



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

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25 May 2026

Closing of the Diocesan Phase for the Cause of SG Fr. Canisius Thekkekara CMI

Beloved CMI Confreres,

Prayerful greetings from CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills!

It is with immense joy and profound gratitude to the Almighty that we look forward to a historic milestone in the spiritual journey of our religious family. Following the glorious legacy of our beloved founder, Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the holy life of another of our saintly brothers is being formally recognized by the Church.

The Diocesan Phase of Inquiry for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekara CMI is drawing to its solemn conclusion on May 27, 2026. This milestone marks the completion of the rigorous local gathering of facts, testimonies, and documents proving his heroic virtues. The closing ceremony represents a major step toward submitting his cause directly to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome.

As we prepare for the concluding ceremony of this diocesan phase, let us reflect on his holy life, integrate his spiritual charism into our own ministries, and unite in fervent prayer.

The Footsteps of a Faithful Servant

The Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekara CMI lived a long, Christ-centered life entirely dedicated to the Word of God, the Church, and our Congregation. Born on May 12, 1914, in Anandapuram, Kerala, he joined the CMI Congregation as an aspirant at Pavaratty, made his First Profession on November 24, 1935—taking the name Canisius of St. Theresa—and was ordained a priest on December 21, 1942. Gifted with great intellectual acumen, Fr. Canisius went on to receive his Doctor of Divinity in Kandy, Sri Lanka (1945). In 1952, he earned a Doctor in Sacred Scripture (DSS) from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. With this achievement, he became the first Indian and second Asian to hold a doctorate in Sacred Scripture.

Fr. Canisius served our Congregation and the wider Church in numerous high-profile leadership roles: Professor of Sacred Scripture and Spiritual Father at SH Seminary, Chethipuzha and Dharmaram College, Bangalore. Rector of Dharmaram College (1960–1966). Prior General of the CMI Congregation (1966–1972). Provincial of Devamatha Province, Thrissur (1972–1975). Vicar General of the CMI Congregation (1978–1981).

In 1981, he chose to step away from administrative offices to focus entirely on prayer, spiritual direction, and hearing confessions at the Centre for Spiritual Renewal (CSR), Pariyaram. He spent his final years in deep contemplation and passed into eternal reward on January 29, 1998, at the Ampazhakad Monastery.



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Core Virtues and Spiritual Legacy

Fr. Canisius was widely revered as a "living saint" by those who encountered him. His spirituality can be encapsulated by several heroic traits:

- **A Heart Refined by Prayer:** He viewed prayer not as a mere duty, but as "rest in the Divine Milieu." He kept a pure heart, a perpetually cheerful countenance, and absolute innocence in his interactions.
- **Heroic Obedience and Compliance:** He firmly believed that the Will of God is directly manifested through legitimate religious and ecclesiastical superiors. Consequently, he accepted appointments, transfers, and high offices without a single worry or hesitation.
- **Evangelical Simplicity & Care for the Poor:** Despite his monumental academic titles and high administrative ranks, he lived with a radically simple, humble heart and maintained an open, compassionate hand for the poor and marginalized.

His Motto: The Compass of His Soul

Servant of God Fr. Canisius was an authentic disciple of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. He imbibed the spirituality of St. Chavara and built his own spirituality on total surrender to Divine Providence. His lifelong motto was: *"God's Will: that in full and that alone! This is my enthusiasm, my delight, my bliss."* Inherited from his devout parents, this maxim guided his every breath. He chose to be only where the Lord wanted him to be and to do fully what the Lord required, completely detached from personal ambition or comfort.

An Inspiration for Every CMI

Fr. Canisius leaves behind a profound treasure of life experience which he joyfully passed on to his religious brethren. His life challenges us to evaluate our own commitment:

- **Seek Only the Divine Will:** In an age of personal ambition and individualistic pursuits, Fr. Canisius reminds us that our true enthusiasm as religious must solely be the implementation of God's will in our daily community life and ministries.
- **The Witness of Joy and Transparency:** He proved that despite our human limitations, it is entirely possible through God's grace to remain pure at heart, pleasant in appearance, and innocent in our dealings with others.
- **Rootedness in the Word:** As a pioneer scriptural scholar, he challenges us to ensure that our theological pursuits are never just intellectual exercises, but tools to lead people to Christ rather than to ourselves.

A Call to Prayer and Action

The closing of the diocesan phase is a historic moment, but the journey ahead requires our collective spiritual solidarity. I request all community superiors, formation houses, and individual members to implement the following:



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1. **Special Prayers:** Offer a Holy Mass and hold a special prayer session in every monastery and house of formation for the successful progress of the Cause of Beatification in Rome.
2. **Spread the Devotion:** Distribute biographical sketches and prayer leaflets among the faithful in our parishes, schools, and institutions so they may know his holy life and seek his intercession.
3. **Report Favours:** Kindly record and forward any special graces or miraculous favors received through the intercession of the Servant of God Fr. Canisius to the Vice-Postulator of the Cause.

Expressions of Gratitude

On behalf of our beloved CMI family, I sincerely thank everyone involved in the painstaking efforts invested thus far. We gratefully acknowledge the constant guidance and support of the Major Archbishops, Archbishops, Bishops, priests, religious, the family members of Fr. Canisius, and the entire CMI family.

In a very special way, we prayerfully remember the late Mar James Pazhayattil, Bishop of the Diocese of Irinjalakuda, for his earnest interest and initial inspiration. We also extend our deep gratitude to Mar Pauly Kanookkadan, who has generously accompanied us as a guide and leader to inspire and motivate this endeavour. The diocesan curia and the entire team of tribunal members involved in the inquiry have shown exemplary cooperation and commitment.

Furthermore, the Reverend Father Provincials and their councils, Priors and members of St. Teresa's Monastery Ambazhakkad, along with many other dedicated members of the CMI Devamatha Province, have carried out this mission with a wonderful spirit of togetherness. I particularly acknowledge the services of Rev. Fr. Jose Nandhikkara CMI, the Provincial, for his genuine interest from the very inception of this process. Rev. Fr. Cherian Thunduparambil CMI, the Postulator, has been ever-supportive in his mission. Finally, I highly appreciate the meticulous and systematic work of Rev. Fr. Davis Panackal CMI, the Vice-Postulator, whose attention to detail has brought this stage of the project to a happy conclusion. May the Good Lord bless them all, along with everyone who has sustained this team through prayer and action.

Let us stand united as a religious family, thanking God for giving us such a luminous model of holiness. May the life of the Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekara inspire us to deepen our religious consecration and live completely for *"God's Will: that in full and that alone"*.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI
Prior General

