



MISSION

April-June 2017



Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, Inaugurates CMI Arunachal Mission in Tuting



CMISSION

**News and Views on CMI Mission
around the Globe**

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**CMI General Department of Evangelization
and Pastoral Ministry
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CMIssion

News and Views on CMI Mission around the Globe

*(A Quarterly from the CMI General Department of Evangelization
and Pastoral Ministry)*

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LIFE-GIVING INNER CIRCLES IN THE LIFE OF A CMI MISSIONARY

Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI

General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

In the context of priority being given to global mission by the CMI General Synaxis 37 (2014), a momentum is created and a new mission consciousness is evolving among the CMIs; with greater interest, a few members have also opted to join the missions outside India. Some of these new missions generate a lot of interest among the youngsters and give us ample scope to be more hopeful in future. Yet, as three years have already passed by after the GS37 and as we are already half-way through the general term of office, the Congregation is at a reasonable juncture to take stock of the achievements and to plan for the next three years in order to actualize the resolutions the General Synaxis had approved with hope and earnestness for the missions.

As the CMI Congregation has been involved in evangelization and pastoral ministry in different countries for over five decades, the new momentum created is in tune with the gradual development of global missionary consciousness among the members. Our experience and expertise in global mission, though still very minimal, impel us to undertake more challenging and demanding missions, especially with the hope of reaching out to those peoples and regions that have been neglected by various Christian communities. While, in this move, we must be ready to spare the best of our resources – man power as well as money power – to make the mission more vibrant, the most effective missionary move calls for our members to be with the people as close as they can so that the Good News could be preached not only through vocal proclamation, but also

through the Christian witness lived concretely amidst them. If the Gospel we preach emphasizes the life-giving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as missionaries, each of us CMIs must be ready to live a life of total sacrifice so that anyone we reach out through our mission would have the experience of being empowered and cared for in their lives (see Jn 10:10). As Francis Assisi insisted, unless we walk the talk, the Gospel proclamation remains sterile and our missionary outreach ineffective. If the hearts of missionaries are not touched and transformed by the person of Jesus Christ and his Good News, they will not be able to transform any other life through their missions.

This, naturally, calls for a Christ-centred life and ministry on the part of a Christian missionary. Each of us needs to be closely connected, personally united, with the person of Jesus Christ. Only our intense personal familiarity with and unwavering commitment to his person would facilitate a lasting change of heart and perspectives needed for an effective mission. This calls for a necessary ingredient of prayer and contemplation in the life of a CMI missionary. Our Oriental, Indian, and Carmelite roots – all originating from a strong contemplative or mystical leaning – must impel us to become firmly rooted in the person and values of Jesus Christ. In fact, the innermost circle of each CMI missionary must be created through an intimate personal relationship with him. It should be an unnegotiable aspect of life if the life of a CMI missionary were to be effective from Christ's perspective.

The above-mentioned inner circles in the life of CMI missionaries should not be seen as offering a group of perfect Christians, but a group of Christians who are earnest in living Christian values and principles within the ecclesial structures of the Catholic Church. In fact, we have the best example in the life of Jesus himself. He handpicked three out of his twelve apostles, namely, Peter, John, and James.

Mark 5:37 and 9:2 along with Matthew 26:37 give us a very clear idea of the special preference Jesus had for these three disciples who formed an inner circle in his mission. As we can very well see, these three were not the perfect ones; in fact, there were instances of Jesus rebuking them (Mt 16:23; Jn 18:11) or being vindictive of their selfish motives (Lk 9:54). Yet, Jesus made them his favoured ones, who got closely associated with the life and mission of Jesus in a unique way. They not only went around with Jesus (like any other Apostle and disciple) but also had privileged moments of withdrawal from the bustle of active ministry and could share in the most unique moments of Jesus' intimate prayer and communion with the Father (Mt 17:1-13). Although, at the time of happening, they could not share the agony on the cross in its fullness, these three did get a real feel of it before they kept themselves away from the act of crucifixion.

Our motivation to remain in this innermost circle originates from the models of our Mother of Carmel as well as our CMI founding Fathers, especially the inspiring life and example of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, whose ecclesial vision was founded in his intense and inspiring Jesus experience, which he christened '*appa*' experience. The intense experience of Jesus shared both by our Mother of Carmel and Saint Chavara and their readiness to share the same with as many as possible through their transformative involvement with all around them inspire us to be established in the innermost circle of prayer and contemplation, as it remains the germinal ground of Christian mission. Every missionary must, therefore, know that the invitation is not only to have a share in the enlivening hope of resurrection but also to be partners in the painful dejection and frightening silence on the cross, the foundation and finale of Christian mission.

In this context, communion among the missionaries themselves, especially among the CMI confreres becomes essential; they all – even if most of them are physically located far away from the spot of one's missionary activity – should form part of the inner circle in the life of a CMI missionary. As Christian mission is always a mission in communion, we shall not think of fulfilling our mission – whether in the home turf or in the global arena – without the close involvement and collaboration of the CMI members, individually and collectively. This CMI communion is better experienced by ensuring the presence of missionaries at the Divine Table (communion in the Eucharist), Dialogue Table (communion through the exchange of news and views), and Dining Table (communion by sharing meals). Indeed, our recent experiences in the global missions impel us to ensure that a missionary must remain in communion with his confreres, even when one begins to exist in isolation and carry out his mission without the proximity of any of the confreres; lest, not only the effectiveness of the mission but even the very vocation to mission gets thwarted!

The next inner circle in the life of a CMI missionary should be that of his collaborators. Their involvement in this circle could be twofold: first of all, our collaborators in mission must be those who intercede for us to facilitate an effective Christian mission in and through our lives and our personal and institutional outreach. Although this remains at the spiritual level and may not call for their physical presence in the mission as such, I believe that this is an essential ingredient in the life of a CMI missionary; hence, the family members and friends, and our collaborators, including the ACMI (Associates of CMI) members, all become very closely associated with our global mission in and through their intercessory prayers for the mission entrusted to the CMIs.

Secondly, some of the above group of spiritual collaborators could be the active participants in the mission by way of their availability and sharing of resources in terms of their time, energy, material or financial resources, etc. As preaching the Good News is primarily seen as life witness, these collaborators must be genuine Christians who constantly strive to excel in their Christian practice. Moreover, they could also offer physical as well as moral support to the CMIs involved in their missions. Some of them, for example, are excellent in team work and are able to offer strategic support to make our Christian mission most effective; there may be some who would be able to offer technical support, for example, with their acquired skills (even if for a shorter duration or at certain specific intervals). Their contributions become so essential in making our Christian mission most effective as many of us are incompetent in certain key areas that are basically needed in promoting and fulfilling our mission.

Yet, another group that must form part of the inner circle in the life of CMI missionaries should be the poor, the marginalized and the excluded, and those who live on the periphery of our socio-cultural structures. As Jesus had a preferential option for the poor and as he insisted that the Kingdom of Heaven would belong to the poor and the marginalized, a missionary who reaches out to the people must imbibe the consciousness and adopt the style of Jesus himself and should make room for them in his heart and mind as well as in the initiatives and institutions that he would chart for an effective mission. If the “poor are the treasures of the Church,” as Pope Francis puts it (6 June 2016), each missionary is mandated to cherish these treasures in his life and to avail all his resources to care for them. Pope Francis’ invitation to observe 19 November 2017 as the first ‘World Day of the Poor’ (see the message of Pope Francis on the ‘World Day of the Poor’, issued on 13 June

2017, in this issue of the *CMission*, pages 125-132) should be seen along this line of an awakened Christian missionary consciousness and the readiness to ensure that they form part of the innermost circle in the life of a missionary.

Drawing from the CMI foundational charisma and patrimony, it may be stated that it is by being established in the person of Jesus Christ that a CMI missionary enters the *Besrauma* (elevated home, in the language of St. Chavara, created with the highest aspirations for the personal sanctification of oneself which is intertwined with the realization of the Kingdom of God in everyone) and would begin to act like a member of *Darsanaveedu* (house of vision, where dialoguing on the values of Jesus with others will constitute the regular rhythm of life), imbibing the spirit of *Tapasubhavanam* (house of asceticism, where fellowship and generous sharing will be spontaneous) and *Punnyasanketam* (house of virtues, where Eucharistic kenosis becomes the fundamental principle), thus, making genuine Christian mission a reality through the presence and facilitation of CMI members and institutions.

Let our Christian mission begin from our intimate *appa* experience personalized through each CMI being directly connected to and firmly established in the person of Jesus Christ and placed within the ever dynamic matrix of the ecclesial community moved into action by the principle of love for every other person and all communities.

Prior General's Message

**"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST
WHO STRENGTHENS ME"**

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General

Jesus commissioned the apostles to make disciples: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mat 28:19-20).

Evangelization or making disciples is in the heart of the command of Jesus Christ. On 4 May 2017, in his morning homily at Casa Santa Marta, Pope Francis recalled the example of the first Christians who followed a special method of evangelization: *they were obedient to the Holy Spirit's instructions*. The first step for the Church to evangelize, according to Pope Francis, is to "get up and go!" One doesn't say, "stay seated, calm, in your house." In order to be faithful to the Lord, the Church should always be on its feet and on the journey: "Get up and go!" A Church that does not rise up, that is not on the journey, is sick. "Get up and go, standing and walking. This is how the Church must act in evangelization."

The second step for the Church is to listen to the restlessness of the people. "All men, all women have restlessness in their hearts. Listen to that restlessness."

The third step for the Church is to "rejoice." It is the joy of being Christian, even in ugly moments. Life is not a bed of roses for the missionary. Nowhere are they given red carpet welcome. Like our Lord and the apostles, the missionary encounters mostly rejection and persecution. The disciple is called to conform his life to Christ, who was persecuted, rejected, and abandoned to die on the cross.

According to Pope Francis, difficulties and tribulations are part of the package of evangelization. The challenges are occasions to verify the authenticity of our faith and of our relationship with Jesus always within the knowledge that "God does not abandon his children during the storm." After the stoning of Stephen a great persecution arose, and the Christians scattered everywhere, like seed carried on the wind, and it fell to them to preach the Word of Jesus.

Every Christian has been part of a relay race in the mission of evangelization after the model of the apostles and the first Christians. When the Church lost its saltiness and got settled with pomp and glory with the conversion of Constantine, the Holy Spirit inspired some to take a new direction to challenge the status quo. In fact, this new journey of being Christian scripted a story of consecrated life; movement of the consecrated persons to the peripheries of the world to carry out the mission of Church was essentially part of this new lifestyle. When movements get institutionalized, the flow of the Spirit stops and the body shows signs of degeneration, despite its size and glitter. Communities of consecrated life, clinging on to outward and outmoded forms, may soon die out. But the Holy Spirit intervenes in history and inspires each new generation to continue the mandate of the Lord and to pay the cost of the discipleship gifting their life. In the encircling gloom of secular culture, tribalism and globalization of superficiality, the only ray of hope is the missionary who runs with the torch of Christian faith and inspire others to follow them, following the narrow path of the apostles, the first Christians, and the martyrs.

CMI Congregation is, indeed, the action of the Holy Spirit in a critical point in history and grew out of the intense God experience in Christ of the founding fathers. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, they committed their lives to intense prayer and deep recollection and the building up

and renewal of the Church (CMI Constitutions §1). The spiritual movement started at Mannanam on 11 May 1831 has come of age. The story of 186 years has been a relentless pilgrimage, a way of the cross, and a movement to the unknown territories disseminating the joy of the Gospel.

St. Kuriakose Elias conceived the CMI community from its inception as a missionary Congregation. He wrote: "Although God has willed to found this Congregation for the salvation of our Christian brethren, due to the shortage of members we are not able to render the help they need. It is necessary that more monasteries and convents be opened in the South, that is, one monastery each to East and West of Mannanam and some convents with boarding houses."

The original charism and vision of the founding fathers shall be the enduring source of inspiration in religious life as well as in our missionary endeavours. They had a profound experience of the love of God and a strong commitment to work for the salvation of their fellowmen. They became powerful heralds of the Word of God, and theirs was a life of total availability urging them to undertake with zeal various undertakings for the good of the Church and according to the needs of the times. Their spirituality found expression in preaching the gospel to the faithful, catechizing new Christians, evangelizing brethren of other religions, working for the wellbeing of St. Thomas Christians and for the reunion of the dissident group among them, and labouring for the all-round building up of the Church (CMI Constitutions §3). Hence, priestly ministry shall always take the first place among the fields of our apostolate (§71) and we should consider evangelization one of the most important tasks of the community (§63). The Holy Spirit has guided our members from time to time to take up new challenges and to reach out to new territories and ministries. In the context of the canonization, whereby St. Chavara was elevated to be a saint of the Universal

Church, we resolved to move to the ends of the earth with the CMI community, the families, and the Poor.

At this stage of our existence, our Congregation has enough to give to the Church and the world. Our territories are those places where others fail to get in. We have scripted a legacy for the Syro-Malabar Church and even for the formation of the Syro-Malankara Church. Time is up to script the Good News to the Universal Church by moving our personnel and resources to the ends of the earth. It is challenging, but certainly rewarding. Being a missionary in a distant land is an awesome experience. God wants us to serve the best to the rest of the world. As Mother Teresa said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

We have great hopes in our young generation. In our formation houses, many young Scholastics are enthusiastic to take up the mission mandate of the Lord and to move to China, Africa, and Latin America. The passion for mission should be ignited among them and a missionary pedagogy and spirituality should be evolved in today's world of martyrs.

Missionary journey is never a strategic and well calculated move, but a leap into the darkness, relying on the promise of the Lord that He will be with us. Before the journey, more than anything else, a CMI missionary shall make sure that he is empowered from above. He shall be humble enough to pray like Moses, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here" (Ex 33:15).

Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents. While painfully aware of our own frailties, we have to march on without giving in, keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). Indeed, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* (Phil 4:13).

Preparedness for Mission

SOCIAL COMMITMENT Core of the Mission of the Consecrated in the Church

Fr. Jacob Peenikaparambil CMI

Introduction

In the second week of February 2017, I was invited to be a 'reflector' in the Patna Province Assembly of the Sisters of the Congregation of Nazareth (SCN). My task was to listen to the deliberations and discussions the whole day and share my reflections for about 15 minutes at the end of the day. It was a great opportunity for me to learn how to be a good listener and how to churn out insights after listening to an avalanche of ideas and views shared by the participants of the Assembly. All members of the province were invited to participate in the Province Assembly and about 150 sisters, including the novices, participated actively in the discussions and deliberations, but only the delegates were entitled to vote. The theme of the Province Assembly was "Contemplative Living for Transformation."

Sister Basanti Lakra, the Provincial, in her keynote address said that the fruits of true contemplation are fearlessness, compassion, and creativity (FCC) and genuine contemplation leads to transformation at three levels: individual, community, and the society. She boldly stated that the religious are not workforce or recruits for ecclesiastical projects or continuity of the institutional service, but they are called primarily to live corporately the prophetic charism in the Church. The prophetic charism is expressed through creative interventions, challenging the unjust structures, and being compassionate to the victims of injustice.

Religious Life: A Call to Become a Karma Yogi to Continue the Mission of Jesus

Sister Basanti's profound expressions confirmed my own conviction that religious life is a call to radical discipleship of Jesus and not merely to become devotees of Jesus. The two dimensions of discipleship are clearly brought out in the Gospel of Mark: "He appointed the twelve to be with him and to be sent out" (Mk 3:14). Often the expression "to be with him" is wrongly understood and interpreted by most of the retreat preachers as sitting before the Blessed Sacrament and worshipping Jesus. Nowhere have I found in the Gospels Jesus asking his disciples to worship him. As I understand, "to be with him" means understanding the person of Jesus and internalizing his vision, mission, and value system so that a disciple will be fully equipped to continue his mission in the context in which she or he lives. Internalizing the vision, mission, and values of Jesus takes place through contemplation and not through worship or recitation of a series of vocal prayers.

As I understand from the Gospels, Jesus was a *Karma Yogi*, the one who integrated in himself *jnana marga* and *karma marga*. I do not find Jesus as a *bhakti marga*; Jesus was not following the rituals and worship patterns of the Jews. In fact, he broke many of the rules and rituals of the Jews, which were obstacles to be a genuine spiritual person. He broke the Sabbath law often by healing the sick on Sabbath days. He did not go to the temple to pray, but to teach people because people were available in the temple. He went to the mountains and lonely places to pray. He fiercely reacted to the commercialization of religion by driving out traders from Jerusalem temple, which was converted into a 'den of robbers'. He told the Samaritan woman that the true worship of God is done in truth and spirit. He vehemently criticized the Scribes and Pharisees for their hypocritical and ritualistic way of life by neglecting justice and mercy.

Because of their obsession with rituals, rules, and traditions they were neither able to experience the Kingdom of God nor capable of guiding people to experience the Kingdom of God.

Jesus showed to his disciples and the people a way of life that can make them happy and, thereby, experience the Kingdom of God here and now. The attitudes, principles, and values that characterize the new way of life are elucidated in the Sermon on the Mount, the essence of Jesus' teachings. The life and actions of Jesus were nothing but a practical exposition of a new way of life that has the power to transform oneself and the society. The early Christian community practised the way of life that Jesus taught his disciples. Mahatma Gandhi was very much influenced by the Sermon on the Mount and tried to shape his life and actions accordingly. That is why Bertrand Russell once said: "I know only one Christian, but he is not a Christian." Mahatma Gandhi, as Jesus, was a *Karma Yogi* too.

Social Commitment: Not an Option but a Must!

Social commitment for a consecrated woman or man in view of social transformation is mandatory. Often the religious congregations delegate the task of social commitment to a group of members who are often branded as 'social workers'. In majority of religious congregations, social work is the least priority and those who are involved in social work often feel that they are treated like second class citizens. In some congregations, there is no budgetary allocation for social work. Those who are involved in social work have to prepare project proposals and mobilize funds from donor agencies either from abroad or from India. The situation of majority of the dioceses is also not different from that of religious congregations. At the same time, dioceses and religious congregations have plenty of money to invest in educational institutions, particularly English

medium schools and self-financing colleges because they generate income.

After a long struggle, the CMI Congregation has taken a decision to allocate at least 10% of the gross annual income of the Congregation for social development at three levels: general, provincial, and local. How far this decision is being implemented is yet to be investigated. The reports presented at the General Synaxis and the Provincial Synaxes indicate that the decision is implemented to a great extent.

Delegating social commitment to a group of social workers is the result of a flawed understanding of the mission of Jesus and the meaning of religious life. Jesus' vision is Kingdom of God, creating a situation in which God is accepted as the Father or Mother and all human beings as brothers and sisters, enjoying equal dignity, opportunities, and rights. Realization of this vision requires transformation in the individuals and in the society. Hence, the mission of Jesus was social and individual transformation following the way of life as envisioned in the Sermon on the Mount. Religious, as radical disciples of Jesus, are called to continue this mission of transforming the society. The various activities or ministries undertaken by the consecrated women and men are the different means for achieving the one and the same goal of individual and social transformation.

Discipleship for Prophetic Mission

Bringing about individual and social transformation requires being prophetic. The mission of Jesus and all the prophets of the Old and New Testaments had two dimensions: denouncing and announcing, breaking and building, challenging and responding proactively. God spoke to the people of Israel through Prophet Amos: "Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like

waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing river” (Amos 5:23-24). John the Baptist challenged people to undergo change and to adopt of a way of life characterized by sharing, not exploiting others and not misusing authority (Lk 3:10-14). Jesus denounced the hypocritical and exploitative leadership of the Scribes and Pharisees while liberating people, particularly the poor and the excluded, from bondages and empowering them. He also brought about transformation in the rich and the powerful as exemplified by the conversion of Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Lk 19:1-10). The consecrated persons are called to continue this twofold prophetic mission of Jesus in the context of today.

Paradigm Shift from Service Providers to Animators and Leaders

In order to be effective in their prophetic mission the religious have to undergo a paradigm shift from service providers to animators and leaders. The religious congregations have been involved in providing various kinds of services to the society. Most of these services could be grouped into three categories: education, healthcare, and social or welfare services. During the last three decades many organizations, including the ones floated by the corporate sector, have entered the fields of education, healthcare, and social work. Even though there is still demand for admission in the schools run by the church organizations, other organizations have overtaken the religious congregations and diocesan institutions in all the three fields.

In spite of the huge presence of religious in the above mentioned three service sectors, they are in a position neither to influence the policies of the government nor the wider society. Except Mother Teresa none of the religious women or men could create a pan-Indian image in the field

of social work. Even though the religious congregations run thousands of educational institutions what contribution could they make in framing the educational policies? The priests, sisters, and brothers who are involved in these three sectors of services assume more and more the role of managers and, as a result, their availability to the people is drastically reduced. Institutions sometimes become a block to perform the prophetic role because of the fear of being targeted by the government and vested interest groups.

The unfolding scenario is an opportunity for the religious to reinvent their role in the society as the 24x7 disciples of Jesus by becoming leaders and animators. Even in the three sectors in which they are involved they have to become animators by delegating the job of management to competent lay persons who are committed to the core values of Jesus. The focus should be shifted from expansion and growth to effectiveness and impact on the stakeholders and the society. It is heartening to note that a few religious congregations have decided to appoint lay persons as principles and vice-principals of their schools.

Becoming the Salt and Light

Following the instruction of Jesus to become the salt of the earth, the religious have to enter into the mainstream society and give leadership. They could take up any job that goes with their vocation. They could be administrators of hospitals, principals, or teachers of schools run by the government or other organizations, journalists, employees in the public and private sectors, civil servants, musicians, artists, sports stars, etc. Irrespective of the field in which they are placed, they have to play the role of enlightened leaders with character and competence.

The religious have to use their creativity to respond prophetically to the new challenges like religious fundamentalism, exclusivist and racist policies pursued by

right wing leaders like Donald Trump and Narendra Modi, terrorism, concentration of wealth into the hands of a few individuals and corporations, vulgar consumerism, etc. Organizing the underprivileged groups to access their rights and put pressure on the government to adopt policies that lead to a more just and equitable social and economic order is undertaken by a few religious communities in collaboration with other like-minded civil society organizations. Such endeavours are to be multiplied.

Universal Solidarity Movement of Value Education for Peace (USM) is a proactive approach to train enlightened young leaders adopting a very innovative way. I have been part of it for the last three years as a team member. USM does not own any land or building. It has been functioning in rented premises for the last 24 years. It does not apply for funds to any donor agencies in India or abroad. Voluntary contributions are accepted, but no appeal is made for contribution. USM generates its resources through training, sale of books, conducting seminars, etc. USM literally follows the way of Jesus, depending completely on the providence of God, but always working hard using God-given talents and capacities. USM always lives on credit, with a liability of paying Rs. 500,000 to Rs. 600,000. But it does not deter USM from paying decent wages to workers and extending warm and generous hospitality to anyone who comes to USM. The whole focus is on realizing its vision of building a civilization of love through capacity-building of students and youth to become enlightened leaders.

The USM community consists of priests, sisters of different religious congregations, and lay persons belonging to different religions. Transparency and participation are its hallmarks. All are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation. Daily evaluation by the core team, every day from 9.00 pm to 10.00 pm, is a unique

characteristic of USM and it is the lifeline of USM, according to Father Varghese Alengaden, its founder. All share the same meals in the same dining room; guests along with their drivers join the USM community for meals. The dining hall of USM does not have a door. The USM community tries to present itself a role model for realizing the ideals of the "Kingdom of God."

Experiment of building inclusive communities and working through them is undertaken by a few religious congregations; but their number could be counted on fingers in India. Most of the religious congregations are still focusing on building and maintaining institutions. Quality is often compromised in the recruitment of candidates because of the concern for the maintenance of institutions. Mission takes a backseat when institutions become the priority.

An Entirely New Way of Training

The new way of living religious life needs a total demolition of the present type formation or training of the religious personnel. 'Repaired old wineskins' will not be able to contain 'new wine'. New challenges require new solutions or responses. First of all, the term 'formation' is to be replaced with the expression 'capacity building'. The religious personnel are formed to suit a system and, in this process, most of the creativity, freedom with responsibility, independent thinking, and scientific temper are lost and a kind of deformation takes place in the members. The whole training process shall focus on adherence to the core values and principles of Jesus, self-discipline and self-learning so that the religious women and men will be able to survive, thrive, and bear lasting fruits in any situation.

If the call of a religious is for continuing the mission of Jesus, from the very beginning of the training they should be trained to relate with the society and build relationship

with the people. They should know how to reach out to all sections of the people. They should learn the ways and means for building and fostering public relation. There should not be any separation between candidates, novices, juniors, the full-fledged members, workers, etc. All should be part of the same community, as in a family, freely interacting with each other. The training centres should be open to the people. The trainees should have the freedom to bring their friends and colleagues to the religious house as well as to visit the houses of their colleagues. The trainers should be able to guide the trainees in the process of building healthy relationship with people.

Often the priests and nuns are not effective and not able to influence the society and fail to become change agents because they lack contemplation. The candidates are to be trained how to contemplate; it has to become a way of life. Contemplation is a process of observation, reflection, getting insights or learning, and application of the insights to life and mission.

Capacity building is a continuous process. What is required during the process of training is creating an intense desire in the candidates for learning continuously and doing one's best without making any compromise with quality. "Compete with yourself, not with others. Don't try to be the first, aim to do your best!" should be the foundational principle of the religious training. An important skill needed to play the role of a leader is excellent communication, both written and oral. The religious men and women should have mastery in the local language, besides being proficient in Hindi and English in the context of India. They must be able to communicate with ease and effectiveness at least in these three languages.

As part of self-learning from the very beginning of the training, the trainees may be asked (1) to read newspapers and news magazines every day without fail and write letter

to the editor, (2) read at least one inspiring book like biographies of great leaders, self-improvement, leadership, etc., and write a brief review, (3) write a brief report with special focus on the insights and learning of the seminars, workshops, and retreats they attend, (4) write at least one article in a month on any socially relevant issue, and (5) write a speech in a month on any socially relevant issue and deliver it before the community. As a part of self-discipline, each trainee is asked to prepare a personal timetable and follow it strictly.

Conclusion

I have shared above my understanding of religious life based on my reflection on the teachings of Jesus. I have watched the movie *Jesus of Nazareth*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli not less than six times as part of the Christocentric Leadership Retreat conducted for the priests and religious by USM. Every time I watch it I get new insights. Some of the insights I got from watching the movie *Jesus of Nazareth* are integrated in this write up. For me, religious life is a call to continue the mission of Jesus, being available 24x7 to people. It is a call to bring about transformation in the society in view of building communities in which all human beings enjoy equal dignity and have equal rights and opportunities. Therefore, social commitment is the essence of religious life. Contemplation helps a religious to track whether he or she is on the right track, to draw inspiration for being creative, to empathize with other human beings, particularly the needy, and to be courageous to challenge injustice and untruth and to face crises.

To be an effective disciple of Christ one must be integrally part of the society and bring about change from within. Rules, regulations, and practices that are obstacles in the way of becoming salt and light are to be abandoned. The present type of formation, which in reality deforms a person

and almost kills all kinds of creativity and innovation, is to be replaced by a training process that focuses on capacity-building and character-building of the trainees. The focus of the new method of training shall be self-discipline and self-education.

Celebrating CMI Missions

FROM THE BEDROCK OF BIJNOR EXPERIENCE

Fr. George Kulangara CMI

God wanted His chosen people to be a people with memory. They were constantly reminded to remember what the Lord their God did to set them free and make them one people. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses their leader repeatedly asks them to remember and not to forget. Remembering what they went through during their forty years long sojourn in the desert and the wondrous ways in which the Lord led them out and made a model out of them for the whole world to see and admire was important. This remembering was to remain the driving force for them for generations to come.

For the CMIs of St. John's Province, their 'Bijnor Experience' is almost akin to 'Exodus Experience' for the people of Israel. It was the call of the Bijnor Mission in 1972 that brought the CMIs to the Himalayan hills and Gangetic plains in the first place. The CMIs have since moved beyond the borders of Bijnor mission (diocese). Of the one hundred and twenty-two ordained members of the Province, currently there are only about thirty serving in the territory of the Diocese of Bijnor. Others have moved to other pastures as the Province moved its borders beyond Bijnor and established centres in four other dioceses of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Far West region of Nepal, and Ghana in West Africa. Yet, to this day, the memory of their 'Bijnor Experience' remains the force that drives the CMIs of St. John's.

For the people of Israel, exodus was much more than a march out of slavery; it was a march into God-experience through which they learnt to trust in God and not to be

overawed by the challenges ahead. 'Bijnor Experience' was no less an exodus experience. It taught the pioneer missionaries that no challenges, however insurmountable and intimidating they might seem, are too big. For the new generation of missionaries, it was a memory full of lessons and insights. Bijnor experience was their march to a discovery of being empowered by the Lord who called them.

Ingredients of Disaster

The biblical exodus did not begin with Moses and his people in Egypt. Its origin should instead be traced to Abram's leaving his father's land in Canaan. Abram, who was happily settled in Canaan, was asked to leave his country, his relatives and his father's home and go to a land that God would show him. Abram put his trust in the Lord and traded all he had for a dream God planted in his mind (Gn 12:1-2). It has been habitual for the God of the Bible to uproot the people of His love and His promise from their favourable surroundings and send them through a whirlpool of deprivation and challenges before they arrive robust in faith that works wonders. For the pioneer missionaries, their homeland with everything it offered and their ministry at home was their Canaan. When the call of Bijnor Mission came, they left their Canaan behind. While what they left behind was real, what they traded it for was only a promise in their prayers and dreams in their minds. What awaited them in Bijnor were challenges of Himalayan proportions. What Bijnor Mission was at its take off point looked ingredients of a perfect disaster!

- As missionaries they were dropped in a virtual land, having not a square foot of land they could call their own. Among the five civil districts - Bijnor, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi, and Joshimath - that were to form Bijnor Mission, the Church at Raja ka

Tajpur with the famous royal connections was the only Church property. But at the creation of the new mission, the ecclesiastical boundary was so made that the tehsil of Dhampur in Bijnor district remained with Meerut, the mother diocese, leaving the new born ecclesiastical unit virtually an orphan. Archbishop Evangelisti of Meerut had famously said, on signing the documents of bifurcation of his diocese and entrusting the new mission to the newly appointed Exarch, Father Gratian Mundadan CMI: "We have lost nothing; you have gained nothing."

- The Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) counted the civil districts of Bijnor, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, and Chamoli among the most underdeveloped districts in India in a report it published in 1972. That it was in the same year when Bijnor Mission was inaugurated was a coincidence pregnant with meaning. "Give them something to eat," the Lord seemed to be telling the missionaries. For them, it was a rediscovery of their powerlessness and the impotency of the mission vis-à-vis the need of the context.
- The greatest challenge that confronted the pioneer missionaries was a theological one. By 1972, the theology of openness to and appreciation for the "truth that was in every religion" initiated by the Second Vatican Council had found acceptance in many ecclesiastical circles in India. Hence, the group of untested missionaries from 'God's own country' had the unenviable task of packaging their mission of evangelization in the *devbhoomi* (land of the gods) with a content and style that were both theologically sound and contextually acceptable. A quick survey of their new home that took them through the holiest places of the Hindus, like Rishikesh, Haridwar, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, etc., convinced the missionaries that they had

to think and come up with an out of the box missionary paradigm.

- Of the five civil districts that formed the Mission of Bijnor, only Bijnor was in the plains, others being the hill districts of the Himalayan region. The hills have been beckoning the pilgrims and the mountain lovers who flock to the hills in the summer months. But because of the difficult terrain and the inhospitable climate, others have felt dissuaded by the hills. Even today, the Uttarakhand government is trying without success to stem the migration of the local population from the hills to the plains. No wonder, since the time of the formation of the ecclesiastical unit of Agra, which is practically the mother of all the present dioceses north of Vindhya, no Catholic missionary had ventured to this part. For the new missionaries from Malabar, huddling to the comforts of the plains of the Bijnor district was not an option.
- If the heightened excitement and expectations in the CMI Congregation and Syro-Malabar Church at the call from the Himalayas created in the minds of those sent illusions of largesse from the Mother Church, they were to be dispelled sooner than later. Literally, they struggled even for a hand to mouth existence. Personnel, finances, local friends, influence – everything was hard to come by.

These were just some of the manifold challenges that greeted the pioneers of Bijnor Mission upon their arrival in their new homeland.

Evangelization of the Evangelizers

From a human point of view, the setting in which Bijnor Mission was born contained ingredients of a perfect disaster. But that was only a reading of the context from a *merely human* point of view. For the missionaries who still felt the raw pain of giving up the land, the people, and the

successes that were theirs until a few days back, the only treasure they could cling on to was a sense of having been called and a trust in the faithfulness of the one who called them. The more they felt deprived, the more they clung to it. Almost instinctively they shared the optimism of Paul, *the* missionary for all times and places: "We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

In hindsight, we can say that every challenge from the context turned into an advantage for the mission. The missiological dictum that every evangelizer must first be evangelized worked perfectly well with the evangelizers to Bijnor and Garhwal.

Dreams are the cherished possessions and potent weapons of the dispossessed. The pioneers of Bijnor dreamt big and high. With nothing in their hands, they let their minds brim with dreams and hearts with sure hope. The realization that they were orphans of the Lord and strangers in the land evangelized them. Unlike any time before, they identified themselves with the misery of the incarnate Lord, the missionary par exemplar and felt the power of having nothing in this world.

The greatest advantage was the freedom and power of having nothing. Those who have must exercise caution at every step; unrestrained enthusiasm can reduce them to being paupers. The pioneers of Bijnor had nothing to hold on to. So, they were unrestrained in their trust in the One who had called and made them flagbearers of his mission in Bijnor and Garhwal. From this unrestrained trust were born unrestrained dreams. Plans and projects were lined up. They settled for nothing less than the big and the excellent. Today, forty-five years later, Bijnor Mission has presented itself as a model difficult to follow for others around it and as a challenge difficult for them to match. The scale of its growth and the achievements in its kitty have turned others

who watched the mission with scepticism and condescending sympathy to its admirers.

- Not having the patronage of the Mother Church had a flipside. Feeling the prick of resource-less-ness, Bishop Gratian travelled the length and breadth of the country and the globe, courting everyone, small and big, who wished well for the mission and made a generous investment of his time and energy nurturing the missionary bond with them. Bijnor became a mission of the World Church, having partners all over the world.
- The imposing Cathedral, which is an artistic marvel, in the nondescript town of Kotdwar is a statement that even the most-impossible-looking mission undertaken on the strength of faith brings ecstasies on its way.
- When the mission of Bijnor was bifurcated from the diocese of Meerut, almost all the urban centres remained with the mother diocese. From the point of urban civilization, Bijnor was a rural wasteland. But soon, wherever the missionaries pitched their tent became like the light set on a hill, attracting the people who wanted to build a future in the light of knowledge. Naturally, it was mainly the apostolate of education that propelled the mission of the Good News both in the valleys and hills.
- For the pioneer CMIs of Bijnor Mission, the transition from the monastic lifestyle they had lived in Kerala to the 'monadic' life in the mission was very trying physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Without the protective layers of community structures, they could have easily slipped into personal indiscipline and spiritual anarchy. In Bijnor, however, the transition brought a blessing in disguise. Here, the bonding of the hearts and minds made 'Bijnor Mission' a euphemism for a 'Family'. Every missionary from even the remotest mission centre would glue around their colleague facing a challenge; pains and joys were shared; plans were owned up by everyone. For

every newcomer in the mission, be it a seminarian or a young nun, the family that 'Bijnor' offered became the greatest inspiration and support base.

- The not so enviable task of having to take the Good News to a land considered the cradle of Hindu spirituality soon became a bunch of creative possibilities. A new paradigm for the Indian Church soon took roots with Indian Christian theology, inculturated liturgy, contextual formation, etc., becoming acceptable patterns. Jeevandhara Ashram at Jaiharikhal and Samanvaya College of Theology at Rishikesh became trendsetters in their respective fields.
- Any people's cultural mind-set and philosophy is conditioned by its context. The CMI missionaries of Syro-Malabar Church had, no doubt, borne in their minds the stamp of their context: living in a land squeezed between the Arabian sea and the eastern ghats, being a vibrant Church confined to the narrow stretch of land between the rivers of Pampa and Bharathappuzha, being a community of monks withdrawn from the world to the sanctuaries of their monasteries – all these had formed their self-view and their worldview. But once in Bijnor, the new context initiated them to a culture of encounter and consequent culture of openness.
- One of the most imaginative and daring steps that the budding Bijnor Mission took even as it was only taking baby steps was to bring the newly recruited candidates of the Congregation to the mission far away from their homes. The first batch candidates arrived in 1973, and were put up in a rented building at Meerut. The candidates would do their intermediate studies in Hindi medium and would be cared for by the Cathedral Parish of the Meerut Latin Diocese. This was a first in the Congregation: CMI formation right from its first stage in a setting of interaction with everything alien. This

instilled in them a perspective that was broad, inclusive, and positive.

Today, the memory of 'Bijnor Experience' is a bedrock of lessons:

- When the mission is of the Lord, challenges move from being adversities to opportunities.
- Every evangelizer needs to be constantly evangelized. For this, one needs to constantly engage positively with the context.
- Material resource-less-ness of a mission has a potent charm. The Lord empowers it with his mantle.
- No missionary is expected to be successful in his/her mission. We need only to be faithful. Moses who pioneered exodus was stopped in his tracks right before he could step in to the Promised Land.

Paolo Coelho wrote in his *Alchemist*: The CMI pioneers of Bijnor chased a big dream. Given the challenges on the way, the chase looked stupid and impossible. But it was the Lord of Mission who conspired with many to bring ecstasies on their way.

FR. ALBERT NAMBIAPARAMPIL CMI
A Prophet of Religious Harmony

Fr. John Peter Muringathery CMI

The perennial spirit of our Indian heritage is very clearly enshrined in the following words of Rigveda I.89.i: “Let noble thoughts come to us from every side” (*Aa no bhadrah krutavo yantu vishwato*). Swami Vivekananda, in his famous address at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, proclaimed openness and respect for all religions to be the fruit of the genius of India. Unfortunately, we see the mounting efforts spearheaded by the Hindutva forces to undo this sacred heritage for political ends. Where the ruling political system with its communal and majoritarian ideology is taking the country is a concern shared by all who believe in the perennial heritage. Therefore, the attribute given to Fr. Albert Nambiaparampil by the Malayalam daily *Malayala Manorama*, announcing his passing away on 6 February 2017 at the age of 86, “Prophet of Religious Harmony,” is very fitting. “*With a sense of foreboding he read the signs of times and worked tirelessly to make people conscious of the traditional heritage and to preserve it. He considered it as his life’s mission to help people understand the values in each other’s traditions, respect and learn from each other.*”

Father Nambiaparampil’s initiatives in promoting interreligious harmony were unparalleled. Marcus Braybrooke, an Anglican clergyman who was associated himself with Fr. Albert for more than 40 years wrote his impressions as follows: “Albert made an important contribution to interfaith fellowship in Kochi (or Cochin), where he lived for many years; across India, especially in his work for the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI); and worldwide, both as a member of the Vatican Secretariat

for Dialogue in Rome and by his active support for many international interfaith organisations, including co-founding the World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils (WFIRC) and serving as its secretary general" (*Interfaith Observer*, 15 March 2017). He served as the secretary to the CBCI Dialogue Commission for three terms and was considered to be responsible for drafting its "Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue."

Basic to the Catholic position on interfaith dialogue is the teaching of the Vatican II in its document on Church's relationship with other religions *Nostra Aetate*: "Let Christians, prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture" (NA §2). Pope Francis, during a visit to the Roman Synagogue on 16 January 2016 said: "Interreligious dialogue must be based on the recognition that all people are children of the same God who calls them to praise him and to work together for the good of all."

In his dialogue mission, Fr. Albert was armed with his own firm commitment to the teaching of the Church and loyalty to the national heritage. In one of the photos included in the coverage of his funeral, we see Cardinal Parecattil and representatives of other religions at the inauguration of Chavara Cultural Centre, Kochi, in 1971. Another photo shows the presence of the representatives of other religions at his funeral. Thus, his life was a pilgrimage together with people of all religions.

Though the teaching of the Church was clearly spelt out by the Vatican Council II and recent Popes, most of the believers are ignorant of it. Therefore, they avoid coming in contact with people of other faiths at a religious level, though they move with them in all other fields. The church

leaders at the local level are reluctant to educate them about the new teaching of the Church for fear of promoting indifferentism. Thus, the ordinary believers hold on to the traditional attitude which amounts to the practical position that there is 'no salvation outside the Church'. Non-Christians, on the other side, don't know anything about the Church except perhaps its old "holier than thou" attitude about other religions. It is against this situation that we have to appreciate the meaning of '*sangamam*' or living-together of members of different religions, a main item in the interfaith programmes of Fr. Albert. Interfaith live-together programme or *Sangamam* is aimed at helping the participants who are members of dialogue groups from all over India and friends from abroad to know each other with their religious background and experience.

To mark the centenary of the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, United States of America, Fr. Albert organized the Interfaith World Celebration of Unity and Life at Kochi in 1993. More than 360 participants from many nations, cultures and religions attended the conference on "Religion and Human Solidarity." It was concluded with a clear position that every religion should lead to society's transformation and resolved to form dialogue groups in areas where such groups did not exist.

Fr. Albert faced criticism from within and from outside, like anyone who ventures into this field of apostolate which had no precursors in Indian Church. From within he had to face the suspicion of creating indifferentism, that all religions are the same. In Tamil, it is called "*emmatham sammatham*." Though for an ordinary Hindu this position is aggregable, Christians do not endorse such a position. A Catholic believer is asked by the Vatican Council II to appreciate the spiritual treasures in other religions while witnessing to one's own faith. The fear of indifferentism is spread by certain fundamentalist charismatic and

Pentecostal preachers. Criticism from outside would be about a hidden motive of conversion, that interreligious dialogue mission is a strategy of the Church to convert others into Christianity. Fr. Albert courageously faced these criticisms and carved a space for his creative mission in interfaith dialogue.

He knew this mission was a part of the charism of the CMI Congregation. The chronicles of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara show how the Founding Fathers, in their search for a place, responded when the local Hindus objected to a Christian Church coming in the vicinity of their temple, at Pullarikunnu. The Founding Fathers said that they did not want to start an ashram hurting the religious sentiments of the people of other religions.

The fitting tribute to Fr. Albert will be to learn from him to read the signs of times and continue his mission. More and more younger members should come forward to take up the mission. Our cultural and dialogue centres should have occasions to bring together members of different religions to know and learn from each other. Similarly, we should try to involve members of other religions in our services for the poor and marginalized. These are only a few suggestions that we take to heart from the dynamic life of Fr. Albert Nambiaparampil.

CMI ARUNACHAL MISSION
A New Exodus to North-Eastern Frontiers

Fr. Nijo Palatty CMI

Some Significant Details of the Diocese of Itanagar

Establishment: 7 December 2005

Rite: Roman (Latin)

Patron: St. Joseph

Area: 52,288 km²

Population: 80,000 Catholics (of 725,591 total) (2015)

Languages: Adi, Aka, Apatani, Hill Miri, Monpa, Nyishi, Tagin,
Mynniong, Bori, Bokar, Pai Libo, Ramos, etc.

Ecclesiastical Province: Guwahati

Deanery: Aalo; Other Parishes in the Deanery: Aalo, Basar, Kaying,
Likabali, Pasigat, Tato, Yingkiong, and Tuting

Statistics (2017): 33 parishes, 99 priests (11 diocesan, 88 religious),
164 religious (9 brothers, 155 sisters), 30 seminarians

Bishop of the Diocese of Itanagar: Rt. Rev. Dr. John Thomas
Kattrukudiyil

Geographical, Political, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Situation

Arunachal Pradesh, known as 'the Land of the Rising Sun', one of the most sparsely populated states of India, covers an area of 84,743 square kilometres. This region acquired an independent political status on 20 January 1972, when it was declared a Union Territory under the name Arunachal Pradesh. The State Arunachal Pradesh Bill was passed by the Parliament in 1986 and, with effect from 20 February 1987 Arunachal Pradesh became the twenty-fourth state of the Indian Union.

It is a land of lush green forests, deep river valleys and beautiful plateaus. The land is mostly mountainous with the Himalayan range along the northern borders criss-crossing

with ranges running north-south. These divide the state into five river valleys: the Kameng, the Subansiri, the Siang, the Lohit, and the Tirap. All these are fed by snow from the Himalayas and countless rivers and rivulets. The weather and the climate of Arunachal Pradesh are quite distinct from the rest of the country. The climate of the State is dominated by the Himalayan system and the altitudinal variations. The climate is highly hot and humid at the lower altitudes and in the valleys covered by swampy dense forest particularly in the eastern section, while it becomes exceedingly cold in the higher altitudes.

Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

There are twenty-six major tribes and a number of sub-tribes inhabiting the area. Most of these communities are ethnically similar, having derived from the original Mongoloid stock; however, their geographical isolation from each other has brought amongst them certain distinctive characteristics in language, dress, and customs. Broadly, the entire population may be divided into three cultural groups based on their socio-politico-religious affinities. The Monpas and Sherdak Pens of Tawang and West Kameng districts follow the lamaistic tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. Culturally similar to them are Membas and Khembas who live in the high mountains along the northern borders, Khamptis and Singphos inhabiting the eastern part of the State are Buddhists of Hinayana sect. They are said to have migrated from Thailand and Burma long ago and continue to use ancient scripts derived from their original homeland. The second group of people of Adis, Akas, Apathanis, Bungnis, Nishis, Mishmis, Mijis, Thangsos, etc., worship the Sun and the Moon Gods, namely, Donyi-Polo and Abo-Tani, the original ancestors for most of these tribes. Their religious rituals largely coincide with the phases of agricultural cycles. They

traditionally practise Jhuming or shifting cultivation. The third group comprises of Noctes and Wanchos in the Tirap district. These are hardly people known for their structured village society in which the hereditary village chief still plays a vital role. The Noctes also practise elementary form of Vaishnavism.

Catholic Church in Arunachal Pradesh

The State of Arunachal Pradesh has been maintaining strict regulations for the entry of non-Arunachalies to the State. Christian institutions and missionaries were not allowed to function openly. The Indigenous Faith Bill of 1978 restricted conversions and denied the right to preach and establish places of worship. In spite of all these restrictions, many have become Catholics over the years. Catholic faith was introduced into the State in 1977 by three young boys who studied in Catholic mission school in Shillong (Meghalaya). Today the three have grown into over 110,000 Catholics spread over 230 centres in 14 districts of the State. This amazing growth of Catholic faith has been not only the fruit of the work of missionaries but because of the students in our schools and lay people. In short, it is right to say that the Church in Arunachal Pradesh is a Church of the laity. Earlier persecutions from the Government authorities were the lot of many who were baptized. Even today, Christians are discriminated at different levels. In spite of all sorts of harassments, the work of evangelization went ahead under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. A good number of people or leaders who were anti-Christian in their approach have been converted through miraculous healings.

At present, the political situation in Arunachal Pradesh is different. There are a number of Catholic ministers in the Government along with a number of political leaders and high-level officers at the various administrative levels. Almost all the well-educated leaders have received their

education from Catholic institutions outside the State of Arunachal Pradesh. As a result, today's political leaders in Arunachal Pradesh acknowledge the great work of missionaries and they have changed their anti-Christian policies. The State has accepted the Christian system of education. It is very encouraging to note that, in the meantime, two new Catholic dioceses have been established in Arunachal Pradesh in December 2005, namely, the Dioceses of Miao and Itanagar.

Diocese of Itanagar

It is glad news for the CMI Congregation that the Diocese of Itanagar has voluntarily come forward and invited CMIs to help the Diocese with our manifold resources in the work of evangelization. The CMI Deacons of St. Paul Province, Bhopal, have been doing their Diaconate Ministry since 2014 in this Diocese. Rev. Fr. Cejo Chakery CMI and Fr. Nijo Palatty CMI were the first priests sent to the Diocese of Itanagar for a year of pastoral ministry soon after their ordination. Fr. Xavier Pottookara CMI and Fr. Akhil Kavungal CMI were also sent in the following years. Rev. Fr. Praveen Payyapilly CMI served for a year in the Imphal Archdiocese, Manipur. Invariably all of them have expressed their satisfaction in the pastoral ministry. There are only twelve diocesan priests in the diocese; hence, the bishop is assisted by around seventy religious priests and nuns to run the diocese.

Scope in the Tuting Mission

The church in Arunachal Pradesh is in its nascent stage. Here we have the possibility of pastoral ministry with an emphasis on evangelization. Currently, our members are confined to presbytery mode of pastoral ministry. In Arunachal, CMI missionaries can enrich themselves with wonderful opportunities for pastoral experience and evangelization. Arunachal continues to offer possibilities of

direct evangelization without any opposition from the State or the local people.

The hard labour demanded for evangelization results in the fruits of faith we get in return from the land; indeed, the missionaries have shed their sweat and blood to reap the fruits of faith. The evangelizing work of missionaries of both men and women religious congregation has facilitated many vocations for various congregations. The CMIs are in North-East to pitch the tent to recruit as many as vocations we get to carry out the mission of the Lord and spread his Good News to still unknown areas of the country. After having stayed two years in the North-East, particularly in Arunachal, interacting with members of several congregations of men and women, there is a realization that the North-East is a very fertile land for faith and vocations.

Taking into consideration the number of people we are able to reach out and the extent of good that we can bring forth in terms of evangelization, faith formation, education, building up of ideal Catholic communities, etc., we need to have a long term vision of effective pastoral programmes and educational institutions to empower the people of Arunachal and to facilitate the proclamation of the Good News and the celebration of our Catholic identity.



**Bishop and Dignitaries at the Opening of
CMI Arunachal Mission in Tuting**



**Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General,
with the Faithful in Tuting, Arunachal**



**Faithful from Arunachal Mission
at Prior General's House, Chavara Hills**



**Brothers from Dharmaram College, Bangalore,
Reaching Out to Students from Marginalized Families**

Arunachal Mission

BEGINNING OF CMI MISSION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH Personal Reminiscences of First CMI Missionaries Fr. Nijo Palatty CMI & Fr. Cejo Chakery CMI

News in Good News

We write these few lines of our pastoral tidings from Tuting, Arunachal Pradesh, close to China Border, North East India. This is a new mission of the CMI Congregation with many challenges and prospects for great enduring pastoral fulfilment. After having stayed in Arunachal for two years, CMI Fathers of St. Paul Province, Bhopal, have extended the mission territory to Arunachal Pradesh. His Excellency Rev. Dr. John Thomas, Bishop of Itanagar, has invited CMI St. Paul Province to collaborate with the Diocese in its missionary endeavours. The Province has joyfully accepted this invitation from North East diocese. The kerygma of the first CMI mission was from 'periphery to the centre'. This is a mission typically at the periphery of the nation and also of the Diocese of Itanagar.

Geographically, Tuting shares the international border of China. It houses the additional headquarters of the Upper Siang District. Since it is border area, naturally, the whole of area has a strong army presence. Approximately, Tuting is situated about 800 kilometres away from Guwahati and falls under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the newly erected Diocese of Itanagar (7 December 2005). The closest airport is in Dibrubgah.

Catholic Mission in Tuting has more than 600 Catholics. As per the Census, there are 160 families under the proposed parish territory. The families are not floating people but they are of the land. The church was established in 1993. There are 8 Catholic villages under this proposed

parish. It was on Saturday, 5 November 2016 we - Fr. Abish Perumbilly CMI, Fr. Cejo Chakery CMI and Fr. Nijo Palatty CMI - reached Tuting along with Rev. Fr. Joseph Chakkalackal MSFS.

6 November 2016 was a golden day in the annals of St. Paul Province, Bhopal, as we informally began this new mission in the Diocese of Itanagar. It was on 15 March 2017 we had the formal inauguration of the CMI Arunachal Mission and the declaration of Holy Rosary Parish at Tuting. This new mission has been entrusted to CMI St. Paul Province, Bhopal. Fr. Cejo Chakery and Fr. Nijo Palatty stay in Tuting since 5 November 2016. This is the first parish church entrusted to the care of the CMI Congregation in the whole of the North-East India. We can be proud of this new mission which is exclusively for pastoral ministry in the direct evangelization mode. The local people are very responsive to the Good News and are very generous in their approach towards the CMI missionaries. The pastoral ministry in Arunachal offers opportunities for pastoral fulfilment and the steady increase in the number of Catholic population is a missionary impetus for our missionary work.

Good News on Foot

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces peace and who announces salvation” (Is 52:7).

Invariably, all missionaries who work in this region consider it a blessing to be with the people of Arunachal Pradesh irrespective of cultural diversity and linguistic differences. ‘Gospel Tour’ (i.e., village touring ministry on foot) is an age-old strong practice of the church in the North East. Missionaries had a hard time in bringing the Good News to the Land of the Rising Sun (that is what Arunachal Pradesh means) especially to its peripheries. It was not at all easy for the missionaries to step into the State of Arunachal

Pradesh because of the misunderstanding and hostility towards them which existed there before some three decades. Braving all such odds our pioneering missionaries, very especially Late Brother Prem Bhai (who is also known as the Apostle of Arunachal Pradesh), have travelled extensively through the villages carrying the joy of the Gospel. We salute them for their zealous and courageous 'Gospel Tours', which has facilitated sowing the seed of Good News among the people of Arunachal Pradesh for the first time.

The 'Gospel tour' is again a wonderful time to be with the people who live in the fringes of the parish territories. I try here to jot down some reminiscences of the Gospel tour made with Parish Youth from Holy Rosary Church, Tuting. It was a week-long village ministry on foot. It was Good news for the villages of Tuting Parish, namely, Mossing, Migging, Panggo, Singging, Ningging, Zido, and Ngaming. All these villages have Catholic presence and they welcome us very warmly. Since it was a holiday, five of our Parish Youth and myself went to all the seven villages within the territory of the Parish. The theme of the Gospel tour was "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). Proclamation of the Word of God really strengthened our faith experience. Despite the inclement weather, steep mountains, long hours of walk on foot, and tasteless food patterns, God kept all the six of us sound and healthy throughout the seven days of Gospel tour. We covered almost 70 kilometres on foot negotiating five to six hours through jungles and mountains.

Didn't St. Paul build his communities with his living experience of the Risen Lord? We join with St. Paul who says: "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess 5:18). In spite of all the inconveniences all members of the parish youth were invariably content and happy after the Gospel tour. We thank God almighty for His unassuming and

protecting accompaniment. We rendered our services by way of hearing confessions, preaching, celebrating the Holy Eucharist, administering Baptism, conducting house blessings, organizing praise and worship, teaching catechism, and offering classes on cleanliness, etc.

We were also singing and praying Rosary on our way and did the same before entering each village. The youth were very active in singing and teaching songs throughout the Gospel tour. Every day, in the evenings, we had praise and worship along with respective Catholic mondali in each village without fail.

“Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). When we take up the mission command of Jesus along with the challenges we live the Word of God. The pastoral satisfaction we enjoy on this land is incomparable and incredible. We thank God almighty for the numerous blessings and rich faith experiences we received during the days of the Gospel tour. We pray that we may be able to re-live this Gospel experience in our life ahead.

THE 'BOUNDLESS BOUNDARIES' OF INDIA My Arunachal Experience

Fr. Oliver Inchody CMI

The breaking news came in: "St. Paul Province (Bhopal) is venturing a mission in Tuting, the Sub-District headquarters of the Upper Siang Dist., Arunachal Pradesh." It was almost for last two to three years, different parts of Arunachal were selected by CMI Fathers of St. Paul Province, Bhopal, for their pastoral experience, a mandatory requirement for the young priests soon after their Priestly Ordination. Thus, three or four of our priests were engaged in intense pastoral ministry in and around the Diocese of Itanagar. But the breaking news culminated these self-initiated efforts and rendered a new sparkling dimension to the overall Global Mission thrust of the entire CMI Congregation.

As per the new directives and decision of the St. Paul Province and the Diocese of Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, on 5 November 2016, two young priests unofficially moved into a rented house at Tuting. Even if they were deprived of the basic necessities in the new surroundings, the new mission was singled out by the zealous missionary spirit of the young priests, Fathers Cejo Chakery and Nijo Palatty. Their thatched bamboo house was made more habitable and religious by the enormous cooperation and collaboration of the Catholic parishioners of the locality.

It was in the month of February 2017, an inordinate liking for the Arunachal Mission broke out in me. On 12 February by noon, I arrived at Naharlagun railway station with another CMI priest who is supposed to work one year as his pastoral year in the Diocese of Itanagar. We were cordially welcomed at the station by one of our CMI priests, who is working in Tuting and were guided to the District Tourism

Officer to work on the ILP (Inner Line Permit), the official visiting permit to move around the whole of Arunachal for any outsider. The Permit is usually granted for one month, which can be further extended as per the need of the visitor. Thus, after the initial official proceedings, we headed to the nearby Itanagar Bishop's House. The Bishop's House is almost 15 kilometres from the Naharlagun railway station. After resting for a day at the Bishop's House, I was prepared for the long and tedious trip to Tuting.

The next day early morning at 6.00 am, my companion priest managed to get a ticket to Yingkiong by a shared taxi, the first step to reach Tuting. The trip lasted for almost twelve hours through the most difficult terrains of Arunachal. From Itanagar to Pasighat, the roads are rather good and the highway is almost 270 kilometres long; it took around six hours for us to reach Pasighat. Pasighat is the lunch stop, which is also the last district headquarters before we climb the most difficult Siang Mountains. The second lap of the trip to Yingkiong from Pasighat is really memorable because of the narrow and uneven roads at the side of the mighty mountains covered with lush green rain forests. It is the first time in my life that I have seen such a thick forest adorned by the beautiful coloured plants and huge sky-scraping trees. The other side of the narrow road is marked by deep unending ridges which lead to the calmly flowing majestic Siang River. Most of the roads are either washed away or are being denuded by the incessant rains of these mountainous areas. Landslides are quite routine sights and blocked roads or traffic jams cause endless inconvenience to the passengers. Anyhow, after another six hours ride through these tough terrains, the vehicle reached Yingkiong around 6.30 pm, travelling almost 145 kilometres. At the stop, Fr. Joseph Chakkalackal MSFS was waiting to take me to his rectory which is again another six kilometres from the town. The night rest was made remarkable by Fr. Joseph's

warm hospitality and the body pain that was caused by the jerks and jolts on the 'roadless' roads.

The very next day, at 6.00 am, I continued my journey to the destination, Tuting. This time to catch the shared taxi, I had to cross the mighty Siang River through a bridge with its floor paved with wooden planks and strengthened by iron ropes from the two sides of the river. Once I stepped onto the bridge and looked at the whole surroundings, I was a bit taken aback and I began to shiver especially while looking into the calmly flowing river deep down the bridge. I was hesitant to continue over the shaky bridge but the priest who is supposed to help getting the taxi encouraged me to move on. The bridge is almost 0.74 kilometres long, and even now I don't know how I crossed it over! The second phase of the trip was much more tedious with the bumpy narrow roads. But the scenic beauty was splendid! While enjoying the Siang River, mountains, and the dark rainforests, I lost track of the time. When the taxi stopped for the lunch near a shabby dilapidated store, everybody got out. The food was really simple and native and nothing was extraordinary there to enjoy. Immediately after the food, we continued our journey.

At 4.30 pm, the taxi stopped somewhere around Tuting. The driver insisted me to get out. As I contacted our priest in Tuting by phone, I understood that that the driver was correct that it was the stop for me to alight. When I turned around, I could see the smiling face of my companion priest of the Tuting mission. That was really a consolation for me that I am in the right place in the right hands!

The rented house, where the priests stay, is really a very simple thatched bamboo house with four ordinary rooms of very limited facilities. One room is shared by the two residential priests and the adjacent room is used as a common room, another room as a small chapel, and the other as the guest room. All these rooms have just one

common bathroom-cum-toilet outside the building. A typical 'Arunachal' bamboo-kitchen with a 'centralized *choola*' (fireplace) serves as both the visitors room and the cooking place. But that is the mostly used place in the whole building, especially in the winter and rainy seasons. The physical consolation and convenience that the *choola* provides in these seasons is simply marvellous and unimaginable. I still cherish those beautiful days I spent around that *choola*, especially with the meagre warm clothes I had during the incessant rain and freezing cold when I was in Tuting. In fact, I am really proud of our CMI young confreres who can also adjust to these bare necessities of our Arunachal lifestyle. Most of the time the mobile network is either out of range or completely cut off; there is no access to TV network and the internet is almost intermittent. Arunachal Mission explicitly and meticulously shows that these modern media lifestyle is not at all a necessity to do serious works like immersing oneself among the local people and to reach out to them by ministerial activities. What is most important is that the resident priests, within a very short time, have gained an immovable place in the hearts and minds of the poor local people, and they get enough time to communicate with the local tribals (i.e., Aadi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh), and spend time to make calculated moves to plan for the welfare and holistic and integral development of the parishioners.

A word about the Tuting Parish, I believe, is well in place. The Tuting parish, which originally belonged to the Yingkiong parish (145 kilometres away) comprises of 8 Catholic communities or centres, having almost 200 Catholic families. All these communities are widely scattered around an area of 55-60 square kilometres, stretching even to the 'boundary wall' of China; thus, to cater the spiritual and physical needs of these quasi parish communities is really a great challenge to the Parish Priest, especially during the

adverse climatic conditions. Most of these communities are in the valleys or on peak of the great Himalayan Mountains. The main parish at Tuting, carved out of the Divine Mercy Parish under the care of Yingkiong Parish taken care of by the MSFS Fathers, was officially declared as an independent parish under the leadership of the CMI Fathers on 15 March 2017 by the Most Rev. Dr. John Thomas, the Bishop of Itanagar, in the auspicious and encouraging presence of Rev. Dr. Paul Achandy CMI, the Prior General, and Rev. Dr. Kurian Kachappilly CMI, the Provincial of St. Paul Province, Bhopal. Thus, a new missionary era has begun in Arunachal Pradesh, taking the Global Mission Thrust of the CMI Congregation with its first mission station in the whole of the North-Eastern India. The occasion was marked by a great celebration in the Tuting Parish with various tribal cultural programs and colourful stage performances by the faithful of all ages. A common meal was prepared by the parishioners, presenting the local delicacies such as *mithun* (the sacrificial animal of the Aadi tribe) and other finger-like items which were enjoyed by all including the invited dignitaries and local officials in the presence of the Bishop and CMI and MSFS priests, and sisters from various religious congregations.

The celebrations are over! The life of our CMI missionaries as well as that of the faithful is back to its normalcy in Tuting. The great crowds of 15 March have withdrawn to their own respective places. The local parishioners of Tuting are left to themselves with their routine lives under the strong and determined leadership of the CMI Fathers. They begin to chalk out their future plan of action to help the mission moving forward and progressing consistently. One thing is certain: Arunachal is prepared to receive the Word of God without conditions and boundaries of castes and sectarianism; hence, preparing the local tribes to receive the word of God is not a herculean task at all. But

the real task is to consolidate Christian faith that the locals have received through the constant accompaniment and interventions of the CMI missionaries. This calls for a journey with the people spiritually and materially. The CMI Congregation, especially St. Paul Province, Bhopal, will stand firm by opening wide the umbrella of resources and man-power behind their unified move to empower the local people in their various activities.

MUSIC AS A CONTEMPORARY MEANS TO YOUTH PASTORAL MINISTRY AND EVANGELIZATION

Joel Muthike Matheka CMI

Regent, Kenya

Young people exert a very important influence in contemporary society. The circumstances of their life, their habits of thought, and their relations with their families have been completely transformed, especially from a Catholic point of view. The growth of their social importance demands from them a corresponding apostolic activity; indeed, their natural character inclines them in this direction. When we think of youth, we think of all that is beautiful in life such as fashion, sports, arts, media, new technologies, fun, adventure, relationships, idealism, creativity, and great dreams. Youth and their trends are of great significance to the society, to the business sector, to religion and politics. Major industries observe youth trends to decide on what to manufacture, while marketing organizations constantly evolve new styles in youth marketing. Consequently, research on youth trends and perspectives has assumed great significance today.

During my last one year regency experience at Donyo-Sabuk, a CMI Parish in the Diocese of Machokos, Kenya, Youth Pastoral Ministry and Evangelization was my greatest pastoral concern. When I arrived in the parish I was amazed by the great number of youths who attend the Sunday Mass, and actively participate in the vigorous singing and dancing that define the African Eucharistic celebration. However, as time went on I noted that many of them never participated in the Eucharistic banquet. The first idea that sneaked into my mind was to call all the youths

after the Mass and take them to task to know the reasons behind this disheartening trend. But immediately I thought that today the Church needs to search for and rediscover the world of young people afresh. It is indeed a fast changing world and, hence, continuous effort for better understanding will keep the Church relevant to the youths. Being youth is a joy as well as a burden. But still there is a common language they love. Understanding and drawing near to them, I contemplated upon the first step in the Church's mission concerning youth. Thus, instead of rushing into an authoritative query of why they do not partake in the Eucharistic communion, I resolved to meet them individually and in groups and being present among them as the first step of this urgent mission. I, therefore, embarked upon a door-to-door youth evangelization in the parish, listening to the deepest of their minds and hearts as a peer and a friend and sharing to each one of them God's experience in their own unique context. In this undertaking, I found out that most of these youths ranging between 18-35 years, though were frequent attendants of Mass, have not been baptized and, thus, not legal Christians. It was a piece of disheartening information since, with such a massive youth unbaptized, the future of the church and society, to my mind, was in jeopardy.

My first task was to I bring them together, teach them catechism, and make them baptized Christians. Immediately, an idea arose in my mind: these youths are lovers of music and dancing and when they hear of music and dancing, like in the Sunday Mass, they would flock in the church even on a daily basis. Having discussed this with the parish priest and the church leadership, we bought a modern music-cum-video player and for one week organized a 'Youth Music Extravaganza' in the parish, an event that attracted hundreds of them, especially my target group. After this we offered gifts and certificates for the best

performers and decided that since the music-cum-video player is a parish commodity bought for the youths, three times in a week it would be available for their use. Many of them responded very well and the numbers increased everyday with many of the unbaptized youths who call themselves Catholics and attend regular Sunday Mass even in the various outstations of the parish, began attending every day. In a few days, the music program was intertwined with basic Catholic teachings and Catholic prayers towards the end, at least for forty-five minutes every day. This was not simply a one-to-one classroom structured catechism class but ornamented with relevant music, video clips, and films. The response of these youths towards such initiatives was very promising. In a short span, the slogan of Don Bosco, "Love what the young love and they will love what you love" was resonating in our parish.

Youth do not want change, they are the change. If you want to see youth and transform both their minds and hearts, bring closer to them the cinemas, music shows, sport activities, literal and cultural programs. Music was transforming the lives of these youths in multifaceted ways in the context of the parish. Within two months after this initiative was begun, we had a total of four hundred and fifty youths from the entire parish undertaking catechism class and preparing for baptism. The music program slowly turned into an avenue of youth evangelization and pastoral care. Youths in preparation for baptism arrived every day at 2 o'clock for catechism class, which was followed by the usual music show attended by all youths; again, the program ended with moral instruction for thirty minutes and prayers conducted for catechumens themselves.

I or the catechist was only present as animators. The youths themselves were organizing and foreseeing the entire initiative as their own. Within two months we

baptized four hundred and fifty-three youths between the age group of 18-35 years, two hundred and sixty-seven from the parish centre and the rest from its outstations. This event which took place in March 2017, remains the pinnacle event ever witnessed in the parish, a real pastoral finding of the lost and forsaken sheep. Today, these youths after their God experience, organize themselves into their own groups and through music and related talents continue to evangelize and transform the entire society spiritually and morally in diverse ways. The church is now flocking with hundreds of youths fully initiated into sacramental life of the church and guiding their younger ones in the same spirit of Christian commitment.

Evangelization and pastoral care of the youths constitute a herculean task for the community and the Church. It throws up innumerable questions on how to ensure the safe enjoyment that they ask for while escorting them on avenues of moral conscience, spiritual orientation, and imparting in them leadership roles with Christian principles. A number of approaches, both old and new, have to be tried out. The experience narrated above is a sample methodology that worked in our context. The Church of all generations has had a special appreciation and preference for youth, after the life example and mind of its youthful Master Jesus. As Pope John Paul II wrote in the International Youth Year ("*Dilecti Amici*," 31 March 1985), "The Church looks to the young; or rather, the Church in a special way sees herself in the young - in you as a group and in each of you as individuals." The Church has much to give and receive from youth. A conscious effort to walk with youth, sing and dance to their tunes, and challenging their trends where deemed fit through dialogue and meaningful discourse will surely transform their minds and hearts making them more effective agents of evangelization and societal transformation. Making the Church and its environs

more youth-friendly will definitely put them more in touch with the 'signs of the times' and, hence, ready to initiate youth-friendly means of evangelization and pastoral care along the footsteps of our Founding Father Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Mission Experiments

CHAVARA TASK FORCE KHATAULI (CTFK)

Fr. Bejoy Pallickamalil CMI

Introduction

St. Thomas school, Khatauli, strenuously works to keep high the human values and qualities of life. Inspired by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Saint Thomas School, Khatauli, belonging to St. John's Province, Bijnor, has come up with the formation of its energetic group of young leaders with a noble cause of imparting human values and virtues in the context of day-to-day human behaviour and actions. In order to impart the values of social responsibility towards the parents and the society, the school initiates its wards in working for the welfare of the society. These groups of vibrant young leaders have been named Chavara Task Force (CTF) after the name of the great visionary animator St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

The vision of Chavara Task Force is to *"support the needy and protect the nature."* Fr. George Kulangara CMI, the former Provincial Superior of St. John's Province, Bijnor, inaugurated CTF on 1 October 2015, in the presence of the Manager Fr. Dominic Kunnumpurath CMI and the Principal Fr. Bejoy Pallickamalil CMI along with the staff and students in the school ground of St. Thomas School, Khatauli.

Chavara Task Force basically consists of specially selected students and teachers of St. Thomas School, Khatauli, which works for the twin goal of supporting the needy and protecting the nature, following the example and inspiration from St. Chavara, who pioneered various initiatives to reach out to the needy and downtrodden. The Chavara Task Force works to enrich and empower the weak, the needy, and the marginalized regardless of their caste,

creed, or religion. It also strives to keep a green and clean environment, motivating others to follow suit.

Criteria for the Selection of Team

The members are selected by the CTF in-charges from among the staff; these members have to register themselves with CTF for a fee of Rupees one hundred. Additionally, there are a number of other conditions to fulfil, if they should get a berth in CTF: their academic performance should be above 70%; they should be well-mannered and hardworking, able to speak on Saint Chavara and his sayings on every occasion. They also take the oath to do this task with full commitment and whole-hearted cooperation at least till they leave the school. The members of this group are distinguished from other students by their uniquely designed uniform. Through this task force the school offers training to many to spread the values inculcated by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara among the students, their parents, and the larger society, and to protect the nature, our Mother Earth.

Action Plan of the CTF

- Spread among the people the values enshrined in the vision and life of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara;
- Planting trees on the birthdays of members of the CTF;
- Spreading human and social values through skits, plays, dramas, etc.
- Visiting orphanages and other centres where the abandoned or elderly people are cared for;
- Financial support during natural calamities by using the fund generated through programmes by the students;
- Distribution of various study materials to the marginalised children in the locality; and
- Distribution of various instrumental aids to the physically challenged.

Source of Income

On special occasions members of the CTF put up small bookstalls and snack centres to cater to the needs of their fellow students; occasionally they also sell specimen copies, etc., within the campus. They welcome other contributions, like students' donations on their birthdays, fine collections from the students, and contributions from parents. All these put together constitutes the CTF fund which is placed at its disposal.

Source of Inspiration for the Students

The CTF supports the needy and initiates timely actions for the protection of the nature. The members of this group are expected to lead others, by their life examples. By their exemplary life they inspire other students to keep the environment always clean and green by proper disposal of waste materials. Thus, they all make the school campus litter-free and offer leadership in planting more and more trees and taking care of them to promote clean environment and protection of the nature. In this way, the Chavara Task Force promotes an eco-friendly life and transmits the values lived and taught by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara to the people around.

First Battalion

Members of Chavara Task Force try to imbibe and spread the qualities of their patron St. Chavara everywhere and in everything they undertake. The CTF is always ready to extend their help both in the school and to the people around. Whenever the school conducts any programme, they display at least one item related to St. Chavara and give a short speech on the life, teaching, and accomplishments of the Saint. On every PTM day they display the awareness programmes and value based themes like save the girl child, protect the environment, misuse of social networking, generation gap, child labour, etc. The parents are really

taken up and inspired with these topics. They all appreciate the CTF for the wonderful services offered by its members and are ready to send their wards anywhere for fulfilling its mission.

Joy of Sharing with the Children of Lepers

It is rightly quoted by Robert Ingersoll that “we rise by lifting others.” The CTF members practise the real meaning of sharing particularly during the season of Christmas. On this auspicious occasion, they invite students of Nayee Asha, which is an institution for the children of lepers run by the Diocese of Meerut. Their very presence along with the various programmes made the day more colourful. Distribution of school bags and the refreshments reminded the audience the theme of CTF, namely, “Support the Needy.” Besides these they are also thoughtful of the poor people around the school and collect a lot of dresses and stationeries to distribute in the nearby slums of railway station.

A Day with Prakash Bhavan Loni

Even in the busy academic schedule, CTF members are able to reach out to the people in their needs. They could find many occasions to visit charitable centres and extend support to them. They visited the homes for physically and mentally challenged people, run by Holy Family Sisters in Loni near Ghaziabad and donate wheel chairs, crutches, toilet chairs, etc. for the use of its inmates. There are around sixty physically challenged teens who study in the nearby government school.

CTF does not limit its support within the boundaries of St. Thomas School. It extends its helping hand even in the national level by way of reaching out to the flood victims of Chennai in which case they sent Rs. 15,000/- for the relief fund through the social work centre of CMI Preshitha Province, Coimbatore. Thus, each and every opportunity

they get to support the poor is utilized with full zeal and genuine empathy.

Second Battalion

In 2016, on the first anniversary, the Second Battalion of twenty students from Class VIII voluntarily joined the CTF. They are very active and enthusiastic and do their best to collect funds and reach out to the needy people around and make the surroundings evergreen. From the Santhome Kindergarten, Khatauli, Bijnor Province, the teachers and the tiny tots have taken great trouble to contribute Rs. 3,000/- for the CTF. Thus, members successfully take the mission of CTF forward with the collaboration of all its stakeholders.

Unforgettable Moments with the Disabled at Prem Dham, Najibabad

CTF students also paid a visit to Prem Dham Ashram, Najibabad, a home for the differently-abled people. It was a rather large group consisting of orphans, physically and mentally challenged, toddlers, teens and elders, deaf and dumb. It was indeed a heart-breaking and tearful experience. CTF performed some entertainment programmes like dances, skit, songs, and speeches along with the children of Prem Dham Ashram. They gifted the inmates with wheelchairs, woollen caps, etc. It was a great as well as an unforgettable experience in sharing whatever we could gather for the poor and the needy through CTF.

Other Activities

CTF got an opportunity to support Bablu Tomar with a wheel chair. He lives in Tabita village near Khatauli. He met with a truck accident in 2007 and is paralysed due to backbone injury. It is hoped that this wheelchair will offer him great comfort, especially to move around.

The CTF also supported a young girl by name Rajni Devi to meet her marriage expenses. She is a native of Tabita village in Khatauli.

Members of the CTF extended a helping hand to Joseph, a man from Meerut, who had lost his eyesight by meeting the expenses for his eye check-up, medicine, spectacles, etc.

Visit to Leprosy Colony

On the occasion of Diwali, members of the CTF and a few teachers paid visit to the Leprosy Colony in Khatauli. While extending Diwali greetings they also distributed sweets to the people on the Colony.

The CTF members were glad to extend a warm welcome to our friends from Germany accompanied by Fr. Joseph Peedikathadathil CMI and Fr. Thomas Pattarumadathil CMI. It was an overwhelming experience for our students as they could interact with German citizens and to know about their lifestyle and cultural background.

Although various services are undertaken, the prime aim of Chavara Task Force is to spread the values and visions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara among the students, parents, and the people associated with the St. Thomas School in tune with the North Indian context.

YouTube Link on Chavara Task Force Khatauli:

<https://youtu.be/tLNRtNftg7M>

CMI JUNIORS' MEET 2017
Chavara Hills, Mannanam, and Kainakary
(21-23 April 2017)

Fr. Paulson Thaliath CMI
General Formation Coordinator

Focusing on one of the thrusts of CMI General Synaxis 37, namely, "being deeply rooted in CMI communitarian charism," the General Formation Coordinators organized a three day "CMI Juniors Meet 2017" during 21-23 April 2017. Except the two juniors from Kenya and one from Kozhikodu, all the 72 newly professed scholastics of the CMI Congregation from five novitiates reached CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills, with their Novice Masters on 21 April. As mentioned by Fr. Paul Achandy, Prior General, in his introductory talk, the program was meant to achieve the CMI *koinonia*-experience among the newly professed CMIs and to enrich their hearts with the inspirational sharings by their batch-mates as well as the Novice Masters.

The programme began with a Eucharistic adoration conducted by brothers from Anudhavana Mission Novitiate, Mancheril. During the dinner, Fr. Prior General welcomed all the new members to the CMI Family along with their novice masters. The interactive session with the members of Prior General's House community was an opportunity to know and identify each General Councillor with their responsibilities. Fr. Paul Achandy, our beloved Prior General, in his Orientation Talk insisted upon the CMI *koinonia* experience and the global mission. Fr. Varghese Vithayathil, the Vicar General, emphasized on the need of human formation during the novitiate and at the stages of ongoing formation.

The second day began with meditation and a concelebrated Holy Qurbana presided by Fr. Prior General along with the Eucharistic community at the Generalate. The inspiring and enlightening personal sharing of 72 young CMIs about their novitiate life was focused on the three points:

1. A practice/habit, which *each one has* acquired from the novitiate and which *each one will observe* throughout *the* life.
2. One striking/touching God experience.
3. Suggestions for a better novitiate formation in the Congregation.

Novice Masters also shared their rich experiences with much joy and appreciation. Thanking Fr. Prior General and the department of general formation they put forward valuable suggestions for improving the novitiate formation in the Congregation.

In the concluding session, Fr. Prior General once again emphasized on the global mission, importance of spiritual guidance, and the need to cultivate courage to face the challenges differentiating right and wrong with a good discernment assisted by the Holy Spirit. Mementos were presented to all the participants. Representing the Juniors Brother Jinnu from Nirmalagiri Novitiate, Punaloor, expressed vote of thanks.

On Sunday, the third day early morning, with great joy and vigour, we started our pilgrimage from *Pithrubhavanam* to *Mathrubhavanam*. Fr. Sebastian Chamathara, Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram, and the former Prior of St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, welcomed all the juniors and their Masters. Kneeling around the tomb of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, all the newly professed 'sons of Chavara' reaffirmed their commitment and readiness to serve the Lord and His people, and beseeched the heavenly intercession of the saintly founder for the same. Sunday Mass was presided over by Fr. Paulson Thaliath along with

Fr. Joshy Cheruparambil, the new General Formation Coordinator and the Novice Masters. Welcoming the entire entourage, the new Prior Fr. Scaria Ethirettu CMI introduced the Mannanam community and briefed about the St. Chavara Pilgrim Centre during the breakfast. As the juniors walked around the monastery compound, they could feel the spiritual presence of our Founding Fathers and experience their heavenly intercession. They walked back through the time of foundation of the Congregation and tried to retrace the footprints of their spiritual experience during the visit to the Sanskrit School and the St. Chavara Museum. The prayer session, sitting around the tomb of St. Chavara, turned out to be a memorable event especially due to the personal sharings by brothers and Fathers.

Fr. Johnson Panthalanickal and community accorded a cordial welcome as the group reached Kainakary by 1.30 pm. After lunch with the community, in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord in the chapel, they spent in praise and worship. Special Kuttanadan black coffee strengthened everyone for the return journey. CMI Juniors' Meet 2017 was concluded at Kainakary Boat Jetty, as each group dispersed to their own destinations around 4.30 pm.

All the juniors along with their Novice Masters and the General Formation Coordinators thank the Almighty for such a graceful and empowering batch gathering and pilgrimage through the CMI *Pithrubhavanam*, *Mathrubhavanam*, and *Janmabhavanam*. Many hands and hearts were put together for the success of this CMI Juniors' Meet 2017 and all of them are remembered with gratitude. The indebtedness to Fr. Prior General, Fr. Vicar General, General Councillors, members of the Prior General's House, St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, and Chavara Bhavan, Kainakiri, and the General Formation Coordinators was expressed by the Juniors.



**CMI Missionaries in Preparation -
Carmel Vidya Bhavan, Pune, 2017**



CMI Juniors at the Tomb of St Chavara 2017



**Inauguration of
Chavara Dham Mission Novitiate in Budni, MP**



**Chavara Dham Mission Novitiate
for North Indian Provinces, Budni, MP**

Mission and Formation

COMMERCIAL GAINS AND COMPASSIONATE GRAINS ASVAS in the Formative Context of Dharmaram

Fr. Jeff Shawn Jose Kaipettiyil CMI

DASS and ASVAS at Dharmaram

Beyond doubt, Dharmaram College is a model campus in the world Church with her unique blend of formation with a rainbow of ministries. Commercial gains resulting from professional excellence, exemplary hard work, and religious commitment associated with some of these ministries in Dharmaram campus is an inspiring model for students in formation. But commercial gains must always be paralleled by compassionate grains. Compassionate grains include the acts of compassion for the poor and needy in the society. It was in this realization to blend commercial gains and compassionate grains that Dharmaram Association for Social Service (DASS) was established at Dharmaram College in 1976. One of the recent attempts to reclaim this blend was the establishment of ASVAS. ASVAS is beyond doubt the compassionate face of the CMI Congregation in Bangalore, serving mid-day meal for more than four hundred poor and needy people, mostly from Kidwai Cancer Institute and National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS). Without discounting the immense good work being done by ASVAS, from a purely formative perspective, it is high time that we do a re-think before it becomes imprinted among the students of formation as merely one among the many 'free food distribution centres' in the Bangalore city or within the Church.

ASVAS in the formative setting of the Dharmaram has a role beyond traditional model of social service. It must

present before the students of formation in Dharmaram campus a sustainable social service model that could bring together the diverse ministries to make a compassionate connect with the poor and downtrodden of the society. How can ASVAS model of compassionate grains be made into a framework worth emulating like other ministries which Dharmaram undertakes? In the following paragraphs, I try to provide a rough framework for this model based on my experience and would leave it to the experts to brainstorm and build a working model.

Immediate Context

While the Church in India, especially in Kerala, is yet to sync with the reality of her decreasing hegemony with regard to institutions in education, healthcare, etc., and as it is yet to experience the inevitable decline in faith practice, the CMI Congregation with the legacy bequeathed to her by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the subsequent global mission experience has the duty and responsibility to awaken the Church from slumber. Philosophical, theological, and management solutions abound in facing this reality; but what matters most for the Church at present is to become the compassionate face of Christ among the needy. The house of the sick and the dying opened in Kainakari by St. Chavara must be an incessant reminder for the Congregation to embark upon a compassionate revolution within, which would in the course of the time spread across the Church.

How can this goal be achieved? Top down approach of ensuring compassion by force might be necessary as an immediate step but an ideal long term process would call for a bottom up approach which involves inculcating the compassionate dimension in the mind of the students in religious and priestly formation which would lay the seeds for a compassionate future for the CMI Congregation and

for the Church as a whole. It is in this context that the Congregation must understand the relevance of ASVAS in Dharmaram campus.

Networking the Ministries

The regular site when a philosophy or theology student makes his or her way to Dharmaram campus in the morning is the sight of a group of lay people walking comfortably through the campus. The closed gates are open wide for them and each student is aware that they are making their way to ASVAS to prepare food for the poor. In the afternoon, either students from Dharmaram College, DVK, Christ School, or Christ University can be seen making their way to ASVAS to serve food. On Sundays, various associations from parishes are seen getting actively involved in activities of ASVAS. The young and old, secular and religious lend a helping hand in this ministry. ASVAS, thus, becomes a meeting point of the important missions done by Dharmaram College, namely, parish ministry and the ecclesiastical and secular education ministry. It is not only about networking the financial resources but also networking of human resources from our ministries which is the first and foremost step.

The Local Connect

“Why should we learn Kannada?” is a prominent question being heard among students of the Athenaeum and the University. A few days visit to ASWAS does give them the answer. The following are some responses: “I need Kannada to recite the prayer said before meals meaningfully.” “I need Kannada to say a few comforting words to the cute young boy who has gone bald during his treatment for cancer and is waiting patiently in the que to get some food.” “I need Kannada to interact with the tired looking old lady who might have her beloved husband operated in the nearby hospital and is waiting for her turn to get some food.”

Together with the language, the service in ASVAS is complete only when those who prepare and serve the food, relish the same local food consisting of raggi mudda, sambar, rice, and curry. Thus, ASVAS model reminds that a meaningful social outreach involves not only the knowledge of local language, culture, and traditions but also immersing oneself into it.

Financial Sustainability

Once people who are associated with our ministries, like students, take part in the compassionate mission they usually become convinced of the purpose and would be ready to be part of this mission. A recent *Economic Times* news report on ASVAS shares the experience of a student and it highlights the above-said fact: "'As a student, I used to go to ASVAS during lunch to serve food for the patients and their caretakers. I continue to go there whenever I can,' said Aishwarya Anand, an alumna of Christ College who now is an associate with the consultancy firm E&Y. Aishwarya took her family along when she sponsored a day's meal at ASVAS, fulfilling a wish of her grandmother." ASVAS or any other project of the sort must be transformed into people's project. We have to take cue from the successful and renowned 'Compassionate Kozhikode' project which helps institutions like mental health centres, children's homes, old age homes, and palliative care centres. Former District Collector of Kozhikode, N. Prasanth, who led the projects says: "The idea originated from the realisation that there are people in Kozhikode who are willing to give and there are many who really need help. We acted only as a facilitator." Once we shed the institutional might and act as facilitators, our efforts to spread compassion would be partnered by generous minds.

Social Visibility

The social visibility of a compassionate act has to happen both offline and online. While offline visibility happens naturally, the step towards online visibility must not be conceived of as an act of glorification or promotion; it is a necessity for three reasons. First and foremost, to find willing volunteers, then to find people who are in great need, and three to share the moments of witnessing and living Christian faith. It is to be remembered that a project like 'Compassionate Kozhikode' received momentum through social networking sites and other media ensuring maximum participation of volunteers from different walks of life. The role of the students in formation in ASVAS should not be merely limited to the role of preparing or serving food. They should also have the opportunity to learn how to bring people together, how to handle the volunteers, how to find and assess people who are in real need, and, above all, share the stories of their lived compassion to inspire more to join such noble causes.

From a formative perspective, this could be one way by which the regular complaint of "too much social networking among seminarians" could be creatively channelled. A clearly defined goal would equip those in formation to make best use of the technology available by coordinating the works of compassion and by being heralds of compassion.

The social visibility aspect is yet another opportunity to highlight the positive aspect of the acts of religious compassion which go far beyond the non-governmental organizations acts of shutting shop once funds dry up. While being surrounded by a deluge of bad press, the ongoing sharing of compassionate acts would be the islands of refuge and hope.

‘The Brother from Dharmaram’

During the recent times when the Church in Kerala went through unfortunate and shameful moments, only a handful of the laity came up to defend the Church publicly and one among them was Binoy Joseph. His Facebook post titled “We Need Religious” went viral. In the touching post, he writes about a ‘brother from Dharmaram’, who imprinted a lasting impression on him. He doesn’t know the name of his brother, but remembers the incident very vividly. He was in Snehadan HIV/AIDS Rehabilitation Centre in Bangalore as part of a mandatory Social Service Programme for which he was not at all interested. He was first asked to help clean a naked patient but he could not accept the fact that cleaning meant helping him with nature’s call. Then, a young guy came up and told him, “I will help you.” Without any inhibition the young guy helped that man to do nature’s call and cleaned him up. Binoy vividly remembers how the young guy helped that man with his calm and occasional friendly chatter with the patient. After some time, he came to know that the young guy is a brother from Dharmaram and that he visited Snehadan every Sunday. The grains of compassion which ‘the brother from Dharmaram’ sowed had grown up in the minds of Binoy Joseph to write a post defending the religious and priests during a time of desolation. We who have studied in Dharmaram know that for years brothers from philosophy batches go to old age homes, HIV/AIDS rehabilitation centres, or villages as part social outreach programmes under the umbrella of DASS (Dharmaram Association for Social Services) but what many of us fail to recognize is the ability of those acts of compassion to move the stony hearts. For that to happen offline and online social visibility is an important factor and the details of which could be carefully formulated and implemented.

Sowing the Compassionate Grains

ASVAS must not be let to stagnate in the vibrant Dharmaram 'ocean' by being merely one among many social service acts. Charismatic individuals leading ASVAS has to be supported by Research and Development wing which would involve experts from secular and ecclesiastical disciplines to provide realistic and creative inputs together with critical analysis of output. Thus, ASVAS would be successful in instilling in the minds of students in formation a tried and tested model which could be successfully customised in their own given mission contexts to build a compassionate Church by sowing compassionate grains.

FAMILY VISION OF FATHER CANISIUS

Fr. Paul Kalluveettil CMI

Introduction

The Servant of God Father Canisius CMI, who served the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) as its Prior General, Provincial, Rector, and Professor of Sacred Scripture at Dharmaram College, Bangalore, was known among the people as a 'Man of God'. The religious, clergy, and the faithful approached him for spiritual direction, counselling, and confession, when he used to spend his days for prayer at the Centre for Spiritual Realization (CSR), Pariyaram. Father Canisius had given numerous spiritual retreats which helped the participants to lead a totally dedicated life with new enthusiasm and celestial cheerfulness. He was the first biblical scholar in India, who took his doctorate in Sacred Scripture from the renowned Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. During his lifetime, everyone considered him as a living saint. Although Father Canisius spent long hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, he was always available to people who approached him.

In this article, I would like to provide a glimpse into the family vision that is irradiating in his letters both to his relatives and the non-relatives. Although he lived in the divine milieu, it did not deter him from being totally humane. He considered everyone as his beloved ones, sons and daughters of God. Father Canisius was ever ready to lead to God all who have contacted him personally or through correspondence, irrespective of their social, economic, and religious status. It seems that he did not show any preference or favouritism towards his blood relations. Of course, they were the persons who have had frequent recourse to him in their family problems and other

difficulties. We are fortunate to have in possession sixty-four letters written to his relatives and spiritual children, apart from twenty-six letters to his sister Sr. Sarseela FCC. These letters in Malayalam are published under the titles *Canisiusachan Kudumbangalodu* (2017) and *Athmabhashanangal* (2015).¹ Theological reflections on the letters to his sister are not in the scope of this study. I present the contents of the letters to the families not in the chronological order, but according to the names of the recipients.

A Son of Chavara

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, one of the founders of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, was gifted with a celestial vision on the Christian families. During his last days he wrote his Testament, known as *Chavarul*, to the parishioners of Kainakari, giving them practical guidance on how to live the family life as envisaged by God. He gave an articulation to his own personal and pastoral experiential vision.

The *Chavarul* begins with the assertion: "A real Christian family is similar to that of heaven," where love, peace, harmony, and happiness reign. The Saint wanted to help the Christian families to live on earth the life of heaven. That was why he, "praying for the divine enlightenment and peace, has written down the Order of Family (*kudumba-chattam*)." He requests everyone to diligently keep it and ask others to do the same. Father Canisius, in his letters to the families, follow the footsteps of the Founder.

To the Family Members of His Elder Brothers

To Inasu, Son of His Elder Brother

As Father Canisius, then studying in Rome, knew that the boy together with his younger sister was going to the school

¹For copies please contact the Vice-Postulator, St. Teresa's Monastery, Kottackal, Mala, Kottamuri PO, Thrissur 680732 Kerala; phone: +91 9539 444156.

at a long distance, he sent him a card with the picture of St. Dominic Savio. He wrote that he feels pride and joy at that venture. In this letter, we feel the tender heart-beat of a loving father. Though he had left the family and the dear ones to follow the call of Jesus, it did not diminish his love for the relatives. Never did he doubt that such a love may lessen his love for God. Indeed, the human love was for him the outflow of divine love. The Servant of God blesses both the boy and his sister, and tells them that the face of Saint Dominic Savio seems to be similar to that of Inasu. These words would have certainly engendered in the boy enthusiasm to imitate the young Saint. To sum up, Father Canisius successfully blended together the human and divine dimensions of love.

To the Parents of Inasu

As Father Canisius heard about the forthcoming marriage of Inasu, he wrote this letter, in which his celestial vision of family is articulated. The bridegroom and bride are called to build up a beautiful family that is most pleasing to God. He volunteers to say a Holy Mass for this intention. In another letter to his relative Antony, he also joyfully congratulated Annamkutty, who was getting married, and promised the couple his whole-hearted prayers and blessings.

To the Second Sister-in-Law

In this letter, Father Canisius exposes his delicate sentiments. As he had come to the Anandapuram Church to celebrate Holy Mass, he did not get time to meet the recipient and her daughter Thressia. At this he asks their pardon. Then, he requests them to keep as a great treasure the room where the consecration to the Sacred Heart was conducted and consider it as a holy chapel. He instructs them that whenever they get time, they should go to that room and spend time in prayer, remembering especially the

diseased members of the family. Is it not a noble religious vision!

To Thressia

Father Canisius wrote seven letters to this unmarried relative. He had a special love and concern for her. The letters witness to the special trait of his spirituality, the integration of both divineness and humanness. When Father Canisius heard that Lonappankutty, the younger brother of Thressia, had left the family, the Man of God expressed his solicitude, and prayed for the boy. At the news of his return the Servant of God greatly rejoiced and rendered his gratitude towards the Almighty. His only wish was for the grace that Lonappankutty may grow as the beloved son of the family and give leadership to it. Fr. Canisius reminded them of Christ's exhortation in Matthew 6:33: "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." It seems that the Man of God was asking them to put into practise his own motto.

In another letter, Father Canisius proposed the members of his family the method of the Lord in order to bring peace within the family: "Do good to those who do evil and bless them" (Lk 6:28). He prayed earnestly that they may get such an insight. The Man of God asked everybody to imitate Jesus who is gentle and humble of heart (Mt 11:29). Peace, according to him, would reign in the modern families if everybody followed this exhortation!

The Servant of God literally followed Our Lord's dictum that in the sick Jesus himself is present (Mt 25:36,40). He hastened to console the sick persons by letters or visits. He always recommended them to seek shelter in the Sacred Heart.

To sum up, in these letters to Thressia, we encounter a person in whose heart, which was throbbing with the love

of God, there was place for every one of the family. Like the Lord he had a special concern for the sick and the children.

To Babu

Father Canisius wrote five letters to Babumon. In the first letter, he thanked for the Christmas greetings of Babu. What a supernatural behaviour by which he thanked even children. He congratulated the boy for writing the examinations very well, and asked him to pray first to the Sacred Heart before doing anything. This endeavour to engender devotion to the Sacred Heart in the young minds can be imitated by all. In another letter, the Man of God asked Babu to participate daily in the family prayers, to attend the Holy Mass, and to make frequent confession and cultivate the virtue of honesty.

To Pylan

Father Canisius wrote nine letters to the grandchild of his eldest brother. There the Man of God consoled Pylan in his sufferings on account of misunderstandings he had to face from others. Pylan was instructed by Father Canisius that he should never nourish thoughts of revenge against anyone. According to him, we should practise the beatitudes preached by Jesus in Mt 5:2-12. Then, he would get a share in the blissful resurrection of Jesus. Father Canisius seemed to recommend to Pylan what he himself was practising in his daily life.

Another saintly trait of Father Canisius was his hesitation to speak about his own infirmities. He wanted them to be known only to the Lord. But he was always prompt to console the sick persons. Accordingly, Father Canisius told Pylan to seek the help of his guardian angel, and take the little sufferings in the spirit of penance and reparation.

Although the Man of God abhorred luxuries, he was particular to recommend Pylan to treat the Parish Priest

sumptuously, who, according to him, stands in the position of God. This attitude is very relevant for today.

To the Family Gathering (Kudumbayogam)

Father Canisius sent the following instructions on the occasion of the formation of Thekkekkara Pothaparambil *Kudumbayogam*. First of all, according to Father Canisius, they had to renew the consecration to the Sacred Heart, and pray for the deceased members. Mutual love should be the trait of the *yogam*. Each one has to give preference to the welfare of others. May Jesus, the King of Peace, bless abundantly each and every one! If the Christians who solemnly celebrate every year the family day (*tharavattudinam*) follow these advices, then the Christian life would have become more God-oriented! Unfortunately, now-a-days more importance is given to sumptuous banquets and cultural programmes.

Conclusion

It is an astonishing fact that Father Canisius nourished a deep fellowship with his relatives, friends, and spiritual children. In the letters written to them he assumed the role of an integral person, who maintained a hundred percent humaneness to his spiritual children. But his human love had its source and resource in his love for God, and found its consummation in his communion with the Divine. Indeed, this was the design that the Creator had concerning his creatures. Humaneness has its milieu in God, its reflection and symbol. Likewise one can designate divineness as the mark of humaneness. The Lord seems to present before us Father Canisius as an authentic man, a true Christian, and a real CMI religious priest.

Analysis of Mission

NEW EVANGELIZATION IN THE USA AND CANADA

Fr. Jose Kariamadam CMI

Almost ten years ago, I was trying to introduce an Indian priest friend of mine to Bishop Choby of Nashville (+ 3 June 2017) with whom we had a cordial conversation. Knowing that the new priest needed an assignment in the diocese, he said: "In olden days, European missionaries went to India; but now, the Indian missionaries are coming to America and we are grateful!" The Bishop was very welcoming and his words were thought provoking.

We are like 110 CMIs working in USA and Canada and almost that many in Germany. Are we all here for missionary or evangelization works? What are our motives and priorities? In truth, our American life and experiences can be compared to that of the blind men who tried to see an elephant. No two parishes or dioceses are alike and no two priests are alike. Some of us may have success stories, but some definitely have miserable stories to tell. I remember my first days in America and my first assignment about 30 years ago. To my great shock, my pastor in Tampa told me, his new associate: "You are a priest in residence. This is a low income parish, so we can't afford to pay you!" A shiver went through my spines then, and I literally had to hunt for a paying assignment, all alone. No doubt, life and work in America are not what people in India think; it is really challenging.

Why are we here and what do we do? I have done pastoral works in USA for about 22 years, at different times and places like Florida, Louisiana, Brooklyn, NY, and Tennessee. I have been with the Diocese of Nashville, TN,

the last 14 years and am trying to wind up, due to age and health reasons.

Our ministry in USA and Canada are multi-faceted. Some are here for studies and new exposures and most of us here are doing pastoral works in places, not chosen by us. We take what we get, and most bishops, I am afraid, are trying to fill in the slots and obliging requests for placements. But we all try to bloom where we are planted. Most of us practise more obedience here than in India. Aren't we all obedient, humble, subservient, respectful, and 'yes men', in most cases? Those are virtues, but in reality, we all try to survive in places and situations where we have no choices.

We are handicapped in more ways than one. We not only speak with an accent, but can't speak or write grammatically perfect English and can't articulate well. I think our lack of a command of good English betrays us and stands in the way of getting what we want. People judge you and respect you from the way you speak and what you speak, much more than the way you look. With my long years of experience, I am of the opinion that the best we can do in North America, as everywhere else, is to bloom where you are planted, learn to do our ministry well, speak well, and relate to people well.

Evangelizing the evangelized! I think this is what all American pastors can and should do. This is a country where there are more than 38,000 Christian denominations, which means that there are as many ways of interpreting the Bible. If India can be called a land of Hindu gods, America is a land of Christian denominations. In my own little town in Tennessee, dozens of churches stand side by side. There is a ministerial association here, and we get together in a spirit of ecumenism. We pray together and discuss matters of common interest. We don't try to convert any one. In fact, some Protestant pastors are radically more Christian and

biblically more knowledgeable than most Catholic priests, and there are those who think Catholics are not Christians at all! Over the years, I learned that my life and work here in USA are more challenging as a Catholic priest.

It is said that the “fallen away Catholics” in America form the largest Christian denomination. Bringing them back to the Church is a herculean task, but that, I believe, is part of the re-evangelization work we need to do. There are church-hoppers, like grasshoppers, and some people change churches like they change clothes for silly reasons, and there are those who quit going to church if they have the slightest disagreement with the pastor. If asked about their family history, they would say: “Well, I am a Catholic, but my husband is a Baptist, and the four children we have go to different other churches. Really, I can’t keep track of them.” There are thousands and thousands of Catholics who tell us stories like this.

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) activity is a way of increasing membership in most parishes. A few non-Catholics may approach us for advice and instructions to become Catholics, if we are lucky. They may have their personal reasons or may have been motivated by others to approach us. Whatever be the reason, educating them in our faith is one thing we need to be involved in, and giving adult education is another. Most of the Confirmation candidates are enthusiastic about being confirmed, but we won’t be able to trace most of them again in church after that. They really need solid foundations in faith.

Think of the church marriages! Just think of its sanctity and stability. In a country where about 50% of marriages end up in divorces how can we speak convincingly about the insolubility of marriages?

A middle aged woman comes to my office and wants me to bless her marriage. She was married five times, all in different court houses. She marries and divorces one man

after another. The last one she has found is a Mexican Catholic, and they were married in a non-denominational church in Las Vegas. She now wants me to bless her marriage, so she can go to Mass and receive Communion!

Keeping track of the marriage history of people like this and helping them with annulments and a sacramental marriage constitute a job in itself. You need the expertise of a canonist and a moral theologian and the patience and understanding of a pastor.

Many eyebrows are raised when it comes to questions on ministries in the first world. To most of us, evangelization would mean converting the non-Christians and working among the poorest of the poor. But there is much 'harvest' in countries like the USA and our labouring is worthwhile. Many of us are in America or in Germany, not because India is fully evangelized but because we believe that we can be little instruments of re-evangelization in the west, while supporting our home missions with the money we are remunerated with. We don't work miracles or move mountains. We speak English with an accent. An American friend of mine tells me: "Father, your accent is charming, your homilies are the best." To many, our 'Indianness' is endearing. Our simplicity, sincerity, humility, availability, and dedication are virtues not so commonly found among the natives and early settlers.

What I have been trying to say is what is called the "New Evangelization" of which Pope John Paul II was very much concerned. He describes a situation "where the entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the church and live a life far removed from Christ and his gospels." He goes on to say: "People are on the move. Social and religious realities which were once clear and more defined are increasingly getting more complex. Many countries are being de-Christianized..." To Pope Benedict

XVI, the greatest threat to Christianity today is the "dictatorship of religious relativism."

We need to be convinced Christians to be Christ's torch bearers, whether we are doing evangelization or new evangelization work. The time is up to make a difference in the world as Catholics, whether we live in India or abroad. As Jimmy Carter said, "My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have, to try to make a difference."

SWAMI SADANAND
An Indian Missionary Prophet¹

Fr. Jacob Peenikaparambil CMI

The first death anniversary of Swami Sadanand (Father Michael Purattukara CMI), the first Catholic priest in India to donate his body for medical research and education was on 25 April 2017. It was the culmination of a life that lived for others. A humanist, a social activist, a prophet, an agent of reconciliation and peace-making, a spiritual guide, and above all an excellent human being and a genuine Christian, all integrated into one person was Swami Sadanand.

When preparations are being made in the Church to raise Sister Rani Maria FCC to the status of a 'Blessed' in the process of canonization, remembering Swami Sadanand, who played a crucial role in the conversion of Samandar Singh, her murderer, and bringing about reconciliation between Samandar Singh and her family members, is quite fitting. Conversion of Samandar Singh was indeed a miracle, but it happened through the strenuous efforts of Swami Sadanand. Swamiji had to meet various government officials and the then Governor of Madhya Pradesh several times for the release of Samandar Singh from jail. Details of the crucial role played by Swami Sadanand in the reconciliation between Samandar Singh and the family members of Sister Rani Maria were published in the *Indian Currents* a few years back in an article titled "Swami Sadanand, a Prophet of Peace and Reconciliation" by Father Varghese Alengadan.

¹This article is a slightly revised version of "Tribute to a Karmayogi, Swami Sadanand," originally published in *Indian Currents*, 17-30 April 2017, pages 22-25.

This write up is a humble attempt to highlight the contributions of Swami Sadanand as a *karmayogi* to the Church and the society. According to *Bhagavad Gita*, the three ways to realize God are *bhakti marga*, *karma marga*, and *jnana marga*. *Karma marga* refers to fulfilling one's duties without expecting any reward whereas *jnana marga* refers to attaining knowledge through meditation or contemplation. One who integrates in himself or herself *karma marga* and *jnana marga* through contemplation is a *karmayogi*. The qualities of a *karmayogi* are utter honesty and integrity in private and public life, courage and fearlessness to stand up against injustice and readiness to bear the consequences, creativity and innovation, and compassion and empathy.

Swami Sadanand used to wake up at 3.00 am and spend about three hours for contemplation and practice of yoga. He also found time for reading inspirational books and writing poems. Except the daily Eucharist he was not practising any ritual or devotion; nor did he promote any devotion. In other words, he was not a worshiper of Jesus, but a disciple of Jesus (*sishya*). It is through meditation or contemplation that he derived insights, inspiration, courage, and strength. For Swami Sadanand, contemplation was a way of life. That is why his personality was as deep as an ocean and as strong as a mountain. As an ocean is rich in resources, Swami Sadanand was highly rich in the qualities of courage, love, compassion, availability, and readiness for service and taking risk. Neither threat nor any amount of suffering could move him from his determination.

Swami Sadanand was a prophet after the model of Jesus Christ. The qualities of a prophet are fearlessness, creativity, and compassion. Behind his ever smiling face there was a resolute and uncompromising prophet. He responded to unjust situations without being bothered about the consequences. Swami Sadanand protested against injustice through his actions. His practice of not shaving and not

cutting hair was a protest against the barbers of Tada village in Sagar, who refused to shave and cut the hair of the scheduled caste people. His simple dress of a dhoti and a shawl was a symbol of protest against consumerism and greed. He did not use footwear because he wanted to be in touch with the Mother Earth. Even when he visited Europe and USA he did not use shoes or footwear. His refusal to submit Mass account was a protest against commercialization of religion.

Two of his prophetic actions in the form of protests through fasting against the injustice within the Church are worth mentioning. In 1996, the Bishop of the Diocese of Sagar decided to close down four convents in the operational area of Rural Development Service Society (RDSS), Silwani, because RDSS did not comply with the demands of the Bishop, which were not in tune with the objectives of RDSS. It is very interesting to note the reason given for closing down the four convents at Silwani, Pratapgarh, Bamhori, and Searmau in the letter issued to their respective major superiors: "As I am convinced that the prevailing indiscipline - religious as well as ecclesiastical - among the CMI Fathers in the area of operation of your sisters may cause spiritual harm to your sisters, I hereby order you to terminate the services of your sisters." Since the decision of the Bishop was not only unjust but also totally un-Christian, the CMI Fathers working in the RDSS, under the leadership of Swami Sadanand, protested by resorting to fasting and prayer in the Bishop's House, Sagar. Swami Sadanand was the inspiring and sustaining force for the whole team in their protest. As a result, a commission was appointed by the Vatican to study the issue and, on the basis of the report of the commission, the Bishop of Sagar was asked to call back the four communities of sisters.

The second instance of fasting was related to shifting of a parish from the CMI monastery, Thalore, in Thrissur district of Kerala, within the territory of the Archdiocese of Thrissur. The monastery church had been raised to the status of a parish by the Archdiocese many years ago in accordance with the provisions of Canon Law. The Archbishop of Thrissur, without consulting the people, decided to shift the parish church to another location. The large majority of people in the parish wanted the parish church to be under the CMI monastery. They appealed to the Archbishop and the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church to change the decision and maintain the status quo. But the Archbishop was stubborn in his decision in spite of the repeated requests by the people of the parish. As they felt that an injustice had been done to them, they decided to protest, using Gandhian method of nonviolence. Since they had heard about Swami's readiness to fight for justice, they invited Swami to lead their struggle. Swami undertook fasting in a chapel in front of the parish church after duly informing the Archbishop and his major superiors in the CMI Congregation.

Since there was no response from the Archbishop after ten days of fasting, Swami and his team decided to shift the venue of fasting to the Archbishop's House. As the team entered the Archbishop's House compound the Archbishop complained to the police of illegal transgression and Swami was arrested and was admitted in the hospital. Later, he got bail. The fasting ended without any visible success. The media that was available at the disposal of the Archdiocese was used profusely to tarnish the image of Swami with a series of baseless allegations. But Swami did not say or write anything against the Archbishop and his 'yes' men who had indulged in mudslinging and spreading calumnies against Swami. Swami, being an authentic spiritual person, did not

nurture any feeling of hatred against the persons who had opposed him.

Creativity is an important sign of a spiritual person. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, in the book *Wings of Fire*, says that through prayer a person connects himself/herself with God, the source of creativity. Hence, a spiritual person ought to be creative. An excellent example for Swami's creativity is blood donation he started in Narsinghpur town in Madhya Pradesh on Good Friday, in order to make the non-Christians understand the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death. Later, it was replicated in some other places. For example, every year the Diocese of Indore organizes blood donation on Good Friday and many faithful gladly donate blood on that day. His practice of herbal medicines and indigenous systems of treatment offer another expression of his creativity. He knew that the poor people are not able to afford the costly allopathic treatment and they needed affordable healthcare alternatives. Swami found a way to meet the health needs of the poor people through the adoption of indigenous methods of treatment.

Being a spiritual person, Swami could transcend narrow identities and see God in every human being. People who benefited from the services of Swami belonged to different religions, castes, classes, languages, and regions. Swami was acceptable to all people. The Hindu pujaris and Muslim mullahs were his friends. Dialogue in action was his approach. In order to find solutions to human problems and to alleviate human sufferings he was ready to cooperate with people of all castes and religions. If Swami Sadanand was honoured publicly by a Right Wing Hindu organization, Vishva Hindu Parishad, in Narsinghpur town in MP, the reason is that he could transcend the boundaries of religion and see the divine presence in every human person.

Swami Sadanand had become a synonym of compassion and love for all those who had come in contact with him. Facilitating reconciliation among the warring groups and estranged family members was the most important mission of Swamiji for the last thirty years. The divine power that emanated from him had the capacity to melt the hearts of even hard core criminals. Swamiji was instrumental in restoring peace and harmony in thousands of families through his mediation in settling disputes and quarrels. Once he was asked by the civil authorities to mediate between two warring groups regarding the right to perform *puja* in a Hindu temple in Narsinghpur district of Madhya Pradesh.

The civil authorities later honoured him with communal harmony award for his outstanding contribution in bringing about harmony among different communities. He had visited all central and district jails of Madhya Pradesh with the message of God's forgiveness and the need to forgive one another. "Miracles happen in front of our eyes as hard core criminals melt like wax," said Swami Sadanand after completing his visit.

The secret of those individuals who achieved greatness is that they could discover their uniqueness and realize the vision and mission emanating from their uniqueness. History is a witness to the fact that individuals who discovered and asserted their uniqueness had to face stiff opposition both from the religious and political powers. Swami Sadanand too had to face opposition from various quarters. But he had the courage to withstand the oppositions, springing from his contemplation. The religious women and men are called to be radical disciples of Jesus, by becoming *karmayogies*. Because they are caught up in the web of institutionalism and ritualism many of them are not able to rise to the level of a *karmayogi*. Let the commemoration of the death anniversary of Swami

Sadanand inspire many individuals to become radical disciples of Jesus, *karmyogies*, radiating fearlessness, creativity, and compassion.

**RAINING GRACES
IN THE RAIN FORESTS OF AMAZON
CMI Missions in Brazil and Ecuador**

Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI

General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

In Retrospect

Looking through the small window of the aircraft to the extensive and thick green forests of the Amazon Region of the Para State in Brazil, a whole lot of memories is playing back in the screen of my mind, especially as I return from Brazil with a sense of mission accomplished, though the real mission is placed on the shoulders of ten young, energetic, enthusiastic, and pastorally motivated CMIs who joined the Diocese of Santarem an year ago in 2016 on the invitation of Bishop Dom Flávio Giovenale SDB.

The trip to Brazil was already on cards when the Bishop of Santarem had confirmed that the installation of ten CMI priests, who are pioneers of CMI Mission in the Amazon Region of Brazil, will take place in January 2017. Moreover, we were also ready to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate and the Diocese of Santarem to formalize the relationship and to facilitate the mission in its full format.

Although seven Provinces have their members in the Diocese of Santarem, only five Provincials (Fathers Jose Cletus Plackal, Anthony Kuttiyanickal, Joseph Vayalil, Winson Moyalan, and Thomas Manjakunnel) along with me could make it to Brazil for the signing of the MoU and the installation programme.

Brazil Mission and the MoU

The primary purpose of this visit to Brazil was to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Diocese of Santarem and the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) for the mission that the latter has agreed to undertake in the Amazon Region. The Diocese of Santarem, spread over 171,906 square kilometres, is said to have only one priest for about three thousand square kilometres, even after ten CMIs have joined them. With thirty-seven diocesans, there are only 64 priests to serve the faithful in Santarem. There are Franciscans, SVDs, and Jesuits; however, the one year old ten CMIs top the list of religious in the Diocese.

In the Amazon region, you turn anywhere and you would not miss Amazon River, as it is almost omnipresent, at least through its tributaries. The length, width, and depth of Amazon River were beyond my imagination till I could actually be there and experience it myself. It was an amazing experience. Added to it the panoramic view of the green and inviting Amazon Rain Forests spread across thousands of kilometres, especially with the sporadic sight of huge trees presenting an impressive and unforgettable sight.

CMIs Embracing Amazon

Matching with the graceful flow of Amazon River, which enlivens the lives of millions of people in this region, and the richness of the Amazon Rain Forests, we come across with a group of Catholics living in this region: the warmth and liveliness with which they have welcomed and embraced the ten CMI priests to animate their Christian life is really promising and inviting. They look for priests who are holy and pastorally available; as many of them living in the interior regions were deprived of pastoral animation from priests, especially to administer Sacraments, the

presence and availability of the CMIs are appreciated. Indeed, the grace with which our CMIs have been welcomed into the parish communities of Santarem is a testimony of the need that this region has for priests. They earnestly hope that CMI priests would be new channels of Divine Grace for them and that they would make a difference in their faith life and Christian practice.

The graciousness with which our CMIs are welcomed can be better understood from the fact that they all are rather fresh in the land of Brazil; although they learned the language (Portuguese) and culture of the locality, they are yet to acquire mastery. Many of the faithful are ready to offer voluntary support to equip our CMI missionaries further by way of giving them personal coaching in the language or liturgical ceremonies as per the local customs. Some even go an extra mile to accompany them to interior mission stations, sometimes even neglecting their own personal inconveniences and bypassing their priorities. It is an amazing sight to witness how wholeheartedly these people have received our young CMIs into their daily life.

The first batch of five CMIs arrived in Santarem in January 2016, and the second batch of another five in February 2016. They had already undergone preliminary training in Portuguese language and were initiated into Brazilian culture in general. Their preparations took place under the leadership of both Fr. George Thanchan CMI, former General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, and Fr. Antony Kalliath CMI, Provincial Councillor from Coimbatore Province, who established contact with the Bishop of Santarem and made the Amazon Mission possible.

The main means of conveyance between our mission centres is by water (both Amazon River and its tributaries; Amazon runs through eight countries, with the maximum width of 163 kilometres and 10-330 feet depth). But for

movement in the interior places, they go by road, but mostly mud roads. For example, one day we travelled 120 km by a bumpy road through the forest to reach the main station in Monte Dourado, which is some nine hours away from Santarem city, the diocesan headquarters, by speed boat through Amazon; an ordinary boat journey of the same distance will take almost its double.

Mission Narrative

The following paragraphs offer a summary of the author's first-hand experience as he visited the mission stations during a two week sojourn through the parishes and stations in Santarem administered by CMI priests in Brazil.

Santarem (20 January 2017)

After a lengthy discussion on the draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (between the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate and the Diocese of Santarem) with the ten CMI priests working in the Diocese of Santarem, we made needed modifications in the MoU, which was subsequently endorsed by the Bishop of Santarem. We had an appointment with the Bishop at 4 pm. In this meeting, the Vicar General of the Diocese also participated. After some preliminary discussions in which the Bishop expressed his happiness over the presence and pastoral services offered by our CMI priests in the Diocese of Santarem, the formal signing of the MoU took place. After the MoU was signed by the Bishop Dom Flávio Giovenale, representing the CMI Prior General, Fr. Winson Moyalan CMI, Coordinating Provincial and the Provincial of Preshitha Province, signed the MoU. The Vicar General of the Diocese, Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, and all the Provincials present, signed the MoU as witnesses. With this event, the CMI Brazil Mission has formally come into existence. The ten CMI priests, who already joined the Diocese of Santarem an

year ago, have already been appointed in five different parishes, where they function as parish priests or assistant parish priests, and have started their services in full swing; indeed, they are appreciated very much by the Bishop and the faithful in each parish community. With the formal beginning of the CMI mission in Brazil, particularly in the Diocese of Santarem, the vision of GS37 to enhance CMI Global Mission has reached newer heights and we are sure that the *kairos* that we experienced at the time of GS37 and the canonization of our beloved founder Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara will continue to inspire the entire CMI Global Mission across the globe, particularly in Brazil. At this juncture, the CMI Congregation gratefully acknowledges the initiative of Fr. Winson Moyalan, initial animation offered by Fr. Antony Kalliath, readiness of 7 Provincials to spare their priests for the mission in Brazil, and the ten young, energetic and motivated CMIs working in the Diocese of Santarem, and the generosity and pastoral magnanimity of the Bishop of Santarem.

Prainha (22 January 2017)

After a long journey of twelve hours by speed boat through the Amazon River, we reached the Paróquia De Nossa Senhora Das Graças, a parish assigned to CMIs in Prainha, a township on the river bank. The parish and the rectory are rather well set with moderate facilities for the stay and ministry of two priests. Fr. Tomy Vattukulathil (Kozhikode) and Fr. Saji Valamangalam (Kochi) have been appointed the parish priest and the assistant parish priest, respectively.

On 22 January 2017, we had a beautiful and meaningful installation ceremony of Fr. Tomy Vattukulathil (Kozhikode) and Fr. Saji Valamangalam (Kochi) in Prainha. The Episcopal Vicar, Msgr. Jose Ronald presided over the ceremony. Along with Fr. Cletus Plackal and Fr. Saju Chackalackal three other CMIs - Fathers Joby, Linto, and

Shinto working in Brazil – also joined the celebration. The Vicar General, in his homily, appreciated the CMI Congregation in general and the ten new CMIs who have arrived in the Diocese of Santarem to serve the faithful of the Amazon region. He expressed his hope that the CMIs would offer quality pastoral care to the people in Prainha with utmost care, as it has already been witnessed by him as well as others with whom these priests have spent almost one year. The installation ceremony was well attended by the faithful of the parish; in fact, the parish church was swelling with people. Soon after the Eucharist and the formal Installation, the parishioners joined a festive meal which was arranged under the auspices of the parish administration. Fr. Tomy thanked the Bishop as well as the Vicar General for the generous gesture of welcoming the CMIs to the Diocese of Santarem and for appointing himself and Fr. Saji in Paróquia De Nossa Senhora Das Graças. The faithful of the parish seemed to be quite happy with the presence and ministry of the new Indian CMI priests in their parish as they hoped that these young priests would bring in a renewal in their faith life as well as parish administration through their availability and readiness to reach out to all in the parish and the outstation communities under the care of the parish.

Almeirim (24 January 2017)

The formal installation of Fr. Dibin Karingan (Kochi) as the parish priest, and Fr. Sebastian Thekkinieth (Bhopal) and Fr. Shinto Kanjiramattam (Muvattupuzha) as the assistant parish priests of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Parish, Almeirim, took place during the Eucharistic celebration held at 7:30 pm on 24 January 2017, which was presided over by Msgr. Jose Ronald, Episcopal Vicar. Fr Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, and Rev. Fr. Antony Kuttiyanickal,

Provincial of Chanda, participated in the ceremony. Other CMIs working in the Diocese of Santarem also joined the celebrations.

This parish, located in Almeirim on the bank of Amazon River, has 60 community chapels spread around an area which stretches around 60 square kilometres. The parish owns a boat (in fact, the only parish having such a facility with a fulltime driver), which is necessary to reach out to the community centres, which are located either on the banks of Amazon River or its tributaries. As our three CMIs assumed the responsibility of this parish, the faithful spread around this large area are hopeful that they will receive regular pastoral care. Our Fathers plan to take turns throughout the month, each one being on the boat for ten days a month.

Monte Dourado (25 January 2017)

Today, Wednesday, 25 January 2017, the installation of Fr. Joby Mathew Virippamattathil (Rajkot) as the Parish Priest and Fr. Linto Varghese Punnassery (Bhopal) as the Assistant Parish Priest of Our Lady of Nazareth (Diocese of Santarem), Monte Dourado, Para, Brazil, took place during the Eucharistic celebration at 7:30 pm. The Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Santarem, Rev. Fr. Jose Ronaldo, presided over the ceremony. Fr. Saju Chackalackal and Fr. Antony Kuttiyanickal along with 5 CMIs working in the Diocese of Santarem also joined the celebration.

The parish is located inside the Amazon rain forest, almost 120 km away from Almeirim (by road, through the thick forest almost without any human presence). Monte Dourado is a township established by Jari Project, an American company that has a huge Eucalyptus plantation, which produces raw materials for the paper industry in the USA. It has around 20 parish community centres where Eucharist is regularly held (one centre, for example, is some 68 km away from the parish church).

With the installation of these two priests, all the five parishes entrusted to CMIs in the Diocese of Santarem become fully functional under the care of 10 CMI priests. May this new mission in Brazil flourish under the mantle of our Mother of Carmel and with the inspiring intercession of our Father Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Santa Maria (26 January 2017)

As Indian Republic Day is being observed in India on 26 January, in Brazil, we joined a small community in Santa Maria located on the banks of a small tributary of Amazon River for Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Joby, Fr. Linto, Fr. Antony Kuttiyanickal and Fr. Saju Chackalackal celebrated the Holy Eucharistic under a mango tree where the villagers were gathered. Our Fathers Dipin, Jose, and Shinto also were present. Eucharistic ministers from the main parish community in Monte Dourado also joined the celebration and one of them preached during the Mass. As no priest visited them in the last few years, we were informed that a number of children are yet to be baptized. Our CMI priests are doing their best to integrate them all into regular sacramental life.

In order to reach this community in the interior area, we had to travel by a car for about half an hour, and then another half an hour long boat journey by a small canoer. As the people in this locality have no other means of participating in Eucharist, they earnestly joined the celebration. They earnestly looked forward to the next visit of Fr. Joby and Fr. Linto. May our Blessed Mother of Carmel and Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara continue to inspire and intercede for this small community to live their faith in Jesus Christ in its fullness.

Holy Mass at Paroquia Nossa Senhora Aparecida (27-28 January 2017)

On my return to the Santarem City, I had the opportunity to join the parish community of Paroquia Nossa Senhora Aparecida, where Fr. John Elavathingal (Coimbatore) and Fr. Binoy Ittikunnel (Muvattupuzha) were appointed as the Parish Priest and Assistant Parish Priest, respectively, for Eucharistic celebrations. Both of them were formally installed at this parish by the Bishop of Santarem before our arrival in Brazil. On Saturday, 28 January 2017, for the evening Mass, the parish church, large and spacious (with air condition facility), was swelling with the faithful. This community, on a regular Saturday evening, gave me a real feel of a fully alive Catholic community in Brazil. The participation in the Mass was nothing but active: people were singing and praying together, supported by the volunteers and a well-groomed Church Choir. While Fr. John presided over the Eucharist, Fr. Binoy offered a meaningful homily, both of which were attended by the faithful in rapt attention. The life and vitality of Catholic faith were well testified the numbers as well as their unassuming involvement all through the service.

The personal rapport that our priests are building up in the parish was visible when we were invited by a family of doctors, who hosted our dinner on Sunday. The ambience and the arrangement of the dinner at their parental home were reminiscent of the European dinners. The multi-course sumptuous dinner served included a number of tasty dishes, though not common to us Indians, but uses a number of ingredients that we regularly use in our Kerala kitchen.

Holy Mass at Church of the Risen Christ (29 January 2017)

On Sunday, 29 January 2017, I joined Fr. Jose Koikara (Chanda), who is the parish priest of the Church of the Risen

Christ, situated in another part of the Santarem City. The sight of children and elders joining together for the Sunday Liturgy was heartening and hope-infusing. Fr. Jose, who also handles another parish substation, was installed by the Bishop of Santarem and has his residence at Paroquia Nossa Senhora Aparecida (Santarem) where the other two CMIs reside; he has independent charge of the Church of the Risen Christ. The Holy Mass on Sunday in which I concelebrated and the homily were keenly attended by the faithful. In this community also I could witness the active participation of the people all through the service.

Visit to Alter do Chao, the Freshwater Beach

Amidst the “green inferno” of the Amazon Rainforests is situated the golden paradise, the Alter do Chao, the best freshwater beach in Brazil (it is rated one among the best freshwater beaches in the world!). On the previous day of my return from Brazil, Fr. John offered me the privilege of spending the whole day in this beach, which is so captivating for its cleanliness and breath-taking natural beauty. For the first time after leaving home (in 1980), this was a unique day for me as I got into the beach water and spent more than five hours in the water (of course, with an interlude for lunch). Although there were many people around, being at the beach and immersing myself in the Amazonian freshwater gave me a totally different feel of Brazil, which I loved to the last minute. Of course, the flipside of the story is that I had a bit of sunburn on my head and shoulders: during the next few days I spent in Ecuador, practically I had new skin over my bald head: an experience worth remembering!

Good Bye, Amazon!

As I completed my first visit to Brazil, and as I was on my way back, on 2 February 2017, I thanked each one of our Brazilian CMIs for making my visit successful and utmost

comfortable. They had gone an extra mile to make our visit most comfortable: some of them offered us their beds, although at night they had to hunt for a space to take at least a little rest. They made the best available to all of us for our stay, transportation, food, etc.

The main purpose of the visit was best served as they gave the feedback on the draft of the MoU and we could revise and update it to include the concerns of the Brazil Mission and the Missionaries. With their openness and straightforward approach, we could finalize this historic instrument, which will make, God willing, further establishment, expansion, and enrichment of the CMI Mission in Brazil. We are glad that, on the one hand, our Missionaries in Brazil are in the safe hands of the pastor of the Diocese of Santarem, Bishop Flavio, a Salesian, who is ready to reach out to all the parishes under his care and, on the other, they all match the generosity of the Bishop with their own option to be in the interior parishes and its communities located in the tough terrains of Amazon. Naturally, they deprived themselves of many comforts that they could otherwise have back in India. That testifies to their mission-mettle about which the entire CMI Congregation is proud of.

Indeed, I felt really proud when I joined each installation ceremony in three centres and the other two centres for their regular Eucharistic celebrations. It was promising to experience their ability to handle Portuguese language, which they have learned within one year. Moreover, most promising was to see the warm response of the people. I am sure that when we see people thirsting for Jesus, and the enthusiastic welcome they extend to us, there is a lot more to aspire for in our Amazon mission. Apart from the formal services offered in the Churches, people do approach our missionaries for personal consultation and spiritual

direction. That is a sign of greater mission impact in the coming years.

As Fr. Prior General along with the General Council and all the Provincials have facilitated the launching of the CMI Mission in Brazil, especially with the facilitation of Fr. Antony Kalliath, we are well set for the full-fledged involvement in the mission of the Diocese of Santarem.

The entire CMI fraternity takes pride in the fact that its special thrust for global mission is taken to a new level of accomplishment, following the footsteps of the veteran missionaries of our Congregation.

CMI Ecuador Mission

The second lap of my trip was the visit to Ecuador Mission where thirteen CMI priests from five different provinces engage in catering to the pastoral needs of the people in three different dioceses.

Through the Parishes

On my first day in Ecuador, I stayed with Fr. Seby Shan Chullickal (Thiruvananthapuram) and visited three community centres and celebrated Eucharist in all three places with Fr. Vibin Muriankeril (Kochi). During a short span of time in the evening, that is, between 4:45 pm and 9:30 pm we visited three stations and celebrated Holy Mass in all the three places. It was very enriching and inspiring to see people waiting for the priest even when he was late. In fact, for the second Mass we were delayed by almost an hour; but people had no complaints; they warmly welcomed us and enthusiastically participated in the Eucharist.

Earlier, in the morning, Fr. Francis Akkapadickal (Rajkot) took me to his parish and its different centres. Interior stations are not easy to reach. Most of the people in his parish are poor; in one centre, most of them catch crabs; though a delicacy, they are not well paid.

All the places I visited looked almost like Kerala; most of the vegetation is similar; it is tropical weather all around. Plenty of mangoes, large plantations of banana, sugar cane, coco, oil palms, etc. are abundant. A lot of fruits, more varieties than what we get in Kerala are seen. Although the land is rich with cultivation, I am told that most of the farms and plantations are owned by the rich, especially North American companies; those who are engaged in cultivation are paid their wages: hence, not many would starve! But, it is unfortunate that the people of the land do not ultimately get the advantage of the rich vegetation and other natural resources that their country possesses. In spite of all these issues, the people of Ecuador are very loving and welcoming.

In the evening, I visited the Cathedral Parish, where Fr Vibin (Kochi) were to be installed Parish Priest on 23 February 2017; a new group of four Holy Family (CHF) sisters from India have been invited by the Bishop to assist the parish priest, especially in the 'home mission' of the parish.

Visit to the Bishop and Celebration of Consecrated Life

On 2 February 2017, there were two events in which I participated. In the afternoon, I joined the get-together of all the religious of the Diocese of San Jacinto de Yaguachi. The main event was the common Eucharistic celebration which was presided over by Bishop Anibal Nieto Guerra OCD, the bishop of San Jacinto. More than sixty religious of nineteen different congregations joined the celebration held at a Dominican cloistered convent. Apart from meeting with the Bishop, it was an opportunity to familiarise with different religious communities and their missions in Ecuador.

The second event was the Eucharist in St. Andres Parish Church where Fr. Seby (TVM) is the newly appointed Parish Priest. As it was the feast of the Presentation of our Lord in

the Temple, Fr. Seby celebrated a meaningful liturgy in which, along with Fr. Davy Kavungal and Fr. Antony Kallookaran from our CMI North American Mission who are on a short visit to Ecuador, I joined the celebration. It was, indeed, an enriching experience, especially for the active participation of the faithful.

Shrine of St. Narsisa and Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Church

3 February 2017 was another special day. We had a long journey from Guayaquil to Pichincha with Fr. Joshi Puthussery (Kochi), the coordinator of the CMI Ecuador Mission. On the way, we visited the shrine of St. Narsisa, in Nobol; St. Narsisa, a catechist, was canonized along with St. Alphonsa in 2008. Later, we had our lunch with Archbishop Lorenzo Voltolini of the Archdiocese of Portoviejo in Manabi state. He welcomed us with a lot of warmth; in fact, he waited for us as we were delayed due to the heavy traffic movement in the town. He expressed his satisfaction and appreciation for the ministry carried out by the three CMI priests in his Archdiocese; particularly, he appreciated their availability and more effective pastoral penetration into interior villages by Fr. Joshi.

Later, in the evening, we were pleasantly surprised to see a small but beautiful newly consecrated church, dedicated to Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara. This church was constructed under the inspiring leadership of Fr. Joshi, who received some substantial support from his friends and well-wishers in the USA. More surprising was to see about 100 faithful gathered together for Rosary and Eucharist, which began at 5 pm. As this church is dedicated to Saint Chavara, I offered them a relic of Saint Chavara, which was venerated by the faithful soon after the Eucharist and Novena to the Saint, which is their usual practice on every Friday. The simple faith and the wholehearted enthusiasm

of the people in this area are so edifying, motivating, and pastorally fulfilling. The day ended with a tea we had with the family which offered the land for the church and continue to support it in every possible manner; finally, we reached the parish house of Fr. Joshi in Pichincha by 8:30 pm; we had a refreshing bath and a homely meal with Fr. Joshi, Fr. Jojo Pathinezhilchira, and Fr. Libin Kurian Kariyil (the last two from Thiruvananthapuram, who have newly joined the Ecuador mission). Witnessing the life and ministry of our Fathers in Ecuador made me thank the Lord for the excellent and meaningful pastoral outreach they offer to the people in Ecuador, which is appreciated by the bishop as well as the faithful.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment

4 February 2017, was yet another very special day for the CMI Mission in the Americas. The day began with the Morning Prayer and the Eucharistic celebration in a small chapel close to the parish church in Pichincha town. Morning Prayer was led by Fr. Joshi (Kochi). The Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Libin (TVM); I concelebrated with him. I was glad to join the celebration and to witness to the confidence with which Fr. Libin celebrated the Holy Mass in Spanish. I felt proud of Fr. Libin and Fr. Jojo (both from TVM) for the expertise in the Spanish language that they have acquired to facilitate their entry into the Ecuador Mission.

Then, in the afternoon, we joined a unique event. Some three months ago, Fr. Prior General along with the General Council had approved a project to start a centre for the empowerment of women, children and youth in Ecuador, especially in the context of the deprivation the people experienced during the devastating earthquake in different parts of the country. The proposal of starting “Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment” (located

at Guayacan de Tachel) was made by the Ecuador CMI missionaries, which was endorsed by Fr. Prior General. Fr. Joshi was on the lookout for a suitable location, and the mayor of Pichincha had approved the allocation of a small plot of land and school building for a twenty years long lease. As the formal approval and the documentation were completed a week ago, Fr. Joshi decided to have the blessing of this new Centre for Empowerment without any further delay. In the presence of Fr. Joshi, Fr. Davi Kavungal, and Fr. Antony Kallukkaran from USA and Fr. Jojo and Fr. Libin and a gathering of more than 100 well-wishers and volunteers from different centres attached to our parishes, I blessed the new centre and dedicated it to the empowerment of women, children and youth, in the name of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara and for the perpetuation of the noble vision that he has bequeathed to the CMI Congregation. Fr. Joshi led the prayer and introduced the purpose of the new venture; myself, Fr. Davi, and a couple of lay representatives spoke during the programme and appreciated the initiative of Fr. Joshi and the support extended by the CMI Prior General and his Council, especially the US\$20,000 special grant to begin the programmes such as a tailoring centre, computer training centre, training in music and languages such as English and Spanish. As this is the first centre with an explicit commitment for the social uplift of the people established by the CMIs in the American continent, this is a day to be inscribed in golden letters in the annals of the CMI Mission outside India, especially in the Americas. It was our prayer that the paternal intercession and inspiration of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara would guide and animate this centre to its optimum success so that the people in Ecuador, especially associated with the CMI missionaries, be supported and empowered through various value-inculcating and vocational-oriented programmes. The whole

CMI community of Ecuador, especially Fr. Joshi deserve appreciation and support in empowering the people through the Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment.

Late Evening Holy Mass inside the Jungles

Soon after the blessing ceremony, we rushed to a community centre in Barraganete, where there is a church dedicated to Mother of Carmel, for Eucharistic celebration. This is a remote village, situated in the midst of the catchment area of a dam some 30 km away from Pichincha. First, we had to drive for almost 45 minutes and, then, 15 minutes boat ride to cross over to the other side of the dam; again, we had to drive by road for another 18 km, and we reached the parish at a time when it was heavily raining. Despite the inconveniences brought by the rain, more than 50 people were present for the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Davi Kavungal, Delegate Superior of CMI Mission in North America, who also speaks Spanish, was the main celebrant and Fr. Joshi preached the homily; Fr. Antony Kallukkaran and myself concelebrated. It was another wonderful experience, especially to witness and experience the simple faith, enthusiasm, and readiness to go an extra mile in realizing the Christian identity by these people located far away from the bustle of the towns and cities. They look for a pastor, who could be close to them and give them animation in living their Christian faith; however, due to the lack of priests, practically it is extremely difficult to avail a full-time priest for them (although earlier Fr. Joshi was a resident priest here; those days, he renovated the existing church, and built up a comfortable rectory with the support of the local people and some well-wishers from the USA).

These experiences made me realize that Ecuador needs more support from the CMI fraternity, both in terms of personnel and in terms of more effective community uplift

programmes, which naturally involves financial support. As a Catholic Priest is well accepted and welcomed by the people, and we can mobilise resources, Ecuador remains a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity before the CMI Congregation. Along with the routine pastoral ministry that we offer through the parishes and community centres, it is time for us to be more alert and forthcoming in planning and executing more and more empowerment programmes for the good of the people. Our animation to lead a meaningful Christian life should include both liturgical animation and social uplift; they must go hand-in-hand so that a holistic society could be built and maintained following the vision bequeathed to us by our founding Father Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

‘Being a Better Priest’: Elevating Sunday Experiences

On 5 February 2017, Sunday celebration was another excellent experience. I participated in three Eucharistic celebrations. The first one was in the parish church of Pichincha, which was presided over by Fr. Joshi. The church was full and the participation of the community was very active and inspiring. Fr. Davy, Fr. Antony Kallookkaran, and myself concelebrated. Prior to lunch, Fr. Joshi, the parish priest, invited me to join the Parish Council; I spoke to them, especially thanking them for the support extended to our CMI priests in Pichincha. I also requested their support to make the newly blessed Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment a success, as it would hopefully enhance the quality of Christian communities in and around Pichincha through various programmes planned under its banner.

The second Mass was at San Juan de Desvio, which was presided over by Fr. Jojo (TVM). Though only a community centre, the Mass was well attended and the participation was quite active. Again, although Fr. Jojo is only three

weeks in Ecuador, he celebrated the Eucharist with devotion and a good command of Spanish language.

The third Eucharistic celebration was again in Pichincha Parish Church. It was presided over by Fr. Davy Kavungal, Delegate Superior of CMI Delegation in the USA and Canada. Fr. Davy celebrated the Eucharist in Spanish, which was very well appreciated by the people who attended the service. His homily in Spanish also was much appreciated. The whole CMI fraternity present – Fr. Antony, Fr. Joshi, Fr. Jojo, Fr. Libin, and myself – concelebrated.

Participating in these Eucharist celebrations was quite enriching and a faith-enhancing for all of us. As Fr. Antony Kallookkaran said while speaking to the parish community, we left each Eucharist in Ecuador being a better priest as we could experience the depth of their faith and the earnestness with which they joined the liturgy. We all felt that our vocation to religious priesthood in the CMI Congregation is really meaningful, especially as our missions are worth the trouble and enriching to the faithful in leading an authentic Christian life. Our faith in Jesus Christ is much cherished by these people with simple faith amidst the hardships of their daily living. It was our earnest prayer that the good Lord continues to strengthen them in their faith and the models of Mary our Mother of Carmel and Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara inspire them to go the extra mile demanded by our faith in Jesus.

In Quito, the Capital of Ecuador

On 6 February 2017, we were at Quito City, the capital of Ecuador. First we visited our Quito CMI community, presently consisting of Fr. Thomas Podinattom (Bijnor), Fr. Jobichan Vadakkunnath (Kochi) and Fr. Sijo Thekkumkattil (Muvattupuzha).

Quito is known as the Vatican of the Catholics in Ecuador, especially due to the presence of a number of

beautiful churches in the vicinity of the Presidential Palace. After our visit through these churches and after witnessing the beautiful flag hoisting ceremony in front of the Presidential Palace, we visited the Archbishop's Residence. We had an appointment with the Metropolitan Archbishop of Quito, Fausto Gabriel Travez Tracez OFM. He spoke in appreciation of the ministry CMIs are rendering in Ecuador in general and in the Archdiocese of Quito in particular. We invited him to visit India, which he said he will consider. We also visited the Auxiliary Bishop of Quito, Vincente Danilo Echeverría Verdesoto. He personally thanked the CMI Congregation for generously sharing our members to fulfil the pastoral responsibilities of the church in Ecuador. As he was formerly a professor and rector of their major seminary and as he spoke very good English, communication was easier and warmer. To our invitation to visit India, he has responded positively, although it may not happen immediately as he would assume greater responsibilities in the Archdiocese.

After lunch, as a tourist interest, we visited the equator located in the city of Quito; interestingly, on my last day in Ecuador, it offered us some lighter moments, especially with a number of memorable photographs. Before leaving Quito community, we prayed together for a while thanking the Lord for the blessing of Ecuador CMI Mission and all the CMI missionaries, who toil hard to offer pastoral accompaniment to the faithful entrusted to them. In fact, the presence and support of Fr. Davy and Fr. Antony from North America made my trips through various mission stations in Ecuador more comfortable and interesting.

At the end of my visit to Ecuador, I sincerely thank every member of Ecuador CMI fraternity, particularly Fr. Joshi Puthussery, the coordinator of the CMI Mission in Ecuador, for supporting me, for taking me around the missions, and for facilitating an excellent first-hand experience, which I

cherish very much, especially in the context of GS37's priority for the global mission. I gratefully remember especially those of our Fathers who went an extra mile to make my stay convenient, for example, by sparing their personal rooms and other facilities for my use. Everyone was so considerate, prompt and forthcoming to support me in every sense. I enjoyed this visit thoroughly as I could see for myself the excellent mission work our Fathers render in the distant land of Ecuador.

Thank You, CMIs in Brazil and Ecuador!

On my last day, during my trip back to India, I wrote the following message to our Fathers in Brazil and Ecuador: "Dear CMIs in Brazil and Ecuador, I have boarded my flight from Sao Paulo and the flight is about to take off; with that, my three weeks long first trip to South American CMI missions come to a close. I thank CMI Fathers in Brazil and Ecuador, especially Fr. John Elevathingal and Fr. Joshi Puthusserry, coordinators of our missions, for their cordial welcome, wholehearted support, and most comfortable facilitation of my trip through the missions. I conclude this trip with a lot of personal satisfaction and congregational fulfilment as I could personally witness our enthusiastic CMI missionaries generously rendering their selfless services for the communities and the faithful entrusted to their care. I could personally experience the fulfilment of the thrust of GS37 for global mission, as it is being realized through our young and energetic CMIs, who are always ready to go an extra mile for the others. It was a fulfilling trip as I could personally visit all the parishes entrusted to us and a number of mission centres which are in remote areas, both in Brazil and in Ecuador. As our Fathers show their preference for missions in the remote regions and tough terrains which are difficult to access, we see a new heaven and earth opening up through these young CMIs. I

am very happy to see that all our missions in these two countries practise community-based missions; it is a positive change from our earlier patterns elsewhere, based on the mind of GS 37. All missions in Brazil and Ecuador consist of two or more CMIs and they collaboratively fulfil the mission, which is certainly a promising change for the good of the CMI Congregation. As the Amazon Mission in Brazil is one year old and the Ecuador Mission will complete 10 years soon, it is my earnest hope that we will be able to make more investment – personnel and monetary – in these two missions so that they could be further strengthened and the needs of the faithful better realized. There is increasing demand for CMI missionaries in South America, which we shall attend as best as we can. As more dioceses in Brazil and Ecuador extend their invitation to us, we need to prepare more of our Fathers for these missions. Let me place on record my personal gratitude to Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy, our Prior General, and the General Council for their wholehearted support for these missions in general and for facilitating this trip. Entrusting our CMI missions and missionaries in Brazil and Ecuador to the Divine Providence and praying for the constant intercession of our Blessed Mother of Carmel and Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara...”

Sharing Resources to Strengthen Missions

Given the fast pace with which the global mission of the CMI Congregation is expanding and the reception that our CMI Fathers receive in all our missions, especially outside India, an observation on the sharing of the resources is in place. Although CMIs alone could not respond to all the pastoral needs, we must be ready to share all our resources to strengthen the missions, especially by sharing our personnel and monetary resources. On the one hand, all our global missions suffer from the lack of personnel. As the volume of pastoral work in various missions undertaken is

so huge, more of our Fathers from India need to join hands with them. This is more pertinent to the Provinces in South India, particularly in Kerala. We need to encourage and motivate more CMIs to opt for missions outside India, which will not only ensure more pastoral fulfilment, but also more meaningful participation in the mission of the Church. While some of our Fathers who retire from their active service in educational institutions could opt for English speaking missions, many of our youngsters could willingly embrace other missions, especially in Africa, Latin America, and other countries in Asia for their mission.

Another area of concern is the lack of funds to support the missions and their growth. Along with more personnel, we need to facilitate flow of more funds to support the faithful in these global missions, especially in Africa and Latin America. This is necessary as most of these churches we reach out are very poor economically and building up the Church and its basic infrastructures would call for a lot of money. We could think of channelizing funds from donor agencies, if they would support. For example, the missions in Africa are very much the priority of agencies like Missio and Misereor in Germany. If we could harness the support of the local bishop a number of Catholic donor agencies would support our missions. While planning to make use of the resources that we could channelize from outside agencies, it is time that our own CMI Congregation contributes a share of its resources to support the global mission. When GS37 consciously decided to prioritize the global mission, it also includes our readiness to share the economic resources that the Congregation has at its disposal in order to strengthen these missions. Although this has taken place in a small way, policies to this effect must be in place in all our CMI Provinces if global mission is really a priority. It is my firm hope that without depriving our houses or institutions in India, it must be possible for each

Province to support the missionary endeavours outside India by way of its collective decision to share at least a larger portion of the resources we generate through our missions in those countries which are economically well off.

Some of the CMI global missions lack technical expertise that our Congregation could boast of in our Indian situation. For example, CMIs trained in professional social work and institutional management are a plenty in our congregation and they offer excellent institutional support in the Provinces. Unfortunately, these trained persons are bound by the institutional needs in India. Even if some of them wish to join the global missions, practically, those who are in the animation role may not let them. It is in such a context, I propose that some of their expertise could be utilized by our global missions by way of extending their support for short duration, for example for three months. For instance, in Ecuador, our CMI priests have already launched "Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment," which requires technical expertise if it should scientifically plan out projects. However, CMIs in Ecuador are already handicapped as the demand on them for their pastoral outreach is immense. Hence, they wish that someone trained in social work could give them a helping hand to professionally assess their needs and, then, identify key areas to be attended through various training programmes and developmental programmes. Such a professional assistance is not only required for planning the programmes, but also at the execution level. This may call for a long term association of such professionally trained Fathers with a mission over a longer period of time. However, this could be done by way periodic assistance in the course of time. In some instances, professional support could be done using modern electronic gadgets and the internet. But the most important in this regard is the willingness to share the technical expertise of CMI members

with the global missions as and when needed and the readiness on the part of the major superiors to positively facilitate such an exchange of expertise for the overall growth of the CMI missions.

Training Budding Missionaries

As the global missions receive more support from the Provinces in India, a key area to be attended is formation of our future missionaries. Be it young ordained priests or seminarians, there is a necessity to ensure that no one is sent to any of our missions without proper training in language of the locality, cultural traditions and liturgical practices of the people.

As far as the young priests are concerned, they could be offered training in language by approaching professional institutes that offer excellent language training. However, to give them initiation in the culture and traditions by remaining in India may be a difficult task. While a part of this could be accomplished by taking the support of our Fathers already working in the missions, it could be effectively carried out by facilitating the stay of new missionaries for a while with those who are already there. This will offer them a hands-on experience in the mission; moreover, as they would be groomed under the care of CMI priests, they could expect a smooth transition from the home-ground to the mission and its challenges.

However, in the case of our seminarians, we need to devise more effective plans. For example, given the importance the CMI Congregation attaches to global mission, training in any one of foreign languages (other than English) required for any prospective mission should be chosen by the candidate and, over a period of time, he should train himself in that language with the support of the formation personnel and major superior. If a decision to this effect is taken by the Congregation, all our members would

be global-mission-ready by the time they are ordained. These scholastics could be also given gradual initiation into the cultural traditions and liturgical practices by inviting our missionaries who come for their vacation in India. Their experience sharing to the community of scholastics and special sessions for those who are interested in their missions would gradually prepare our scholastics for the global mission that they would be part of after their ordination.

Along with the training in language and cultural traditions, our scholastics also must be prepared for the type of life that they would lead in these missions. On the one hand, they must be trained to live and exercise their mission in community; for, CMI mission is not an individualistic one, but communitarian. Although many of our members may stay alone due to pastoral exigencies, what is ideally needed is to be in a community and exercise the responsibilities, as much as possible, in and with the community. On the other hand, even when we are in communities, the global mission context calls for more personal responsibility on the part of each member. The values that we cherish as CMIs, the consecration that we undertake as religious and the pastoral responsibilities we are mandated as ordained ministers would call for a more responsible existence whether one is placed in a community or works alone in a parish context.

As life in the global missions become more complex due to the cultural adaptations needed, we must also focus on better emotional maturity during the time of formation. Human formation should be the starting point and more effective animation must be offered to all our scholastics throughout their formation to ensure that they are equipped to cultivate emotional equilibrium by the time they are ordained and commissioned for their mission in the Church.

Celebrating CMI Missions

As the CMI Congregation is engaged in more than thirty countries, there is a need to bring all our members more conscious of the mission carried out by our global missionaries in different corners of the world. While they may remain numerically small and their impact may have only local impact in the country of their work, the entire CMI fraternity must remain connected with them and support them through our good intentions and prayers. This can be better realized by celebrating and propagating the success stories of our global missions through the communication media that our Congregation has at its disposal. Not only we propagate the accomplishments of our missionaries through CMIssion (which we must continue to do), but we must also make use of other means of propagation through print and social networking facilities. We must adopt measures to inform the public about the excellent pastoral outreach our CMI global missionaries facilitate through their committed lives in different parts of the world.

Moreover, when these missionaries come for their vacation, all our houses must invite them at least for a day and listen to their experiences as it would build up an effective bonding between the members working in India and others who carry out their mission outside India. As it was indicated earlier, inviting and facilitating the sharing of missionary experiences with those in formation (at all stages) is an essential ingredient in cultivating a missionary orientation as well as option for global missions among the young candidates. For, effective witness by those who live in the missions and face the challenges willingly would be the best motivating factor to the youngsters who look for more meaningful challenges in the mission of the Church.



Feast of St George in Monte Dorado Parish, Brazil



Light of Faith Transferred in Monte Dorado, Brazil



**After the Installation Ceremony of Fr. Joby and Fr. Linto
in Our Lady of Nazareth, Monte Dourado, Santarem, Brazil**



**Celebrating Holy Mass under the Shade of Mangoe Trees
in the Amazon Region, Brazil**

From the Vatican

FIRST “WORLD DAY OF THE POOR” 19 November 2017

Pope Francis

Let us love, not with words but with deeds

1. “Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18). These words of the Apostle John voice an imperative that no Christian may disregard. The seriousness with which the “beloved disciple” hands down Jesus’ command to our own day is made even clearer by the contrast between the *empty words* so frequently on our lips and the *concrete deeds* against which we are called to measure ourselves. Love has no alibi. Whenever we set out to love as Jesus loved, we have to take the Lord as our example, especially when it comes to loving the poor. The Son of God’s way of loving is well-known, and John spells it out clearly. It stands on two pillars: God loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:10.19), and he loved us by giving completely of himself, even to laying down his life (cf. 1 Jn 3:16).

Such love cannot go unanswered. Even though offered unconditionally, asking nothing in return, it so sets hearts on fire that all who experience it are led to love back, despite their limitations and sins. Yet this can only happen if we welcome God’s grace, his merciful charity, as fully as possible into our hearts, so that our will and even our emotions are drawn to love both God and neighbour. In this way, the mercy that wells up – as it were – from the heart of the Trinity can shape our lives and bring forth compassion and works of mercy for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in need.

2. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him” (Ps 34:6). The Church has always understood the importance of this

cry. We possess an outstanding testimony to this in the very first pages of the Acts of the Apostles, where Peter asks that seven men, “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (6:3), be chosen for the ministry of caring for the poor. This is certainly one of the first signs of the entrance of the Christian community upon the world’s stage: the service of the poor. The earliest community realized that being a disciple of Jesus meant demonstrating fraternity and solidarity, in obedience to the Master’s proclamation that the poor are *blessed* and *heirs* to the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3).

“They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45). In these words, we see clearly expressed the lively concern of the first Christians. The evangelist Luke, who more than any other speaks of mercy, does not exaggerate when he describes the practice of sharing in the early community. On the contrary, his words are addressed to believers in every generation, and thus also to us, in order to sustain our own witness and to encourage our care for those most in need. The same message is conveyed with similar conviction by the Apostle James. In his Letter, he spares no words: “Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you, and drag you into court? ... What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled’, without giving them the things needed for the body; what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has not works, is dead” (2:5-6, 14-17).

3. Yet there have been times when Christians have not fully heeded this appeal, and have assumed a worldly way of

thinking. Yet the Holy Spirit has not failed to call them to keep their gaze fixed on what is essential. He has raised up men and women who, in a variety of ways, have devoted their lives to the service of the poor. Over these two thousand years, how many pages of history have been written by Christians who, in utter simplicity and humility, and with generous and creative charity, have served their poorest brothers and sisters!

The most outstanding example is that of Francis of Assisi, followed by many other holy men and women over the centuries. He was not satisfied to *embrace* lepers and give them *alms*, but chose to go to Gubbio to *stay* with them. He saw this meeting as the turning point of his conversion: "When I was in my sins, it seemed a thing too bitter to look on lepers, and the Lord himself led me among them and I showed them mercy. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of mind and body" (Text 1-3: FF 110). This testimony shows the transformative power of charity and the Christian way of life.

We may think of the poor simply as the beneficiaries of our occasional volunteer work, or of impromptu acts of generosity that appease our conscience. However good and useful such acts may be for making us sensitive to people's needs and the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to lead to a true *encounter* with the poor and a *sharing* that becomes a way of life. Our prayer and our journey of discipleship and conversion find the confirmation of their evangelic authenticity in precisely such charity and sharing. This way of life gives rise to joy and peace of soul, because we touch with our own hands the *flesh of Christ*. If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist. The Body of Christ, broken in the sacred liturgy, can be seen,

through charity and sharing, in the faces and persons of the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom's admonition remains ever timely: "If you want to honour the body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments, and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness" (Hom. in Matthaeum, 50.3: PG 58).

We are called, then, to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude. Their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts, and to acknowledge the value of poverty in itself.

4. Let us never forget that, for Christ's disciples, poverty is above all a *call to follow Jesus in his own poverty*. It means walking behind him and beside him, a journey that leads to the beatitude of the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20). Poverty means having a humble heart that accepts our creaturely limitations and sinfulness and thus enables us to overcome the temptation to feel omnipotent and immortal. Poverty is an interior attitude that avoids looking upon money, career and luxury as our goal in life and the condition for our happiness. Poverty instead creates the conditions for freely shouldering our personal and social responsibilities, despite our limitations, with trust in God's closeness and the support of his grace. Poverty, understood in this way, is the yardstick that allows us to judge how best to use material goods and to build relationships that are neither selfish nor possessive (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nos. 25-45).

Let us, then, take as our example Saint Francis and his witness of authentic poverty. Precisely because he kept his gaze fixed on Christ, Francis was able to see and serve him in the poor. If we want to help change history and promote

real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization. At the same time, I ask the poor in our cities and our communities not to lose the sense of evangelical poverty that is part of their daily life.

5. We know how hard it is for our contemporary world to see poverty clearly for what it is. Yet in myriad ways poverty challenges us daily, in faces marked by suffering, marginalization, oppression, violence, torture and imprisonment, war, deprivation of freedom and dignity, ignorance and illiteracy, medical emergencies and shortage of work, trafficking and slavery, exile, extreme poverty and forced migration. Poverty has the face of women, men and children exploited by base interests, crushed by the machinations of power and money. What a bitter and endless list we would have to compile were we to add the poverty born of social injustice, moral degeneration, the greed of a chosen few, and generalized indifference!

Tragically, in our own time, even as ostentatious wealth accumulates in the hands of the privileged few, often in connection with illegal activities and the appalling exploitation of human dignity, there is a scandalous growth of poverty in broad sectors of society throughout our world. Faced with this scenario, we cannot remain passive, much less resigned. There is a poverty that stifles the spirit of initiative of so many young people by keeping them from finding work. There is a poverty that dulls the sense of personal responsibility and leaves others to do the work while we go looking for favours. There is a poverty that poisons the wells of participation and allows little room for professionalism; in this way it demeans the merit of those who do work and are productive. To all these forms of poverty we must respond with a new vision of life and society.

All the poor – as Blessed Paul VI loved to say – belong to the Church by “evangelical right” (*Address at the Opening of the Second Session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council*, 29 September 1963), and require of us a fundamental option on their behalf. Blessed, therefore, are the open hands that embrace the poor and help them: they are hands that bring hope. Blessed are the hands that reach beyond every barrier of culture, religion and nationality, and pour the balm of consolation over the wounds of humanity. Blessed are the open hands that ask nothing in exchange, with no “ifs” or “buts” or “maybes”: they are hands that call down God’s blessing upon their brothers and sisters.

6. At the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, I wanted to offer the Church a *World Day of the Poor*, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ’s charity for the least and those most in need. To the World Days instituted by my Predecessors, which are already a tradition in the life of our communities, I wish to add this one, which adds to them an exquisitely evangelical fullness, that is, Jesus’ preferential love for the poor.

I invite the whole Church, and men and women of good will everywhere, to turn their gaze on this day to all those who stretch out their hands and plead for our help and solidarity. They are our brothers and sisters, created and loved by the one Heavenly Father. This *Day* is meant, above all, to encourage believers to react against a culture of discard and waste, and to embrace the culture of encounter. At the same time, everyone, independent of religious affiliation, is invited to openness and sharing with the poor through concrete signs of solidarity and fraternity. God created the heavens and the earth for all; yet sadly some have erected barriers, walls and fences, betraying the original gift meant for all humanity, with none excluded.

7. It is my wish that, in the week preceding the World Day of the Poor, which falls this year on 19 November, the Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, Christian communities will make every effort to create moments of encounter and friendship, solidarity and concrete assistance. They can invite the poor and volunteers to take part together in the Eucharist on this Sunday, in such a way that there be an even more authentic celebration of the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King, on the following Sunday. The kingship of Christ is most evident on Golgotha, when the Innocent One, nailed to the cross, poor, naked and stripped of everything, incarnates and reveals the fullness of God's love. Jesus' complete abandonment to the Father expresses his utter poverty and reveals the power of the Love that awakens him to new life on the day of the Resurrection.

This Sunday, if there are poor people where we live who seek protection and assistance, let us draw close to them: it will be a favourable moment to encounter the God we seek. Following the teaching of Scripture (cf. Gen 18:3-5; Heb 13:2), let us welcome them as honoured guests at our table; they can be teachers who help us live the faith more consistently. With their trust and readiness to receive help, they show us in a quiet and often joyful way, how essential it is to live simply and to abandon ourselves to God's providence.

8. At the heart of all the many concrete initiatives carried out on this day should always be *prayer*. Let us not forget that the *Our Father* is the prayer of the poor. Our asking for bread expresses our entrustment to God for our basic needs in life. Everything that Jesus taught us in this prayer expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties and the lack of what they need. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he answered in the words with which the poor speak to our one Father, in

whom all acknowledge themselves as brothers and sisters. The *Our Father* is a prayer said in the plural: the bread for which we ask is “ours”, and that entails sharing, participation and joint responsibility. In this prayer, all of us recognize our need to overcome every form of selfishness, in order to enter into the joy of mutual acceptance.

9. I ask my brother Bishops, and all priests and deacons who by their vocation have the mission of supporting the poor, together with all consecrated persons and all associations, movements and volunteers everywhere, to help make this *World Day of the Poor* a tradition that concretely contributes to evangelization in today’s world.

This new *World Day*, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practise in our lives the essence of the Gospel.

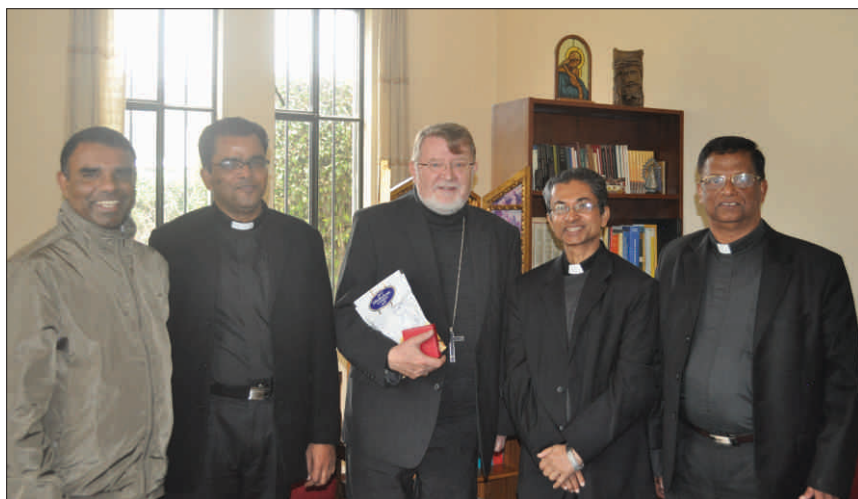
Issued from the Vatican, 13 June 2017
Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua

POPE FRANCIS

invites us to meaningfully observe the first

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

on 19 November 2017



**Fr. Prior General
with the Bishop Norbert Klemens Strotmann Hoppe MSC in Peru**



**Fr. Prior General
with the Auxillary Bishop Arthur Joseph Colgan CSC
of the Diocese of Chosica, Peru**



Chavara Task Force, Khatauli



Chavara Task Force with Beneficiaries, Khatauli

Appeal

CONTRIBUTIONS SOLICITED FOR FREE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

Financial contributions are solicited from the readers of the *CMIssion* and the well-wishers of the CMI Congregation, including the ACMI members, to extend a supporting hand to the CMI Department of Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry to promote the free distribution of the Bible (especially the New Testament) and some basic Christian literature.

Title of the Account: General Department of
Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

Account Number: 0313053000000182

Name of the Bank: South Indian Bank

IFSC Code: SIBL0000313

Purpose of the Bank Transfer: "CMI Christian Literature
Distribution"

News

SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH CENTRE

**Fr. Jose Chennathusserry CMI
Antony Vallavanthara CMI**

A Feather in the Cap of Mannanam

Kottayam, the *Akshara Nagari* (city of letters) is a land of literary as well as religious heritage. Now the place has one more feather in its cap. The saintly soil of Mannanam in Kottayam, which has contributed to the rich social, political, religious, and cultural legacy of Kerala in general and the history of Catholic Church in particular has opened St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre attached to St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, the Mother House of the CMI Congregation.

The Research Centre was officially inaugurated by the Honourable Governor of Kerala, Shri Justice (Retd.) P. Sathasivam on 9 February 2017 in the presence of an august gathering of well-wishers. The Research Centre, named after Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, is a fitting tribute to commemorate the multifarious social and cultural contributions of the saintly soul. Thanks to the unstinting support of St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam coupled with the technical and financial support of Christ University, Bengaluru. The centre is housed on the premises of the monastery that Saint Chavara built. It has a rich and varied collection of historical documents and artefacts as early as 1555. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre is a knowledge corridor that provides a generational link.

Inaugural Function

It is befitting that the formal inauguration of the centre coincided with the 212th birth anniversary of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Besides the Honourable Governor of Kerala, the inaugural ceremony was attended by a galaxy of distinguished personalities including, Shri Jose K. Mani MP, Shri Suresh Kurup MLA, Fr. Paul Achandy, Prior General of the CMI Congregation and Dr. Babu Sebastian, Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. The Governor, in his inaugural address, felicitated the venture which is a landmark achievement in embarking on wider and deeper research into the heritage and history of the land. He extolled the glorious contributions of the Christian missionaries to the enrichment of education and social services in Kerala. He went on to highlight the great achievements of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in the field of inclusive education at a time when education was the privilege of a few elites. He recalled the historical magnitude of Saint Chavara's policy of opening a school attached to every church. Fr. Sebastian Chamathara, Prior, St. Joseph's Monastery, welcomed the esteemed gathering and Fr. Jose Chennattussery, Professor of Christ University proposed vote of thanks.

A Peep into the Rich Collection

The bulk of the materials in the possession of the Centre have come from the collection of early books and documents at St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam. The earliest of the collection from the Monastery dates back to 1829 and includes manuscripts, printed books, and palm leaves. Most of the manuscripts are in Syriac and Malayalam. There are several documents in English, Latin, Tamil, and several other languages. The Centre is a wellspring of data for future research into Kerala history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A special reference may be made about

the first printed material in St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam, which was founded by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara in 1846. These are affirmations of the tireless endeavour of the members of the CMI Congregation in fostering the print media.

The archival collections include Catechism by Dr. Joseph Kariattil, First Account Book of St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam 1829 to 1930, the Chronicles (*Nalagamangal*) composed by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara 1831 to 1870, *Chronicles* written by Fr. Varkey Parpurathu, *Raza* of the Syro-Malabar Rite prepared by Bishop Roz SJ, *Diaries* of Fr. Bernard Alencheril, *Canons of Synod of Diamper*, Fr. Placid Collection, *Kallantharium* (Liturgical Calendar made by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara), *Anasthashyadae Reakthasashyam* (Written by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara), Collection of Letters by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Bible translation manuscript notes by Manikkathanar, Syriac-Karsuni Dictionary by Fr. John Perarios SJ, Biography of CMI Founding Fathers by Fr. Palakkal Thoma Malpan and Fr. Thomas Porukkara, notes on CMI Congregation's history by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Fr. Thomas Porukkara, works of St. Augustine (Printed in Paris 1555), first printed version of *Atmanuthapam* (1871) and *Njanapeeyusham* composed by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, *Biblia Poliglotta*, the first Syro-Malabar Missal printed in 1774 in Rome and used by Fr. Thomas Porukkara and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Mannanam Archives Hall: An Overview

The archives hall consists of three segments, namely, the Reference Room, Archival Room (Stack Room), and Processing Room.

1. Reference Room: Reference room is equipped with a digital reference facility. Koha Library Management Software facilitates the cataloguing.

2. Archival Room (Stack Room): The air-conditioned space maintains a room temperature of 23° and humidity of 50-55. The documents which are broadly grouped into Manuscripts, Printed Books, Palm Leaves, and Paper documents (Letters) are further classified on the basis of Language, Subject, and Year. Digital copies of these documents are available in the reference room.
3. Processing Room: The Processing Room is also known as workshop of documents. Different types of archival technical works, like preservation and conservation are done in the processing room. The conservation work includes fumigation, dust cleaning, pagination, lamination, binding, and many more. The subsequent steps are archival classification, cataloguing and digitization.

Digitisation of Manuscripts

While the original manuscripts are well preserved, their digital replicas are being built in order to balance authenticity and accessibility.

Twin Engines

The realisation of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre is the result of the collaborative efforts of St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, and Dharmaram College and Christ University, Bengaluru. The Centre is well geared to embark on a multitude of research work. Interested researchers and seekers of knowledge are welcome to this rich house of primary sources.

Contact Address:

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre
St. Joseph's Monastery
Mannanam P.O., Kottayam, Kerala 686561, India
Website: kearchives.in; Email: mail@kearchives.in
Telephone: +91 481 2597237; +91 82899 98237

SAMANVAYA COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY **Hermeneutics for Mission**

Fr. Joshy Pazhukkathara CMI

Samanvaya is a 'hermeneutics for mission'. The non-institutionalist nature of Samanvaya may be regarded as a weakness by a few, but, as a process, it does contribute a lot for the development of a theology of mission. What exactly is the method for a theology of mission? An exploration of this question takes one to the vision of Samanvaya, namely, "formation for mission in the mission." In the course of its development, this vision is more systematically and contextually augmented, which has resulted in the development of a theological hermeneutics for mission, namely, Samanvaya. Therefore, to know what exactly is the best method for mission, it suffices to consider what and how Samanvaya functions. Indeed, Samanvaya is a process and a program for theology of mission. It is the hermeneutics for mission.

Gerald Anderson, in his book *The Theology of Christian Mission* (1961), speaks of the tripartite structure of theology of mission, namely, Biblical Text, Faith Community, and Missional Context. The hermeneutics for mission has to be an intersection of these three. In Samanvaya, the realm of biblical text takes place in the missional context, i.e., within the faith community; therefore, an integration of these tripartite phases. As the etymology of Samanvaya indicates, it proffers such a theology of integration. The three are harmoniously and richly integrated in the formative

¹The following three articles are taken from *Darpan: Reflections from the Context*, published by Samanvaya Theology College, Jagdalpur, Volume 2, Issue 6, March 2017.

program of Samanvaya. It is for this reason that I call Samanvaya the hermeneutics for mission.

The mode of this hermeneutics is exercised primarily as a Christological enterprise, that is, rooted deeply in the life and mission of Jesus. The incarnational nature of the ministry of Jesus is the hallmark of Samanvaya program. Samanvaya has integrated the incarnational nature in different contexts. Yet, another feature of Jesus' ministry was his openness for difference; for him, more than one single static structure, 'human person' was more central, which is seriously considered in Samanvaya formative program. A third feature is the focus on small community. Jesus was never interested in huge numbers; rather he had a small group of people, who always moved and stayed with him. Samanvaya also envisages a small community in its formative process. (All types of narrow-mindedness in liturgical, religious, or sociological perspectives and practices are against the central thrust of Jesus' broader outlook).

'Reflection-Action-Reflection' is another unique feature of Samanvaya program which is basic to a theology of mission. Theological reflection leads one to the context and, in turn, action takes back to reflect more deeply and critically based on one's experience. This experiential theologizing is the key of Samanvaya hermeneutics. Therefore, Samanvaya is a critical-hermeneutics suited for mission, which is otherwise identified as contextual-experiential hermeneutics. In other words, it is an inclusive or integral hermeneutics.

Moreover, a biblical and ecclesial based single-mindedness brings all these different features together in Samanvayic vision. In short, theology of mission is a biblically-informed and contextually appropriated program, which is true in its root. Any theology of mission is basically "*missiologia viatorum*." This "pilgrim missiology" is the heart

of Samanvayic-program; which is otherwise termed as “mobile-theology” or “theology on wheels.” The flexibility of Samanvayic-program proffers various prospects to respond creatively and contextually according to the needs of the time. It aims at making future missionaries more open-minded and flexible like Jesus (Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*, 1978: 6, 18).

Furthermore, in Samanvaya-hermeneutics, the theological *loci* is redirected to the context from the traditional *loci*, namely, dogmas and doctrines. Thus, in context, the Sacred Scripture is read and re-read with new perspectives. Samanvaya hermeneutics is theology in new wine skin. Context gets its optimal role in this new paradigm for mission – “Text in context,” “Theology from and for Context,” etc., are some of the specific features of this mission hermeneutics.

THE TAPESTRY OF FAITH The Samanvayic Method

Bibin Changancheril CMI

Christian faith is a texture of '*auditus fidei*', '*intellectus fidei*', and '*experientia fidei*'. The '*auditus fidei*' is the hearing of faith which refers to the content of revelation (heard) in the Sacred Scripture, tradition, and teachings of the Church. The '*intellectus fidei*' is the understanding of faith in the light of reason; and '*experientia fidei*' is the acquaintance of faith through the experiences of day-to-day life. Theology becomes meaningful when there is a combination of these three. They are like a tripartite tree which demands oneness in being but distinction of the different parts. Meaningless overemphasis on any of the parts would not provide a complete tapestry of faith.

Christian faith is ever dynamic and lively because of the constant indwelling of the parts, and among which '*experientia fidei*' has a higher role to play. It gives us a foundation for theology because of its subjective and experiential nature. The denial of '*experientia fidei*' is the denial of self or the very being of a person. Since God is omnipresent, the world is the laboratory for living theology. Samanvaya teaches us that theology is not meant to be with books and shelves alone, rather the basic lessons are taught by God through the people around us and through the varying experiences of life. The olden concept of abandoning the world in order to possess God has been changed today in finding and experiencing him in the world and with the people; and, subsequently, classroom learning is complemented and completed with life experience. If '*auditus fidei*' and '*intellectus fidei*' give flesh to theology, '*experientia fidei*' remains as its backbone. When we say that

Samanvaya is a place for contextual theology, it means that we are living our faith and not learning our faith, a faith which is ever dynamic, wherein we encounter the mutual indwelling of scripture, philosophy, and experience. For this reason, the Samanvayic method of theologizing is *experientia fidei* complimented with *auditus fidei* and *intellectus fidei*.

MISSIONARY IN ZERO POSSESSION

Jebin Attokaran CMI

Going to a village, meeting with people, and conversing with them are all about *experiencing* the kingdom values. There seems to be a drastic contrast between the life in a village and in a city; the former presents a fullness of wonder of God's creation and the latter depicts nothingness in comparison to the first. When naturality dominates artificiality, we feel that things are ancient and classical. Therefore, a true village is a classic piece of the creation of God, a disclosure of the Divine presence. It resembles simplicity, unity, and equality. That may be the reason why Jesus sent his disciples for village exposure as depicted in the Gospel (Lk 10).

In the Gospel, however, Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Kingdom of God, to heal the sick, liberate the downtrodden and to give them the gospel of salvation. Instructing them, he said: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor bag, neither bread nor money and wherever they do not receive you, go out from the city shaking the dust from your feet" (Lk 10). With these guidelines, he conveyed the message of exercising the powers of heaven. Additionally, he demanded complete detachment and renunciation from each of them. The ministry of Jesus is transferred to his disciples by a process of emptying themselves into a zero position. Detachment from one's self is the point of entry into the abyss of nothingness or *sunya*. Nothingness or *sunya*, referred to as 'the zero possession', is a space of absolute possibilities. God created this world from zero. The *Vedas* and the *Bhagavad Gita* also speak of the universe being created out of *sunya* or zero.

One would find the true meaning of this zero-position among the village people. Stepping in to a mud house may not make one happy. Many of us prefer majestic buildings to stay. Black tea has become out of fashion for us. However, all these proffer naturality to village life. Mud house is the only style seen in a village; black tea is very much a part of any celebration; it is considered a healthy-drink. Moreover, the fact that three to five utensils are enough to make a happy dinner for these villagers is a matter of surprise for many. They consider less money to fetch a more peaceful and comfortable life.

Is this what Jesus tried to communicate to us? He came to this world by emptying himself to the barest minimum, as even his own life was laid down for others. He came to exist here in this world through a zero-process. He emptied himself to establish the kingdom of love and compassion. He started his kingship by taking birth in the manger of nothingness. He was a kingly son of an ordinary carpenter. He stayed in the hills and mountains and remained open to the complete universe. He visited the boundaries of his kingdom without any chariot. He was entertained not by his friends and relatives but by sinners and the gentiles. His clothes were not silky. He did not possess any royal seat to rule His kingdom. He chose rocks and boats to preach His good news. In His last days, He fought and died by accepting the cross of humiliation and total negation (zero); He offered his disciples a piece of bread and nothing more to cherish his memory. He possessed nothing except love and compassion.

We know Jesus was really neglected and totally rejected. He is our way, truth, and life. He is the God of those who are isolated and marginalized in the society, and he, being a man of absolute zero, is something we need to experience during our life span. Jesus emphasizes that there is power in being a zero or a man of *sunya*. It is the power for a new

realization. It is a power for a new beginning. It is a power to create new sets of relationships.

Realization is possible only for those who hold an empty space within his or her life, because one tries to fill his or her life with certain meaning. Creating a meaningful life is really a new step towards this zero-position. Accomplishing this meaning is possible through relating and recognizing the idea of meaning in others' lives too. However, one need not worry if he or she has nothing to offer; there was a man who went before us having possessed nothing but, later, achieved every heart of this world. Do not be upset if you are rejected and neglected, because there was a man who was rejected but later acknowledged. Be happy if you have no seats of power, because Jesus taught us to serve and not to be served. Be joyful if you have no talents because we are counted not by the talents but by the act of love and compassion. So, let us realize the power we have within and make our lives more meaningful and unique so that we may be able to understand the purpose of our life here in this world. With this conviction, now let us start from where we have stopped and be ready for a new and joyful beginning.

NEWS FROM CMI MISSIONS

CMI Education Summit

A Mini Educational Summit was held during 5-6 January 2017 at CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills. Fr. Prior General inaugurated the summit. Fr. Jose Kuriedath presented the Lineamenta and identified five core topics for discussion. Fr. Varghese Panthallookaran made a very insightful presentation of *Pallikutam* and the web portal was launched. Dr. Valson Thampu, former Principal of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, gave an inspiring address to find solutions to most of the challenges we face in terms of Christian mission and commitment to the poor. Fr. Sebastian Thekkedathu, General Councillor for Education and Mass Media, and his team took the trouble to organize the program very effectively. As a follow up, a full-fledged CMI Education Summit will take place by the end of September 2017 in Bangalore.

Installation of CMIs as Parish Priests in Brazil

Fr. John Elavathingal (Coimbatore) and Fr. Benoy Joseph Ittikunnel (Muvattupuzha) were installed the parish priest and assistant parish priest of Aparecida Parish in Santarem Diocese, Brazil, on 3 January 2017, feast of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, by Bishop Dom Flávio Giovenale, Bishop of the Diocese of Santarem.

Fr. Jose Koikara (Chanda) was installed the parish priest of the Church of the Risen Christ, Santarem, by Bishop Dom Flávio Giovenale on 10 January 2017.

On 22 January 2017, Fr. Tomy Vattukulathil (Kozhikode) and Fr. Saji Valamangalam (Kochi) were installed parish priest and assistant parish priest of Paróquia De Nossa

Senhora Das Graças in Prainha. The Episcopal Vicar, Msgr. Jose Ronald presided over the ceremony.

The formal installation of Fr. Dibin Karingan (Kochi) as the parish priest, and Fr. Sebastian Thekkinieth (Bhopal) and Fr. Shinto Kanjiramattam (Muvattupuzha) as the assistant parish priests of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Parish, Almeirim, took place during the Eucharistic celebration on 24 January 2017, which was presided over by Msgr. Jose Ronald, Episcopal Vicar.

On 25 January 2017, the installation of Fr. Joby Mathew Virippamattathil (Rajkot) as the Parish Priest and Fr. Linto Varghese Punnassery (Bhopal) as the Assistant Parish Priest of Our Lady of Nazareth (Diocese of Santarem), Monte Dourado, Para, Brazil, took place during the Eucharistic celebration, which was presided over by Msgr. Jose Ronaldo, the Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Santarem.

Proposal: "St. Chavara Doctor of the Syro-Malabar Church"

Mar Kuriakose Bharanikulangara and Mar Jose Chittooparambil CMI met with the CMI General Council representatives of CMI and CMC congregations as a follow up of the request placed before the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church to declare St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara "Father of the Syro-Malabar Church." Based on the feedback from the expert committee and in the light of the decision arrived at in the Synod of Bishops, a new proposal was made to approach Vatican to declare St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara "the Doctor of the Syro-Malabar Church."

CMI Mission in Australia

Bishop Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane, has given a coordinating Centre for CMIs in Australia in his archdiocese. Fr. John Panamthottam CMI is the parish priest in the centre. CMI common programmes will be organized from this centre in Australia. Address: Our Lady and St.

Dympna's Parish, 479 Robinson Rd., Aspley, 4034, QLD, Australia. Phone: +61 7 38629402; Our House Address: 24 Glengellen Street, Zillmere, QLD, Australia. Phone: +61 4321 55 970.

MoU between the CMI and the Diocese of Santarem

Fr. Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, Fr. Wilson Moyalan, Fr. Cletus Plackal, Fr. Joseph Vayalil, Fr. Thomas Manjakunnel and Fr. Antony Kuttianickal, Provincials of five provinces, visited CMI Amazon Mission in Santarem, Brazil. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Santarem Diocese and CMI Congregation was signed on 20 January 2017. The Installation ceremonies of our members as the Parish priest and associate were attended by the General Councillor and the provincials. CMI missionaries in Amazon region must be congratulated for their passion for the mission and expertise in picking up Portuguese language. The efforts of Fr. Antony Kalliath in facilitating the Amazon mission are also appreciated.

Feast of Saint Chavara in Kainakary

The feast of St. Kuriakose Elias was held on 12 February 2014 at Chavara Pilgrim Centre, Kainakary. Mar Pauly Kannookadan, Bishop of Irinjalakkuda, was the main celebrant. Fr. Varghese Vithayathil, Vicar General, Fr. Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor, and other members were present for the festal liturgical celebration. Large number of people, irrespective of caste and creed, took part in the preparatory Retreat, Novena, solemn Eucharistic celebration, procession and the festal *oottunercha*. On the solemn feast day, at least 4,500 people participated in the celebrations. The efforts of Fr. Johnson Panthalanickal, Director of Chavara Bhavan, Kainakary, and other committee members, including the CMC sisters of the Pilgrim Centre, and those of the neighbouring communities

are appreciated. Members from different CMI Provinces and a large number of CMC sisters and their associates joined the celebrations during the novena days and on the feast day. Dr. Sebastian Paul and Dr. Radhakrishnan also spoke to the faithful prior to the Procession to Saint Chavara School, Kainakary, which was led by Rev. Fr. James Madathikandam CMI, former Vice-Postulator of the Chavara Cause.

Mission Visit

Fr. Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, visited the missions in Brazil and Ecuador on during January-February 2017. During this mission trip, he visited all our missionaries in Brazil and Ecuador. Particularly, he joined the signing of the MoU between the Diocese of Santarem (Brazil) and the CMI Congregation and the installation of CMI Fathers as parish priests and assistant parish priests in different parishes in the Amazon Region. In Ecuador, during his visit to different stations spread in three dioceses, he also blessed the newly established Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Centre for Empowerment, a new initiative of Ecuador Mission with the support of Rev. Fr. Prior General. Fr. Saju expressed his great appreciation and satisfaction of the inimitable commitment of CMI Fathers for their missions in Brazil and Ecuador.

Human Formation in Major Seminaries

Marking the Diamond Jubilee of Dharmaram College, the major study house of the CMI Congregation, a seminar cum workshop on "Human Formation in Major Seminaries" was held during 10-13 February 2017. His Beatitude Moron Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, President CBCI, inaugurated the seminar. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, presided over the inaugural function. His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry gave the concluding message. The

seminar was so unique with its theme and participants and resource persons. The participants highly appreciated Dharmaram community for the unique way of celebrating its diamond jubilee with a unique contribution to Indian Church than reducing it to a consumptive celebration. Along with Fr. Thomas Aykara, Rector of Dharmaram College, Fr. Shaji Kochuthara and others organized the event very effectively. As a follow up, a committee has been assigned to evolve a model of human formation in major seminaries, which may be made available to other seminaries in India.

Silver Jubilee of CMI Dhule Mission

The silver jubilee of Chavara Mission, Dhule, was held on 5 February 2017 in Chavara Auditorium, Dhule. Mar Thomas Elavanal, Bishop of Kalyan, celebrated the Holy Mass and presided over the jubilee gathering. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, Fr. Walter Thelappilly, Provincial, and Major Superiors of the communities of consecrated men and women working in the Dhule Mission were present. The program consisted of spiritual preparation with chain adoration and a number of social work initiatives to uplift the poor and the differently abled. Fr. Thomas Kannanaickal, the Mission Superior of Chavara Mission and the Vicar General of Kalyan Diocese and other CMI members coordinated the events.

St. Kuriakose Elias Archives and Research Centre

Inauguration of St. Kuriakose Elias Archives and Research Centre was held on 9 February 2017 by Justice (retired) P. Sadasivam, Honourable Governor of Kerala. Along with other dignitaries, Fr. Prior General felicitated the gathering and thanked Fr. Sebastian Chamathara, Prior of St. Joseph's Monastery, Fr. Jose Chennatussery and other members who made it possible. The role of Dharmaram College, Bangalore, and especially its constituent unit Christ

University, was appreciated for the support in realizing this project. After the function, the Governor visited the tomb of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and paid his respects and prayed over there.

CMI Mission in Arunachal Pradesh

The official inauguration of CMI Mission in Arunachal Pradesh undertaken by St. Paul Province, Bhopal, was held in Tuting, on 15 March 2017. His Excellency John Thomas, Bishop of Itanagar, made the inauguration of the CMI Mission during the Eucharistic celebration and declared the centre in Tuting a parish and installed Fr. Nijo Palatty as the parish priest. Fr. Cejo Chakery is appointed the Mission Superior. Fr. Prior General, Fr. Kurian Kachappilly, Provincial, Fr. Thomas Pulickal, the Provincial Councillor, other CMI members, MSFS Fathers and sisters attended the function along with good number of faithful from the parish community. Fr. Prior General appreciated Fr. Provincial and his team and the young CMI missionaries for taking up the mission on the borders of China. The mission was initiated through the interaction of Fr. Paulson Thaliath, which was followed up during the diaconate ministry of Frs. Nijo and Cejo in different parishes in the diocese of Itanagar.

Saint Chavara Centre for Empowerment, Ecuador

In the context of the devastating earthquake experienced in Ecuador on 16 March 2016, a new initiative *Chavara Centro de Capacitacion* was launched by the CMI missionaries in Ecuador; it is supported by the General Social Apostolate Department of the CMI Congregation. It plans to empower children, youth and women. Fr Joshi Puthussery CMI, the Coordinator of CMI mission in Ecuador, along with the other CMI missionaries deserves appreciation for their breakthrough in social apostolate along with their pastoral engagements.

CMI's Ordained Deacons in Kenya

Diaconate of three CMI scholastics Alexander, Danu and Linto in Kenya was held on 25 February 2017 at Hekima University College Chapel.

New CMI Provincials (2017-2020)

During the elections held in fifteen Provinces of the CMI Congregation, new provincials and their councillors were elected. The following are the provincials:

01. St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram: Fr. Sebastian Chamathara CMI
02. St. Joseph Province, Kottayam: Fr. Sebastian Elanjickal CMI
03. Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha: Fr. Paul Parakattel CMI
04. Sacred Heart Province, Kochi: Fr. Jose Kuriedath CMI
05. Devamatha Province, Thrissur: Fr. Walter Thelappilly CMI
06. St. Thomas Province, Kozhikode: Fr. Thomas Thekkel CMI
07. Preshitha Province, Coimbatore: Fr. Joy Kolengadan CMI
08. St. Paul's Province, Mysuru: Fr. Varghese Kelamparambil CMI
09. Mary Matha Vice-Province, Bellampally: Fr. Joshy Pazhukkathara CMI
10. Mar Thoma Province, Chanda: Fr. Benny Joseph Mukalel CMI
11. Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur: Fr. Josey Thamarassery CMI
12. St. Paul Province, Bhopal: Fr. Justin Akkara CMI
13. St. Xavier's Province, Rajkot: Fr. Thomas Kolamkuzhy CMI
14. St. John's Province, Bijnor: Fr. Bijju Vadakkal CMI
15. Chavara Vice-Province, Bhavanagar: Fr. Emmanuel Kariyapurayidam CMI

"Chavara Inspire"

Chavara Inspire Charitable Society, a registered charitable organisation set up in the fond memory of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara to support the socially ostracized in the society, is a joint effort of CMI and CMC congregations under the auspices of Chavara Cultural Centre,

Karikkamuri. Its activities started in 2011 and till date it had conducted six state level camps. During 22-26 April 2017 a summer camp was conducted for children affected with HIV at Renewal Centre, Kaloor; 142 children from across the state of Kerala participated and benefited out of discourses and various programmes. They spent half a day in Chavara Hills and presented cultural programmes and had tea and dinner with the Generalate community.

Christ University Ranked First

Christ University, a premier higher education institution of the CMI Congregation in Bangalore, has received the best ranking in "India Today Survey of the Best Colleges." Christ University has been ranked with all India *first* in Science, BCA and BBA, *second* in Commerce, *third* in Arts and Mass Communication, *fifth* in Law, and *sixth* in Hotel Management.

Servant of God Father Canisius CMI

Birthday celebration of Servant of God, Fr. Canisius Thekkekara CMI was held on 12 May 2017 in Canisium, Anandapuram, with a one-day prayer session organized under the leadership of Fr. Walter Thelappilly, the Provincial. Mar Pauly Kannookadan, Bishop of Irinjalakuda, attended the prayer and gave the final blessing. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, celebrated the Holy Mass and preached the homily. Fr. Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor, led the final prayers after the Holy Mass.

CMI Foundation Day

On 11 May 2017, the CMI Foundation Day, members of the CMI GC-PC were in Mannanam at the tomb of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and renewed the commitment of the CMIs to live the legacy of the founding fathers. Fr. Prior General was the main celebrant for the Holy Mass and consecrated the congregation to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the presence

of the General Council and the Provincial Council team members from all the fifteen provinces of the CMI Congregation. Being the 186th anniversary, 186 CMI members concelebrated in the Eucharistic celebration. The ceremony was well organized by Fr. Sebastian Chamathara, Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram, and Fr. Scaria Ethirettu, the Prior of St. Joseph's Monastery and the Director of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Pilgrim Centre in Mannanam.

Chavara Family Apostolate

The first meeting of the "Chavara Family Apostolate" team newly constituted at the General level was held at St. Chavara Bhavan, Kainakary, on 14 May 2017. It was providential that the new team began its family mission with prayers at the birth-home of St. Chavara, where he was born and groomed. The team members consisting of Fr. Wilson Tharayil, Fr. Thomas Irumpukuthiyil, and Fr. Johnson Panthalanickal spent about three hours along with Fr. Saju Chackalackal, General Councillor, and Fr. James Madathikandam and Fr. Joshy Cheruparampil, chalking out a plan of action for the next three years. The team operates from CSR, Pariyaram, and will be coordinated by the General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry. Further, as part of its initiative, a one-day monthly adoration-cum-intercessory prayer day for CMI Congregation is observed on every first Saturday of the month, from 9 am to 4 pm at CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills. Members of the Chavara Family Apostolate and the Prior General's House join the prayer for the whole day.

Joining Hands to Build Houses for the Dalit

In response to the request from Mar Jacob Murickan, Chairperson, KCBC SC/ST/BC Commission, Kerala, CMI Provinces in Kerala have agreed to provide support to

construct 101 houses for the Dalit Catholics in Kerala as a continuation of the “House-for-House” project envisioned in the General Synaxis 37 (2014). KCBC appreciated the CMI Congregation in the Kerala Bishops’ Council held at POC, Kochi, on 5 June 2017 for their commitment to provide support to construct houses for the Dalit Catholics in Kerala

Father Gabriel Chiramel CMI

Padmabhushan Fr. Gabriel Chiramel CMI (103) left for eternal reward on 11 May 2017, the 186th anniversary of the foundation of the CMI Congregation. He was given a befitting funeral with State Honours. Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, was the main celebrant for the funeral Mass held in Christ Monastery Chapel, Irinjalakuda. Mar Pauly Kannookadan, Bishop of Irinjalakuda, officiated the funeral ceremony. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, gave the funeral message. Mar Andrews Thazhath, Archbishop of Thrissur, celebrated a Requiem Mass in Amala Hospital Chapel. Ministers and a host of dignitaries paid homage to the illustrious son of CMI family, Fr. Gabriel, along with a large gathering of CMI members, bishops, priests and the religious. Padmabhushan Fr. Gabriel leaves a great legacy of high thinking and action with simple life. Institutions such as Christ College (Irinjalakuda) and Amala Hospital (Thrissur) speak of his contributions to the Church in India and to the Nation as a whole.

Visit to Peru and Ecuador

Fr. Paul Achandy, Prior General, Fr. Sebastian Thekkedathu, General Councillor, and Fr. Johny Edapulavan, General Auditor, spent time with our missionaries in Peru. They visited various mission centres and celebrated Mass in the parish communities. All CMI missionaries in Peru assembled on 7 June in Lima and spent time in prayer, reflection, sharing of mission experience and discussion on

the future prospects. The bishops in whose dioceses CMIs offer their services have great appreciation for them and there is greater scope for the Peru mission if more members join and Peruvian local vocations are inducted. Fr. Thekkedathu and Fr. Edapulavan also visited CMI missionaries in Ecuador along with Fr. Jose Kuriedath, Provincial of SH Province, Kochi, during the second half of June 2017.

Mall Chapel in Boston, USA

Mall Chapel ministry in Boston is highly appreciated. Apart from two Masses and adoration daily, CMI Fathers now offer Holy Mass with the Anointing of the Sick every first Saturday. Responding to the request of the people, they have started evening of adoration, confession, and recollection. Fr. Jilson Naduviledath CMI, Director, along with Fr. Janesh Moolayil CMI enrich this Mall Ministry more effective and attractive through their creative initiatives. This initiative offers a learning point as well as greater confidence for more meaningful mission in the economically developed countries.

Bishop David R. Choby, Bishop of Nashville

His Excellency David R. Choby, Bishop of Nashville, slept in the Lord on 3 June 2017. He has been a great supporter, benefactor, and well-wisher of the CMI Fathers working in Nashville Diocese and, more especially, for the Carmel Spirituality Center at Liberty, TN from its inception.

New Mission Novitiate in Budhni, Madhya Pradesh

The blessing and inauguration of Chavara Dham Mission Novitiate, Budhni, Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal Province) for the candidates from all North Indian CMI Provinces were held on 14 June 2017. In the presence of Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General, Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal Archdiocese blessed the novitiate house during the

Eucharistic celebration. Many CMI Provincials along with representatives from all North Indian CMI Provinces, and missionaries from various mission stations were present.

CMI Contemplative Ashram Completes 12 Years

Twelfth anniversary of 'Darsanaveedu' - Chavara Contemplative Ashram (Kakkadampoil), which was originally started in Malayattoor, was celebrated on 10 July 2017 with a Holy Mass led by Fr. Paul Achandy, Prior General. The inspiring prayer life of the community, though small in number, has been a blessing for the entire CMI Congregation, the people around, and for the Church as a whole. CMI novices, who join for forty days prayer programme, benefit a lot from this centre, especially to grow in prayer life.

First Generation Bijnor Missionary Fr. Raymond CMI

Fr. Raymond Mancheril CMI left for his eternal reward on 30 June 2017 at St. Joseph's Hospital, Ghaziabad, UP. His funeral service was held on 5 July 2017 at St. John's Provincial House, Najibabad, Bijnor. Fr. Raymond served the CMI Congregation in various capacities, like Provincial of St. John's Province, Bijnor (twice), General Councillor for Social Apostolate, Regional Superior of Bijnor Mission and Superior at various mission stations in Bijnor. He had also served in Sagar and Mysore missions.

CHAVARA FAMILY APOSTOLATE

Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

In the light of the resolutions of the CMI General Synaxis 37 (2014) to promote family apostolate in the Congregation, under the auspices of the General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, a new Chavara Family Apostolate cell has been established at CSR, Pariyaram (Kerala). This team consists of three seasoned and enthusiastic members, namely, Fr. Wilson Tharayil CMI, Fr. Johnson Panthalanickal CMI, and Fr. Thomas Irumpukuthiyil CMI.

The proposed programmes that Chavara Family Apostolate will undertake are the following:

- Monthly Intercessory Prayer for Families (First Friday, at CSR, Pariyaram)
- Monthly Intercessory Prayer cum Adoration for the CMI Congregation (Every First Saturday, 9 am to 4 pm, at CMI Prior General's House Chapel)
- Chavara Family Darshan Renewal (3 Days, in Parishes or Institutions; once a month at CSR, Pariyaram)
- Model Family after the Inspiration of Saint Chavara (1-3 hours, for parents along with PTA Meetings at Schools)
- Retreat for Aspirants (3-5 Days, CMI Aspirants' Houses, as per the demand by the provincial/Rector)
- Youth Animation: Preparation for Christian Families (1 Day, CSR/Parishes)
- Catholic Teachers' Animation for Families (1 Day, Schools or Colleges)
- Media Productions (TV Serials, Short Programmes on Chavarul, Discussions, Short Films)
- Training Trainers for Family Apostolate (Biannual, Prior General's House or CSR)



Fr. Prior General and General Council with All Provincials and Their Councils

Bishop and Dignitaries at the Inauguration of CMI Arunachal Mission in Tuting

