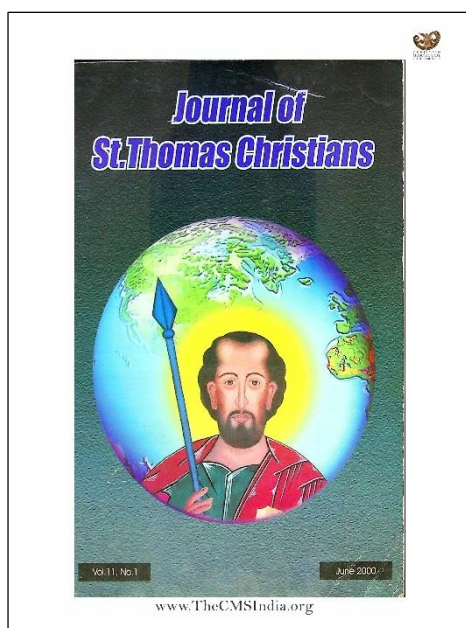


## Journals of St. Thomas Christians Vol.11



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Call Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | RR-1390                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Journals of St. Thomas Christians Vol. 11                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Journals of St. Thomas Christians                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Author                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Unknown.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Publisher/Year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tri Annually/2000                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Editorial Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. George Menacherry</li> <li>• Dr. Jose Porunnedom</li> <li>• Dr. P. Kochappilly</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| Printed at                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Gujarat                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Total Pages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 131                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Language                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | English                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Copyright                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Author/Publisher                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Contributor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Key Words                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | # JournalsofStThomasChristians #Stthomaschristians<br>#Gujarat #DrAntonyVallavanthara #Drpaulvithaythil<br>#FrGeorgevadakel #FrJosephPuravakkatt<br>#Dr. JosePorunnedom #Prof. GeorgeMenacherry<br>#DrPKochappilly |
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# ***Journal of St. Thomas Christians***



Vol.11, No.1

June 2000

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Journal of St. Thomas Christians is published tri-annually by 'Mission of St. Thomas Christians' in April, August, and December. Views expressed by the authors are not the opinion of the Editors or the Patron.

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# *Journal of St. Thomas Christians*



Apostle Thomas  
to whose missionary preachings  
all St. Thomas Christians Trace their Origin

Vol. 11, No. 1

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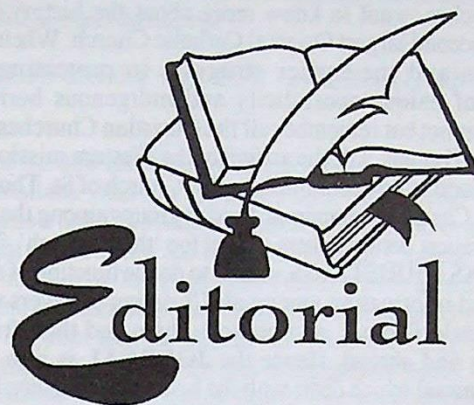
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June 2000



#### A NEW JOURNAL

We have great joy in bringing out the first issue of the **JOURNAL OF ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS**, at the dawn of the third millennium, when Christians are repeatedly requested to commit themselves fully to the task of realizing the essential missionary goal of the Church through a 'new evangelization' and accomplishing the reconciliation of Churches aimed at 'full communion' through a total dedication to ecumenism. One of the ways to realize both these tasks is effective communication. We are now living in an age of computers and fast progressing communication net-work. Life has changed very drastically, within the last few decades, influenced by scientific progress and modern communication media. Distance means very little now. The world is swiftly turning into a global community. This has been brought about by effective communication. The absence of a dynamic organ, for effective communication, in the fields of evangelization and ecumenism of the Church of St. Thomas Christians has been felt by many. We hope that the **JOURNAL OF ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS** could fill this gap by taking up the role of the medium of communication in the realms of evangelization and ecumenism.

#### THE JOURNAL AS A 'LINK-MEDIUM'

We are fortunate to live in a nodal point of history - the third millennium. The Church of St. Thomas Christians is entering the third millennium with a rejuvenated spirit, as its age-old *Sui Juris* characteristic has been recognized and approved by the universal Church by raising it to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Oriental Church, in 1992. With this most important event in the annals of the Church of St. Thomas Christians, it has now come to the lime-light

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Bishop Gregory Karotemprel

# The Apostolic Origin & Development of Syro-Malabar Church

BISHOP GREGORY KAROTEMPREL

## Historical Background of the Syro-Malabar Church

The Church of St. Thomas Christians is an Apostolic Church founded in India by St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Christ. According to ancient, strong and continuous tradition, St. Thomas landed at Kodungalloor (Muziris) in 52 AD. After preaching and establishing Christian Communities in different parts of India, he suffered martyrdom at Mylapore in 72 AD. Tradition holds that St. Thomas founded seven Churches in Kerala: they are in Kodungalloor, Niranam, Kollam, Chayal, Kottakkavu, Kokkamangalam and Palayoor. Even before the Christian era, there were Jewish colonies in south India and we see with amazement the strange coincidence that these seven Churches are situated in or near these colonies. From early centuries the Church of St. Thomas Christians came into life-relation with the Christian communities which came to be known as the East Syrian Church. This relationship made the St. Thomas Christians share the liturgical, spiritual and other ecclesiastical traditions with the East Syrian Church (therefore they are grouped under Chaldean Rite). At the same time the Christians of St. Thomas kept their distinctive character especially in church administration and socio-cultural and ascetic-spiritual life.

*Knanaya* Catholics of Syro-Malabar Church claim their origin to Thomas of Cana and the 72 families that migrated to Kerala, India in 345 AD from the land of Syria. The descendants of this group maintained their separate identity. In the matter of liturgy and spiritual activities they fully belong to the Syro-Malabar Church and as such they are an integral part of it. His Holiness Pope Pius X established the Diocese of Kottayam in Kerala for this endogamous group in 1911.

### Bishop Gregory Karotemprel

|                                         |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of the Eparchy                     | : Gorakhpur                                                                                             |
| Area                                    | : 19,070 Sq. kms.                                                                                       |
| Population                              | : 13,631,365.                                                                                           |
| Languages                               | : Hindi and Bhojpuri.                                                                                   |
| Catholics                               | : 2225                                                                                                  |
| Mission Stations                        | : 14                                                                                                    |
| Sub Stations                            | : 6                                                                                                     |
| Priests                                 | : 36                                                                                                    |
| Religious Brothers                      | : 8                                                                                                     |
| Women Religious                         | : 162                                                                                                   |
| Educational Institutions                |                                                                                                         |
| Ecclesiastical                          | : 3                                                                                                     |
| Secular                                 |                                                                                                         |
| Colleges                                | : 3                                                                                                     |
| High schools                            | : 12                                                                                                    |
| Junior schools                          | : 7                                                                                                     |
| Primary schools                         | : 23                                                                                                    |
| Vocational Training Centres for Girls   | : 5                                                                                                     |
| Inter-religious Dialogue Centre         | : 1                                                                                                     |
| Diocesan Laity Organization             | : 1                                                                                                     |
| Community Health Education Centres      | : 165                                                                                                   |
| Adult Education Centres                 | : 60                                                                                                    |
| <i>Balwadies</i>                        | : 19                                                                                                    |
| Women's Organizations                   | : 160                                                                                                   |
| Youth Associations                      | : 41                                                                                                    |
| Hospitals                               | : 3                                                                                                     |
| Dispensaries                            | : 12                                                                                                    |
| Boardings for Boys                      | : 4                                                                                                     |
| Boardings for Girls                     | : 3                                                                                                     |
| Printing and Training Centre            | : 1                                                                                                     |
| Rehabilitation Centre for Handicapped   | : 1                                                                                                     |
| Homes for the Poor and Dying Destitutes | : 6                                                                                                     |
| Address :                               | Bishop's House,<br>Civil Line,<br>University P.O.,<br>Gorakhpur - 272 009, U.P.<br>Ph.:- (0551) 332723. |



### The Syro-Malabar Church

|                             |                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Educational Institutions    |                                                                                                     |
| Ecclesiastical              | : 3                                                                                                 |
| Secular                     |                                                                                                     |
| Higher Secondary Schools    | : 4                                                                                                 |
| High Schools                | : 13                                                                                                |
| U.P. Schools                | : 15                                                                                                |
| L.P. Schools                | : 17                                                                                                |
| Hospitals                   | : 2                                                                                                 |
| Dispensaries                | : 7                                                                                                 |
| Publication                 | : 1                                                                                                 |
| Orphanages, Old-age Homes,  |                                                                                                     |
| Rehabilitation Centres      | : 4                                                                                                 |
| Vocational Training Centres | : 6                                                                                                 |
| Press                       | : 1                                                                                                 |
| Address :                   | Bishop's House,<br>Rewa Rd. P.O., P.B.No.22,<br>Satna - 485 001, M.P.<br>Ph.:- (07672) 24167/25667. |

### Diocese of Thuckalay



On November 11, 1996 by the decree *Apud indorum* of His Holiness Pope John Paul II the Archdiocese of Changanacherry was bifurcated and the new Diocese of Thuckalay was erected with jurisdiction over the district of Kanyakumari and the Taluk of Senkottai in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. On February 2, 1997 Monsignor George Alencherry was installed the first Bishop of Thuckalay.

|                                          |                   |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Name of the Eparchy                      | : Thuckalay       |
| Area                                     | : 1,793.94 Sq.Km. |
| Catholics                                | : 22,000          |
| Parishes with Resident Parish Priests    | : 23              |
| Parishes without Resident Parish Priests | : 21              |
| Mission Stations                         | : 3               |
| Priests                                  | : 39              |
| Men Religious (Including Priests)        | : 12              |
| Women Religious                          | : 167             |
| Educational Institutions                 |                   |



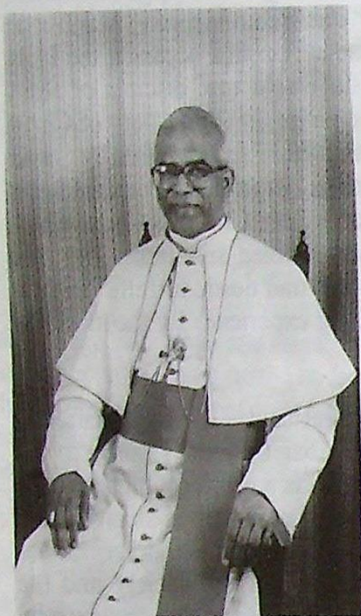
#### Memorandum to the Holy Father

of the prestige and influence of the Sacred Oriental congregation, particularly vis-à-vis the *Propaganda Fide*.

- 6.5.4 Ours is an "Oriental Region" according to can. 303 of *Motu Proprio*, "*Postquam Apostolicis*". As a matter of fact, the Holy See has previously given to the S. Oriental Congregation exclusive jurisdiction in areas that are considered as "Oriental Region". Pius XI in 1938 invested the S. Oriental Congregation with exclusive jurisdiction of countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, etc. In these countries even the Latin communities living there remain subject to the Oriental Congregation. We feel, that in any case, the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches should at least be rendered capable of exercising unhindered its territorial jurisdiction all over India.
- 6.5.5 In this context it may be useful to allude to the importance the evangelization of India will have in the total context and strategy of bringing the entire world closer to Christ. Any one who looks at the future, will be able to realize the immense importance India will have in the emerging world situation. Between India and China are speedily catching up industrially with other developed nations of the world. They both have a glorious past and are proud of their cultural heritages. China is for the present practically closed to the influence of the Church. In India, the Catholics form only about 1.6% of the total population of about 650 million. Although we are small in number, the future seems to be promising. One should therefore keep the future very much in mind and plan accordingly. The Oriental communities with their genuinely indigenous life patterns and their much greater potential in religious and priestly vocations can be guided with discretion to make a greater impact on the people. In any case, the immensity of the problems of India requires a definitely co-ordinated approach of the Holy See that will ensure the freedom of initiative for all, for the good of the Church in India, as a whole.
- 6.5.6 If what is said above has to be achieved, the Oriental Congregation has to be strengthened. Then only can it give a more effective leadership. We look with gratitude on the many eminent prelates who have been at the helm of affairs at the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, who have striven to uphold the rights



## Installation of Mar Varkey Vithayathil



The installation of Mar Varkey Vithayathil, CSSR as the second Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church took place on Wednesday, 26th January 2000 at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica at Ernakulam. The new Major Archbishop was accompanied in liturgical procession from the Major Archbishop's House to the Basilica by His Grace Most Rev. Lorenzo Baldisseri, the Apostolic Nuncio in India, Msgr. Antonio Joscio, Counsellor of the Nunciature, Archbishop Alan De Lastic, the CBCI President and Archbishop of Delhi, the members of the permanent Synod Mar Joseph Powathil, Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, and Mar Paul Chittilapilly and most of the bishops

of the Syro-Malabar Church. As representatives of other Rites, bishop George Anathil (Indore), bishop Paul Maipan (Khammam), and Fr. Jossy Kandanattuthara (Auxiliary-Tiruvalla) took part. Major Superiors of various clerical and non-clerical Institutes of Consecrated Life, Presidents of different ecclesiastical faculties, and priests who came as delegates from the Syro-Malabar eparchies joined the procession. The procession started at 3.00 p.m from the Major Archbishop's House and entered the Basilica passing through Broadway in front of the Basilica. Hundreds of faithful witnessed the procession from both sides of the road.

The Major Archbishop was received by Fr. Joseph Pallipadan, the Archpriest of the Basilica, by presenting him a lighted candle at the main door of the Basilica. Proceeding to the sanctuary the Major Archbishop lighted the oil lamp while the choir sang a hymn invoking Christ as the light of the world. Fr. Bosco Puthur, Executive Director of the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Research Centre at Mount St. Thomas, made a commentary on the importance of the day and on the various parts of the service. Fr. Antony Nariculam, the secretary of the Central Liturgical



*The Hill Shrine of Apostle Thomas on the banks of River  
Periyar at Malayattoor, Kerala*



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