the only experience then Eucharist is not playing a big role or proper role because they need to experience Eucharist as community gesture and that you can do only in a smaller group.

We say that in a Eucharist celebration—we are all one?

It does not work, it is not practical thing, the problem in multiple Eucharistic celebrations and in smaller group will be the problem of priest. We don't have enough priest, so a priest has to say three mass on Sunday and he has no energy, he has to say not only three masses but also some other celebrations. He also has to go like blessing of the house and visiting the poor and sick etc., so how can in a parish a priest assure a group masses, so the only way is to ordain lay men and women so the choice here is if we want to make really the Eucharist meaningful, you should make provision for that which means we need more priests, then we can have group mass. If necessary ordain good married people who can handle the little things. Then we have the parish priest in the parishes so on a Sunday, on a big feast day we all come together. Even on a Sunday in Europe they all come together for singing and when it is comes for reading, homily and so on there is a teacher who takes the children away so like that if you have possibilities to have smaller groups to make Eucharist more meaningful and the lack of the priest is a hindrance to this. In places like India where there is a lot of practice and lot of crowd come for mass you can't handle so

what you can have is the priest saying mass and there is choir singing and most of the people come and go, and they don't have a community spirit at all.

Using dance which is part and parcel of our community will it bring people together?

But still it has to be dance you know, dance is one way can bring people together for some project so there are some ways to bring people together.

Is there is a possible of doing it?

Sure dance is one way see, but the thing is, once again- it all depends on what you call dance. It is one thing, ideally in this speaking the abstract, see dance is one way of experiencing your attitudes, emotions and so on you can do that through words, you can do that through gestures, you can do that like *panchanga pranaam*, you can do that in music, so it is possible through dance, it is one expression. If you speak and sing there is no reason why you cannot do dance. This is one form of expression. The second thing will come, if actually through dance if you want to promote community that kind of a thing, it must be a dance where all can be participate, for instance in Africa as soon as the liturgy starts the drums start playing, the whole community is shaking the bottoms and shaking the bodies, according to the clapping so on, I have seen this in the Congo liturgies for instance also the mass hours the celebrants they also moving, the mass in the altar and the whole community participates in this kind of things. But in India for instance, for the problem, of course is that in *adhivasis* dance the whole community does not participates because of the big crowd and only one group participates and, then of course, then it come to say things like Bharathanatyam of course people who are capable can only do this.

Bharathanatyam by itself is not a group dance. It is much more classical individual dance, then of course! What happens? The community element is diluted because ultimately the community becomes the spectator of a small group that performance. You are not performing it and so there are these kinds of problems. When you speak seriously of Indian classical dance, but, if you can involve a ways in which all people can participate through some gestures and movements, then that will be much more, even let say, the idea of dance speaking be a spectacle it is not necessarily and it need not be a negative element. Because just as let us say, I may not be a singer but somebody is singing I can get lost in the music, in the same way somebody is expressing his or her devotion through dance, I can identify myself with her and become part of it, but that requires an extra effort, so that I am not a

merely a spectator but I become a participant. But we have to train people for this. These people have to understand what gestures the girl is doing? So that they can identify with that, so people have to be trained but that remains a possibility, though it is one person or small group is dancing somehow you are identified and get into it. I have seen this in that in some Hindu groups that people are so much part of the thing and they know what exactly she is doing. The mudras and all, therefore they can follow. Because it is from their religion but very often in our situation because of the background, if you are dancing they don't know what you are doing really. And the singing words are not clear, so and for all these interferes the thing, but ideally speaking where people can follow what the dancers is doing and they can follow the music and follow the words etc., that there should be possibilities of participating, but then it is always difficult because you are dancing and you would not observe it. And when you are observing of course, let's say, there is every possibilities of, let's say now, for instance, I had to attend a conference in Chennai Bishop's conference some years ago, there were some girls doing Bharathanatyam for offertory, entrance whatever, so some Bishops afterwards complained, that they could not object the dancing, because the girls had danced for pope all that, but they all complaint that they were distracted.

Which year it happened, is it CCBI or CBCI conference?

I don't know the year, may be some eight years before, the dancing was done by Santhom communication centre and the organisation was done by the famous Satyabhama university – Engineering college, so some Bishops even complained that they are tempted, they said that they were not looking at the gestures and the Bhava of the girl or music but they were looking at the girls.

Do you think it is personal or because of dance it happened?

No they can look at the girl even without dancing, but the thing is, it would be different, for instance, as an African I am also dancing with them I may not going to look at the girl that way but if I am sitting an observing, there is a possibilities that my mind wonders instead of identifying myself with what she is doing, I am looking at her Breast or whatever ornaments or whatever hair styles, therefore I feel I am tempted. You train people to look at the Samaritan woman and not at the girl, and the gestures are simple enough so that people can follow, the gestures can be simple so that all can follow, one step further I go and say that the dress should be changed, we are not doing Bharathanatyam on stage, it

is liturgy, so wear good saris which cover your legs, or the Bharathanatyam dress which highlights the parts of the body and nicely combed hair etc. Today's Bharathanatyam dress highlights the beauty of the girl and highlights the feminine beauty, it is good and I am not against it but in the liturgy it is not necessary, but then all the highlights disturb the liturgy

So you are talking about how the dances should be presented in the liturgy. But some of the institutions like, you know NBCLC and Kalai Kaviri and all those institutions where I was working, don't do Bharathanatyam dance in the liturgy, Bharathanatyam is a base/ techniques to learn the moves. It helps to perform the dance, through dance to communicate or interpret gospel. Especially me, whatever I choreographed for the liturgy or for our Church, I choreograph the moves to communicate the message and I don't teach the dance what I learnt in the dance class. But still I don't understand, why dance is not allowed in the liturgy?

That means simply over all prejudice they don't want to look at it, they simply say they know what dance is, they have seen in films and so on. And mentally they can't go through the liturgy and they don't even want to look at your efforts. One thing is that if you basically have no objection then you are open to examine what you are doing and see whether it is useful or not. If before even looking at it if they have pre-judgement about whether you should have dance in the liturgy or not and you think dancing will be distracting and things like that. Then you don't want to consider what is happening that may be the reason often.

Cardinal Arinze in one of the interviews on liturgical dance said that liturgical dance is a spiritual expression. Such dance should be able to communicate the message, if any community which has traditional dance of that kind can be used as liturgical dance. Even after the dance the people should be wrapped up in prayer. They should be able to reflect the message communicated. His opinion is that the West countries do not have such dance forms.

But, then the problem, of course is, let us say, now everything in Bharathanatyam, faces (Facial Expression) shows and all that, but the problem is, let us say as soon as the dance group start dancing the eyes tends to wonder from one to another. Therefore you are not concentrating what is being done. It is a group, if it is only one girl it is different, you look at only one girl and don't look at other. There it comes spectacle once again, secondly if

the facile expression is so important then people should be able to look at your face, now what happens if you are looking at the back and if you are looking at the priest, then priest only can look at your face. What emotions that you are showing. Yes how does this fit in the liturgy? Let us say may be if you are saying, liturgy is being, say suppose, where the gospel passage of Samaritan passage is read and you are showing it a kind of from the altar and the people can watch your face and then they can identify with you. But you are doing towards the altar, and every people are looking at your back and they will only look at your body. They are not looking at your face and Bhava and all. So that also is a problem, Very often you know, therefore you have to set up such a way where people can see you. Now what is happening let us say, suppose for instance your dancing in that chapel say in NBCLC but which ever people wherever they are standing can see you, but suppose you go to the Ascension church, you're standing on the stage, except people who are sitting in the first five rows others can't see you watch your movement.

Do you have options for this to help me to solve this problem?

So therefore you don't do this in huge crowds, we can't do it in huge crowd. If it is a huge crowd do it carefully. In huge crowd you won't be able to do it. If you really want to do it in huge crowds what you should do is – ok if you are doing it in a feast day or etc. Then you should have number of screens. You are dancing on the altar and the other side, for example, there are four to five screens every ten yards, and then people will be able to see you. You may be only one person standing, there may be people sitting in the first few can see your face. The others could see your face in the screen and therefore then it will connect by looking at your face, and so that kind of possibilities is there in the modern times or you have smaller groups and you know or you have a bigger group then you focus on other things. Like you want to focus on joy or something, like that and you can come up with dance or group dance, people sort of something to engage to clap hand and to take part in the dance, then it is ok. So you have to choose. What kind of dance and which occasion and how it is done and whether people have access to it. All these you have to think of.

In the Eucharistic celebration people are supposed to have a celebration mood and not to fold the hands and sit quietly. It should be a joyful celebration. One cannot say that 'I am happy and keep their lips closed'?

The thing is that there is not a whole understanding of the Eucharist among the people because till today most of the people would think the Eucharist means that you're facing God. That is why they even say that priest should turn to the altar and turning back and praying in the name and so on. They are not thinking it as a community celebration. That is one issue. It will take time to change all these things.

Thank you for your time and sharing your views.

Participant Seven

My study is to explore the understanding of using dance especially Bharathanatyam in the Holy Mass: RC liturgy. I have been in this field since many years. You have witnessed it and as well as our Indian Church. I found there is always a resistance to use dance in the liturgy. Many times I have tried to answer the Bishops, priests or sisters and people in regard to use of dance for the worship. Now, through this study, I am trying to bring a theological, historical perspective to incorporate dance in the liturgy. I would like to know your view on using dance in the liturgy

This is after listening to your sharing I could see three or four point's especially in terms of your conscience of your doctorate. Firstly the historiography of dance, you are trying to rewrite the very history of the evaluation of the Bharathanatyam, the very approach you are taking something very contrary to the general conceptions of Bharathanatyam today. It is a Brahminical way of understanding. The understanding of this dance seems to be that '*Bharathanatyam* is imposed in the name of the religion on the people. It is not an easy task, it is a peculiar task that you have to find out, and you have to substantiate the fact and figures. In the very beginning it would have been a folk basis but later it would have evolved into Brahminical way so always the upper class Brahmins will catholicise everything what is happening today. Trying to bring under the umbrella of Hindu Catholicism, so that is the cultural, religious, political, convictions. So this kind of things, this is what is happening today in the political scenario. They try to bring all non-Christians and non-Muslims and non-Sikhs and so under the umbrella of Hinduism. That is the phenomenon happening so that the tribal and outcaste and the Dalits. What I feel and interpreter as if they belong to Hindu religion though they, Dalits and tribal never likes to associate with Hinduism. What is happening is consciously or unconsciously if people look outside Hindu caste system attracted they don't have any scriptures whether it is Hindu religious interests. That is the one thing so also, so we can look at the whole things, it is not an easy thing. India has that kind of imagination, and also India has freedom of pluralism to interpret the same thing in a pluralistic way, so this is one section of your doctoral thesis set up. You have to substantiate with the historic facts and figures etc. So you have to analyse who are the dancers of the temples who are they, are they Dalits and Tribal or Brahmins what was their status etc...There are so many issues you know. If you argue the dance has come from folk

level or Dalits and how do they enter into the temple. Normally they are not allowed in the temple you know. Even if some people come to Hinduism there is a kind of baptism re-baptism etc. happening. There are so many issues if you really... There was no caste system at all, only during Brahminical period the whole caste system came in. There is one historic point that you have to argue and you have to establish that it has a folk basis.

You have to argue and fight that is one part of it. Now what I would like to say is speak more on the religious flow and substance in this situation of Indian culture. One thing I can say is that Indian culture is religious culture. It is one thing every aspect every bit every part of life is some have incorporated from Hindu religion dimension, very inclusive religion. It is much totalled religion. There is continuity in every aspect of human life. Political, sociology, dance and everything; so dance is very much belonging to Indian culture and actually Indian religion. So religion is the overall perspective, over all contexts, overall text and values everything happening in India. Here we cannot understand religion in a very limited perspective. In customary level, we find you know very limited, traditions or dance traditions or whatever traditions they are in the oral level, they don't have any written text and so naturally a political dimension also. Hindu participation also, they have a kind of tendency to flow to upper caste, Brahminical religion and that is the another way of looking at it. But this you have to establish in the beginning, we have tribal or Dalits or folk level but later Brahmins would have taken and made it as their own. That could be one of the things and the another thing you know for example what could have happened in various levels of Hindu religion in history for example in *Ramayana* Sita and Rama we have more than twenty five *Ramayana*, for example what is spoken *Ramayana* is Brahminical *Ramayana* where Krishna (Rama) and Sita and Ravana these characters you know there is another dimension Valmiki *Ramayana* and *Kamber Ramayana* of south. There is a tribal *Ramayana*. Sita that word itself comes from Plough, there is a plough Sita means may be that they, where they cultivated the land in the constitution Sita is the sister of Ravana, and Rama is brother, Raman has stolen Sita from Ravana that way....

It is Ravana.

Sorry Rama is the villain and Ravan is the brother of Sita and Rama goes to Lanka and takes Sita. What I am saying is, the text, these are text interpreted to their convenient and according to their political and social intentions, kind of discipline etc. This often imposed on human being whether it is Islamic religion or Christian religion or from the very

moment on wards the discipline religion into the lives of the people. It is something got from the outside imposed on them. So religion is something different. It is a kind of drastic divide between religion and secular life. So it is our way of looking at it. But Indian situation they go deep into the religious identity or the religious consciousness of Indian culture. I would say basically Indian point of view means human beings are religious beings. Basically it is not something given. Basically human beings are religious being because they have consciousness. So what I mean by this special consciousness, only human beings have consciousness, it is a quality, it is ultimate existence of logic quality. Once it is gained it cannot be erased from our system.

It is a basic quality, this consciousness. It is a potentiality, you have to realise it. What is this consciousness? So when we basically get interested in ourselves and like try to understand the very significance of life. We are basically seekers. We have to seek the meaning of life. We seek a logo that is the basis of our whole life.

So when we seek the logos the religion just happens not evolves just happens. It just happens in our search because we are searching so only a seeker will have a religion. It is not something outside. It comes from within the consciousness. So in this happening of religion dance comes also. Dance comes; I would say a religious language because basically it is a radical language. Dance is an intimate religious language. It is a most perfect, profound expression of our inner consciousness, inner sentiments. So here dance is not an external action. It is a kind, flowing of inner consciousness. That is why when we look at the whole experience, the dancers should generate the real dance. There cannot be a real difference between dancer and dance. There is only one dance; the dancer becomes the dance. He goes beyond the frames. He knows the whole existence, so in that the whole existence, whole cosmos, the whole creation, is a dance. I put in that way. And one becomes the wave which goes beyond his body and everything merges with. That is why we give lot of expression and *bhavas* etc... So he becomes the wave of the whole ocean of the existence and this is how one can understand ocean. A wave like individual human beings, like a drop of water can understand the ocean of existence only by becoming wave otherwise it cannot be understood. Each drop of water has in ocean in one way or the other. This is not the ocean but this drop of water it wants to know what ocean is and what are the depth and the dimension and there is no other way except to become wave, total surrender to the ocean. Then this drop of water becomes the wave. You know it gets travelled to any way to any

depth. So that way, dance helps us to become waves of the ocean. So the basic thing there is no other way. For example, take the ocean, the ocean needs waves also for manifestation. So the gravity of the existence needs. Dance is the wave of ocean. Dance is the wave of the existence. Yes Universe. So a dancer has to become that wave of existence. That way the ocean needs the wave for its manifestation otherwise, ocean is a potentiality it has no movement. So dance gives real expression of existence. I mean the ocean is expressed or manifested through dance. Then that becomes the real adoration and worship, real and powerful that is the each human being is invited in this existence to give a new meaning. Mainly one with the existence that is why I used to say is the existence dreams through. Existence tries to see itself through the mission of each human being, needs some wave. Ocean needs expression. So wave is the expression. So existence tries to know. I would say God wants dream through us. There is no other way, like the ocean tries to express through its waves, so this is the relationship. Dance is the right person really. Then it becomes real worship.

Could you repeat please, dance is right then it will become worship?

Dance becomes the worship. Dancer is the real one through whom God dreams try to visualise existence. It is perfect there is a lot of transparency lot of intensity is there you know like the wave. You know there is full of movement. Avidity is there, it is not that way, we can put it another, and I always considered God whatever you say are existence the reality. It is basically, karma actually. And the beautiful expression of this Karma is dance. The whole, for example; when we look into the meaning everything is dancing you look at the tree, tree moving, it is dancing; you look at the flowers, butterflies and everything. You can look at the whole thing, it is dance. The existence is dance, we human being since we have the conciseness positively, take interest then only we become dance. We are the people who resist the existence. The moment, we can see the wisdom but we can get so many expressions that way, now here the existence is the dance. God is the dancer we can say. We cannot even say God is not a dancer, but God is dance. Dance is part of a human expression. God wants to express himself through human beings Sometimes we in proxies theology they say God is not the creator, God is the creation. The whole creation is God

So God is manifested in the creation?

We cannot separate him from creation or God and Creation because there is only unity you know. We cannot divide God into creator and creation. God is dance. It is like God is garden not gardener. It is an external understanding. Gardener and garden, that kind of separation, now I have told you religion happens in our process of seeking when we become the seeker and the important of dance comes here. So when we look into the religious a kind of search and a journey basically there are 3 things you know. There is a seeker, there is a seeking and there is a sought. There comes a movement when all these three things are rolled together and becomes one. And at that movement the seeker becomes a seer, *sakshi*. That means he becomes the *akshi*. The eye of the existence at that movement my ego cannot existence that is the religious knowledge.

When the sought whatever you say the God when that knowledge comes I cannot exist. I just become one with them. Like the drops of the water becomes one with the wave. So objective knowledge for example something objective we can borrow. We can borrow it from the market, new clear water you say. For example once Einstein went to the theory of relativity he has to positively work hard. Once it is discovered that objectively the scientific knowledge becomes own property anybody can understand there is no need for that search. It is given a readymade product but here in religious knowledge everyone has to teach us. Jesus Christ Buddha Mahaveer then only we can get the realisation. For example the history of resurrection that is the greatest form of dance. God Jesus has come, for example the smile of existence. So that cannot be borrowed, he has given a wave how to dance.

Could you tell me something about the resurrection; you are trying to tell about the God and resurrection.

No let me complete, so resurrection means Jesus only. First fruit of the resurrection that does not mean we can buy resurrection from market. If you want to resurrect like Jesus if you want that new life what is the life of Jesus Christ, there is no other easy way except Jesus Christ a total surrender that is why I always understood and think that cross is the stage or spectrum on which Jesus really danced. And this dance is come out beautifully in the term of resurrection. Christmas is not really in the crib actually on the cross Jesus was really on the cross he resurrected on the cross that is the really rebirth here is no biological birth so just here dance becomes a kind of sadhana because it helps us to total surrender.

So, on the cross Jesus totally surrendered to the father. It was a rebellion against the father and it was his intelligent and not of the rebellion against the father. The drop of water cannot rebel against the ocean; see he was asking and re-questioning and interrogating the will of the father. So then he was intelligent and no point asking and he surrendered. So the drop of water surrenders. Then he became the wave of the ocean the resurrection the new life the abundance of life etc. So Jesus message was, purely nothing, but abundance, full supplies come because exuberant of dance. It was a dance. 100% dance. So he becomes very transparent. So it is one way of looking at theological point of view so God is the dance and the dancer. So that is the case dance is the most profound way of worship. It is through the dance we can totally surrender to God to the creator.

We can participate in the creative process. It is through dance we can become co-creators we can participate put it in theological intermission of God. Here dance becomes an *upaya*, a *sutra*, a method of total surrender. See, when we say repeat mantra and so many times we become the body of God. So dance can also be seen as mantra. If you become the body of God, then he stands out you know. The existence, the dance is out so this is how we go beyond our ego, beyond our body and dancer is totally involved. They merge with the existence. They go beyond the body frames. The ego frames become away from the whole existence. This is so then what else we need. Then the form of worship, this is the best way of worship. You are really dancing you know. We don't need any words; the body becomes the pooja, the whole worship. Body becomes the sacrifice and Jesus really the death of Jesus is dance you know. So there is a wonderful message in Vedas you know. So you can take Nat raja as a God or Nataraja dancer, he is so far as I understood Nataraja is the God dancer who he dismembers the whole body and creates the whole world. So that way the whole creation has become dance, really dance. Not something different from God. God is not outside. He is very much inside. He is the dancer and dancing and creating the whole world. The whole creation, the avenue and he are very creative and innovative. So that way we can God has creator and he is always in *Karma* and this *karma* is like a dance, you know, is a kind of pleasure, it is a delight for him, it is not something imposed on him. So this is the basic way of looking at the whole existence.

So the existence we can see is the kind of worship basically. So that can be a form of worship. That way you can bring about the whole theology of dance you know, basically speaking one thing that you can bring in so many ideas. When you dance there should not be ego, ego should disappear totally you know, if you have ego then you cannot dance. You have ego then you cannot dance. It is what I am saying is dancer is one who surrenders 100% to the energy of God then only you can really dance. You can go beyond mind and beyond his structures you can become. In Indian situation dance is one of the key structures of rather one of the key ways of worship that much we can say another is that dancer has become part and parcel of the folk culture, general people's culture, aspect.

What is the necessary? Why we are stressing on folk culture? Now days when I say folk culture it mentions the group of the people who are below average.

It is not like that no they don't belong to the below average.

But usually the expression is for that the folk culture. What the picture is given now, the classical group and the folk group.

Folk religion got folk expression of dance. What is the distinction between folk religion and classical because folk religion have no any written script, it is non-scriptural religion, they base their religion on oral tradition and this oral tradition is very well versed in the dance and music for example tribal I s the folk religion one or the other we can say. They are the folk religion through the dance and when they participate with the dance what is happening is the revelation takes place. According to my understanding if you take the whole marginalised oppressed people like tribal's and Dalits etc., etc. If you have that kind of tool to analyse, so you can say 85% of people belong to Dalits class or oppressed class and if you come to Christianity we can see that in Christian population about 80% belong to Dalits. Only hardly 15% to 17 % belong to the upper class. For example; in Kerala Syrian and etc., so in Catholic Church or in Christianity itself and in protestant and R.C together about 80% belong to the Dalits class. I put it as Dalits class. Dalits is a common word you know, to signify the oppressed you know, so *Panchamas* and lower class people, tribal's and people belonging to folk religion, we club them all together and put them give them a general name we can call them Dalit people. They are oppressed in terms in the name of caste, in the name of tradition, in the name of religion, in the name of language etc.; we can call them as Dalits. So we can say dance becomes a wonderful expression of prayer, this dance belong to Dalits culture. For example Nataraja can be considered as

Dalits one way or the other; we have to interpret it you know, that is why it is very much Brahminical symbol these days. Anywhere we can find it, so we can say this dance is a wonderful form of ordinary oppressed class. And we have various expression of dance. In which social issues are brought out not only religious expression and sentiments. So dance is very comprehensive symbol or praxis or practices of religion. We can say socially critic as well as a kind of worship, that way we can take it. It is a language we can say, basically it is a language which a powerful language, it is not a kind of art form. I mean accept it from ordinary religion in media world, dance becomes a powerful. We can develop a theology out of this in many ways, the vary truth of it that way the truth fullness of truth.

And also perception of generality, you can argue that Bharathanatyam has its origin from the Dalits sources you know; where in today's society Bharathanatyam is a classical expression. Indian classical expression, it belongs to Brahminical tradition, the perception, but today if you look into the films, bollywood or Tamil etc, Bharathanatyam does not come very much into this... Folk dance comes... because folk dance represents a people's feeling and sentiments and people like them. When you see today Kathakali or Bharathanatyam it is very classical and it is goes through a class, people reject they take some insights from here and there and from Bharathanatyam. But Bharathanatyam does not vibrate the present population because majority are Dalits, when we look dance, the form of worship, I feel to say, Bharathanatyam is not right dance form of worship today. You should have some other expression - Folk dance etc. They may be better expression of worship because liturgy is basically the prayers of the people. Liturgy has a different way you know. It is people's work. That is the exact meaning of liturgy. When it is people's work then the work should vibrate people. In tribal perspective it is very important. I think here comes the real theology dance. Especially tribal's focuses on *shabdha*, *naatha* and not the words, for example when you look at the tribal dance, dance and drum comes *shabdha*. The sound comes is important that makes the dance, here sound is the revolution not the work. Sound, rhythm whatever you can say, word takes birth from sound. Sound is the womb actually. Sound is articulated in the words. What is moral original and authentic is the sound when we dance. We vibrate more with sound. Then sound becomes the real medium of worship. And sound becomes the body and expression of dance. They are more transparent you know. When we put into words, then immediately the sound is biased because of the cultural and reason, so the origin. I would say the fruits of worship is realised through sound, music dance etc. So, that is what I understand is more innocent and

more origin and original and everything is there is a lot of transparency and forth rightness in the dance.

Ego does not come, that is the beauty of it. You can give a theology of dance. So one chapter you can think about discussing about various dance forms of which are folk origins. So that way your doctoral thesis will become informative. So we are reading different dances in your perspective. You have to educate the Church this is the process, we are educating the church.

But when they are saying these all we accept, but dance could be done outside the liturgy, outside the worship and not in the worship.

Not like that, we have to conscientise. It is a slow processes you no.

But so how much time or how many years we need to wait?

Who has taken the real interest? We have not a positive interest in that. You may be one of the key persons to educate, conscientise the church. When we think of liturgy, we have to put it in dance form. This is how the Church awakens to it, to see the different forms, the Church is always open, it is not technically speaking if you looking into the whole history of the church. Christianity is open to new cultures always and may be would say dance may be threshold and entry point to enter into Asian culture in a much unprejudiced way. When, we enter into inculturation and, concept and ideas, and idioms, we ourselves very difficult because all these ideas and idioms are structured and prejudiced and biased. Dance is not that way. It is more an artistic expression. It gives a lot of freedom

Yes freedom to imagine and to interpret and translate what we think, what runs in the mind could be translated what you call brought into a visualised way.

It is open entry and words are already judged tropically, socially, culturally and anthropologically also. Our words are already constrained you know. They have closed. Dance is a creative process. It is an open entrance not only it is dance is a delightful I think I would say it is narrative. It is a story culture we can bring our narrative retelling the story of Jesus. That way so we are retelling the story of Jesus through dance or through narrative and it is open entry. So people can participate and when it is a narrative and unfolding the spirit has greatest space to walk through us.

And looking for an appropriate conclusion, to put in technical words we loved God we vibrate with the spirit which blows wherever it breeze in word.

It comes with lot of opens, so again comes the basic, I find dance as the basic form of surrender, a total surrender beyond our ego, total surrender to the spirit, the moment you become the dance you are the surrender, there is no surrender, the one who surrenders that there is no subject there, it is an experience, realisation, it is an awaking, so that way.

How could you connect it with liturgy? Using it in liturgy or to enhance the Liturgy?

This is how liturgy is, how liturgy is basically worshiped. Now worship in the sense, worship through which we surrender ourselves, conversion, total surrender to God then only God's mercy and blessings will come upon us. This is one of the basic forms of surrender.

It is often said that dance in the liturgy and when the girls are in the sanctuary, it is distractive and disturbance?

There are the issue; no you have to educate the people. See what I understand liturgy is people's work. Liturgy is people's work, as here as people's work dance is used in the liturgy. You have to think a new theology of liturgy. It is not ritualistic it must become people oriented and the whole I don't know. I have written a book a liturgy of life an article sometimes. Liturgy of life, you have to celebrate the liturgy in the society in the civics space. Jesus actually celebrated liturgy not in the Jerusalem temple, He was arguing outside the gate, outside the gate means, he was celebrating ultimate liturgy on the cross and forgiving. In the civic space, civics space he was crucified not on religious reason but on political reasons. So His liturgy was celebrated in the civic space. This is what I am arguing out very much so dance belongs to civil life people's life.

Thank you Father

Participant Eight – Lay Man: theologian

Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to interact with you. You have already read my description about my research. Probably you know the work of NBCL, trying for inculturated liturgy. My proposal is to incorporate dance, Bharathanatyam in the Holy Mass. What is your view on using dance in the liturgy? Whether it will enhance the Liturgy as a Liturgist what do you think?

See culture is basically part of a man. A man cannot be separated from his culture. Culture and man are both inseparable. But then in our Indian church, since the Europeans came in to the Church in the 17th century for nearly for the past 4 century, we have been thinking that Christian culture is European culture. The colonial rulers have gone, but the colonial mentality has remained in us so our people traditional Christians. These traditional Christians think European culture is Christian culture, Christ given culture. There lies the problem. Unless you change the mentality of the people this inculturation cannot take place, whether dance or Indian music all these things will find a very, very difficult way to go about.

You mean to say people's mentality should change?

Fr. Amalorpavadass started inculturation but without forming the people. You need to prepare the people. Had he prepared in advance. Or the Church taken the initiative to prepare the people before introducing the inculturation it would have been a success. That is one big hurdle today. Secondly Vatican 2 encourages inculturation is very well. But what Vatican 2 says whatever is good for your people, whatever is meaningful for your people, whatever can help you to promote your liturgy, participation of the people in the liturgy and those thing which can help to bring out the majesty and glory of God to praise God then you can make use of it. But what happens today, people introduce different elements like dance just for the cause of novelty. That will not work. Inculturation is not for the sake of novelty. Not for the sake of novelty. Unless there is genuine need we cannot inculturation and we should not inculturation. So inculturation what is the basis genuine need. And another thing also disturbs my mind that is who is to find out whether it is genuine needed or not. It is the Theologians to decide for the church, it is not the Theologians, It is not the Bishops. It is the people, because 99 percent of the catholic

population is people, lay people, of course they must be convinced the need for it. You will take a cup of water only if you are thirsty. So unless the people are thirsty for inculturation how will they accept it?

How will they know what the need is?

What efforts have taken as a Church to make the people to know it? There lies our problem. That is what I told you in the beginning had Fr. Amalorpavadass prepared the people, they would have accepted it. Formation is needed before introducing inculturation, formation of the people.

It is already forty years since inculturation started in India no?

I tell you. I have been the secretary for Tamil Nadu. In my experience, we have a seminar for Tamil Nadu level. We have 2 zones for example, north zone and south zone. North zone we call nearly 8 or 9 dioceses to come and participate. South zone we invite 8 or 9 dioceses to come and participate. Normally 8 or 9 dioceses participate hardly 30 to 40 people come. So if you cover 30 people or 40 people are maximum 50 people per year, how many of them we are going to reach. That is what is happening today.

How are you inviting them?

We send letter to the respective diocesan secretaries, it is their responsibility to find out and send. The secretaries recommend the Parish priest to send one or two members from each parish. And also I will tell you one more thing, even the Bishops also, see they are not directly involved in the process, for example Bishop comes to a celebration, there is a diocesan celebration, all the diocesan irrespective of any diocese what happens they have a dance program in the beginning. Even in this year in Trichy 30th of Jan there were some Kalai Kaviri girls, thirty or forty girls came for dancing. Just before mass began their dance program was there. So when there is a dance program people come and then the Bishops are watching the program, but no official document of the Church says you can make use of dance inside the Liturgy. There is no official document.

It says if clapping, moving your body, dance is part of your culture then you can make use of it in the Liturgy.

It is not in the Vatican documents. The Document says Even when the Pope, when the Roman congregation for divine worship permits certain things, the local Bishops in his diocese for the good of his people can stop it for some time.

How can the Bishops stop it when the Authority has given permission?

There is a loophole also, when Rome says we give freedom to each Bishop or Bishops conference to decide whether it is good for the local church. For example the 12 points which the Rome has allowed, the Tamil Nadu Bishops conference has decided we will accept only 9 of them.

What are the 3 points they don't accept?

For example: *Panchanga Pranama*. *Thambalam* and squatting mass with shawl. These are the 3 things they did not accept.

Why they did not accept these things?

Because our people are not ready to accept these things, you go to the Cathedral for Sunday mass. If the priest sits and celebrate mass who will accept. I ask you one more thing even today you take the Vatican document Sacrosanctum Concilium 123 says the Church can be built according to the local Architecture local religious architecture. Can I ask you one thing? Vatican 2 issued this document in the year 1963 Dec 4. It is going to be nearly 48 years since the document is issued. How many Church you will find in Indian style.

What is the reason for this?

I told you know we are in colonial mentality. We think colonial culture is Christian culture, European culture is Christian culture, and western culture is Christian culture. This idea is deep rooted in our people. Even that is the image given in the church. If there is dance program the Bishops participate in the dance program. They see the dance program, whether before the mass, during the mass or towards the end of the mass. They see the dance but they won't issue a circular saying we the bishops of such and such a state allow our people, our Episcopal conference decides to allow dance in entrance procession, we decide to perform a dance during the time of Our Father. We allow our people to dance during the *arathi*. We allow dance during doxology. They don't say it in black and white.

Why they don't say it in writing?

See there are 2 types of priests. There are some priests who are for inculturation. What they will do. They will carry on without telling the Bishops without getting the permission of the Bishops conference approval they will go on doing. But unless these types of permission are given some will go against it. And do you know how many percentages of priests are for inculturation. See vast majority of priests are formed before Vatican 2. And even after Vatican 2 how far this news has reached the younger priest. So one thing is vast majority of priests are against inculturation. Another thing is if at all some are doing it they are doing it without knowing fully the meaning of it.

Coming to the Para 37 & 38 it could take to introduce the cultural elements.

There is no doubt about it. When the Church says whatever is good in your local Church you can adopt. Culture has music as basic thing and language is most important in a culture and dance also is a part of the culture. In Tamil Nadu & in India there are 7 or 8 particular forms of dances. They are very good and we also have folk dances. All those things can be introduced in the Liturgy I have no doubts. That should be in a proper way and when it is needed for the Liturgy and when it can enhance the people's participation. What happens today it becomes today it becomes a show. It doesn't help the people to involve in the Liturgy. Instead of taking the people to go in to the spirit of the Liturgy it is more of a distraction. See we must be proud of our Indian culture and special our Tamil Dravidian culture. Our culture is very, very rich culture. We must feel this culture has brought to me by my ancestor. They have lived more than three thousand, four thousand five thousand years. It is through their experience, life style, though their practices, through their religious practices they have contributed towards this culture and it is the experience of two thousand, three thousand, and four thousand years. Such a rich culture when we are in India we don't appreciate much. I think our religion, Christian religion; Catholicism has not taught people in the beginning to love their culture. You know some missionaries who came to our country those days, French missionaries they have said you are living in a devilish culture.

Whatever is not Catholic is considered evil?

Devilish, pagan culture that is why, our people use to have hatred towards our Tamil culture and our local cultures and now it is very difficult to change this mentality.

Participant Nine - Priest

My research is to know the view on incorporation of dance in the Holy Mass. Many thanks for helping me in this research and I hope you will enlighten as we are talking more about what I have to do to bring about this dance in the liturgy. May I just know how far you are well known in the field of inculturation and liturgy?

I have been involved in this field from the very early post Vatican II period. In fact I worked with Fr. D.S. Amalorpavadass from 1967 onwards in this field and participated in the preparation of getting the cultural elements integrated into the Roman liturgy.

What liturgy Father?

Roman Liturgy. I also prepared together with two of my colleagues the present experimental text of Indian Mass

What is Indian Mass?

Our Indian Mass

But they are telling it now we are not supposed to say Indian mass. It is a Latin rite?

Ok Then you can change. Instead of Indian mass you can put experimental

But if you say I can change.

No, No, you are correct. Experimental what is there what is put there?

I have put Indian Mass.

Experimental text of the mass for Experimental text of an order of Mass

Ok order of Mass.

An Order of the mass for India which is being celebrated in many places

Are they celebrating in many places?

Yes, many places.

Could you give some examples? Where these text have been used.

We use in Bangalore some places.

I think only in Institutes we use?

Yes. It is used only in the Institutes.

And not in Parishes

No. No, not in parishes it is used.

Why it is not gone into the Parishes father?

Because people are not ready to receive it, we are not prepared them.

So do you think how to prepare them or what should we do?

Catechise, we must slowly introduce different elements, one by one. Unless people are convinced of one don't go to the next point. This is always in any case, not only for inculturation for any case even for the change in Roman missal. If we introduce without explaining anything they will reject. So this is a pedagogical approach which we do not follow always. That is the reason why people object Indian rite mass, people are ignorant, they have not been initiated, they have been accustomed to one particular way of celebrating mass. And now all of a sudden you come and say this is the new way without telling them why? And wherever we have done with proper catechism people are appreciated it very much.

To the common people

Yes. I have done it in NBCLC many times.

But that is a centre for Indian culture.

Anyway those who are coming there are from outside. There are so many people coming. Sisters, fathers, brothers and people coming for seminar, they all say it is nice because we have initiated them first and celebrated with action and preparation.

Preparation is important?

So when we say it is only a centre. People without a centre! What centre? It is not a building. All the people all over India come there and whenever we celebrated in that way they accepted it.

And you are convinced of that?

If you do it properly then people will understand. Naturally we have to make some adjustments according to the regions. Because India is a multicultural and therefore we

cannot have one Indian order of the Mass, we will have many different Indian order of the Mass but basically they have many things in common.

Many things in common ok, according to the region it will differ. That's right. What are the elements you think that is appropriate to introduce in the liturgy?

Now, this I cannot say off hand, I will see. For this I have to live in different parts of the country. And I must see For example I cannot go to North East and celebrate this Mass there. Because they are completely different culturally, I cannot celebrate this in Jharkhand (north India) because they are coming from different back ground. So I have to make sure that it is celebrated only in those places and with those elements which are coming from the culture of the people.

Which are coming from culturally?

In NBCLC we have never told people to imitate our Mass. We have told them this is one way of celebrating you go back to your region and find out the proper way, take the inspiration from here you may do so then make your own mass.

But, is the Vatican accepted to do it.

Wait a minute. Question of Vatican is different. We come to it afterwards.

What I am telling. This is the procedure to be followed.

What are the new elements that are introduced and the people accepted or able to follow?

For example, we have accepted Indian gestures and postures: For example sitting on the ground, Indian gestures and postures *Anjali Hastas* hands, folded hands, deep bowing then *Arathi*, then we used to put 8 flowers on the Altar that is accepted. So things like that so we did not make all of a sudden a completely a new Mass. We can't do that. You take the existing mass and slowly introduce these elements into the Mass. Then after that when you do many times, many centuries, a liturgy to be formed in a particular culture you need centuries. The Roman rite we have got today not the product of one seminar or few people, they celebrated it and slowly, slowly, slowly these got into the understanding and taste of the people. SO you can't expect that all of a sudden, what you have to do is, take the existing rite – you want to change something there, ok. Say instead of kissing only touch the object and venerate itlike that so but I must explain to people before I do that. So it

is a long process. We should not be impatient. We should not throw the Roman Rite and start another that cannot be done.

I accept and understand. That's right.

Sometimes one some priest have done this. They have thrown away everything and started all, and then people will object to it. So, see if there is an objection against Indian rite Mass, Indianisation in India. The Main reason is that we have not respected the feelings of the people. We have not catechised the people.

Yes catechise. That is important.

We have not followed the procedure of passing from the existing form to new forms gradually. The gradual implication is important. We have not done that.

Patiently waiting for assimilation by the people, I will tell you there will be always a group who opposes it. But, if the procedure which I am proposing is followed, the majority will fall there.

So we need to follow certain procedure?

People never asked for the Roman Rite. We initiated them into it slowly and they accepted it. Similarly when the new rite comes, these new changes comes slowly if you make it acceptable to them gradually then new thing will evolve. So no liturgy has been produced in the Roman Catholic Church sitting at a table and writing by experts. It is trial and error and terror. You try this, new things slowly imperceptibly without knowing people it will slowly enter into the minds of the people. Because liturgy is not a matter of intellectual things but emotional feelings, and emotions are not by, nobody can change the emotions with a seminar, emotions are changing by living it, gradually assimilating it. Liturgy is not intellectual. It is not a dogma. I can prove a truth and tell you wrong. But here I cannot do that I must do the feelings of the people.

So the next question is that you said that Indian gesture and postures and all. So I have done Masters in dance forms. So I am thinking that since there is space to use these elements, why not our Church is thinking of using dance in the liturgy.

You spoke about using local elements, why not our Church taking any steps to introduce dance elements in the liturgy?

No about the dance we have to take into account many things. That you must not look at it and say in theoretically speaking, theoretically speaking I have no problem because it has been always used not only now, during the Middle Ages also.

**You understood that, because so far people use to ask me. Where was dance used?
Now our church, in early churches they have used it. Dance**

Yes. In middle ages they have used it. Even now some of the hymns, sequence for Easter was accompanied by dance. So in theory I have no problem but practically speaking we have to take into account the sensibility and sensitivity of the people. So for example during worship in the Hindu tradition during worship people do not use dance. When they are doing the pooja, when they are doing the sacrifice they don't do dance. But they will dance in front of two things. In India there are 2 places in worship one is pooja and another called sacrifice Bali. Now doing Bali they don't use dance but during pooja they will do it doing homage. For example we have got Meerabai; she was doing puja, puja means homage. Homage to Krishna, she will dance as an act of homage. So that you can do, so these distinctions must be made. In the Hindu tradition, in the Bali they don't do dance.

What is that Bali they are doing father?

They got rituals. They got mantra and all that. You understand. But Puja is done by *Pujari*. He does *arathi*. He does all things. But now our worship is. Our worship is combination of both.

Liturgy is a combination of both, so I would say certain act of homage can be accompanied by dance. Example; entrance procession, homage to Bible, Is some places also the offertory procession, we can also do it on the doxology, recession – these are these are the moments we are doing pooja. Now, but introducing them we must see if this is palatable to the people or not because people are not accustomed to it in our churches. So don't introduce to them all of a sudden. May be an entrance dance they might not mind but they would not like to do offertory dance. Some people they may not like to dance on the enthronement of the book. It all depends. Slowly change according to the taste of the people.

For example: the *adhivasi* in Jharkhand they have no problem with entrance dance or offertory dance. They have no problem in bringing the bible in the procession and dancing. They have no problem. So you cannot simply you know introduce all over. Simply say dance is beautiful or it is not a question of dance is bad. There is a difference between what

is beautiful and what is relevant? So that is why and if you introduce the things, good things in an irrelevant manner you make the good thing become bad. And therefore you don't think. Another thing don't think that with your thesis abolish or introduce everything. No your thesis is one among the many thesis. It will take long long time. You must live and die and others will come and then slowly it will come afterwards.

But I feel at least little they should introduce. You said you have to slowly introduce. When that slowly is going to start father?

You start immediately but see. You must not only look at your dance. Look at also people what they feel about it. I told you we are dealing with the emotional elements. An emotion has to be changed gradually. You must enter into their feeling. So if you do with your own feelings, they will burst at certain moment. Many of these things they like imperceptibly. Don't go on reason. Reasoning g is no use. You are not going to introduce symbols by reasoning. Enter into the feelings of the people.

How are we going to introduce that? I feel, if the priest or the in-charge is not interested on what previously introduced, then it does not continue and it is stopped.

That is our mistake. No continuity

Same way in NBCLC - it was stopped completely.

That is our mistake.

So that is what I am thinking in the diocese level or the Church level. National level how are we going to say there is at least some way there should be a point saying please proceed or could be possible or something.

There is no. Who said? Why to say you proceed. It is not forbidden. There is no book, no liturgical book are forbidden dance. Now why should I go and say proceed. Who will say? Who has to say this one? Who will say this one? They must realise it.

When are they going to realise it?

That I don't know. I cannot say this one. In order to answer that question I must enter into their mind. I can only say what I am feeling about it. When are they going to introduce that I can't answer. I cannot go and. The moment I go and say you must do it then finished. That is what. Don't go in a crusading mentality to introduce inculturation. Enter into their

feelings first. Then slowly you can make lead them through feeling. If anyone is opposing dance, the first thing is not to introduce dance. Make them your friends. Slowly they will change.

Do you think is there is any place to introduce these things other than the parishes. Because Parishes it might be as you said it might be very difficult to catechise the people.

You can do it in the formation houses and I think in the formation houses we have done a lot already. There are many places they are doing it in formation houses. But what we are lacking is in the parishes. Even in the parishes we can do. And I can tell you whenever we have introduced in the parishes with proper catechises they have liked it. Our priests are lazy pastorally. They don't do catechises.

But for national level they can't do it. For example

First of all national level there is no inculturation in India. Inculturation is left to the regional level. Because why the reason is India is multi-cultural. Therefore you cannot have a national level inculturation.

So according to the region they can have.

They are supposed to do it. Inculturation in India is left to the regions. At some times in the region there are sub-regions also. According to different cultures, surely you take for example Shilong. There are *Kashis*, there are *Gharos* and so. So take into account all these.

Yes father you said there is no dance in the Hindu religion sacrifice. They do it in Puja. In puja they mean to say where they do *Garbhgraha* you know that is the puja you are saying father.

Puja. Understand the meaning. Puja means doing homage to a deity, particular deity. So we do lots of things throwing the flowers and so on. That is called Puja. Scarifies means something is offered to God. Offered to God,

Which part of our tradition? You mean to say in our church.

In our Christian understanding offering is done by Jesus already. Finished, we join with him. And then we also worship him in the mass, Worshiping is *arathi* in the mass is an act

of worship. Entrance procession is an act of worship. Doing *arathi* to the book is an act of worship. Putting eight flowers is an act of worship like that.

Father they say that, they all saw and I have interviewed people, before also people have asked me. Before I entered into the study why do you want to bring this Devadasi dance into this liturgy?

Who told you? Who wants Devadasi dance. This is wrong thing. Who says? It is not Devadasis. Don't speak about that Devadasis. Our girls and boys are dancing not Devadasis.

Another question is they said this is a feminine type of dance. Why you wanted to bring it into the church. All this feminine things,

What is wrong with feminine dance? Women can come. Can women sing then they can dance also.

And another thing, they also said dance was never been a part of our liturgy at all. Then what is the reason you wanted to introduce dance in liturgy.

I told you it is not true.

Never it was part of our liturgy tradition?

I am telling you in the middle ages they were having.

So I can make this point.

That is one point. Second point The Vatican 2 has said that the Church has nothing against any culture. Whatever is culturally good? What we need to avoid is culturally bad. Otherwise it is this way if dance is bad in itself then we should never watch the dance at all.

That is right. I don't know whether you have come across about the research now at present which is happening in USA about the introducing the dance in the Liturgy. Have you come across father? In USA?

No I have not come across.

Actually 1975 they have banned the dance in using dance in the Liturgy in west. So since then the group is keep doing research and trying to convince the Vatican to rewrite the documents and allow them to dance. But I think still it is prolonging. So, once when Cardinal Arinze was called for to do an interview by that research group R.C. group. He said that dance in the liturgy absolutely no for the west. In Africa and Asia it is fine.

But in the west no is not completely true.

Is there is any document?

But we have got liturgical texts shows that dance. I am telling you. You sing the Sequence of the Easter. It is all dancing.

What is that?

The Sequence is one example. Sequence of Easter; it means After the Alleluia there is one song called Sequence. And it is sung on some feast days. It is not always there only some occasions. And that song is sung in Latin and if you go and analyse the song, it has got dancing in it. And we know they are dancing in the middle Ages.

My main thing is not that dance is part of my culture and proclaims the word of God or it has good gestures or not only that. I also think it might bring some transformation in the society. For example when we teach the dance, not only the rich comes, not only the poor come, not only the catholic comes. So there is a possibility of bringing the low caste and the high cast together.

It is not only in dance every cultural element it is accepted and takes away all distinction and discriminations.

But in dance Bharathanatyam is considered as elite group of dance. It is only meant for the Brahmins

Those kinds of things do not happen in Christianity. There is no dance only done by the Brahmins. It is for all human beings.

In my Research in the last one and half years I came to know this Bharathanatyam dance belongs to the Schedule Caste. It is not called Bharathanatyam, it is called *Paratha Natyam*. But in 1940 Brahmins took it over and they colour from *Natya*

***Shastra.* It is only after the Church took it over in 1965 we got the chance to learn it. First time, dance was introduced in 1965 by Fr. George Proksch at the Eucharistic Congress. That was taken over by Fr George and started the Kalai Kaviri College and from then started spreading everywhere.**

But look this is not only of dance. The Roman liturgy which was practiced in India has absolutely no Indian elements at all. Not only dance. It was only a copy. Perfect copy of the Roman Rite mass, from the begging Roman Liturgy exited in India in pure Roman form. So there was no inculturation at all in any area. Latin language, Candles were used so many things. All things came from west. No inculturation at all.

Father, Christ is the centre and He is universal that is one thing and secondly if you see that from where Christ comes is from an Asian from our side. But now the Roman Catholic Church the Rome has taken it and from there only the Church has been spread. What do you think about that father?

The evangelisation in the early period did not consist in bringing in liturgy and worship. It came with the Gospel. And the people received the Gospel and expressed their response in cultural forms. So we got different rites. Now so this did not take place at the evangelisation of the third world countries. Here they did not bring the Gospel only, they brought the Church. Means the Gospel practiced in a particular place. So the Church was brought. So when the Church was brought you bring all the forms of the church. So this was the problem with India and the other countries.

Is it must to follow the same pattern?

No that pattern is going on still. They are trained by whom. They are trained by west. Even the seminary in India is trained by the western mentality.

What is your opinion about that father?

That is why I am telling we need to give those indigenes training. It is not my opinion. Vatican 2 says in *Optatum Totius*.

What is that father?

Optatum Totius, this document on the training of priests. The training should be given according to their culture.

Do you think that the training is given then there will be change?

Slowly change. Things will change slowly. Not all of a sudden. Change always takes place slowly. Not all of a sudden.

One more Question. You say that this dance can be used in certain acts of the liturgy in the procession and so on. I feel that dance could give a better expression rather reading the gospel or just giving as a word.

It depends on the Gospel. Some Gospels can be expressed through dance very well. Because magnificent can be danced nicely. But that depends on the Gospel.

But they say that Magnificat should not be danced but proclaimed.

It has to be proclaimed and interpreted in a dance form.

So you say that proclamation can be a dance. So dancing also can be proclamation

But it will become proclamation only if the words are pronounced also because otherwise people won't understand

Of course. When we dance the lyrics will be there. With the lyrics only we can dance. But I was told that it should be proclaimed. The Church is very much particular about it.

Proclaim does not mean only speaking. I can proclaim with my words, with my gesture, with my song. Can I proclaim with song

Which part of the Church this dance could be used. When we dance in the Church which part of the Church they can dance.

Well it should be where people can see.

Some priests say you are dancing in the front and showing your back to us.

I would like to ask one question to them. Old mass the priest was turning the whole time was turning his back and there was no problem. When the priest is giving his homily where does he turn? Is he giving his back to the Blessed Sacrament? The readers do that when the priest is saying the Mass facing the people. So don't worry about that.

Thank you so much for your time and sharing your views on Liturgical dance.

Participant Ten – Lay woman

Thank you so much for accepting to be a participant of my field research. I would like to know your view on using dance in the Holy Mass especially in India.

I am one of the members in my parish which is one of the local parishes of my diocese. I am also one of the lay leaders in my diocese.

The Bible says that we should worship God with all kinds of music and songs. In the Holy Mass also we try to do the same. Psalm says to worship God with joyous music and singing. Art leads to almighty so dancing and singing is good. On this basis, also, now a days in our parish, the priest and the whole congregation is welcomed by *arati*, garlanding and keeping sandalwood paste and *kum kum* (red colour powder) on forehead as a local custom and we welcome them into the Church for the Holy Mass. This is actually the Indian way of welcoming people, which is practiced at NBCLC our inculturation Mass. We must appreciate, when the congregation and the priest are welcomed in an Indian way with music and dance, to celebrate the Holy Mass. Using incense, flowers and lighted oil lamp for worship is usually used in the beginning of the Holy Mass or during adoration time -doxology. This was not in the earlier worship. It is a very new way of receiving the congregation and the priest and reaching them back to the entrance of the Church by accompanying them through dance and music.

Would people like this...?

Yes. Yes. This may add some more extra minutes, but I feel people will be satisfied and happy to use such things which are part of their local culture.

Would they get annoyed of dance or these extra timings...?

No, because the dance is performed for the devotional song which glorifies God. The music is not from the films or any other types of song but for the Church songs.

Which are the places that dance can be used

We can use it for entrance procession, offertory, and recessional and for doxology (like using *arati* and so on). I don't think that dance will suit other than these parts of Holy Mass.

How about during prayers or Lord's Prayer

That is what I said during the doxology, just before the Lord's Prayer, when the doxology prayer is recited 'through Him, in Him....'

Ok. I would like to know how it would be if the Lord's Prayer is danced

Yes. What you are saying is right. But what happens is sometimes, the priest say let us sing the Lord's Prayer, sometimes it is said that let us recite the Lord's Prayer with much devotion and dedication. It would be good to sing in a nice tune or reciting it rhythmically. As you said, it could be elaborately explained and with meaning it could be used, some people are of the opinion that 'what every time we repeat the same, it is very monotonous'. Before introducing any new thing, if it is explained well, as you were discussing with your friends I was there, and heard some of your conversation, it was good and I liked it the way you explained the creative liturgy and how Holy Mass can be celebrated in an attractive way. If it is explained then people may accept any new addition in the Mass. Now, myself, I am strong in Roman Catholic faith. However, every day there is a program comes around mid-day 11am or 12pm and I watch it. See, whatever it is, when good messages are told by whoever it may we must listen and accept it. If someone, whoever may, when they give a good message of God, we must accept it. We cannot say that all those who go to Church daily and call out God, God, is the only people who are very devoted and good people. The people, who is really happy and glad in God's presence, and one who thanks and praises God in any situation of their life and one who leads a life according to the will of God is the people whom God likes and they are the real devotees of God. In that same mind set, when the people also have a mind to say that they are satisfied to participate in a creative liturgical celebration, and they felt the presence of God in such liturgical celebration, then it is possible to do as you said. When they have such mind to accept the new addition in the liturgy then it is possible to use Lord's Prayer in dance and music form. In such situation, it is possible, as you said outside, along with the song on Lord's prayer, if a good message through dance, if it is able to help people to understand the message from Lord's prayer in a better way, then the Lord's prayer can be used in dance and music form. If it is not merely a dance for the sake of dancing during the Lord's Prayer and if it really helps the people to pray in a better way, then surely people will accept it. It should be a matter where people can join and do such things in the Holy Mass. See for example. The hymn of Gloria, it would be good if everyone together sings it and if only the choir sings alone, then it does not help the people to participate. Sometime the choir changes the tune and rhythm of glory song and the congregation will find difficult to sing alone with the choir and sometime only the choir sings it and people will not be able to participate it. So likewise for the Lord's Prayer also, if the whole congregation can participate in it then we can have Lord's Prayer in dance form also.

What do you think, if the prayer is danced, for example ‘The Lord’s Prayer’

Yes. During Lord’s Prayer, the people are supposed to look up and recite the prayers, sometime what happens, the people look down or stare at something while they recite the prayer or just they blabber the prayer and they don’t really feel what they are reciting. Some they may not realise and feel the words what they say, in this case, the actions can help them concentrating. See, this morning I had attend the Holy Mass and after the Holy Mass, I was talking with my friends outside the church, and I told them there are different kinds of Catholics such as daily Catholics, weekly Catholics, feast or festival Catholics so on, I said these people are occasionally coming to Church during the Christmas or Easter, their intention is only to show their new dress and to proclaim that they have been to Church in new dress and so on, and they never thing that they got at least one day to praise and thank God, and they never realise to make use of it. I agree that some people cannot come to Church always but when they get chance to come at least once a year, they should utilise it. Holy Mass is a feast, we come to participate in that Holy Meal, if we are healthy we can eat nicely, if someone have invited us for a party and if we not well then we cannot participate in the party and cannot enjoy the food. Same way, when people’s mind is not ready for praying and to participate in the Holy Mass, then they don’t bother what is happening in the Holy Mass. If your work and study helps to such people to change their mind, through celebrating the Holy Mass in Indian custom and culture, and if it helps them to participate in it, then I really appreciate it.

See, some centuries ago, the missionaries like beschi and others have taken the ‘*Pandaram vesham*’ means taking the form of a beggar,

Do you mean that they become Brahmin priest?

No. Like *Pandaram vesham* means beggars, having minimum dress and not owning any belonging and going from place to place and live in a hurt in Ashram, they actually adopted the local culture and tried to live as a Christian, yes, there were things happened like this. So we can also celebrate the Holy Mass in Indian way.

So you think that people will accept dance in the liturgy and they don’t mind for girls dancing in the sanctuary

See, now-a-days girls are serving at the altar. There may be a time will come, that only women will be there at all the leading position when there will not much space for men to do thing. So in such situation society will accept women and their service everywhere. My point is that we can look at women like the Angels in heaven. See the matter that we discussed here may not suit to all the societies. What I said about women may fit to my

diocese and place but it might differ to place to place. A small example, I have children and grandchildren, there will be always a comparison and complaint that I am biased to one son, and that I show difference between them. It is not true, my sons are my sons and I care them equally, sometime I give some more attention to son because he might need it for he might be weak in something and he needs to encourage it. This does not mean I am showing partiality to one son. So what I am trying to say is, different people have different opinion over things, so good things do not stop and it should go. So whether male or female, if dance is useful it can be used.

What are the places that dance can be used in the liturgy

We can use dance for the intentional prayers. Every intentional prayer has different meaning and message. For example, a prayer is like this, Oh God who helped us to realise not to forget God and to keep the trust in the human beings for the sake of unstable world life, let us live a life which is suitable to the Kingdom of God and prepare our self for the eternal life, Lord hear our prayers in your mercy, This is one type, and the other one, is like this, for the poor and needy, for the hunger and starving, and those who are in tears and suffering, let us be kind to them and help them, Lord in your mercy hear our prayers. These are good themes and for every message we can have scene acting with movements and gestures and so people can see and feel and this will touch them and help them to pray. Same time, you also have to think which and where it will be suitable to dance for the prayers and accordingly it has to be used.

So your point is that using dance in the liturgy can be accepted in the liturgy

See, what I want to tell is that, some people they may not like the new things and they want the old things, for example, those days, the priest where a cassock always and for Holy Mass they wear couple of garments over the cassock and then the upper garment will be worn but now a days it is not the case, So people sometime criticise them, But what the priest answer for this is that 'the garment is already made holy', so it is not necessary to wear many pieces of garments to over the cassock. But people cannot understand it because we are taught like that from the beginning and now when changes come people find it difficult to accept. However, this will not continue, certainly there will be changes. See, during my time, I mean I served as an altar boy and the Mass was celebrated facing the East, tabernacle, but now it not the case, so, therefore, the changes will gradually happen and keep going with your good work. Wishes...

Thankyou...

Participant Eleven- Lay woman

Thank you so much for accepting to be a participant of my field research. I would like to know how you do like using dance in the liturgy. How much can using dance in the Holy Mass enhance the Catholic Liturgy especially in India.

Unless I am not well I attend Holy Mass every day. I am a member of Legion of Mary. I have been involved in many activities in our parish since my childhood. I like to go for Mass because I feel that Holy Mass is the only way to develop my relationship with my God. I have also heard about creative liturgies and celebrating liturgies with some of the local culture. It is something called inculturated Mass that is celebrating Holy Mass in our local culture and custom. Isn't it!

Yes. I am doing a research on incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* in the Holy Mass to enhance the worship. Have you heard or seen dance in the Holy Mass?

In our parish sometime there will be *arati* to welcome the main celebrant, especially when there is Bishop's Mass and during some special feast times. Using dance in the liturgy, personally I think, all the people in many parts of our country may not accept it. People from my parish will not like using dance in the liturgy. But, it would be good if occasionally when small children dance for devotional song. Yet, girls dancing in the Church – we are not used to it. I mean, using dance in the Holy Mass is new to our area and our church. Here in our church, after twelve or thirteen year, I mean when the girls attain puberty, during that time onwards, they will not go into the sanctuary. In this situation it is very difficult to make the girls dance in the sanctuary. May be in other places or other parishes they may like to do but we don't use dance in the Holy Mass or allow the girls in the sanctuary. Don't you think that dance will distract us, because we are going to Holy Mass to pray and to adore God, using dance during worship will not be

good? Moreover it is not our custom. Hindu people may use it in the temples. Women first of all can't go into the sanctuary then how can they dance

To encourage the youth to come to Church and to enhance the liturgy dance can be incorporated. Some parishes and in convents and Christian institutions dance is used in the Holy Mass. When Pope visited us some years back, in Calcutta as well as in Chennai, there was dance in his Holy Mass. So Holy Mass is used in the liturgy but not widely practised.

Yes. Yes. I have heard about it but, see, many years before when we are small, Holy Mass was celebrated in Latin and those days it was so strict. Priests and nuns followed many customs. Later, Holy Mass was celebrated in different languages according to their region, I think; it is after Vatican Council or something,

Yes. After the Second Vatican Council,

Yes. See, using dance in the liturgy is not a good thing and liturgy is so Holy thing. Then, how can you use dance in the liturgy. Only the priest can celebrate the Holy Mass and Vatican has given permission only for them to celebrate the Holy Mass and not for others. We are sinners and we have no permission to go near the altar. Then how can you use dance near the altar.

If Vatican allows...

Ok. If Vatican allows it can happen, but Vatican will not allow and we are sinners, how can you use dance in the sanctuary.

What about Priests? They are also human beings, sinners, and they go into sanctuary?

Yes. They are human beings like us but they have special permission and they are consecrated to do that work. They are different from us. After many years of priestly education and completing many years of study they become priest and they have been taught how to do things in a religious and spiritual way.

What about if the nuns dance in the sanctuary?

No, not women, women do not have permission to go on the sanctuary. They should not go. I have told in the beginning why the girls are not allowed after certain age in to the sanctuary.

Then what about Mother Mary, she is also a woman, her statue is on the sanctuary.

She is the mother of Jesus, our Lord,

Even she can't be allowed inside, if she is alive, because of the present situation. Do you know my parish patron saint is Mother Mary? But still, today she is not with her physical body and it is only her statue is kept in the sanctuary. Pope has not allowed the nuns to go near the tabernacle or use it, then how about the lay women?

Pope has never said that nuns should not be allowed near the tabernacle. In Bangalore and some of the other parts of India, and in foreign countries not only nuns but lay people also distribute Holy Communion. They use the tabernacle. In my parish at Bangalore, a lay man distributes Holy Communion.

Maybe they have special permission but in our parish we don't allow the woman because they are unclean, I told you the reason earlier. So they should not be allowed, even Pope Permits or not. We will not allow the women into the sanctuary.

God created women and so the menstruation also given to women by God, so then, how it will be unclean?

Yes. God created and God has given it to us. Still, it is considered 'unclean' and it is not right to go near the altar during the period of menstruation. I am personally feeling that woman should not be allowed into the sanctuary, this has been a custom for many years in

our area, in our parish. I am not sure, if there will be any change in the future but in our time it is not so easy to allow women into sanctuary. They can be only allowed to go until the gate of the sanctuary place. Even the women, they may not like to enter into the sanctuary. If the girls go into the sanctuary or if they dance, the women will be the first to push them out and to resist them. We have never had dance in our parish and never seen liturgical dance so far

The Church allows for creative liturgy and encourages to inculturated the liturgy that is to use the local cultural elements like *arati* and so on.

We Christians are very less in number when we compare with other faith. Even many Catholics are moving to other denominations. Other denomination wants to increase their number and pull our people to those churches. They have loud music and singing and sometimes dancing, the whole congregation dance and so on, I think this is to attract the people towards their churches; we should not lose our mind and leave our churches. In this situation if we have dance in the liturgy and if we allow the girls into sanctuary, the others, the people who are waiting to find fault on us may laugh at us and they will criticise. This might pay a way for many Catholics to move from our churches. This is because, our people in this area don't like, and are not used to such things like, dance in the liturgy. We have heard and read that Miriam and David dance in the Bible but they did not dance inside the church.

They danced in the presence of God, Rightly to say, before God!

Yes. But, may be, but we are not used to such things. At present we can't convince people, today, in this area. May be in future when things get changed, there will be some creative worship might happen. I don't know. But using dance or allowing the women into sanctuary is a difficult thing at this situation here, in our place.

Participant Twelve – Lay man

Thank you so much for accepting to be participant of my field research. I would like to know how much using dance in the Holy Mass can enhance the Catholic Liturgy especially in India.

Dance can be used in the Holy Mass but it should not be scandalous. Those who are using dance in the Holy Mass should know the differences between devotional dance and the cinematic type of dance. I feel using dance in worship is not new. We can see examples in the Old Testament. I think at present people also accept the use of dance in the Holy Mass, in some places. But, people should not miss use it. Liturgical dance should not lead to a wrong path. It should be like film dances. If dance is used appropriately in the Holy Mass, then people may accept it.

Have you seen any time dance during the mass?

I have seen using dance in the worship in two or three places. To mention, I have seen dance in the Holy Mass at NBCLC. I felt, giving messages through dance would easily reach the people. The dances were mostly presented by girls.

What about women dancing in the sanctuary?

One cannot say that only man is important or woman is important. Without one person the other one will be incomplete. So, if girls come into the altar, we cannot say it will distract or disturb the people. Now-a-days women come forward in the sanctuary to read Bible. So we can't say that is a distraction. Whether boy or girl, one should understand what is the role that they have in the Holy Mass. It is because the girl performs dance, it is not correct to say that the girls or her dance will divert or distract the congregation. I don't think because of using dance, the devotion of any one would be disturbed or lessened.

How about using *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Liturgy?

Bharathanatyam is seen as Hindu dance. Actually I think this dance is used by the Hindu people and in the course of the time it has got the name Hindu dance. I think this dance is part of our culture. Also, *Bharathanatyam* will help to direct the minds of the people toward God than any other dance form, I think. This dance can be used and this dance can help in reaching the message to people in an easier way. So dance can be used.

Latin Rite is imposed in the minds of the people to worship God. And, it will not be easier to remove it and have a new way of worship. First of all, people will think that all the cultures and local practices which are not practiced by the Christians are Hindu culture. At present people are having developed in knowledge and they are aware of certain things. So, people accept now- a-days that *Bharathanatyam* is a local cultural dance. May be different people have different opinion and some priest also may be against these things. Now-a-days changes are coming up. But slowly it should be done (using dance in the liturgy) to bring awareness among people and to change people.

What is your opinion on Inculturation?

I think inculturation is not understood properly by the people and it is not used properly. The people or priests have different opinion about it and it is difficult for us to know which is to be understood. Actually Veerama munivar (a French missionary) started inculturation many centuries ago; we have read and heard about it. Even inculturation is practiced or not, in the parishes, *arati*, keeping sandal wood paste on the forehead to welcome the priest and the congregation are happening at present. So, if it is used people will accept.

Do you accept that Bharathanatyam a local cultural art form?

I think Brahmins who were living in India since many years used the local culture including *Bharathanatyam*, and now it belongs to them. For example, the Tamil Film music director Illayaraja from Chennai, Tamil Nadu belongs to a Dalit community. There were many hurdles in his life to come up as a famous film music director. In beginning, he was prohibited to learn Carnatic music and to read Hindu scripture *Slokas*. But today, he is one of the famous persons in India. Not only that, he is known abroad. So either dance or music, it is belong to the local culture or India, and everyone has the right to use it. So Brahmins also used it. For this we cannot say it is their culture or art forms. I will say that they have used it. Today not only Brahmins, we can see many musicians, singers and music directors of all castes and religions. Like this, if dance is brought in the Holy Mass, it will not be that we are not using Hindu dance or other culture.

Do you think Bible message could be conveyed more effectively through dance?

I think dance can be used during Bible readings because instead giving in words if it is given in an attractive way, then it might reach people easier. So people not only can hear but they also can see and experience. So dance can be used for Bible readings. For

example, people will be tired and bored of hearing the sermon or message repeatedly. But when the message is given also through art forms then people may be interested in seeing and attentively listening.

What do think about using dance in the Holy Mass?

People are accustomed to recite prayers like Hail Mary and they are used to it. Now, when we dance or sing? When we are happy or joyful, we will express ourselves by singing or dancing. This does not mean that they are just jumping or dancing as they like. Assuming like this is not right. Actually they are expressing what is in their heart through dance or moving the body or singing. So when a person is in a good joyful mood, he or she may sing or dance. Likewise, in the Holy Mass, the people are trying to express their heart desire to God or to ask for something or to express the gratitude for what we received from God. I think then it is a joyful matter and using dance and music will help to express, the prayer, and gratitude, the joy. People may show opposition in the beginning but slowly they will realise and they may accept these changes. For example, many years before, the priests are only allowed to use robe or priestly dress. But now changes have come, the priests are dressed like ordinary lay man and mingling with the ordinary people. Likewise slowly changes might happen. But not that easy to use dance and make people to accept it but it will happen slowly.

***Bharathanatyam* is considered as an elite group dance, your opinion on that?**

Most of the Hindu people may think that Christians have taken the Hindu dance and are using it. Religion is different and culture is different. But, as far I understood is that they have combined the culture and religion. Since the elite people used it first, so they may speak or think that *Bharathanatyam* belongs to them. They think dance of Hindus have been adapted by Christian. In fact this may not be the truth. Dance is part of the local culture of India and it not only belongs to Hindus, it is common to all people. For example, *Pongal* festival is the festival for all Tamilians. So I may celebrate *Pongal* and people throughout Tamil Nadu may celebrate it, and no one can say that is not right. I may not have used to celebrate those festivals once, but now I celebrate it. Likewise, using dance in the Holy Mass also. For instance, Jesus was born as a Jew but he did not only do things for Jews, he also changed the Samaritans and preached for them. So, the Hindus who used the local dance also linked it with the religion and connected with Lord Nataraja, the Hindu god Lord Shiva. I don't think it is written anywhere that *Bharathanatyam* is the dance of

Lord Shiva. It is we who use it say that, it is Lord Shiva's dance. Secondly, when the art forms are given a religious picture then it will be taken care to preserve, develop and use it. So we can't say that it is Hindu god's dance.

Another thing is that, we did not follow the practice of the old tradition. What David did in the Old Testament, he praised and worshiped God through dance and music. Hindu people were preserving and practicing all those practices of their ancient people and trying to follow the tradition. In Christian tradition, we took only the worship part and forgot all the other parts. Many references are there, that people sang and danced and worshiped God, but we forgot it, we did not think that these kinds of elements are also in Christian tradition also. So I want to say that, what we left and what we forgot should be brought back and try to use it. So using dance in the liturgy is not a new thing and it was used in early times, people worshiped God through dance and music.

Do you think the local people will accept this dance to be used in the Liturgy?

Since there is no written document to say that dance is prohibited to use in the liturgy, when music is accepted and practised in the liturgy then dance also can be used. Therefore, there is no objection to use it in the liturgy.

People may react and may oppose it in the beginning but when the Church supports it and make attempts to make the people understand it, then it might be acceptable in the course of the time. I think it is a mistake by those who used the European culture to spread Christianity and left the local culture. If they would have thought that time about this awareness and need, then these problems would not have occurred. Church did not use it that time and now if dance is allowed, there will opposition towards it. Some of the missionaries who understood the local culture and acted accordingly in the mission were able to bring tremendous success in bringing up the Church in Tamil Nadu.

Thank you so much for your valuable time.

I appreciate your research; make this known to the Church. So that it may be useful and people may come to know about the matters that they are not familiar with. Thank you.

Participant Thirteen – lay man (translation)

I am doing a research on incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Roman Catholic Liturgy. Could you please share your opinion on using dance in the liturgy?

According to me, the youth are very much interested in involving in the liturgy. They like to take different parts in celebrating it. I was working with the youth in my diocese. The youth likes to bring newness in the Holy Mass, innovative way of celebrating it. For example, In 2010 November we had a big Jubilee celebration on the 25th youth year in the diocese. The celebration was named as '*Sangamam*' (meaning coming together). The youth completely involved and they took all the responsibility for celebrating it. We used the art form of my local culture such as *Karagam*, *Kummi*, *oyillatam* and so on were used. The celebration is mainly the Holy Mass. For the first Bible reading—according to the reading the youth acted out a theme. For the second reading, we used *Bomballattam* (puppet show), this art form is one of the best art forms of Tamil Nadu. So the youth used the puppets and showed action for every line of the reading. For example, the youth portrayed the scene Jesus going to Jerusalem. Therefore, such type of celebrating the event through art forms is possible when priests and Bishops support it. If not these types of celebration is not possible.

Is dance an effective medium of communication? Especially to convey the bible message to the youth

Dance is a good concept, but using it in the liturgy is not that much sounds good. Dance means it is entertainment. People also will feel the same and using it in the liturgy people may not welcome it. May be in African countries, I have heard even priest dance along with people in the church. Even some churches when charismatic prayers are included, the people oppose it. They questioned how can we clap hands before the tabernacle? Some of these issues have become a big problem in the church, the people accused that those who are clapping are showing irreverent action and the sanctity of the tabernacle place is not kept. So the people opposed it. For example, when the Church allowed receiving Holy Communion in the hand, the people oppose it for sometimes. But now this became a common matter and there is no problem in receiving Holy Communion with hand. Likewise, around five or 10 years before when the charismatic prayers were introduce and when the people raised their hands to clap and singing, there were opposition but now that is also changed, people like it and in some churches it became part of the Holy Mass.

Many people like it and because of that there will be a big crowd in the churches which used charismatic prayers along with Holy Mass. So, I am also feeling that, one way introducing dance in the Holy Mass is a difficult matter. But it is also possible to use, though it is difficult task. I welcome such things. Yes. It can be possible to use dance. I think the people just come and attend the worship and go away. Sometimes, I feel that, they don't even open their mouth to recite the prayers. In such situation dance might serve as a useful tool, to motivate and encourage those people.

Will the youth accept this dance to be used in the Liturgy? How about using *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy?

Now when we talk about *Bharathanatyam* to introduce, I don't think it is a right dance to use. It has its own history. It is Aryan's dance; they brought this dance along with them when they came into our country. In their beginning stage of their life in this country, they introduced this dance through *Devadasis* concept. *Devadasis* are the young women you were dedicated to the temple. They were using this dance in the temple and those women were used by the temple priest and other who come to the temple in an immoral way. This was happening throughout Tamil Nadu temples. In order to make the people happy, especially those who are coming to the temple, there were some dance movements and techniques have been used. Because of this reason only, some of the dance moves were created like bending and so on. So it is started for a bad cause, to seduce people and in the course of the time, it took different form and today it is raised to an important position and has high status in the society. So it is belonging to Aryan's and not Indian's. When they came into the country through Indus valley, they brought in. So it is not Indian's dance, it is not from our local culture. The local cultural art form like *Parai attam*, this dance form is actually reserved for a separate caste. But today beyond this caste boundary, the Church is trying to use this dance. And this dance also has definite dance moves and techniques.

The *Sakti* group from Dindugal district is famous in giving training in *Parai Attam* in Tamil Nadu. This group goes village to village and learn the dance steps from the people. For example, in case if this team come to know that in some village they are using *kummi* dance, then immediately this group go to that village and learn those steps from the women those who dance *kummi* (clapping hands and dancing). Likewise, this group go from one village to the other and they found that all most all the villages in Tamil Nadu had different

dance forms in use. This could be because in those days there is no television or any entertainments for the people, so in the evening, the people form a group and do dance and spent their time. So according to the people and place, there were different steps and forms of particular dance of the village. We did not know about this since many, many years, but now people are aware of this local art form and trying to introduce these folk art form instead *Bharathanatyam*.

When the people are aware of these art forms, they thought that they should not allow these art forms to diminish and research on this local art form is encouraged. The scholars who studied about these local art forms have preserved it today. Even folk dance is not easy to perform. It needs lot of rehearsal and the dance steps are not so easy to practice. Therefore without proper rehearsals it cannot be performed.

In your understanding; which is the appropriate dance to use in the liturgy?

Dance is good and it is in our culture, but to use it in the liturgy, the dances that are belong to the local land, such as *Kummi*, *Karagam*, *Kollatam* folk dance, should be used. *Bharathanatyam* is not the right dance form to use in the worship today; it needs to have some other expression to communicate the message to the congregation like folk dance. Now, the music of the folk dance is very loud and when such music are played people's mood will change and it will not lead to prayer. So in such situation *Bharathanatyam* is more suitable. At the same time, *Bharathanatyam* and the folk dance should be used together and folk dance should not be neglected.

Would you think that using dance in the Holy Mass might bring some changes in the youth or in our local community?

There are lots of chances for the people to divert their minds. People might think, during the Bible reading that they have heard those reading many times and may not pay attention. Same way during sermon also; sometime the priest sermon will not be an interesting topic or the people may not understand it properly due to high theological terms or ideas. So in such cases when art forms are used, people will listen the preaching or the Bible reading with much more interest and help them to concentrate on the message given while attending the worship. The message may easily reach the people. It is because the trend is as such, the people are very much accustomed to watching video or films and they can remember those things easily. So, when the words are enacted or given in action the people

may easily observe it. And also there is possible to preserve and promote the local art forms as well as to promote the Gospel values among the people.

I have come across a parish where drama is used. During the sermon, just before the sermon a drama was enacted according to the theme of the liturgy of that day and then the priest used that theme in his sermon. The people were listening very attentively. I found such presentation would create a greater impact on the congregation as they see and hear at the same time.

What about the people of your diocese, will they accept it?

Though I feel there will not be much objection to use these art forms in Holy Mass occasionally or in the developed places. According to me the matters like using art forms in the Holy Mass will be easy to promote among the villagers. I feel personally for me it is easy to handle villagers than the city people. I can make the villagers easily to understand to accept this though they are very traditional Christians and elderly people may not like these things initially. But in town areas, it will be very difficult to convince them. They are sort of like Pharisees, and conservatives. It is difficult to convince them. But if we are able to change them then it is possible to introduce dance in such places also.

What about women dancing in the Sanctuary?

Those who want to oppose it will keep opposing like male dominators may not allow the girls to allow on the sanctuary. Once the ladies were not at all allowed for Bible readings may be ten, fifteen years before but now this have changed. And women are going into the sanctuary and reading Bible. But in some parishes in Tuticorin diocese and also in Kanyakumari diocese, still, ladies are not allowed on the sanctuary. They say that the ladies are unclean due their menstruation time. So, still that sort of mind set is there among some group of people. However good things should not be stopped, should find ways to promote it.

Thank you so much for your time and sharing your views on Liturgical dance.

Participant Fourteen – Lay woman (translation)

I am doing a research on incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Roman Catholic Liturgy. Could you please share your opinion on using dance in the liturgy?

I am a housewife, I attend Holy Mass regularly. I have a lot of involvement in the Church and its activities. I feel dance should not be used in the Holy Mass on a regular basis but it can be used occasionally, for some special event. People also will be interested in knowing about what is happening and it will bring interest among people.

Why? What is the reason for it?

For example, when the priest gives the message only through a sermon or preaching, some people used to go to drink tea or some stood outside the church until the sermon. Some people will not bother about what's happening on the sanctuary and may continue to talk among them. Often these are the things that take place during sermon and it happens even now.

So don't you think through dance the Gospel message can be conveyed more effectively?

Bringing dance into the liturgy may attract people and it may be possible and people may accept it. But will it be possible to use dance in the liturgy, how this sort of work will be done? It is sure; a message can be given very easily not only through preaching. There are also other media along with the preaching to reach the message effectively to the people. For example, on a feast day a priest cannot keep on preaching for a long time, maybe ten minutes. More than that, the people will not have the patience to listen to the sermon. So the situation demands this. When dance is used, people may like it, even from children to older people they will be interested in watching it. The dance is not merely with dance steps, body movements; it is not a dance without words. The dance may be performed with a song, the song will have lyrics and the lyrics will have a message. There will be definitely God's message in it, - at least one important

point or message will be there in the song and so that there is more possibility that message will touch the people.

Have you come across dance in the Bible?

In the book of Samuel from the Bible, David danced before the Ark of the Covenant when the tabernacle was brought in procession into the city of Jerusalem. So dance can be used in the liturgy. But care has to be taken while doing dance in the liturgy. If you see, in the Old Testament, King David danced and sang and worshipped God. Those who watched it, many of them criticised it. There were also other views that it was 'a mighty king dancing as one among the people! And the reason that changed him like this was because of God's greatest grace over him'. So when King David worshipped God through dance and music, he worshipped God whole heartedly, with his whole soul and whole strength. The first commandment for us is that, I am your God and there shall not be other God for you. And one should love Him with all his/her soul, with all his/her strength and with all his/her might. So when it is like this, the way King David worshipped was really the way one is supposed to worship God.

Then why dance cannot be used in the Liturgy?

For example, I may be sitting here, and I may be praising God in my heart. But I don't think it will be with all its strength. I doubt it, if in a Pentecostal worship if the people are raising their hands and moving the body and worshipping God by these means, it is not a form of madness. When God is worshipped with all ones might and strength, then it will be an acceptable and desirable worship/offering to God. When we are sitting in one place and praising God only in the mind, there are many chances for the mind to wander here and there. At the same time when one is praising God through the whole self, moving the body, then he/she can concentrate, also even watching a dance, one can concentrate on the message that is given through it.

Can women dance in the Sanctuary?

I think small children onwards up to teenagers can be allowed to dance. So when children are dancing, the people also will like to see them, because everyone likes children. When the children dance it will not only look nice, it will not be provocative. When children are dancing there will be more appreciation for them. They will be encouraged and appreciated for their boldness to come forward in the midst of the people. The dancers' parents, relatives, friends will all come to watch the performance. If a child or children from a local group or community performs it, that will be proudly spoken of and it will be encouraged and admired as bringing one family together. This will help the people to come together and it will be a way to bring different families together. *Bharathanatyam* costume is such that the body is fully covered. So this dance or the way it is dressed will not disturb or distract the viewers. It is not only the costumes are very modest, but the dance movements are very graceful and delicate. Even the dance steps will convey the message. My daughter was learning *Bharathanatyam* when she was a child. I have seen many *Bharathanatyam* dances and I observed these things in it. So I think *Bharathanatyam* dance is good.

What is your opinion about *Bharathanatyam* dance? Is it our local culture or a Brahminical dance?

The music of the folk dance itself will be very different and energetic. Certain folk dance has its own meaning and reasons to use it and those who are listening to the music or dance of any folk dance, first the meaning or the reason for what that folk dance is performed will come to mind. For example Tappu dance, its music is very loud as they beat the drums and dance. And as soon as one listens to the music, it can be understood oh! This is the dance performed in a house of mourning or at the death of someone. So such dances, folk dances, will remain for the particular purpose for which it is performed. In such a situation, I think *Bharathanatyam* is good to perform. Surely, most of the people will like it if dance is introduced in the Holy Mass. People are interested in dance. Some percentage will be there who don't like it, for example the elderly people, they may not like to see dance in the Holy Mass.

Thank you for sharing your views on incorporating dance in the Liturgy.

Participant Fifteen – layman (translation)

I am Virgine Jesica Antonet Sinniah. I am a PHD student at University of Birmingham. I am doing research on incorporation of Bharathanatyam dance in the liturgy. With the help of Bishop you are chosen by the parish priest to give interview. I was told that you are a regular visitor to the church and you actively participate in every event of this church. May I know your opinion about using dance in the liturgy?

There is monotony in the liturgy. And to change it and make the liturgy very lively is a matter to think. Liturgy means Holy Mass in your research and other sacraments isn't it.

Yes.

It is said that liturgy, Holy Mass is divided into four parts; Penitential rite, Word of God, Holy Communion and Thanks giving. And there is very less part for worship. Only the singing glory is the worship part. I don't know how much dance can contribute to make the Holy Mass very lively. There is possibility for the people to divert their minds when dance is used. But there is lot of benefits when music is used such as to make the Holy Mass lively, for everybody to participate and also to experience God's presence. It is said that experiencing the presence of God is possible through music. It will not divert either the mind or thought. Music will not divert like dance.

Our worship is monotonous whereas Pentecostal worship is very lively, creatively; it will give a satisfaction in attending the worship, also one can get the experience of taking part in the worship and can feel the experience of God presence, these all through music. So music plays a greater role in this worship. In this worship while they sing, they also ask us

to wave our hands and clap out hands and this goes along with the music. If it happens this way it will not divert us. I don't know how far it can successfully happen when worshipping only through dance, and how far one can feel God's experience.

Do you think people will accept this dance to introduce in the Liturgy?

We have seen in Bible David worship God through dance and music. But I don't know how dance will fit in the Holy Mass. I don't know whether it will go according to the plan and meaning of use it or against it. I don't think people would consider using dance in the Holy Mass, at present. I think first reason for this could be distraction, diverting their prayerful mind. Secondly, the people will think that the Holiness of the altar or sanctuary would not remain and it would be de-sacralised.

What is your opinion about women or girls dancing in the sanctuary?

When children dance it may be acceptable. As they are like angels so it's fine. But young girls or teenagers above fifteen years, if they are dancing on the sanctuary it may not be welcomed and it may be distraction. There are practical problems in bringing the girls to the sanctuary. Already there are problem happening between girls and boys those who are in the music/ choir group. In such situations, now introducing dance may bring more problems so using dance has some practical problems.

Using *arati* or lighting *kuthuvillakku* (lamps) are happening and it is from local culture. These things, though, it is associated with women, now-a-days priests are lighting lamps and doing *arati*. So it is not necessary that only women should come on sanctuary to do these things. Also ladies can take part but it will not affect like dance. Because there is no

dance moves in lighting of the lamp or *arati*. So, it does not matter when women does it. But dance is not like this, it distract the people.

So, do you think that dance will be a distraction...

I think the minimum distraction is in *Bharathanatyam*, if the question is raised before me to ask if what dance could be more distractive. Then I would say people would feel minimum distraction with *Bharathanatyam* dance and the other dances have maximum distraction. In *Bharathanatyam* dress is fully covered and decent so there will be less distraction. A basic instinct is there, and it is a God given nature attraction towards the opposite sex. So, even if a young girl dress up properly and dance in the sanctuary there will be distraction among the boy viewers. Because the girl is the girl however she dresses up. So what I am trying to say is that, when we go to the Church for a particular purpose and that there is opportunity to lose that purpose because of this dance.

What I mean is, for a God relation or to worship or to remember the Calvary sacrifice, we go to Church but if we get some other thought instead of worship because of these things, it makes to think, whether these types of inclusion like dance is necessary to not. If the whole congregation dance then it is fine, but only five girls are dancing on the sanctuary and others are watching it means, they become the spectators or viewers.

Is *Bharathanatyam* a local cultural dance?

Devadasis were the one who learn different art forms and used in the temple including dance. I don't know the history in regard to this, but this dance is not for women of good morality or woman from a good family and this would have been the opinion of other people also. This dance style is not used in the villages, *Bharathanatyam* does not belong to ordinary people and it belongs to the elite, a Brahminical dance form. It has come from outside the society of Tamil people. At present people say *Bharathanatyam* is not the local culture and only the folk dance. So

whatever dance, may be small children if the dance people may accept? I am surprised to know about your research that you have taken up to find about using dance in the Holy Mass.

Yes. Many people wonder at my studies, some have asked me that, how can you do a PhD in *Bharathanatyam* and theology and so on. While some dance scholars, Bishops and priest, even the provincial sister from our diocese appreciated my imitative in this field, in fact, when I first introduced about myself and my study, she screamed and said, vow, really where are you doing it? She continued that, someone who can understand dance may appreciate it because dance is a medium for communication.

Yes, yes, that is all ok, when it is outside the church. I have witnessed many good programmes, dance program from Kalai Kaviri College, but using dance in the liturgy. I don't know how far it might help. You have just begun it, may be, let us see. Ok. Good wishes....

Thank you very much for the time.

Participant Sixteen – Lay woman (translation)

I am doing a research on incorporation of *Bharathanatyam* dance in the Roman Catholic Liturgy. Could you please share your opinion on using dance in the liturgy?

Worship is an act where both the clergy and the people together celebrate.

OK

If it is music, then everyone in the congregation can able to practice and sing together and there is possibilities of every one to take part in the Holy Mass. In general worship is supposed to be a place of worship where everyone can take part in it. Whether the people are good singers or not they will be able to sing along with the congregation and almost all the people sing during the mass.

Once upon a time, the mass was celebrated in Latin and people were mere a spectators. But now the mass is celebrated in the local language and people are able to take part in it. Also the music also is sung in the local language with simple tune where everyone can follow and so there are possibilities for everyone to take part in it. But when danced is used, people cannot take part in it and they will be mere a spectator. How this dance will allow the people to take part in it? *Bharathanatyam* could only be performed by the individual, and that this dance does not represent a community action because the folk dances are performed in a group.

Bharathanatyam by itself is not a group dance. It is a much more classical and individual dance. So folk dance like *Kummi* and *Kollatam*, which are group dances and community oriented, should be used. Dance of the soil (local culture) like many folk dance such as *kummi*, *kllatam*, *oyilattama* are group dances. All most all the village can take part in it. Dance like *Bharathanatyam* is not belonging to ordinary people. It is belonging to the elite group, Brahminical dance form. All the dance costumes, make-up and things required for the

performance are not of the ordinary people or it won't suit the life of the ordinary people. It would take three or four years to train the dancers. Therefore, *Bharathanatyam* does not suit the marginalised society, which forms the majority of the Church. When you bring this dance in the liturgy people cannot take part in it and they will become mere spectators. See, we are Christians since, how long, four to five hundred years.

Yes...

Foreigners, I mean the missionaries brought us Christ, Christianity. It is not from this land, until now, looking at the way of life and the worship elements such as bread and wine, and the people behaviour such as wearing shoes inside the Church and so on, people think it is a foreign religion. In such situation, what is the necessary of bringing dance like *Bharathanatyam* in the liturgy which is belong to the elite group or the dance of the elite group, like the rich foreigners, which is not from our land. The ordinary people's worship should resemble the life of the ordinary people, it should like common people worship, simple and so on.... and able to take part in it. When the ordinary people are not able to take part in the worship, worship through the type of *Bharathanatyam* dance, then it is not necessary to bring such dance worship which is not suitable to the ordinary people. In such case the people will become mere spectators and won't be able to participate satisfactorily in the worship. So, why should the dance of people, which is the folk dance is brought into the worship. *Bharathanatyam* is not used in the village. To this day people think that *Bharathanatyam* is performed and used by the elite group, the Brahminical group. It is very expensive art form. Even from the time of *Devadasis*, who offered them to dance for God, it is presumed even that time also this dance might not have considered as the dance form that is suitable to the ordinary people

This dance is not belonging to the woman of morality and the dance is only used and practiced by the *Devadasis* who were married to the deity and lived in the temple for they had the illegal life and their life is forced to depend on the priests and made them as a common woman for the society (a prostitute). Because of such reasons this dance did not gain a good reputation among the good/disciplined family people. People also will have doubt and also why to give the 'good news' through this type of dance. The people are not educated or not yet prepared to accept the liturgical inculturation. People are not even ready to accept the priest to be seated (squat the legs on floor) equally on the floor to celebrate the liturgy. Inculturation is not yet reached the common people (R.C.) and do not know the importance of inculturation. In such situation, it will be very difficult to accept or to understand the worship through dance form. The dance once which was seen as a *devadasis* dance, which was banned and reformed is now prevalently used among the Brahminical society and seen as a Brahminical art form.

Ok. But, in some places dance is used in worship like NBCLC and in Kalai Kaviri College. Moreover our Church is promoting it. So the father and Bishops knew that something good in that dance, Bharathanatyam can help to communicate the message effectively to the people, so, why we can't give a try?

The request on having worship group or worship preparatory group in every parish of the diocese itself is not installed. May be for 50 parishes in a diocese, 10 parishes will have worship preparatory group. Even the Church is not improved or successes in maintaining such groups for the parish liturgies purposes. In such circumstances, it is very difficult to have worship through dance. There is lot of preparation needed to have worship through dance and there are many poor parishes where the parishioners don't have access to the

basic needs. In such parishes, the parish priest will not take the effort to use these types of expensive art form for worship; the training of this dance, costumes, music and required things to use this dance is very expensive.

Sometimes the parents of the children who perform this dance may be proud of their children dancing and they will accept the use of dance in the Holy Mass. On the other hand, those who do not have any connection with the dance will not accept the incorporation of dance. Moreover people are waiting to finish the mass early and to leave to their houses. Having dance worship may take longer time and it is difficult to ask the people to stay back.

As people are very much influenced with the media, so when the message is given through such effective media, as you say, like dance that will leave an impact... and without any doubt it will reach people. But at the same time there should be space for the common people to participate in it when it is used in worship. Occasionally for any feast any dance group like Kali Kaviri could come and perform but it is a questions mark that for how many people that the message would reach? Instead, if a group has to be formed among the people of the parish and then if they use dance for worship then it brings lots of meaning to the life of the people also. But that is not possible at present in the local parishes. Even to prepare for the ordinary liturgy, it is very difficult to gather people. In such case to have a group to use dance for worship is very difficult task.

I have visited some foreign countries; I mean I have been to Europe. In foreign countries, if it is a youth or children mass, all the preparation is only done by the particular group. Here in the local place (Tamil Nadu) it is not the same. People are given freedom, even if the freedom is given to them nobody come forward take such responsibility and can say people are not trained or given practice to take up the responsibilities. The parish priests

says that he invites the people come forward to take up the responsibility but nobody come forward even to take up the reading to read during the liturgy.

Using dance in the worship is a very big task. It is very doubtful whether the people will come forward to prepare such mass and also to gather children to give practice. Even to prepare people to take *arathi* or for lighting of the lamp, it is very difficult though the Church allows it, to incorporate the local elements (for inculturation). In such circumstance of the Church, we do not know how far these new things will successfully carry on. There is lot of preparation to use worship through dance: practical preparation, and also to educate the people to understand using dance in the Holy Mass, and to make them understand that why dance is used in the worship and so on. People have to be convinced before that the Church hierarchies, bishops, concern persons for the liturgy, then parish priests have to be convinced.

There won't be a consistency in the local parishes though they are taught how to go about in using dance in the worship. There won't be people to take initiative to prepare and carry on the work in the local parishes. This is one of the major issues about using dance in the worship in the parishes. The other issue is that, generally all the people say that according to the interest of the parish priest the things get changed in the parishes. If the priest is interested in dance, he will encourage the dance and it will continue till his time in the parish. When the next priest takes over the parish and if he is not interested then the dance will not be encouraged and according to his interest some other thing will be encouraged. Without the priest dependency no parishes will work independently or continue the work which was already in the parishes. Even if the diocese bring some rules that all the parishes should have different groups such as Bible studies, music, dance, still it is very doubtful that it would progress successfully

Thank you so much for sharing your views on incorporating *Bharathanatyam* dance in Christian worship.