



# CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

## CMI PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE

Chavara Hills, P.B. No. 3105, Kakkanad P.O.  
Kochi 682 030, Kerala, India



ST. KURIKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA  
1805-1871

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI  
Prior General

## Chavara Jubilee Year

(03 January 2020 - 03 January 2021)

REF: PG/517/2019

12 December 2019

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Dear Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

Prayerful Greetings from Chavara Hills!

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, our beloved founder, offered his beautiful soul in the hands of the Lord God, manifesting extraordinary signs of the love of God, amidst the tears of his spiritual children, on January 3, 1871. Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, his spiritual children, are privileged to celebrate 150<sup>th</sup> heavenly birth of our beloved father and founder. This jubilee year is indeed a time of great blessing to rededicate ourselves for the great spiritual movement St. Chavara initiated along with other founding fathers. "By the grace of God, I dare say that with their (the Holy Family's) help I had no occasion to lose the grace I received in baptism." This last conversation of our beloved founder is the true testimony of his holiness and baptismal innocence and this legacy shall inspire CMI family to set our priority on leading an immaculate and saintly life.

Religious life is a call to sanctify oneself and work for the salvation of one's brethren. Being nurtured by a devout mother in strong faith and Church traditions, St. Chavara naturally imbibed the grace of sanctity and the readiness to discern the will of God. Self-sanctification and salvation of all became his mantra. God's will always and everywhere was his inspiration. He did enjoy being glued to the tabernacle and experiencing the heavenly bliss. He had special devotion to Mother Mary and St. Joseph and his attachment to the Holy Family was always his great strength in life, and he took the name, Kuriakose Elias of Holy Family. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the power he received from the tabernacle enabled him to begin 40 hours adoration for the benefit of the faithful. Pope Francis states: "The first task in life is prayer, not the prayer of words, like a parrot; but the prayer, from the heart: gazing on the Lord." St. Chavara was a man of deep prayer, meditation and contemplation and today he challenges us to imbibe the contemplative spirit to be truly prophetic in our mission.

“What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action” (Meister Eckhart). This is very much true in the life of St. Kuriakose Elias. He could be more innovative and creative in his mission as he was discerning and doing things as per the will of God revealed in contemplation. In all his endeavours, the principle that led him was *sentire cum ecclesia*. He felt with the Church, thought with the Church and fought for the Church. All his apostolic endeavours had a touch and feel of being a responsible son of the Holy Catholic Church. He was moving as per the directive of the Holy Father and the Bishops. Whenever he was in doubt and confusion, he had the audacity to write to Rome and get things clarified. At the same time, he kept the Holy Father informed of the challenges of St. Thomas Christians and he did everything for the unity, autonomy, renewal and growth of the Church. Primarily, he focused on spiritual renewal through Sunday sermons, retreats, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Holy Family and saints. His contribution of liturgical rubrics (*Tukasa*) and liturgy of the hours deserves appreciation.

He found that the absence of a religious community was responsible for the retardation of the Church founded by St. Thomas and owing to that a lot of good did not happen in God’s own country of that time. As Bishop Stabilini granted permission to initiate a religious community, he had authorized to do all good that has been shown to the eyes. St. Chavara categorically stated that a day without doing good is a wasted day and it won’t be counted in the book of life. St. Chavara initiated the seminary movement for the effective formation of priests so that there will be right leadership in the Church to lead the souls on the right path. In his effort to shape an enlightened and empowered society, he is ever remembered for his educational endeavours of Sanskrit school for all in a caste-ridden society and for the circular to establish schools along with the church. His concern for the poor, the sick and the dying found various projects in terms of *pidiyari*, *thengukettu* and *upavisala*. More than anything he was a missionary who initiated catechumenate along with monasteries and it led many to accept Catholic faith. While we continue the legacy of apostolic mission of St. Chavara, let us imbibe his thirst for souls and love for the Church, especially in this year of sesquicentennial jubilee of the death anniversary of our beloved founder.

Celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara should be an opportunity for the CMI and CMC Congregations, the Church in Kerala, and the whole Indian Church to experience and appropriate the spiritual empowerment and God experience after the model of Saint Chavara. Every CMI community should be a place to appreciate, emulate, and nurture the spirituality of Saint Chavara by becoming genuine *Punnyasanketam* and *Besrauma*. Similarly, every member of the CMI shall be renewed in the spirituality of Saint Chavara in order to return to the *Punnyasanketam* and *Besrauma* that the founding fathers had yearned for.

**Inauguration of the Chavara Jubilee Year:** We will begin the Chavara Jubilee Year celebration at 10 am on January 3, 2020 at Mannanam with the Jubilee Qurbana led by His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church and the President of KCBC. Being a historic time in the life of CMI family, it is our privilege to be part of this blessed celebration of the Holy Eucharist. At 2.30 p.m. Honorable Governor of Kerala Shri Arif Mohommed Khan will inaugurate the sesquicentennial jubilee

of the death anniversary of our beloved founder. It is recognition for our beloved founder that both the head of the State and the head of our Church are present for this unique occasion. Our presence, participation and involvement alone will make the celebration a true blessing. Based on the request of CMI and CMC congregations, the Major Archbishop has already issued a Circular to the whole Syro-Malabar Church on the 150<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Saint Chavara and to observe Chavara Jubilee Year.

Chavara Jubilee Year celebration will be held at 10 am on January 4, 2020, at Chavara Hills along with CMI Award Day and Reception to the newly ordained priests. His Grace Mar Antony Kariyil CMI, Metropolitan Vicar of Ernakulam Angamaly will be the guest of honour and he will be felicitated for his new mission in the Archdiocese after the model of St. Chavara. The program has been planned in such a way that we get a right perspective of St. Chavara's contribution to the Syro Malabar Church and his credential to be called the Father and Doctor of the Church.

Based on the meetings of the members of CMI and CMC congregations, representatives of CMI-CMC major superiors and CMI and CMC General Councils, we shall take up various programs at general, provincial and local levels based on the particular context of the place and culture.

1. **Chavara Museum: The construction of** Chavara Museum at Kainakary is in progress and its blessing and inauguration will be held on February 7, 2020 along with the feast of St. Chavara at Kainakary.
2. **Chavara Exhibitions:** Museum at Mannanam and Koonammavu shall be focus centres, as they have set up all available exhibits in an excellent manner. Chavara Exhibitions shall be arranged at Mannanam, Kainakary, Generalates of CMI and CMC, Study Houses, Provincial Houses, etc.
3. All CMI-CMC institutions shall be asked to either arrange for an exhibition with public access, or to place at least a sufficiently large billboard (poster) showcasing the person and achievements of Saint Chavara.

## **RENEWAL PROGRAMMES FOR CMI AND CMC COMMUNITIES**

1. **365 Days Prayer by CMI-CMC Members at the Tomb of Saint Chavara:** Under the leadership of the Provinces of CMI and CMC Congregations, we shall ensure that during the whole of Chavara Jubilee Year, there will be at least a few CMI and CMC members, spending time in prayer and recollection at the Tomb of our Holy Founder at Mannanam. A schedule to this effect shall be drawn up by the Director of Saint Chavara Pilgrim Centre, Mannanam, in consultation with the CMI and CMC Provincials in the surrounding areas of Mannanam. Apart from these assigned members, the whole CMI-CMC members shall be encouraged to join in prayer and recollection at least for one day at the Tomb in Mannanam. We shall make effort for the Reception of Indulgence for those who visit the Tomb of Saint Chavara at Mannanam during the Chavara Jubilee Year shall be ensured with proper permission from the Holy See.

2. **Monthly Recollections:** Monthly Recollections of the local communities or the zones, without prejudice to the already approved plans by the Congregation or local Provinces, shall be based on the person and contributions of Saint Chavara. (Note: 12 themes will be identified and some literature will be prepared under the auspices of the Chavara Central Secretariat and shared with provinces or local communities).
3. **150 Hour Adoration:** In view of getting sufficient spiritual support for the whole celebration, 150 Hour Adorations shall be organized at Provincial level; CMC Sisters will take the lead; CMI members shall join them for the adoration. It will be arranged during 10 am to 4 pm for 25 days (either in one place, or shared by various communities on specific days).
4. **Promotion of Reading Habit:** As Saint Chavara is an exemplary model of academic pursuit with a mission focus (who acted with determination to overcome *jnanakurudathvam*), this celebration shall be an opportunity for the members of CMI and CMC to rekindle interest in reading. Action plans are to be worked out to cover various age groups. Specifically, all CMI and CMC communities shall arrange to read the writings of Saint Chavara in common, at least once a week, during the evening meditation.

#### **DEVOTIONAL PROGRAMMES WITH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

1. **Thiruseshipu Prayanam:** In view of popularizing devotion to Saint Chavara, Chavara Jubilee Year (2020-2021) should be converted to be an opportunity to arrange 'Relic Processions' in parishes across Kerala (covering Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and Latin Churches), and wherever CMI and CMC members are engaged in various missions. If a couple of members from CMI and CMC shall be assigned in each locality with the special task to organize the Relic Procession, it could be easily worked out, also with the collaboration of local parish priests. This would also call for enlisting support at the diocesan level by the Major Superiors of both Congregations. In this regard, steps shall be taken by both Congregations to ensure that the Relics of Saint Chavara are made available to all parishes in Kerala and in the parishes associated with the communities of both Congregations outside Kerala.
2. **Pious Celebrations at CMI and CMC Retreat Centres:** In view of popularizing devotion to Saint Chavara among the public, our retreat centres should be effectively utilized. If each of these centres could be contacted, they will be able to design programmes that will reach the public at large. All retreat centres of both Congregations shall be encouraged to organize retreats for the public on the person and teachings of Saint Chavara.
3. **Chavara Parish Retreats:** CMI and CMC members shall form regional teams to offer Chavara Parish Retreats (preferably one evening or more, or weekend retreats for various age groups or associations). In this context, we could also undertake Home Mission, Relic Processions, and full-scale annual parish retreats as well.

4. **Enlisting Support and Collaboration of Jesus Youth:** More effective youth programmes could be organized at Mannanam (and Kainakary), if the support of the Jesus Youth is enlisted. Jesus Youth being an effective Catholic youth organization, and as there are a few CMIs and CMCs already involved in their spiritual animation, it will be easier to get their support and to fine tune the programme also including the insights from the life and writings of Saint Chavara.
5. A Youth Day each shall be organized at Mannanam and Kainakary, for which the Directors of both Pilgrim Centres shall take the organizational responsibility.

#### ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED PROGRAMMES

1. **Chavara Publications:** Publication of (1) revised and updated English translations of the Complete Works of Saint Chavara, new editions of (2) Malayalam Biography by Fr. Valerian, (3) History of the CMI by Fr. Bernard, and (4) Biography by Fr. A. M. Mundadan by Chavara Central Secretariat. Publication of the remaining volumes of “Theological Studies on Saint Chavara” and the Commentary prepared by Fr. Augustine Keemattam CMI and Sr. Jossy Maria CMC by the Chavara Central Secretariat.
2. **Publications by Secular Authors:** Promoting writing and publication of articles and books by renowned secular personalities (apart from Chavara Central Secretariat, each Province can support and promote at least a couple of such publications in the respective local language and English). Such exemplary projects have been carried out by Fr. John Mannarathara CMI of Saint Thomas Province, Kozhikode. Studies and publications on Saint Chavara as a social reformer, especially in English as well as in regional languages, shall also be a focus in this project.

*Note:* To facilitate such projects the writers are paid reasonably well; budgetary provisions should be made by all Provinces in this regard.

3. **Conferences:** Saint Chavara (National) Conference at (1) Dharmaram, (2) Poornodaya-Samanvaya, (3) Darsana, (4) Kenya, and, (5) if possible at inter-provincial levels (one in south and another one in the north).
4. **Media Presentations:** Saint Chavara’s writings should be made easily accessible by converting them into more appealing forms using visual and audio media, all of which could also be popularized through social media platforms.
5. **Programmes for Teachers:** Programmes could be jointly organized by the CMI and CMI Provinces for each region, especially in association with the Catholic Teachers’ Guild.
6. **Chavara Digital Library:** Chavara Digital Library ([www.chavaralibrary.in](http://www.chavaralibrary.in)) should be further enhanced by Chavara Central Secretariat with more resources.
7. **Saint Chavara at the UN:** Chavara Cultural Centre, with its Special Consultative Status at the UN, shall organize at least one event to commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> Death

Anniversary of Saint Chavara at the UN. Director of Chavara Cultural Centre shall organize the event.

8. **Formees:** Aspirants' Houses, Novitiates, Juniorates, and Major Study Houses shall organize workshop sessions focusing on Saint Chavara's life and mission, his writings, especially in relation to the contemporary relevance of his initiatives.
9. **Chavara Chair at MG University:** Empowering of Chavara Chair at MG University with a few more relevant programmes organized both for the academia and the general public; we shall also explore the possibility of starting similar research oriented projects in universities and other higher education centres.
10. **Higher Education Institutions to Promote Chavara Teachings:** Christ University as well as other CMI and CMC Autonomous Colleges can plan and launch programmes on Saint Chavara Thoughts and Teachings with academic credits for students. Other higher education institutions can also offer optional programmes or occasional talks on the life and contributions of Saint Chavara and their contemporary social relevance.
11. **Schools:** All CMI and CMC schools should organize relevant programmes to popularize the person and contributions of Saint Chavara, especially during the Chavara Jubilee Year. Along with academically relevant programmes, there should also be programmes having social and cultural relevance prepared based on the thought of Saint Chavara. Such Programmes organized shall also be converted into media productions and made available on social media platforms with public access.

#### **PROGRAMMES WITH SOCIAL ORIENTATION**

1. **Social Face of the Celebrations:** Some of the social issues faced by the contemporary society should be addressed. For example, increasing number of unmarried men in Catholic community, aftermath of natural calamities, increasing tendency to neglect senior members in the families, etc., shall be our focus during the Chavara Jubilee Year celebrations and the General and Provincial level Department of Social Apostolate shall organize programmes to address these issues
2. **Scholarships to Promote Chavara Studies:** Establishing Scholarships to promote Chavara Studies by PG House and Provinces (not only in CMI institutions but also in other institutions of higher learning and research)
3. **Couples Renewal or Family Enriching Programmes:** After the model of family life charted by Saint Chavara in his *Chavarul*, Family Apostolate wings of the CMI and Faith Formation Teams of the CMC (at the General and Provincial levels) shall jointly organize programmes for married couples (say, after one year, or after five years of marriage). This programme shall be designed after the Pre-Cana Course, but focusing more on the actual life situation in the life of married couples and the grooming of children. For successful launch of this programme, we shall enlist the support of the parishes or local institutions.

4. **Chavara School/College Education Scholarship:** “Chavara Scholarship” to support students from economically poor backgrounds (General and Provincial Departments of Social Apostolate and CMI and CMC Institutions)
5. **Houses for All Dalit Families at Mannanam:** Houses for All Dalit Families associated with Saint Joseph’s Monastery, Mannanam, shall be undertaken. As the Dalit community was attached to our Mannanam Monastery from the time of Saint Chavara, this Chavara Jubilee Year shall focus on ensuring that all Dalit families have their own houses with the support of the CMI and CMC Generalates, Provinces, and institutions. It was decided that jointly we construct at least 150 houses, with a primary focus on the Dalit families associated with Saint Joseph’s Monastery, Mannanam; if there are remaining houses to be constructed, it shall be left to the Generalates and Provinces to identify local families.
6. **150 Years of Nanmarana Sakhyam:** As 2019 is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Joseph’s Nanmarana Sakhyam, the pioneering project of Saint Chavara with people-participation, CMI and CMC Congregations shall plan some such programmes with contemporary relevance. Special thrust shall be placed on providing palliative care for terminally ill persons.

#### AUDIO-VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

1. **Videos and Movies on Saint Chavara:** Promoting production of video presentations and movies on Saint Chavara, if possible, with the collaboration of lay people.
2. **Social Media-Oriented Multimedia Programmes:** Various Provinces and institutions shall take lead to prepare short video presentations and to circulate them on the social media platforms. Good entries, if uploaded on the platforms like YouTube, will be available for public access even in future.

#### COMPETITIONS

1. **Short Film Competition:** Short Film Competition on Saint Chavara by Chavara Cultural Centre (Chavara Media House Productions).
2. **All India Essay Competition:** All India Essay Competition (preferably organized by Darsana, Wardha, and CMC Wardha Province) shall be organized on the person and contributions of Saint Chavara and their contemporary relevance. Three Separate Groups:(1) Major Seminarians (only English) (2) Consecrated Women (English and Malayalam); (3) Catechism Students (High School and Higher Secondary) (English, Hindi, and Malayalam).
3. **All India Speech Competition:** All India Speech Competition (using the WhatsApp platform) (preferably organized by Poornodaya-Samanvaya and CMC Bhopal Province)Theme: Relevance of the Life and Message of Saint Chavara in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” for Major Seminarians (only English) and Catechism Students (High School and Higher Secondary) (English and Malayalam).



4. **Chavara Quiz:** “Chavara Quiz”: to be organized by (1) Chavara Central Secretariat in association with Chavara Cultural Centre shall organize a quiz for families and (2) all CMI and CMC Provinces could join together to organize regional quiz events for education institutions.

#### **Province Level**

1. **Inauguration at the Provincial Houses:** Inauguration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Saint Chavara could be held in each province on a convenient date during January 2020. If possible, it may *be organized jointly by CMI and CMC Provinces* along with members of the Province, other Consecrated Communities, and lay people.
2. **Chavara Jubilee Year Celebration at the Provincial Houses:** One day Chavara Celebration at the Provincial Houses involving the neighbourhood and other consecrated communities. If possible, it may *be organized jointly by CMI and CMC Provinces* along with members of the Province, other Consecrated Communities, and lay people.
3. **Chavara Retreats in Parishes:** Inter-Provincial Teams (also with the support of CMC Sisters) could be formed to preach Chavara Retreats in parishes and other institutions, including other consecrated communities (to get opportunities, the Provincial Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry shall fund these teams in reaching out to various parishes)
4. **Pilgrimages to Mannanam, Kainakary, and Koonammavu:** Pilgrimages to Mannanam, Kainakary, and Koonammavu (including CMC Mother House) shall be organized under the auspices of the Provincial Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry; CMC Faith Formation Teams and local Social Work units will also organize pilgrimages to these locations. (Note: Mannanam and Kainakary can offer moderate facilities for overnight stay of the pilgrims, if needed.)
5. **Pilgrimages to Mannanam and Kainakary:** Members involved in various apostolates in parishes and institutions shall organize at least one pilgrimage to Mannanam and Kainakary during the “Chavara Jubilee Year 2020-2021”. CMI and CMC communities shall organize it with lay people, taking into consideration the local convenience. Institutions may prefer to arrange it separately. But collective presence will make the pilgrimage more impactful.
6. **Promoting Popular Devotion with Pious Articles, Novena, etc.** Disseminating information on Saint Chavara by sharing printed books and articles, and mementos or devotional articles with people in the neighbourhood and consecrated communities and parishes

#### **Local and Personal Levels**

1. **Half-Day/Evening Celebration** of Saint Chavara’s 150<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary, preferably with a Eucharistic celebration and a talk on the person and contributions of

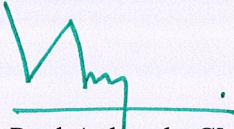


Saint Chavara; the main audience shall be the Eucharistic community around our houses and, if deemed opportune, the general public. All local communities of the CMI and CMC are requested to organize the inauguration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Saint Chavara and the Chavara Jubilee Year on Sunday, 5 January 2020 with appropriate programmes; wherever feasible, joint celebrations of the CMI and CMC communities will be ideal. Neighbourhood celebration

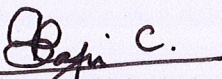
2. **Monthly Recollections** for the whole year shall be based on Chavara themes (details listed in the General level)
3. **Monthly Study Sessions** (internal) on the works of Saint Chavara. Alternatively, as already listed above, under the title 'Reading Habit', this could be once a week reading sessions on the writings of Saint Chavara in the local communities, at least during the evening meditation time.
4. **Dissemination of literature and devotional articles** on Saint Chavara among the people in the neighbourhood
5. Some programmes to celebrate the person and contributions of Saint Chavara could be offered, if possible, in the parishes in our neighbourhood and our own institutions (for example, for the staff and students of our educational institutions). Outreach programmes may be taken up in neighbouring parishes

May Chavara Jubilee Year be a graceful time of renewal and rejuvenation of our CMI way of life rooted in the legacy of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara so that our life and mission will be fruitful like in the present time. May the Holy Family strengthen us to lead a saintly life as they strengthened our beloved founder for keeping his baptismal grace! May St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, our beloved founder intercede for us, his children, to live our religious commitment after the model of our founding fathers.

Wishing you the grace and blessings of Christmas and Chavara Jubilee Year!

  
Fr. Paul Achandy CMI  
Prior General



  
Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI  
Secretary, General Council