

BHARAT APOSTLE
The Saviour of Harijans
The Protector of the Poor



BI. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

Fr. Valerian Plathottam CMI



Br Santhosh K

BHARATH APOSTLE
BLESSED
KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

FOUNDER
of
THE CONGREGATION OF
CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

and
THE CONGREGATION OF
THE MOTHER OF CARMEL

VICAR GENERAL

of
THE SYRO - MALABAR CHURCH

by

Fr. Valerian Plathottom CMI

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Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Saviour of Harijans

By Fr. Valerian Plathottam C. M. I.

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Bl. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA



Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil
BISHOP OF PALAI

PHONE: PALAI 2216

BISHOP'S HOUSE, PALAI
686 575
KERALA, INDIA

8. 11. 1991

Dear Father Valerian,

I am happy to learn that your book "Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara" is being reprinted with additional documentation. The life of Blessed Kuriakose Elias has been an inspiration for the Church. This book, I hope, will be able to shed light on the message and work of Bl. Kuriakose Elias.

Invoking God's abundant blessings on you,

Sd/-

Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil

Mr. Joseph Felt

March 20, 1964

1000 S. Hobbs, Santa

Febe 932

San Jose, Calif.

8-11-1964

Dear Father Vincent

I am happy to learn that your book "The
Katharine Alice Kinsman" is being republished
with additional documentation. The life of
Katharine Kinsman has been an inspiration
for the Church. I hope I can be able
to find time to do the message and work of the
Katharine Kinsman.

Yours truly,
Joseph Felt

24

Mr. Joseph Felt

INTRODUCTION

The Congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (C. M. I.) is the first Indian indigenous religious Congregation. It sprouted in Kerala the South Western most coastal state of India, which is the home of the Marthoma Christians who have their Christian heritage from St. Thomas the Apostle, who landed in Cranganore in 52 A. D. then a great centre of Hindu culture and abode of Malayali Brahmins.

Fr. Thomas Palakal, Rector of the Seminary at Pallipuram, his adviser and trusted friend Fr. Thomas Porukara, also Secretary to Maurelius Stabilini the Bishop of Verapoly and Fr. Kuriakose Chavara the brilliant student of Fr. Palackal were three outstanding priests of the time well known and accepted by all for their erudition, piety and leadership. They founded the first monastery of the C. M. I. s at Mannanam on May 11, 1831 dedicating themselves to prayer and the service of the people.

Today the C. M. I. congregation has on its rolls 1805 priests and seminarians. It is constituted of nine provinces with 160 houses. From Kerala it has spread all over India and even abroad to Italy, Germany, United States, Canada, South America and Africa.

Fr. Kuriakoes Chavara, one of the founding fathers and first superior general of the congregation died on January 3rd 1871 leaving behind him the high reputation of a holy monk. He has already been declared venerable and his beatification is to take place at Kottayam on 8th February 1986, during the visit of Pope John II.

While presenting the public, this re-edited short history I must express my indebtedness to many for their

encouragement and assistance, to mention a few of them; late Mar Augustine Kandathil, Mar James Kalacherry, Fr. Aurelian OCD, and Fr. Zacharias OCD and many others in my congregation.

My personal devotion and trust in the holiness and intercessory power of Ven. Kuriakos Elias Chavara goes back to the early days of my religious life, when I obtained extra-ordinary grace of cure of my heart disease. The simple prayer then I compiled and distributed among my companions in the novitiate gave also Ven. Sr. Alphonsa who prayed to him, a cure, of which she gave her written testimony to Fr. Aloysius, CMI.

Despite discouragements from certain corners I continued writing and publishing short lives of the Venerable and praying. Many joined suit in this who all rejoice today along the faithful and clergy of India. I must humbly confess that it is a happy coincidence that this happy event - Beatification - takes place when I am in the 50th year of my priestly ministration.

I sincerely thank, appreciate and congragulate Mr. Thomas Zacharia Kottukappally for his generous, magnanimous offer to bear the expenses for publishing the short life of Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Pala **Fr. Valerian Plathottam, CMI**
10-10-91

FOREWORD

Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara, the subject of this biography was a very holy man, and like all holy men he was a 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 heart felt wish and prayer.

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 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

Joseph Cardinal
Parecattil
Archbishop of Ernakulam

Archbishop's House
Cochin - 682011
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

PRIOR GENERAL'S LETTER

Dear Rev. Fr. Valerian,

You have laid the Malayalam speaking Catholics under a deep debt of obligation to you by your life of our illustrious Father Cyriac Elias (Chavara) from original sources. There is no doubt that the publication of the book has helped to make the holy man better known all over our land. An English version of the book would make him more known all over India and in other countries as well. Your efforts in this line are very commendable and I wish you all success.

The life of Fr. Cyriac Elias is a beacon light for us all. It is only by walking in his footsteps that our congregation can expect to reach the goal intended for it by him who was destined by providence to make his profession of vows as the first in the congregation and to rule it for 15 fruitful years. He knew the needs of the Christianity in this country. It was his sole aim in life to lay the foundation of a vigorous Catholic life first among the clergy and then among the laity. Let us always have before our eyes his lofty ideals and let us strive hard to be his worthy children by carrying out all his noble plans for the welfare of religion in this country.

May God help more and more people to know and imitate the holy man by reading his life. May God bless your efforts in publishing his life.

Recommending myself to your prayers,
I am yours in Our Lord,

Ernakulam,
1st Nov. 1953.

Fr. Maurus of the M. of Sorrows,
Prior General T. O. C. D.

PRIOR GENERALS 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 obser-

vance of even of the minutest rules, his child-like and ready submission to legitimate authority, his allembracing 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 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.)

Ernakulam
15-12-1974

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

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENTARY BIOGRAPHY

Catholic Malabar can very well deem itself extremely fortunate in having received the light of faith early in the first century of the Christian era (52) from St. Thomas one of the twelve beloved Apostles of Christ. It can also be proud of the fact that it has succeeded in keeping this light ever shining without a break through the long centuries of trials and tribulations. Yet there is none who does not wonder, nay grieve, over the misfortune of our Church in having not even one of its flock raised to the honors of the altar after the lapse of these 19 centuries of unbroken faith. Is it because of the conspicuous absence in our church of men and women who after distinguishing themselves by a saintly life of heroic virtues in imitation of our Divine Savior have slept in the Lord in an equally saintly and edifying manner. Most certainly there have been such. History as well as tradition assert it emphatically and no one denies it. Then naturally arises the question why none such has yet been solemnly proclaimed a Saint by our holy Mother Church. Unfortunately, we have not to seek for its cause elsewhere but in ourselves. It is only because of our characteristic indifference or rather unpardonable lethargy.

It is almost a matter of daily experience for us at present that the peoples and nations that succeed in moving the Holy see to the final stages of a canonization process sponsored by them do at the cost of stupendous labours selfless sacrifices, worldwide publicity and patient sufferings. As a canonization is 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 MAN-NANAM" 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 to 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 enquiriess 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 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 materisls 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.

BHARATH APOSTLE BLESSED KURIAKOS ELIAS CHAVARA

Few places in Asia could rival Kerala in its ancient traditions, scenic beauty and natural 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, Kerala 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 exhortation 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 Kerala 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 Kerala 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. Kerala.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the solidarity of the Christlan 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 administraton and to several schisms one after the other. 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. Kuriakos 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 Kerala.

KURIAKOS CHAVARA

Fr. Kuriakos was born on 10th of February, 1805, the youngest son of Kuriakos and Mary Chavara. The Chavara family could trace its ancestry to the celebrated line of Pakalomattom, in Palayoor one of the foremost Christian families of Kerala that received the faith and priesthood from the Apostle himself.

He was born at Kainakary, a tiny village in Kuttanad, near Alleppy. The quiet village lies to the east of Alleppey and can be reached by motor-boat in about thirty minutes. There are no roads leading to the place even today and can be reached only by boats. The whole of Kuttanad is interspersed with numerous island formations like Kainakary and they are connected by the canals and small lakes. The backwaters of Kerala formone of the most attractive features of the lovely landscape.

Chavara, descending from the Pakalomattom family from Palayoor could claim as its members many noble sons who shaped the fortunes of the Syrian Church in Kerala. Mar Alexander, several archdeacons who ruled

over the Church in Kerala, Bishop Mar. Louis Pazheparampil, Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, all descended from this line. The late bishop of Changanacherry, Mar James Kalacherry was also related to the Chavara family. It was perhaps providential that Fr. Kuriakos the co-founder of the Carmelite Congregation was a scion of the Pakalomattom family.

The educational facilities in Kerala were far different in 1805 from what they are today. There were no proper schools at all and the young students had to go to the local guru (the asan as he was called) at whose feet they learnt the rudiments of the mother-tongue and mathematics. The asan held his classes in a low thatched shed and children of various ages and intellectual standards sat on the floor, loudly repeating whatever the asan said. Often it rose to the level of a chant but every student participated in it eagerly, and in the process, the basic principles were learnt by heart. Young Kuriakose spent about five years in this local school and picked up sufficient knowledge of Malayalam and Tamil.

From his young days he showed great concern in 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. She was a pious and deeply religious woman, who by her many acts of devotion impressed on her son the significance of such things. Even as she fed him she recited to him various prayers which she made him commit to memory. Later in life, he recalled memories of his mother getting up regularly at night to say the roasary. Spurred on by her example, he developed a keen desire to devote himself completely to the service of God. The stirrings were manifested by the enthusiasm he displayed in studying the prayers in Syriac to enable him to assist at the Holymass. It was only natural that the zealous acolyte aspired to prie-

sthood. The encouragement of Fr. Thomas Palakal, malpan in the Pallippuram seminary was very timely and in 1818, Kuriakos was formally admitted to the seminary to undergo the training necessary for ordination.

Fr. Kuriakos Eliseus of Porookara speaks about this period: "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 place 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 Kuriakos 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 often characterized youngsters".

Several of his classmates have remarked that Fr. Kuriakose was the foremost in study and in the practice of devotions. How admirably holy and dignified his life was can easily be summarised 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 eleven years, in 1829, he was ordained priest by Monsignor Stabilini, *interim* Vicar apostolic of Verapoly. He

was only 24 years of age. He celebrated his first Mass on the 26th of November, 1829, in his parish church at Chennankary.

He stayed at Chennankary and Pulincunnu for some time 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 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 the outstanding aspiration of this new priest at the altar, was realised.

In those days, Sunday sermons were not common. Fr. Kuriakos set about to reforming this state of affairs. He went about from church to church preaching sermons. The memory of the preaching he successfully conducted at Pulincunnu is cherished even to this day. But this did not satisfy him. He worked out for himself a new line of activities for the spiritual regeneration of Malabar. He also had 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 honour 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 term of great intimacy and mutual regard. These were the leaders with whom Fr. Kuriakos 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. Kuriakos 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 Palakkal, Rev. Fr. Thomas Porookara and Rev. Fr. Kuriakos Elias Chavara. The First conceived the idea of starting a religious society of some kind in Kerala. Fr. Porookara entertained the idea of running away from the world to the wilderness like the ascetics of old; but Fr. Chavara was not in favour of that, eventhough he liked the idea of a religious society. Hence they decided to place the matter before Father Thomas Palakkal whom the two held in high-esteem and deep respect. Fr. Palakkal gladly accepted and heartily approved their idea of founding a religious society of some kind. The next day he, along with Fr. Porookara met the bishop Mgr. Maurelius Stabilini, a Calced Carmelite (OCD), seeking help and guidance in the matter.

The bishop knew them pretty well; Father Thomas Palakkal was the chief of the diocesan consultors and Father Porookara was his Secretary. They were the most learned and holy priests of the day. Naturally enough the bishop was rather reluctant to part with their services, both to himself and to the diocese. He gave them a patient hearing and approved of their idea. He convinced them that the need of the hour was a service-oriented religious society, independent and indigenous, living among and for the people. He strongly discouraged the idea of a flight from the world.

The priests were convinced of the need of such a religious society and agreed to the bishop's proposal. The bishop asked them to draw up a petition rather an episcopal circular delineating therein the nature and scope of the religious community they had envisaged and ex-

horting the faithful to reach out financial aid for the same. They drew up the circular and submitted it to the bishop in no time. The bishop sealed it with his hearty approbation and himself headed the list of Contributors.

Soon after getting the episcopal approbation, Fr. Porookara began his fund-raising tours of the country. Within a short time the required amount was raised and then the search was for an ideal spot to build their temporary monastery whence to start their activities. Fr. Porookara and Fr. Chavara felt that the hillock at Mannanam was the most suited place. The choice was applauded by their colleagues and arrangements were made 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 modern India. The foundation stone was laid on May 11, 1831 by Fr. Thomas Porookara in the presence of Mgr. Stabilini Fr. Thomas Palackal, Fr. Chavara, over fifty priests and hundreds of laymen.

Mgr. Stabilini sent the community his episcopal approbation on Dec. 8, 1831. Along with this he sent them a code of conduct consisting of ten articles. The members of the community began their life according to these rules.

Ten years later in 1841, Fr. Thomas Palackal was called away to his eternal abode. Five years later Fr. Porookara also died. Thus it fell to the lot of Fr. Chavara the task of completing the work they had begun together. It was indeed a herculean task. But relying on divine providence he devoted himself completely to it.

In the wake of the arrival of the Portuguese traders, there came to Kerala, several religious orders such as the Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites. The

founding fathers became familiar with some of these. They found out that these religious orders had been approved by the Holy See either as pontifical or exempt. Naturally Father Chavara desired to obtain for his congregation such an approbation from Rome. With this purpose he met the successors of Msgr. Stabilini one after the other. They were Msgr. Francis Xavier, Msgr. Ludovic and Msgr. Bernardine. The first two were favourably inclined and they promised all help. But they could not realise the desideratum. One died in 1844 and the other was called back to Rome in 1853.

Fr. Chavara now approached Msgr. Bernardine who was not very favourable in his attitude. He put Fr. Chavara and the community to several severe tests to check their constancy. They stood them all with the utmost submissiveness and patience. But even after that instead of obtaining the approbation of the Holy See he sent them the "Regulae and Constitutions" of the first order of Carmel with instructions to note down the changes desired and to return it.

The small community at Mannanam consisted of about thirty members including priests, clerics in minor orders and aspirants. Fr. Chavara in consultation with the others noted down certain changes in the constitution keeping in mind the conditions of the torried zone, the demands of the church and the period in which they were living and returned it to the bishop. But utterly regardless of their suggestions Msgr. Bernardine sent back the constitutions of the First order with such changes as he deemed fit. This plunged the whole community into 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 into a religious community. Fr. Chavara wrote to the bishop that the constitution was too exacting and would defeat the purpose for

which the community was formed. But the bishop was inexorable. He persisted in his stand that they should accept them and that those unwilling must quit. He sent Fr. Marcel O. C. D. a missionary to preach the retreat preparatory to the profession of vows. The constitution was to come into force from the commencement of the retreat.

Fr. Chavara found it very hard to part with some of those who had first come to join the community. All these years they had lived together, dined together, prayed and worked together for the greater glory of God. Fr. Chavara persuaded his confreres to go into the retreat and to make their final decision after that. Just before Holy Mass on December 8, 1855 Fr. Chavara read aloud before Fr. Marcel O. C. D., the words of profession of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Then the capacity of the supreme head of the community Father Chavara received the vows of the other ten that remained. Till his death in 1871, Fr. Chavara remained the prior general of the new religious community. Besides the mother house at Mannanam he also founded the houses at Coonammavu, Elthuruthu, Vazhakulam, Pulincunnu, Ambazhakad and Mutholy.

SEMINARIES

The Missionaries who came to India set up seminaries in places like Cranganore, Vaipicot, Sampalloor, Angamali, Alangad, Kubuthruthy and Verapoly. Many of these disappeared in course of time and only the one at Verapoly continued to function during the 19th century.

At the time the religious house was founded at Mannanam there was crying need for a major theological seminary and such one was started at Mannanam in 1833. The archbishop Msgr. Francis Xavier encouraged it in every way. Soon after the death of Fr. Palackal he promoted Fr. Chavara as the Malpan. The order issued by

the Arch bishop is still preserved at Mannanam. It reads as follows.

“I am encouraged by your virtues and efficiency, to appoint you as the Examiner for all priests of 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 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 . . .”

After the death of Fr. Porookara, Fr. Chavara was solely in charge of the affairs of the seminary. He found that the building at Mannanam was not sufficient to serve the needs of a growing community. He planned to start a seminary on a grand scale. He drew up a scheme for the purpose and made an appeal seeking the co-operation of all the parishes in the diocese. He suggested setting up two establishments in a place chosen by the bishop. In one the boys were to be taught Tamil, English, Latin and Syriac. The second was for those who completed this course and wanted to pursue theological studies. All this meant a lot of money and he made an appeal to the people to contribute generously to the noble cause.

There was considerable delay in executing a suggestion such as this. So under instruction from the Archbishop two seminaries were opened: one at Vazhakulam and the other at Elthuruth. A bigger seminary was started at Verapoly in 1866 and it absorbed all others. In 1887, the Carmelite Congregation was taken under the direct control of the Holy See and was relieved from Verapoly. The Verapoly seminary was later transferred to Puthenpally. In all these places Fr. Chavara wielded great

influence on the young aspirants. The service rendered by the Carmelite seminaries has been gratefully appreciated and remembered to this day.

PRESS APOSTOLATE

Ever since he set foot at Mannanam Fr. Chavara dreamt of a printing and publishing institute. But the financial implications were far too much for his resources and he could not do anything for long. At that time there were only two printing concerns in Travancore, the Government Press at Trivandrum and the CMS Press at Kottayam. Fr. Kuriakos thought of fabricating a wooden press to start with. He went to see the working of the press at Kottayam. But he was not allowed even to see it. So he went to Trivandrum and saw how printing was done at the Government press. He went back and made model 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, working.

At that time it was necessary to get permission from the Government to publish books. He secured this with the influence of the Resident, General Cullen. With great difficulty he managed to publish "Ganapiyoosham" (Spiritual Nectar) the first book in Malayalam from Mannanam. Printing was very expensive and most of the time he was in terrible difficulties. One day when he was almost driven to despair, a stranger approached him and offered him 500 Chakrams (Rs. 17½) and promised him more, if he wanted. It was thought to be a positive gift inspired by St. Joseph the patron of this press and monastery.

St. Joseph's press Mannanam was the first to publish prayer books in Malayalam. At that time prayer books in Tamil only were common. The first wooden press built by Fr. Kuriakose is preserved to this day, as a precious

relic attributed to his skill, foresight, perseverance and patience. St. Joseph's Press, over a century old, rises today as a glorious monument to its indefatigable founder and a beacon-light to the whole of Kerala. Perhaps there is no christian house in Kerala where atleast one book printed at the St. Joseph's press cannot be found. The Malayalam translation of the Holy Bible, the innumerable prayer books, 'Flower of Carmel', a monthly and the daily 'Deepika', now published from a branch house at Kottayam, were all perhaps in the dreams of the saintly founder. Fr. Kuriakose will certainly be remembered as a pioneer in the field of printing and publishing which was to have far reaching effects on the religious and social life of Kerala.

HIS SCHOLARSHIP

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

Fr. Palackal had noticed the literary talents of Kuriakose when a boy 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 has left to posterity. He is one among the most talented catholic writers since the days of Fr. Governador Paremmakkal. A hundred years ago, there were very few authors who could claim anything like the achievement of Fr. Chavara in this 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 "Athmanuthapam" is mostly autobiographical. The "Lamentations of the Repentant Soul", "Parting Advice of a Dying Parent", and some other minor works are the most devotional among his writings. All his writings are compiled today into four volumes.

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. 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.

There were only few Syrian churches, if any at all, in Malabar which Fr. Kuriakos 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 make a good impression on the audience. Several instances of his impressive extempore sermons are popularly talked about to this day. The panegyrics he preached at the funeral service of Archbishops Bernardine and Francis Xavier, are often quoted as outstading examples of his great talents in this direction.

EDUCATIONIST

In addition to his being a brilliant scholar in literature and the sciences, Fr. Kuriakos Elias was a great edu.

cationist. Till his time, the church in Malabar had not advanced much in the field of education. But proficient as he was in several languages he became a powerful influence in the cause of catholic education.

His interest in the field of education of students 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 already started running a few English schools. They were in the field from about 1816. He realized that the community would ever remain downtrodden if they did not move with the times and so he decided that his new congregation should concentrate on educational work. So in 1846 the monastery started a new institution for Sanskrit studies.

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 had planned a central college for Catholics. But it did not materialize owing to various unfavourable circumstances. If today the catholics of Kerala are literate to a high degree, it is largely because of the farsighted policy of Fr. Kuriakos, in the establishment of a school for each parish. Today the community manages a number of first grade colleges, high schools, L. P. Schools, elementary schools and other technical institutes. The first English High School of Syrian Catholics was founded at Mannanam in 1885.

The educational activities of the Carmelite Congregation have won wide acclaim. The service rendered by them in the field of education has been applauded by all. Msgr. Zaleski, a former Delegate Apostolic to India in an official report, has commended the congregation for its special work in the field of education saying "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 himself and their legitimate successors. But from the fourth century, the administration was through foreign bishops ordained and sent to Malabar by the Patriarch of Babylon. Though foreigners by nationality, they had the same Syrian 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 Menezis, the Archbishop of Goa, to Latin bishops. The Portuguese rulers were not familiar with the Syrian Rite and social connections. Further they were lacking in a spirit of accommodation. All this ultimately led to the deterioration of the Syrian Community in many respects.

Leaders of the community in Malabar proud of their ancestry and noble traditions, resented this trend and organized themselves to safeguard their interests. They solicited the authorities in Rome and Portugal to appoint Syrian bishops to Malabar to preserve and promote their social and cultural integrity. But 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 the countries concerned and fight for their recognition. Fr. Antony Kudakkachira and Fr. Antony Thondanad led a party of young men to Babylon. Unfortunately, the former died there. But the latter, succeeded in persuading the 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 forth with he 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 Thondanad, as secretary to the bishop wrote to all the churches intimating them of the arrival of the bishop and requesting their recognition and homage. Fr. Elias Chavara too was informed. A great many rushed to the new bishop and paid him their respects and received his blessing. They planned to secure the monasteries at Mannanam and Elthuruth as residences for him. Fr. Elias aware of these demonstrations hastened to contact the bishop and ask him his credentials. But the satellites of the bishop saw to it that their trick was not easily revealed. They refused Fr. Elias permission to meet the bishop. They even tried to humiliate and molest him.

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 Travancore and Cochin Governments. The strict measures adopted by the Government of Cochin soon brought them under control. But the schism was spreading. A large portion of the faithful aligned themselves with the new Syrian bishop and their strength grew. Of the 155 Syrian Churches then existing, 86 unconditionally accepted Rocos and 30 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 Fr. Chavara. But he with his heroic spirit of renunciation declined to accept such an honour. So he was appointed their Vicar General, with wide and unusual powers over the faithful. This was in June 1861, just a month after Bishop Rocos had arrived. 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".

As Vicar General, he strenuously and authoritatively worked to establish order and tranquility 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 a reply on 7th October duly informing him 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 the Pope was despatched to Fr. Chavara on September 5th of the same year.

With the publication of the authentic letters from Rome, the pretension 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 his followers. 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 charge and criticism Fr. Chavara and his colleagues 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 reestablishment of several centres in the faith. It was 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, Kumpalam, Kodavechoor, Muhamma, Tattarampally, Chennankary, Champakulam, Edathua, Pulincunnoo, Thuruthy, Thottakad, Vaipur, Manimala, Nedumkunnam, Kanjirappally, Areethara, Kurumpanadam, Kudamaloor and Kaipuzha never accepted Rocos.

The honour and the credit of having thus kept alive the light which St. Thomas lighted in Malabar goes to him in a very large measure. Rocos was commissioned by the Patriarch of Babylon only to visit Malabar and report on the condition of the church here. 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 from his Patriarch, by visiting churches and ordaining priests in the capacity of one with regular jurisdiction over

the faithful. 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. The Peishkar of 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 quit Malabar immediately. The Patriarch of Babylon also renewed his order recalling him.

Driven to such helpless straits from all directions Rocos retired to the church at Gnarackal. On 30th November in the Cathedral Church at Varapoly, Dr. Bernardin, 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 Gnarackal, proclaimed the excommunication in the church after the community Mass and later called on Rocos in person and handed over the document confirming the punishment. The supporters of Rocos created an uproar and tried to surround and manhandle 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 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.

CARMELITE CONVENTS

Fr. Chavara also founded a congregation of Carmelites for women. In this endeavour, he was considerably helped by Fr. Leopold who was equally interested in the formation of religious houses for women. Fr. Chavara organised the convents as centres from where christian education and culture were to spread among the women of the country. He had also envisaged them as enclosures for those women who wanted to devote themselves to a life of prayer and mortification and service of souls.

One may wonder to hear that Fr. Chavara founded the first convent with the capital of 58 Rupees of which 40 were collected from the churches at Gnarackal and Alleppey, and the rest was a donation from his monasteries. The enclosure that he put up for the convent at Coonamavu. "St. Teresa's convent" was mostly made of bamboo mats and coconut fittings. He 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 Elisba, a widow, her daughter Anna, Thresia of Karthedath parish and Elizabeth of Puthenangady, Vaikom. They came to live in the new convent of February 13th 1866. Four postulants were received after two days and they were given the scapular.

Fr. Chavara was not happy with the temporary shed made for the nuns. He toured the southern districts of Kerala and raised Rs. 8000/- within eight months to put up a permanent house for them as well as a school and boarding house for girls. The building was completed in

March 1867. On the 27th of March, the nuns were transferred to the new house and on the same day they were vested with the habit of the religious and given Constitution and Rules designating them as the "Third Order of Carmelities". Aspirants to the new order arrived from even distant places and in a short time the necessity for establishing sister-houses in other became urgent. Branch houses were founded at Mutholy (1888), Verapoly (1890), Ampazhakat (1897), Karukutty (1899), Parur (1910), Ernakulam (1915), Gnarackal (1925), and subsequently in several other places.

In 1887, the ecclesiastical administration of St. Thomas Christians was brought under Trichur and Kottayam dioceses. This division had its impact in the indigenous religious Congregations too. Consequently those sisters of the Latin Rite were transferred to Varapuzha in 1889. This branch then known as T. O. C. D. is now known as Congregation of Teresian Carmelites (C. T. C.). Those of the Syrian Rite, then known as T. O. C. D., is now known as Congregation of Mother of Carmel (C. M. C.).

Today the C. M. C. Congregation has 4440 sisters with 374 houses. The C. T. C. has nearly 800 members and more than 40 houses. These two congregations having the same origin at Coonammavu in 1866, extend their dedicated services today in various apostolic dimensions such as education, mission work, medical relief and social apostolate throughout India and abroad.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

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 lessening of 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 Christian life in Malabar.

First, of course, he had to start with the clergy. He saw to it that the seminaries under him specially tried to enforced the strict discipline among the students. He effected the necessary reforms and raised the standard of instruction. He insisted on an annual retreat for all priests. He also insisted that the priests should recite the 'Divine Office'. In all these, he had the support and blessing of the Archhishop.

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. 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 into religious life and among the faithful at large.

Not satisfied with concentrating on the education of the well-to-do, he interested himself in the rehabilitation of the under-privileged both materially and morally. He started missionary activities and tried to spread secular as well as religious education among them. He put up a home for the destitute at Kainakary and it stands as a monument to his charity and consideration for those in want.

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 great administrative reformers in the country.

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 the Syrians using unleavened bread and the vestments according to the Latin Rite for mass is a 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. 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 condified 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 to 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 composite 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 him including the foreign missionaries have unequivocally complimented him in this respect. Archbishop Bernardine and Fr. Marceline have on several occasions given expression

to their high respect and appreciation of his sanctity in personal life and of 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, humanity, 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 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” 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 special mission on earth.

APOSTLE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The central theme of the devotional life of Fr. Chavara was the Holy Eucharist. 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 Kerala. 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 Kerala. He recorded specific instructions on this devotion in the document he bequeathed as his will and testament to his people.

He enforced the practices of this devotion among the religious congregations both for the priests and nuns. Public exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and adoration were ordered in all the monasteries and convents for all the days following the feast of Corpus Christi. The beautiful prayers meant for public use on such occasions were also compiled and popularised by him.

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

Devotion to the Blessed Mother of God is co-existent with devotion to Christ. Fr. Chavara was ardently devoted to the Virgin Mother. He was taught this devotion by his own mother. Even as a child, he was taken by her to the Church of our Lady at Vechoor and was dedicated to her care. She continued to advise and direct him, 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 advise and practice made on him is visible in the innumerable references he makes 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

patrimonial possession, he offered himself to mary as her spiritual Child and thus ensured his vocation for priesthood. He propagated this devotion among his colleagues in the Seminary. He enjoyed explaining to almost everybody he met, the beauties of this sublime devotion. He did everything possible to spread Marion devotion among the people. It could be said that the Blessed Mother remained with him throughout his life and he could say confidently on his deathbed that through the mediation of mary he had the rare grace of preserving inviolate his baptismal innocence till his death.

CHARITY

Fr. Chavara was ever alive to the new commandment of our Lord, "Love one another as I loved you." He spent his days charitably in activities 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 many. He would hasten to the dying even if they were stricken by the most deadly and contagious diseases. In spite of all opposition and threats during the days of the schism he went about trying to do good even to those who opposed him. He built a home for the destitute and the poor at Kainakary and established a "Confraternity for Happy Death." Such Organizations conceived by him were the first ones of the kind in the country. They again confirm the deep love and compassion he had for the poor and the unfortunate in the society.

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 instructions and practice. He made these morally binding on all the members of the congregation: that they live in truth and love and despite their large number, they all grew up as if children of the same mother.

A good many among the poor in this land have enjoyed charitable hospitality from one or the other 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 corporeal charity and mercy were so well known that the well-to-do always encouraged 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 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 upon one. He sought out those who tried to hinder his work or to humiliate him and promised them all encouragement and co-operation in all their work. In his last testament he has even mentioned as a benefactor, one who had filed false suits against him and caused heavy damages to the monastery of Mannanam.

PRAYER LIFE

Even as the prophet Elias, the founder of the Carmel was wedded to a life of prayer, so was Fr. Chavara the saintly founder of Carmelites in Malabar, devoted to prayer. Love fulfills itself in frequent and intimate colloquy with the beloved. The great love Fr. Chavara 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 for going sleep and rest at times, marked him but as a man of prayer. The sacrifice of the Mass he offered at the Altar, 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 supplicates of God, quite confidently, all that he felt 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! There are instances of his having received great financial help in immediate response to prayer in straitened circumstances. How the meagre 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.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Fr. Chavara believed in God completely and this absolute faith stood him in good stead throughout his life. Nothing could shake his faith. He made his decision to serve God in his young days. Later when the other male member of his family died and there was the lure of all the ancestral property coming to him, he stuck to his decision and remained true to his vocation. He could rise above the transitory and mundane aspects of life and reach heavenly heights because of his faith in God.

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.

The capital from which he drew endlessly to execute many of his schemes was 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 hand and yet how easily he was able to complete the work, 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; I shall not

confounded", the Psalmist had sung and Fr. Chavara lived by its charm.

Such faith and hope could not but have endowed him with a great personal Love of God which was manifested in all his work. 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 messag of love. His contemporaries, both elders and juniors, have unanimously acclaimed the zealous devotion for which his sermons were known. He reformed the faithful entrusted to his care by exhortations, 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".

EXEMPLARY RELIGIOUS

The founders of all religious orders have been specially inspired by the Holy Spirit and in their lives they set the standard for their congregations. That is why the Church is anxious that each order should live after its founder in all things. An order is founded, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at a particular stage in the history of the world, to serve a 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 vow of fortresses in the shape of the divine commandments, the laws 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. All the founders of the different orders are unanimous on the necessity of the constitutional regulations 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 had 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 a congregation which he initiated 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 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. Tedious travels, old age, weakness and even infirmity hardly succeeded in making him relax. He would relax when absolutely necessary, but 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.

He zealously gave to God His due. He found in his superiors God's spokesmen and messengers and unquestioningly accepted their commands. The sacrifice he made in respecting the wishes of his Archbishop to go to Coonammavu and 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 where with 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 a folly, what a fancy!" Many other examples of his advice and instructions could be quoted to show how much he laboured 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 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 from him. He tried to imitate our Lord and thus win the esteem and confidence of the subordinates. 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 the needed. He was even willing to forgo his own necessities to a very large extent. Luxury was far from him, but at times he mixed with others participating in their expeditions and other recreations. This was mainly to know the individuals personally and then treat them with the sympathy and consideration each one deserved.

The congregation maintains happy and proud memories of that glorious period. His death was mourned by all for a long 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 and the gap it created was too great.

DEATH

When Bishop Leonard returned to Rome to attend the Vatican Council in 1870, Fr. Chavara went to Bhara-nanganam, 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 Coonammavu and was 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 advise from him. They suggested a change to Ampazhakat where he went and stayed a few days. As that proved unsuccessful he returned to Coonammavu. 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.

On the second of January 1871, he made his last confession to his spiritual director Fr. Leopold. He grew visibly emotional at communion time and his face became singularly bright. In the afternoon he started vomiting. Medicines proved ineffective. He sought his own trusted spiritual director to administer him the Last Sacraments. But the missionary was so emotional that he was unable to comply with his request, so he suggested that Fr. Vicar of the monastery should do it for him. Before the final phase Fr. Chavara was helped into a half reclining posture on his bed, from which he gave a final exhortation to all the inmates assembled around him.

Pacifying them he said, Why should you grieve after all? All men must die some time or other, who or whatever they may 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 I am confident of it. I dedicate you all and this hu-

mble congregation to the same Holy Family. Rely on it. Let the Holy Family reign over your hearts. Do not be worried or be upset, for 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 to them all and a request for Anointment. 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 till the next morning. On the third of January 1871 by about half past seven while the priests stood around praying God 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 all over Malabar. The bishop was close by, on a visit to the parish, in S. Parur. He was prompt to come and officiate the services for the dead. People who heard of his death came in crowds to Coonammavu. The sanctity of Fr. Chavara was so well known that the next morning an unprecedentedly large crowd collected around his mortal remains. The body was dressed in priestly robes and brought to the

church for the people to have a last look at and pay their homage. Later, the dress was changed into the simple habit of a religious more becoming a member of an astatic order.

All the Churches that could manage to send their paraphernalia arranged to participate formally in the funeral ceremonies of their late champion. After the most solemn services and 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 the possessions of the last 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 C. M. I. house at Coonammavu was appropriated by the Latinites on the strength of the order of Rome. There were reinterred with proper honours at Mannanam in 1889. A marble slab was laid on the tomb on 2nd July 1929.

When in 1955 the diocesan for Beatification and canonization was started, a new slab was laid where the precious remains were then interned. The three member commission for collection and study of the works of Fr. Chavara and related documents started functioning in 1958. In 1962 diocesan tribunals were set up. Later in

1984 the high level investigation in Rome was over and Pope John Paul II formally made the declaration of Fr. Kuriakos Elias Chavara's heroic virtues. Further it was in May 1985, that the congregation for the cause of saints approved the miraculous nature of the cure obtained by Mr. Joseph Mathew Pennaparambil through the intercession of Venerable Kuriakos Elias. As a prerequisite for beatification, in June 1985 the remains were exhumed, scrutinised, identified and re-placed.

Now we all await that great day of February 8th, 1986, for the solemn announcement of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

"Venerble Kuriakos Elias Chavara is a Beatus"

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

As the reputation for the sanctity of the Servant of God Kuriakose Elias Chayara 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 Mathew 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 Mathew Kavukatt, then archbishop of Changanacherry instituted two diocesan tribunals, one of 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 Mathew 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.

We are gratified to note that the sacred congregation immediately took the matter in hand having examined the writings of the Servant of God, on 12 October 1273 issued the decree "*nihil obstat quominus ad ulteriora procedatur*".

Now, the sacred congregation is studying all the documents related to the Servent of God and preparing the *positio* for the official introduction of the cause in the curia Romaná. 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.

BEATIFICATION

Formula of Petition

The Ordinaries of Changanacherry and of Palai, humbly beseech Your Holiness that the Venerable Servants of God KURIAKOSE ESIAS CHAVARA and ALPHONSA MUTTATHUPADATHU may be inscribed among the Blessed in heaven.

Then follows a short account of the lives of the two Venerable Servants of God.

RESUME OF THE LIFE OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

Kuriakose (Cyriac) Chavara was born in 1805, of pious and devout catholic parents of the Syro-Malabar Church, in Kainakary, Kerala, India. In baptism he was given the name Kuriakose (Cyriac). After his early schooling in the native village and priestly studies under Fr. Thomas Palackal at Pallipuram, he was ordained priest in 1829.

Co-opering with Frs. Thomas Palackal and Thomas Porukara, he founded the religious congregation for men, now known as the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (C.M.I.). It was after the death of the senior companions in the foundation that Fr. Kuriakose with the first members, made the religious profession in 1855. In religion he took the name Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family. Starting seven religious houses, besides the first one at Mannanam, in different parts of Malabar, the new congregation made great strides in a spiritual renovation in the Church of Malabar. Seminaries for the education and formation of

clergy, introduction of annual retreats for priests and people, a publishing house for the propagation of catholic doctrine, a house for the dying and destitute, special attention to catechumens, schools for general education, were among the few of various activities under Fr. Kuriakose Elias' leadership. Many valuable improvements in the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, are largely to his credit. In 1866, with the co-operation of Fr. Leopold Beccaro O. C. D., he started the congregation of the Mother of Carmel (C.M.C.), for women. A schism threatened the church in the area in 1861, creating a very critical situation. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, then Vicr General of the Syro-Malabar Church is gratefully remembered and acknowledged by the then and later leaders of the church and by the catholic community in general, for his strenuous fight, strong stance and effective leadership in thwarting Thomas Rochos' intrusion and saving the church in Malabar from schism.

Amidst his diverse and manifold activities he found time and leisure to write a few books, both prose and verse, for the benefit of the faithful. His counsels to the christian families, given in the form of a "testament of a loving father", are universally applicable and are relevant to this day. Essentially a man of prayer and intense charity, he stayed in close communion with the Lord amidst his several religious and social activities permeating his spiritually to all around him, so much so that he was accepted and referred to as a man of God, from his early years.

In 1871, on January 3, Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, after a short, but painful illness, died in the Lord, preserving his baptismal innocence. An exhortation to his spiritual children around the death bed, significantly concluded the final hours.

It is a regular feature that hundreds of devotees flock at his tomb in the St. Joseph's Church, C. M. I.,

monastery, Mannanam, where his mortal remains are buried, and seek his intercession in their needs.

As during his life, so also after the death, his reputation for sanctity was constantly growing among the faithful, so much so that in 1955, at the instance of the late Fr. Maurus C. M. I., then Prior General of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, the Sacred Congregation, then, of the rites, authorized the Bishop of Changanacherry to conduct the informative process regarding the servant of God Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

The Bishop, having collected all the historical documents related to the Servant of God through a commission, inaugurated the informative process in 1958. The process was completed in 1970 and all the documents together with the acts of the process were handed over to the S. Congregation in the same year.

The S. Congregation, having scrutinized the writings of the servant of God, on 13th October 1975, declared **"Nihil Obstat Quominus Ulterius Procedatur"**. The **positio**, prepared under the care of the S. Congregation, was submitted in 1978 and the S. Congregation formally introduced the case on March 15, 1980. On April 7, 1984, Pope John Paul II, happily reigning, solemnly declared the heroic virtues of the Servant of God.

Subsequently, the postulator presented to the Sacred Congregation the case of an instantaneous cure, considered to be wrought through the intercession of the Servant of God, and the S. Congregation, having studied the case through its experts, issued the decree on 9th May 1985, confirming the miracle wrought through the intercession of the venerable Servant of God.

RESUME OF THE LIFE OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD SISTER ALPHONSA MUTTATHUPADATHU

The Servant of God, Sister Alphonsa, was born in the village of Arpukara, near Kudamalur, in Kerala, on the 19th of August 1910, to Joseph Muttathupadathu, a Medical doctor, and to Mary Putukary, excellent christian parents. She was baptised on the 29th of the same month and was given the name Anna, but everyon called her Annakutti.

The family ambient and that of the Syro-Catholics to which she belonged, imbued as it was by a deeply felt and faithfully practised religious sense, impressed itself profoundly in the soul of the Servant of God.

In November 1917 Annakutty received confirmation and first communion and from them on she received the eucharist frequently. If, for reasons beyond her control, she had to omit the saturday or the first friday of the month she became greatly upset. She frequented the elementary school and showed that she had a rather vivacious and acute intelligence: she stood out among her companions for the seriousness and intensity with which she applied herself to her studies or to whatever she was doing. At the age of thirteen years, following local customs, she was promised in marriage by her very own family, while she herself had already felt the great desire to become a religious finding no other way out of the difficult position she was in, the young girl thought of disfiguring a little her more than note worthy appearance: she had read more than once that even the saints did the same. One morning, after a long period of prayers, she approached a burning crater, she suddenly slipped and fell in receiving very serious burns.

Cured, she sought and obtained permission to enter the Clarist tertiaries of Malabar: it was the feast of pentecost 1927. Annakutti was only seventeen years of age

After two years of postulancy, during which she frequented the secondary school, the Servant of God took the religious habit and changed her baptismal name for that of Sister Alphonsa.

In August 1935 she began the noviciate year under the spiritual guidance of a worthy and wise priest. After only two weeks she fell gravely ill: she haemorrhaged from the nose and mouth, she was afflicted with ulcers in various parts of her body, thus causing her incredible pain. Despite this suffering no one in the house was as happy and serene as she: she had taken as a model to imitate the little saint of lisieux.

She made her religious vows on the 12th of August 1936 and immediately left Changanacherry for Bharananganam, where she remained until her death in 1946.

These ten years were marked by the sign of the cross: it has been written that in record to the illness there was sufficient material for a treatise in pathology. She herself said that it seemed as if she had received on her shoulders a part of the cross and that she did everything to carry it with joy, without ever letting others see how she suffered.

Physical ills, slanderous take and displeasures of all sorts tormented her to an incredible degree: one wondered how it was possible for such a fragile person to bear such a heavy trial. To the bishop of Changanacherry, who asked her how she succeeded in passing the never-ending, sleepless nights: she replied simply "I Love".

Love of God and Love of her neighbour, combined with her suffering, elevated her life to sublime heights.

Repeatedly she declared to her bishop that her specific task was that of immolating herself and suffering for the sins of the human race.

In July 1946 her state of health grew worse and she begged her superior to allow her to ask the Lord to grant her the grace of dying, if that was in conformity with his will. She received the last sacraments in a most edifying manner on the 27th July and she asked God for the grace to suffer still more before breathing her last. A moment later she died peacefully.

The sister in the convent and those who knew her were convinced that a saint had died. From that day until today the tomb of the Servant of God has become the focal point for a continuing flow of Pilgrims, which increases as the time passes. The faithful seek her intercession with great confidence and many assert that their prayers have been heard. There have been several sudden cures from incurable diseases.

Only nine years after her death, in 1955, the diocesan processes were opened on the fame of sanctity, on her writings and on the status of "non cultus."

The processes were concluded in 1962.

The decree for the introduction of the cause dates from the 1st of June, 1979. The Apostolic processes on the heroic virtues were carried out in 1980 and 1981 and the Decree of heroic virtue was promulgated on the 9th of November 1984. Finally, the Decree which approved the Miracle, which had been presented for beatification, was promulgated on the 6th of August 1985.

Formula of Beatification

We, accepting the desire expressed by our brothers, Joseph Pawathil, Archbishop of Changanacherry, Joseph

Pallikaparampil, Bishop of Palai by many other brothers in the episcopate, and by many faithful, after having received the opinion of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, do now, declare, with our Apostolic Authority, that the Venerable servants of God, KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA and ALPHONSA MUTTATHUPADATHU, many be called from now on, Blessed, and that their feasts may be celebrated in the place and according to the norms established by law, each year, on the day of their heavenly birth: on January the third, for Kuriakose Elias Chavara, and on July the twenty seventh, for Alphonsa Muttathupadathu.

Nos, vota fratrum nostrorum, Joseph Powathil, Archiepiscopi Changancherriensis, Joseph Pallikaparampil, Episcopi Palaiensis, necnon plurimorum aliorum Fratrum in Episcopatu, multorumque christifidelium, explentes, de Congregationis pro Causis Sanctorum consulto, Auctoritate Nostra Apostolica facultatem facimus, at Venerabiles Servi Dei: KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA et ALPHONSA MUTTATHUPADATHU, Beatorum nomine in posterum appellentur, eorumque festum die ipsorum natali: Kuriakose Eliae Chavara, die tertia Januarii: et Alphosae Muttathupadathu, die vicessima septima Iulii, in locis et modis inur statutis, quotannis celebrari possit.

In nomine+Patris,+et Filli et Spirtus Sancti.

In the names of the+

Father:and of the+ R. Amen.

Son: and of the Holy

Spirit.

R. Amen.

Formula of Thanks

The Ordinaries of Changanachery and of Palai, with all their hearts, thank your Holiness for having deigned today to confer the title of Blessed on the Venerable Servants of God Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Alphonsa Muttathupadathu.

During the unveiling of the pictures of the Blessed and the Veneration of the relics by the Holy Father all the congregation sings (hymn in Malayalam)



BL. FR. CHAVARA, THE SAVIOUR OF HARIJANS

Kerala State, the little India is an integral part of the sub continent India. Its unique geographical position, peculiar physical features, century old foreign trade and contact with Europe and Asia have invested it with a distinct individuality, glory and glamour from ancient times. Thus this land was enjoying a kind of political, cultural and socio-economic isolation and freedom, with a very few exceptions, from the rest of the country. In the part the state had been enjoying a welcome immunity from the political convulsions, cultural upheavals and drastic changes that shook and afflicted the other parts of the sub. cotinent. All the more, Kerala was able to evolve its own way of life and social institutions. Paradoxical, it may seem, that Kerala is more influenced by the west rather than North India.

The people of Kerala followed Dravidian customs of worship which was a mixture of primitive rites and practices. North Indian religions entered Kerala before Christ out Jainism and Buddhism slowly dwindled away due to Arianization. The caste system was foisted on a Casteless society by these Arian immigrants.

In the first century A. D. Christian way of life was introduced by St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus of Nazareth, which was accepted as an indigeneous faith and it made steady progress. The Indians who accepted this new faith and way of life were known as Nazaranies-St. Thomas Christians. The number of these Christians was reinforced by the influx of syrian immigrants. In the course of centuries Christianity made rapid progress in Kerala and the church of St. Thomas became one of the well established institution in this part of the land. The zoal of the western missionaries especially the work of St. Francis Xa.

vier paved the way to the spread and growth of Christianity through out Indian peninsula.

Christianity together with its growth made radical changes in the realm of education, medical service, and socio-cultural activities. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the unique position at present Kerala has among other states of India is mainly due to christianity.

In the 19th century there occurred a social awakening in the North as well as in the South. Fr. Chavara who was born at Kainakary in 1805 was the pioneering spirit of social reform in the South. Fr. Chavara who became a priest in 1829, together with his co-workers started a religious movement at Mannanam in 1831. Until his death in 1871 he had been working for the Christian Bhakti movement and the uplift of the poor and marginals of the society. Even before the birth of social reformers, who are acclaimed as such by the historians, Fr. Chavara began his work vigorously in the fertile soil of Kerala to eradicate untouchability and thus enabling Harijans to become a part and parcel of the main stream of the society.

In the 19th Century Kerala society was not based on the principles of social freedom and equality. The law that prevails in the land was not equalitarian. The penal code was extremely severe and inhuman as far as the lower castes were concerned. Slavery in the primitive form with all its atrocities prevailed in the land even in the beginning of the 19th century. The Janmies had even the power to put them to death without being called to account.

At a time when the women folk of lower castes were not permitted to cover up the upper part of their body. Fr. Chavara wanted to raise the status of women in general. For this purpose they should be educated. He founded a Religious order for women (C. M. C.) to educate girls

irrespective of Caste and Creed and thus help them ascend the social ladder. He wanted all the harijans to go to school, study and equip themselves to be eligible for government services and thus come to the lime-light administration. If we look back we can see that thousands and thousands of girls of lower castes and harijans were educated together with the students of upper Castes in these schools.

Again, he asked to start schools adjacent to every church to make people literate. In these schools, students of all denominations and castes, whether upper or lower, had to be enrolled. Can't we say that this was the first movement in literary Campaign of the people of Kerala.

Elimination of untouchability was the must of the time. Avarnas and untouchables like pulayas, parayas, chandalas and lower caste people were not allowed to come near the Brahmins or other upper classes, to walk in the public street, to enter the places of worship, to go to schools and dress properly. They were considered only as the scum of the society. Fr. Chavara could not agitate against these inhuman acts, because he was a religious and not a politician. Any how he initiated inglorious campaigns for the uplift of the Harijans. He helped them by giving them food, dress and job in many of his monasteries.

He started a sanskrit school at Mannanam, when he wanted the harijans to study the sacred language sitting along with the students of the upper strata of the society. It was a great challenge, it was a revolution. The great champion Iyyankali was not yet born at that time to witness it. He built another school at Arpookara to teach the harijans. The words of R. Venkattaraman, President of India are worth quoting "Fr. Chavara regarded education as a means of uplifting the poor he ensured that all parishes maintained schools as auxiliary to them. Going further, Fr. Chavara threatened to close

down those parishes which failed to comply with his instructions regarding the maintaining of schools. It is remarkable that his schools were open to members of all communities who sought admission including Harijans. Christian missions worked among adivasis, the aboriginals and among the Harijans in a practical implementation of the christian ethics of service. Few people have exemplified this dimension of Indian Christianity as memorably as Fr. Chavara".

Now some many doubt why historians of Kerala left out his name from among the social Reformers of Kerala and champions of harijans in their works? Perhaps it was because he was a Religious Priest, a silement worker whose activities are not affilicated to a political party or Revolutionary movement. His Excellency P. Ramachandran former Governor of Kerala tries to give the answer. "Unlike lesser mortals he did not seak pomp and fame or worldly riches or acclaim".

Fr. Chavara is not only the saviour of the material life of harijans but also of their souls. He saw them as complete human phenomenon and hence wanted to save the whole man of the harijan brethern. Thus he became the "pride not only of Kerala, but of the entire mankind". He awakened the social consciousness of Kerala. His house of charity at Kainakary, which was the first of its kind in the India, is an institution to recine sick, poor and distitute people of all castes and harijans.

History will remember him more than anything else as a man vision who put it into practice what he believed and a great genuine social reformer. Swami Nikhilanan.

di's words are fulfilled in Fr. Chavara, he gives three conditions which are to be fulfilled before a man may aspire to become a genuine social servant. "First, he must feel the suffering of others, second, he must find out right means to alleviate human suffering. Third, he must be totally unselfish. There should not be any motive of personal gain or power behind his social service. A man who sees the Divine spirit in all, can be the true servant of society. To him work is the same as worship".

All his contributions become important and significant, against the background of his time and conditions he lived. Credit goes to Fr. Chavara in the main for the pioneering aspects of his work and his achievements without Precedent. For this generations would hail him as their saviour.

Fr. J. Chirayil

Blessed Chavara - Champain of Faith

The Text of the Homily preached by His Eminence Peter Cardinal Palazzini during the solemn liturgy held in Rome on 15th May 1986.

(Free translation from the original Italian)

"If you wish to have the illumination, be it internal or external, writes Tulasidas (1532-1573), a great mystic of Hinduism, keep the precious light of the name of Rama on the tip of your tongue" (G. K. Handao, Tulsidasa, Calcutta 1964, page 93.)

Cyriac Elias Chavara, priest, co-founder of the Congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, who lived between 1805 and 1871 in Kerala, was faithful to this dictum. He conserved a torch all through his life, not in the Roma, but in the name of God the One and the Three.

His spiritual journey was always illumined by the burning lamp of a living faith, which the Council of Trent Calls, "the beginning of human salvation, the root and foundation of all justification" (Sess. VI, Ch. 8, Ds. 1532). This spirit of faith, characteristic of his spirituality, he had learnt from the very infancy from his well-instructed parents. On the 8th of September, the very year of his birth (1805), his pious mother conducted him to the Marian sanctuary at Vechoor, to dedicate him to the Blessed Mother, a ceremony which our Blessed Kuriakose renewed often during his life, recalling the words of the mother, of Montfortian taste, "Remember always that you are the servant of the Mother of God". From the mother herself the child grasped the truths of faith, which made him aware of the vanity of the values of Hinduism taught in the school which he frequented from the age of five to the age of ten. Our Blessed Kuriakose himself testifies to his

catholic formation which he received at home in the quasi auto-bio-graphical booklet *Atmanuthapam*, which he wrote towards the end of his life, in 1869.

The faith which he learnt from the childhood was a spiritual force all through his life. Once he felt the call of God to be a priest, he persevered in his firm decision; and when his parents and his elder brother Joseph died, although many of his relatives and friends tried to persuade him to return home to continue the line of his family Chavara, he resisted all such temptations and persevered in his vocation.

The same faith rendered him docile and obedient to his superiors. He demonstrated this after the death of Fr. Thomas Porukara (in 1846), when he accepted in the decision of the vicar apostolic that the new institute be associated with the Order of the discalced Carmelites. He saw in this affiliation with the Carmelites an additional sign of link in his devotion to the Mother of God.

The same force of faith and confidence in God was made manifest in our Blessed Kuriakose; when he accepted the Constitutions in spite of its rigour and severe discipline, enforced by the Vicar Apostolic Mgr. Bernardin Baccinelli in 1855.

The faith of Blessed Kuriakose shines especially in the manner in which he combatted the schism of Thomas Rochos and the schismatic attempts of his secretary Antony Thondanatt. Blessed Kuriakose always remained loyal to the vicar apostolic, nominated by Pope Pius IX. In order to oppose the schism more effectively, Msgr. Baccinelli the vicar apostolic nominated him vicar General of the syro-malabarians. In this quality he wrote and printed pastoral letters to confirm the people in their loyalty; he asked for a papal letter. When Mar Thomas Rochos desisted from his schismatic attempts, he took all

possible measures to reconcile him to the Pope and to bring back to ecclesial unity all the separated churches. Pope Pius IX in gratitude sent him a letter of congratulation for all what he did to curb the spread of the schism and to bring the same to an end.

This fight against the schism puts in relief the strong ecclesial character and faith of our Blessed Kuriakose. His obedience to the vicars apostolic who were presiding over the syro-malabarians and his loyalty to them manifest in all his activities and those of his young congregation, have made him a model of true cooperation uniting the apostolate of the hierarchy with that of the religious institutes.

The strong and living faith of our Blessed Kuriakose was illumined and enriched by the supernatural gift of piety. The activity of this gift is evident in his ardent devotion to the Blessed Mother, to the Holy Family and to the Holy Eucharist, which he nurtured all through his life. It was this very same faith which instilled in him the spirit of prayer and an intimate union of friendship with God.

The faith, which was the living force of his life from the age of reason, faith, which is unexceptional from the objective point of view, which subjectively characterizes his whole vision: his mental disposition by which he sees in all things and in all events the work of God, the uninterrupted divine presence which enjoyed, his extraordinary Eucharistic life and his zeal to inculcate the same in others, his ecclesial sense, his love for the unity of all in the one faith, his activity as preacher and publisher, his devotion to the successor of Peter, the promotion of all good works recommended by the ecclesiastical hierarchy to cultivate the faith of the people etc. The concrete actions in which all these different aspects of his faith are incarnated, which are numerous and constant, are found abundantly in his terrestrial life.

The example of such a faith, substantial nourishment of his whole life, is a living example for us, especially at a time when disturbances in the faith, with points creeping also from the scientific side on the contents of faith, are not wanting.

There have also arisen certain theories, according to which the note of faith, nay the stability of the assent would be the mobility of a perennial research. It may be added that an authentic faith need enter into crisis and pass through temptations and as far as possible should be away from a state of rest.

It may be said however that the multitude of objections which stimulate "to revive and reconquer continuously one's own certainty of the christian message, are very desirable" (OR 15-6 January 1979).

Such a dynamic concept of faith derives from a false theory, according to which, faith would be a function of the sentiment of the divine, and the truths, concepts worked out by the intellect would be changeable expressions of the sentiment.

The erroneous point in such a concept stands also in this that the man in continuous search, assumes by way of humility such a disposition of the soul. But such a position is the sign of a subtle pride.

In fact, one who prefers the search for the truth in place of the truth itself, what does he prefer? He prefers the proper ego and the subjective motion and the vital agitation of the ego to the firm adhesion to the immutable truth.

Religion demands the submission of the creature to the creator and teaches that thus submitted the creature finds his satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

The error, according to which one esteems the search for the truth over the possession of the truth itself, is a form of indifferentism towards the truth, as Pope John Paul II has very correctly noted: "Indifferentism towards the truth is to consider more important for the man the search for the truth to possess the truth itself, because this definitely escapes him irremediably" (OR 25 Aug. 1983)

From such an error follows the other that he confuses the respect which owes to every man, whatever be the ideas which he professes with the negation of the existence of the existence of an objective truth.

It is equally erroneous to say that faith consists in a tension of the man towards God and that it subsists independently of what he believes, because there subsists the tension. Such a doctrine too is alien to the tradition of the Church.

It is true that Religion is a disposition of the integral person and not only of the intellect; but the act of faith is an act which the person makes especially through the intellect.

Faith is a truth regarding the man in the genus of knowledge and not simply of a tendency.

The religion is integrated in all the three theological virtues, but its foundation is the faith, not the tension, which is hope. It can very well be admitted that the religion can be considered to be in the genus of a tendency to God! but that it consists, in itself, in a tension, is false.

Nay, the tension is suitable in the greatest degree to the religious experience of Satan, who tends to God with all its force, but not to adore Him but to be Him.

The true note of religion is the suggestion and the principle which it constitutes and the acknowledgement

of the dependence of the creature on the Creator. The principle of the tension, on the other hand, is a principle of autoimposition of independence.

Also on the motives of religious belief there are false affirmations discordant from the doctrine of the church.

It is said, in fact, that the motive of belief is the perfect integration of the human person and the entirely of the satisfaction sought by the man.

This motive is legitimate, but not as the primary and determining motive, because the end of religion is not the satisfaction of man, but the fulfilment of the end of creation, which is God himself.

The end which God assigns to man is justice (Mt. 6,33) that is the adhesion to the divine will, but in this very end which God proposes in assigning to man the justice, and to lead him to the beatihude, is hidden.

Beautitude consists in being perfectly just, according to the words of Christ "Blessed are those who hunger and thlrst for justice they will be satiated (of justice) (Cf. Mat. 5, 6)

Also the foundation of the certainty of faith totally stands outside the subject. This certainty, for the believer, is more unshakeable than all certainties and surpasses the intellegibility of the thing revealed and all historical conditions.

Since the thing revealed is such that the human mind could not attain that nor verify the same, the only possible manner to base this certainty is to receive the truth, to receive that purely without mixing it with some of the chants.

The certainty, in fact, which the believer has, of the dogmas of faith do not rest on the historical arguments and their truth, but on a principle which surpasses every historical eventuality.

To believe, with cathoic faith, is to know most firmly that no arguments already found, or which could be found under the light of reason, prevails against the truth that is believed.

Such was the faith of our Blessed Kuriakose and this was the spirit that filled all his life, as also of intense charity.

His example reminds us that faith is adhesion to the truth not apprehended by the evidence of reason, to which the reason adheres with an assent; but this assent is not the product of a logical necessity of the evidence. It is well based on a supernatural element which is grace.

It reminds us that the motive of faith, on the one side, is the limitation of our intellect (and hence all our sciences are founded on faith) and on the other side, on the authority of the divine word revealed to us, which would not and cannot deceive us.

May the Blessed Kuriakose help us to admire our faith; intercede for the Church that she may preserve intact the purity of our faith.



Thus Spoke Fr. General

(Welcome Speech delivered on the occasion of
the Chavara Celebrations in Rome 15th May 1986)

Your Eminence Cardinal Lourdasamy, Your Excellencies, Rev. Monsignors, Dear Fathers, Sisters, Friends,

I deem it a great privilege to be with you this beautiful evening and to stand before you to extend a warm welcome to this small but hearty assembly. This is a gathering of our friends and well-wishers, of our dear and near ones especially of those who made the beatification of our Founder possible, one way or other. This is a thanksgiving evening. During the divine liturgy we just celebrated, we thanked the Father, ever-loving and never-failing, who deigned to raise two children of the syro-malabar Church to the honours of the altar. The divine liturgy, the Raza we celebrated was a solemn act of praise to God, His loving providence that gave us this great gift, namely our founder Blessed Chavara. Blessed Chavara is a wonderful gift given to the universal Church and to the Indian Church in particular, and especially to our C M I and C M C Congregations. He is not simply gift possibly passed over to us, but a gift to be lived daily in our attitudes and aspirations. We thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth "for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11,36). On this auspicious occasion feelings of gratitude fills my heart and may I request you all to join us, C M Is to thank the Father for whom Blessed Chavara had a tremendous filial devotion.

Bl. Chavara, born on the 10th of February 1805 at Kainakary in Kerala, the southern-most state in Kerala, is not simply a person who lived for 65 years and died in

1871, but a permanent and powerful inspiring force that re-vitalized the Church and society of his time, a living flame that enlightens us today, a living force that enriches the culture and a stimulating spirit that renews the manifold spheres of our daily life. As the Holy Father said at Kottayam on the occasion of his beatification, "he laboured generously for the renewal and enrichment of the christian life. His deep love for Christ filled him with apostolic zeal and made him especially careful to promote the unity of the Church". Blending beautifully the *Dhyana and Karma in his Bhakti*. devotion to the Church, being the continued presence of christ in the world of ours, BI. Chavara to my mind, is an authentic Bhakta an adorer of God and His people, a man of God and man for the people of God. As we are having other papers on BI. Chavara's personality and contributions, I do not want to go into more details. Prophetic and mystic as he was, he is an excellent example of integration between christian and Indian tradition - a vision that all of us are called upon to share, not only in India, but wherever we happen to be.

At the very outset, I mentioned that this is a thanksgiving evening. While we thank the Lord for this ineffable gift, we are bound to be grateful to many others who prepared the presentation of this gift. It was indeed a very gracious gesture from the part of the Holy Father to be kind enough to come to our home-state and raised our Founder and Sr. Alphonsa to the ranks of the Blessed in the great communion of the saints, both children of the flourishing syro-malabar Church. The Indian Church and the CMIs and CMCs in particular are deeply indebted to His Holiness. We are particularly grateful to the Congregation for the cause of Saints; Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Though I do not want to narrate the names, I must make mention of His Eminence Cardinal Rubin, His Eminence Cardinal Caprio, and Monsignor

Giovanni Papa I gratefully recall the services of the late Mar Mathew Kavukatt, Archbishop of Changanacherry, initiated the canonization process, the late Fr. Maurus, the Prior General of the Congregation, the late Fr. Placid Podipara, the first postulator of the cause who did wonderful service in this painstaking process. Let me recall them gratefully.

Let me come to my duty: We are really fortunate indeed to have His Em. Simon Cardinal Lourdasamy as our president today. He is a great friend of the CMLs. He has been all through very kind and considerate to us. We have been associated with His Eminence for more than 20 years. Now we are immensely happy that he is the prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, a Congregation to which we are to turn constantly for guidance and so to say, for everything. I hope His Eminence will assist us live more meaningfully and imaginatively the inspiration that Bl. Chavara is. I am sure His Eminence can and will help the Church of the St. Thomas christians live their identity more authentically and dynamically and help widen our vision. One practical idea that comes to my mind is: Why not a *Mar Thoma Oriental College* in Roma for the priests and religious of this Church where they can stay together, think, search, theologize and plan together? Unity in vision, efficiency in planning, timely evangelization approaches, integration of cultures etc. could be its scope. Such an idea has its own difficulties and limitations indeed. Growth always entails transcending trying difficulties. There was once here a college, called the Malabar College, this ceased to exist. We are confident that Your Eminence will give our Church a new thrust new direction and renewed dynamism. In the name of all gathered here and in my own name, I extend to Your Eminence a hearty welcome.

The Congregation for the cause of saints has been a great source of help and encouragement. Had it not been for the generous cooperation of this Congregation, this great gift would not have been prepared and presented now. It was extremely kind that His Eminence Cardinal Palazzini to have preached the timely homily. We welcome His Eminence very warmly.

Welcome to you one all, who accepting our invitation has come to this gathering to join us in our thanksgiving service.

Let Bl. Chavara the inspiring gift deepen our devotion to Christ and His Church, strengthen our orientation to God and His people and help as blend our love for God and our fellowmen in true Bhakti—devotion of mysticism and action.

Thank you

Fr. Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI

Blessed Chavara: Father of the CMI

**(Presidential Address by His Eminence D. Simon
Card. Lourdusamy Prefect, Congregation
for the Oriental Churches - 15th May 1986)**

I am delighted to be intimately associated with this celebration here in Rome in honour of our **Bl. Kuriakos Elias Chavara**, as I was at Kottayam on the happy occasion of his Beatification by Pope John Paul II.

We have listened to two papers that gave us a glimpse of the personality and contributions of Bl. Chavara. I have very limited studies on Bl. Chavara though I have been gathering in my personal archives, since 35 years, articles and booklets on the life of Fr. Chavara and Sr. Alphonsa, with a "prophetic vision" that they would one day be raised to the honours of the altars. I find him not simply a spiritual personality, but rather a spiritual phenomenon, the living density of a spiritual presence, an expression of an intense love of God and concern for the fellow human beings. Bl. Chavara cannot be pigeonholed into a tiny and limited sphere; his magnificent and magnetic personality pervaded the entire Church, society and culture, a beautiful integration of diversities, a powerful proponent of unity in diversity. In Bl. Chavara we have one who had absorbed and lived in depth the soul of India, an intense interiority in dividing diversities.

I

The Congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate is the continuation and embodiment of the commitments of this blessed personality, who was their founder and the first superior general. In 1831 Bl. Chavara and

the two co-founders together rather initiated a spiritual movement than founding an Institute at Mannanam in Kerala. The CMIs today are being called upon to carry on the same movement with enthusiasm and earnestness, and they do it very commendably, for what I know. Following the footsteps of their founder, they have laid their hands on all spheres of the life and activity of the Church both in India and abroad.

1) Their works of evangelization have been splendid. In the beginning all the monasteries had catechumenates attached to them. It was in 1930 that the CMIs started organized mission work in groups in connection with the re-union movement in Trivandrum and Tiruvalla, and in the diocese of Calicut in the north. In 1962 Holy See entrusted the eparchy of Canada to the care of the Congregation a historic and farsighted step. The Holy See, pleased with the work done by the fathers in Canada, entrusted subsequently 4 other eparchies to their care: Sagar in 1969, Bijnor and Jagdalpur in 1972, and Rajkot in 1977. More than 200 priests and about 200 seminarians of the Congregation, along with the communities of many sisters from different religious congregations, work in these five dioceses of North India today. The CMI fathers have started several mission centres in the South as well; Mysore, Coimbatore, Trivandrum, Kanyakumari etc.

Outside India, members of the Congregation work in Ghana and Kenya in Africa, and Peru in South America. They are getting prepared to work in Madagascar as well.

Feeling the need of specialized training and formation to the personnel working in the mission, the Congregation has started a mission Institute in Bhopal, "Poornodhaya", which has a programme of specialized training for seminary students and catechists who have opted to work in the missions, as well as for priests and sisters who are in active service in the missions.

2) Taking up pastoral works and preaching retreats in the parishes was a primary concern of the Congregation from the very start, which the members continue to this day with great zeal. They also readily render their services to the parishes, where and when they are called for by the bishops. Besides, in recent years, several of their monastery chapels have been formally constituted as parish churches. In 1983 the syro-malabar bishop's conference entrusted to them the pastoral care of the thousands of syro malabarians who are settled in the archdiocese of Bombay.

Liturgy is an important factor of the pastoral ministry. The Congregation at all times has taken interest in the proper liturgical celebrations. Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, at the order of the Vicar Apostolic, codified and arranged the liturgical services of the syro-malabar Church, which continued to be in use for more than a century. In the vernacular, the CMI fathers took the initiative.

3) Seminaries for the right formation of the clergy was always a concern of the Congregation. The founding fathers themselves started the Seminary at Mannanam in 1833. In the course of the years seminaries were started, also attached to the other monasteries of the Congregation.

Dharmaram College in Bangalore, established in 1957, is today the central study house of the Congregation. I was the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Bangalore from 1962 till 1971, and I had the happiness of watching its growth at close quarters and getting keenly interested in its progress. Since 1977, it is a pontifical Institute of Theology and philosophy, which confers degrees in Theology and Philosophy. The Institute is open, also to the diocesan seminarians and to the students of other religious Congregations. Besides the 235 students of the Congregation, there are about 100 students from different dioceses and religious congregations, who today study in the Institute.

In view of the special cultural formation demanded in the mission regions, an Institute of Philosophy, "Darsana Institute", is started in Wardha for the students who are to work in the missions, which works in collaboration with the Dharmaram Pontifical Institute.

The regional inter-diocesan seminary of Bhopal is entrusted to the care of the CMI Congregation.

4) Side by side with formation of the clergy and of the members of the Congregation, *the CMI take interest also in the theological formation of the laity.* The bimonthly Review "Jeevadhara" is a theological publication, which is edited simultaneously in English and Malayalam, and aims at bringing together the catholic scholars for the benefit of the educated society and building up an "Indian theology."

5) Assimilating the spirit of India, in integrating all that is best in other traditions and accepting the invitation of Vatican II (Nostra Aetate 2), *the CMIs have prepared a forum for the meeting of religions through the Centres in Bangalore, Ernakulam, Thodupuzha, Kottayam, Rome etc.*

The "Centre for Indian and inter-religious studies" in Rome, was started on 15th September 1977, and I had the privilege of giving the key-note address at the inaugural function; on 19th March 1984 the Centre had to be transferred to another locality, and again I was invited to bless and inaugurate the new premises. This Centre aims at bringing a more harmonious synthesis of the East and West, as well as that of the Indian traditions and the christian tradition of the Orient. The Centre offers monthly talks on relevant topics in the field of comparative study of world-religions; an annual inter-national seminar, where scholars interested in the study of world religions meet; and a one-week seminar on topics related to Oriental Christianity, under the name "Placid Lectures", in memory of the late Fr. Placid.

6) Following the example of the founding fathers and especially of Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the C M I fathers have always been in the foreground in the field of education. The Congregation runs at present number of schools at all grades, ranging from the kindergarten up to the post-graduate levels; several university colleges, professional and technical institutes, giving facilities for about 60,000 students every year.

The Congregation is in the forefront also to make use of new forms of education, according to the special needs of the people of the locality, giving training to the physically handicapped, to mentally retarded children, and to those who are deaf and dumb, and organizing adult education in various forms of non-formal education.

7) Also in the all-important field of *mass media of communication* the C M I s are rendering a very valuable service. Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara designed a press of his own. This was the first printing press for the catholics in Kerala. He utilized this to propagate the catholic teachings, books of devotion, prayer books, etc. in Malayalam. The C M I Congregation, fully conscious of this heritage, has been keen on publishing books of catholic literature. Today it has 9 printing houses and several publishing houses in different parts of the country. Deepika is a socio-religious and political catholic daily run by the C M I fathers. Karmelakusumam is a monthly which discusses questions facing the common people in their ordinary catholic life; Kudumbadeepam is another monthly which focusses on christian family life; Samarpatha is a quarterly intended especially for religious men and women and discusses questions on spiritual life and ways of christian perfection.

Among the media of communication, the C M I s have not left out arts. Kalabhavan (house of arts) is founded and directed by one of the members of the Congre.

gation, which gives courses in music and produces audio-visual tapes and discs of christian songs and liturgical music. Chethana is a film institute located in Trichur, which has the programme to produce good moral films to build up a better society.

8) The Congregation is very much involved in the socio-cultural apostolate, youth training and humanitarian works. Sharing the Church's mission, the Congregation has opened several social service societies. Kuriakose Elias Service Society in Trichur, Industrial Estates in Kadalundi and Ambhazhakad, Santhigram Welfare Society in Iduki, Samagravikas in Alleppy etc. are just some of the social service societies, which have set up programmes to give trade and jobs to several thousands of unemployed youth in the country.

The C M I movement has been so far praiseworthy, having at present 6 provinces and 3 vtce.provinces and 5 regions. They are about 1500 professed members, of whom 934 are priests, 310 seminarians, 162 novices, and 93 brothers co-operators. They have besides about 500 candidates under training.

Bl. Chavara, in his intense love for the people of God and their development, founded yet another religious Congregation, the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (C. M. C.). This Congregation has 9 provinces and a vice-province. The Congregation, with more than 5000 sisters and 104 novices today, is the largest in India. They have education as their primary apostolate. In recent years, however, they engage in several fields of apostolic activity, especially in charitable and humanitarian services, responding to the needs of the place where they work. They are spread all over India in several dioceses, both latin and oriental, and also abroad in Africa, America, Germany etc.

This short survey would tell us how fruitful has been the spiritual movement Bl. Chavara initiated. Bl. Chavara was primarily a man of the spirit who could see far ahead of the centuries. Divine Spirit, you know, has its internal eye, transparent and transcending and not tied down to time and space. The sons of Bl. Chavara, I hope, will first of all be charged with that Spirit, the immense sight of the internal eye. The same Spirit will open them to be more generous and more imaginative to respond to the needs of the times, a vision Bl. Chavara had in abundance.

The CMI spiritual movement, springs up from the rich experience of the Syro-malabar Church. The God experience their founders had at Mannanam, was a sharing in the apostolic experience of the local Church. Religious consecration, we all know, is especially ecclesial. The CMI spiritual movement is part and parcel of the Syro-malabar Church. I think the CMIs of today have a more responsible job in the Syro-malabar Church. They have to be deeply aware of the identity of the local Church. Blessed with abundance of vocations and competent personnel they have to be more generous and contribute more towards the deepening of the consciousness of the Church and revitalizing it in its diverse spheres. Their Centres of learning both in India and abroad, especially the one in Rome, will hopefully take up serious scientific studies and enhance the growth of the rich ancient Church.

The CMIs have the uniqueness of combining the oriental and the Indian inspirations. Being an indogenous Congregation, they have a tremendous duty to help the Church in its process of incarnating in India. The Church in India has already made some progress, but still a long way to go. The CMIs have to expedite this process. Serious studies are a must in this juncture. Painstaking researches, prudent experimentation, concerted theologizing, etc. are all extremely important today. Bl. Chavara

gave commendable leadership in seminary training. A theological training that suits India is to be rethought a training that takes into account the Indian religious heritage, thought categories, social reality, political and cultural situation. The CMI Congregation can and must contribute in this important field.

I feel it is high time that the form and style of religious life in India be more seriously discussed and made suited to the soul of India. India needs Indian form of religious life, more contemplation minded, ashram-type, and simple in life style. It is a subject that needs more praying together, seeking together and sharing together. An indigenous Congregation like the CMI, can do a lot in this important area.

Bl. Chavara's love for the destitute and deprived must inspire the CMIs more today. The staring social reality of India in particular will dictate their life-style and fill their prayer sessions.

Imitating Bl. Chavara, the CMIs today have to be more mystical in mental make-up, more prophetic in steps, more open in their outlook, more committed to the Church in India and out side, more people-oriented in their approach.

I have shared with you some of my aspirations to which the CMIs may or may not agree. I pray the Bl. Chavara to help us understand their role rightly today.

Blessed Chavara and the Kerala Church

(Paper Presented by Rev. Dr. Thomas Aykara,
C. M. I. on the occasion of the Chavara Cele-
brations in Rome on 15th May 1986)

*Your Eminence, Excellencies, Very Rev. Fr. Prior General, Mon-
signori, Fathers, Sisters and Friends.*

On the occasion of this wonderful thanksgiving evening I am extremely happy and feel privileged to speak a few words on the contributions of Blessed Kuria-kose Elias Chavara towards the well being and renewal of the Church in Kerala. Professor Pathrapankal has given us a beautiful sketch of BI. Chavara's inspiring personality and of his multidimensional life, a life that can by no means be encapsuled in a restricted region or contained in a limited time. Richly filled with an intense God-experience, BI. Chavara's life was constantly Transcendence-Oriented and consequently transcending always what is finite and human; deeply committed to the concerns of his fellow human beings, especially the poor and the weaker ones, he toiled unceasingly for their integral well being, spiritual, intellectual and cultural. BI. Chavara, our founder was a charismatic person who was intensely involved in the day to day varying needs of the people of God, and at the same time constantly united with the loving Father, a father, who is up above and away, disinterested and detached from us, but a Father whose wonderful providence takes care of us so amazingly. A little child's utter confidence in his father's arms was a strong feeling that filled our Founder's life all through. Confidence, we know from psychological disciplines of today, is the net result of several commendable qualities and attitudes' such as love, recognition, encouragement, sense of belonging and community, mutual trust and quite

a few similar attitudes that contribute towards the growth of an integrated personality. The root of BI. Chavara's inspiring integration was his intense love for his everlasting Father and his unfailing trust in the loving divine providence.

I do not want to go into more details of his personality as we have already heard from Prof. Pathrapankal. The purpose of this short expose is to present a summary of BI. Chavara's contributions towards the building and renewing of the people of God. He was a man of God constantly committed to the people of God. In true sense BI. Chavara was a son of the Church as St. Theresa of Avila so proudly said.

Time after time, God in his inscrutable providence sends great men with special charisms to meet the needs of the Church. St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Dominic, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul are only a few of them. The Syro-Malabar Church of the 19th century also had a charismatic leader in the person of BI. Chavara. He was a man sent by God to save his Church in Kerala from a great danger of schism and also to bring about a spiritual renewal in the life of the clergy as well as that of the laity.

The history and growth of the Church in Kerala would have been much different from what it is today, if BI. Chavara and his confreres did not in the providence appear on the scene at that critical juncture. BI. Chavara rose imaginatively and prophetically to the occasion is the most important factor. Most of us constantly are in the process of confronting critical occasions. Short sighted in outlook and shallow in God experiences often as we are, we fail to rise to the occasion. Such occasions draw us and we do not outgrow them. BI. Chavara is an excellent example of an authentic son of the Church who championed her cause at the cost of everything.

The unique example of his unfailing loyalty to and love for the Church is his fight against the Rochosian schism. The Syro-Malabarians of that time in general had a dislike for the European missionaries on account of their disappointing experiences. They were yearning for a bishop of their own rite. It was at this opportune time Rochos arrived in Kerala, but not with the necessary authorisation of the Holy See. Unauthorised though Rochos was he could succeed in winning a considerable following. Bl. Chavara's powerful leadership in fighting this schism played a central role in the history of the Kerala Church. It was Chavara's unyielding and strong resistance to Rochos that forced him to leave Malabar.

Vicar Apostolic Bernardin Baccinalli's letter to the Prefect of Propaganda Fide amply illustrates Bl. Chavara's charismatic leadership and leading qualities. Let me quote:

"In these circumstances I have decided with the counsel of my missionary confreres to appoint as my Vicar General for the Syrians, the senior most of the Tertiary priests who is the Prior of all the monasteries, and is the chief and head of the whole Congregation, a man truly christian, virtuous most learned in the Syriac language and who has shown himself in these circumstances by deeds most attached to the Catholic religion and to the HolySee, so much so that the revolutionaries the intruders and the others on his side, even up to Bagdad, have tried very much, used every art and cunning to the extent of offering to consecrate him bishop to get him over to their side. If they would have been able to get him, all would have followed him, since he enjoys with all great esteem, reverence and authority. My thought and request to Your Eminence is that, if it is judged convenient and if it is possible, to consecrate him co-adjutor bishop end of the quote.

Bl. Chavara was the unquestioned leader of the Malabar Catholics of his time, their unconsecrated bishop. His

loyalty to the Holy See was unconditional and absolute that no one could shake his deep dedication to and respect for the Holy Father and his sense of unity of the Church. He never yielded to the temptation for power and position. He refused outrightly the offer to episcopate by Rochos and his group. Even his appointment as Vicar General was accepted only under the order of obedience from his ecclesiastical superiors. The above quoted letter continues: "Only I must warn that the said person has the simple vow of humility and even if had not taken that vow he would not accept such a character and dignity without an order as I had to give him accept to be the Vicar General". End of the quote.

His leadership was a spiritual leadership, a leadership of unselfish services. His leadership quality is also evident from the fact that he organized the new religious community for men and obtained the recognition of the Church, and established seven monasteries several seminaries and a religious institute for women, the present CMI and CMC Bl. Chavara know very well that the well being and development of the church in Kerala depended very much on the quality of priests and religious who serve the Church. Hence he concentrated very much on the formation of clergy and religious.

Bl. Chavara was a man of God, lived for the people of God. His constant concern was to revitalise the Church. The most important means he used to renew the spiritual life of the people of God were retreats and sunday sermons. He understood in depth the power of the Word of God to change the hearts of men. He stored his energy from the same Word of God and transmitted the same. He used to send his confreres to different parishes of the Syro-Malabar Church and preached about 30 retreats a year, and each retreat was, as a rule, followed by the canonical visitation of the hierarchy. This gave a new life to Church.

Sunday sermons and homilies were another means he used to renew the Church. At that time homilies were not at all common. But Bl. Chavara understood the Word of God as integral part of the divine liturgy and insisted very much on Sunday sermons. The devotion of 40 hours adoration started by him also helped to revitalise the Church.

Bl. Chavara foresaw the importance of the publications for the renewal and progress of the Church. Till his time there were no books on spiritual subjects in Malayalam. The Catholic community did not have a printing press. He installed the first catholic Press at Mannanam, where from spread spiritual books and other publications in plenty including the first Catholic daily in India, Deepika which celebrates its centenary next year, in 1987. His prophetic foresight is fantastic. Bl. Chavara himself was a good writer and an eloquent preacher.

Bl. Chavara concentrated not only on the spiritual renewal of the people. He foresaw the necessity of imparting education to the Catholic community that was very much backward at that time. He rightly understood that education means human development. In 1846 he started a Sanskrit school at Mannanam and in 1865 he sent a circular to all the churches of Syro-Malabar Rite, in his capacity as Vicar General, ordering to open schools attached to every church under the penalty of interdicts. He was determined and deep in his conviction.

Bl. Chavara's intense love for God found its expression in the acts of charity towards the poor and the low castes. "The day on which you do not do some help to others will not be counted in the days of life", he used to say. The home for the aged he started at Kainakary is a monument of his love for the poor and the forsaken.

Bl. Chavara had intimate relationship with his faithful. His manifold achievements were the result of the

generous co-operation he received always from the part of the laity. His concern's were the community's concerns, and the community was concerned with his concerns. A good pastor always lives with his people and for his people. Bl. Chavara was such a shepherd, always with and for his flock.

Conclusion

Bl. Chavara loved the Church as his own Mother and was always ready to die for her. Being a man of the Spirit he had a foresight and a vision to transcend time. Deeply immersed in God-experience and constantly strengthened by the Word of God as he was, he had the courage and confidence to take extraordinary steps in his days, steps ordinary, diffident people do not dare to take. He lived for the people of God, so they followed him unreservedly.

Let Bl. Chavara's death in God-experience, strength from the Word of God, his love for the loyalty to the Syro-Malabar Church and the Universal Church, and his un-failing concern for the people of God inspire and encourage us in the daily steps we take. Let his personality be a powerful presence to us, a source of strength for wider vision and deeper mission.

Thanking you,

Fr. Thomas Aykara, C. M. I.

The Personality of Blessed Chavara

(Paper presented by Rev. Dr. J. Pathrapankal
C. M. I. on the occasion of the Chavara Celebration
in Rome on 15th May 1986).

A characteristic note of human society is that it grows up or is destroyed through the role played by certain individuals during the course of its history. This is true of social, political and religious leaders all over the world. Whereas a Francis of Assisi is responsible for the birth and growth of a dynamic spiritual movement in the church during the 13th century, Adolf Hitler is responsible for the total destruction of the world order in the 20th century through his political ambition and misguided philosophy. It is the vision of life such people held which ultimately conditioned the kind of role they played in the human society either to its growth or to its destruction. Posterity looks back to these persons either with gratitude or with hatred, depending on the kind of contribution they made for the progress and well being of human society at large.

Another important characteristic of our society is that we are all very slow in understanding and appreciating the significance of the role that was played by great personalities. The honour and esteem which Mahatma Gandhi receives today all over the world is typical example of this attitude of ours. A scientist theologian, Pere Teilhard de Chardin, was considered almost as a heretic, when he was alive during the first half of this century. But now his theology is dominating Catholic theology so much so that the pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world has to a very great extent its inspiration and orientation from the teleological and cosmic thinking of this great theologian.

When I think of B.I. Chavara and see the kind of honour and admiration he gets today more than a century after his death, I feel that the same is true about him as well. It is not only that the society of his time did not fully understand the role played by him during the 19th century in the history of the church in Kerala; we have been all very much slow in appreciating the many contributions he made to the church in India, especially to the church in Kerala. I think it is also partly on account of a certain inherited inferiority complex that is probably part of the mental make up of decolonialised countries, where people have too little respect for their own leaders and thinkers are too eager to recognise and appreciate realities and persons belonging to other social and cultural environments. However, it is heartening and encouraging to see that, of late, we have started thinking and reflecting for ourselves, and we have also begun to appreciate our cultural and religious identity as something contributing to the total well-being and growth of the human society. It is within the larger frame-work of this self-awareness and self-respect that I would like to say something about the personality of B.I. Chavara as a great leader of the church in the 19th century.

When people speak of B.I. Chavara, it is customary to enumerate his qualities, his many achievements, his many undertakings in pastoral and social realms, such as education, press apostolate etc. To my mind, B.I. Chavara was more than anything else, a prophet of his time, and a prophet for all times. In fact, it was his prophetic personality which made him what he was then, and what he is today. The prophets of the OT, When they carried out their ministry were no more than ordinary persons, and sometimes they were discredited for their enthusiasm for religious values. Some of them were seen as 'trouble makers' by a society that was given

to religious indifference. But later generations began to study the role they played for the good of the society. Their oracles were preserved and codified, and so we have in the prophetic books one of the richest contribution of OT theology. Now the prophets of the OT are seen as the true defenders of the Hebrew religion, a role which they played not on account of the official religion controlled by the Kings and the priests, but in spite of them, though they were the ones supposed to be the true leaders and defenders of the covenant religion of Israel.

When we try to understand the prophetic personality of BI. Chavara, I want to start with the very meaning of the word 'prophet'. A prophet for many of us is a 'fore-teller'. This is not what a prophet is, at least, in essence. The Greek word 'prophetes' is the translation of the Hebrew 'Nabi' and the meaning of it is either 'one who is called' or one who calls'. Hence a prophet is one who is called by God or one who calls in the name of God. What is essential here is the God-Perspective of the prophetic personality. His role is not a hereditary one as was the case of the kings and the priests. Rather it was the result of a direct intervention of God by which certain individuals were directly called and were asked to speak in the name of God. Theirs was a call and a mission at the same time. They were called in order to be sent. BI. Chavara was a prophet of this kind, a man who was called and a man who was sent into a society to speak and work in the name of God. As called at a very young age, BI. Chavara had to start his mission at a very young age, and thanks to the awareness he had of his task and responsibilities, he was faithful to the call he received.

A prophet has three major qualities which would like to analyse and see how all of them have been very well realized in the person of BI. Chavara. The three major qualities of the prophets of the OT were:

- a) Close intimacy with God
- b) Sense of history
- c) Total involvement in the destiny of the people

a) Close intimacy with God

All the genuine prophets of the O T had a profound intimacy with God. They always remained on the side of God and evaluated things from a God-perspective. For them every thing was derived from God and everything was destined to God. They had no secular understanding of the world, for them the whole world moved in a divine milieu.

This God-perspective of the prophetic personality was very often brought out in the very names the prophets bore. Thus Elijah means 'Yahweh is El'; Hosea means 'Yahweh is salvation'. The baptismal name of Bl. Chavara was Kuriakose, which means in Greek 'one who belongs to the Lord'. He was one who pertained to the Lord of the New Covenant and from his writing we know that he kept up that union with Christ throughout his life. It is this sense of belonging to the Lord that prompted him to work so hard for his church.

b) Sense of history

The second major quality of a prophet of the OT was his sense of history. By the word 'history' I do not mean the record of the past. Rather 'history' means the dynamic process of interaction between the past, present and the future. Every moment we live through very soon becomes a reality of the past, preparing itself for the present and opening itself up to the future. This interplay and interaction between the past, present and future make history one of the most important realities for the progress of humanity. What is absolutely important is that we should all develop a 'sense of history', a certain sense

having the capacity to see the present in the light of the past and in relation to the future. In our age of pragmatism, many people do not have this sense of history and it is a real tragedy of our times.

The prophets of the OT were characterised by their tremendous capacity to see and understand the past, present and future in their relatedness. They had their *faith in the past, their love for the present and their hope about the future*. Their faith in the past enabled them to see the past as something precious, as something created and guided by God. Their love for the present compelled them to critically evaluate it in the light of the past. In this they had to condemn many things which were not in tune with the ideals of an authentic community. They had to condemn the externalism in the cult, the practice of social injustice and the over-all break-down of the covenant religiosity. For this the prophets were disliked and often persecuted by the people as well as by the official religion. But their love for the present made them bold to face such oppositions. They never practised opportunism, they were never prepared to make compromises on vital issues. Rather they were prepared to stand on the side of God and suffer with the assurance that God was with them.

This authentic stand in the present was possible for them precisely because of their hope about the future. The future is that which is born out of the present. It is shaped by the present. But for the prophets, God is the author of the future and we can have only optimism about it. They did what they could to make that future more in tune with God's plan about his people. In other words, they were not onlookers of the future. They were collaborators, doing what they could and leaving the rest to to God for him to act in his good time.

Looking at what Bl. Chavara did for the church and his people in Kerala during the 19th Century, one could very well say that he had this profound sense of history. He knew only too well that the church in that part of India had an authentic apostolic tradition and a genuine spiritual wealth which got blurred and confused through the historical vicissitudes of the 16th and 17th centuries after the arrival of the Portuguese. The Kerala church was in need of a renewal and revitalization. The clergy was in need of an updating. Christian families had to be renewed from within. Bl. Chavara took up the challenge and did whatever he could to bring about a lasting renewal of the church in Kerala.

More than anything else, it was the Rochosian schism which revealed the real prophetic role of Bl. Chavara. Though he was fully aware of the need and beauty of maintaining the identity of the St. Thomas Christians and their rite, for which a bishop of their own rite was the ideal, he was more concerned about keeping the unity of the church under the Roman Pontiff than falling a victim to the thrill and enthusiasm that was created in Kerala through the arrival of Thomas Rochos. It was in his fight against this schismatic bishop that Bl. Chavara proved his real zeal for the church, something similar to the fight of prophet Elijah against the Cananite gods. Bl. Chavara gave more importance to universal values and was ready to forgo particular interests for the sake of common good. This is a lesson which all of us today have to learn from Bl. Chavara, especially at a time when there is so much energy spent on exercising and establishing identity at various levels.

The prophetic vision of Bl. Chavara enabled him to relate himself to all the various aspects of the life of the Christian community and to find out ways and means for educating and revitalising it from within. His pastoral

vision was so comprehensive that no realm of christian life was left out in his all-embracing commitment to transform the society. Thereby he tried to restore the authenticity of an ancient church in matters of discipline, worship and spirituality. Through this he expected to create a better christian community, a better clergy, better christian families and a better church. If today about 70% of the vocation to priestly and religious life in India is from among the St. Thomas Christians, it is because of the renewal of the christian families Bl. Chavara accomplished in the 19th century.

c) Total involvement in the destiny of the people

The third characteristic of the prophets of the OT was their total involvement in the destiny of the people. This is something that resulted from their sense of history. The prophets were not only spiritual leaders of the people in the restricted meaning of the term. They were concerned with every aspect of the life of the people. Thus prophet Amos fought against the social injustice in the Northern kingdom. Prophets Micah and Isaiah did the same. Any taking refuge in the externalism of the cult was for them a mockery. Isaiah pleaded for justice to be practised which consisted in "correcting oppression, defending the fatherless and pleading for the widow" (Is 1:17). Bl. Chavara knew only too well that the progress of a community greatly depends on the growth from within and assistance from outside. For the former he launched a process of education at various levels, such as theological education and formation of the clergy, education of the children through schools attached to all parishes. For the latter he started the medium of press apostolate, to accomplish which he had to work very hard. The Ministry of the Word of God was another important means through which Bl. Chavara tried to help the people of God to authentic christians.

The Religious Communities which Bl. Chavara founded both of men and of women, were to take up this prophetic task of building up the Kingdom of God, not only in the tiny geographical boundaries of Malabar but also throughout India and as far as possible in other parts of the world. For us living during the latter part of the 20th century all what Bl. Chavara planned for a meaningful apostolic community is self understood. But the fact that more than a century ago he launched all these apostolic activities means nothing less than a profound prophetic vision and a radical commitment to the cause which he had set before him. While remaining grateful to him for all what he has done and has bequeathed to us, we should all take up the challenge of his vision and mission as something precious.

In the Book of Numbers we read the story of Moses exclaiming before his people: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" (Num 11:29). It would also be the prayer of Bl. Chavara as he now sees his sons and daughters spread far and wide, that they be all prophets like him, that they all hold up a prophetic vision and carry out a prophetic mission in the world of today, that they think and act in the present with a sense of the past and a vision into the future, that they do not remain satisfied with the given and the established, but rather that they transcend the limitations of the present to live into the future, that they develop a broad vision about their mission and become available every where and to every one in this vast world to transform it into the Kingdom of God.

H. E. Cardinal Lourdusamy

(Delivered by Father General at Prior General's House, on 2nd August 1987, on the occasion of the visit of His Emience Simon Cardinal Lourdusamy, Prefect, Congregation for the Oriental Churches.)

Your Eminence Simon Cardinal Lourdusamy, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Your Grace, Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara, and my Confreres,

1. Introduction

It is indeed my singular privilege this fine morning, so welcome most sincerely Your Eminence to our midst in the CMI Prior General's House, on this auspicious occasion of your first official visit to the Church of St. Thomas Christians in India. This visit is all the more welcome and opportune, as this year happens to be the Silver Jubilee of the establishment of the first mission territory, namely the eparchy of Chanda. And this is also your episcopal Silver Jubilee year. Our happiness is doubled, as Your Eminence's visit comes in the wake of the recent momentous and farsighted letter of the Holy Father concerning the inter ritual relations, in view of the Evangelization of India.

The CMIs are no strangers to Your Eminence. As the Archbishop of Bangalore, you have been in constant contact with us in Dharmaram College. I recall with gratitude your most cordial relationship and paternal care for the growth and development of our Centre in Rome. I am told that you had given the freedom to the Superior of our house in Rome to contact you at any time till 2.00 a. m. on any day. It was your loving concern for us that prompted you to find time to be with us and to give the key-note ad-

dress for the inauguration of the Centre in Rome in 1977 and to give the presidential address on 15th May 1986 on the occasion of the Bl. Chavara celebrations in Rome. We are happy and proud to have Your Eminence, a noble son of India, as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

2. Our Charism and Identity

Our Congregation is the historical embodiment of the aspirations to religious life on the part of our holy founders Fr. Thomas Palackal, Fr. Thomas Porukkara and Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Bro. Jacob Kanianthara shared their inspiration and assisted them in the foundation. It is a spiritual movement initiated by our founders, which we are called upon to carry on and develop, taking in to consideration the needs of the Church and signs of the times. The Congregation has been aware of the centrality of its ecclesial dimension. Deeply fervent and spirit-filled persons like Blessed Chavara and others have played a leading role in the Church of their times. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the history of the Chnrch of St. Thomas Christians in India in the 19th century is almost identified with the history of the CMI congregation of that period.

3. Our Missionary Thrust

The Missionary ideals and aspirations of the congregation were such that Bl. Chavara our co-founder wrote in his last testament: "God has willed the foundation of this Congregation for the salvation of our brethren". The work of evangelization in the form of individual conversion was undertaken from the very beginning. It became systematically organized later catechumenates were established with every monastery. Another important dimension of the mission thrust in the first half of the present century focussed on the re-union of Jacobites and other separated brethren. Our Fathers started work in this direction.

After the reunion of Archbishop Mar Ivanious and Bishop Mar Theophilus in 1930, our father continued the movement under the auspices of the Malankara Church. A similar missionary zeal prompted many of our fathers to go and work among the large number of emigrants to the north of Kerala in the present dioceses of Tellicherry, Mananthavady and Thamarasserry.

4. Mission outside Kerala

If mission work upto the 1940s was concentrated in and around Kerala, it took a new turn in 1950s. At the invitation of Mgr. Severin, Bishop of Raigarh-Ambikapur, the first batch of our missionaries was sent to that Mission. Around the same period, some of our fathers were sent to the Middle East for work among the Chaldean Catholics, at the suggestion of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. These early missionary experiences prepared our Congregation for work on a larger scale outside Kerala, when the opportunity presented itself.

The Oriental Congregation took the unprecedented step in 1962 by entrusting the first mission territory proper—the eparchy of Chanda—to the CMI Congregation for work. Our Congregation started several mission centres in South India as well. The vast regions of Mysore and Coimbatore, extensive areas in Trivandrum, Kanyakumari and High Ranges, are the main territories of the South Indian Mission.

Though our mission work is mainly concentrated in our motherland, India, with its teeming millions of non-Christian population, we could not resist the pressing invitations of missionary bishops from various developing countries. Thus, as a symbol of our ardent desire and deep commitment to the missions, some of our members are working in Kenya and Ghana in Africa, in Madagascar and in Peru in South America.

Besides our main thrust in the mission work, we are also actively engaged in other fields of apostolates such as education, press, theological training of the clergy and laity, social apostolate and the like. Special mention must be made here of Deepika daily, centenary celebrations of which were inaugurated by the Holy Father in Kottayam in February 1986.

5. Vocations

During the past one hundred and fifty six years, the Congregation, in the Providence of God, has grown from the tiny mustard seed planted on the beautiful hillock of Mannanam to a mighty trees spreading its branches all over India and abroad. The three founding fathers in 1831, the eleven first professed in 1855, today our community has grown to six Bishops, 918 Priests, four permanent deacons, 80 brothers, 393 scholastics, 58 Novicea, 91 postulants and 413 aspirants. May I take this opportunity to thank Your Eminence for helping us maintain our students inspite of your many limitations.

6. Theological Training

The charism of the founding fathers, reflected in starting seminaries for priestly training, is continued to this day with earnestness and enthusiasm. Dharmaram College Bangalore started in 1957 has by now blossomed into a Pontifical Athanaeum with faculties of the theology and Philosophy, authorized to confer degrees up to doctorate. Its portals are wide open not only to the members of the CMI Congregation, but also to others including the laity. Out of the 364 students on the rolls about 20 are non-CMIs.

Darsana, our institute of Philosophy in Wardha is trying to evolve a curriculum of philosophy in touch with the living realities of the mission regions of North India in

a spirit of action and reflection and dialogue with the people, their religion and culture, thought forms and art. Poornodaya, our mission Institute in Bhopal is engaged both in giving orientation and training to the missionary personnel and doing serious research on the various aspects of the Mission. At the request of the Bishops of the Madhya Pradesh, we have also taken charge of the M. P. Regional Theologate at Ashta.

7. Theology for the Laity

We have been trying to enhance the role of the laity in the Church by enlightening the laity with religious and theological education through some of our publications and periodicals. Karmala Kusumam, Kudumba Deepam Jeevadhara, CMI Mission etc. are trying to do this at different levels.

8. Inter-religious Dialogue

From the beginning of our contact with the vast North Indian Mission we began to realize the need for Inter-religious dialogue for the success of our mission in a pluralistic society like India. Our fathers took active participation in the early stages of such dialogues in India. The Centre for the study of World Religions in Dharmaram College, and the number of dialogue and cultural centres run by our fathers in Coimbatore Trichur, Alwaye, Ernakulam, Thodupuzha, Kottayam etc. are signs of this growing thrust in the mission. The Holy Father's emphasis in his addresses made in India in February 1986 on inter-religious dialogue has been a great encouragement to all concerned.

9. Village apostolate

Of late, we are witnessing a new movement in the missions, namely a continuous and living dialogue with the rural masses of India. More and more mission.

aries are trying to discover the Indian Soul in the lives and aspiration of the rural population. Sharing their life-style of simplicity they are trying to bring the good news of integral liberation through the sacrificial love and concern of Jesus for the poor.

10. Thanks

On this auspicious occasion, I am very happy, indeed, to place on record the paternal solitudes and loving concern the Oriental Congregation has been showing to us at all times. The legendary love of His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant deserves special mention. Within a very short time Your Eminence has already become aware of my problems and concerns of the Oriental Churches in India and helped the Holy Father immensely to find solutions to most of them.

11. Conclusion

I am most grateful to Your Eminence for having come over here and paid this most cordial visit. We really wanted to take you to all our Provinces and study houses. But your pressing and crowded schedule does not permit it this time. In the name of the entire CMI Congregation I once again welcome you most cordially and thank you most sincerely. May the good Lord shower his choicest blessings on You, giving you good health and long life enabling Your Eminence to help solve the various problems of the Syro-Malabar Church and lead it to full growth is my prayer.

Thank you

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"You CMIs Are A Miniature Church"
"You Are Doing Wonderful Things"

Simon Cardinal Lourdusamy

(Transcript from the speech at Prior General's House,
August 2, 1987 - Editor)

Very Rev. Fr. Prior General, Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

The problem is where to begin and where to end. First of all I wish to thank the entire community, particularly Fr. Prior General for the invitation extended to me to come over here, this fine morning. We had spiritual feeding in the church, here material feeding which has been alround. Then we also had the intellectual feeding in the report of the Prior General. I would say it is not only intectual but alo pastoral and missionary.

I wonder whether you are already bidding me farewell by offering these gifts!... This boat (reference is to the snake boat presented to the Cardinal) may mean either that Lourdusamy go back to Rome in this boat or that all the gifts I am going to receive these days could be shipped to Rome in this boat !! ... This is just to appreciate in my own way your thoughtfulness for me.

My Association with the CMIs

As I said in the chapel, I feel quite at home with you CMIs. I recall my close association with you starting from my student days. In 1953 I was on my way to Rome for higher studies, and when I got into the boat at Bombay I meet to Carmelite Fathers - Fr. Abel and Fr. Antony (senior) who is now in Dharmaram. We three sailed

together. I also think of Fr. Placid to whom I used to go for some guidance both spiritual and intellectual. When I came back to India. I was assigned to Bangalore and I had very close association with Dharma-ram, with Fr. Canisius who was the only Scripture Scholar of India at that time; with the four generations of Prior Generals of your Congregation- Fr. Maurus, Fr. Canisius, Fr. Theobold, Fr. Aykara and now Fr. Vijay Anand. I know also many of your Fathers-Provincials, Procurator Generals at Rome. I see old faces here. I found it easy to strike a common cord with your Fathers ... Now when I left Rome I persuaded people not to come to see me off. But Fr. Eustace was there with a group. He was keen to see me off. When I landed in Bombay your Fr. James Orum-pakatt was with me always with Fr. Chittilappally and others. Thus the CMIs have always surrounded me lavished me with their love, care and affection.

Now it was in 1952 that the first mission exarchate of Chanda was started. I was in Bangalore at that time, made bishop in the same year and Bishop Januarius goes to Chanda as Exarch in the same year to start from scratch. Now he has developed that area in a very wonderful way, with 25.30 thousand Catholics. Chanda is celebrating its silver jubilee and I am celebrating my silver jubilee. By the way, thank you for the offerings, greetings and prayers.

Bishop Januarius is insisting that I come for the silver jubilee celebrations and should visit all the mission dioceses in the north. He says, "people in the missions are important and we need a special treatment". This I am going to respect. But not this year. I will come some time later.

Though I was working in the Propaganda, I continue my contact with the C M I fathers in Rome.

Whenever the bishops and priests come to Rome, they come to meet me in the Propaganda, and thus we are in close contact.

You are a Miniature Church

Coming to your activities, I don't want to repeat what Fr. Prior General said. You have done wonderful things. Your activities have extended beyond Kerala, all parts of India, and have gone all over the world—America, Africa, Madagascar—as missionaries. Often I quote C M I example for your wonderful missionary work. In India alone now there are five eparchies—and the proportion is very high. But then God has blessed you with a number of Vocations. How many countries, how many congregations in the world can boast themselves of such a number of Vocations! We have to be thankful for this. It is really encouraging for the Church, that the C M Is are thriving. I think, the abbreviation C M I can be given another expansion—Carmelite Missionaries of India. I think, I am justified in saying this—after the beatification of Blessed Chavara, a man of prophetic vision whose zeal you inherit. He is not only a saint, a man who saw far ahead, a prophet. He himself, in his life time covered all the sectors of the Church's life. You are following in all fields of apostolates, education, mass media of communication, missionary endeavour, social service, cultural centres etc. One can enumerate all fields of such activities where you are active—a miniature church.

You are Loyal

Another thing I would like to compliment you on this occasion is your close association with the local bishops. You are loyal to them. His Grace Antony Padiyara is here. You are in close contact with him. He is happy to come

here. This shows his attachment to you. This could be said of other bishops too. I don't think I ever heard any complaint from any bishop about you. The Bishops are very happy with your close collaboration and with your attitude towards them. This is the ideal of living and working, not for our own satisfaction, but for the general good of the church and good of the people whom we serve irrespective of caste and creed, covering not only members of the Church. Look at the missions. Who are the people who benefit? Most of them are non-Christians. You go and penetrate all sections bring them the message of Christ in the name of the Church.

May God bless each and every one of you.



APPENDIX

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

The Sertant 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 bacame 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 some what 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 to 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 left 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

"Oneday 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 am 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 my 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. It 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 to making 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 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. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and we began to pray to him for the correction of the deformity of the feet of Joseph. My daughter Annakutty (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 Annakutty. 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 Annakutty 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 oneday 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 Annakutty, 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, oneday 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, Thomas Mathew,
Malabar, Penneparampil
November 10, 1960.

6. Four years ago I received a favour through the intercession of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias Since the I was very much attached to him. Two years age, my maternal uncle Rev. Fr. Antony Thatchuparampil fell sick. X-ray tests revealed tuberculosis; one lung was completely affected and the other about 15% gone. Immediately, I took a resolution "If my uncle, who is beyond human redress be cured through the intercession of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias, then we would both go to the place where his revered remains are interred and each offer a High Mass." After the resolution was taken, I started to pray to him specially. Within a week sings of relief appeared without much mentionable attention or treatment. He is fully recovered now. So according to our resolution we went to the Carmelite Monastery at Mannanam and offered High Mass.

3-12-'46

Fr. Joseph, Paranilam.

7 All the previous confinements of my wife were very difficult and dangerous. Owing to a novena in honour of Fr. Cyriac Elias, this time there was no difficulty whatever. I acknowledge this gratefully.

Koratty,
11.1.'42

Ouseph Pylo, Thekkenath.

8. I have received a big favour through the intercession of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias, Chavara. I used to vomit and develop chest pain if I took any food. I was confined to the bed for about one year. Treatments of various kinds gave me no relief. It was the other way often. In the end the whole community sought the mediation of Fr. Chavara, and started a novena. I was worse during the novena days. But on the nineth day I was alright. I could kneel for the whole time of Mass. From my meagre wheat kanji diet, I could take full rice meal. I did not feel sick at all. I could attend to my normal duty also. Grateful thanks to Fr. Chavara for the cure of my disease considered even incurable.

23.12.'40.

Sr. Bartholomew, T. O. C. D.

9. My elder brother was troubled with insanity. He did not improve under varied treatments. Then we sought the intercession of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara through a novena. As a result of it, he is cured and this letter is in grateful acknowledgment of it for publication.

Thoma Mathew Kakassery, Mattom

10. A very serious litigation in the family and consequent unpleasantness were all peacefully concluded by the kind intercession of the Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias. In grateful acknowledgement I am visiting Mannanam where his revered remains are kept. I am releasing the information for publication.

Thommen Ouseph, Perumpkuzhiyil
Pyngottoor, Kalloor

11. I write to inform you that I was almost dying and that I was miraculously cured and consoled by the mediation of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara.

Velayudhan Subrumony,
Thunduparampil

12. I had my stomach operated upon once at Chalakudy hospital. But the pain recured. I could not take any food. Another operation was recommended. I went to the General Hospital, Ernakulam. The Doctors decided that my disease was in a hopelessly advanced state. But I sought the intercession of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias and I have been completely cured now.

Varghese Annamma, Aykanath Plakal,
Koratty

13. Due to some cereberal disorder Sr. Christina kept away from the Sacraments and religious practices for about 30 months. Prayers for her restoration to normal condition incessant but were not fruitful. Finally a Novena was held in honour of Fr. Cyriac Elias and on the 9th day the Sister volunteered to go to the confession and she received Holy communion. She is alright now and regular in her devotions.

Fr. Joseph Vithayathil, Chaplain,
Holy Family Convent, Puthenchira

14. My dear Rev. Father,

Since my operation for Appendicitis in 1924 I was very weak. The floods of 1929 my house was washed away. It augmented my worries. I was exhausted and grew even desperate. I could hardly discharge my duties. Life seemed a heavy burden. I even thought of giving up

everything. Then I heard of favours received through Fr. Cyriac Elias. I resolved offering Rs. 5/- and advertise the favour if I was cured of my condition. I grew alright. I have sent the amount to Mannanam. My memory is quite in order now. I feel refreshed and enlightened. I am as fit as I was before I fell sick. In thanksgiving I have offered high mass today. I believe Fr. Cyriac Elias alone has been instrumental in my recovery.

Fr. Antony Chiramel, Meloor

15. I have been receiving my favours by the intercession of Fr. Cyriac Elias, Chavara. And hence my respect, love and regard day by day increase by leaps and bounds. One of the important favours is the miraculous cure effected to my newborn baby, which was suffering from ever so many serious complaints. For this great favour I am sending yon fifteen rupees. One rupee is intended to say one mass in honour of Fr. Cyriac Elias' cause for one the cure of my mother's headache she was having since three years.

E. Varghese Abraham, Elanjickal,
Alleppey

16. Dear Rev. Father,

There was a party that wanted to join the religious order, but found it difficult to provide the necessary patrimony. A Novena in honour of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias of Chavara had the desired effect of procuring a benefactor for the above cause. The vocation has fructified. This may be published in the columns of the Flower of Carmel.

Fr. Gervasis, T. O. C. D.

17. On the 31st December '38 a dog had bitfen me. The wound was pretty big. Native ireatment did not cure it. Allopathy was tried. That produced swelling in the

leg and that gave rise to plenty of puz. By the 5th Jan. the festering had extended considerably upwards. Doctors recommended operation. I sought the intercession of Fr. Cyriac Elias for getting cured thus. On the seventh Doctor came, examined me again and decided to have the operation the next day. But the next day when he returned with the necessary instruments and examined me again, I was very much better. The Doctor returned declaring that an operation was not needed. By the time I finished the novena I was completely cured.

Mary Celin, Arakuzha

18. One of the day-scholars here had an attack of fever. The malady grew worse soon and seemed almost fatal. Doctors gave up hope. Treatments were of no avail. Then a Novena in honour of Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias was held on for this intention. The child started recovering. By the time the Novena was over, the child was quite fit. Studies have been recommenced. All of us believe the cure has been a miraculous one and that due to the Novena.

Cicily Arakuzha

PRAYERS

O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee that Thy faithful servant Cyriac Elias be raised to the honours of the Altar crowned with the halo of sanctity for all the trials add hardships he has undergone in Thy name and for Thy glory sacrificing his very life to enkindle in the hearts of all that fire of divine love with which his heart was ever inflamed. O most holy Virgin and Mother, beauty and splendour of Carmel, look with love upon thy devoted servant and child of predilection Cyriac Elias and obtain for him a crown of glory in heaven and the honours of the Altar on earth for the greater glory of God and the rapid spread of the Church in this our pagan country. St. Thomas the Apostle of India intercede for us before the throne of God. Amen.

Imprimatur

† *J. Kalacherry*

Bp. of Changanacherry

Changanacherry

20, Dec. 1939.

O most loving Jesus, we ardently implore of Thee if it be for Thy glory and the sanctification of souls, deign to glorify Thy humble servant Fr. Cyriac Elias and let him come to our assistance by obtaining the favours we beg through his intercession. Eternal Father, I offer Thee all the Masses which are being celebrated today throughout the world to obtain this great favour of the public veneration of Fr. Cyriac Elias. St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavire' Apostles of India, intercede for us, Amen.

Imprimatur

G. Valiarampath

Ernakulam

Vicar General

25, 11, '40

PRAYER TO OBTAIN FAVOURS

O! God our Lord and Father, in whom Fr. Cyriac Elias placed his confidence with such filial love, deign to make known that his work for the preservation of faith in Malabar and his zeal in Thy glory were pleasing to Thee by granting the favour we ask.

O! most loving Jesus, we ardently implore of Thee if it be for Thy glory and for the sanctification of Souls deign to glorify Thy humble servant; grant us the blessing of seeing him raised to the honours of the altars, and let him come to our assistance by obtaining the favours we beg through his intercession, Amen.

Pater, Ave, Gloria

Imprimi potest.

Fr. Bartholomew of Jesus T. O. C. D.

Thcvàra,

Prior General

21-7-'37

Imprimatur

† *Francis Vazhapilly,*

Trichur,

Bp. of Trichur

22-9-'37.

O most loving Jesus, we ardently implore Thee, if it be for Thy glory and the sanctification of souls, to deign to glorify Thy humble servant Fr. Cyriac Elias and let him come to our assistance by obtaining the favours we beg through his intercession. Eternal Father, I offer Thee all the Masses which are being celebrated today throughout the world to obtain this great favour of the public veneration of Fr. Cyriac Elias.

St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier, Apostles of India, intercede for us.

Imprimatur

Fr. A. Lenthaparambil

Verapoly:

Vicar General, Verapaly.

10-11-41

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF FR. CYRIAC ELIAS

O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee that Thy faithful servant Cyriac Elias be speedly raised to the honours of the altar crowned with the halo of sanctity for all the trials and hardships he has under gone in Thy name and for Thy glory sacrificing his very life to enkindle in the hearts of all that fire of divine love with which his heart was ever inflamed.

One Gloria.

O Most holy Virgin and Mother, beauty and splendour of Carmel, look with love upon thy devoted servant and child of predilection Cyriac Elias and obtain for him a crown of glory in heaven and the honours of altar on earth for the greater glory of God and the rapid spread of the Church in this our country.

One Gloria.

O Blessed St. Joseph, diligent protector of Christ, who guided in the way of salvation thy devoted client Cyriac Elias. Do thou, we implore thee, intercede on his behalf and secure for him the halo of saintly glory for the triumph of the Church upon earth. O glorious St. Thomas, fervent Apostle of Christ, who didst disseminate the word of God in our country, vouchsafe to intercede for thy humble servant Cyriac Elias the fruit of his labours in Malabar that he be soon raised to the honours of the altar for the sanctification of souls and the spread of the Kingdom of Christ.

One Gloria.

Let Us Pray

O God who in Thy ineffable providence didst vouch safe to choose Cyriac Elias to be Thy instrument to foster religious life in Malabar, we offer Thee all the

sacrifices of the Holy Masses that are being celebrated this day upon all the altars throughout the world to grant us the favour to hasten with miracles the promotion of the cause of Thy dear son. Amen.

Imprimi potest

*Fr. Sylvester T. O. C. D.
Prior General.*

Thevara

9 - 11 - '36.

Imprimatur.

† *J. Kalacherry,*
Changanacherry, *Bp. of Changanacherry.*
11-xi-'36.

Eternal Father, we thank Thee for the graces bestowed on Thy servant Fr. Cyriac Elias Deign to make known that his life was pleasing to Thy Divine Majesty by granting the favour that we are asking.

O! Most Loving Jesus, ardently implore - if it be for Thy glory and for the sanctification of souls - deign to glorify Thy servant, and grant us the joy of seeing Thy servant raised to the honours of the Altar, and may he ever take us under his protection for Thy greater glory, Amen.

Pater. Ave, Gloria.

Imprimatur

† *Mathew Kavukatt,*
Changanacherry, *Bp. of Changanacherry.*
26-10-'53.

Almighty Eternal God, the bestower of all good gifts, who dost glorify those who serve Thee faithfully in this world for the love Thy faithful servant Fr. Cyriac Elias bore Thee grant us the favour we ask of Thee in his name.

St. Thomas, our Father, intercede for before God's throne so that - if it be for the glory of God - thy humble servant who spent his life for the church in Malabar might be raised to the honours of the Altar, and may he come to our assistance by obtaining for us the grace we beg through his Intercession, Amen.

Pater, Ave, Gloria

Imprimatur

† *Sebastian, Vayalil*
Bp. of Palai.

Palai

26 - 10 - '53

O, God Our Lord and Father in whom Fr. Cyriac Elias placed his confidence with such filial love, begin to make known that his work for the preservation of faith in Malabar and his zeal for Thy glory were pleasing to Thee by granting the favour we ask.

O ! Most Loving Jesus, we ardently implore of Thee if it be for Thy glory and for the sanctification of souls deign to glorify Thy humble servant; grant us the blessing of seeing him raised to the honours of the Altars, and let him come to our assistance by obtaining the favours we beg through his intercession, Amen.

Pater, Ave, Gloria.

Imprimatur.

† *Victor Fernandes,*
Bp. of Mangalore,

Mangalore,
19 - 12 - '39.

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