

FR. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

THE SERVANT OF GOD

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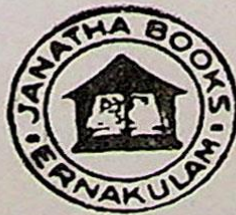
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By Fr. VALERIAN PLATHOTTAM, C.M.I.

THE SERVANT OF GOD
KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

"WHAT IS LOVELY NEVER DIES"



(English)

Kuriakose Elias Chavara

By

Fr. Valerian C.M.I.

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The Servant of God

KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

FOUNDER, PRIOR GENERAL

FOUNDER OF
THE SYRIAN CHRMELITE CONGREGATION

FOUNDER OF
THE RELIGIOUS LIFE FOR WOMEN IN MALABAR

VICAR GENERAL FOR
THE SYRIAN CHURCHES

By
Fr. VALERIAN C.M.I.

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

As the reputation for the sanctity of the Servant of God Kuriakose Elias Chavara was being spread more and more among the faithful, it was felt that the canonical process for his canonization should be started. Accordingly the sacred congregation for the cause of saints on December, 9, 1955 (prot. n. 63/955) issued the decree authorizing the bishop of Changanacherry, in which diocese lie buried the mortal remains of the Servant of God, to institute the diocesan process. Thus, Mar Matthew Kavukatt of happy memory, the then bishop of Changanacherry on December, 31, 1957 constituted a historical commission to collect and study the writing referring to the Servant of God.

Even as the historical commission was collecting and studying the writings on August 15, 1962 the same Mar Matthew Kavukatt, then archbishop of Changanacherry instituted two diocesan tribunals, one to examine the writings of the servant of God presented by the historical commission and the other to conduct the informative process. Both the tribunals having completed their work, on August 8, 1969 the same Mar Matthew Kavukatt instituted a third tribunal to examine on the *non-cultus*.

When all the above said tribunals have completed their work and the acts and documents were translated into Latin, on September 18, 1970 Mar Antony Padiyara, Archbishop of Changanacherry, in a public session held at the St. Joseph monastery chapel at Mannanam, duly examined all the acts and documents of the tribunals and sealed them. Subsequently they were forwarded to the sacred congregation for the cause of saints.

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We are gratified to note that the sacred congregation immediately took the matter in hand and having examined the writings of the Servant of God, on 12 October 1973 issued the decree "*nihil obstat quominus ad ulteriora procedatur*".

Now, the sacred congregation is studying all the documents related to the Servant of God and preparing the *positio* for the official introduction of the cause in the curia Romana. Let us hope and pray that the sacred congregation soon issue the decree on the heroicity of the virtues of the Servant of God and subsequently also the decree of beatification.

LUCAS C.M.I.
21-3-1975,

Nihil obstat

Romae
Amatus Petrus Fustar
Subsecretarius.

FOREWORD

Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara, the subject of this biography was a very holy man, and like all holy men he was very dynamic personality. From his very early childhood he seemed to have been marked out by Providence in a special way to perform great things and his life bears out unmistakably that it was not a vain expectation.

The beautiful thing about this holy man was that in him the colossal St. Benedict and the swift and agile St. Bernard blended in a fine harmony. While all his life was a song of love and union with God, he never forgot to sing about the common man and toil day and night for his needs. There was nothing vague about his love of his neighbour, it was definite and as clear cut as his love of God. He was never a moody mystic lost in the hazy clouds of day-dream, but had his feet firmly on the ground. Never a visionary he had yet vision enough to see far ahead of his times. Many of his dreams have found their fulfilment today. Many await their fulfilment and it is up to his children, the Syrian Carmelites of Malabar to see that the dreams of their holy founder realized.

He was a great soul because he had the imagination and sensitiveness of the artist about him. The 'broken arcs' were not for him the perfect round; the highest and the best was ever his ideal. That is the grand legacy he has left for his children the Syrian Carmelites of Malabar. May they catch up the spirit and carry on the message of their holy founder, is our earnest and heartfelt wish and prayer.

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A cursory glance at the labours of Fr. Cyriac Elias in the various fields of activity, ecclesiastical, social, and literary reveals the gigantic figure that he was. Great men do not pass away to the beyond without making their marks for the guidance and inspiration for future generations. Fr. Cyriac has left enough marks on the church and society in Malabar of which we can be greatly proud.

We should be thankful to Fr. Valerian C.M.I. for this inspiring biography.

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime”

Changanacherry,
26-10-1953.

Mathew Kavukatt
Bishop of Changanacherry



Holy Father's Audience
to Prior General, Fr. Theobald Pothanikat, C.M.I.
March 21, 1974.

PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE,
Ernakulam, Cochin-682011,
Kerala, India.
December 15, 1974

Dear Rev. Fr. Valerian,

It was with immense pleasure that I learnt that you are publishing a biographical sketch of the Servant of God, Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara. I am sure that this publication will help make the holy man better known all over our land and abroad.

It is easy to see that Fr. Cyriac Elias who lived between 1805-1871 in Kerala was a prototype of St. Vincent de Paul or St. Don Bosco. Like them he founded two religious Congregation; like them he was involved in religious and social events of the first importance; like them he dreamt of missions; and he was also a builder, a great apostle of the press, an eloquent preacher and an educationalist. The great uplift the Malabar Church witnessed in the 19th century is to be attributed to the great zeal, vision and wisdom of this holy man.

Full as his life was active, acted upon, Fr. Cyriac Elias would never have merited that gentle reproach from Our Lord, "Thou art careful and troubled about many things.....". Henri Ghion asks: "What is the point of classifying the friends of God as active or contemplative"? "The active are active only in the measure of their prayers", he says. Fr. Cyriac Elias looked like Martha, but he was Mary. "He remained on his knees as though in an ecstasy for as much as one hour of his meditation", relates an eye-witness. He passed before the Blessed Sacrament every moment he could snatch from the various charges with which he was entrusted.

Though I might have spoken of his other virtues—of his filial devotion to Mary Immaculate, of his strict observance of even of the minutest rules, his child-like

and ready submission to legitimate authority, his all-embracing charity, which extended even to those outside the fold, his wonderful patience in infirmities and suffering—I prefer to limit myself and to condense my thoughts. In one word, he was a saint.

Of a saint, says G. K. Chesterton, "it is natural to think first as gentle and pacific: and in one sense, like all such men, he is very gentle and very pacific. But he is, above all things, challenging. He cuts across the whole trend of his time at right angles; quite content to know that the angle is right. Nearly all people of the other kind take their divergence in a sort of curve feeling the forces, round them as things that can be partially followed if they are ultimately left behind". It is easy to see that Fr. Cyriac Elias belongs to the above challenging type.

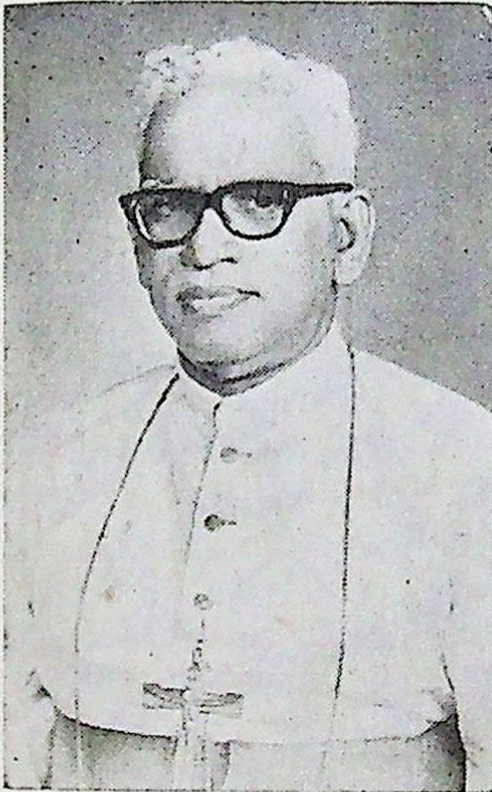
Although several of the numerous favours attributed to his intercession are of a temporal nature, Divine Providence seems to wish to render testimony to the mission which the humble man, now so powerful with heaven, had foreseen would be his; that of leading souls to become more holy, of drawing them to greater missionary action.

It is hoped that your work will set forth the ideals of the servant of God for the inspiration of this generation to make the presence of Christ real and efficacious in our times. I heartily congratulate you on this effort and wish the publication wide circulation and every success.

Yours devotedly in our Lord,
(Sd.)

Fr. Theobald, C.M.I.
Prior General.

Ernakulam
15-12-1974



Joseph Cardinal Parecattil
Archbishop of Ernakulam

Archbishop's House
Cochin-682011
Kerala State, India

December 31, 1974

No. R2/Misc. 759/74

Dear Father Valerian,

I am happy to learn that your book "The Servant of God Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara" is being reprinted with fresh additions. I am sure this inspiring biography of the venerable founder of the Syrian Carmelite Congregation will be a beacon light to generations to come, leading them to a life of sanctity and perfection. Let everyone imbibe his spirit and zeal and become a real witness to Christ in today's world.

Invoking God's blessing upon you and the readers of the book,

Yours sincerely in Our Lord
(Sd.)
Archbishop of Ernakulam

practically impossible without an endless chain of prayers, an unbroken series of earnest attempts, and an unstinted expenditure of money, what we can do at present is only to trust in God and do our best. Of course God bestows upon His chosen few His divine blessings and heavenly honours even without a solemn proclamation. Yet He is no less interested in His beloved servants being duly honored and widely known in the world as well. Though it be certain that the Almighty Lord does not require any external interference in the consummation of his divine plan, it would seem to be his divine will that we should also participate and benefit ourselves in the glorification of His chosen ones.

If only we continue to pray ardently and work earnestly will our Lord be pleased to honour His servant by favouring us with gifts, spiritual and temporal, through his intercession. And it is when we are thus blessed with divine gifts in a supernatural manner through his intercession that we can be the more certain about the Lord's will to glorify him in every way. It is mainly because of this that the Church insists on the Divine approbation of her undertaking in the form of miracles, before one is finally enrolled in the list of the Blessed. And for this we should all now pray in particular.

To any one reading this book once it will be quite evident that there have been saints in Kerala, which undoubtedly was the chief centre of the missionary efforts of St. Thomas in India. My humble object in compiling this book is that it should serve as an inspiration to each and every one in and outside India and especially to those in Malabar to understand and appreciate our saintly hero Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara. In addition to being the illustrious founder of the

Carmelite Congregation of Malabar the only indigenous organization of its kind in our country he is also well-known for the part he played in the history of the Malabar church as its spiritual guide and preserver of its ancient faith. That he was leading a model life of sanctity and died a saintly death, also are facts well known to all. It is therefore our privilege, as well as our duty to contribute our share to get him officially proclaimed a saint of the church.

He has been aptly called "THE FLOWER OF MANNANAM" by Bishop Marcelline and it is a pity that the sweet scent of this beautiful flower should still remain beyond the reception of so many. No one is loved and respected unless he is first known well. So we must try to know him well and then will naturally follow our love and respect for him. It will be clear from a perusal of this life of our hero that from very early childhood he was not only loved and revered but also looked upon as a saint by everyone that happened to know him. Many are the occasions on which our people lamenting over the want of a saint of their own have been consoled and satisfied with the suggestion of the name Cyriac Elias Chavara as being one such.

Indeed there have been many who always took it for granted that he was a saint and spared not their efforts to see him raised to that dignity. The first and foremost among such was the illustrious missionary Fr. Leopold O.C.D. who knew him intimately as spiritual father and confessor for a long time. But for his sudden recall to Europe the cause of our saintly hero would have been advanced much further. Yet there have been other individuals silently working in this cause ever since the death of their hero. Greater interest was of course taken in this matter only after the fiftieth year of his death, and now fortunately it has gained the

enthusiastic support and whole-hearted approbation from the whole length and breadth of India.

This universal outburst of a noble aspiration may safely be attributed to the mysterious working of the hand of providence. The ever flourishing church of Malabar which formerly had been the object of universal praise and admiration has in recent years begun to experience insurmountable barriers in the path of its progress. The one effective means to stem the tide of impiety says St. Francis Sales is to extol the virtues of the departed saintly souls and to enhance their reverence shown to them. Such being the conditions prevailing here it is to be hoped the renewed enthusiasm in the cause of our hero is the one effective means chosen by God for the expansion of the church, its consolidation and allround progress and the greater sanctification of its faithful.

Attempts were begun years ago for compiling a biography of our venerable hero. A brief sketch of his life was published in the very year of his death, but it has long been out of print. Later it was tried to satisfy the great demand of the public with pictures and pamphlets about him, but this only served to increase the demand for larger and detailed account of his life. Then finding it well-nigh impossible to meet such a demand on all of a sudden, a brief history of his life and works were published in 1936 from the St. Joseph's press, Mannanam.

Later, upon the decision of the Prior general in council, issued the official letter No. 566/36 entrusting me with the onerous task of compiling a complete and full account of the life of Fr. Cyriac Elias based on all the relevant records and with all appropriate references and notes. It was in pursuance of this order that after about four years of hard and continuous labours I have

succeeded in bringing this my humble attempts to a happy close by publishing this biography in its present form. The bibliography included in the book will speak for itself and so it makes it almost unnecessary to dilate on the merits of this book and other original records that have been made use of in the preparation of this book. Along with the many precious manuscripts scrupulously preserved in the archives of the St. Joseph's monastery are kept two valuable books of Fr. Cyriac Elias in his own handwriting. One of them with the title "A Repentant soul" is a record of the principal events of his life from birth to death. And the other is a collection of daily chronicles prepared by himself. These two manuscripts form the basis of the present biography. Extracts from these two have been copiously taken and extensively used that they make up the bulk of the new book and justify its claim of being an autobiography.

Contemporary works in the form of daily chronicles and historical sketches also have contributed no small share to enliven the present work and to confirm the veracity of the historical facts dealt with in the course of these pages. Many are the valuable records seen in the archives of the monasteries at Ampazhakad, Elthuruth, Vazhakulam and Mutholy, wherein references are made to the life and work of our hero. Relevant facts from all these sources have been drawn in the preparation of this work so as to make it as perfect as possible. There is ample reason to believe that the scrupulous care and attention paid by our ancestors in the preservation of the various records concerning the venerable father was due to their firm faith in the holiness of the man. The helping hand of God also may be recognized in this. The only records yet remaining to be consulted are those in the archives of the archbishop's palace at Verapoly. They are sure to

be considerable in extent and importance as he was the Vicar General and in charge of all the administrative matters concerning the Syrian churches in particular, and His Excellency Archbishop Attipetty of Verapoly has magnanimously consented to favour me with all the necessary materials when convenient and so it may be hoped that these valuable evidences also may be included in the next edition of the book. Not content with the researches in the various archives I have spared no pains in meeting personally people who as contemporaries, relatives, friends, fellow-townsmen, natives or other ways were expected to know anything about him. Among such may be mentioned in particular V. Rev. Fr. Aloysius of Manjummel Monastery whose testimony exceptionally valuable.

In addition to our hero's diaries and chronicles there are also several of his works both prose and poetry to his credit. Important among them are the History of the Rocos Schism, the History of the Founding Fathers, A history of Kerala, the Founding of Monastery, Meditations, Marana parva, Eclogues and others. A burning zeal of Divine love is the common factor to be noticed in all these works. The brief account of his life drawn up by his spiritual counsellor Fr. Leopold and the daily chronicles and abstracts mentioned by his co-workers Fr. Kuriakose Elias Porukara and Fr. Varghese Parapuram also provide abundant materials. No less important are the trust-worthy accounts of Archbishop Bernardine and Bishop Marcelline.

The one obvious conclusion that can be drawn from all the long and laborious enquiries and researches is that he was universally acclaimed a holy man at all times and by all people. It will be clear from the ensuing chapters how and why the clothes, books and other

things used by him and even his hair have been preserved most carefully by his admirers for so long a time. Not only Catholics but also non-Catholics seem to have looked upon him with deep veneration as is due to a holy man, even during his life time. And this attitude of veneration became all the more strengthened when it was publicly known from his death bed that he had preserved in maintaining un-tarnished, that white robe of sanctifying grace which he had obtained at the time of the Baptism. That the preliminary measures for including him in the roll of the saints was undertaken soon after his death also proves the common interest of the people in this cause.

In conclusion, I may also say that we can consider ourselves really fortunate in being able to collect from various sources all the relevant historical materials at least now, for there have been serious mishaps which but for providential circumstances would have made it an impossibility.

Fr. Valerian C.M.I.

FR. CYRIAC ELIAS CHAVARA

MALABAR

Few places in Asia could rival Malabar in its ancient traditions, natural beauty and fertile resources. Centuries before Christ, the Aryans migrated into this land and established themselves in various centres extending from Cape Comorin to the extreme North. Under their influence, Malabar developed new trade and cultural relationships with the rest of the world. Celebrated ports like Cranganore facilitated negotiations with foreign traders and attracted foreign missionaries in later years.

As early as 52 A.D. St. Thomas the apostle arrived in Cranganore, in fulfilment of the mandate his Lord and Master had laid on him. "Go out all over the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." By his exemplary living, repeated exhortations and by performing miracles he succeeded in drawing a large community into the fold of his Master. He also ordained priests and bishops to perpetuate the structural integrity of Christ's kingdom that he extended to this Land. The ruins of seven ancient Churches in Malabar still bear testimony to the antiquity of the Church here.

A reinforcement of Syrian Christians under the leadership of the "Armenian" trader Thomas of Cana colonised in Malabar in or about 345 A.D. They attracted the attention of the then ruling dynasties and

secured from them many royal prerogatives and privileges. Several ancient European missionaries, traders, and visitors have described the flourishing community of St. Thomas Christians they met in Malabar.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the solidarity of the Christian community here suffered severe set-backs. The advent of Latin missionaries and their failure to appreciate the oriental rites led to considerable disturbances in the ecclesiastical administration and schisms resulted. The internal dissensions rose to a very high pitch under their rule till in the 19th century Archbishop Bernardine (of Verapoly) himself admitted it and passed orders commissioning Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara as Vicar General. To Fr. Chavara was thus given the opportunity and the privilege of infusing new life and vigour into the decadent community of Syrian Catholics in Malabar.

CYRIAC CHAVARA

Fr. Cyriac was born on the 8th of February, 1805 the eldest son of Cyriac and Mary Chavara. The Chavara family could trace its ancestry to the celebrated line of Pakalomattam, one of the foremost Christian families of Malabar that received the faith and priesthood from the Apostle himself.

The house of Fr. Cyriac is in Kainakary, about half an hour's run by motor-boat from Alleppey, on the Arabian coast. The backwaters of Malabar, interspersed with numerous island formations like Kainakary, form one of the most attractive features of the beautiful land.

Chavara descending from the Pakalomattam family could claim as its members many a noble son among those who shaped the fortunes of the Syrian church in

this part of the world. Mar Alexander, several Archdeacons who ruled over the church in Malabar for long periods, Bishop Mar Louis Pazheparampil, Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, all descended from this line. His Lordship the late Bishop of Changanacherry, Mar James Kalacherry, was also related to the Chavara family. It is difficult to ignore Providential scheming in matters like this. It can never be just an accident that Fr. Chavara, who among other things is best remembered as the founder of the Carmelite congregation in Malabar should have been a scion of the Pakalomattam family.

The year 1805 ! Those were days when even Travancore which now stands foremost in literacy had not yet developed its educational activities. Government schools were introduced for the first time about 1817, in the reign of the late Maharaja Swathi Thirunal of revered memory. It was much later that schools were opened in Kainakary. So the young Cyriac had to draw his inspiration and knowledge at the feet on the 'Country Asan', who conducted a common class in a shed for children of various ages and standards. The youngster spent about five years in this native school and picked up at the hands of his master sufficient knowledge of Malayalam and Tamil. But he was more concerned with perfecting his character and developing those virtues which marked him out for recognition in his later career. Most of this training was imparted to him by his own mother. Even as she fed him, she recited to him various prayers which she made him learn. She impressed him by her many acts of devotion. Later in life he recalled memories of his mother getting up regularly at night to say the Rosary. Spurred on by the example of his mother, he developed a keen desire to offer up his whole life exclusively to the service of God.

The beginnings of the desire were manifested by the enthusiasm he displayed in studying the prayers in Syriac to enable him to assist at the Holy sacrifice of the Mass. Even before he had grown physically big enough to handle the Missal with its stand and move from one side of the altar to the other, Cyriac was ready in the service at the altar, as an ardent and zealous acolyte. It was only natural that his desire soared and he aspired to the Priesthood. The encouragement of Fr. Thomas Palakal, Malpan in the Pallipuram Seminary, was very timely and in 1815, Cyriac was formally admitted to the seminary to undergo the training necessary for ordination. Fr. Cyriac Eliseus of Porookara speaks about this period: that "his life in the seminary was very exemplary, is admitted by all his colleagues. His devotion, meekness, obedience and charity were all outstandingly impressive. The seminary was a new one and the discipline enforced was particularly strict. Yet throughout the rather long period of his training, there was no instance of his having been reproved for even the slightest offence. On the contrary by virtue of his character, zeal and talents, he acquired great proficiency in Syriac and other languages. Also because of the great regard and esteem in which he was held by the Malpan, he was sent to other places to gain more knowledge in Portuguese and Latin." Fr. Leopold, the celebrated foreign missionary gives corroborating testimony. "As would be endorsed by many of his colleagues still alive, Fr. Cyriac was particularly interested in the service of God. Without any consideration for worldly achievements, he zealously attended to his study. He was quite orderly and God-fearing. He was always pleased with and charitably disposed to his fellow students. He deprecated the ill-temper and impatience that open characterized youngsters". Several of his classmates have remarked that Fr. Cyriac was the

youngest of the lot but easily the foremost in study, and in the practice of devotions. How admirably holy and dignified his life was can easily be surmised from the fact that his superiors had occasion only to commend his activities in a community built up of members of different temperaments and dispositions. After a period of training and study extending over fourteen years, in 1829, he was ordained priest by Monsignor Stabilini, *interim* vicar apostolic of Verapoly. He was only 24 years of age then. He celebrated his first Mass on the 26th of November, 1829, in his own parish church at Chennankary.

He stayed at Chennankary and Pulincunnu for sometime after his first Mass. Not long after, he returned to Pallipuram and helped Fr. Thomas Palakal in the conduct of the seminary affairs. His zeal to work for the salvation of souls received a great impetus at this time. One of his great aspirations was to work for souls. Even in the ordination service, while he was co-celebrant of the Sacrifice with the bishop, he had prayed for the blessings of founding a religious congregation in this country to work for the salvation of souls at large and for the spiritual perfection of its own members. Providence had also willed it, that he should attain his objective, the outstanding aspiration of this new priest at the altar.

In those days, there were not as many sermons from pulpits in churches as today. The effect of it was also visibly manifest then. Fr. Cyriac set about reforming this state of affairs. He went about from church to church preaching sermons. The memory of the preaching he successfully conducted at Pulimcunnu is cherished even to this day. But this did not satisfy him. He had worked out for himself a new line of activities for the spiritual regeneration of Malabar. He had also

the benefit of the co-operation and guidance of two other celebrated leaders, Fr. Thomas Porookara and Fr. Thomas Palakal. The former enjoyed great popular recognition as a holy and virtuous priest, bent upon receding as much from the world as the world chose to honor him and extol his worth. The latter, his Malpan, was at this time leading a life of asceticism and renunciation in the seminary at Pallipuram. They were on terms of great intimacy and mutual regard. These were the leaders with whom Fr. Cyriac was privileged to work. The similarity of ideologies that inspired all of them was greatly responsible for the success of the organisation which was reserved for Fr. Cyriac to found officially, in its present form.

FORMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

In the history of the Syrian Carmelite Congregation—Congregation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate—the three outstanding names are those of Rev. Fr. Thomas Palackal, Rev. Fr. Thomas Porookara and Rev. Fr. Kuria-kose Elias Chavara. The latter two first conceived the idea of starting a religious society of some kind in Kerala. Father Porookara entertained the idea of fleeing away from the world to the wilderness like the ascetics of old; but father Chavara, although he liked the idea of a religious society, was not in favour of a flight from the world. Hence they decided to place the matter before father Thomas Palackal whom the two held in high esteem and veneration. Father Palackal gladly accepted and heartily approved their idea of founding a religious society of some kind. The next day himself and father Porookara went to the bishop, Mgr. Maurelius Stabilini, a Calced Carmelite (O.C.D.) for help and guidance in the matter.

The bishop knew them pretty well; father Thomas Palackal was the chief of the diocesan consultors and father Porookara was his secretary. They were the most erudite and holy priests of the day. Naturally enough the bishop was rather reluctant to part with their services, both to himself and to his diocese. The bishop, who knew to draw good out of evil, patiently heard them and approved of their idea and tried to convince them that the demand of the church at that time was that they should form themselves into a service-centred religious society, independant and indigenious, living with, among and for the people. He emphatically discouraged the idea of a flight from the world.

The fathers were convinced of the necessity of such a religious society and agreed to the proposal of the bishop. Thereupon the bishop asked them—his consultor and the secretary—to draw up a petition, rather an episcopal circular delieneating therein the nature and scope of the religious community they had envisaged and exhorting the faithful to reach out financial aid for the same. They lost no time in drawing up such a petition—circular—and submitting it to the bishop. Immensely pleased with it, the bishop sealed it with his hearty approbation and headed the subscription list with a good amount. (This circular is considered an official, episcopal approbation in as much as it contained also the nature and scope of the society).

No sooner did they obtain the much desired official, episcopal approbation than father Porookara started on his fund—raising tours of the country. With sufficient funds at their command, the pioneers and other well-wishers started in different directions seeking for a spot suitable to perch their temporary

'Monastery' whence to start their activities. At long last father Porookara and Fr. Chavara hit upon the hillock at Mannanam as the best suited one. The natural setting of the country side was so appealing that all his colleagues applauded the discovery and arrangements were forth-with set afoot for the construction of the temporary shed and for the laying of the foundation stone of the first house of the first independent and indigenous religious society in India.

On May 11, 1831, Father Thomas Porookara, in the presence of the bishop, Mgr. Maurelius Stabilini, father Thomas Palackal, father Chavara, over fifty priests and hundreds of lay people laid the foundation stone for the first house of the first independent and indigenous religious congregation in India. It is indeed the red-letter day in the annals of the congregation. Here it must be mentioned that it was his ill-health that prevented the bishop from laying the foundation stone himself.

Immediately after, on Dec. 8 1831, Mgr. Stabilini sent for the new community his official—episcopal—ecclesiastical—approbation together with a rule of life and work consisting of ten articles. It was given under his own hand, signed and sealed and the fathers of the new religious community began their life and work according to them.

Ten years after, in 1841, father Thomas Palackal was called away to his eternal reward and five years hence, in 1846, father Porookara followed him. Thus it fell to the lot of father Chavara the task of completing the work they had begun together. No doubt it was a difficult one for him to handle alone. But relying on divine providence, he rose equal to the occasion and threw himself heart and soul in the work.

In the wake of the Portuguese there had come to Kerala several religious orders such as Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites. The founding fathers had learned of them and were quite familiar with those of their times. From them they had come to know that their Orders were approved by the Holy See either as Pontifical or exempt. Naturally enough father Chavara desired to obtain for his congregation such an approbation from Rome.

To this end father Chavara approached the successors of Stabilini, one after another. They were Mgr. Francis Xavier, Mgr. Ludovic and Mgr. Bernardine. The first two, simple and saintly as they were, desired nothing but the good of the new religious society. They desired very much that this community should grow up independant and indigenous; they assured father Chavara that they would certainly help him to realise his long-cherished dream and to this end, they carried on numerous correspondence with the Holy See. But before they could realise the *desideratum* both were called away, one to his eternal reward in 1844 and the other to Rome in 1853.

Least discouraged by these unhappy turn of events, father Chavara approached Mgr. Bernardine who the Servant of God knew was not so very favourable as his immediate predecessors. He requested him to obtain his religious congregation the approbation of the Holy See. But he was not easily moved. He put father Chavara and the little community to several very serious tests as if to try their constancy. They stood them all with the utmost submissiveness and patience. At last Mgr. Bernardine, instead of obtaining for them the approbation of the Holy See, sent them the REGULAE & CONSTITUTIONES of the first Order of Carmel with instructions to note down the changes desired and return.

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Now the small community at Mannanam had swelled to over thirty including priests, clerics in minor orders and aspirants. Least suspecting any other motive in the bishop, the Servant of God assembled the community, read out the instructions of the bishop and, in consultation with them, noted down the changes to suit to those in a torrid zone and the needs and demands of the times, the church and country and returned to the bishop. But utterly regardless of their suggestions, Mgr. Bernardine sent back the constitutions of the first order with such changes as he thought fit. This sent the whole community into utter despair. The strict law of enclosure, too many fasts, too many community exercises etc. were all such as to defeat the very purpose for which they had formed themselves into a community of religious. Father Chavara on behalf of himself and of the whole community wrote that the Constitutions would defeat the very end of the community and that they were too exacting. But the bishop was inexorable. He persisted in his stand that they should accept them and that those unwilling might quit. He further noted that father Marcel (missionary) would be sent to preach the retreat preparatory to the profession of vows and that the rules of the constitutions would be enforced from the very commencement of the retreat. Here it will not be out of place to quote Father Varkey Parappuram, the chronicler. He wrote, "The members of the community felt aggrieved, discouraged and disappointed at them; humbly they protested against the imposition of the new constitutions; but it was of no avail: Mgr. Bernardine was inexorable; he persisted that those unwilling might go away.....".

The paternal heart of the Servant of God throbbed with sorrow. He could not bear the idea of parting with those who had first come to join the community and till that day had lived together observing the rules they first

Continued with the 13th of 1880

got from Mgr. Stabilini; all these years they had lived together, dined together, prayed and worked together for the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom. It was indeed a great shock. Hence entirely throwing himself into the hands of God, father Chavara, persuaded his confreres to go into the retreat and there in to make their final decision.

The master preacher, Fr. Marcel O.C D. (a missionary) reached in time and commenced the retreat together with the enforcement of the new rules.

The retreat over, the day dawned for the profession of vows of those that chose to. We might say it was a cloudy day, a day of throbbing of hearts and shedding of tears, for, the chronicler adds, ".....half the number of the community held away.....". The others relying on divine providence made their vows feeling aggrieved at the fate of those that were compelled to withdraw. What did they ask for, what did they get instead, Did they ask for bread and were they offered a serpent, Do the baneful effects of this imposition still linger on?

On December 8, 1855, early in the morning before mass, father Chavara read aloud before father Marcel O.C.D., the representative of the bishop, Mgr. Bernardine, the words of profession of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. This over, after mass, father Chavara in the capacity of the supreme head of the community received the vows of the other ten that remained.* Father Chavara was till his death in 1871, the prior or prior general of the new religious community. Besides the mother house at Mannanam, he founded also the houses at Coonammavu, Vazhakulam, Elthuruthu, Pulincunnu, Ambazhakad and Mutholi.

*Here it must be remembered that the first fathers made their profession as members of 'The Society of the Servants of the Immaculate mother of Mount Carmel'.

SEMINARIES

St. Thomas himself had ordained and appointed men of the country to be priest of the church in this part of the world. Providentially, there has never been a shortage of priests here so far. That was primarily responsible for the unbroken continuity and progress of the church in Malabar. This sufficiency was brought about by a few seminaries in different places. To start with, they were small institutions. Later on major seminaries were established in noted centres like Cranganore, Vaipicot, Sampallor, Angamali, Alangat, Kaduthuruthy and Verapoly. Many of these disappeared in course of time and only the one at Verapoly continued to function during the 19th century. But for the restrictions imposed by the consideration of Rite, father Chavara would have started houses even outside the limits of Kerala.

Mgr. Bernardine was so manipulating things that the new congregation might, in every sense, be another self of the first Order of Carmel. With this end in view Mgr. Bernardine, in 1860, got it affiliated (?) to the first Order of Carmel as its third Order. Now at the time of the formal inception of the congregation in 1831 only a leather belt over white toga signified the non-secular element in their dress. But slowly and steadily they imposed the Carmelite habit: a long white scapular in 1859, the ~~owl~~ in 1868. The appointment of father Leopold (ordained in 1860) as the Delegate of the Vicar Provincial—the Vicar Apostolic Mgr. Bernardine himself was the provincial—of the congregation crowned the process of conquest of the congregation. All these were done without reference to and consultation with either the superior general, father Chavara or the community of religious. Naturally enough they resented the frequent interference of the missionaries in

the internal affairs of the congregation. When matters had reached this pass, Mgr. Bernardine tactfully intervened and evinced paternal solicitude for them and guaranteed redress of all their grievances.

On January 3, 1871 at 7-30 a.m. father Kuriakose Elias Chavara slept in the Lord fortified by the RITES of the church. It was indeed no tranquill period in the history of this congregation, yet father Chavara was always in a placid state of mind. It required indeed extraordinary patience and spiritual courage to steer the bark of this infant religious community clear of the opposing tides. Wounding neither side, he always succeeded in bringing the opposing sides to embrace each other. This was the secret of his success and the secret of his sanctity.

At the time the religious house was founded at Mannanam, there was a crying need for a major theological seminary. Naturally the farseeing promoters of the Congregation were not blind to it and a new seminary was started at Mannanam in 1833. There was also the seminary at Pallipuram. The success of the seminary at Mannanam was appreciated very much by the Archbishop Mgr. Francis Xavier, who encouraged it in every possible way. He promoted Fr. Chavara to be Malpan soon after the death of Fr. Palakal. The order promoting Fr. Chavara, issued by The Archbishop* is still preserved at Mannanam. It reads, after the usual blessing formula:

"I am encouraged by your virtues and efficiency to appoint you as the Examiner for all priests of the Syrian Rite under my jurisdiction and as the Malpan of all theological studies.

I authorise you hereby not only to permit the ordination of those whom you have examined and found

*Archbishop Francis Xavier

qualified but also to allow the priests to preach sermons and hear confessions. I do hereby command all those on whom this decree is binding to recognize and obey you as the qualified Examiner and Malpan.....

Archbishop Francis Xavier

Fr. Chavara was solely in charge of the affairs of the seminary after the death of Fr. Porookara. But he found that the building at Mannanam was not sufficient to serve the needs of a growing community. He ambitiously planned to start a central seminary on a grand scale. He drew up a scheme for the purpose and sent round a public appeal seeking the co-operation of all the parishes in the diocese. In it he pointed out the necessity and responsibility of parents giving proper education to the children and suggested that two big establishments should be conducted in a central place chosen by the bishop. In one of the two, children were to be taught Tamil, English, Latin, and Syriac. Of those who completed the course there, anybody desirous of pursuing theological studies would be encouraged to do so, if he was otherwise worthy of Holy Orders in the opinion of the responsible senior priests in charge. For such the second establishment was to be constituted. All that meant money which had to come from the different parishes. Each parish was called upon to contribute a proportion—say a tenth—of its annual net income.

There was considerable delay in executing a suggestion such as this and the pressing need for priests did not leave much time for it. So under instructions from the Archbishop two other seminaries were opened at Vazhakulam and Elthuruthu in 1866 and 1868 respectively. A bigger seminary was however started at Verapoly in 1866 and in course of time it absorbed all the others and became a common central one. In 1887, the Carmelite Congregation was taken under the direct

control of the Holy See and relieved of the control from Verapoly. This led to the progressive diminution in the strength of the Carmelite Seminary. The common seminary at Mannanam functioned as such only till 1894. Afterwards all aspirants for priesthood had to go to the seminary at Puthenpally, Verapoly. The Verapoly seminary was transferred to Puthenpally—(This has now been transferred to Mangalapuzha, Alwaye). Catholic Malabar has all along enjoyed the fruits of the loyal and steady service of Fr. Chavara in preparing labourers for the vineyard of our Lord. The service the Carmelite Seminaries have rendered to the church in Malabar, is gratefully appreciated and remembered to this day. It may be recalled that Mgr. Charles Lavinge, S. J. Vicar Apostolic of Kottayam sent a note to Mannanam thanking the congregation for its memorable work in the seminaries.

PRINTING AND PUBLISHING

Fr. Chavara was dreaming of a printing and publishing concern ever since he set foot in Mannanam with the idea of a Monastery. But the financial implications were far too much for his resources and he could have done but little for long. But his conviction of what a printing press meant for the causes so dear to his heart kept him always working for it.

It is said that the first printing press in India was set up in Goa by the Portuguese in 1556. Subsequently they established two more, one at Cranganore, Cochin and the other at Vaipikot. Some say that printing in Malayalam was undertaken for the first time at the latter place. At the time of Fr. Chavara founding the monastery at Mannanam, there were only two printing concerns in Travancore, the Government Press, Trivandrum and the C.M.S. Press, Kottayam. He was so keen on starting a press that he even thought of fabricating

a wooden press in the first instance. He tried to see the press working at Kottayam. But he was not allowed to see it. So he went to Trivandrum, saw the printing done in the Government Press, went back and made models of the press and got a working press made by local carpenters. That is the first press which set the present St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam going. A smith working in the C.M.S. Press, Kottayam at the time, cast the metal types for Fr. Chavara's first wooden press. A certain Mr. Kurian, formerly of the Government Press, Trivandrum, was engaged on the printing side, and a Jew from Cochin who had some training in binding at Bombay for the binding section. Then there was considerable difficulty in securing paper and ink. As one suggestion failed he tried another, till finally he got a supply much in excess of his requirements and he and his agents found it difficult to pay for it. It led his agents into very humiliating bargains, but ultimately a portion of the supply was returned to the suppliers themselves and he got over the embarrassment.

Permission was needed to publish books at the time. This he secured from the Palace through the influence of the then Resident, General Cullen. Thus after several set backs and trials he finally succeeded in publishing the first book from Mannanam "Gnanapiyoosham" (Spiritual Nectar) in Malayalam. Printing of the kind was far from paying those days. He was driven to very severe straits. He found it impossible to pay even the workmen's wages. He was almost driven to the verge of despair. One day as he was coming out after an importunate prayer to St. Joseph to help him, in his dire need a strange visitor from a place about 12 miles distant, called upon him and offered him 500 chs. (Rs. 17/8) and promised him more help. It is thought that this was a positive gift inspired by the Patron of this Press and Monastery, St. Joseph.

St. Joseph's Press Mannanam was the first to publish prayer books in Malayalam. Prayer books in Tamil only were common at the time. This press was the third in Travancore, but was the first one to be set up under private ownership in the country. The first wooden press Fr. Chavara got built, is preserved to this day, as a precious relic and attribute to his skill, foresight, perseverance and patience. St. Joseph's Press itself, over a century old, rises today as a glorious monument to its indefatigable founder and a beacon light in the full sense of the phrase, to Malabar. There is no Christian house in Malabar where some book printed at the St. Joseph's Press is not to be found. The Malayalam translation of the Holy Bible, the innumerable prayer books—the monthly Flower of Carmel and the Daily 'Deepika' now published from a branch house at Kottayam, were all perhaps in the dreams of the saintly Founder. The Press stands for just one thing above all—to preach the Gospel of Christ and to help the social life of those amidst whom it works.

HIS SCHOLARSHIP

Fr. Chavara was reputed as a deep scholar, a versatile literary genius and a charming speaker. He knew Tamil, Sanskrit, Syriac, Portuguese and Italian, besides being well versed in Malayalam with its many local variations.

Fr. Palakal had noticed the literary talents of the boy Cyriac and sent him to Verapoly to gain further proficiency in Latin. But owing to some unexpected circumstances, he had to return from there. He then went to Thanki and there he learned Latin at the hands of the missionary priest, Fr. Main. A teacher was brought down from Trichur to instruct him in Sanskrit. The mastery he had over the language is well reflected in the many poems and other writings he had left of

posterity. He is easily among the most talented among Catholic writers since the days of Fr. Governador Paremakkal. Some 100 years ago, there were very few authors who could claim anything like the achievement of Fr. Chavara in the line. His work "Nalagamam" written in two volumes, spread out over the period, 1829 to 1870, is a true historical picture of the church in Malabar. His history of the Rocos Schism is also a valuable authoritative document. The poem "Atmanuthapam" is mostly and truly autobiographical. The "Lamentations of the Repentant soul", "Parting Advice of a Dying Parent", and some others among his minor works are the most devotional among his writings.

Fr. Chavara was not among those who had the benefit of higher university education. Even in the seminaries there were not such advanced courses of instruction in Theology and Morals as there are today. The Bible was the main subject of study then. It is no exaggeration to say that he knew the Bible almost by heart. He had studied its implications so well, that he could have held his ground on Theology and Morals even against those foreign missionaries who had special instruction in these subjects. They marvelled at his great wisdom. It cannot be said that his wisdom and knowledge were all the outcome of any special study. It is difficult to account for it, except against the background of the traditions of a church which holds up for our veneration a St. Teresa of Avila (who had not even seen the portals of a University) as one of the great Doctors of the church, and St. Catherine of Sienna, who (herself illiterate) could dictate notes and letters that held Kings and Popes, spell-bound and enthralled by their literary perfection.

There were only few Syrian Churches, if any at all, in Malabar which Fr. Chavara had not visited in his capacity as the "Vicar General" of the Syrians. He

invariably preached in all the churches he visited. His winning eloquence, ringing voice and special talents in driving home certain favourite ideas of his are still remembered and recounted in high esteem. He was ever willing and ready to preach to any congregation. Even when speaking at short notice, he never failed to impress. Several instances of his impressive ex tempore sermons are popularly talked about to this day. The panegyrics he preached at the funeral services of Archbishops Bernardine and Francis Xavier, are often quoted as outstanding examples of his great talents in this direction.

EDUCATOR

Fr. Cyriac Elias was a great educator also, in addition to his being a brilliant scholar in literature and the sciences. Till his time, the church in Malabar had not achieved much in the field of Education. But being proficient, as we have seen, in different world languages, he became a powerful influence for good in the cause of Catholic Education.

His interest in the field of education for priesthood—the establishment and conduct of seminaries—has already been dealt with. He was also concerned with the general education of the laity. The protestant missionaries had then started and experimented with the running of even English schools. They did so from about 1816. He realized that the community would ever remain down-trodden if they did not move with the times and he decided that his new Congregation should concentrate on educational work. So in 1846, the monastery developed a new organ in the form of a Sanskrit school.

As Vicar General of the Syrians, he took a very bold step, for which the country at large should be grateful

to him. He issued a mandate, calling upon all parish churches under his jurisdiction to raise schools attached to each of them. He even threatened to close down the churches that failed to comply with his orders. How he executed these directions through the monasteries he founded is well known. He had even planned a central college for Catholics when he was Vicar General; only it did not materialize then owing to various unfavourable circumstances. If today the Catholics of Malabar are literate to a high degree, it is largely because of the farsighted policy of Fr. Cyriac Elias, in the establishment of a school for each parish. The Syrian Catholics who were thus guided and led by him, have now to their credit 5 colleges, 23 high schools, 7 industrial schools, 134 elementary schools 58 middle schools, a Sanskrit College and a commercial school. He was also anxious for spreading English education. The first English High School of Syrian Catholics was founded in 1885 at Mannanam and it is now enjoying a very enviable reputation.

The educational activities of the Carmelite Congregation have won the esteem and recognition of both political and ecclesiastical authorities. Members of the royal family have condescended to be patrons of their institutions or otherwise co-operated with their activities., Mgr. Zaleski, a former Delegate Apostolic to India has commended the congregation in an official report, for its special work in the field of education. "Among your modern activities, the schools and boarding houses and hostels form the most important ones always. You have already demonstrated your special talents in this line."

THE ROCOS SCHISM

For nearly three centuries the church which St. Thomas founded in Malabar was ruled over by native

bishops ordained by the Apostle and the legitimate successors of those ordained by him. But since the fourth century, it is seen that the administration was through foreign bishops ordained and posted to Malabar by the Patriarch of Babylon. Though foreigners by nationality, they had the same Rite and they got along fairly well with the people here. But in the sixteenth century after the Synod of Diamper, the administration of the native church passed on through Don Menesis, the Archbishop of Goa, to Latin bishops. The Portuguese rulers were not familiar with the Oriental Congregation, its Syrian Rites and social connections. Further they were lacking in a spirit of accommodation. All this ultimately led to the deterioration of the Syrian Church in many respects. *(this one side only)*

Leaders of the community, proud of their ancestry and noble traditions, very much resented this trend of affairs and organized themselves to safeguard their interests. They solicited of the authorities in Rome and Portugal the appointment of Syrian bishops to Malabar to preserve and promote their social and cultural integrity. Somehow such requests did not meet with favour or success. This led to further alienation between the foreign rulers and the members of the old rite. The more adventurous among the latter volunteered to go in person to western countries and fight for their recognition. Fr. Antony Kudakkachira and Antony X Thondanad led a party of young men to Babylon in the first place. Here the former unfortunately passed away. The latter, while staying at Moussal finally succeeded in persuading Patriarch Joseph Audo, to send a bishop to study the condition of the Syrians in Malabar. Accordingly the Patriarch sent bishop Thomas Rocos to Malabar. The news of a Syrian bishop coming to Malabar was hailed heartily by the Syrians. But Rocos was not designated as a bishop of Malabar. Even the

commission he held from the Patriarch was without the sanction of the Holy See. But the impostors pretended that his appointment was effected with the permission of Rome. Efforts of the Latin Bishops to vindicate the hollowness of their claims were mostly ineffective. Fr. Chavara was aware of the dangerous situation and forthwith issued from Mannanam a statement under his hand and seal explaining the position.

On 9th May 1861, Rocos landed in Cochin. He was received and led in procession to Thykkattuchery encouraged and directed by Parayil Tharakan. Fr. Antony Thondanatt, as secretary to the bishop wrote to all the churches intimating them the arrival of the bishop and requesting their recognition and homage. Fr. Elias too was informed. A great many rushed to the new bishop and paid him their respects and compliments and received his 'blessings'. They planned to secure the monasteries at Mannanam and Elthuruth as residences for him. Fr. Elias suspected these demonstrations had hastened to contact the bishop and demand of him his credentials. But the satellites of the bishop saw to it that their trick was not easily given away. They refused Fr. Elias permission to see or speak with the bishop. They even tried to humiliate and molest Fr. Elias.

Fr. Elias and his Congregation tried their best to prevent the schism from spreading. Several prominent laymen were on his side. When he found that the schismatics were unruly and interfering with his fold he reported the matter to the Cochin Government. The strict measures the Government of Cochin adopted, soon brought them somewhat under control. But the schism was spreading. A large proportion of the faithful aligned themselves with the new Syrian Brshop and their strength grew. Of the 150 Syrian churches then existing, 86 unconditionally accepted Rocos and 36

gave him partial recognition. The position was very grave and fraught with dire consequences. Archbishop Bernardine could think of no other alternative to fight the schism than giving a legitimate Syrian bishop. His first choice was undoubtedly Fr. Chavara. But this latter with his heroic spirit of reunciation declined to accept such honour but not the responsibility. So he was appointed as their Vicar General, with wide and unusual powers over his faithful. This was in June 1861, just a month after Bishop Rocos had landed. The decree appointing the Vicar general ran as follows, after the usual formula of salutation and blessing.

"For the information of Very Rev. Fr. Chavara, the beloved Prior of Mannanam and other monasteries: considering the difficulties of looking after the needs of all the christians who have been under our jurisdiction for long considering our advancing years and consequent weakness and dislocations, and realizing that from our control of their affairs, the clergy and laity are not profiting spiritually, and because of the present happenings, as allowed and directed by the Council of Trent to appoint a Vicar General when necessary, convinced of your courage, skill, knowledge and saintliness, I do hereby appoint you as the Vicar General of the Syrians in Malabar, to look after their spiritual needs and to govern both the clergy and the laity, with such powers as are generally given by us in the accompanying note. I pray God to give you the grace to minister to the spiritual needs of the faithful attending all our Syrian Churches".

Once officially appointed as the Vicar General, he strenuously and authoritatively worked to reestablish order and tranquillity in the church. His first concern was to expose the pretensions of Rocos. For this he formally addressed a letter to His Holiness Pius IX requesting information. This was on 19th June 1861.

He received an early reply on 7th October to the effect that Rocos was not legally sent by the Pope. A detailed communication from the Pope was also promised in it. The confirmatory communication under the hand and seal of His Holiness himself was despatched on September 5th of the same year and it was duly received by him.

With the publication of the authentic letters from Rome, the pretensions of Rocos and his adherents collapsed miserably. But it provoked their spitefulness and vengeance.

They came out in the open and indulged in severe attacks on Fr. Chavara and party. Their propaganda led to serious developments in places like Aranattukara, Trichur and Ollur. They openly accused Fr. Chavara and other Carmelites of false propaganda. Defying all charges and criticisms, Fr. Chavara and his colleagues in religion travelled widely in Malabar, proclaiming the justice of their position with respect to the schism. This led to the reclamation of several parishes from the schism and the re-establishment of several centres in the faith. It is also mostly due to the work and activities of Fr. Chavara that at least a few churches were preserved intact throughout, without ever falling into schism at all. History records that the churches at Muttam, Pallipuram, Vaikom, Parur, Ampallur, Kum-palam, Kodavechoor, Muhamma, Tattarampally, Chennankary, Champakulam, Edathua, Pulincunnoo, Thuruthy, Thottakad, Vaipur, Manimala, Nedumkunnam, Kanjirappally, Areethara, Kurumpanadam, Kudamaloor and Kaipuzha never accepted Rocos. A few families under the jurisdiction of Aranattukara, Ollur, Kandasam-kadavu, Parappur and Chittattoor churches also are seen to have been loyal to the lawful authority during all these troubled years.

The honor and the credit of having thus kept alive the light which St. Thomas lighted in Malabar goes to him a very large measure. Rocos was commissioned by the Patriarch of Babylon only to visit Malabar and report on the condition of the church there. Even that appointment was in defiance of definite injunctions from Rome. But, once in Malabar, Rocos yielded to the inducements of his schismatic supporters and superseded the authority he held even from his Patriarch, by visiting churches and ordaining priests in the capacity of one with regular jurisdiction over the people. When the Patriarch heard of it, Rocos was immediately ordered to return to Babylon. But he defied the order with impunity and continued his unauthorized administration. As this led to breach of peace in several places, Fr Chavara brought the whole affair to the notice of the Civil Governments in Travancore and Cochin. Mr. Sankunni Menon, Peishkar, Travancore and the Dewan of Cochin, both interfered with the unauthorized conduct of Rocos and ordered that he should not enter the churches situated in areas under their jurisdiction. At this juncture, Rome issued instructions to the properly constituted authority at Verapoly to excommunicate Rocos if he did not forthwith quit Malabar. The Patriarch of Babylon also renewed his order recalling him.

Driven to such helpless straits from all directions Rocos retired to the church at Gnareckal. On 30th November in the Cathedral Church at Verapoly, Dr. Bernardine, under instructions from Rome pronounced excommunication on Rocos in the name of the Holy Father. Fr. Mathai Mariam Kappil, Vicar of the Carmelite parish at Coonammavu volunteered to convey to Rocos the official decree of his excommunication. He went to Gnarakal, proclaimed the excommunication in the church after the Community Mass and later called

(3)

on Rocos in person and handed over the document confirming the punishment. The supporters of Rocos, created an uproar and tried to surround and rough handle the Vicar, who however escaped from the crowd and with the help and support of one Mr. Kunjipailo Parekkat, safely returned to Coonammavu.

Rocos found it impossible to carry on his pretension any longer. So he offered to return and secretly requested the Archbishop to finance his passage back. The archbishop consulted Fr. Chavara and decided to pay for his return. Fr. Chavara was deputed to meet Rocos and fix up the details. Accordingly he went to Cochin and advised him to return immediately. He generously persuaded him to retrace his misguided steps and promised him, in the name of the Archbishop, absolution even from the excommunication in case of sincere repentance and retraction. Rocos agreed to return but tactfully added that he was ready to return even when he was first ordered to, that he was delayed owing to financial difficulties and that the excommunication was therefore not binding on him.

The decision of Rocos to return, naturally enraged those who promoted the schism under his leadership. Prominent among those who were thus disappointed and enraged was Fr. Anthony Thondanat. He tried various means to prevent the return of his "Master"! When each one of them failed in turn, he was driven to desperate straits and finally sued Rocos in the Civil Court for damages valued at Rs. 5000. But the influence of Fr. Chavara finally prevailed and in March 1862, Bishop Rocos sailed back to Bagdad.

The persistent fight against this schism, with its triumphant conclusion was a major achievement of Fr. Chavara. Several times even his life was threatened.

But he did not flinch or waver. In recognition of the great service he thus rendered to the church, the Holy Father Pope Pius IX sent an acknowledgement, signed in his own hand. .

CARMELITE CONVENTS

The Carmelite convents in Malabar are as much to be appreciated as the Congregation of Carmelite priests and lay brothers, considering the great influence for good they both exerted and continue to exert on the church. Fr. Chavara is the founder of this congregation of sisters. Fr. Leopold, who was also equally interested in the formation of religious houses for women considerably helped Fr. Chavara. The Archbishop of Verapoly gladly approved it. Fr. Leopold and the successor of Fr. Chavara, Fr. Kuriakos Porukara Prior General of the Congregation, have both paid unqualified tribute to the great interest, zeal and wisdom, with which Fr. Chavara organized the convents as centres from where Christian Education and culture were to spread among the women of the community. He had envisaged them also as quiet homes for those women who wished to dedicate their lives to prayer, mortification and service for souls.

Fr. Chavara founded the first convent with the capital of 58 rupees of which Rs. 40 were collected from the churches at Gnarakal and Alleppey and the balance was a donation from his monasteries. The enclosure he put up for the convent at Coonammavu was mostly of bamboo mats and cocoanut fittings. He had built a common prayer hall refectory and three single rooms for the nuns, all walled in from the outside. The first members of this new Congregation were Thresia of the Karuthedath Parish and Elizabeth of Puthenangady Vaikom. They came to live in the new convent on February 11th, 1866. Two days after, four postulants were

received and they were given the hair-woven scapular, Fr. Chavara was their chaplain and spiritual director.

He was not satisfied with such a temporary shed for the 'nuns'. He toured the southern districts to raise funds to put up a permanent house for them and a school building and boarding houses for girl students. In the course of eight months the fund grew to Rs. 8000. The amount was sufficient for him to complete the building for which the foundation was laid in June 1866, as early as March 1867. On the 27th of March, the four postulants were transferred to the new house; on the same day they were vested with the habit of religious and awarded Constitution and Rules designating them as the "Third Order of Carmelites". Aspirants to the new Order arrived from distant places in short time and the necessity for establishing sister-houses in other places was manifest. Branch houses were founded at Mutholy (1888), Verapoly (1890), Ampazhakat (1897), Karukutty (1899), Parur (1910), Ernakulam (1915), Gnarakal (1925), and in several other places subsequently. Today their number is over 50 in the Syrian dioceses and about 8 in Latin dioceses. Together their number is close to 1500.

SOCIAL WORK

Just as internal dissensions in a country would upset its equilibrium and retard its progress, so also schisms in the Church have great repercussions on its solidarity. The schism engineered by Rocos and his supporters, naturally led to a lessening among the faithful in their respect for constituted authority. Decline of faith and disrespect for authority developed side by side. It was left to Fr. Chavara, not only to drive away the schism, but also to effect a thorough reformation of religious life in Malabar.

First, ofcourse, he had to start with the clergy. He saw to it that the seminaries under him specially tried to enforce the greatest discipline among the students. He effected the necessary reforms and raised the standard of instruction there. He insisted on an annual retreat for all priests. He also insisted that the priests should recite the 'Divine Office' without fail. In all these, he had the support and blessings of the Archbishop.

He also tried to popularise the idea of retreats for the laity. He sent the priests of his congregation to all parishes to conduct periodical missions. Sunday sermons were made general in the parish churches. Himself ardently devoted to Christ in the Holy Eucharist, he introduced the Forty Hours' Adoration in the Syro-Malabar Church. Thus he tried to infuse great enthusiasm and devotion to religious life among the faithful at large.

Not satisfied with concentrating on the education of the well-to-do-, he interested himself in the re-habilitation of the under-privileged both materially and morally. He started missionary activities and tried to spread secular as well as religious education among them. The far-reaching effects of the uplift work he started among the down-trodden community are now too well known for further comments. The home for the destitute he put up at Kainakary stands forth as a monument to his charity and consideration for those inwant. *(for Converts from paganism, run by laity missions)*

He introduced several reforms in the administration of the churches. Those who have studied the reforms he brought about in the church, have compared him with Sir. T. Madhava Rao and his administrative reforms in Travancore.

The liturgy and rubrics of the Syrians also suffered with the advent of Latin control. The Synod of Diamper

effected considerable changes in the Syrian observances. The portuguese insistence on Syrians using unleavened bread and the vestments according to the Latin Rite for mass is an historical fact. Fr. Chavara tried very much to reinstate the old practices. But the opposition was too strong for him. He could only formulate what those in higher authority suggested. So with the approval of the Archbishop, he wrote out clearly every minute detail of the Syrian Mass as it is said today. He also laid down the exact procedure for High Mass, Solemn High Mass, Vespers etc. He popularised the Syrian Calendar for church services. Office for the Dead was also codified by him, With the permission of the Holy See he translated the services for Holy Saturday from the Latin original and added it on to the Syrian Liturgy to complete the Holy week services which had already been translated from Latin and incorporated in the Syrian Missal.

Another of his memorable contributions to the Syrian Liturgy is the preparation of the Breviary. The prayers for different days and seasons were all scattered over four different books, Hudra, Kaskol, Gaza and Kala. It was not easy to refer to all these and recite the prayers proper for each day. Even as a cleric he had already realised this difficulty and compiled a compositive volume including all the prayers for the different occasions. With the permission of the Holy See Archbishop Leonard commissioned him to arrange the prayers of the Breviary which he did in due time.

SAINTLY LIFE

Fr. Chavara endeared himself to all, more by virtue of his saintly life than by his grand achievements in practical life. All those who have come in contact with including the foreign missionaries have unequiv-

cally complimented him in this respect. Archbishop Bernardine and Fr. Marceline have on several occasions given expression to their high respect and appreciation of his saintliness in personal life and in the exemplary conduct of the religious under his guidance. Reviewing his predecessor his immediate successor observed, "By his quiet and perfectly disciplined life in the monastery, by his charity, humility, obedience and love of God, he soared in the highest planes of sanctity and encouraged others to such high perfection by advice and example," Fr. Leopold, his spiritual director and confessor says: "It is more proper to say about Fr. Chavara that he did these virtuous things more by his sanctity and good example than by his advice and authority. He commanded the obedience and respect of others by himself being humble, charitable and obedient to his superiors". One of his own students Fr. Aloysius, who had stayed with him for long at Manjummel recalls the memory of his revered master in the following words: He was very keen on observing the spirit of obedience, love of God and devotion to the vows of the congregation. He spent the whole time of meditation in the evening on his knees, in tears and overpowered by emotion. He had to be reminded by those near by that the allotted time was over. Other priests held him in high esteem as a superman even—the Prior General appears as an angel they used to say". Even non Catholics respected Fr. Chavara as a saintly man. He easily created the impression that he was a man specially sent by God to fulfil some mission on earth.

APOSTLE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The central theme of the devotional life of Fr. Chavara was the Holy Eucharist. Saints have reached great heights of intimate union with our Lord on earth

through this miraculous sacrament of love. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood lives in Me and I in him" said our Lord. Fr. Chavara implicitly believed it and found his heaven on earth before the tabernacle. A major part of his life was lived literally in front of this holy heaven.

Even as a boy, Fr. Chavara was impressed by this august sacrament. His desire to serve at Mass was a clear indication of this. His life in the seminary gave his colleagues further examples of his ardent love of Christ in this sacrament. His career as a priest was unceasingly utilised in propagating this devotion all over Malabar. The grace and charm that adorned his face while he was lost in meditation in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament have been noted by many of his colleagues and friends who could only describe it as "Angelic". The great attention and care he bestowed on the cleanliness and order of the church and precincts also arose from his devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

He preached devotion to this sacrament as a means for the growth and reformation of the church in Malabar. He recorded specific instructions on this devotion in the document he has bequeathed as his will and testament to his people. "Exhortations of a good dying parent".

He enforced the practice of this devotion among the religious Congregation—both for the priests and nuns—public exposition of the Blessed sacrament and adoration were ordered in all the monasteries and convents for all with the days following the feast of Corpus Christi. The beautiful prayers meant for public use on such occasions were also arranged and popularised by him.

The Fourty Hours' Adoration, first started in 1866 has now become an annual feature of all important

parishes in Malabar. These days have also become a period of general confession and communion for the parishioners. Considering the surprisingly large number of communions made during these seasons every year, this one activity alone will be ever hailed as a lasting monument to the genius whose devotion to the Holy Eucharist made him dream for the first time of its fulfilment in this land.

Devotion to the Mother of God is co-existent with devotion to Christ. It transcends all the veneration we give to the other saints of God. In fact the apostles themselves preached Marian devotion, wherever they went, as an almost necessary complementary counterpart of affection to her Son. Even non-catholics accord great respect to Mary.

Particularly in Malabar, Marian devotion had a very great hold on the people. St. Thomas himself had enjoyed the special confidences of Our Lady and he faithfully encouraged his spiritual children also to be devoted to her. It was popularly recognised even abroad. His Holiness the Pope, in the encyclical connected with the institution of the Syrian Hierarchy in Malabar refers to the prevalence of this devotion here to a high degree. No wonder then. Fr. Cyriac the accredited leader of the community, was ardently devoted to the Blessed Mother of God.

He was initiated into this devotion by his own mother. Even as a child, he was taken by her to the church of Our Lady at Vechoor and dedicated to her. She continued to advise and direct him, in later days also on this meritorious devotion. She woke him up at night and encouraged him to kneel down with her and say the Rosary and other prayers in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The deep impression such insistent advice and practice made on him was visible in the innumerable

references he makes to them in his autobiographical poem. the Atmanuthapam.

The great love he had for the Mother of God fulfilled itself in many ways. When his parents and an only brother passed away leaving him the sole male heir to the partrimonial possession, he offered himself as the spiritual child of Mary and thus ensured his vocation for priesthood. He propagated this devotion among his colleagues in the Seminary. He considered it his personal responsibility and enjoyed explaining to almost anybody who met him, the beauties of this profitable devotion.

His assiduous efforts in pushing this devotion to the forefront, secured for him the choicest blessings of Mary. Among all the graces he obtained, the privilege of officially establishing the Carmelite Congregation in Malabar ranks foremost.

The part the Congregation of Carmelites has played in popularising Marian devotion in Malabar is not small. The popularity of the different orders of the scapular prevailing in the country is in no small measure due to the Carmelites. Many other expressions of devotion to the Mother of God under various appellations have now sprung up and all of these Fr. Chavara could legitimately claim to have originated.

Gratefully enough' the Blessed Virgin remained with him throughout, till on his death-bed, he could say confidently that through the generous mediation of Mary, he was given the rare grace of preserving inviolate his baptismal innocence till death. *(basis?)*

CHARITY

Fr. Chavara was ever alive to the one 'new' commandment, our Lord himself had enjoined on us;

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“Love one another as I loved you.” An overwhelming charity was his characteristic Christian trait. He never grew tired of exhorting others to be extremely desirous of being more loved than feared by others and to count those days as empty which were not filled with charitable services to others. True to his own advice, he saw to it, that his days were spent charitably in works of social uplift, restoration of faith and salvation of souls.

Ever since his days in the seminary his charitable disposition had enough scope to manifest itself. As a priest the opportunities for selfless service were very much more. He would hasten to the dying even if they were stricken by the most deadly and contagious diseases. He dared all opposites and threats during the days of the schism and went about trying to do good even to those who opposed him. As already mentioned he was the first to organise a home for the destitute and the poor at Kainakary and also to establish a “Confraternity For Happy Death”. His contributions along these lines shine with redoubled splendor when it is remembered that such organisations were conceived by him for the first time in this country.

His successor in charge of the congregation has commented upon the insistent demands in charity Fr. Chavara made upon all his colleagues and fellow members in religion. “Do not let beggars go away from your doors empty-handed. Never fail to give them something when you can manage it somehow. The proper wages for labourers and servants should not be delayed. Do not ridicule or inconvenience the poor.” Such were his clear-cut instructions and practices. He made these morally binding on all the members of the congregation: that the responsible Priors of all their monasteries should be well established in true and

Divine charity; that despite their large number, they should all grow up as children of the same mother.

There will be hardly any among the poor in this land who will not have enjoyed charitable hospitality at one or another of the monasteries of the Carmelites. Fr. Chavara established in these houses the practice of feeding clothing and nursing the sick and the poor, to the extent of their resources, when and where possible. His works of corporal charity and mercy were so well known that the well-to-do always encourage him with handsome donations. He raised large amounts in such donations and invariably used them exclusively for the benefit of the poor. He always gratefully acknowledged and remembered such help and in his last will and testament, he has requested his fellow religious to remember such patrons with lively gratitude.

It was in his dealing with those who were inimical towards him that his charity shone out. As the pioneer in many revolutionary and progressive measures and as the stalwart champion of the Anti-schismatics he had many enemies in his life time. But he was always considerate towards them. Literally, he was prepared to show the other cheek if he was struck on one. He sought out those who tried to hinder his works or to humiliate him and promised them all encouragement and co-operation in all their works. In his last testament he has even mentioned as a benefactor, one who had filed false suits against him and caused heavy damages to his monastery at Mannanam.

DEVOTION TO PRAYER

✓ Even as the prophet Elias, the founder of the Carmel, was wedded to a life of prayer, so was Fr. Elias, the saintly founder of Carmelites in Malabar, devoted to

prayer. Love fulfills itself in frequent and intimate converse with the beloved. The great love Fr. Elias always cherished for his Maker, found expression in his intimate and loving colloquies with his Lord and Master. He tried to fill his whole life with prayer. He made a complete dedication of all his conscious and unconscious efforts to the service of God. Very often he was found lost in prayer, either alone in his room, or before the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes during the 'one hour meditation' usual in the congregation, he fell into a celestial trance and had to be waked up to normal consciousness and feeling. The yearning to win more souls for Christ spurred him on. Constant prayer and meditation, even foregoing sleep and rest at times, marked him out as a saintly priest. The sacrifice of the Mass he offered at the Alter, impressed the faithful as exceptionally devotional.

His prayer evinced his great faith in it. He had learned to look at God and His saints in a very personal way. Among the prayers he has written, in the private notes he kept, are many revealing passages:—in which he demands of God, quite confidently, all that he took in need of. When schisms threatened his institutions and all his well wishers advised him to seek Government protection, he resisted and merely resorted to prayer. And his Institutions were left Intact! Eye-witnesses have narrated the story of how Fr. Chavara and his assistant were once way-laid by a huge serpent against which they both knelt down in prayer, till help from the neighbourhood reached them and the serpent was killed. There are instances of his having received great financial help in immediate response to prayer under straitened circumstances. How the capital of Rs. 58 with which he started the convent at Coonammavu swelled into Rs. 8000 in a short time can be accounted for only in

terms of his confident prayer. Even spirits dared not resist the strength of his prayers. The members of a family in Kuttanad were put to very serious inconveniences by the parading of evil spirits in the house. They tried various means to get rid of this haunting of spirits. But all were of no avail. When they approached Fr. Chavara seeking his intercession and prayers, he gave them a written prayer, which they were instructed to recite and stick on the walls of the house. They were over-joyed to find that this frightened the devil who let them alone ever after.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

“The just man believes in God. He sees God in all creation. He lives, work and hopes to die for and in Him.” These thoughts were always before Fr. Chavara. His life was fashioned in absolute conformity with them. Nothing served him from the path of serving God. Early in life when he made the first choice of a religious life, the other male successor in his family died and this was an inducement for him to return to the world. But his faith in the glory of his mission and his conviction of the transitoriness of all things created kept him to his vocation. He had learned the art of rising to his Creator by using creatures as mere footstools. The many poems he had composed after meditating on these things while at Coonammavu show the strong uncompromising nature of his faith in and regard for the supernatural.

This faith also gave him a feeling of strong, unquestioning loyalty to the visible representatives of God on earth. The Papacy and the other high ranks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy drew forth his great veneration and respect. The fervour of the fight he put up against the schism engineered by Mar Thomas Rocos was only

one of the manifestations of his belief in the integrity of the Catholic Church. Fr. Leopald O. C. D. (Carmelite Missionary) has commented on the great anxiety Fr. Chavara displayed for the welfare of the Church Militant on earth, – how solicitous he was to further her cause and how expectantly he wanted to see her in glory ! What else could explain the courage and daring that animated Fr Chavara in his insistent fight against the schism.

The capital from which he drew endlessly to execute many of his schemes was nothing but his faith, which gave him as its necessary counterpart hope. We have seen how he started some of his biggest institutions with little more than a few rupees in hands and yet how easily he was able to complete the works, several of which have grown to dazzling proportions today. He has himself expressed surprise at all that has come to pass and acknowledged the continuous providential protection he always enjoyed. "How have these things come to pass: who called me out of my house; how was the congregation formed; how was I called Prior; how this and this and all this do I deserve these Hardly any – except that God has made me work thus: that his will, will be fulfilled " Such realization of his absolute dependence on God, was more than amply rewarded. "My soul hath hoped in the Lord; It shall not be confounded" the Psalmist had sung and Fr. Chavara had lived by.

Such faith and hope could not but have endowed him with a great personal Love of God which was manifested in all his works. He had resolved to live a life of prayer and devotion, whether others observed him or not. He had grown into an ardent apostle of love, living and preaching the message of love. His contemporaries,

both elders and juniors, have unanimously acclaimed the fiery devotion for which his sermons were known. He reformed the faithful entrusted to his care by sermons, by example, by reproof and by granting the pardon of God in the confessional. He was also what his Master wished and promised. His first disciples to be,—one among the “fishers of men”. Some of his sermons are quoted even today as classics, like those on the Passion and Death of our Lord, usually given on Good Fridays.

He adhere to his devotion to the spiritual life till the very end. In his sick bed, visitors were not allowed to talk on anything other than spiritual matters. A written notice posted in his room demanded such restraint from all. Conversation on spiritual matters was his most welcome relief when in pain.

His was an active Love which sought fulfilment in achieving much for the Beloved. Despite the manifold and varied opposition, he succeeded in *doing* much. The formation of the Third Order of Carmelites, the many acts of social progress, the fight against the schism, the founding of the convents for the nuns, these and many other deeds of his were achieved at great cost. But he believed in St. Paul who said: “Charity is patient; is kind; charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent, does not claim its rights. does not brood over injury, takes no pleasure in wrong doing, but rejoices at the victory of truth—sustains, believes, hopes, endures to the last.” Much ahead of his time as he was in intelligence and knowledge in general, he always submitted to his spiritual directors and ecclesiastical superiors even as a child.

Busy about material achievements which he believed would help the spiritual progress of thousands of his countrymen, he was never averse to mortification and

suffering. He used to fast on all Fridays and Saturdays, taking only a little milk in the morning. The suffering on his death bed was endured with the most heroic resignation, even as a martyrdom.

EXEMPLARY RELIGIOUS

The Founders of all Religious Orders have been specially inspired by the Holy Ghost and in their lives they set the standard for their congregations. That is why the Holy Church is anxious that each order should take after its Founder in all things. An order is founded, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost at a particular stage in the history of the world, to serve specific purpose. And naturally He gives the Founder the necessary graces and directions too. It is against this background that we should review and assess the character and career of Fr. Chavara

The life of a monk is well protected by a row of fortresses in the shape of the Divine commandments, the law laid down by the church from time to time and the regulations of the particular order to which he belongs. It is best for him that he is thus regulated too. All the Founders of the different Orders have unanimously agreed on the necessity of the constitutional regulation of each order for the sustenance of the ascetic or monastic spirit in the monks. No wonder then, that Fr. Chavara was extra-ordinarily insistent on the observance of the regulations he codified for his congregation. He exhorted others to emulate him in living up to the requirements of the order. Thus by example and precept he built up the congregation which he started at Mannanam with a routine discipline that was very much trying to the aspirants, some of whom even gave it up as impossible. If today, it has acquired a high

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status and importance it is undoubtedly due to the strict adherence of the members to their declared Constitution and objectives. From the very beginning till the very end Fr. Chavara subjected himself to the Order with the interest and enthusiasm of a novice. He regarded the Order in such esteem as though it were his own mother. It was to him, his paradise on earth and he encouraged his disciples to hold it in similar high esteem. He would never willingly absolve any one—including himself—of the responsibility of conforming to the Order. Travel, old age, weakness and even infirmity hardly succeeded in making him relax much. He would relax when absolutely necessary, but only after asking permission from his spiritual director. He was ever anxious to have his meals with the community; frugal and austere as they were. Even while sick and laid up, he tried to manage with the common meals only.

He zealously gave to God his due. He found in his superiors His spokesmen and messengers and unquestioningly accepted their commands. The sacrifice he made in respecting the wishes of his Archbishop in going to Coonammavu to stay there during his advancing years after more than 32 years of association with the monastery at Mannanam, must have been heroic. Even while others persuaded him to return to Mannanam as he grew worse at Coonammavu, he was reluctant to do so because he knew that the Archbishop and Fr. Leopold desired that he should stay at Coonammavu.

The advice he gave to his fellow-monks was often very touching; "dearly beloved brethren" he would say, "The strength of these monastic houses is not in the bricks and stones wherewith they are built, but in you, your devotion and your virtues. We have not come in here, seeking a living, having had no other alternative

in the outside world. The joys of the world were ours had we cared to accept them. But we voluntarily gave up our wealth and our relations for the sake of our Lord. And now, if we by our lethargy and indifference, give up our Lord, what folly, what fancy! Many other examples of his advice and instructions could be quoted to show how much he labored to permeate his religious with the idea that the real greatness of the order lay not in material acquisition but in their charity, humility and sanctity. He demanded that each religious should look up to his superior as he would to Christ and thus to regulate his relationship with him. He was himself their first superior, and he was ever careful to see that the members of his Congregation never had any unbecoming example before them. He tried to imitate our Lord and thus win the esteem and confidence of those who came under him. He did not wait for his monks to go to him for their necessities, but he volunteered to find them out himself and give them unasked. But he was willing to forego his own necessities to a very large extent. Luxury was far from him, but at times he mixed with others freely participating in their boating expeditions and other recreations. This was mainly to get to know the individuals personally and then treat them with the sympathy and consideration, they severally deserved.

Thus did he manage the affairs of his Congregation for about sixteen years. The Congregation maintains happy and proud memories of that glorious period. His death was mourned by all for a considerable time. The Congregation missed in him their genial and saintly friend and guide who combined with his great love and sincerity an equally great administrative skill. They realised that a really holy soul had left them.

DEATH

When ^{Arch} Bishop Leonard returned to Rome, after his visit in 1860, to attend the Vatican Council he and Fr. Chavara went to Bharananganam, to settle some disputes that survived the recent schism and troubles. Fr. Chavara had an attack of fever during this trip and his health suffered very much. He returned to Headquarters and was put under the treatment of a specialist from Ernakulam. But there was not much relief. Many of his friends and well-wishers visited him and they all received valuable spiritual advice from him. They suggested a change to Ampazhakat, but as that proved unsuccessful he returned to Coonammavu to spend the rest of his days there. He realised that his end was drawing near. He prudently started preparing for it and never allowed himself to be drawn into conversation on worldly things.

by Fr. Philopos.

On the second of January 1871, he made his last confession to his spiritual director Fr. Leopold. He grew visibly emotional at Communion that day. His face shone singularly bright. In the afternoon he started vomiting. Medicines proved ineffective. He sought his own trusted spiritual director to receive the Last Sacraments from him. But the old missionary was so emotionally overcome that he was unable to comply with his request. So he suggested that Fr. Vicar should do it for him. Before the final phase, Fr. Chavara was helped into a half-sitting, half reclining posture on his bed, from which he gave a final exhortation to his colleagues in religion.

“Why should you grieve, after all? All men must die some time or other. who or whatever they be! My hour is come. By the grace of God, I constantly had the vision of this hour before me and I was preparing

for it. My parents always kept me mindful of the Holy Family, which was ever my protection and in my heart. Mercifully they protected me. I dedicate you all and this humble congregation to the same Holy Family. Rely on it. Let the Holy Family reign over your hearts. Do not be worried or upset that I am dying. Willingly submit yourselves to the ways of Providence. God is all-powerful and infinitely merciful. He will give you a new Prior, who can do much more good for you and our Congregation. Stand fast in the observance of all the rules of our elders, our Congregation and the Church. Love our Lord Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament with all your heart. Draw from that fountain the waters of eternal life. You members of the order and particularly elders and Priors among you, love one another—be truly charitable. Thus will God be glorified through the Congregation which will also grow extensively.” This rather long farewell, merged into a blessing doeth them all and a request for Extreme Unction. The Last Sacraments were soon administered to him. He received them with great calm and resignation, repeating the words of the prayers with the priest. Lapses followed at intervals. But whenever he woke up he was murmuring to himself ejaculations of love. Once during the night there was a serious development but he survived it till the next morning. By about half past seven next day, while the priests stood round praying for, absolving and blessing him, he breathed his last. He had completed a sojourn here which lasted sixty five years. ten months and twenty five days.

THE END

News of his death soon spread over Malabar. The bishop was close by on parochial visit to S. Parur. He officiated at the services for the dead as soon as he was

told of it. People who heard of the death crowded to Coonammavu. The sanctity of Fr. Chavara was so well known that the next morning an unprecedentedly large crowd collected round his mortal remains. The body was laid out in the church, dressed in priestly robes, for the people to have a last look and offer their expressions of love and respect. Later, the dress was changed into the simple habit of the religious as more becoming a member of an ascetic order.

All the churches that could manage to send their Paraphernalia arranged to participate in the funeral ceremonies of their late champion. After the most solemn services and a very touching panegyric, the body was taken in procession round the town and finally laid to rest in St. Philomina's church, Coonammavu, close to the communion rails beside the Sanctuary.

Fr. Leopold the confessor and spiritual director of Chavara, realising the great sanctity of this soul, distributed token possessions of the late Prior General among the various monasteries. He also gave them each a copy of his last will and testament. A short sketch of his life was also published and distributed by him.

The remains of Fr. Chavara were transferred from Coonammavu to Mannanam, with the special permission of the Delegate Apostolic, when the house at Coonammavu was taken over from Syrians. They were reinterred with proper honors at Mannanam in 1889. A marble slab was laid on 2nd July 1929, to mark the spot where the precious remains of the Saintly Carmelite await the day of glorious resurrection.

APPENDIX

A. SOME FAVOURS RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

The Servant of God Sr. Alphonsa of Bharananganam acknowledges three favours received by her through the intercession of Father Kuriakose Elias

1. "It is now about six and a half years since I became very sick. From that time onwards, I was under Ayurvedic and allopathic treatments in turn. But day by day I got worse and worse, and never got any relief. I was then, at the advice of a doctor, taken to the general hospital at Ernakulam, where I was treated for about one month. The doctors were of the view, that I could not get a complete cure of my illness, but could get only some temporary relief. Any how for one year I was under allopathic treatment. Getting there from no relief, ayurvedic treatment was again tried. The ayurvedic physicians too were of the opinion that a complete cure was beyond hope. Yet they tried to do their best. In the meanwhile incessant prayers were offered for my cure. Medicines were also taken without any interruption.

Finding me somewhat well, the Superiors sent me to the novitiate. But soon my old ailments returned. With great hardship I observed the community rules and routine for about a month. When I took a spoonful of coffee or kanji my stomach swelled up making breathing very hard; and I suffered acute pain, hunger and thirst.

For a long time I was unable to raise from bed without the help of others; and I was mostly sleepless.

I used to vomit eight or ten times a day, and the vomit was thick blood. On some days I suffered acute headache and on such days plenty of blood gushed out of the nose. On some days there was some haemorrhage from the eyes. Haemorrhage was accompanied by acute pain in the body. When the community was praying for me, I felt some relief, lasting sometimes for two or three days. Then again my sufferings relapsed and persisted as before. Thus for about eight months I and those who attended me suffered. Whenever I was left alone, I was the victim of great fear.

At this stage Fr. Aloysius gave me a prayer of Fr. Prior. On starting a Novena with that prayer some relief was felt. I was saying the same prayer regularly. I think it was in the month of May that Fr. Aloysius brought me a picture of the venerable priest. From the time I saw that picture, I felt great confidence in, and devotion to, that person. I kept the picture by my side and prayed to him. Before going to sleep I used to kiss the picture and pray. From the day I began to keep the picture by my side and pray, my fear seemed to abate.

One night when I was tortured by hunger and thirst, but owing to the bulging of the belly I was unable to take any food, or to sleep, I felt that I saw a person, resembling the picture kept by my side, standing near me and speaking nothing. Taking the person for our novice mistress, I tried to touch the person saying, 'Oh my mother I feel that before morning I may pass away owing to the bursting of my belly or owing to suffocation'. Then it seemed that the person told me, 'Your belly will not any more swell up; God will bless you'. And then the person was not to be seen.

By the next morning all my illness disappeared. From that day till now my belly has never swelled up. Previously I could not take even a spoonful of kanji. Now I can take even unbroken-rice-meal and something

else also. Now I have no stomach pain, or bulging of the belly. And I have fairly good sleep. I believe that this is a favour obtained through the intercession of Fr. Prior. All seem to wonder at the cure of the diseases in my stomach.

2. ANOTHER CURE OBTAINED BY SR. ALPHONSA

"One day I had a very bad head-ache and copious flow of blood from my nose; and I suffered much. In that condition I prayed to Fr. Kuriakose Elias. One of the sisters was sitting by my side. At about 3 a.m. I felt that I saw Fr. Kuriakose Elias standing by my side cheerfully and blessing me with his hands raised. Presently I happened to laugh with some noise. The sister near me asked the reason for my laughter. I replied there was nothing. And I felt great relief. From then till now, there never occurred any flow of blood from my nose. Formerly whenever there was haemorrhage from the nose, it used to last for many days. This time it was not so. The next morning I felt quite well. More over an ulcer on my left leg with pus oozing from it every day, was found healed in the morning. I only think that I felt like this because of my stupidity, because I was praying to him, and because of my firm faith that he would not fail to hear my prayers.

Since, my case having been given up by doctors as hopeless, I regained such good health, I thank God and whole-heartedly pray to glorify him."

Changanacherry,
July 10, 1936.

Sr. Alphonsa

3. A THIRD CURE OBTAINED BY SR. ALPHONSA

"For six or seven years I was quite unwell, and could not take anything, except occasionally some kanji made of broken rice. Several doctors examined me and declared my cure hopeless. Some fifteen days after I began my novitiate at Chethipuzha (Changanacherry), my condition became very bad. It was then that, what I have already written, happened.

After coming here I was suffering from fever for about five months. The doctors diagnosed my disease as pulmonary tuberculosis; and advised that I should be removed from the community. The authorities began to think of sending me away to my house, and my relatives were willing to take me away. Feeling very sorry at this, I told Rev. Mother Superior, that Fr. Prior would cure me and requested her to wait until a novena of prayer through his intercession will be made. The Mother consented and the community began a novena. During this novena, day by day, my fever rose higher and higher. In the evening of the eighth day my temperature stood at 106 degrees. All feared on the ninth day at about 3 a.m. the temperature fell down to 95½ degree. Since then I had no fever. I am alright now. This is certainly a favour granted by Fr. Kuriakose Elias.

Bharananganam,
March, 1937.

Sr. Alphonsa

4. SUDDEN CURE OF A SWELLING

"I am a sawyer. In April 1949, one evening there appeared a swelling in the middle of my right thigh on the front side. The swelling was about nine inches

long, about two inches thick and had the appearance of a tortoise. It gave me acute pain and disabled my right side. The pain increased day by day. Confined to my bed, I suffered intense and incessant pain for full eighteen days. The affected leg had to be made to rest on three pillows. Any slight movement of any part of the body made the pain all the more acute. I was sleepless for all these eighteen days. My wife and children too, had to remain sleepless in those trying days. An Ayurvedic physician treated me. But his medicines gave me no relief whatsoever: but only seemed to increase my sufferings. The swollen portion had no facet whatever to give any hope of a bursting. I was often crying like a child in those days.

In the evening of the nineteenth day, as usual, my uncle Mr. Thomas Kunjappu called on me on his way back from our parish church to his house, which is close to mine. The old monastery building in the premises of the parish church were being dismantled in those days; and my uncle was the supervisor of the work of dismantling. Among several things, he said. 'The work of dismantling the building is suspended for the time being' by an order from his Grace the Archbishop Verapoly. It was in this building that Fr. Kuriackose Elias Chavara of pious memory had been living in the last years of his life. The order of the Archbishop is that, since Fr. Kuriackose Elias was a saintly priest, the room which he had been occupying and which witnessed his holy demise should be preserved.

Those elderly people who had assembled in my house at that time, had been talking much about this holy priest. Till then I had not heard about him. Suffering as I was from acute pain at that time, I listened to this conversation, felt a great devotion for this father,

and prayed to him silently for my relief and cure and recited one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be tomaking at the same time a vow that, if I was cured of my illness, I would do two days' manual labour without wages, when the said room would be repaired and renovated.

Less than half an hour after this prayer, I fell into a deep slumber, and waking up at about 4 a.m. I found myself fully relieved of all pain. I could raise up from bed without any help and with no difficulty. I found that the swelling had completely disappeared. After a bath, I went straight up to the parish church about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away from my house, entered the room of Fr. Kuriakose Elias, knelt down there and prayed and thanked God for the miraculous—as I believe—relief and cure given to me through the intercession of Fr. Kuria-kos Elias. After hearing Holy Mass in thanks giving, I met the Very Rev. Parish Priest and the two Rev. Assistants and reported to them the sudden cure of my disease. Those who saw me in the church and on the way were amazed and asked me how this had happened, for they all were witnesses of my condition and suffering during the past eighteen days." This incident encouraged the authorities concerned to renovate the said room and to convert it into a chapel where Holy Mass is occasionally said by devoted priests and the faithful assemble to pray for the intercession of the Servant of God and to thank him for favours received through him.

Coonammavu,
November 20, 1958.

Joseph Rockey Anthikkatt

5. INSTANTANEOUS CORRECTION OF CLUB FEET (Talipes Equino Varus)

Both legs of my son Joseph were congenitally club-footed. The feet were turned upside down; their soles were facing each other and when walking the heels remained raised from the ground.

When Joseph was about six years old, we happened to hear of the favours obtained by many, through the intercession of the Servant of God, Fr. Kuriakos Elias Chavara and we began to pray to him for the correction of the deformity of the feet of Joseph. My daughter Annakkutty (Anne), Joseph's elder sister, was most interested in the matter. At her insistance we daily recited the prayer for obtaining favours through the intercession of Fr. Kuriakos Elias. Joseph used to go to school in the company of Annakkutty. Very often, on the way, when treading on the sharp stones lying scattered on the uneven path, Joseph used to cry owing to pain felt in his feet. On such occasions Annakkutty used to lift and carry her little brother over the difficult portions of the way to school.

A few weeks after we began to pray to Fr. Kuriakos, one day Joseph on his way to school in the company of his sister, felt intense pain in the feet and began to cry. This time, his sister, instead of lifting and carrying him as usual, asked him to pray with her to Fr. Kuriakos Elias. Together they recited One Our Father, One Hail Mary, and One Glory be to.....and prompted by Annakkutty, Joseph uttered the supplication, "Oh Father Kuriakos Elias, cure the deformity of my feet", When suddenly felt a shiver in his right foot; the next moment he could fix the sole of the right foot flat on the ground in the natural position, the deformities of 'Equino' and 'Varus' being simultaneously corrected. This cure of the double deformity of the right foot is permanent.

With profound gratitude and unbounded trust, we continued our prayers for the correction of Joseph's left foot also. A few months later, one day Annakkutty and Joseph were going from our house to a neighbouring one, the residence of my eldest son. On the way Joseph felt a pain in his left foot. Searching for the cause of the pain, Annakkutty and Joseph could see Joseph's left foot turning back from the deformed condition. The correction of the deformity is only partial. The heel does not yet touch the ground.

We are praying with great confidence for the correction also of the persisting deformity and that God may soon deign to raise the Servant of God to the honours of the altar.

Koodalanji,
Malabar,
November 10, 1960.

Thomas Mathew,
Penneparampil

Important dates in the life of the Servant of God Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara

Birth 1805 Feb. 8
Baptism Feb 16
Seminary study 1815—1829
Tonsure and Solemn reception 1817
Subdiaconate and diaconate 1827—28
Ordination 1829 Nov 29
Assistant to Palakal Malpan 1829—30
Tours in search of suitable site for
religious house 1830—31
Laying the foundation stone at Mannanam 1831 May 11
Construction of the Religious house 1831—32
Appointment Vicar of Pallipuram 1832—33
Continuation of construction work at Mannanam 1833
The historic dangerous journey to Arakuzha 1834
Death of Fr. Thomes Palakal Malpan 1841
Appointment as Malpan and Examiner 1844
Death of Fr. Thomas Porukara 1846
The first wooden press and printing 1846
Canonical approbation and first vows 1855 Dec 8
Fr. Cyriac Elias of the Holy Family Prior of the
community 1855
The small community named "The Servants of the
Immaculate Mother" 1855—60 *of Carmel.*
The second foundation at Koonammavu 1857
Prior General and Prior of Mannanam 1857—71
The third foundation at Vazhakulam 1859
Long Scapular added to the religious habit 1859 Dec 25
Affiliation to the First Order Carmel in Rome 1860
Rocos Schism 1861
Appointment as Vicar General of the

Syrian Churches 1861 June 8
Fr. Cyriac's letter to H. H. Pius IX 1861 June 9
Decretum laudis by H. H. Pius IX
signed personally 1861 Sept 5
Change of residence to Coonammavu 1864
Introduction of Mensa Episcopalis 5% 1865
The fourth foundation at Pulincunnnoo 1866
The first religious house for women, Coonammavu 1866
Introduction of the Forty Hours' Adoration 1867
The fifth foundation at Ampazhakad 1868
Introduction of the May devotion in the
present form 1868
Addition of hood to religious habit 1868
Introduction of the Holy Saturday ceremonies 1869
Letter addressed to Prior General in Rome
for provinces 1870
Happy and glorious death 1871 Jan 3
Solemn funeral Coonammavu 1871 Jan 4
Translation of mortal remains to the
Mother House 1899 March 9

SOME SALIENT POINTS OF HIS LIFE

1. Devotedness to the Church, zeal for the sanctification of her children and loyalty to the Apostolic See and other superiors may be pointed out as characteristic virtues of the Servant of God.

2. Not less remarkable is his devotion to the Eucharistic Lord. He may be called the Apostle of Eucharistic devotion in Kerala. He started the forty hours' adoration in Kerala for which he translated and adopted into Syriac the Latin Ritual.

3. At a time when the intruder bishop Thomas Rochos of Chaldea came to Malabar and brought many of the Syro-Malabar churches under his sway against the Vicar Apostolic, the legitimate authority, and thus threatened a schism in the Malabar Church, he fought strenuously against it risking even his life. He brought back all the churches to unity under the Vicar Apostolic and thus saved the Malabar Church from a schism.

4. A man of prayer, he wished to give new vigour and spirit to the Malabar Church. Being nominated Vicar General for the members of the Syrian Rite in 1861, he renovated the liturgical and devotional life of the Church. At a time when this Church was practically cut off from the contact with the East Syrian liturgical sources, the Servant of God tried to fill in certain deficiencies by several devotional exercises largely drawing inspiration and guidance from the Latin liturgy used by the Vicar Apostolic and other missionaries.

5 He has set a heroic example of virtue and sanctity for the modern times. At a time when authority is little catered for, nay it is questioned everywhere, the example of his heroic obedience and loyalty to the

Church stands out as an example to follow. He has wonderfully combined a most intimate interior life with an intense apostolic activity as demanded by the needs of the Church.

6. He is an example of Indian asceticism crowned by Christian spirituality.

7. He started the first poor home in Kerala to give refuge and protection to the poor and destitute. He is to be considered the pioneer of organised work for the poor in Kerala.

8. He is to be considered the pioneer of the Apostolate of the press in Kerala. Seeing that there was no easy means to print and propagate catholic literature, in Kerala, he started the first catholic press in Kerala undergoing many hardships owing to the lack of financial sources. He translated many Tamil books and printed several valuable spiritual books in this press.

9 Truly humble of heart, he was never ambitious of power and honour. When the Vicar Apostolic, Mgr. Bernardine Baccinelli appointed him the Vicar General for the Syrians he accepted it only when he was commanded under the precept of holy obedience. Though the partisans of the intruder bishop Rochos approached him offering him to be consecrated bishop, he flatly refused the honour, categorically answering that the salvation of the soul is the one thing that matters.

10. He is the founder of the first two religious Congregations in Kerala: one for men (present C.M.I.) and the other for women (present C.M.C.), the two most flourishing congregations in the Syro-Malabar Church.

75

Board Outline Of Our Missions (1974) and a Glance at Their Growth

CHANDA

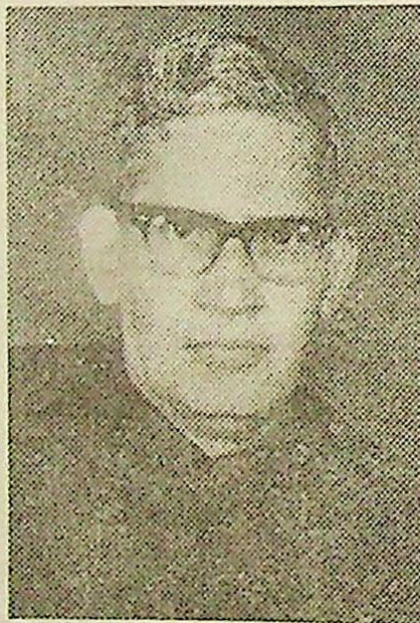


	1962	1974
Year of starting	1962	
Area in sq. k.m.	50,000	
Total population	36,37,157	
Christian	10,600	
Catholics	700	8,900
No. of Priests	2	44
No. of Brothers	nil	nil
No. of Sisters	3	134
No. of Convents	3	18
Mission Stations:—		
a) Residential	2	21
b) Visiting	3	68
Churches and Chaples	5	35
No. of Schools	nil	10

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Hospitals, Clinics & Dispensaries	1	8
Boarding Houses & Orphanages	nil	18
Catechists	nil	34
Mobile Medical Units	nil	4
Social Welfare Centre	nil	2
Printing Press	nil	1

SAGAR



	1968	1974
Year of starting	1968	
Area in sq. k.m.	39,020	
Total population	13,56,301	
Christians	3,300	
Catholics	1,250	1,750
No. of Priests	5	20
No. of Brothers	2	2
No. of Sisters	23	68
No. of Convents	2	8

77

	1972	1974
Mission Stations—		
a) Residential	3	12
b) Visiting	2	12
Churches & Chapels	3	12
No. of Schools	2	8
Hospitals, Clinics & Dispensaries	1	4
Boarding Houses & Orphanages	2	5
Catechists	nil	nil
Mobile Medical Units	nil	1
Social Welfare Centre	nil	2
Printing Press	nil	nil

BIJNOR



Year of starting	1972	
Area in sq. k.m.	32,000	
Total population	35,00,000	
Christians	4,000	
Catholics	200	236
No. of Priests	nil	12

78

	1972	1974
No. of Brothers	"	2
No. of Sisters	"	23
No. of Convents	"	5
Mission Stations—		
a) Residential	"	5
b) Visiting	"	4
Churches & Chapels	"	nil
No. of Schools	"	3
Hospitals, Clinics & Dispensaries	"	1

JAGDULPUR



Year of starting	1972	
Area in sq. k.m.	39,176	
Total population	151,44,000	
Christians	7,500	
Catholics	400	450
No. of Priests	4	17
No. of Brothers	1	2
No. of Sisters	nil	29
No. of Convents	"	5

79

	1972	1974
Mission Stations:—		
a) Residential	3	6
b) Visiting	2	12
No. of Schools	1	4
Hospitals Clinics & Dispensaries	nil	2
Boarding Houses & Orphanages	2	2
Catechists	nil	3

SAURASHTRA

Year of starting	1972	
Area in sq. k.m.	73,000	
Total population	34,52,737	
Christians	4,500	
Catholics	2,500	
No. of Priests	7	14
No. of Brothers	1	nil
No. of Sisters	46	48
No. of Convents	4	4
Mission Stations		
a) Residential	4	5
b) Visiting	10	12
Churches & Chapels	5	6
No. of Schools	5	5
Hospitals, Clinics & Dispensaries	2	2
Boarding Houses & Orphanages	2	2
Catechists	nil	1
Mobile Medical Units	"	1
Social Welfare Centre	nil	2

REALIZATION OF A GREAT DREAM

‘But I, being poor, have only my dreams ;
I have spread my dreams under your feet ;
Tread softly, for you tread on my dreams.’

GROWTH OF A MUSTARD SEED ON THE HILLOCK OF MANNANAM, KERALA, INDIA

Mother House Head quarters	St. Joseph's Monastery Prior General's House, Cochin-11
C.M.I. Roll	<u>1232</u>
Provinces & Regions	8
Formed Houses & Residences	79
Exarchates	2
Mission Stations	21
Colleges	7
High Schools	14
Primary Schools	18
Technical Institutions	3
Hostels & Boarding Houses	22
Hospitals, Dispensaries and Nursing Homes	8
Houses for the Aged	3
Houses for the Handicaped	3
Boys' Homes	6
Printing & Publishing Houses	10
Parishes & Catechumenates	27
Daily & Periodicals	6

'Half the world does not know
how the other half lives.'

ANOTHER SEED SPROUTED AT KOONAMMAVU, KERALA, INDIA

Head Quarters	Mother General's House, Alwaye
Mother House	St. Teresa's Koonammavu
C.M.C. Roll	<u>3856</u> (7 4 0 0 0)
Provinces & Regions	6

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Religious Houses	142
Colleges	4
High Schools	35
Primary & Nursery Schools	126
Hostels & Boarding Houses	44
Hospitals, Dispensaries & Nursing Homes	5
Orphanages	15
Balabhavans	4
Training Schools	2
Press	2

CAUSE OF FR. KURIACKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

Institutions of Historical Commission	1958
„ Tribunals	
— for the informative process	
for the writings	1962
Tribunal De non Cultu	1969
Final Sessions of the Tribunals	1970

Acts and documents forwarded to the S. Congregation
of Rites on 17th October 1970. Thus the diocesan
process is concluded.

‘Mortals that would follow me
Love virtue ; she alone is free ;
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime ;
or if virtue feeble were,
Heav’n itself would stoop to her.’

*Positio, prepared by Fr. Lucas
submitted to the S. C. of Congregation,
Rome, Historical. in 1977 Dec.*

STATISTICAL ABSTRACT on 13-12-1974

Provinces	....	4
Mission Regions	....	5
Exarchates	....	4
Houses, Residences, Centres	....	98
Priests	....	697
Scholastics	....	297
Brothers	....	103
Novices	....	77
Aspirants	....	219
Aspirants' Houses	....	8
Novitiates	....	4
Study Houses	....	2
Parishes	....	26
Catechumenates	....	15
Sunday Schools	....	43
Mission Stations	....	10
Theology Centre	....	1
Ecumenical Centre	....	1
Retreat Houses	....	2
Arts and Science Colleges	....	6
Training College	....	1
Technical Institutions	....	6
High Schools	....	14
U. P. Schools	....	6
L. P. Schools	....	16
Nursery Schools	....	7
Hostels	....	20
Boarding Houses	....	4
Cultural Centres, Clubs	....	8
Boys' Homes	....	9
Houses for the Aged	....	3
Hospitals	....	6
Dispensaries, Nursing Homes	....	12

Printing Houses	....	7
Dailies	....	1
Monthlies	...	5
Periodicals	....	2
Libraries, Reading Rooms	....	6
Book Houses	....	5

N.B. Statistics of the Exarchates are not included here;
they are given under each Exarchate.

ANOTHER SEED SPROUTED AT KOONAMMAVU, KERALA, INDIA

Head Quarters	Mother General's House, Alwaye
Mother House	St. Teresa's Koonammavu
C.M.C. Roll	4042
Provinces	6
Religious Houses	207
Colleges	4
High Schools	35
Primary & Nursery Schools	200
Hostels & Boarding	64
Hospitals & Dispensaries	20
Orphanages	24
Houses for the aged	7
Training Schools	4
Press	4

HOLY FATHER'S AUDIENCE TO FR. THEOBALD POTHANICAT C.M.I., PRIOR GENERAL

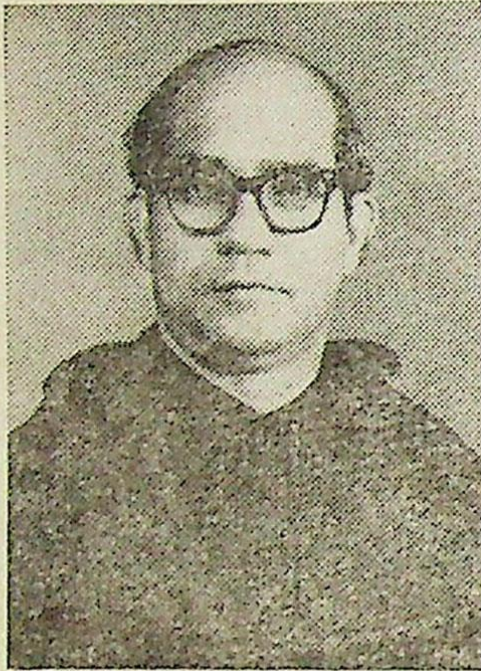
After the General Audience of 21st March Pope Paul received a group of Indian Carmelites of Mary Immaculate led by the Prior General, Father Theobald Pothanikat. To these religious the Pope spoke as follows :

It is a pleasure for us to have this opportunity to extend a word of welcome to you, the Prior General and members of the Carmelite of Mary Immaculate.

We are aware of the admirable pastoral work carried out by your Congregation in India, teaching at all levels, the care of the aged and the sick, the apostolate of the press, as well as running several dioceses. For all of this activity on behalf of the Church we thank you from our heart.

We are likewise pleased to note that there is no lack of vocations to the priesthood, and we should ask you to assure your students of our particular fatherly affection. We pray that they will be granted the grace of perseverance and joy in the life of special union with Christ, which they have freely embraced.

To all of you indeed we give the assurance of a special place in our prayers. As we express once more our particular closeness to you in your work, we cordially impart to yourselves and to all the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate Our Apostolic Blessing.



THE LITURGICAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Fr. Abel, C.M.I.

a) LITURGICAL

In the 1960's the Kerala Syrian Church experienced a liturgical revival. The Syro-Malabar 'Qurbana' was translated by the then Liturgical Committee in 1962. Nothing more was done in the field during the following three years. The President of the Liturgical Committee, H. E. Joseph Cardinal Parecattil, asked Rev. Fr. Abel C.M.I. to translate and versify the Funeral Services. The book was published in August 1965, which was applauded by all.

At the instigation of the Cardinal, Fr. Abel devoted himself for the translation of the Liturgical books. And in course of time the following books were published by him with the approval of the Cardinal.

1. Funeral Service for Priests, children etc.
2. Funeral Services for Laymen
3. Rasa for the Dead
4. Requiem High Mass

5. Service on All Souls' Day
6. Prayers before and after Death
7. Breviary—Lent
8. „ —Easter
9. „ For Sisters
10. High Mass
11. Solemn High Mass
12. Solemn Rasa
13. Festival Services
14. Consecration of Bishops
15. Sacraments
16. Blessings
17. Holy Week
18. Holy Saturday, Easter
19. Consecration of Churches
20. New Year, Year End, Christmas
21. Benediction of the Holy Sacrament
22. Vestition of Sisters
23. Breviary for Advent and Pentecost.

In addition, Fr. Abel also published four Hymn Books, and composed and tuned a number of songs.

b) CULTURAL

Fr. Abel C.M.I. has done pioneering work in the cultural field. He organized a group of youngsters, interested in music as well as dramatics, and gave them proper and efficient training. They presented musical recitals and dramas in public. This marked the beginning of Kalabhavan in November 1968 under the chief Patronage of the Cardinal.

The Kalabhavan, under the able guidance of Fr. Abel, has developed into a premier cultural organization in Kerala. Its activities are indeed many and manifold.

1) Orchestra Troupe

The troupe, comprising of 20 eminent artistes, conducts musical concerts at the professional level. It is easily the best of its kind in Kerala. Some vocalists of the troupe have recently risen to the rank of play-back singers.

2) Academy

Classes are conducted in vocal as well as instrumental music. A course in Theatre training is a unique and recent step. The Academy has over 300 students on its rolls.

3) Broadcasting

The Kalabhavan presents cultural programmes for the All India Radio to be broadcasted from various Stations in India.

4) Records

The Gramophone Company of India has brought out discs of Kalabhavan, which are used for public functions throughout Kerala.

5) Children's Film

It has produced a feature film, 'Kunjikaikal', for the moral up-gradation of the Youth.

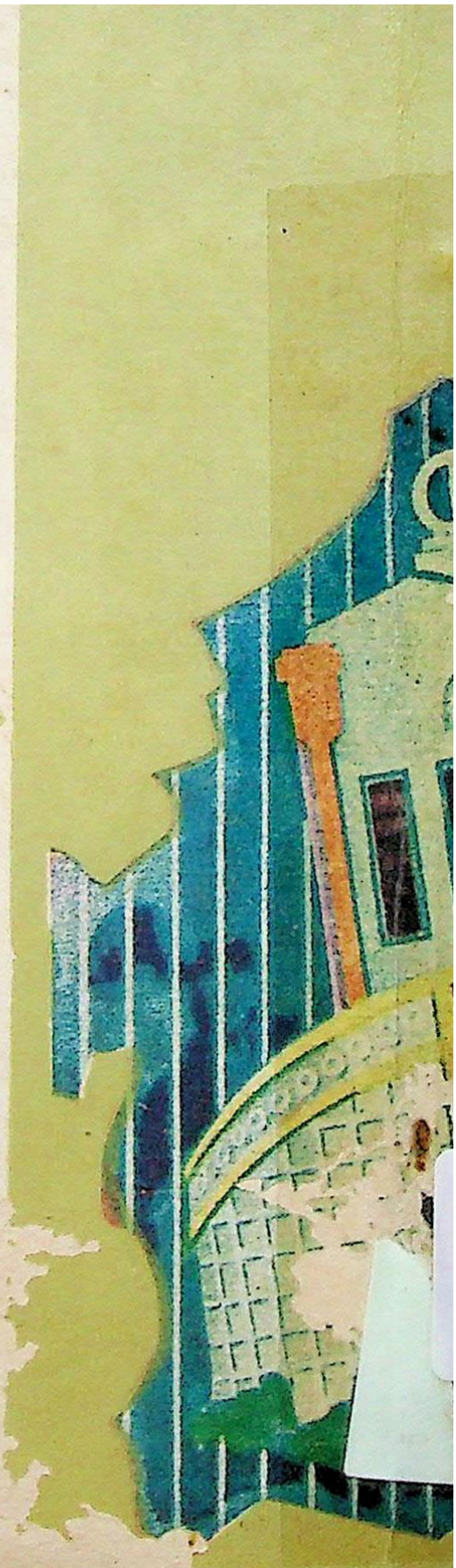
Moreover, Kalabhavan has in view a Film Institute, Research Centre for Fine Arts, a Music Library etc.

FR. KUPPUSOSE CHAVARA

It is a rare
presentation to the pub-
lic sketch
of God, Fr.
Chava-
process
ne. In him
oyed ecstasy
flesh service,
al he age.
g

with him.
and moiled day and
night for an all round uplift
of all in Kerala. He was,
no doubt, a man of insight and
foresight. Happy to record that
his dreams are materialised
today. His magnetic and saint-
ly personality played a leading
role in manifold fields – eccle-
siastical, social, literary, etc.,

The cover page depicts the
holy room of Chavara sit-
ted at Coonammavu. He
in this shrine for seven
and then left
and then
to





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C H R I S T I A N
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