



# CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

## CMI PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE

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



ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA  
1805-1871

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI  
Prior General

REF: PG/307/2026  
Circular No. 03

09 May 2026

### CMI YEAR OF MEDIA

**Dear and Loving CMI Confreres,**

Prayerful Greetings on the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CMI Foundation Day!

After having the celebration of the Year of Education, we are entering into “the Year of Media” (11 May 2026- 10 May 2027) as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the foundation of our congregation. It is a matter of great joy and contentment that we make sincere efforts at the personal and communitarian levels to live up our commitment to the Vision- 2031, which we have envisioned for the celebration of the 200 years of our existence as a congregation. Let us revitalize ourselves to be a Grace-filled Presence for a Transformed World, especially through our sincere efforts for a communitarian witnessing

We remember that the CMI General Synaxis 38, after much studies, discussions, collective reflections and discernment identified “Digital Media for *Missio Dei*” as one of the major thrusts that would propel the life and mission of the Congregation in her stride through the present to the future. This is to be seen as a definite reflection of the mind of the CMI Constitutions, which has clearly recognized that “the modern media of social communication have an extraordinary bearing on the human spirit” and that the modern media technologies are “potent means for the dissemination of the good news of salvation and also for the Christian transformation of the genuine values of the world” (C. #76). Our ongoing GS 39 also discusses on the impact of Media and Social Communication very clearly and vibrantly.

#### **Jesus, the master communicator**

Jesus, being the master communicator, the perfect image of God the Father, and the sacrament of Divine Life and Relationship made use of the best of communication technologies of His time, such as person to person contact, parables, signs/miracles, and so on (*Communitarian Witnessing Beyond Borders*, pp. 70). He employed all resources at hand, even his own body and blood, life and resurrection to advance the Kingdom of heaven. And He instructed His disciples to remain in Him and to proclaim His Gospel to the ends of the world using all God-given gifts (Mk 16:15; Acts 8:4-25). The great command is to love the Lord and share this love to others with all your strength, all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind (Mt 22:36-40). The unfathomable and indescribable mystery of God manifested in Jesus—being made visible, audible and palpable in His incarnation—is to be brought to the people of our times in a befitting manner through the marvellous creation of digital and social media where the “real” and the “virtual” spheres of life are intertwined.

#### **The Magisterial and Papal Teachings on Media**

The Church magisterium has understood the mind of the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ in engaging and making use of the technological developments as a blessing, opportunity and obligation to further the cause of the Gospels. The first-ever modern document of the Magisterium on the use of media,



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*Miranda Provisus*, an Encyclical of Pius XII in 1957, exhibited the Church's admiration for the media technology as "gifts of God", breaking down the mistrust many had. The document also suggested that the proper use of media would promote and perfect human life and morals. *Inter Mirifica*, the Decree on the Media of Social Communications promulgated in the Second Vatican Council, (1963) called on Christians to embrace all forms of media that enhance man's function as being salt and light in the world. If properly used, the various forms of media can be of great service to mankind and to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God. *Christus Vivit*—the post-synodal exhortation issued by Pope Francis in 2019—speaks about it within the broader reality of young people's lives in the digital world. It offers rich insights that can shape a theology and pastoral approach to media. The document recognizes the digital environment not as something virtual or unreal, but as a genuine space where young people live, relate, and search for meaning. Media, therefore, becomes a mission field, not just a tool. The document invites the Church—and especially young people—to become "missionary disciples" in the digital continent to witness to Christ through their online presence to create meaningful, value-based content to bring hope, beauty, and truth into digital culture.

Our recent popes consistently affirm the importance of engaging modern media for evangelization, while urging responsible and value-based use. Pope John Paul II, in his 2002 document *Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel*, urged Catholics to enter the expanding world of digital communication with realism and confidence. When used with competence and responsibility, he saw the internet as a powerful means for spreading the Gospel and advancing God's Kingdom. As he noted, proclaiming Christ in the media is not only essential to the Church's mission but also enriches the media itself with hope and inspiration. Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2009 World Communications Day message, invited the Church to engage the emerging "digital continent" with hope rather than pessimism, bringing into this new culture the values that sustain Christian life. Pope Francis highlights both the promise and the peril of digital media. While he calls it a "divine blessing" that fosters connection and mutual support, he also warns of its dangers—especially the risk of isolation, where young people become "social hermits" detached from real relationships. In this way, the "digital continent" can fragment into "digital islands." Hence, the Church is called to enter this space actively and pastorally, echoing the missionary spirit of Paul the Apostle: "I have become all things to all people, that I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Pope Leo XIV emphasizes the need for ethical and "disarmed" communication in today's media landscape. He calls for a commitment to truth, human dignity, and peace over sensationalism, propaganda, and polarization—especially in an age shaped by misinformation and artificial intelligence. Stressing that information is a "public good," he urges media professionals to give voice to the voiceless, resist serving power, and avoid fostering division. Communication, he insists, should build dialogue, "disarm" hearts hardened by hatred, and always keep the human person at its center.

Across these perspectives, one constant emerges: media, deeply intertwined with popular culture, must be engaged responsibly and creatively as a vital space for evangelization and humanization. The popular culture may have opposing and contradictory values to the "Christian" and "Kingdom" values. This is where the media mission of the Church is to be seen: to "evangelize the culture of media and the ideologies of media technologies. The challenge today, thus, is to understand that the



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new technologies are not just instruments of communication but are profoundly affecting the very culture of communicating the Gospel. (*Communitarian Witnessing Beyond Borders*, p. 67).

### **Media and the CMI Legacy**

The legacy of media and communication in the CMI tradition finds its inspiring origin in the visionary leadership of Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Long before the advent of modern digital technologies, St. Chavara recognized the transformative power of communication as a means of evangelization, education, and social renewal. His initiatives reveal a remarkably forward-looking understanding of media as both a tool and a mission. One of his most significant contributions was the establishment of one of the earliest printing presses in Kerala, which became a powerful instrument for spreading knowledge and faith. Through this, he promoted the publication of books, catechetical materials, and devotional texts, making spiritual and educational resources accessible to the wider public. His emphasis on education, especially through schools open to all sections of society, further strengthened the communicative mission of the Church. St. Chavara also demonstrated a deep sensitivity to the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of communication. He encouraged the use of literature, hymns, and artistic expressions like eclogue to nurture faith and community life. His famous directive to establish a school alongside every church reflects his conviction that communication, education, and evangelization are inseparable.

### **The Dual Function of the Media for the CMIs**

The media face of the CMI Congregation and the Church at large is the face of Jesus Christ Himself, who came down from heaven to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. The CMI Constitutions recognize that communication media have a dual function: 1) as a help for other forms of apostolate to communicate their message, and 2) as an apostolate in itself, showing forth the value of the world of art and beauty (D. #150). First, media serve as an effective support to various apostolates by helping communicate their message with clarity, reach, and relevance. In today's context, this calls for a deliberate effort to develop structured communication strategies, create engaging content, and train members to use digital platforms responsibly and creatively. By doing so, the mission of education, pastoral care, and social outreach can be amplified, reaching wider audiences and responding meaningfully to contemporary needs. Secondly, the Constitutions affirm media as an apostolate in itself—one that reveals the deeper values of art, beauty, and human creativity. This vision invites members to go beyond functional communication and engage in creative expressions such as films, music, literature, and visual arts that reflect Gospel values. Such initiatives not only evangelize but also elevate culture, fostering a sense of harmony, dignity, and transcendence in society. To realize this dual mission, formation in media literacy, ethics, and aesthetics becomes essential. Members need to be equipped not only with technical skills but also with a discerning and responsible approach to communication. Thus, communication media, when embraced in this integrated manner, become both a powerful tool and a meaningful ministry—proclaiming the Gospel while also revealing the beauty and depth of human and divine life.



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### The CMI Year of Media – Action plan

This rich legacy continues to inspire us, the CMIs today. In an age marked by digital media and global connectivity, the spirit of St. Chavara calls for renewed creativity and responsibility in communication. The CMI Year of Media (2026–2027) invites every member of the Congregation to engage creatively and responsibly with the world of communication, recognizing media as both a powerful tool for evangelization and a formative influence on contemporary culture. This year calls for a renewed commitment at all levels—general, provincial, local, and personal—to harness the potential of media for the mission of the Church. Let us try to realize the action plans envisaged in *CMI Vision 2031* for the bicentennial celebrations at these different levels.

The CMI Year of Media is a bridge between the 1846 printing revolution and the 2026 digital revolution. It is not merely a programmatic initiative but a prophetic call to rediscover our missionary identity in an interconnected world. Rooted in Christ, the Eternal Word, we are invited to be credible communicators of hope, truth, and love. As we enter the "digital continent" with faith and creativity, may we proclaim the Gospel in ways that touch hearts, transform cultures, and build communion. By transforming our screens into "pulpits of hope," let us ensure our digital footprints lead others toward the Divine. May this year empower every CMI to be a "Letter of Christ"—written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God—accessible to all in this modern world. Ultimately, may this Year of Media inspire us to be a grace-filled presence for a transformed world.

Commending our media mission to the intercession of our Founder, St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, I wish you all a very happy and spiritually enriching Foundation Day.

Yours fraternally in Christ,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI  
Prior General

