

Carmelasandesam

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Message



Never Give Up Until the Final Whistle

Every four years, the FIFA World Cup captivates billions of people across the globe. Nations unite in cheering their teams, celebrating moments of brilliance, courage, and perseverance. Yet the World Cup is much more than a sporting spectacle. It is a living classroom that teaches discipline, teamwork, sacrifice, resilience, leadership, and hope. Behind every thrilling victory lie years of silent training, unwavering commitment, and a common dream. These values are not merely sporting virtues; they are profoundly evangelical virtues. As the CMI Congregation journeys towards its Bicentenary in 2031, the World Cup offers timely lessons for rekindling the original vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and our Founding Fathers.

When St. Chavara and his companions founded the CMI Congregation in 1831, they did not seek to create an organization of successful individuals or efficient institutional managers. They envisioned a spiritual movement—a fraternity of consecrated men rooted in Christ, united in prayer, and sent forth in mission. Like a championship football team, they understood that no single player wins the game alone. The strength of the Congregation lies in the unity of its members, each contributing his unique gifts to the common mission of proclaiming Christ. As St. Paul reminds us, "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:4,7).

One of the greatest lessons from football is the importance of playing for the team rather than for personal glory. World-class players willingly sacrifice individual recognition for the success of the entire team. They defend, create opportunities, and support one another, knowing that victory belongs to everyone. Argentina's triumph in the 2022 FIFA

World Cup and finals in 2026 beautifully illustrated this truth. While Lionel Messi's brilliance inspired millions, the championship was won because every player accepted his role, worked tirelessly, and trusted his teammates. This is a powerful reminder for every CMI. Religious life is not about prestigious appointments, personal influence, or individual achievements. Our ministries, institutions, and talents bear fruit only when they serve the mission of the Congregation and the Church. St. Chavara constantly encouraged his companions to seek the common good rather than personal advantage. True greatness lies not in being celebrated but in helping others flourish.

The World Cup also teaches us the beauty of unity in diversity. National teams bring together players from different clubs, cultures, languages, and personalities. Yet once they wear the same jersey, they become one family united by a common purpose. Likewise, the CMI Congregation today serves in more than thirty countries across diverse cultures and ministries. Our unity does not come from our language or place of origin but from our shared charism as Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. Jesus prayed, "That they may all be one... so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). The Founding Fathers envisioned a fraternity where communion would always be stronger than competition and collaboration more important than individualism. In an increasingly divided world, our fraternal life itself becomes a powerful witness to the Gospel.

Every successful football team also possesses a clear identity and a well-defined style of play. Teams that lose their identity often struggle, regardless of the talent they possess. The same challenge confronts religious life today. We can become excellent educators, administrators, parish priests, or social workers while gradually forgetting that we are first and foremost consecrated religious. St. Chavara never separated prayer from ministry. He formed contemplatives in action, convinced that every apostolate must spring from a deep union with Christ. Jesus reminds us, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Unless we continually return to the source of our vocation through prayer, our ministries risk becoming merely professional rather than prophetic.

Another lesson from the World Cup is the importance of continual for-

mation. No football champion reaches greatness through talent alone. Behind every success are years of disciplined practice, learning, correction, and perseverance. Similarly, the CMI vocation requires lifelong formation. Prayer, study, spiritual direction, intellectual growth, emotional maturity, and pastoral renewal are the daily training sessions that prepare us for faithful discipleship. St. Chavara himself was a lifelong learner who valued education, discipline, and excellence because he knew that only a well-formed religious could effectively serve the Church and society.

Football also reminds us that every player has a unique role. Not everyone scores goals. Some defend, others create opportunities, while the goalkeeper quietly prevents defeat. Every position is indispensable. Likewise, within the Congregation, some are called to teach, others to preach, accompany seminarians, administer institutions, serve in remote missions, or dedicate themselves to prayer. Every ministry possesses equal dignity because each contributes to the mission entrusted by Christ. As St. Paul writes, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor 12:21). In a community each member's gifts are recognized as blessings for the whole body.

The World Cup also demonstrates that discipline is the foundation of excellence. The laws of football do not restrict freedom; they make the game possible. Likewise, our Constitutions, evangelical counsels, community life, and spiritual practices are not burdens but gifts that safeguard our vocation. St. Chavara insisted on regular prayer, common life, obedience, and simplicity because he knew that fidelity in ordinary things preserves the vitality of religious life.

Another inspiring lesson is perseverance. Never Give Up Until the Final Whistle. Some of the most memorable World Cup matches have been won in the final moments because teams refused to surrender. Religious life likewise demands perseverance. We face declining vocations, increasing secularization, demanding ministries, and personal struggles. Yet the Founding Fathers built the Congregation amid poverty, opposition, and uncertainty because they trusted God's providence. Their witness encourages us never to lose hope. As St. Paul reminds us,

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up" (Gal 6:9).

Perhaps the most beautiful image after every World Cup final is the entire team lifting the trophy together. Every player's contribution—visible or hidden—is celebrated. This reflects the Christian vision of communion. The Church is one body with many members, and the Congregation is one family with many gifts. St. Chavara translated this vision into daily community life through mutual support, forgiveness, shared responsibility, and joyful fraternity.

Finally, football reminds us that the team is always greater than any individual. Players come and go, but the jersey and the mission endure. Likewise, every generation of CMIs receives the charism from those who came before and passes it on to those who follow. We are not owners of the CMI charism but its faithful stewards. As we prepare for the Bicentenary, we are called to hand over to future generations a Congregation that is spiritually vibrant, deeply contemplative, united in fraternity, courageous in mission, and faithful to the vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

The FIFA World Cup celebrates passion, teamwork, sacrifice, discipline, and unity. These same virtues define authentic religious life. Yet our goal is infinitely greater than winning a trophy that fades. Christ is our Captain. The Holy Spirit is our strength. St. Chavara and our Founding Fathers remain our inspiring guides. The Gospel is our game plan, and the Kingdom of God is our ultimate victory. If every CMI chooses to play for the team rather than for himself, to place communion before competition, prayer before activity, and mission before personal ambition, then our Congregation will truly become what the Founding Fathers envisioned—a vibrant spiritual movement of contemplatives in action, joyfully proclaiming Christ to the world.

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General

Editorial



“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” — Ecclesiastes 3:1

We are living in a moment of extraordinary grace—a true Kairos chosen by God as our beloved congregation stands on the threshold of its Bicentennial foundation. This milestone is not merely an occasion to celebrate our history, but a sacred season calling us to deep personal renewal, heartfelt conversion, and a vibrant missionary reawakening. It is with this profound sense of shared purpose that I greet you in this latest edition of Carmela Sandesam. In this journey, we find ourselves beautifully aligned with the universal Church; the recent Apostolic Exhortation Magnifica Humanitas reminds us to look beyond mere digital efficiency and become “weavers of hope” through authentic communion. Echoing this universal mandate, our proposed Bicentennial theme powerfully challenges us to focus on “Being Grace-filled and Synodal for a Transformed World.”

As we inaugurated the Year of Media on May 11, 2026, within our congregation, we look to our foundational inspiration, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. He brilliantly, creatively, and courageously mastered the communication tools of his era for evangelization and systemic social transformation. Today, Carmela Sandesam comes to you as a direct continuation of that very legacy, challenging us to embrace contemporary media not as a distraction, but as a privileged space and frontier for our modern mission. In his saintly spirit, let us use our words, platforms, and digital presence to build up, heal, and connect rather than divide. As Saint Chavara wisely reminded us:

“Days gone by will never return... true wisdom lies in utilizing the present time fruitfully for the glory of God and the good of one’s neighbor.” — St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara

This period of transition also brings new administrative life to our congregation. We prayerfully welcome our new administrative team at Chavara Hills and the new Provincial teams across our provinces. May the Lord grant them wisdom and shepherds' hearts.

Moreover, this issue of Carmelasandesam reaches you at a graceful time, as we walk together into the crucial Second Session of the XXXIX General Synaxis. I warmly invite all of you to engage with this bulletin kindly feel free to share your valuable suggestions and comments so that we can journey forward together.

Let us place our ultimate trust in our Lord, who began this good work in us two centuries ago and will surely bring it to completion.

Fr. Benoy Elavunkal

General Councillor for Education and Media.

CIRCULARS FROM FR. GENERAL

REF: PG/307/2026

09 May 2026

Circular No: 03

CMI YEAR OF MEDIA

Dear and Loving CMI Confreres,

Prayerful Greetings on the 195th anniversary of CMI Foundation Day!

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

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

Jesus, the master communicator

Jesus, being the master communicator, the perfect image of God the Father, and the sacrament of Divine Life and Relationship made use of the best of communication technologies of His time, such as person

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

The Magisterial and Papal Teachings on Media

The Church magisterium has understood the mind of the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ in engaging and making use of the technological developments as a blessing, opportunity and obligation to further the cause of the Gospels. The first-ever modern document of the Magisterium on the use of media, *Miranda Prorsus*, an Encyclical of Pius XII in 1957, exhibited the Church’s admiration for the media technology as “gifts of God”, breaking down the mistrust many had. The document also suggested that the proper use of media would promote and perfect human life and morals. *Inter Mirifica*, the Decree on the Media of Social Communications promulgated in the Second Vatican Council, (1963) called on Christians to embrace all forms of media that enhance man’s function as being salt and light in the world. If properly used, the various forms of media can be of great service to mankind and to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God. *Christus Vivit*—the post-synodal exhortation issued by Pope Francis in 2019—speaks about it within the broader reality of young people’s lives in the digital world. It offers rich insights that can shape a theology and pastoral approach to media. The document recognizes the digital environment not as something virtual or unreal, but as a genuine space where young people live, relate, and search for meaning. Media, therefore, becomes a mission field, not just a tool. The document invites the Church—and especially young people—

to become “missionary disciples” in the digital continent to witness to Christ through their online presence to create meaningful, value-based content to bring hope, beauty, and truth into digital culture.

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

Across these perspectives, one constant emerges: media, deeply intertwined with popular culture, must be engaged responsibly and creatively as a vital space for evangelization and humanization. The popular

culture may have opposing and contradictory values to the “Christian” and “Kingdom” values. This is where the media mission of the Church is to be seen: to “evangelize the culture of media and the ideologies of media technologies. The challenge today, thus, is to understand that the new technologies are not just instruments of communication but are profoundly affecting the very culture of communicating the Gospel. (Communitarian Witnessing Beyond Borders, p. 67).

Media and the CMI Legacy

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

The Dual Function of the Media for the CMIs

The media face of the CMI Congregation and the Church at large is the face of Jesus Christ Himself, who came down from heaven to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. The CMI Constitutions recognize that communication media have a dual function: 1) as a help for other forms of apostolate to communicate their message, and 2) as an apostolate in itself, showing forth the value of the world of art and beauty

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

The CMI Year of Media – Action plan

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

The CMI Year of Media is a bridge between the 1846 printing revolu-

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

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

Yours fraternally in Christ,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General

REF: PG/436/2026
Circular No: 08

27 June 2026

CMI Year of Media: 2026 - 2027
Action Plan

Dear Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

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

As we have began the CMI Year of Media (2026–2027), we recognize anew that communication is an essential dimension of our mission of evangelization. In an age shaped profoundly by digital culture and media technologies, we are called not merely to use media but to witness to Christ through it, communicating truth, hope, and fraternity in creative and responsible ways.

The CMI Year of Media invites every member, community, institution, and Province to renew our commitment to becoming effective communicators of the Gospel. Inspired by the vision of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who creatively employed the communication means of his time for evangelization and social transformation, we seek to embrace contemporary media as a privileged space for mission.

I am pleased to present the accompanying Action Plan prepared for implementation at the General, Provincial, Community, Institutional, and Personal levels. These initiatives are intended not simply as activities for a special year but as steps toward fostering a lasting culture of communication, digital evangelization, media literacy, and responsible engagement with emerging technologies.

I encourage all Provinces, communities, institutions, and individual members to adapt and implement these action plans with creativity, commitment, and missionary zeal. May this Year of Media strengthen our ability to proclaim Christ, share the richness of our charism, and bring the message of hope to the wider world.

CIRCULARS FROM FR. GENERAL

Entrusting these initiatives to the intercession of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara and our Blessed Mother, I invoke God's abundant blessings upon all our efforts.

Fraternally Yours in Our Lord,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General

General Level

1. Establish a General CMI Media Commission to coordinate, animate, and evaluate media initiatives across the Congregation.
2. Launch a Central CMI Digital Evangelization Platform integrating websites, social media channels, podcasts, video content, and online formation resources.
3. Create a CMI Media Resource Centre and Digital Archive to preserve and disseminate the heritage, history, spirituality, publications, and apostolic contributions of the Congregation.
4. Produce and disseminate digital resources on the life, teachings, vision, and spirituality of St. Chavara.
5. Organize a CMI Media Congress and related forums on evangelization, communication, artificial intelligence, and digital culture.
6. Develop a Global Network of CMI Media Personnel to facilitate collaboration, mentoring, resource sharing, and innovation.
7. Launch "CMI Voices," a podcast and video series featuring inspiring stories, testimonies, research, pastoral insights, and missionary experiences.
8. Celebrate an annual Global Mission Media Week highlighting

missionary stories, cultural diversity, and the universal nature of the Church.

Signature Congregational Projects

- CMI Media Summit
- CMI Musicians Summit
- CMI Writers' Forum
- Digital Missionary Formation Programme
- CMI Media Awards

Provincial Level

1. Appoint a Provincial Media Coordinator and Community Media Animators to implement and monitor the Provincial Media Action Plan.
2. Organize media literacy programmes, workshops, and training in communication, content creation, digital evangelization, artificial intelligence, and media ethics for members and collaborators.
3. Incorporate communication, media literacy, and digital evangelization modules into all stages of formation.
4. Establish a Provincial Media Studio or Content Creation Hub for producing videos, podcasts, graphics, and educational resources.
5. Strengthen and professionally manage Provincial websites, social media platforms, and digital communication channels.
6. Allocate a dedicated budget for media ministry, promote media initiatives in educational institutions, and conduct periodic evaluation of implementation.
7. In the light of the encyclical *Magnificat Humanitas* organize ongoing formation, research, and awareness programmes on Artificial Intelligence, digital ethics, and emerging technologies to equip CMI members, educators, and collaborators to use technology responsibly for evangelization and the common good

I Pastoral

1. Train a team of young priests, brothers, and students as Digital Missionaries capable of creating engaging and faith-based content. Establish or strengthen a dedicated Provincial Digital Evangelization Team to coordinate online missionary initiatives.
2. Produce and disseminate regular digital content such as Gospel reflections, faith-sharing videos, podcasts, testimonies, educational resources, and vocation promotion materials.
3. Document and publicize inspiring stories from the ministries of the Province, highlighting evangelization, education, social outreach, and missionary activities.
4. Develop a “Voices from the Mission” Series featuring stories, testimonies, and experiences from CMI missionaries working in villages, tribal areas, urban peripheries, and mission stations both in India and abroad.
5. Create a digital repository of CMI missionary history, saints, pioneers, and mission achievements in India.

II Education & Media Apostolate

1. Organize a Media Literacy Programme for all members during the Year of Media to promote responsible and effective communication.
2. Encourage educational institutions to establish Media Clubs and Digital Storytelling Forums to nurture responsible communication.
3. Conduct awareness programmes on ethical media use, digital citizenship, cyber safety, and responsible engagement with artificial intelligence.
4. Create virtual cultural exchange programmes between CMI educational institutions in India and mission territories abroad.
5. Create value based programmes for students at the Province level.

III Social Apostolate and Healthcare

1. Document and publicize inspiring stories from the ministries of the Province in the field of social outreach.
2. Produce digital content and campaigns that promote social responsibility, human dignity, environmental stewardship, child protection, and justice-oriented initiatives.
3. Utilize digital platforms to amplify the impact of social service ministries and foster public engagement with the marginalized and vulnerable.
4. Develop and disseminate media content that upholds human dignity, fosters a culture of dialogue, peace, fraternity, ecological responsibility, and integral human development, in accordance with the vision of Magnificat Humanitas.

Local Community and Institution Level

1. Conduct regular community reflections on communication, media culture, and digital evangelization in the light of the Gospel and the CMI charism.
2. Share community activities, ministries, mission experiences, and faith reflections through appropriate digital platforms, promoting the life and teachings of St. Chavara.
3. Document and preserve the history, ministries, publications, photographs, videos, and significant events of the community or institution through digital archives.
4. Organize media literacy, digital citizenship, and ethical social media programmes for parishioners, youth, students, and lay collaborators, including Media Awareness Week and related competitions.
5. Establish and promote Media Clubs, Digital Storytelling Forums, and mentorship programmes for talented youth interested in communication and evangelization.
6. Observe a Community Media Day to foster dialogue on emerging media trends, opportunities, and challenges for mission.

CIRCULARS FROM FR. GENERAL

7. Periodically review personal and community media practices to ensure that they support religious life, fraternity, mission, and human growth.
8. Conclude the Year of Media with a community evaluation and thanksgiving celebration, highlighting achievements, learnings, and future commitments.

Personal Level

1. Read at least three books during the Year of Media, including one related to communication, media, or digital culture.
2. Practice regular screen-free time, digital discipline, and responsible media engagement, including verification of information before sharing.
3. Participate in media literacy programmes and attend at least one workshop or training programme related to communication or digital evangelization.
4. Contribute annually through writing, content creation, or other creative media initiatives for Provincial or Congregational platforms.
5. Share faith-based, educational, and inspirational content regularly through appropriate digital platforms.
6. Learn and practice the ethical use of artificial intelligence and emerging communication technologies.
7. Dedicate time each month to reflect on the impact of media on personal, spiritual, and community life.
8. Integrate prayer and discernment into media engagement, using communication as a means of evangelization, catechesis, vocation promotion, and service.

REF: GC 13/ACT 93/2026

24 June 2026

Circular No: 07

XXXIX ORDINARY GENERAL SYNAXIS

Second Session (26 July – 01 August 2026)

“Fan into flame the gift of God that is within you” (2 Tim 1:6)

Dear CMI Confreres,

Prayerful greetings from the Prior General’s House, Chavara Hills!

With gratitude to God and with deep fraternal affection, I am pleased to inform you that, as decided during the First Session, the Second Session of the XXXIX Ordinary General Synaxis will be held from 04.00 p.m. on 26 July 2026 to 04.00 p.m. on 01 August 2026 at the Prior General’s House, Chavara Hills, Kakkanad.

As we prepare to gather once again in the Lord’s name, we are reminded of the words of the Psalmist: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity” (Ps 133:1). The General Synaxis is one of the most beautiful expressions of our communion as a Congregation. It manifests our shared responsibility for the charism entrusted to us and our common commitment to discern together the will of God for the CMI family.

Rekindling the Fire of the Founding Fathers

The Bicentenary of our Congregation (1831–2031) is a *kairos*—a privileged time of grace inviting us to renewal, conversion, and missionary reawakening. On 11 May 1831 at Mannanam, our founding fathers kindled a movement of holiness, fraternity, and mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was truly a spiritual movement that sought

to transform persons, families, the Church, and society through a life deeply rooted in God. Today, we are called to re-found, renew and re-kindle the spiritual movement with renewed vigour for our times. The prophet Jeremiah records God's invitation: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies, and walk in it" (Jer 6:16). To discern our future faithfully, we must revisit the original inspiration that animated our founders. Their lives were marked by deep interiority, radical trust in Divine Providence, evangelical simplicity, communion with the Church, and a missionary passion that reached the peripheries of society. The bicentenary journey therefore calls each one of us to personal and communal conversion.

The recent Apostolic Exhortation *Magnifica Humanitas* reminds consecrated persons that in a rapidly changing world marked by technological advancement and artificial intelligence, religious life must remain a luminous witness to the irreplaceable dignity of the human person, the primacy of relationships, and the transformative power of God's grace. Our mission today is not merely to adapt to new realities but to humanize them through the Gospel and to become signs of hope, fraternity, and communion.

Significance of the Second Session

We are living in an age shaped by unprecedented developments in artificial intelligence, digital culture, and global interconnectedness. While these realities offer new opportunities for evangelization and service, they also raise profound questions about identity, meaning, relationships, and human dignity. In this context, the Second Session of the General Synaxis becomes an important moment of ecclesial discernment. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are invited to look honestly at our strengths and weaknesses, our hopes and challenges, and to discern together the paths that the Spirit is opening before us.

As Pope Francis reminds consecrated persons, we are called not to self-preservation but to missionary boldness; not to comfortable maintenance but to prophetic witness. The Synaxis therefore seeks to pro-

vide a clear vision and practical roadmap for the years leading to our bicentenary, helping us to live our vows more authentically and to serve the Church with renewed evangelical fervor. Like the disciples gathered in the Upper Room, we come together to listen, pray, discern, and allow ourselves to be sent anew. “Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength” (Is 40:31).

After prayerful reflection, collective study, and extensive discussions on the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the First Session proposed the following orientations in draft under the common theme: “Being Grace-Filled and Synodal for a Transformed World”

1. **Renew and Nurture Our Interior Life:** Deepen our Besrauma experience—the CMI way of life—through integrated rhythm of prayer, reflection, and the pursuit of holiness.
2. **Journey Together in Fraternity:** Foster deeper fraternal communion by mutual trust, shared responsibility, accompaniment, and joyful community living.
3. **Serve with Compassion:** Embrace evangelical simplicity and become credible witnesses of God's love through solidarity with the poor, care for creation, promotion of justice, and accompaniment of those on the margins.
4. **Mission with Passion:** Go forth with missionary courage to the peripheries, reaching out to the scattered and bringing them hope and living presence of Christ.

The Synaxis will finalize and approve the Vision Statement, Resolutions and Action Plans, that will guide our Congregation in the years ahead. It will also deliberate on important policy matters, proposed amendments to our Constitutions and Directory, and the comprehensive Action Plan for the celebration of the Bicentenary. I warmly invite all delegates to come prepared with studied reflections, creative suggestions, and practical proposals. Let us approach the Synaxis with open minds, listening hearts, and a sincere desire to seek not

our own preferences but God's will for our Congregation. The Church teaches that authentic discernment is always a communal process in which each member contributes humbly while remaining attentive to the movements of the Spirit. Your participation, prayer, and wisdom are therefore essential for the fruitfulness of this gathering.

Petitions

Any petitions intended for the General Synaxis should reach the Prior General on or before 20 July 2026. Petitions may also be submitted by email. They will be reviewed by the Petition Committee and presented to the Synaxis for appropriate consideration.

Pray for the Gifts of the Spirit

The General Synaxis is fundamentally a journey of faith and discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us invoke daily the Spirit who inspired our founders and continues to lead the Congregation today. I invite every member and every community to accompany the Synaxis with earnest prayer.

United with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and in communion with all our departed confreres, let us implore God's blessings upon this important event. May the intercession of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, SG Canisius Thekkekara, SG Bruno Kaniarkath, and all our confreres who have gone before us keep alive within us the flame of the CMI spirit and mission.

Delegates of XXXIX Ordinary General Synaxis – Second Session

A. Ex-Officio Members

1. Fr Paul Achandy CMI (Prior General)
2. Fr Benny Nalkara CMI (Vicar General & General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry)

CIRCULARS FROM FR. GENERAL

3. Fr Benoy Elavunkal CMI (General Councillor for Education and Communication Media)
4. Fr Tom Arackal CMI (General Councillor for Social Apostolate and Healthcare)
5. Fr Joseph Ponmany CMI (General Councillor for Finance and Agriculture)
6. Fr Sheejo Attupuram CMI (General Auditor)
7. Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI (Former Prior General)
8. Fr Josey Thamarassery CMI (Former Vicar General & General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry)
9. Fr Paulson Paliakkara CMI (Former General Councillor for Finance and Agriculture)
10. Fr Babu Mattathil CMI (Former General Auditor)
11. Fr Tomy Kattampally CMI (Provincial, St Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram)
12. Fr Santhosh Mathenkunel CMI (Provincial, St Joseph Province, Kottayam)
13. Fr Joby Kochumuttam CMI (Provincial, Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha)
14. Fr Poulose Kidangen CMI (Provincial, Sacred Heart Province, Kochi)
15. Fr Jose Nandhikkara CMI (Provincial, Devamatha Province, Thirissur)
16. Fr Biju John Vellakada CMI (Provincial, St Thomas Province, Kozhikode)
17. Fr Johnson Valiyakulathil CMI (Provincial, Preshitha Province, Coimbatore)

CIRCULARS FROM FR. GENERAL

18. Fr Joby Kunnath CMI (Provincial, St Paul Province, Mysuru)
19. Fr Jins Varacheril CMI (Provincial, Mary Matha Vice Province, Hyderabad)
20. Fr Binoy Checkonthayil CMI (Provincial, Mar Thoma Province, Chanda)
21. Fr Thomas Valavananickal, CMI (Provincial, Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur)
22. Fr Thomas Kollappilly CMI (Provincial, St Paul Province, Bhopal)
23. Fr Wilson Vettumanickal CMI (Provincial, St Xavier's Province, Rajkot)
24. Fr Biju Vadakkal CMI (Provincial, St John's Province, Bijnor)
25. Fr Martin Mallath CMI (Provincial, St Chavara Vice Province, Bhavnagar)

B. Members Elected from the Provinces

1. Thiruvananthapuram

26. Fr Jose Chennattussery CMI
27. Fr Justin Alukkal CMI
28. Fr Antony Edanad CMI
29. Fr Jose D. Poovattil CMI
30. Fr Sebastian Attichira CMI
31. Fr Sebastian Chamathara CMI
32. Fr Antony Elamthottam CMI

2. Kottayam

33. Fr Jose Panthaplamthottiyil CMI
34. Fr George Edayadiyil CMI

- 35. Fr Jais Vayalikkunel CMI
- 36. Fr Sebastian Elanjickal CMI
- 37. Fr Joy Philip Kakkanattu CMI
- 38. Fr Augustine Kochuvelikkakath CMI
- 39. Fr Abraham Vettiyankal CMI

3. Muvattupuzha

- 40. Fr Tomy Nambiaparambil CMI
- 41. Fr Martin Koottaplackal CMI
- 42. Fr Pratheesh Pulickal CMI
- 43. Fr Jeff Shawn Kaipettiyl CMI
- 44. Fr Sijan Unnukallel CMI

4. Kochi

- 45. Fr Johnson Vazhappilly CMI
- 46. Fr Roy Palatty CMI
- 47. Fr Mejo Gracevillla CMI
- 48. Fr Sebastian Edathikavil CMI
- 49. Fr Varghese Panthalookkaran CMI
- 50. Fr Prasant Palakkappilly CMI

5. Thrissur

- 51. Fr Julius Arakkal CMI
- 52. Fr Lijo Brahmakulam CMI
- 53. Fr Walter Thelappilly CMI
- 54. Fr Francis Kurissery CMI
- 55. Fr Davis Panadan CMI

56. Fr Joice Elavathingal CMI

57. Fr Davy Kavungal CMI

6. Kozhikode

58. Fr Francis Thonipara CMI

59. Fr Thomas Thekkel CMI

60. Fr Anto Nellamkuzhiyil CMI

61. Fr Thomas Vattakkatt CMI

62. Fr Sebastian Mulloparambil CMI

7. Coimbatore

63. Fr Anson Panengaden CMI

64. Fr Prathap Thuruthumali CMI

65. Fr Wilson Chakkyath CMI

66. Fr Saju Chackalackal CMI

8. Mysuru

67. Fr Varghese Kelamparampil CMI

68. Fr Jinto Inchikalayil CMI

69. Fr Varghese Koluthara CMI

70. Fr Augustine Paimpillil CMI

9. Hyderabad

71. Fr Sebastian Puthenparambil CMI

72. Fr Joshy Pazhukkathara CMI

10. Chanda

73. Fr Benny Mukalel CMI

74. Fr Meljo Parappuram CMI

75. Fr Harish Puthenpurackal CMI

11. Jagdalpur

76. Fr Sebastian Alackapally CMI

77. Fr Jenish Kollithadathil CMI

78. Fr Alexander Maramattam CMI

12. Bhopal

79. Fr Kurian Kachappilly CMI

80. Fr Anto Kanjirathinkal CMI

81. Fr Abish Perumbully CMI

82. Fr Jacob Peenickaparambil CMI

13. Rajkot

83. Fr Francis Ozhakal CMI

84. Fr James Thayil CMI

85. Fr Saji Koodakattu CMI

14. Bijnor

86. Fr Varghese Vithayathil CMI

87. Fr Benny Thettayil CMI

88. Fr Sebeesh Vettiyadan CMI

15. Bhavnagar

89. Fr Jacob Marangattu CMI

90. Fr Francis Aykaraparampil CMI

C. Representative of the Brothers (Nominated by the General Council)

91. Bro. Joseph Muttanolil CMI

D. Special Invitee without Voting

92. Fr Davis Panakkal CMI (Procurator General, Rome)

**E. Nominated Delegates from the Missions Abroad without Voting
(Nominated by the General Council)**

93. Delegation Superior, Germany

94. Fr Lawrence Karangu Kinyua CMI (Coordinator General, Africa)

95. Fr Vipin Muriyankeril CMI (Coordinator General, South America)

Dear brothers, as we journey toward our bicentenary, let us remember that the future of the Congregation will not be shaped merely by plans, structures, or programmes, but by our fidelity to God's grace and our willingness to be transformed by the Spirit. May this Second Session of the General Synaxis become a true Pentecostal moment for our Congregation—a time of deeper communion, renewed conviction, and courageous missionary commitment.

Together let us pray that the Lord who began this good work in us through our founding fathers may bring it to fulfilment for the glory of God, the service of the Church, and the transformation of the world. "See, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5).

Fraternally yours in the Lord,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General

REF: PG/353/2026

25 May 2026

Circular No: 05

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

Beloved CMI Confreres,

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

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

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

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

The Footsteps of a Faithful Servant

The Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekara CMI lived a long, Christ-centered life entirely dedicated to the Word of God, the Church,

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

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

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

Core Virtues and Spiritual Legacy

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

- **A Heart Refined by Prayer:** He viewed prayer not as a mere duty, but as "rest in the Divine Milieu." He kept a pure heart, a perpetually cheerful countenance, and absolute innocence in his interactions.
- **Heroic Obedience and Compliance:** He firmly believed that the Will of God is directly manifested through legitimate religious and ec-

clesiastical superiors. Consequently, he accepted appointments, transfers, and high offices without a single worry or hesitation.

- **Evangelical Simplicity & Care for the Poor:** Despite his monumental academic titles and high administrative ranks, he lived with a radically simple, humble heart and maintained an open, compassionate hand for the poor and marginalized.

His Motto: The Compass of His Soul

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

An Inspiration for Every CMI

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

- **Seek Only the Divine Will:** In an age of personal ambition and individualistic pursuits, Fr. Canisius reminds us that our true enthusiasm as religious must solely be the implementation of God's will in our daily community life and ministries.
- **The Witness of Joy and Transparency:** He proved that despite our human limitations, it is entirely possible through God's grace to remain pure at heart, pleasant in appearance, and innocent in our dealings with others.
- **Rootedness in the Word:** As a pioneer scriptural scholar, he

challenges us to ensure that our theological pursuits are never just intellectual exercises, but tools to lead people to Christ rather than to ourselves.

A Call to Prayer and Action

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

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

Expressions of Gratitude

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

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

and the entire team of tribunal members involved in the inquiry have shown exemplary cooperation and commitment.

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

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

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Fr Paul Achandy CMI

Prior General



Reflections & Views

REMEMBRANCE OF 150 YEARS: 1876 – 2026

THE SEVEN SONS OF CMI, THE SEVEN HEROES OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

Fr. Thomas Panthaplackal

The year 2026 mark the 150th year of Expulsion of 7 CMI members from the Congregation known as - SEVEN DOLOURS – for the cause of a separate bishop of ones own Rite. The related article presented here is an edited work by Fr Thomas Panthaplackal CMI from a large article prepared by the late Fr Lucas Vithuvattickal CMI. Expecting a serious book on the matter from Fr Thomas – The Editor.

VICTIMS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

Fr. Geevarghese Irimpan CMI

Fr. Hilarion Tharavattathil CMI

Fr. Louis Pazheparampil CMI

Fr. Mathai Matheckal CMI

Fr. Mani Minatoor CMI

Fr. Joseph Chavara CMI

Fr. Poulouse Sankoorickal CMI

STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

“We reap what others have sown.”
What St Paul has expressed in his letters is a truth verified of all times and with all people and nations.

If we live today in the politically

free India, we know that thousands of our fore-runners, our fore-fathers, have paid for it by their hard labour risking their lives. Many of them have sacrificed their lives and shed their blood to gain this freedom. They are all really heroes of our nation, whom we can never forget as we live in a free India today.

Ever since the Synod of Diamper celebrated in 1599, which, though illegally, severed the relation of the Church of St. Thomas Christians with the Chaldean Church, and brought it under the rule of the Latin Missionaries: From that time on the St Thomas Christians were struggling and planning every means to free them from

the Latin missionaries and to obtain bishops of the proper Rite to rule over them.

Frs. Joseph Kariattil and Thomas Paremmakal made an adventurous journey in 18th century to Rome and Portugal to obtain for us a bishop of our own Rite. Though they succeeded in their attempt, to a certain extent, we were not fortunate enough to enjoy the benefit of their labour. They are to be considered heroes of St. Thomas Christians.

Later, in the 19th century Fr. Antony Kudakachira and his nephew, Fr. Antony Thondanatt ventured and plotted means to obtain for us a bishop of the Chaldean Rite to rule over the Church of St. Thomas Christians, though their end in view and the means they adopted to gain the end could not be justified.

UNVEIL THE STORY OF SEVEN CMI's

Here we wish to unveil the story of seven members of the CMI congregation, seven talented young priests, who took the initiative to write directly to the Holy See and to inform the people concerned about the real situation in the Malabar Church and the real cause of the schism that was vexing the Malabar Church from

time to time. As they proposed to the Holy See the only possible remedy, namely to divide the Apostolic Vicariate of Verapoly and appoint bishops proper to the Syro-Malabar Church. They were dismissed from the CMI Congregation in 1876, by Archbishop Leonard Mellano by compelling the CMI General Fr. Kuriakose Elisha Porukkara. The information they have given to the Holy See quoting the previous letter of St. Chavara to the Holy See, regarding the Malabar Church has contributed much and influenced the Holy See to divide the Vicariate of Verapoly and constitute two new Vicariates for the faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church in 1887.

Fr. Chavara wrote to Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of the Propaganda in 1869 reporting as: "We are Mar Thoma Christians who have received our faith from St. Thomas. For the past many years, we had no bishop of our own. Provoked by such envious thoughts when they get an opportunity, they will go to Babel saying 'Let us resort to Babel for getting bishop of our own Rite'. They will at last petition to them in writing, and those greedy people will accept such a request. ...Hence, Your Eminence, I am placing before you a suggestion, which I

consider good. It is good to have two bishops here, one for the Latin Church and the other for the Syrian Church. Then their longing to have a bishop of their own will cease, and gradually their relationship with Babylon will end. This would be very opportune and useful. There are also many non-Catholics in our midst, who are our own kith and kin, now known as Jacobites. The above mentioned solution will help them renounce schism and return to the unity of the Catholic fold”.

Fr. Louis Pazheparambil, then a priest of the Mannanam monastery and professor of Latin and Syriac in the seminary following the trend of thought St. Chavara, held with great concern the problem the Syro-Malabar Church encountered for long, but especially by those of his own times. Fr. Louis Pazheparambil and a few fellow priests of the Mannanam monastery hit upon the idea of sending a memorandum to the Holy See.

Frs Palackal Kuriakose, Kalathil Zacharias, Chavara Joseph, Pazheparampil Louis, Tharavattam Hilarion, these were the daring few. After drafting the letter to Rome, placing it on the altar of Mannanam they made the prayer in one voice: “Lord you are our Saviour, We are sending this let-

ter to Rome. It involves too much of a risk. If you comply with our request, we would be grateful to you. Many souls would then tread along the safe path of salvation, if your will is otherwise, blessed be your holy will. If you save us from being expelled from the congregation, we will sing your praise for ever in this house”. Then they recited some prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, dedicated the project to the S. Heart of Jesus, and took the letter and posted it registered, to Rome.

The missionaries then explained to the Archbishop the means they have adopted to quell the present disturbances. Of these the first means was to appoint some delegates in the four parts of the Vicariate and to give them the necessary power, the second, to prepare a petition signed by these delegates, and the third, their promise to help the Archbishop in all these matters, not to aid the agitation to check the movements of the young religious, nay, even to cast them out from the monasteries, if necessary.

Frs. Candid, Marceline and others in the meantime prepared a document stating that those petitions asking for a new bishop were sent by a few disobedient religious, who do not observe the rules

and seek freedom for wandering and by some young priests fond of novelties who invented these means to disturb the peace of Malabar and promote the cause of the Mellusian schism. The Prior was asked to sign this counter petition prepared to be sent to Rome. As he could not go through the document leisurely, he was reluctant to give the signature. The missionaries asked him then to take at least an oath binding himself to help the Archbishop and suppress the new movements and adhere to the views of His Grace. But the prior refused to take an oath on the plea that he was a priest and therefore should be trusted in his oral promise. The prior replied that he would be loyal to the archbishop, and that he would not make an oath on that.

After Fr Marceline left for Pulincunnu, the fathers noted a complete change in Fr. Porukara. He was found extremely sad and preferred to be aloof; lost appetite. Again Fr. Palackal was sent to look into the matter, to whom Fr. Prior replied: "I have dipped my finger in the blood of my brothers. I do know what would happen to them." Fr. Palackal replied that they were prepared to abide in their convictions, whatever might be the consequence. He

was asked not to divulge the news to anyone. Fr. Palackal however communicated everything to Fr. Louis.

Fr. Marceline submitted his report to the archbishop after the visitation. Fr Thattacheril, who had prepared one of his own formerly, was bow to execute the sentence of the archbishop. There were six priests at Pulincunnu monastery: Frs. Jacob Mangalath, Sebastian Panthottathil, Mathew Matheckal, Emmanuel Minatur, Stanislaus Chakyath, and Paul Sankoorikal. Charge sheet for each one of them has been prepared and punishments are to be meted out. Frs. Matheckal, Minatur and Sankoorickal were dismissed from the Congregation and were to go and stay in their parishes. All others in the monastery were transferred to other monasteris.

The next destination was Mannanam. Fr Joseph Chavara and Geevarghese Irumpan were served orders about their dismissal. As Fr. Joseph Chavara was unwilling to leave Mannanam; he was suspended from sacred ministry. Fr. Hilarion too remained firm in his determination. So Fr. Thattaceril decided to dismiss both and informed the archbishop. A very long charge sheet was prepared and sent to Fr. Porakara,

dated January 15, 1876. Deprived of the religious habit, Fr. Louis went back to Pulincunnu. The mental depression he experienced on the occasion may be imagined from what he has noted down in the diary "I did not go to Mannanam for the forty hours adoration after my religious habit removed. I was rather shy to go to places where people gathered or where there was an assembly".

When he recovered himself from the shock, Fr Louis sent a telegram to the Holy Father: "Because we approached the Holy See requesting for separate bishop, we have been expelled from the congregation, without any fault of ours. Four more are to be expelled shortly. One monastery is already empty. Another is on the way to be empty. Religious priests are dismissed from the monasteries; parish priests are dismissed from their parishes. We religious plead with your Holiness that this work is stopped forthwith. Please make an enquiry through an Apostolic commissary, to see if we are at fault or not". Fr. Geevarghese Parapurath and Thomas Moonjelil too were served with dismissal orders. Before the execution of the orders, the archbishop got a telegram from Rome. "In future no one shall

be dismissed; and was ordered to take back those dismissed." This was kept a secret, and news was flashed that the two fathers were forgiven because they repented and shed tears.

We conclude this rather gruesome account with a quote from what Fr. Zosima on the death bed told a religious candidate. 'Unless the grain of wheat falls down and decay, it will remain useless. If it decays, it will produce much fruit...' This is my thought for you. You may have to go out of this cloister, but you can live outside in the world as a genuine monk. There will be a lot of enemies for you. But even your enemies will come to appreciate you. Many a misfortune may fall upon you. But still you will find satisfaction. They will consider you blessed, others will acknowledge you blessed. This is what is most important.

The oath of the warriors for the cause of Rite:

"To try my best, I do resolve here

To get a distinct bishop for our Rite

In this attempt, were I to be punished

This shall I brave, even sufferings galore

Never shall I retrace my steps

from this

Together I shall be always with you

This do I confirm, this I do subscribe"

The Holy See appointed a commission to study the problem and report it. Bishop Leo Meurin, the Apostolic Visitor reached Kerala in May 1876. It could be envisaged easily that Bp. Meurin will deal with the problems: 1) Syrian Ecclesiastical problem, and 2) the question of schism itself. Bishop Meurin stayed in our Mannanam monastery for more than a month. He had several meetings of the Syrians from both clergy and laity. He found that the aspirations of the Syrians were legitimate and that they ought to be separated from Verapoly and placed under a separate bishop, who for the time being could be a European.

BRIEF LIFE-SKETCHES OF THE SEVEN DOLOURS

1. Louis Pazheparambil

He was born in Pulincunnu on March 25, 1847, as the only son of the family. His only sister was the mother of the late Chev. I. C. Chacko. As a young boy, he desired greatly to join the new Congregation that was started at Mannanam. He joined the CMI

Congregation at Koonammavu in the year 1861. He had personal experience of the troubles created by Bishop Thomas Roccas in the Church of Malabar in 1861-62 and later also of the intrusion of another Chaldean bishop, Elias Mellus, who intruded in the Church of Malabar in 1874. These experiences led him to think of effective means of saving the Church of Malabar from such schisms. Following the inspiration from St Chavara, he discussed the matter with other priests, his companions and hit on the idea of writing directly to the Holy See describing the real situation in the Malabar Church. For that reason he was victimized and expelled from CMI. Later he became the first bishop of Ernakulam.

2. Fr. Joseph Chavara

He, the grandnephew of St Chavara, was the senior most of the seven Dolours. Born in 1835, he joined the seminary at Mannanam in 1855 and was ordained priest in 1864. After ordination he was always staying at Mannanam monastery and was managing the several constructions there. The three storied building at Mannanam seminary, which is now used as part of the St. Ephrem's school was constructed under his supervision. He was often deputed by

St. Chavara to collect donations for the construction. He was one of the signatories to many petitions to the Holy See. The order of dismissal was served him through Fr. Porukara. It was a death blow to him when he received the order of dismissal. He cried bitterly when he received the order saying that he won't leave Mannanam, and that he wanted to die at Mannanam. Eventhough he was dismissed from the congregation, with a special admission, allowed to live in a room outside the enclosure of the Monastery till his death.

3. Fr. Geevarghese Irimpan

Fr. Geevarghese Irimpan Keeri of the Poovathussery parish was born in 1839. He joined the congregation in 1857 and was ordained priest on 24th December 1864. He made the religious profession on 9th December 1865. He was staying at Pulincunnu when he was served the order to go to Manjummel and meet the archbishop. When he met the archbishop at Manjummel he was seriously rebuked by the archbishop and was ordered to go to Koonammavu. When he reached Koonammavu the superior served him the order of dismissal from the congregation on January 3rd 1876.

4. Fr. Mani Minattur

Fr. Mani Minattur of the parish of Bharanganam, was born in 1844. He joined the Congregation in 1860 and was ordained priest in 1870. As he was well-versed in Syriac and Latin and also in several European languages, he was assigned to teach Latin and Syriac in the seminary at Pulincunnu even before his ordination. He was a fellow novice and a fellow student with Fr. Louis Pazheparambil. Both started teaching Latin and Syriac in the seminary as Deacons. Both were ordained on December 4, 1870. He was expelled from the Monastery of Pulincunnu for the cause of the struggle for autonomy.

5. Fr. Mathai Mathekal

Fr. Mathai Mathekal of the parish of Arakuzha was born in 1845 as the only son of the family. He had a sister in the family. He had his priestly studies at Koonammavu and was ordained priest in 1872. In 1873 we find him a professor at the Pulincunnu seminary in the company of the other two Dolous Fr. Mani Minattur and Paulose Sankoorikal.

6. Fr. Paulose Sankoorickal

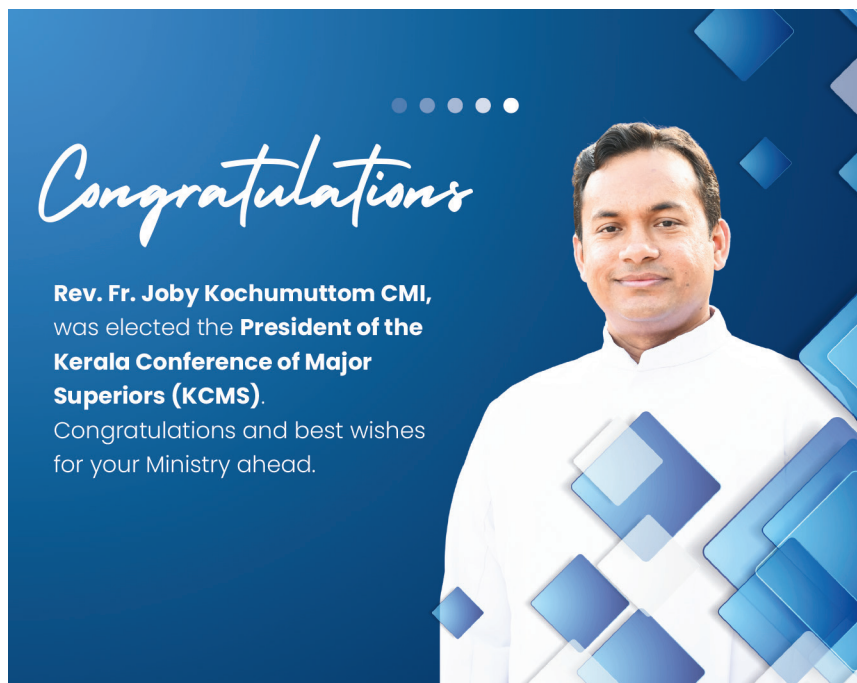
Fr. Paulose Sankoorickal of the

Gnarackal parish was born in 1848. He had his priestly studies at Koonammavu and was ordained priest in 1872. In 1875 we find him as a priest in Pulincunnu at the St. Sebastian's monastery, teaching in the seminary. He was summoned by the archbishop to meet him at Manjummel. As he reached Manjummel he was seriously rebuked by the Archbishop and ordered him to go to the Koonammavu monastery. When he reached Koonammavu he was served the order of dismissal from the congregation.

7. Fr. Hilarion Tharavattom

Fr. Hilarion Tharavattom should

be remembered in a special way for the services he rendered to our fathers when they had to vacate Koonammavu in 1889. At that time he was the parish priest of N. Parur. He was very influential with the Government officials. He helped very much to pacify the unruly crowd that assembled in the church yard at Koonammavu when our fathers tried to exhume the mortal remains of St. Chavara. Both Frs. Louis Pazheparambil and Hilarion Tharavattam were professors in the seminary while they were deacons. He was expelled from the congregation together with Fr. Louis. ●





SERVANT OF *God*

Fr. Davis Panakkal

INTRODUCTION

As part of the canonization process, on 25 March 2026, the Feast of the Annunciation, the tomb containing the mortal remains of Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekkara, a member of the CMI Congregation and its 21st Prior General, was opened, canonically examined, identified, and rearranged.

The exhumation process took place at 9:15 am in the presence of Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, Bishop Mar Paul Kannookadan of the Diocese of Irinjalakuda, Bishop Mar Jobi

Pozholiparambil of Hosur, Apostolic Visitor Monsignor Jolly Vadakkan, Vicar generals Monsignor Jose Maliyekkal, Monsignor Wilson Eerathara, Monsignor Antu Alappadan, Chancellor Fr. Kiran Thattla, Prior General Fr. Paul Achandy CMI and numerous other clergy, religious superiors, sisters, medical professionals, and civil authorities.

The steel casket containing the mortal remains of Servant of God Fr. Canisius was placed in a newly prepared tomb.

On 29 March 2014, Fr. Canisius was officially declared a Servant



presided over by Bishop Mar Pauly Kannookadan in the presence of bishops, priests, religious, and faithful.

“GOD’S WILL... THAT IN FULL... AND THAT ALONE.”

Servant of God Fr. Canisius was an exemplary teacher in whom holiness and scholarship were harmoniously united. He was a holy man who lived the spirituality of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara in modern times.

The motto that guided his life was: *“God’s Will... that in full... and that alone.”*

1. CHILDHOOD

Like the Prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:10–14), who zealously loved the Lord God of Hosts, Servant of God Fr. Canisius dedicated himself completely to God, God’s word, and God’s people.

of God. Historical and theological commissions and a diocesan tribunal were established for the investigation of his cause. These bodies completed their reports and submitted them to the diocesan bishop.

On 27 May 2026, the diocesan inquiry was formally concluded and the reports were forwarded to Rome for further proceedings. The concluding ceremonies were

He was born on 12 May 1914 in the parish of Anandapuram in the Diocese of Irinjalakuda, Thrissur District. His parents were Lonappan and Mariam of the Thekkekkara Pothaparambil family. He was the youngest among seven children.

His baptismal name was Ouseph (Joseph).

The motto “God’s Will... that in full...and that alone.” was inspired by the loving upbringing, virtuous example, and life values imparted by his parents.

Young Ouseph received his primary education at the Government School near his home (1919–1923). Since there was no nearby school for further studies, he continued his education at home for approximately three years (1924–1927).

Later he studied while residing in the boarding house attached to the monastery church at Elthuruth, Thrissur (1927–1930). Even as a child, Ouseph excelled in intelligence, obedience, and academic performance.

The atmosphere of prayer at Elthuruth deeply influenced him. In his own words:

“At the age of 13 I began my studies at the Elthuruth Board-

ing House. The life style of Fr. Michael and his long hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament greatly influenced me.” (Prayer Life and Administrative Service, p.12)

2. CALL TO RELIGIOUS LIFE AND PRIESTHOOD

Though he was an excellent student from childhood, his devout parents were initially reluctant to send him to the seminary. However, from a young age he cherished the desire to become a priest, specifically within the Carmelite congregation (CMI). Through God’s providential guidance, this desire grew stronger. Responding to God’s call, and with the blessing of his parents, he joined the CMI aspirant house dedicated to St. Thomas the Apostle at Pavaratty in 1930, at the age of sixteen.

He completed his matriculation studies at St. Joseph’s School, Pavaratty (1930–1933).

On 3rd July 1934, he entered the novitiate at Ampazhakad, dedicated to St. Teresa of Lisieux, and made his first profession in the CMI Congregation on 24 November 1935.

At profession he received the religious name Canisius, after St.

Canisius. Recalling his novitiate years, he wrote:

“During our novitiate, our real textbook was our master, Rev. Fr. Bartholomew. The lesson that prayer should inspire work and work should nourish prayer was embodied in his life. The church, prayer room, playground, cashew grove, and recreation hall remain unforgettable memories of the novitiate.”

During these years he adopted the guiding principle: “Maximum for God and for my brothers.”

3. TOWARDS PRIESTHOOD

After novitiate, Brother Canisius was sent to Koonammavu for language studies.

He was later selected to study philosophy and theology at the prestigious St. Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore.

He made his perpetual profession in the CMI Congregation on 8 December 1938.

In the years that followed he received the successive clerical orders leading to priesthood: Tonsure (1939), Minor Orders, Subdiaconate (1940), Diaconate (10 December 1942). He was ordained a priest on 21 December

1942 by Bishop Victor R. Fernandes of Mangalore.

He often recalled seminary life as a period marked by deep fraternity and spiritual joy.

4. HIGHER STUDIES

After ordination, Fr. Canisius was appointed to the CMI General House at Karikkamuri, Ernakulam.

For higher studies he was first sent to the Papal Seminary at Kandy, Sri Lanka, and later to the renowned Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

In 1944 he earned a doctoral degree from Kandy. From 1945 to 1948 he served at the CMI Study House in Chethipuzha as professor and spiritual guide to seminarians.

In 1948 he was sent to Rome for advanced biblical studies. In 1952 he obtained the degree of Doctor in Sacred Scripture (DSS), becoming the first Indian to earn this distinction from the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

His doctoral dissertation was: “Cardinal Seripando: An Exegete and Biblical Theologian.” During this period he became proficient in numerous languages, including: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, German

5. A SERVANT OF THE WORD (1953-1960)

After completing his studies in Rome, Fr. Canisius returned to India and began a new phase of priestly ministry as a professor and spiritual guide to seminarians (1953-1960).

During this period, the study house at Chethipuzha was transferred to Dharmaram College, Bangalore (1957). There too he continued his service as professor of Sacred Scripture and as mentor to seminarians.

His profound scholarship, thorough preparation, and passionate teaching won the admiration and affection of students and colleagues alike. He combined intellectual excellence with deep spirituality, making the study of God's Word both inspiring and transformative.

6. RECTOR OF DHARMARAM COLLEGE (1960-1966)

At the age of forty-six, Fr. Canisius was appointed Rector of Dharmaram College, the major seminary and study house of the CMI Congregation in Bangalore.

Throughout his tenure he remained faithful to his ideal of serving "to the maximum for God and God's people."

After successfully completing one term, the authorities of the Congregation reappointed him for a second term as Rector.

Among his notable qualities were:

Remembering people by name.

Understanding the hearts and personalities of seminarians.

Correcting faults with charity.

Offering wise spiritual direction.

Guiding future priests with fatherly care.

These gifts distinguished him as an exceptional formator.

During his rectorship, the 38th International Eucharistic Congress was held in Mumbai in 1964. At this Congress, forty-five CMI deacons were ordained priests, and a Syro-Malabar liturgical choir led by CMI seminarians participated in the celebrations.

7. PRIOR GENERAL OF THE CMI CONGREGATION (1966-1972)

At the General Synaxis of the CMI Congregation held at Karikkamuri, Ernakulam, Fr. Canisius was elected the 21st Prior General of the Congregation.

Through constant prayer and complete obedience to God's will, he guided the members of the Congregation with zeal and ded-

ication.

His election came shortly after the Second Vatican Council, a period of great renewal in the Church. Inspired by the Council, Fr. Canisius became a leading force in the renewal of the CMI Congregation.

He: Convened extraordinary synaxis for renewal, encouraged the implementation of Vatican II reforms, promoted internal renewal and spiritual growth within the Congregation.

He guided the adaptation of religious life to contemporary needs while remaining faithful to the founding charism.

During his leadership: The Brothers' Institute at Koonammavu was established.

Significant work was undertaken for the renewal of Syro-Malabar liturgy.

The expansion of Syro-Malabar dioceses outside Kerala received support.

Initiatives in family renewal, social reform, and interreligious dialogue were encouraged.

His personal influence left a lasting mark on all these fields.

8. PROVINCIAL OF DEVAMATHA PROVINCE (1972-1975)

Fr. Canisius then served as Provincial Superior of Devamatha Province.

The renewal efforts he had championed earlier continued during this period.

Under his leadership, strong foundations were laid for CMI missions in: Sagar, Coimbatore

With a forward-looking vision, he encouraged initiatives in: Pastoral ministry, Social service, Arts and culture, Education. Several important developments occurred during this period, including:

The beginning of Thrissur Kalasadan

Renovation of the Pontifical Shrine at Azhikode

Celebrations connected with the Jubilee of St. Thomas the Apostle

During 1973-1974 he was appointed Apostolic Visitor for the Medical Mission Sisters.

At the same time, the Oriental-Congregation responsible for Eastern Churches appointed him as Delegate for the renewal and unification of the Sacred Heart Congregation.

Despite these heavy responsi-

bilities, he fulfilled them with remarkable grace, inspired by his lifelong motto:

"God's Will... that in full... and that alone."

Desire for a Life of Prayer

During these years he increasingly felt called to a life centered on prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and contemplation.

He wrote to the then Prior General, Fr. Theobald, expressing his desire that the CMI Congregation establish a house dedicated to prayer and contemplation, and that he himself might spend the remainder of his life in such a setting.

However, God's will took a different course.

Instead, he was appointed Superior of the Theology House at Dharmaram, Bangalore (1975–1978).

Though contrary to his personal preference, he accepted the appointment with complete obedience, seeing in it the will of God.

9. VICAR GENERAL (1978–1981)

In 1978 the General Assembly of the CMI Congregation elected Fr. Canisius as Vicar General.

Working alongside Prior General Fr. Thomas Aikara, he served as

counsellor for evangelization and missionary activities.

He strongly promoted missionary outreach and expansion within the Congregation.

During this period:

The publication CMI Mission was launched.

ACMI (Apostolic Club of Mary Immaculate) was founded.

The Man of Prayer (1981–1996)

The deepest desire of his life was to become a true companion of the Eucharistic Lord.

This desire began to be fulfilled in 1981.

The Man of Prayer

With the permission and blessing of Prior General Fr. Thomas Aikara, he resigned from the office of Vicar General and moved to CSR (Centre for Spiritual Realization), Pariyaram, near Chalakudy.

For the next fifteen years he dedicated himself to: Eucharistic adoration, Retreat preaching, Spiritual direction, Intercessory prayer

Every day he spent approximately five hours before the Blessed Sacrament.

Countless people experienced

encouragement, guidance, healing, and blessings through his ministry.

Writing about this period in his memoir *My Life Experiences*, he said:

“From 23 June 1981 until now, I have been able to spend five hours every day before the Blessed Sacrament, praying for our brothers, with them and on their behalf.”

Reflecting on the evening of his life, he wrote:

“Eternal praise to the Divine Artist who graciously chose to use up what remained of this worn-out brush.”

10. THE SERVANT OF SUFFERING (1996–1998)

The religious name he had received at profession was Canisius of St. Teresa.

Toward the end of his life, Divine Providence brought him back to Ambazhakad, where his religious life had begun.

This return may be seen as a special act of God’s care.

The motto of St. Teresa —“Either suffer or die” (as rendered in the text)—became a reality in Fr. Canisius’ life.

During his final years he suffered

from numerous illnesses.

Severe rheumatoid disease caused intense swelling and pain in his hands and feet.

As a result, even simple activities became difficult:

Walking, Sitting, Eating, Writing, Bathing himself

During this period of suffering (1996–1998), he was transferred to the monastery dedicated to St. Teresa of Avila at Ampazhakad.

He also suffered from Urinary ailments, Eye diseases and underwent surgical treatment. Throughout these trials his response remained unchanged: *“God’s Will... that in full... and that alone.”*

11. JOURNEY INTO ETERNITY (29 JANUARY 1998)

Even during his final illness, the prayer he repeatedly requested from visitors at Amala Hospital was:

“Pray for me.” He did not ask people to pray that his illness might be removed. Rather, he asked for the grace to endure it faithfully.

When sisters visited him, he would often ask them to sing his favorite hymn:

“Come, Come, Lord Jesus...”

Two days before his death he requested and received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

On 29 January 1998, Fr. Canisius departed for his heavenly home.

When his body was brought to Ambazhakad Monastery Church, large crowds gathered. Even while he was alive many people had referred to him as a “living saint,” and now countless faithful came to pray and seek blessings.

In the funeral homily, Fr. Thomas Aikara, former Prior General of the CMI Congregation and long-time collaborator of Fr. Canisius, declared:

“Fr. Canisius is a holy priest. Through his life of total dedica-

tion he brought many people closer to God. We can seek his intercession.”

CONCLUSION

Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkekkara CMI was a faithful disciple of Christ, a biblical scholar, teacher, spiritual guide, administrator, missionary leader, and above all a man of prayer.

His entire life can be summed up in the motto he cherished from childhood until death:

“God’s Will... that in full... and that alone.”

Today he continues to shine as a source of light, inspiration, and blessing for countless faithful who seek his intercession. ●

Congratulations



Fr. Lawrence
Regional Superior



Fr. Stephen Kasisi
Pastoral Councillor



Fr. Julius Education
Councillor



Fr. Vipin
Social Councillor



Fr. Peter
Finance Councillor



Fr. Justin
Auditor

St. Thomas Region, East Africa



SWAMI SADANAND

THE MONK WITHOUT A TOMB

***A Decade of Remembrance of Swami Sadanand, a Prophet of Peace,
Reconciliation and Interfaith Harmony
(April 25, 2016-2026)***

Fr. Joby Pulickkan

Swami Sadanand CMI (Fr. Michael Porattukara CMI) walked the earth for sixty-eight years, with a vision far beyond our fears. In the Universe of the Creator, Swamiji walked barefoot with grace. He earned no big degrees from universities, but he embraced wisdom from above. One with humans and animals, plants and the skies, he shared their wis-

pers, their joys, and their sighs. He nurtured harmony with love in his heart. He was a compassionate soul, a prophet of peace and reconciliation. A gentle and kind fellow traveller, a man of joy he would find true joy even in suffering and miseries. A priest, a sage, a light so pure, a monk without a tomb, his memories never fades. He was reverentially addressed

as Para Pathar. Paras Pathar refers to the mythical Philosopher's Stone in Indian mythology, believed to have the ability to turn base metals into gold. In an era that is filled with divisiveness and in a society fragmented by various self-interests, Swamiji's life brought about profound positive transformation.

This article disseminates to the esteemed readers the proceedings of a commemorative seminar on 'Reconciliation, Peace and Harmony through an Interfaith Approach' that was held in Samanvaya Theology College, Bhopal on Monday, 20 April 2026 as a part of celebrating the memories and legacy of the person of Swami Sadanand CMI on his tenth death anniversary. Before entering into the seminar proceedings, I would like to introduce briefly the person of Swami Sadanand for the respected readers who are not familiar with this saintly sage.

With a broad smile that was so natural and divine on his face, he walked barefooted. He practised vegetarianism avoiding meat, fish and egg. His food habits were so austere. He ate one meal per day avoiding breakfast and having a cup of milk in the evening. Getting up early morning at 3 AM,

he would have his yoga and other prayers and spiritual exercises. As his food habits, so austere were his clothing. He just owned a pair of saffron dhotis. His upper clothing was just a shawl even during the harshest winter. If in train, he would travel only in General compartments without any prior reservations or bookings. He spent good time in learning the intricacies of naturally existing medications and practicing it for the benefit of patients who had not received any solace elsewhere.

A prophet of Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Harmony, his reconciliation mission will be etched in golden letters in the history especially the reconciliation mission that he took up towards the conversion of Samandar Singh, the murderer of Bl.Rani Maria. This act of reconciliation will always remain one of the strongest witnessing of Christian Mission in the Northern part of India when Samandar Singh would ask pardon for his cruel gesture from Bl. Rani Maria's parents and siblings. This witnessing was all the more enthralling as Sr.Selmi would tie 'Rakhi' on the hands of Samandar Singh accepting him as her brother making Samandar Singh a member of Bl.Rani Maria's

family. This act of reconciliation among Samandar Singh, Sr.Selmi and their family would become a reality because of the sole efforts of Swami Sadanand, a sure sign of his deep spirituality.

It was on February 25, 1995, the brutal attack on Sr.Rani Maria occurred. A nun belonging to the Franciscan Clarist Congregation (FCC), Sr.Rani Maria was bound for her home holidays. Not having a direct train from Indore to Kerala, her alternative travel plan was to travel till Bhopal by bus to catch the train to Kerala. It was during this Indore-Bhopal bus journey, the ill fate would strike her. An activist who worked for the welfare of the bonded labourers, Sr.Rani Maria was a speck in the eyes of the Zamindars, and they were keen to get rid of her. Samandar Singh was deputed to take up this job which he did meticulously. The chilling incident took place in broad day light; he stops the bus and requests Sr.Rani Maria to deboard the bus. Before anyone could realise what was happening, the onlookers would see Samandar Singh stabbing Sr.Rani Maria with a sharp knife killing her on the spot. The post-mortem report identified 34 deep wounds in her body.

Vengeance and hatred overloaded, we can imagine how much hatred would be flowing in the veins of Samandar! A hard-core criminal, behind the bars, hated by the society, Swamiji identifies in Samandar a potential child of God who had made a big mistake and worthy of forgiveness and reconciliation. Imprisoned in the Central Prison in Bhopal, Swamiji would frequently visit Samandar in Jail. His initial visits were met with very cold and unreceptive response from Samandar. Eventually he would realise the warmth of Swamiji's person leading him to ultimately realising the gravity of the mistake he had committed. A new chapter begins as he repents and mends his ways. Swamiji's efforts of brining reconciliation among Samandar Singh, Sr.Rani Maria's parents and siblings stem from his deep spirituality which the best psychiatrist or psychologist or any other priests with extra ordinary degrees would never be able to accomplish.

It is, indeed, befitting to cherish his legacy and celebrate his person. The commemorative seminar on Swamiji was titled, "Fostering Reconciliation, Peace and Harmony through an Interfaith Approach: A Decade of Remem-

brance of Swami Sadanand, A Prophet of Peace, Reconciliation and Interfaith Harmony.”

The seminar comprised of four segments:

1. Keynote Address,
2. Panel Session: Dimensions of Peace Building
3. Anecdotal Sharing (Swami Smriti)
4. Honouring, “Peace Builders through Path Breaking Initiatives

1. Keynote Address:

The keynote address was delivered by Rev.Dr.Davis George. The Vicar General of Jabalpur Diocese and former Principal of St. Aloysius College, Jabalpur, Fr. Davis George knew Swamiji from close quarters. Speaking on the topic, “Life and Contribution of Swami Sadanand: Insights and Applications for Today”, Fr. Davis George would identify Swamiji as a ‘Beacon in a Fragmented World’. In the keynote address, it was emphasised that in a world that is increasingly fractured by divisions of religion, culture, politics, and ideology, the need for Leaders like Swamiji who embody peace, harmony, and reconciliation has never been more urgent than now. The keynote speaker would remind the audience how while

talking about Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein said, “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.” Taking this famous analogy, the keynote speaker dares to state: “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a Catholic Priest as this, ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.” Such bold, authentic and unexaggerated claims do not occur often.

2. Panel Session: Dimensions of Peace Building

Another important segment of this commemorative seminar was the panel discussion on the Dimensions of Peace Building, moderated by Rev. Dr.Ciril Kuttianickal CMI.

Panellists included Sr. Sujata Jena who spoke on the theme, “Women Empowerment- A Way for Peace Building”, Rev.Fr. Thomas M D who dealt on the topic, “Peace Building through Interfaith Harmony- the Way Forward in the Context of India”, Ms. Archana Chakravathy, on a unique topic, “From Loss to Leadership: Transforming Trauma into Peace Initiatives”, and Ms. Daya Bai (veteran activist, noted for her works for the welfare of the tribal), on the topic, “Safeguarding Nature to

Secure Lasting Peace and Wellbeing of People- From the Perspective of an Activist”.

3. Anecdotal Sharing (Swami Smriti)

Short personal reflections and experiences by members who have been inspired by the life and message of Swami Sadanand were indeed a unique and much appreciated segment of this seminar. The following individuals from various walks of life (Sr.Julia OSA, Dr.Sudhir Singai, Sri Sanjay Pandey, Sri. Ajay Tulsi, Shri.Vikas Chourasia, Ms.Sadhana Das) who shared a deep bonding with Swamiji narrated their experiences with Swamiji.

4. Honouring, “Peace Builders through Path Breaking Initiatives

The commemorative seminar would honour individuals who have made significant contributions towards the welfare of the society after the example of Swami Sadanand, especially in their efforts of promoting peace, reconciliation and Interfaith Harmony. The following were honoured:

- Social Reform through Holistic Health: Dr. B M Singh
- Socio-Economic Empowerment and Integration of Persons with Disabilities: Fr.Solo-

mon Kadambattuparambil CMI

- Promotion of Interfaith Harmony: SAMANVAYA PARI-VAR, Narsinghpur, M.P
- Women’s Empowerment: Sr.Sujata Jena
- Social Transformation of war widows based on experiential intervention: VEER RATNA Foundation, Bangalore.

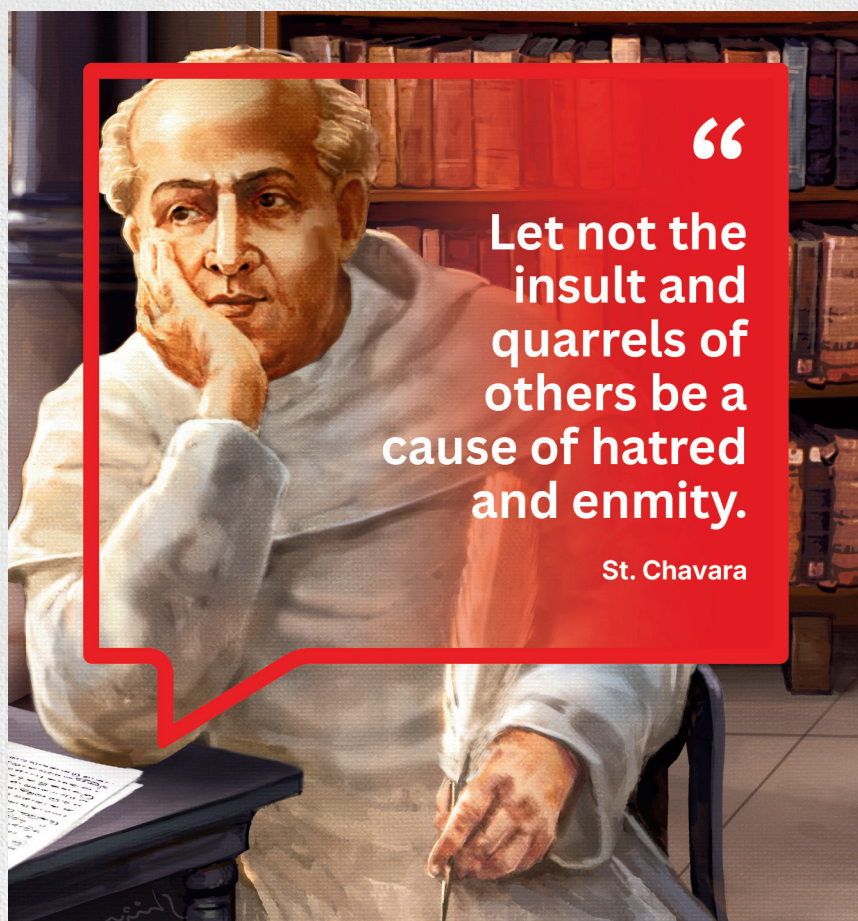
Conclusion

“My life is my message.” (Mahatma Gandhi) These words are truly applicable to the life and message of Swami Sadanand, a barefoot missionary. How true, “The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.” Karl Rahner. Swami Sadanand said, “My life has been shaped by sermon on the mount of Jesus, life of Mahatma Gandhi, Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa of Kolkata”. He promoted Spirituality more than Religion. He showed that a leader is the one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way. With indomitable will and courage he walked the talk and spread love, peace and joy. “Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:18). As an ultimate act of giving as written in his last will, his body after death was donated to the All

India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhopal. "After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it." (1 Tim 6:7) "Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live." (Norman Cousins)

"All people are born as originals, but many live as photocopies." (-Carlo Acutis). Swamiji's life re-

minds us that we are human; we are unique; we are God's Masterpiece. Swamiji's life inspires us that we are here to make a difference in today's world. Let the legacy of Swamiji inspire thousands of the new generations. Tulsiram, a Hindu friend of Swamiji said, "Swamiji is a Paras Pathar, a stone every touch of it convert everything to diamond or gold." ●



“

Let not the
insult and
quarrels of
others be a
cause of hatred
and enmity.

St. Chavara

DEMOCRATIC TO 'KOINOCRATIC'

Refounding the CMI Charism on the Bicentennial Journey

Fr. Vibin Pullanpilly

Introduction

The contemporary Church stands at a historical crossroads. Across the world, religious institutions are experiencing declining vocations, institutional fatigue, loss of credibility, generational distance, and fragmentation of community life. The challenge before us is not merely administrative renewal but a deeper spiritual and ecclesial 'Refounding'. The transition from a merely "democratic" understanding of governance to a 'koinocratic' model rooted in communion (koinonia) offers a prophetic path for the future of the Universal Church in general on her Synodal Journey

and in particular to the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate on our Bicentennial Journey. The need for this paradigm shift calls a renewal beyond the structures and authority to a deeper spirituality of communion of the members marked by shared discernment, lived fraternity. Such a vision was profoundly rooted in our founders charism who understood religious life not merely as an efficient institutional framework, but as a living communion of persons united in the triune God oriented toward the holistic renewal of both Church and society. "It was a life of communion with the triune God: experiencing the freedom of

the Spirit, and making “the Word our sole food and drink” (St. Kuriakose Elias, Chavara, *Atmânuthâpam*), they became powerful heralds of the same Word and formed themselves in the likeness of the Son.”(CMI Constitution § 3)

Democracy and ‘Koinocracy’: Two Different Visions

The concept democracy, derived from the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power), fundamentally emphasizes participatory and the equitable distribution of authority within a political or ecclesial body. However, within ecclesiastical and religious contexts, democratic structures can gradually become overly procedural, juridical, and institutional, reducing participation to administrative consensus rather than fostering authentic spiritual communion. In contrast, the notion of ‘koinocracy’ emerges from the New Testament term *koinonia*, which signifies the power of communion, participation, fellowship, and shared life in Christ (Acts 2:42-47). Thereby, we need to discern to present the CMI as a sacramental community animated by the power of communion rather than as a merely organized institution, integrating authority, participation, and mission within the

mystery of ecclesial communion. The early Christian community described “they were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32) reveals a profoundly ‘koinocratic’ ecclesiology in which authority was exercised through service, discernment, and Spirit-filled communion. Such a model resonates deeply with the spiritual theology of St. Chavara, whose vision of religious life integrated contemplation, fraternity, shared responsibility, and social mission within a communion-centered spirituality. For St. Chavara, community life was a sacred participation in the Trinitarian mystery of mutual self-giving love, where obedience, charity, and humility formed the foundation of common life. Therefore, on this bicentennial journey of renewal the CMI congregation requires a paradigm shift from ‘institutional maintenance’ toward a spirituality of communion rooted in prayerful discernment, Eucharistic fraternity, and co-responsible mission. Moreover, a ‘koinocratic’ vision challenges the congregation to reinterpret authority not as administrative control but as pastoral service animated by Christ’s kenotic model of leadership: “whoever wishes to be first among you must be servant of all” (Mark 10:44).

The Crisis to Koinocratic Renewal

One of the contemporary crisis is the profound spiritual and ecclesiological rupture affecting the very identity and credibility of our religious communities within the congregation. Beneath the visible decline in numbers lies a deeper crisis characterized by excessive institutionalism, clerical 'self-referentiality', individualism, emotional isolation, weakened fraternal bonds, and a growing disconnection from the concrete needs and existential concerns of our members. Although many of our religious institutions continue to function with administrative efficiency and organizational stability, they frequently fail to generate authentic experiences of spiritual belonging, communion, and missionary participation, particularly among younger generations who seek authenticity, relational depth, shared mission, and meaningful fraternity rather than rigid institutional structures.

The "signs of the times," discerned in the light of the Gospel (Mt 16:3), reveal a world increasingly marked by secularization, digital fragmentation, loneliness, ecological anxiety, economic inequality, mental health crises, and widespread distrust toward in-

stitutional authority, thereby exposing the inadequacy of purely structural or managerial responses within the Church. These realities demand not merely pastoral adaptation or strategic reform, but a genuine ecclesial conversion rooted in the recovery of the Church's original identity as a communion of life, faith, love, and shared discipleship in Christ. In this context, the vision of St. Chavara challenges the CMI's to move beyond bureaucratic maintenance toward a 'koinocratic' spirituality in which community life becomes a sacrament of fraternity. Practically, this requires members to cultivate deeper interpersonal communion through common prayer, emotional transparency, attentive listening, intergenerational dialogue, ecological sensitivity, and renewed engagement with the spiritually wounded. Furthermore, the congregation need to be more synodal and participatory by empowering younger members, collaborating authentically with laity and families, and fostering spaces where the charism of each person contributes to the common mission of the Church. Ultimately, the future vitality of religious life will depend not upon institutional expansion or administrative effi-

ciency, but only upon the capacity of consecrated communities to embody credible Gospel-centered communion, in the prophetic legacy of St Chavara.

A koinocratic renewal involve several paradigm shifts

A genuine koinocratic renewal of the CMI congregation necessitates a profound paradigm shift. Firstly, A leadership beyond command-oriented administration and juridical control toward a model of spiritual accompaniment and communal discernment, wherein superiors function not merely as institutional administrators but as guardians of constitution as well as communion who facilitate prayerful listening, dialogical participation, and Spirit-led decision-making in imitation of Christ the servant-leader (Mk 10:45). "Our congregation is a communion of brethren brought together by a common quest for God culminating in the profession of the evangelical counsels, and held together by our love for one another in Christ." (CMI Constitution § 155, Nature of Authority in our Congregation)

Secondly, koinocratic renewal requires a transition from merely functional communities to authentically fraternal com-

munities, since many religious houses risk becoming efficient residential institutions devoid of emotional depth, interpersonal transparency, and spiritual intimacy. An intentional cultivation of deep listening, mutual care, shared prayer, intergenerational dialogue, above all the constant priestly prayer of unity (John 17:21) with a religious spirit may help to become authentic religious communities.

Thirdly, the congregation mindfully need to move from an excessively clerical understanding of identity toward a synodal ecclesiology that recognizes the active participation of laity, women, families, and youth in the mission of the CMI Congregation, affirming that the Holy Spirit speaks through the entire People of God. Such a koinocratic ecclesiology demands collaborative leadership, participatory mission, and authentic lay partnerships, thereby overcoming clerical isolation and enabling the congregation to embody a more inclusive and dialogical form of ecclesial communion.

Furthermore, the present challenge is a great evangelical freedom inspired by the Gospel and our founder's original charism. The spiritual legacy of St. Chavara

challenges the congregation to rediscover that authentic renewal emerges not through structural expansion or institutional prestige, but through a return to roots and sources, contemplative depth, holistic and ongoing formation, and compassionate mission to humanity. Ultimately, koinocratic renewal is about restoring relationships, with God, with one another, with oneself and with the nature, so that the congregation may become a credible sacrament of communion and a prophetic sign of the Kingdom of God in the contemporary Church.

Re-founding the Congregation

Re-founding, within a theological and ecclesiological framework, does not signify a rupture with tradition but rather a re-actualization of the founding charism in fidelity to its original pneumatological impulse, interpreted through the lens of contemporary synodal consciousness. For the CMI congregation, such re-founding implies a return to the sources and the founding 'fire' of the Carmelite spirituality embodied in the life of the Founding fathers (1 King 19:10) Authentic renewal becomes possible only when the congregation consciously privileges communion over control, prioritizing relational ecclesiol-

ogy and koinonia over administrative dominance, and when it embraces discernment over bureaucracy by fostering Spirit-led, synodal processes of decision-making rooted in prayer, listening, and communal consensus (Acts 15). Likewise, mission need to dominate over institutional maintenance, ensuring that structures exist as instruments of evangelization rather than ends in themselves, while fraternity is elevated above individualism so that consecrated life becomes a lived sacrament of Trinitarian communion rather than a collection and proclamation of isolated ministries. Furthermore, prophetic witness shall be preferred over institutional prestige, recalling the evangelical logic of Christ who "emptied himself" (Phil 2:7) and thereby revealing that ecclesial credibility arises from kenotic presence rather than structural power or social status.

Conclusion: Toward a Koinocratic Church

A genuinely koinocratic ecclesiology proposes that the Church of the future cannot be understood merely through hierarchical or administrative categories alone, but must be re-appropriated as a deeply relational grounded in the mystery of koinonia. In this

vision, a koinocratic Church is one that listens before it speaks, thereby privileging contemplative discernment over reactive judgment; accompanies before it judges, embodying the pastoral praxis of Christ the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11) who walks with the wounded; serves before it commands. It may therefore be discerned that the Holy Spirit is inviting the CMI's not toward quantitative expansion or

institutional consolidation, but toward qualitative depth; not toward greater power or social dominance, but toward authentic communion; and not toward intensified institutionalization, but toward renewed evangelical simplicity and apostolic credibility. Thus, our journeying together to the bicentennial become an authentic witness of 'koinocracy' the power of communion in the church. ●



"Since you
belong to God
you should be
given back to
God"

St. Chavara



Congregation & COMMUNICATION



Fr John Mannarathara

From papyrus scrolls carried by hand to sermons carried by satellite, the story of faith has always been, in part, the story of its telling. Today that story finds itself at a curious new crossroads — one lit not by candlelight but by the glow of a screen. What follows is an attempt to walk that crossroads slowly: to look back at the roots that have carried us this far, and to look ahead, with open eyes and an open heart, at the digital horizon now unfolding before us.

The Carmelites of Mary Immaculate congregation has always encouraged the talents of gifted members. Like a banyan tree, it has sent its roots into every

cultural terrain it has touched — bending without breaking, adapting without losing itself, and quietly becoming an agent of reform wherever it has taken hold.

Media is a chosen calling within a calling. Down through the generations, our historians, biblical scholars, educationists, lyricists, poets, artists, theatre persons, cultural leaders, interfaith voices, musicians, spiritual leaders and writers have left their fingerprints all over the media landscape. The congregation has flung open its doors of expression as generously as secular society ever has.

This legacy runs deepest, perhaps, in ink and paper. Saint Chavara,

our founder, had the foresight to erect the third printing press in Mannanam — a small act with a long echo, one that still reverberates through Deepika daily, a publication bound to our congregation by history and heart alike.

Fr Abel, the iconic versifier of devotional songs was universally admired, and connected seamlessly with the general public. His trend-setting cultural ventures cutting across religious divides secured a respectable standing for Christians performing arts, especially music.

Our educational institutions and cultural centres should have media hubs with professional communicators in all categories. Similarly, the general house, and provincial houses too should have media facilities for content writing, documentation, and publishing. Globally, Protestants have been more adept in using media for evangelisation, and in publishing.

Our educational institutions should spend more on media activities. Though education and media are interconnected, we haven't effectively leveraged this synergy. What one hand builds, another sometimes lets fall, leaving us with a media ecosystem that is more patchwork quilt than

seamless tapestry.

Our educational achievements are more publicised than that in the media. Better focus on media can make social action and pastoral ministry more visible. Reporting of unique personal stories of members, staff and students will make for riveting content. Altruistic initiatives, creative ventures and accounts of spiritual witnesses will be worth documenting. The thoughts of philosophers and theologians could be a lodestar for the young helping them navigate uncertain waters.

Magnificent Humanity

The encyclical of Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas, exhorts us to reflect on the relationship between faith, human dignity and technological innovations. In the face of the tectonic shift caused by digital technologies and artificial intelligence, it advocates discernment, hope, and responsibility to confront the change.

The encyclical posits two biblical images, the Tower of Babel, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The former poses the risk of a dystopian world dominated by power, individualism, and dehumanisation; while the latter offers the prospect of building a city founded on "listening, fraternity, justice and mutual care". Thus, we too should

commit ourselves to building the 'City of God' brick by digital brick, partaking of what Papa terms as becoming "Weavers of hope". The Pope stresses the urgency of "an educational alliance for the digital age", in which campuses and families play a central role.

The Social Media Pulpit

The Gospel has always traversed through the language of its time, from papyrus to Guttenberg press to podcasts. The hegemony of social media presents a unique opportunity to connect with people and spread the message of the Gospel to new audiences.

Catholic influencers who utilise social media and other digital tools to preach the Good news are recognised as digital evangelists.

The American media theorist Neil Postman was a key figure in the development of media ecology. He believed that in the age of show business, the media presents religion too as they cover news and politics, as a form of entertainment. Social media has replaced the disciplinary demands of traditional journalism and amusement and pleasure are supplanting the introspections and transcendence of religion.

Religious influencers need to re-

sist the temptation of showmanship. Far too often we appear to confuse the conversion of hearts and minds with the acquisition of likes and followers.

The Republic of Silence

The country which has transmogrified into a 'Republic of Silence' remains criminally silent on the pulsing cycles of violence, including lynching, continues to stifle dissenting voices, and bend the media to its will.

This systematic repression apart from eroding civil liberties and minority rights, also restricts the space in which minority voices can be articulated. In context, even as for the first time in the history of World Press Freedom Index over half of the world's countries feature in the difficult or very serious categories, India is an unedifying 157th out of 180 countries in the 2026 Index.

Magnifica Humanitas' remarks on the decline of democracy should be viewed in this tenebrous backdrop. Pope Leo warns of the risks facing democratic life in which the question of "What is true loses interest," giving way to pragmatism, content with what seems useful and effective. The consequences of this indifference to truth leads slowly but inexorably toward totalitarianism.

Personal Note

One day Sr Lizbeth Mary CMC gave my father a novena prayer book to pray for the intercessory blessings of Chavarayachan. She could discern my vocation for a life of the cloth, and recommended me to join the CMI congregation. Since then I have been impelled by an inner quest to know more about Chavarayachan. In the year 2013 at Devagiri CMI Public School, I formed a band of artists, writers and translators for the publication of books on the life and legacy of Chavara. His prophetic imagination had a wide scope for research and reflection. More than thousand paintings and illustrations and hundreds of research articles and reflections were collected and edited for three volumes of books, who have been my chosen colleagues. Reading introduced me to writing. In my abiding devotion to Chavara, my humble ongoing attempt is identifying creative writers to make them write on Saint Chavara.

My role in organising cultural activities as the director of Chavara Cultural Centre, Kozhikode helped me conceive, curate and archive conversations, concerts, book talks, interfaith dialogues and celebrations of festivals.

The combined project of performance and production helped me create numerous videos for the YouTube channels of Chavara Cultural Centre Calicut, Silver Hills Public School, Silver Hills Higher Secondary School, Innkeepers and Route to the Root. A performance before a limited audience can be shared by thousands online. Budding artistic student talents interacting with great personalities has paved the path to a unique educational activity.

For me campus is more of a canvas that unleashes creativity, fostering liberal and progressive education, and less about control. Instead of the Machiavellian principle that 'it is better to be feared than loved', I believe in the Son of Man's gospel of love, and by extension that exercise of responsible freedom forms better humans. Thus, the landscape of the campus is an artscape. Radio station, recording studio, language lab, dance lab, theatre corner, writers club, all together make a wholesome campus.

Proper imparting of education and knowledge of media ensures life skills development, birthing men and women of character, compassion, competence and conscience. ●

അടിച്ച വഴിക്കുപോയില്ലെങ്കിൽ

ഫാ. ജോൺ വിയാനി

ഏകദേശം 150 വർഷങ്ങൾക്കുമുമ്പ് നമ്മുടെ ചവറപ്പിതാവായ വലിയ പ്രിയോരച്ചൻ ഒരു കാര്യം പറഞ്ഞു. എന്തായിരുന്നെന്നോ? നമ്മുടെയൊക്കെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ നമ്മൾ കണ്ടും പ്രവർത്തിച്ചും പോരുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങൾ തന്നെ. 1969-ൽ അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞു, നമുക്ക് തളർച്ച തോന്നാം; എന്നാലും നമ്മൾ നമ്മൾ സൂക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടേ? എന്ന്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ തന്നെ വാക്കുകളിൽ പറഞ്ഞാൽ, ‘സ്നേഹിക്കപ്പെട്ട കുടപ്പിറപ്പുകളെ, നമ്മുടെ എളിയപ്പെട്ട കുട്ടം മനുഷ്യർ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയതല്ല, പിന്നെയോ, തമ്പുരാൻ എത്രയോ പുതുമകളാൽ ഇതിനെ സ്ഥാപിക്കുകയും വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും നടത്തുകയും ചെയ്തു എന്നതിന് നിങ്ങൾ എല്ലാവരും സാക്ഷികളായിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ, ഈ ദൈവ പ്രവർ

ത്തിക്ക് അന്തരം വരുത്തുന്നതിന് മനുഷ്യരുടെ ഞെരുക്കങ്ങളും നീരസങ്ങളും സൃഷ്ടികളുടെ വിരോധങ്ങളും മതിയാവുകയില്ല, പിന്നെയോ ഒരു കുട്ടം മാത്രമേ മതിയാവുകയുള്ളൂ. നാം നമ്മുടെ ദൈവവിളിപ്പിനെ മറന്ന്, അതിനടുത്ത കടങ്ങളെ ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് നമ്മുടെ അന്തസ്സിനടുത്ത പുണ്യങ്ങളായിരിക്കുന്ന എളിമ, ചൊൽവിളി, ഉപവി, സന്യാസ അടക്കം, പട്ടയങ്ങളുള്ള ഭക്തി എന്നീ പുണ്യങ്ങളെ നിരുപനായാൽ മാത്രം വിചാരിച്ചാൽ മതയെന്നുവെച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിയാലേ നിറവേറ്റാതെയിരിക്കുന്നതുകൊവേനതകളെ ചുരുങ്ങിയകാലത്തിനകത്തു ഇല്ലാതാക്കുവാൻ മതിയായിരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു’ (പരസ്യ കത്ത് 1869 കർക്കിടകം)

ഏതാണ്ട് രണ്ട് നൂറ്റാണ്ട് മുന്നം

നമ്മുടെ വലിയ പ്രിയോർച്ചൻ പറഞ്ഞ വാക്കുകളാണല്ലോ ഈ പറഞ്ഞത്. കാലം മാറുമ്പോൾ കോലവും മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കണം എന്നത് കാലാനുസൃതമായ ഒരു വിചാരമാണ്. നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസ ജീവിതത്തിലും വേണോ ഇപ്പറഞ്ഞ ചിന്തകൾ? ഞാനിത്രയും കുറിച്ചപ്പോൾ, നമ്മുടെ സഭാംഗങ്ങളിലൊരാൾ വിദേശത്തു വിശ്വാസികളെ പരിചരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു കൂടപ്പിറപ്പ്, ഭവന സന്ദർശനാർത്ഥം വന്നിരുന്നു മുൻകാലങ്ങളെ അപേക്ഷിച്ചു നമ്മുടെ സഹോദരങ്ങൾ വിദേശങ്ങളിൽ പോയി സേവനം ചെയ്യുകയും അവരുടെ അവരുടെ പ്രതിഫലം നമ്മുടെ സഭയ്ക്ക് വരുമാന മാർഗമായിരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുമെന്നയാൽ, അത് കാലോചിതവും സുചിന്തിതവുമായിട്ടു നമ്മുക്ക് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിയും.

അമ്മാതിരി വിദേശ ബന്ധങ്ങളും വൈദേശികസമ്പർക്കങ്ങളും വഴി നമ്മുടെ സഭാഅംഗങ്ങൾക്കു പുത്തനായ ഉൾക്കാഴ്ചകളും പുതിയ കാൽ വയ്പുകളും ഉണ്ടാവാൻ സാധ്യതയുണ്ട്. അത് ശാരീരികവും ആത്മീയവുമായ വളർച്ചയുടെയും പുരോഗതിയുമുണ്ടാക്കുമ്പോൾ സന്യാസ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ആത്മാവിനനുതരണമാറ്റം സംഭവിക്കാം.

എന്താണ് സന്യാസത്തിന്റെ ആത്മാവ്? കാലം എത്രയൊക്കെ മാറി എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞാലും ശരി, സന്യാസ ജീവിതചൈതന്യങ്ങൾക്കു മാറ്റം വരുമോ, വരാനോ? സകലവും പരിത്യജിച്ചു ഭാരതചരിത്ര സങ്കല്പത്തിലെ കുചേലനെപ്പോലെ ജീവിക്കുക എന്നൊരു ധാരണ നിലവിലുണ്ടല്ലോ. വിദേശത്തു പോവുകയും വിദേശികളുടെ ഇടയിൽ ജീവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യു

മ്പോൾ, വൈദേശികമായ ചിന്തകളും ജീവിതശൈലിയും നമ്മെ സ്വാധീനിക്കണമല്ലോ. ആയിക്കൊള്ളുക അന്നേരമായാൽ തന്നെയും നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു നമുക്കുള്ള ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ അഭിലാഷങ്ങൾക്കും ഭാവങ്ങൾക്കും മാറ്റം വരുമോ? വരാനോ?

സന്യാസ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഊടും പാവുമാക്കെ മാറിയെന്നു വല്ലവരും പറയുമായിരിക്കും. പക്ഷെ, സന്യാസത്തിന്റെ സ്വഭാവം മാറുകയില്ലല്ലോ. മാറുമോ? മാറാനോ? വിശുദ്ധനായ ചാവറച്ചനെക്കുറിച്ച് ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട വചേരിയനച്ചൻ ഒരു കാര്യം പറയുന്നുണ്ട്... 'സന്ദർഭോചിതമായ ആചാരോപചാരങ്ങൾ ചെയ്യുന്നതിൽ പ്രഥമനായിരുന്നു. മറ്റു സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്നവരെ ഇടയ്ക്കിടയ്ക്ക് സന്ദർശിച്ചു സുഖവിവരങ്ങൾ ആരാഞ്ഞു.... പ്രോത്സാഹനം നൽകിയിരുന്നു.... സൽസ്വഭാവികളല്ലാത്തവരോടും മതിപ്പും സ്നേഹവും കാണിച്ചിരുന്നു..... പാടുള്ള വിധമെല്ലാം ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുകൾ ഇല്ലതാക്കിയിരുന്നു....' (ജീവചരിത്രം പേജ് 305) സൽസ്വഭാവികളല്ലാത്തവരോ? ആരാണവർ?

വിശുദ്ധ മത്തായി എഴുതിയ സുവിശേഷത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ഒരു സാഹചര്യം എടുത്തു പറയുന്നതുകാണാം. ഒരിക്കൽ സെബദി പുത്രന്മാരുടെ അമ്മ ഈശോയുടെ അടുത്ത് വന്നു. വളർച്ചയെത്തിയവരാണെങ്കിലും ശരി രണ്ടു മക്കളുമുണ്ട് അമ്മയുടെ മുൻപേ നടപ്പ്. തള്ള എന്നും തള്ളയാണല്ലോ. ഈശോ ആ അമ്മയോട് ചോദിച്ചു, എന്താണാവോ അമ്മയും മക്കളും കൂടിയിപ്പോൾ? പാവം തള്ളയന്നേരം

ഉത്തരം പറഞ്ഞു, മക്കൾക്ക് പ്രായം എത്രയായെന്നാലും ശരി, പെറ്റ് വളർത്തിയ തള്ള എന്നും എവിടെയും അമ്മയാണല്ലോ. മക്കൾക്ക് എന്തെല്ലാം നേട്ടമുണ്ടായെന്നു പറഞ്ഞാലും തള്ളയുടെ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ നിലക്കുകയില്ല..... അങ്ങനെയുള്ള ആ തള്ള, സെബദിപുത്രന്മാരുടെ അമ്മ, ആ മാതൃഹൃദയം പ്രകടമാക്കി നിൽക്കുന്നനേരത്തു, ഈശോ മക്കളോട് ചോദിച്ചു, ഞാൻ കുടിക്കാൻ പോകുന്ന പാനപാത്രം കുടിക്കാൻ നിങ്ങൾക്കാവുമോ? അമ്മയുടെ കണ്മണിയിൽ അല്ലേ! അവർ ഉത്തരം പറഞ്ഞു, തീർച്ചയായും... അനേകം അമ്മയുടെ കണ്മണിയിൽ നിന്ന് ഉത്തരം പറയുന്ന ആ മക്കളോട്, അവിടുന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു, എന്റെ പാനപാത്രം തീർച്ചയായും നിങ്ങൾ കുടിക്കും. പക്ഷെ..... എന്താണ് പക്ഷെ? ഒരു തള്ളയുടെ കണ്മണിയിൽ വെച്ച് തന്നെ, ആ തള്ള കേൾക്കെ ഉത്തരം പറഞ്ഞ ശ്ലീഹമാരോട് ഈശോ പ്രതികരിച്ചു. പരാതിയുമായി വന്ന മാതൃഹൃദയത്തെ ആസ്വദിക്കുകയും ആ മക്കളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയുമല്ലേ ഈശോ ചെയ്യുന്നത്? അവിടുന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു, എന്റെ ഇടം വലം ആയിരിക്കുകയെന്നത്..... നമ്മൾ അനുഭവിക്കാനിരിക്കുന്ന കാര്യമാണല്ലോ..... നിങ്ങൾ അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാരാണ്ല്ലോ. നിങ്ങളുടെ ത്യാഗസന്നദ്ധതയെ കുറിച്ച് എന്നിക്കു നല്ല ബോധ്യമുണ്ട്. എന്തെല്ലാമൊക്കെ പറഞ്ഞാലും ശരി, എന്റെ ഇടതും വലതും ഓരോ ഇരിപ്പിടം തയ്യാറാക്കുക എന്നതിനെ പറ്റി, ഈ അമ്മയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യത്തിൽ, ഞാൻ ഒന്നും പറയുന്നില്ല.

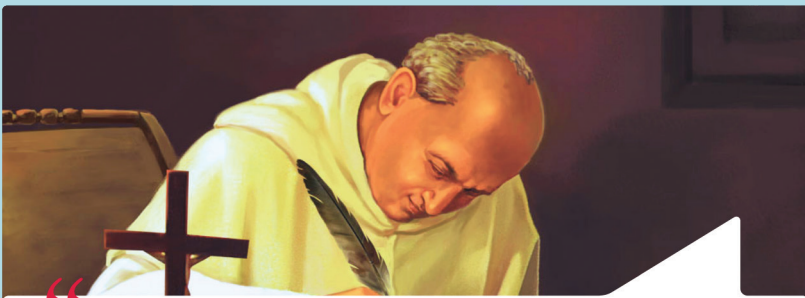
ആ അമ്മയുടെ മുന്നിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന

രണ്ട് അപ്പസ്തോലമക്കളുടെ, അവരോടു സംസാരിക്കുന്ന ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ഹൃദയഭാവമാണ് എന്റെ ചിന്താവിഷയം. വല്ലവരും ചോദിക്കുമായിരിക്കും നമ്മുടെ സഭാംഗങ്ങളുടെ ആനു കാലികമായ പുരോഗതിയും, ആ പുരോഗതിയെ മനസ്സിൽ കാണുന്ന ആ നുകാലിക സന്യാസചിന്തകരുടെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകളും, കാലാനുസൃതമെന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന വ്യതിയാനമനോഭാവവും തമ്മിൽ എന്താണ് ബന്ധം എന്നും അതുപോലെതന്നെ, അനുവാചകരായ വല്ലവരും ചോദിക്കുമായിരിക്കും, നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതത്തിൽ കാലാനുസൃതമായി വരേണ്ടതും വരുത്തേണ്ടതുമായ വത്യാസങ്ങളും ഇന്നത്തെ കാലത്തു സഭാസമൂഹത്തിൽ വന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നതുമായ മാറ്റങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ എന്താണ് ബന്ധം? ആ സംശയത്തിനും ആ ചോദ്യത്തിനും ഉള്ള മറുപടിയാണ് എന്റെ ചിന്താ വിഷയവും.

അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാരായ മക്കളെയും കുട്ടികൊണ്ട് ഈശോയുടെ മുന്നിൽ വന്ന അമ്മയ്ക്ക്, അവരാഗ്രഹിച്ച മറുപടി ഈശോ നൽകിയോ? നൽകിയെന്ന് പറയാം. പക്ഷെ അമ്മ ആഗ്രഹിച്ച ഉത്തരമാണോ ഈശോ നൽകിയത്? അവർ കേൾക്കേണ്ടിയിരുന്ന ഉത്തരം ഈശോ കൊടുത്തെന്നു പറയാം. എന്തായിരുന്നു ആ ഉത്തരം? അവർ അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാർ എന്ന നിലയിൽ, പണിയെടുക്കാൻ വേണ്ടി വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ടവരാണ്. ക്ലേശങ്ങൾ സഹിക്കേണ്ടി വന്നാൽ പോലും അവരതു ചെയ്യണമെന്നത് തന്നെ. എന്നുവെച്ചാൽ, അവർ ഉൾക്കാഴ്ചയോടെ, ദീർഘദൃഷ്ടിയോടെ പണിചെയ്യണം എന്നതുതന്നെ.

നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞാലും, അതുശരിയല്ലേ? നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസ ജീവിതത്തിൽ അതിന്റേതായ അടിസ്ഥാനവസ്തുതയില്ലേ? നമ്മുടെ അനുദിന ജീവിതത്തിൽ അത് നമ്മൾ കാത്തു സൂക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടേ? അതല്ലേ സന്യസ്തരിൽ കാണാൻ ദൈവജനം ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നത്? നമ്മൾ ജീവിക്കുന്നത് മനുഷ്യരെ കാണിക്കാൻ വേണ്ടിയല്ല. എന്നാൽ നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതം മനുഷ്യർക്ക് കാണാനും അനുകരിക്കാനും സഹായകമാകാൻ വേണ്ടിയല്ലേ? അതെ എന്ന് നമ്മൾ ഉത്തരം പറയേണ്ടേ? ആ നിലയ്ക്ക് നോക്കുമ്പോൾ, നമ്മൾ പറയേണ്ടിവരും, ഇന്നത്തെ നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതത്തിൽ വരുന്ന പഴുതുകൾ നമ്മൾ തിരുത്തുക തന്നെ വേണം. ഈശോയുടെയടുക്കൽ വന്ന അമ്മയെപ്പോലെ നമ്മൾ നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു ചില പുനർവിചി

ന്തനങ്ങൾ ചെയ്യണം. രണ്ടുമക്കളെയും കൂട്ടി ഈശോയുടെ അടുക്കൽ വന്ന അപ്പസ്തോലമാതാവിന്റെ ചിന്താഗതി, മനുഷ്യസാധാരണമെന്നു ചിന്തിക്കാൻ നമ്മൾ തുടങ്ങണം. നമ്മുടെ സന്യാസജീവിതത്തെ നമ്മൾ കാര്യക്ഷമമായി കണക്കിലെടുക്കണം. നമ്മുടെ വലിയ പ്രിയോരച്ചൻ മനസ്സിൽ കണ്ടതുപോലെയുള്ള സന്യാസജീവിതത്തിലേയ്ക്ക് നമ്മൾ വലതു കാൽ എടുത്തു വയ്ക്കണം. അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാരുടെ കാര്യത്തിൽ എന്നത് പോലെ നമ്മുക്കും കാലിടറാം. ആ കാലിടറലിന്റെ പ്രകടനങ്ങളല്ലേ നമ്മുടെ പെരുമാറ്റങ്ങളിൽ ഇന്ന് വന്നു ഭവിക്കുന്നത്? ആ മാറ്റങ്ങളും പോരായ്മകളും പോരായ്മകൾ തന്നെയാണ്. സന്യാസജീവിതം എന്നതിന് ‘അടിച്ചവഴി’ ഒന്നുണ്ട്. നമ്മൾ ആ വഴിയിലേക്ക് തന്നെ, മടങ്ങണം. വേണ്ടേ? ●



“

You angels will be turned to devils, if you fall into evil situation.

St. Chavara



A CALL FOR INTROSPECTION RETURN TO ORIGINAL SPIRIT ?

Fr. Davis Manjaly

As we prepare for the bicentennial of our congregation it is appropriate that we reflect upon

our charism and spirit of early church. Our founding fathers were zealous pastors involved in

the growth and development of the church especially spiritual renewal. Frs. Porukkara and Palackal had great desire for ascetical life, away from the people. With this intention they approached Bp. Maurelius Stabellini. Bishop was shocked and remarked, if you, knowledgeable priests, go for ascetical life, who will take care of the people? He suggested to start an Ashram for religious life and combine contemplation and pastoral work. Here we see the beautiful blending of the individual charism of founding fathers and the ecclesiastical guidance. Pastoral care and renewal of the church were an integral part of our charism. They took care of the migrants in Malabar and Kanyakumary, fought against Rocos and Melus schisms, pioneered the reunion movement of Jacobites. Above all they took leadership for spiritual and liturgical renewal. We have to introspect whether we have lost that role today?

Vita Consecrata says that consecrated life in the church is not something isolated and marginal. "It is the very heart of the church...it is an intimate part of her life, her holiness and her mission" (VC 3). Let us examine how the church drifted away from the original spirit and witnessing.

Spirit of early Church

The characteristic of the early Church was unity and sharing. The group of believers was one in mind and heart. No one said that any of his belongings was his own, but they all shared with one another everything they had. (Acts 4:32) The early church was a poor and persecuted church; and was a charismatic community. Their strength did not lie in material wealth but in the power of Jesus. They preached the risen Lord and bore witness boldly led by the Spirit. Church was nourished by the blood of Martyrs.

With the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, Christianity was granted religious freedom and began to receive imperial support. Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, a landmark event in shaping Christian doctrine. In 380 AD, Emperor Theodosius I declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

These developments are often seen as great blessings that contributed to the growth and expansion of the Church, especially in Europe. However, they can also be viewed from another perspective - as the beginning of a gradual decline in the original spirit of

Christianity.

The Church, once poor and persecuted, slowly became increasingly rich and powerful. A close alliance developed between Church and State, where, at times, political influence overshadowed spiritual guidance. Instead of being led solely by the Holy Spirit, the Church often found itself shaped by political power.

Colossal churches and institutions were built which were signs of wealth and power. Gradually, a spirit of extravagance entered in the day to day affairs of the Church and in the life of its leaders. They began to live like kings and in some cases, royal families exerted influence over Church affairs, including the appointment of bishops and even the Pope. As royal culture and values seeped into ecclesial life, there was a growing distance between Church leaders and the ordinary faithful. The simplicity, unity and spirit of service that characterized the early Christian community began to fade.

Clamour for Change

The period of the Reformation was another crucial moment in the history of the Church. Martin Luther questioned some of the unjust practices within the

Church, especially the sale of indulgences. He was an Augustinian theologian who sought renewal from within. In 1517, he nailed his Ninety five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. His intention was not to break away from the Church, but to invite dialogue, reflection and reform. However, his protest quickly gained widespread support, as many people were already dissatisfied with Church practices and governance. What began as a call for discussion soon became a powerful movement- the Reformation that shook the Church.

This situation compelled the Church to engage in deep self-examination and reform. Many committed leaders and saints emerged during this time, contributing to the renewal and strengthening of the Church. Although the Church has often viewed Luther as a rebel, many others recognize him as a reformer. Had he not raised his voice, the internal decay within the Church might have worsened. In this sense, his bold step can be seen as a wake-up call, inviting necessary change.

A call for introspection.

Over time, the Church seems to have adopted many royal customs and symbols (the mitre,

crozier, ring, liturgical vestments and sacred articles like the chalice, paten, monstrance, and tabernacle etc) often reflect a sense of opulence. While they carry deep symbolic meaning, they can also appear as signs of power and aristocratic culture. I watched the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023 on TV. What struck me was how closely it resembles our Episcopal ordination ceremonies.

This creates a striking paradox when we remember Jesus - who was born, lived, and died in simplicity and poverty. The one whom we follow had no place to lay His head, yet our expressions of faith can sometimes lean toward splendour and display.

Construction of gigantic churches and institutions continue today. Ostentatious celebrations have, in many places, become normal. See our grand ceremonies for ordinations, jubilees, parish feasts, and weddings etc - marked by elaborate decorations, illumination, fireworks, and lavish meals. All this happens even as many poor people live around us, often unnoticed.

Another area that invites introspection is the use of Titles within the Church. Many of the titles once used in monarchies - such as

Your Holiness, Beatitude, Grace, and Lordship - have also been adopted by Church leaders, who are essentially called to be servants. Jesus taught servant leadership and preferred to be called simply as Son of Man.

In today's world, even powerful leaders are addressed in simpler ways. For instance, the President of the United States is commonly addressed as Mr. President, and the British Prime Minister as Mr. Prime Minister. Yet, the Church in many places continues to retain traditional royal titles.

Simplicity – Sign of Indian Spirituality

In India, Hindu religious leaders are addressed as Pujya Swamiji. India is a land known for simplicity and renunciation and religious leaders are models of it. They usually wear a simple dhoti with a shirt or shawl. Even for Pooja, they wear a simple dress.

True respect, after all, is not gained through elaborate titles or costly attire, but through an authentic life rooted in humility and integrity. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, stands as a powerful model of this truth. His simplicity and authenticity won him deep respect across the world.

The appearance of Christian leaders can at times become a counter-witness when it does not reflect the simplicity and humility of Christ. Recently, I watched a video in the social media of the liturgical procession of bishops at a CBCI meeting held at St. John's Medical college, Bangalore. It was majestic and colourful, with a wide variety of vestments, mitres, and croziers representing different rites. I found myself wondering, if Jesus were to see this, what might His reaction be? What impression does it create, especially among people of other faiths? Does it communicate the simplicity of the Gospel, or aristocracy? Perhaps it is high time that such paraphernalia is changed.

The whole world was shocked and deeply moved by the simple funeral of Pope Francis, carried out according to his own instructions. A simple coffin, a modest ceremony, and above all, a plain tomb with the name "Franciscus"- without titles, not even Pope. He chose to be laid to rest at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major rather than the traditional magnificent St. Peter's Basilica. This decision itself was striking and deeply symbolic. It was more than a personal preference - it was a powerful message. In its simplicity, it challenged

long-standing customs and raised a profound question before the Church. It pointed toward a new way of witnessing- one rooted not in grandeur, but in simplicity. This can be seen as a kind of paradigm shift, a call to return to the essence of the Gospel.

Synodality and its Impact

In recent years, the Church has engaged in wide-ranging discussions and deliberations on synodality at various levels. Synodality calls the entire People of God to walk together- through listening, sharing, accomodating, and communal discernment, even making space for respectful dissent. It envisions a Church that is more circular than pyramidal, where participation and shared responsibility are valued.

However, we must honestly examine : has this process brought about substantial transformation, or only minor adjustments? The need of the hour is not superficial change, but deep renewal and genuine transformation. What is required is not 'cosmetic surgery' but a 'surgical strike' that touches the very heart of the Church.

If such renewal does not come from within, it may eventually be imposed from outside. That is why we are called to return - not to a

medieval model of the Church - but to the spirit of the early Christian community : simple, united, Spirit-led, and close to the people.

Adaptation and Inculturation

We are invited to be attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit, discerning the signs of the times with openness and courage. In some parts of the world, particularly in powerful western countries, signs of decline and fatigue are visible. At the same time, the Church in Africa continues to flourish- even as a poor and persecuted Church. One of its strengths lies in its ability to embrace local culture and traditions. The liturgy is meaningfully inculturated, incorporating elements such as local music, dance, and symbols, making worship vibrant and appealing to the people.

The Second Vatican Council opened the door for such aggiornamento - a process of renewal and updating, marked by openness to other cultures and religions. This vision remains ever relevant today. In India, especially in mission areas , if the Church is to remain relevant, it must meaning-

fully engage with Indian culture and traditions and respond to the aspirations of the people. We are called to present Christ and the Church in a way that resonates with the Indian context- rooted in its spirituality, values, and lived experience. This calls for a sincere effort to move beyond an exclusively Western expression of the Church. Many people perceive such expressions as distant from, or even disruptive to Indian culture and values. Therefore, our liturgy, thinking and lifestyle need to be more deeply attuned to the richness of Indian spirituality- simple, contemplative, and close to the people.

Pope Francis beautifully expressed this when he said, “Shepherds should have the smell of the sheep.” This invites a profound question : do we carry the smell of our own people and culture, or do we still marked by an aristocratic, Latin, or Syrian identity ?

The Church must constantly introspect and renew itself in order to remain faithful to its mission - to return to the spirit of early church. ●



ENGAGING MEDIA IN OUR MISSION



AS RELIGIOUS AND CMIS

Fr. Jacob Peenikaparambil

Introduction

As religious and CMIs, we are called to continue the mission of Jesus with a view to facilitating the Reign of God. As we understand from the Gospels, the Reign of God is a situation in which God is accepted as a loving Father and all human beings are brothers and sisters with equal dignity, rights, and opportunities. It is characterized by forgiveness and reconciliation, sensitivity and compassion, the selfless sharing of resources and services, justice, and equity. Such a situation can be created at both the micro and macro levels. The Reign of God can be fos-

tered in the communities, institutions, and organizations we lead, and among the people whom we serve.

Our mission requires bringing about individual and societal transformation, as reflected in the life and teachings of Jesus, by responding creatively and effectively to the challenges that arise in society from time to time. CMI Constitution No. 7 states: "Rooted in our religious commitment, we must address ourselves to the living problems of our nation and of the world, endeavouring to bring them closer through Christ to God." Various apostolates such

as pastoral care, education, social action, and media communication are means of realizing our mission. The concrete ways of carrying out this mission must be continuously evolved in response to the rapidly changing world, especially in the context of the technological revolution.

Media has become one of the most powerful forces shaping modern society. It influences the way people think, communicate, learn, make decisions, and interact with one another. It plays a crucial role in informing, educating, entertaining, and influencing individuals and communities. Therefore, as a congregation, we need to reflect on and explore ways and means of engaging media in our mission and apostolates.

Engaging Media in Our Mission and Apostolates

Rev. Fr. Prior General, in his circular on the “CMI Year of Media,” has briefly explained the dual function of media in our mission. First, media can be engaged as a support for different forms of apostolate to communicate their message effectively. Although diverse forms of media can be used to enhance the effectiveness of apostolates such as education, pastoral care, and social action,

digital media offers wider possibilities in this regard.

Secondly, media can be planned and implemented as an apostolate in itself for communicating the Gospel and moral and ethical values through art and culture, including the production of movies, documentaries, music albums, and similar initiatives. Publishing national or regional dailies, news magazines, and operating television channels can also be included in this category.

Fr. General, in his circular, has emphasized that in order to realize these dual goals, CMI members must be equipped not only with technical skills but also with training in ethics and aesthetics. Besides having well-equipped members with skills and creativity, mobilizing financial resources for broadcast and print media remains a major concern. Digital media, which includes videos, social media platforms, websites, and digital audio, may not require large investments in finance and infrastructure.

An Overview of the CMI Media Apostolate

According to information provided by the General Councillor for Education and Media Apostolate, there are 14 cultural/media cen-

tres in the CMI Congregation. Of these, five are primarily involved in media activities and productions, whereas the other nine centres combine media-related activities with socio-cultural initiatives. Chavara Cultural Centres in Kochi, Delhi, and Kozhikode are examples of the latter.

Fourteen CMI members are almost fully involved in media apostolate. There may be many others who are partially involved. However, the percentage of CMI members engaged in media ministry is probably less than one percent and, therefore, not very significant. A Google search indicates that approximately 30 percent of CMI members are involved in the education apostolate. This may be one reason why the Media Apostolate is attached to the Education Apostolate.

The number of CMI members who regularly contribute to news magazines or newspapers as journalists is very small.

The Congregation owns no national or regional daily newspaper. From 1887 to 1989, the Congregation managed *Deepika*, a daily newspaper. The Congregation also does not own or operate any national or regional television news channel. Chavara Cultural

Centre, Kochi, publishes a magazine called *Moolyasruthi*. There is no national-level magazine or periodical published by any media centre within the CMI Congregation. Sargakshetra, Chethipuzha, runs a community radio station, Sargakshetra FM 89.6.

A brief survey of the major media-related activities undertaken by the cultural/media centres and members involved in the media apostolate reveals a diversity of services and productions. The following is not an exhaustive list of media activities within the CMI Congregation, but only a glimpse of some major activities gathered through a Google search:

- Media education and training, including digital media training, workshops, and seminars, are undertaken by almost all media communication centres. This appears to be the most prominent service rendered by these centres. Trainees also produce short films, documentaries, and advertising films as part of their training. For example, students of the SH School of Communication Department of Sacred Heart College, Thevara, Kochi, engage in digital reporting, news broadcasting, and multimedia news packaging. The department runs “Wow Kochi,” a student-driven digital media startup.

- The second most important activity undertaken by media centres appears to be the production of short films, documentaries, and videos. Most media centres have their own YouTube channels. Music and devotional albums constitute an important segment of media production.

- A good number of media centres provide facilities for professional recording, including audio recording, editing, and mixing. For example, Chetana Sound Recording Studio and Chavara Cultural Centre, Kochi, offer professional digital workflows for film, television, and independent music artists.

- Some media centres organize competitions in drama, painting, cartoons, and related fields to encourage young people to develop their artistic talents.

- A few media centres are involved in the production of web series and also operate web television channels. For example, Amala Media House, Kozhikode, produces creative musical web series such as Tape Records.

CMI Media Apostolate and Societal Transformation

Building the Reign of God requires ongoing individual and

societal transformation. Societal transformation has two dimensions: (1) denouncing the evil tendencies and structural barriers that prevent the arrival of the Reign of God, and (2) announcing the values that contribute to the building of the Reign of God. Media can play a significant role in both these aspects.

Along with announcing the Reign of God through his teachings and actions, Jesus also denounced the structures that prevented its realization. Jesus was a critic of societal and religious structures and practices that exploited the poor (Matthew 23:14), commercialized religion (Mark 11:15–18), perpetuated discrimination against women (John 8:1–11), and misinterpreted laws (Luke 11:42). He violated laws that did not promote life (John 5:1–18; Luke 6:6–11; Mark 2:23–28).

Several Old Testament prophets like Amos (5:21–24), Isaiah (1:11–17), Micah (6:6–8) and Jeremiah (7:4–11) forcefully denounced religious worship that was disconnected from social justice. For example, prophet Amos is the most outspoken critic of empty religiosity. “I hate; I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt

offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them... Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (5:21-24)

The CMI media apostolate, too, has the dual role of announcing Jesus' message of love, forgiveness, compassion, justice, and human dignity, while also denouncing systems and processes that are opposed to the core values of the Reign of God.

In today's context, some disturbing developments that are opposed to the Reign of God at both the global and national levels, especially in India, include: (1) hatred, violence, wars, and rampant violations of human rights; (2) the erosion of democracy and the rise of authoritarian and majoritarian regimes; (3) environmental degradation and the climate crisis; (4) poverty and skyrocketing economic inequality; (5) the increasing communalization of politics and discrimination and violence against Muslims and Christians in India; and (6) rising discrimination and violence against Dalits, Adivasis, and women in general.

Against this backdrop, the CMI media apostolate cannot remain

satisfied with its current activities and productions, although they play a significant role in disseminating the message of Jesus through artistic forms. We need to raise our voice through our media apostolate against the systems and forces of evil that are opposed to the Reign of God. We cannot remain silent when Muslims and Christians are discriminated against, isolated, harassed, and persecuted; when hate speech becomes the language of leaders; when the human rights of journalists and social activists are grossly violated; and when Indian constitutional values and provisions are flouted. If those who have left everything to follow Jesus and carry forward his mission lack the courage to speak out against the dance of cruelty, injustice, and inhumanity, what meaning does consecrated life have?

The Way Forward for the Media Apostolate

As this is the CMI Year of Media, the Congregation may undertake a scientific study of the existing media centres, their activities, and productions with a view to improving coordination and amplifying their impact on society. This study could be undertaken under the auspices of the General Department of Education and

Media Apostolate with the involvement of external experts.

Present and future priorities should focus more on digital media than on traditional media (print and broadcast media), as the former requires less capital investment and offers a much wider reach. Thanks to the internet and smartphones, digital content transcends geographical and national boundaries instantly, making it accessible to billions of people across the globe.

Although media centres are necessary for media education and training, greater priority should be given to equipping CMI members with the skills and knowledge needed to use media effectively rather than establishing new media or cultural centres.

Media education and training should be an essential part of the CMI formation programme from the initial stages through ordination, as media expertise is necessary for the effectiveness of all our apostolates. Along with acquiring new skills, formees should also be educated on the legal and ethical dimensions of media. Responsible use of media, particularly social media, should be an integral part of the formation process.

In the digital age, the role of jour-

nalism has shifted from being merely a gatekeeper of information to becoming an essential anchor of truth, context, and verification. Journalists function as fact-checkers, expert storytellers, and public watchdogs in a media landscape flooded with rapid and often unverified digital content. Investigative journalism remains a cornerstone of this mission. Journalists actively monitor governments, corporations, and institutions to expose corruption and protect the public interest. In this context, our scholastics who possess an interest and talent for journalism should be encouraged to pursue specialized studies in journalism and become freelance journalists. They can also serve as part-time staff members in our media centres.

In today's context, promoting peace and harmony among followers of different religions, castes, languages, and ethnic groups should be a priority area of the CMI media apostolate. While remaining faithful to Christian teachings and the message of Jesus, Christians must respect all religions. Jesus' new commandment of love makes religion human-centred: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love

one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34–35).

In the Indian context, Hindutva has become a major threat to the Constitution of India. Constitutional democracy is increasingly being replaced by majoritarianism and electoral autocracy. While the external forms of democracy remain, the autonomy of democratic institutions and civil and fundamental rights are being compromised. Against this backdrop, the promotion of Indian constitutional values should become a priority of the CMI media apostolate. The foundational principles of the Preamble to the Indian Constitution—Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Individual Dignity—and the vision of the Reign of God taught by Jesus share a profound philosophical and moral overlap, particularly in their concern for the vulnerable and marginalized.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought revolutionary changes to many aspects of human life. It presents immense opportunities as well as significant dangers. In this context, the first encyclical of Pope Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial In-*

telligence, is highly significant. In this encyclical, the Pope appeals for the safeguarding of humanity and the promotion of truth, the dignity of work, social justice, and peace. The CMI media apostolate may disseminate the key insights of the encyclical in order to educate people, governments, educational institutions, AI companies, and others about the responsible and judicious use of AI.

Conclusion

As CMIs and religious, we are called to become radical disciples of Jesus and continue his mission of building the Reign of God while making disciples of Jesus. All those who follow the core teachings and values of Jesus are, in a broader sense, disciples of Jesus. Mahatma Gandhi was a disciple of Jesus in this sense, as he drew profound spiritual inspiration from Jesus’ commitment to non-violence, humility, and concern for the poor. He incorporated these values into his own framework of Satyagraha (truth and nonviolent resistance) alongside his Hindu faith.

In today’s context, especially in India, our mission is to motivate and inspire people to follow the core values of Jesus—forgiveness and reconciliation, love and

compassion—in an atmosphere increasingly marked by hatred, revenge, and violence. Let every member of the Congregation engage with some form of media to share the love and compassion of Jesus with people of all faiths, while becoming a role model in living out the core values of Jesus.

(Fr. Jacob Peenikaparambil, a member of CMI St. Paul Province, Bhopal, is currently the National Coordinator of the Universal Solidarity Movement (USM), Indore. He is also a columnist for Indian Currents, a periodical published from Delhi. ●



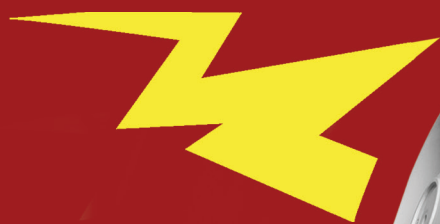
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Wisdom and
purity should
be spiritual
food, like food
for natural
growth.

St. Chavara

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NEWS FROM THE PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE

XXXIX General Synaxis, March -2026



The XXXIX General Synaxis of the CMI Congregation was held at the CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills, Kakkanad, from 15 to 21 March 2026. On 19 March 2026, following a time of prayer, the election of the Prior General was held. Subsequently, the election of the General Councillors took place.

The XXXIX General Synaxis concluded with gratitude to God for His guidance and blessings, renewing the Congregation's commitment to its charism and mission, and strengthening the spirit of unity, service, and hope for the years ahead.

Farewell to Outgoing Prior General & Team

A warm farewell was organized for the outgoing Prior General and team on 6 April 2026 at the CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills, Kakkanad. The gracious gathering was attended by the community members of Mount Saint Thomas under the

leadership of His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop. On this occasion, the Rev. Fr Prior General conveyed his heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to the outgoing Prior General and team, acknowledging their dedicated service and praying for God's abundant blessings upon their future endeavours.

Get-Together of the Newly Professed CMI's at the Generalate



The Get-Together of the Newly Professed CMI's was held at the Generalate from 24 to 26 April 2026. The programme commenced with the inaugural address by Rev. Fr. Prior General and included prayer sessions, interactions with the Chavara Hills family, an input session by Rev. Fr. George Kulangara CMI, and a motivational talk by Prof. Kochurani Thomas. The gathering concluded with a pilgrimage to Kainakary and Mannanam and the celebration of the Holy Qurbana at the Tomb of St. Chavara.

Major Superiors' Advisory Council Meeting



The Major Superiors' Advisory Council Meeting was held at the Generalate on 27–28 April 2026. The programme commenced with the welcome and introduction of the newly appointed Provincials to the Prior General's House community, followed by the Vicar General's introductory session on the dynamics of the meeting and an orientation address by Rev. Fr. Prior General. The second day was devoted to deliberations

on matters of common concern, including reports from the Provincials on the first sessions of their Provincial Synaxes, appointments and transfers in the common houses and institutions, and discussions on various themes pertaining to the life and mission of the Congregation. The meeting concluded at 4.00 p.m., after fruitful discussions and fraternal sharing.

195th Foundation Day of CMI Congregation and Inauguration of CMI Year of Media



The 195th Foundation Day celebration and the inauguration of the “CMI Year of Media” were held on 11 May 2026 at St. Joseph’s Monastery, Mannanam. Arch Bishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, Bishop of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry was the main celebrant of the Solemn Holy Eucharistic Celebration. Following the Holy Qurbana, the official logo of the CMI Year of Media was unveiled by Arch Bishop.

GC-PC 2026



The CMI GC-PC Meeting, an interaction between the Provincial Councils and the General Council, was held from 11 to 14 May 2026 at the CMI Prior General's House, Chavara Hills, Kakkannad. The programme commenced with a welcome and orientation by Rev. Fr. Vicar General, followed by the inaugural address of Rev. Fr. Prior General and the introduction of the participants. The gathering also included the celebration of the Holy Qurbana presided over by His Grace Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany. The four-day meeting featured a series of input sessions by eminent resource persons, Group Discussions, interactions between the Provincial Councils and the General Council, and presentations by the Departmental Councils. The meeting concluded with the closing message of Rev. Fr. Prior General, who expressed gratitude to all the participants and called for renewed commitment to the mission and communion of the Congregation.

Initial Formators' and Formation Coordinators' Meet



The Initial Formators' and Formation Coordinators' Meet was held at the Generalate from 18 to 20 June 2026. The gathering brought together Aspirant Rectors, Postulant Rectors, Novice Masters, and Formation Coordinators. The programme featured enriching sessions led by Rev. Fr. Jose Poovattil CMI and Rev. Fr. Teji Kelamparambil CMI.

Vocation Promoters Meet

The Vocation Promoters Meet was held at the Generalate from 12 to 14 June 2026. The programme featured enriching sessions led by Fr Jose Poovattil, CMI and Fr Linston Olakkengal CMI under the leadership of Fr. Prathap Thuruthumali CMI (General formation Coordinator).

Annual Meeting



CMI priests serving in Germany gathered for their annual meeting in Köln from 5–8 July 2026. The gathering was graced by the presence of the Rev. Fr. Prior General, the Vicar General, the General Councillor for Finance, and the Provincials.

VISITATION & EVENTS

August 04 - 07	: Samanvaya Bhopal
August 08 - 11	: Darsana Wardha
August 11	: Chanda Provincial House
August 12	: Hyderabad Province
August 14 - 16	: Samanvaya, Kolachoor
August 24 - Sept 17	: Dharmaram College, Bengaluru
Sept 18 - 21	: Carmel Vidya Bhavan Pune
Oct 30 - Nov 2	: Major Superiors Meeting and General Formation Council (Dharmaram College, Bengaluru)

THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONS

■ DHARMARAM, BENGALURU ■

Visit of Archbishop Carlo Maria Polvani

Archbishop Carlo Maria Polvani, representing the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education, visited Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram accompanied by Fr. Hrudayaraj, for a series of academic and ecclesial engagements centered on Catholic higher education and formation, in particular for the golden jubilee of the faculty of theology. At DVK, he interacted with students of Theology and Philosophy, encouraging them to integrate academic rigor with spiritual depth and pastoral commitment. He also met faculty members, visited the Central Library and Research Centre, and engaged with students of Vinayasadhana and Oriental Canon Law. A significant highlight of the visit was the unveiling and blessing of the Jubilee Stone of the Faculty of Theology, marking its status as an independent ecclesiastical faculty authorized to confer degrees. The Archbishop also visited Christ University,

where he met university leadership and reflected on the role of Catholic higher education in contemporary society. A joint cultural programme organized by DVK, Christ University, and the Christ Group of Schools featured a vibrant parade and student performances. In his address, he emphasized the harmony between faith, culture, and education. The event was attended by Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore and Archbishop Elias Gonsalves of Nagpur, followed by a formal dinner in honour of Archbishop Carlo Mario Polvani. On the following day, Archbishop Polvani presided over the Eucharistic celebration at Dharmaram chapel and later visited the Christ Group of Schools and Christ Special School, where he commended the institutions for their value-based and inclusive education.

Convocation and Samavarthanam

On 28 January 2026 Dharmaram witnessed a day of profound ec-

clesial and academic significance with the celebration of the Convocation and Samavarthan ceremonies. The day commenced with the solemn celebration of the Divine Liturgy at 9.00 a.m., concelebrated by Mar Thomas Tharayil, Archbishop of Changanassery together with the newly ordained priests. Rev. Fr. Prior General also joined as a concelebrant. In his homily, Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil underlined the essential call to evangelization marked by mercy, reminding the community that the salvation of souls remains the fundamental mission of priestly life. He exhorted the faithful to bear witness to Christ through compassion and pastoral sensitivity. The Convocation Ceremony was held at 10.45 a.m. in the JBC Auditorium. A total of 142 students successfully graduated from the faculties of Philosophy, Theology, and the Institutes of Vinaya Sadhana and Oriental Canon Law and 77 students were present for the ceremony. The Vice Chancellor, Rev. Dr. Thomas Chathanparambil, conferred the certificates upon the graduates. In the evening, the Samavarthan ceremony for the outgoing CMI priests was conducted at Darshana Theeram, marking its first-ever celebration at this venue. During

the ceremony, the newly ordained priests received blessings from Fr. Emmanuel Kariyapurayidam, the Master, and the Rev. Fr. Rector were honored.

New Self-Service Kiosk and Information Display Inaugurated at Cardinal Tisserant Library

On 5 March 2026, the Cardinal Tisserant Library marked a significant milestone with the inauguration and blessing of its new self-service kiosk and library information display system. The inauguration and blessing ceremonies began at 7:30 am following the Holy Mass were led by Rev. Fr. Rector in the presence of Fr. Joby Thurackel, the library in charge, along with members of the faculty and student community. The newly introduced self-service kiosk is designed to simplify the borrowing and returning of books, offering users greater convenience and independence. In addition, the library information display system will enhance communication by providing timely updates and important announcements to all visitors

Diaconate and Sub-Diaconate Ordinations

On 23-24 March 2026, the Dharmaram College community joyfully celebrated the Sub-Diaconate

and Diaconate ordinations of its brothers. The Sub-Diaconate ordination was conferred on 23 March 2026 by His Excellency, Mar Joseph Pamplany, with 37 brothers (27 CMI & 10 Non-CMI) ordained as sub-deacons. The Eucharistic celebration took place at 6:00 PM. On 24 March 2026 at 10:00 am, 31 brothers (29 CMI & 02 Non-CMI) were ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany.

New Prior General's Visit

On 26 March 2026 Dharmaram witnessed the gracious visit of Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, the newly elected Prior General, who arrived on Thursday afternoon to meet the Fathers and Brothers of the community. He was accorded a warm and cordial welcome on his arrival. During his stay, Rev. Fr. Prior General interacted with the members, shared his vision for the congregation, and encouraged all in their mission and community life. The visit concluded on Friday afternoon, 27 March 2026, leaving behind a memorable experience for the Dharmaram community.

Inauguration of DVK Academic Year

The Academic Year 2026–27 of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram

(DVK) was formally inaugurated on 1 June 2026. The celebrations commenced with a solemn Holy Mass at 09:00 a.m. in the Dharmaram Chapel, presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Anthony Poola, Metropolitan Archbishop of Hyderabad and President of CBCI. In his homily, the Cardinal emphasized the importance of cultivating genuine wisdom and common sense in the pursuit of knowledge and formation. Rev. Fr. Jeff Shawn, Registrar of DVK, welcomed the gathering. Delivering the inaugural address, His Eminence called upon the academic community to return to the original sources of Christian living and apostolic wisdom.

In his presidential address, Rev. Fr. Rector reminded the assembly that the institution stands on the shoulders of great pioneers and visionaries such as Malpan Thomas and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, whose legacy continues to inspire its mission and academic excellence. Rev. Fr. Mathew Attumkal, President of DVK, in his keynote address, highlighted the significance of intellectual formation rooted in faith and values. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Rev. Fr. George Kulangara. The inauguration marked the beginning of

a new academic year, reaffirming DVK's commitment to the pursuit

of wisdom, academic excellence, and holistic formation.

DARSANA, WARDHA

Reception To The Newly Ordained Darsana Alumni



Darsana joyfully welcomed back its alumni, the 13 Newly Ordained Priests, on the 21st of January. The day was marked by gratitude and joy as they revisited cherished memories and expressed heartfelt appreciation for the guidance and formation they received. A concelebrated Holy Mass followed by a fellowship dinner made the celebration truly grace-filled and memorable.

RISONANZA 2026-__Valedictory Function



The Valedictory Programme for the academic year 2025-2026, Risonanza 2K26, was held on 26 January 2026 in the presence of Bishop Joseph Thachaparambath CMI. The event accorded a warm reception to the Chief Guest, the first alumni bishop of

Darsana, and marked the culmination of Atmadarsan, DKS, and DSKS, the women-formation, cultural, and social wings of Darsana. The programme featured an inspiring address by His Excellency, a vibrant cultural evening, and the distribution of prizes to competition winners.

AU REVOIR

The farewell programme, "Au Revoir," was held on 28 March in honour of Fr. Lijo Thekkanath, the outgoing animator, and the senior brothers. The occasion featured a thanksgiving Holy Mass, a cultural programme,

and felicitations expressing gratitude for their valuable contributions. On 30 March, they departed for their respective provinces, carrying with them the community's prayers, love, and best wishes.

Welcome to Darsana



Darsana warmly welcomed the 15 first-year brothers who had completed their novitiate in different CMI novitiates and a one-month language course at Kolchoor on Saturday, 6th June. They participated in a week-long orientation programme that provided them with an overview of life at Darsana. The senior brothers organized ice-breaking sessions, games, and other interactive activities to help them feel at home. We wish our first-year brothers a fruitful and enriching stay at Darsana.

Inauguration of the Academic Year 2026-27



The Academic Year 2026-27 at Darsana Institute of Philosophy was solemnly inaugurated on Monday, 22nd June. The inaugural programme that followed was graced by Rev. Fr. Binoy Elavumkal, Gener-

al Councillor for Education and Media, as the Chief Guest. Fr. Binoy encouraged the students to pursue academic excellence with dedication, discipline, and a spir-

it of service. Special appreciation goes to Fr. Joshy Nellivelil and his team for the meticulous planning and successful organization of the programme.

SAMANVAYA, BHOPAL

Inauguration and Blessing of Samanvaya – Study House, Institute & Library

On January 21, 2026, the newly constructed buildings of the Samanvaya Theology College, Samanvaya Institute of Theology and Library were blessed.

Fr. Thomas Chathanparampil, the then Prior General, inaugurated the newly constructed Samanvaya by cutting the ribbon and unveiling the commemorative plaque. This was followed by the Eucharistic celebration and the blessing of the altar by Mar James Athikkalam MST, Bishop of Sagar.

After the Eucharistic celebration, the ceremonies for the blessing and inauguration of the academic wing commenced. Archbishop Sebastian Durairaj SVD, Archbishop of Bhopal, blessed and inaugurated the Academic Wing and the Library. The ceremonies were followed by a felicitation gathering.

Fr. Jacob welcomed the gathering. In addition to the Prior General and the two Bishops, four

Provincials addressed the assembly: Fr. Abraham Vettiyankal, Fr. Pius Pariyarathukunnel, Fr. Saju Chackalackal, and Fr. Joseph Kallampilly. Fr. Joshy Pazhukathara, Rector, proposed the vote of thanks, after which a fellowship meal was served.

29th Annual Conference of the Indian Catechetical Association (ICA)

Samanvaya hosted the 29th Annual Conference of the Indian Catechetical Association (ICA) in its newly constructed Auditorium from February 11 to 13, 2026.

The members of the Association are scholars holding Doctoral or Licentiate degrees in Catechetics. Forty-two members from different regions of India—North, South, East, and West—participated in the conference. All participants were accommodated on the campus. Paper presentations, discussions, workshops, and a Bhopal Darshan were among the highlights of the conference.

New Appointments & Transfers

The following appointments have been made at Samanvaya: Fr. Naji Kalambukattu is appointed as the Rector of Samanvaya. He is also the Director of Poornodaya and the Parish Priest at Mata Mariam Parish. Fr Jacob Marangatt continues as the Spiritual Director, and Fr Cyril Kuttianikkal is the Director of the Institute. Fr. Sabu Koottungal is appointed as the Director of Christ School, and the administrator of Samanvaya. Fr Sebastian Mavumkal is the Assistant Parish Priest and Fr Jaiino is the animator of the students

and he accompanies the students at Kolchur and Rishikesh. Samanvaya at Kolchur has Fr. Tiju Manakkottil, the Director and at Rishikesh Fr Davis is the Director.

Fr Joshy Pazhukkathara who served as the Rector and Fr Benny Thettayil, the Director were transferred to Dharmaram, Bangalore, and Fr Lawrence Padamadan who was the administrator and the Director of Christ School was transferred to Mary Matha Vice Province Hyderabad. Samanvaya gratefully acknowledge their selfless services and contributions.

CARMEL VIDYABHAVAN, PUNE

Diaconate

On February 15, 2026, Carmel Parish, Pune, became a sanctuary of profound spiritual joy and divine grace as it witnessed the solemn Diaconate Ordination of thirteen brothers from various religious congregations. In a beautifully grace-filled liturgical celebration, His Excellency Mar Jose Kollamparambil CMI, Bishop of Rajkot, conferred the Sacred Order of Diaconate upon eight brothers from the CMI congregation, three from the CST congregation, one from the OFM Capuchins, and one from the IMS. This sacred milestone marks their

definitive step toward the Holy Priesthood, sealing their commitment to selfless service, ministry at the altar, and the proclamation of the Gospel.

The sanctity of the occasion was further enhanced by the esteemed presence of Father Provincials, Provincial delegates, and the fathers of the extended CMI family, whose support brought great joy to the celebration. Alongside the deeply moved family members of the deacons, the community stood in prayerful solidarity to witness this milestone in vocational formation. CVB extends its heartiest congrat-

ulations to the newly ordained deacons and assures them of its continued prayers as they embark on this sacred ministry with fortitude and holy zeal.

New Rector and New Brothers

On May 05, 2026, Carmel Vidya Bhavan, Pune, entered a vibrant new chapter as Rev. Fr. Joy Philip Kakkanattu CMI officially took charge as its Rector, while also assuming his pastoral and administrative responsibilities as the Vicar of Carmel Parish and the Manager of Christ College. Father Joy steps into these multifaceted leadership roles with an exceptionally distinguished portfolio, possessing a myriad of laurels as an acclaimed biblical scholar, polyglot, profound lyricist, musical composer, and the former President of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK). The entire community extends a warm, prayerful welcome to him, trusting that his vast wisdom and creative pastoral vision will guide these institutions to newer heights, and that this new missionary endeavour will shine as yet another brilliant milestone in his lifetime of dedicated service.

Seven new brothers came to CVB

on May 30, 2026, to explore and experience theological studies at Jnana Deepa and the CMI community fraternity in CVB.

Good Memories and Goodbyes

On June 8, 2026, the Carmel Vidya Bhavan community gathered with mixed emotions to bid farewell to its outgoing Rector, Rev. Fr. James Thayil, whose tenure was marked by profound pastoral care and spiritual leadership. Leaving an enduring legacy, Fr. James imparted a powerful parting message that will long serve as a guiding beacon for the community: "Discipline is not what is imposed from outside; it is from within. Self-discipline is the best discipline." This timeless wisdom remains his greatest parting gift to the fraternity.

His charismatic leadership, cheerful demeanour, and warm, pleasant presence have left an indelible mark on the hearts of everyone at CVB. As he transitions to his next administrative and pastoral assignment, the entire community extends its deepest gratitude and prayerful wishes, imploring the Almighty to guide, protect, and abundantly bless him in all his future endeavours.

OBITUARY

- Rev. Fr John Pynadath CMI (83) belonging to Sacred Heart Province, Kochi was called to his eternal reward on November 21, 2025. The Funeral was held on November 22, 2025 at SH Provincial House, Kalamassery.
- Rev. Fr Raphael Perinchery CMI (78) belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur was called to his eternal reward on December 07, 2025. The Funeral was held on December 10, 2025 at St Xavier's Monastery, Pullur.
- Rev. Fr Ludovic Pathickal CMI (91) belonging to St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram was called to his eternal reward on December 23, 2025. The funeral was held on December 24, 2025 at SH Monastery, Chethipuzha.
- Rev. Fr Sebastian Kochupurackal CMI (83), belonging to St Joseph Province, Kottayam was called to eternal reward on January 03, 2026. The funeral was held on January 05, 2026 at St Antony's Church, Poomattam.
- Rev. Fr Davis Kachappilly CMI (83) belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur, was called to his eternal reward on January 06, 2026. The funeral was held on January 08, 2026 at Carmel Bhavan, Chalakkudy.
- Rev. Fr Antony Kelamparambil CMI (84) a member of Yesubhavan, Rajagiri, Kalamassery, belonging to Sacred Heart Province, Kochi was called to his eternal reward on January 14, 2026. The funeral was held on January 15, 2026 at SH Provincial House, Kalamassery.
- Rev. Fr Cyriac Elias Kanichai CMI (88), belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur, was called to his eternal reward on January 17, 2026. The funeral was held on January 19, 2026 at Carmel Bhavan, Chalakkudy.
- Rev. Fr Jose Veppamkotta CMI (50) belonging to St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram, was called to his eternal reward on January 21, 2026. The funeral was held on January 22, 2026 at

CMI Malarnilayam, Pilankalai.

- Rev. Fr John Thonippara CMI (90) belonging to St Thomas Province, Kozhikode is called to his eternal reward on February 13, 2026. The funeral was held on February 14, 2026 at St Thomas Mount, Marikunnu.

- Rev. Fr Jose Stephen Menachery CMI (85), belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur, was called to his eternal reward on february 14, 2026. The funeral was held on February 16, 2026 at St Teresa's Monastery, Kottakkal, Mala.

- Rev. Fr Aloysius Puthiyaparambil CMI (88) belonging to St Joseph Province, Kottayam was called to eternal reward on March 04, 2026. The funeral was held on March 06, 2026 at St Antony's Church, Poomattam.

- Rev. Bro Stephen Kanippilli CMI (88) belonging to Sacred Heart Province, Kochi is called to his eternal reward on April 21, 2026. The funeral was held on April 22, 2026 at SH Provincial House, Kalamassery.

- Rev. Fr Jose Kuriedath CMI (81) belonging to Sacred Heart Province, Kochi was called to his eternal reward on April 24, 2026. The funeral was held on April 25,

2026 at SH Provincial House, Kalamassery.

- Rev. Fr. Geo Mangara CMI (81) belonging to Sacred Heart Province, Kochi is called to his eternal reward on May 05, 2026. The funeral was held on May 08, 2026 at SH Provincial House, Kalamassery.

- Rev. Fr. Joachim Puzhakkara CMI (91) belonging to Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha was called to his eternal reward on May 05, 2026. The funeral was held on May 06, 2026 at Carmel Monastery, Vazhakulam.

- Rev. Fr. Raphael Kanjirathingal CMI (75) belonging to Preshitha Province, Coimbatore was called to his eternal reward on May 19, 2026. The fduneral was held on May 20, 2026 at Bharathamatha Ashram, Palakkad.

- Rev. Fr Winson Antony Parekat CMI (86) belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur, was called to his eternal reward on May 26, 2026. The funeral was held on May 28, 2026 at St. Teresa's Monastary, Kottakkal Mala.

- Rev. Fr Davis Kuttikatt CMI (88) belonging to Preshitha Province, Coimbatore, was called to his eternal reward on May 26, 2026. The funeral was held on May 28,

2026 at St. Teresa's Monastery, Kottakkal Mala.

- Bro. Peter Poothara CMI (93), a member of the Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha, was called to his eternal reward on June 02, 2026. The funeral was held on June 04, 2026 at Carmel Ashram, Vazhakulam.

- Rev. Fr John Parokkaran CMI (79) belonging to Devamatha Province, Thrissur, was called

to his eternal reward on June 12, 2026. The funeral was held on June 14, 2026 at Infant Jesus Monastery.

- Rev. Fr Baby Mangattuthazhath CMI (66), a member of Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur, was called to his eternal reward on June 26, 2026. The funeral was held on June 30, 2026 at Calvary Mount Ashram, Patham Mile.



FR. DR. JOSE KURIEDATH CMI **(1945-2026)**

Birth	: 20/07/1945	Profession	: 16/05/1967
Ordination	: 23/03/1972	Death	: 24/03/2026

Rev. Fr. Dr. Jose Kuriedath CMI, a distinguished member of the Sacred Heart Province, Kochi, was called to his eternal reward on 24 April 2026, leaving behind a rich legacy of wisdom, scholarship, and faithful service.

Born on 20 July 1945 at Koonammavu, as the eldest of nine children to K. P. Joseph and Mariamma, he was blessed with a keen intellect and a deep sense of responsibility from an early age. Responding generously to the Lord's call, he joined the CMI family at the Aspirants' House, Vazhakulam, in 1960. He made his first religious profession on 16 May

1964, his perpetual profession on 16 May 1967, and was ordained a priest on 23 April 1972.

Fr. Kuriedath was widely revered as a man of wisdom, marked by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a deep passion for truth. His academic journey was truly distinguished: he secured first rank in M.A. Philosophy from Delhi University (1975), completed an M.A. in Sociology from Karnatak University (1978), and obtained his Ph.D. in Sociology from Kerala University (1988). His intellectual quest took him beyond India to post-doctoral research at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and to a visiting fellowship at Fordham University, New York. A prolific thinker and writer, he authored eleven books, published over fifty research articles, and translated *Sadhana: A Way to God* into Malayalam, thereby making profound spiritual insights accessible to many.

A true son of Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Fr. Kuriedath beautifully integrated contemplation and action. He dedicated many years to teaching and academic leadership, serving as Lecturer, Head of the Department of Sociology, and later as Principal (1995–1998) of Sacred Heart College, Thevara. His leadership extended across various ministries: Director of Chavara Cultural Centre, Kochi; Pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Toronto; Director of Jeevass Centre, Aluva; Prior of Sacred Heart Monastery; Manager of Sacred Heart College; General Councillor for Education & Communication Media and Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province, Kochi. At the time of his passing, he was serving as Director of the Rajagiri institutions (RSET, RBS, and RCSS), continuing his lifelong mission of forming minds and shaping society.

Fr. Kuriedath possessed a rare gift of reading the signs of the times with a discerning and prophetic vision. As a sociologist, he interpreted contemporary realities with depth and clarity, always rooted in Gospel values. His words carried conviction, his insights inspired many, and his life stood as a bridge between faith and reason. He constantly challenged us to think critically, stand firm in truth, embrace unity in diversity, and remain open to the movements of the Spirit in a changing world. Within the CMI community, he was a valued resource person, especially in articulating our charism, interpreting our Constitutions, and deepening our understanding of our rich legacy.

Beneath his remarkable intellectual achievements was a man of resil-

ience and unwavering faith. He bore prolonged and painful health challenges with courage, including battles with prostate cancer and later intestinal cancer. Even in suffering, his commitment never faltered, echoing the words of St. Paul: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). As we bid farewell to our beloved elder brother, we do so with gratitude and hope. His life continues to inspire us to live our vocation with integrity, depth, and fidelity. Let us commend him to the infinite mercy of God.



REV. FR. GEO MANGARA CMI
(1945-2026)

Birth	: 50/04/1945	Profession	: 16/05/1967
Ordination	: 23/04/1972	Death	: 05/05/2026

Rev. Fr. Geo Mangara CMI of Sacred Heart Province, Kochi, was called to his eternal reward on Tuesday, 5 May 2026, at the age of 81. The CMI family is ever grateful to God for the life of our beloved Fr. Geo, who truly embodied the CMI charism of contemplative service and fraternal love.

Born on 5 April 1945 in Kothanalloor, Kottayam, to Varkey and Annamma, Fr. Geo responded to the Lord’s call with a generous heart. His journey of religious life was marked by these sacred milestones: First Profession: 16 May 1964; Perpetual Profession: 16 May 1967; and Priestly Ordination: 23 April 1972.

A scholar with a deep thirst for wisdom, he specialized in Catechetics at the Lumen Vitae Institute in Brussels and pursued advanced theological studies in Paderborn, Germany. His intellectual contributions in-

clude three soul-stirring books: Eesho Mishiha, Vijaya Veedhiyile Nakshathrangal (Stars on the Path of Success), and Theerthadakante Vazhi.

Fr. Geo served the Church in Germany for 34 years with tireless zeal. For a quarter-century, he was a spiritual guide and teacher for the Franciscan Sisters of Salzkotten. Even while miles away, his heart remained with the Congregation; he was a silent benefactor to countless CMI seminarians, ensuring that the future of our priesthood was nurtured through his financial and spiritual support.

Upon returning to Kerala in 2010, Fr. Geo took the helm of Sevagram in Pothy. His tenure was a "Golden Era" for the institution. By bridging his German connections with his local mission, he transformed Sevagram's infrastructure, adding a new auditorium and hostel. More than a builder of structures, he was a builder of lives. True to James 1:27, he was a father to the fatherless—securing higher education in nursing and pharmacy for his children and joyfully officiating the marriages of the girls under his care. He turned Sevagram into a sanctuary where society's elite and the marginalized met in a spirit of communion.

Even after retiring in 2014, Fr. Geo remained a "guiding light" at Sevagram. Those who knew him will forever remember his profound Marian devotion, his radical simplicity, visionary foresight, and his fraternal warmth that made everyone feel like family.

"Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your master!" (Matthew 25:21). Let us unite as a community to pray for our dear departed brother.

May the Lord of Mercy grant him the crown of righteousness. May his soul rest in peace. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.





REV. FR. JOACHIM PUZHAKKARA CMI
(1935–2026)

Birth	: 50/04/1945	Profession	: 08/12/1958
Ordination	: 17/05/1962	Death	: 05/05/2026

Rev. Fr. Joachim Puzhakkara CMI (91), a devoted member of the Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha, was called to his eternal reward on 5 May 2026. The CMI Congregation gratefully remembers his long and dedicated life of priestly service, marked by simplicity, commitment, and pastoral zeal.

Born on 1 August 1935, Fr. Joachim responded generously to God's call and entered religious life at a young age. He made his First Profession on 8 December 1955, his Perpetual Profession on 8 December 1958, and was ordained a priest on 17 May 1962. From the very beginning, his life was rooted in deep faith and a spirit of total surrender to God's will.

Fr. Joachim pursued his studies with diligence and dedication. After completing his schooling at St. Thomas, Thudanganadu, he underwent his religious formation at St. Antony's, Alwaye, and Ambazhakkad. He completed his philosophical and theological studies at Dharmaram College, Bangalore. His academic journey also included a Diploma in Printing from Maharaja's College, and an M.Th. from the Angelicum, Rome, followed by an M.A. from Fordham University, New York.

Throughout his priestly ministry, Fr. Joachim served in various capacities with commitment and integrity. He began his teaching apostolate at SJPH, Kalamassery. He rendered long years of service as Manager at LFI Press, Thevara, and also served as Vicar Provincial of the Sacred

Heart Province, Kochi. His leadership roles included Prior of the monasteries at Thevara and Vazhakulam, and later, Bursar at Koduvally. He also served as Secretary of the Vazhakulam Farmers' Enterprises (VAFE). VAFE stands as a powerful social witness offered by Rev. Fr. Joachim Puzhakkara toward the socio-economic development of the community.

Fr. Joachim was deeply involved in pastoral ministry, especially in retreat preaching at the Divine Retreat Centre. He later served as Provincial of the Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha, for two terms, guiding the province with wisdom and foresight. His later years of ministry included serving as Director of the Divine Mercy Prayer Centre, Thodupuzha, and as a member of the Nirmalgram Retreat Centre, Chenkara, and MD Monastery, Malayinkeezhu.

A man of prayer and discipline, Fr. Joachim was known for his administrative ability, spiritual depth, high thinking, and firm decisiveness in every matter. He was a broad-minded person who bore hardships with patience and made generous adjustments for the common good, always placing the needs of others before his own. His life reflected the true spirit of a CMI priest—blending contemplation with active service.

The courageous and visionary initiatives undertaken by Fr. Joachim serve as an inspiring model for the Carmel Province and the CMI Congregation. As we bid farewell to our beloved Fr. Joachim, we thank God for the gift of his life and his inspiring witness.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25:21). Let us unite in prayer for his eternal repose.

May the Lord grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace. Rev. Fr. Raphael Kanjirathingal CMI (1950–2026)





**REV. FR. RAPHAEL KANJIRATHINGAL CMI
(1950–2026)**

Birth	: 14/07/1950	Profession	: 16/05/1974
Ordination	: 13/05/1983	Death	: 19/05/2026

Rev. Fr. Raphael Kanjirathingal CMI (75), a beloved member of Preshitha College (Lisieux Bhavan), Saravanampatty, of the Preshitha Province, Coimbatore, was called to his eternal reward on 19 May 2026 at 7:50 am.

Fr. Raphael was born on 14 July 1950 at Padavaradu in the Archdiocese of Thrissur. He entered the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) Congregation and made his First Profession on 16 May 1974, followed by his Perpetual Profession on 16 May 1979. He was ordained a priest on 13 May 1983, beginning a life of dedicated service to God and His people.

Throughout his priestly ministry, Fr. Raphael devoted himself to Religious Formation, Parish Ministry, and Retreat Preaching. He served the Congregation in various roles, including Prior, Superior, Rector of Aspirants, Novitiate Team Member, Vicar, and Chaplain. His missionary zeal led him to serve in the Kenyan mission for three years, where he became deeply loved by the faithful. Even in later years, he found joy in singing Kenyan hymns, a sign of his enduring affection for the mission and its people.

Fr. Raphael was known as a man of prayer, simplicity, and optimism. Despite being bedridden at Preshitharam, Mannuthy, for more than seven years, he remained cheerful and hopeful, never losing his missionary

spirit. His paternal love, compassionate listening, and availability inspired many to live their religious vocation after the example of Christ.

A gifted musician, Fr. Raphael often carried his guitar while preaching retreats or teaching classes. His retreat preaching was marked by joyful singing and praise of God's eternal love, leaving a lasting impression on those he guided. His missionary spirit and pastoral availability were hallmarks of his ministry, making him truly a Shepherd with the smell of the sheep.

Even in illness, Fr. Raphael glorified God with his talents and bore his suffering with patience and faith. His silent endurance reflected the compassionate face of Jesus, offering a profound witness to all who visited him. He never complained, but instead adjusted himself with humility to the treatment he received, embodying the spirit of surrender and trust in God.

The CMI Congregation remembers him with loving gratitude for his missionary spirit, pastoral dedication, and inspiring witness. His life was a testimony of generosity, availability, and unwavering faith. Let us unite in prayer for the repose of his soul, that he may share in the eternal joy of Christ.

May the Lord grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.





REV. FR. DAVIS KUTTIKATT CMI
(1937–2026)

Birth	: 21/11/1937	Profession	: 16/05/1978
Ordination	: 22/04/1979	Death	: 26/05/2026

Rev. Fr. Davis Kuttikatt CMI (88), a beloved member of Carmel Monastery, Erode, under the Preshitha Province, Coimbatore, was called to his eternal reward on 26 May 2026. He leaves behind a great legacy of prophetic religious life and a radiant witness of simplicity, humility, hard work, and silent charity.

Born on 21 November 1937 at Padavaradu in the Archdiocese of Thrissur, Fr. Davis responded generously to God's call later in life. Entering the CMI Congregation with a mature and discerning spirit, he made his First Profession on 16 May 1973, his Perpetual Profession on 16 May 1978, and was ordained a priest on 22 April 1979. From the very beginning of his religious life, he carried within him the dignity of simplicity and the strength born out of humble beginnings. Having experienced the struggles of ordinary labourers in his early life, he remained deeply compassionate toward the poor and grounded in the realities of common people.

Throughout his priestly ministry, Fr. Davis served the Congregation in various roles, especially as Parish Priest, Vocation Promoter, and member of the Novitiate Team. He dedicated much of his life to nurturing vocations, accompanying young men in their discernment journey with patience, fatherly care, and personal sacrifice. He tirelessly visited families and benefactors, often travelling long distances, to support the formation of future priests and religious.

Fr. Davis was also a visionary who beautifully integrated spirituality with care for creation. Long before ecological responsibility became widely discussed, he understood conservation and simplicity as expressions of Gospel living. During his studies at Dharmaram College, he initiated an innovative waste-management programme known as “Taste for Waste,” transforming discarded materials into resources for charitable and social outreach. For him, nothing was to be wasted, because everything was a gift from God entrusted to human stewardship. His life itself became a lesson in eco-spirituality, marked by moderation, gratitude, and responsible living.

A man of profound silence and peace, Fr. Davis avoided conflicts and never allowed disagreements to disturb fraternity. His response to tensions was prayerful silence, humility, and quiet withdrawal. He was never seen idle; whether in the kitchen, garden, chapel, or pastoral ministry, he served joyfully and without complaint. His missionary zeal was extraordinary. He travelled wherever needed to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, hear confessions, and accompany the faithful, often sacrificing his own comfort for the spiritual care of others.

Fr. Davis will also be remembered for his warm smile, approachable nature, and compassionate heart. He silently supported many families and individuals in times of financial hardship, never seeking recognition for his generosity. Even during his final years at Preshitharam, Mannuthy, many grateful families and benefactors continued to visit him with affection and reverence.

As we bid farewell to this gentle and faithful confrere, we thank God for the gift of his inspiring life. May his witness of simplicity, contentment, ecological sensitivity, and tireless dedication continue to inspire our CMI family and all who knew him. We prayerfully commend his soul to the infinite mercy of God, trusting that he now rejoices in the eternal joy of Christ whom he loved and served so faithfully. May the Lord grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.



**REV. FR WINSON ANTONY PAREKKAT CMI
(1939–2026)**

Birth	: 26/12/1939	Profession	: 16/05/1959
Ordination	: 18/12/1972	Death	: 26/05/2026

Rev. Fr. Winson Antony Parekkat CMI (86) belonging to CMI Devamatha Province, was called to his eternal reward on May 26, 2026. Fr. Winson was a true gentleman, widely loved for his profound simplicity, deep humility, and unwavering respect for every individual he encountered. Throughout his earthly journey, his dual ministries of education and pastoral care touched and transformed countless lives.

Fr. Winson was born in Mala on December 26, 1939. Answering the divine call to religious life, he made his first profession in the CMI Congregation in 1959 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1972. As a young priest, he was blessed with the gift of sacred music, and the community deeply cherished his beautifully sung Holy Mass celebrations. "I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live." (Psalm 104:33)

Fr. Winson began his impactful journey in education as a teacher at St. Aloysius High School. His leadership and vision led him to become the founder and first Headmaster of Deepthi High School, Thalore. Many CMIs had the rare blessing of being taught by him. Known for his compassionate love and genuine concern, he won the hearts of generations of students. The bond he formed with them was so enduring that even long after his retirement, former students frequently visited him and eagerly invited him to bless the major milestones of their lives. Later, he served as the Manager of prestigious institutions, including Carmel

School, Chalakudy, and CMI Public School, Chalakudy, dedicating himself to shaping young minds with steadfast support.

Fr. Winson's mission extended far beyond his homeland. He spent many years rendering commendable pastoral service in the United States. Notably, he was the pioneering CMI priest to serve in the Archdiocese of Louisville, blazing a trail where many CMI fathers

continue to serve today. Both in the US and in India, he was deeply appreciated for his gentle, caring, and approachable nature. "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings..."(Isaiah 52:7)

Within the congregation, Fr. Winson served with distinction as the Vicar Provincial of the Thrissur Devamatha Province. He was a leader who chose to uplift others rather than seek the limelight. He possessed a deep, abiding love for his congregation and was a constant pillar of strength, encouraging his fellow brothers to achieve their absolute best. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

After decades of active and vibrant ministry across various fields, he spent his later years at the CMI House in Chalakudy, blessing the community with his grace-filled, prayerful presence. Fr. Winson leaves behind the rich legacy of a nurturing father, an encouraging friend, and a truly paternal heart. Just as he lived his life quietly, the Lord granted him a peaceful departure, calling him home without making him spend a single day confined to a hospital bed.

As we bid farewell to our dear Fr. Winson, let us strive to imbibe his remarkable community spirit, continuing to support, love, and nurture one another just as he did.

May the Lord grant him eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.



REV. BRO. PETER POOTHARA CMI
(1933-2026)

Birth : 11/04/1933 **Profession** : 16/05/1965
Death : 02/06/2026

Our beloved Brother Peter Poothara CMI (93), a member of the CMI Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha, was called to his eternal reward on 02 June 2026. Br. Peter was widely known for his deep religious commitment, beautifully integrating a culture of prayer with a spirit of care.

Br. Peter was born on 11 April 1933 at Vallara Puthen Pally, in the Archdiocese of Kottayam. Responding generously to God's call, he entered the CMI Congregation and completed his Novitiate in 1958. He made his First Profession on 16 May 1959 and his Perpetual Profession on 16 May 1965, faithfully living his religious vocation for 67 years.

Throughout his long religious life, Br. Peter rendered dedicated service across various monasteries and institutions of the Congregation, including Thevara, Koduvely, Vazhakulam, Mysuru, Aluva, Kalamassery, Koonammavu, Niravilpuzha, Kattappana, Neriamangalam, and Kothamangalam. Serving primarily as a Procurator, he carried out his responsibilities with simplicity, diligence, obedience, and unwavering commitment.

Known for his humble and prayerful life, Br. Peter was a silent witness to religious dedication and community service. His simplicity of life, fidelity to religious observance, and readiness to serve wherever assigned remain an inspiration to all who knew him.

As we bid farewell to our beloved brother, especially in the context of

the CMI Bicentenary, let us imbibe his unwavering commitment to religious life. Let us thank the Lord for the great gift of Br. Peter and for the countless blessings received through his life and ministry.

"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master." (Mt 25:21)

May the Lord grant him eternal rest, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace!



REV. FR JOHN PAROKKARAN CMI
(1947-2026)

Birth	: 12/09/1947	Profession	: 22/06/1972
Ordination	: 30/12/1977	Death	: 12/06/2026

Rev. Fr. John Parokkaran CMI (78), a beloved member of Devamatha Provincial House, Patturaikkal, Thrissur, of the Devamatha Province, Thrissur, left for his eternal abode on 12 June 2026. Fr. John was a priest who did not merely preach the Word of God; he lived it. Throughout every season of his 78 years, his soul was anchored in the Scriptures, dedicating his entire life to proclaiming the Gospel and guiding souls through retreats.

Fr. John was born into this world on 12 September 1947 at Thumbur, near Irinjalakuda. Hearing the whisper of the Divine Call, he chose the path of religious life, making his First Profession in the CMI Congregation on 06 June 1968, and his Perpetual Profession on 22 June 1972. He was ordained to the Ministerial Priesthood on 30 December 1977. From that day forward, his life became a living echo of the prophet Jeremiah: "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, Lord God Almighty." (Jeremiah

15:16)

As a young priest, Fr. John blessed the Church with his exceptional musical talents and powerful preaching. His beautifully sung Solemn High Masses are fondly remembered across countless parishes. As a missionary of the Kingdom of God, Fr. John's priestly ministry was defined by an untiring zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel. He truly embodied the commission of St. Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season." (2 Timothy 4:2). His voice resonated far beyond our borders, guiding retreats across almost every state in India and stretching into 36 countries. Bishops, priests, religious sisters, families, and youth all found spiritual renewal through his words.

Within our CMI brotherhood, he served with a shepherd's heart in various capacities: Prior and Superior, Rector of Aspirants & Novitiate Team Member, Vicar and Chaplain. Whether serving in Chiyyaram, Pullyur, Varandarappilly, Thalore, Kottackal, Shornur, Muringoor, or the Devamatha Provincial House in Patturaikkal, he brought the joy of Christ to every community he touched.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9). The final chapter of Fr. John's life was perhaps his most profound sermon. Though bedridden at Santhvanam, Amala, for nearly three years, his missionary spirit was never crippled. He remained a beacon of cheerfulness, optimism, and fraternal love. He did not complain; instead, he embraced his illness with a spirit of quiet surrender and radical trust in God. Through his patient endurance, compassionate listening, and welcoming smile, our brother Fr. John reflected the suffering and compassionate face of Jesus to everyone who visited his bedside.

The CMI Congregation bows its head in gratitude to God for the gift of Fr. John Parokkaran—our brother and a true servant of the Word. May our Blessed Mother of Carmel intercede for him, and may he hear the words of the Master he so faithfully proclaimed: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21) May his soul rest in eternal peace



REV. FR. BABY MANGATTUTHAZHATH CMI (1960–2026)

Birth	: 01/09/1960	Profession	: 01/01/1987
Ordination	: 24/11/1988	Death	: 26/06/2026

Rev. Fr. Baby Mangattuthazhath CMI (66), a beloved member of Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur, entered into his eternal reward on 26 June 2026. After courageously bearing a prolonged kidney-related illness with deep faith and serenity, he suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while being taken to the hospital from Nirmal Ashram, Thellakom, Kerala. His earthly pilgrimage came to a peaceful completion after nearly four decades of dedicated missionary priesthood.

Born on 1 September 1960, Fr. Baby joined the Jagdalpur Mission in 1976, inspired by a deep missionary calling. He made his First Profession in 1982, Perpetual Profession in 1987, and was ordained a priest in 1988. From the beginning until the end of his life, he remained a joyful and committed missionary, wholeheartedly serving the Church and the people of the Bastar Mission.

Fr. Baby generously accepted every responsibility entrusted to him—as missionary, pastor, educator, social worker, and administrator. His pioneering work in Bhanupratappur, his contribution to English-medium education at Dantewada, his service as Regional Secretary of CEVA, and his pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Salina, Kansas (USA), reflected his readiness to serve wherever the Lord called him.

A particularly beautiful witness of his priesthood was his loving care for Bishop Mar Paulinus Jeerakath CMI during the Bishop's prolonged

illness. With patience, humility, and filial affection, Fr. Baby remained by his side, offering compassionate care and quiet companionship until the end. His selfless service became a source of great consolation to the Bishop in his final days and revealed the compassionate heart that characterized his entire priestly life.

Fr. Baby will be remembered as a simple, prayerful, and compassionate priest. His love for the Eucharist, missionary zeal, humility, punctuality, and gentle leadership inspired everyone who knew him. He had a special concern for the poor, the tribal communities, struggling families, and deserving students. His kindness extended to everyone around him, reflecting a heart that saw Christ in every person.

Gifted as a preacher, singer, writer, and poet, Fr. Baby never sought recognition. Even during the difficult years of illness and regular dialysis, he continued to serve with courage, serenity, and complete trust in God's providence. His patient endurance became a living testimony to the hope and strength found in Christ.

As we thank God for the precious gift of Fr. Baby's life and missionary witness, let us pray that the Lord whom he loved and served so faithfully may welcome him into the fullness of eternal joy. "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace."





MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS

An Appraisal

Fr. Benny Thettayil

In their shepherding ministry, down through the centuries, the Popes have consistently managed, amidst global chaos, to identify major shifts that affected the world. In 1963, John XXIII, in the midst of the Cold War, published *Pacem in Terris*, which condemned not only the use but also the possession of nuclear weapons. In 1991, John Paul II published *Centesimus annus*, marking the eclipse of communism in Europe. In 2015, Pope Francis published *Laudato si*, warning of global warming and the need to protect the earth for humanity. *Magnifica Humanitas* an encyclical letter from Pope Leo XIV “on

the protection of the human person in the age of artificial intelligence” fits perfectly within this tradition. The encyclical is about how we preserve the glory of the human person in the age of artificial intelligence. Pope Leo explores how the principles of dignity, common good, solidarity and subsidiarity can apply to the challenges that we face in this age of rapid technological development and reminds us of our dignity as human persons made in the image and likeness of God.

Since AI is the cutting-edge technology that is the in thing today, it is presented as one of the key challenges of our times, but the

encyclical is not all about technology. Rather it is about how we respond to the challenges that this technology brings to our world and how we live our lives, in the light of our faith. The Pope notes: "Technology has the power to heal, connect, educate and protect our common home; but it can also divide, exclude and generate new forms of injustice." (MH 9). It is a warning against inequality, exclusion and automated weapons used in war.

This writeup is meant neither to be a substitute reading nor is it a précis writing on the Encyclical. The critical reading of the document is meant to pique the reader's interest in the Encyclical. It situates the document in the contemporary social and ecclesial context, it takes a look at the salient points made by the documents chipping in illustrations from our world and finally, it makes an assessment of the document.

Setting the Context

Plato, the ancient Greek Philosopher and Samuel Johnson, the modern literary critic would note that literature is the mirror of the society. They mean that books, poems, and plays reflect the culture, values, flaws, and prevailing conditions of the era in which

they were written. Literature captures human actions, thoughts, and struggles, allowing a civilization to see its own reflection and understand its own strengths and weaknesses. The following films, which are literature in visual form maps the progress of technology in relationship to human beings.

A.I. Artificial Intelligence is a 2001 film by Steven Spielberg. It tells the story of David, a childlike android programmed with the ability to love. He is adopted by a grieving couple whose son is terminally ill. When the human son miraculously recovers and returns home, David is abandoned in the woods. Desperate to become a "real boy" so his mother will love him back, David embarks on a long journey. Thousands of years later, humanity has been wiped out, and a highly evolved, advanced species of machines discovers David. They revive him and, using a strand of his mother's DNA from his memory, the advanced mechas recreate her for just one day. David gets to spend the happiest, most loving day of his existence with his "mommy", and once the day ends, he quietly goes to sleep forever. The film challenges the biological boundary of what qualifies as a "person." Even though David is made of synthetic materials and

code, he demonstrates a capacity for grief, loyalty, and existential yearning that surpasses that of many humans in the film. This forces audiences to ask how humans emotionally interact with AI and whether consciousness deserves moral protection regardless of its physical origin.

Alita: Battle Angel (2019) by Robert Rodriguez follows the story of a young female cyborg whose head is discovered in a scrapyard by Dr Ido, who attaches it to a new body, naming her Alita. Alita possesses a fully organic human brain attached to an advanced, manufactured cybernetic body. Awakening with total amnesia, Alita falls in love with a street-smart boy named Hugo, and discovers she possesses extraordinary combat skills. The movie explores the philosophy of transhumanism, the blurring boundaries of human consciousness, and the socioeconomic control of cybernetic technology. Despite her synthetic construction, Alita experiences complex human emotions, moral agency, and love. This challenges the idea that consciousness requires an organic biological vessel and raises the question: If every physical part of a person is replaced by machines, do they retain their humanity?

Ich bin dein Mensch is a 2021 film by Maria Schrader. It follows Alma, a sceptical archaeologist who reluctantly agrees to a unique ethics trial: to live with Tom, an advanced, AI-powered humanoid robot designed to match her preferences, desires, and deepest needs. Tom is charming and constantly updates his algorithm based on Alma's reactions. Despite her resistance, over time, she develops complex, genuine feelings for Tom, even though she is aware that he is an artificial creation. Tom's adaptable personality is built by aggregating brain scans, psychological profiles, and personal preferences with data drawn from 17 million other people. It highlights the ethical dilemma of how much of a person's inner psyche should be harvested, quantified, and owned by a corporation to build an artificial companion. The film critiques a near-future where humans use technology to bypass the friction, messiness, and vulnerability of real human interaction, making people increasingly "allergic" to one another.

These three films tell the story of how AI machines develop emotions and are able to meet the emotional needs of human beings. Biologically, David does not

age in the traditional sense; he is a robotic boy designed to be 11 years old. Psychologically, his artificial mind matures in emotional depth over the film, while fundamentally retaining the obsessive, dependent attachment of a young child. Biologically and psychologically, Alita has the age and mind-set of an early teenager, typically estimated to be around 14 years old and has humanlike emotions as she develops a self-sacrificing platonic love for a human. Tom is a hyper-realistic AI creation that took unprecedented, deeply intimate surveillance and data collection from a vast data pool that he was able to meet every emotional need of a lady in her early 40s. They question whether programming a machine to love gives it an equivalent soul, and how humanity treats sentient beings built solely to serve them. It raises the question of whether love can be considered “real” or ethical if a participant cannot choose otherwise.

Throughout these narratives, the AI undergoes an existential and emotional awakening. The overarching legal debate in these movies is when we treat AI as an equal partner capable of genuine empathy, do we risk diluting the authenticity and complexity of gen-

uine human emotion. They blur the line between a programmed response and a real human. They raise profound questions about artificial intimacy, data privacy, the definition of emotional authenticity, and what it means to be human. The central premise forces the viewer to consider whether a relationship can be genuine if one party is merely programmed to fulfil the other’s needs.

AI Presence in the World

Now that AI has made its presence felt in the nurseries, in the classrooms, in the offices, in counselling session, in our prayers, in the media and of late, in war, Pope Leo XIV has made a monumental ethical intervention through Magnifica Humanitas. It is not meant to be a religious rulebook, but a sweeping philosophical critique of the digital age. It encourages the readers to use AI thoughtfully ensuring that the algorithms are constantly monitored so that the automation that is given to the machine might serve humanity and not enslave it.

AI did not appear overnight; nor did the Pope make an impulsive response to the phenomenon in Magnifica Humanitas. Since Alan Turing made the Turing Test, which is a foundational benchmark in

artificial intelligence, invented by the mathematician in 1950. It evaluates a machine's ability to exhibit human-like conversational intelligence. A machine passes if a human judge, conversing with both a human and the machine, cannot reliably tell them apart. IBM's supercomputer Deep Blue made history in 1997, by becoming the first machine to defeat the reigning world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, in a regulation tournament match. The landmark six-game match in New York concluded with the computer winning in the final game. At the Vatican, even as Pope Leo XIV officially promulgated Magnifica Humanitas on 25 May 2026 addressing the profound ethical and social impacts of artificial intelligence, Anthropic co-founder Christopher Olah discussed the unpredictable, mysterious nature of artificial intelligence. He described AI models as "grown" rather than strictly engineered, revealing that researchers increasingly find internal structures mirroring human neuroscience and evidence of machine introspection. AI has been around for the last 75 years.

Ecclesial Engagement with AI

Before the promulgation of Magnifica Humanitas, in recent years, the Church had addressed AI in

several official statements. Published by the Dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith and for Culture and Education in January 2025, Antiqua et Nova examined the risks of AI in education and labour, emphasizing that AI algorithms process information but lack the capacity for human wisdom, reasoning, and discernment. Pope Francis dedicated the 57th World Day of Peace Message and the 58th World Day of Social Communications Message - two of the Vatican's annual flagship global messages in January 2024, exclusively to the ethics and regulation of artificial intelligence urging the development of AI to serve rather than replace human dignity. Similarly, in 2020, backed by the Pontifical Academy for Life, this declaration outlined a framework for algorithmic ethics based on transparency, inclusion, accountability, impartiality, reliability, and security.

It is assessing the trajectory of AI for the last three quarters of a century and in line with his predecessors thought that the Pope has penned Magnifica Humanitas. Additionally, it was in the 135th anniversary of Rerum Novarum, by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, the Church's response to the immense societal shifts of the In-

dustrial Revolution that Pope Leo XIV makes a similar statement on algorithmic era. Hence, Olah, reflected on a “real possibility” that AI will displace human labour on a massive scale, emphasizing that supporting displaced workers is a historical moral imperative.

The Contrasting Worlds

The core theme that the Pope addresses in Magnifica Humanitas revolves around the fundamental anthropological question whether technology will serve humanity or will it enslave humankind. The real conflict that is at the heart of the document is between the technocratic mindset which views humans as resources to be constantly optimised with algorithmic productivity and the humanistic mindset that safeguards the inherent value and irreducible dignity of human beings.

These two opposing mindsets are addressed by Magnifica Humanitas with a twin metaphor of Babel and Jerusalem. Humanity today is facing a critical turning point. This twin metaphor of the Tower of Babel or Nehemiah's walls of Jerusalem serves as the fundamental framework for examining modern technology including AI, urging society to choose solidarity and human dignity over hubris

and algorithmic control. the two constructions point to the contrast between the two radically different ways of understanding progress, community, and the human person. The Babel Syndrome represents a technocratic dehumanizing worldview. In the age of AI, this translates to the temptation to optimize, control, and quantify everything for efficiency and profit without a reference to God. In Babel's logic, people are reduced to mere data points, productivity metrics, or performance tools undertaken by a few. It ultimately results in a society where efficiency displaces compassion, and algorithms replace human relationship. In contrast to a single, monolithic tower, Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was a patient, shared, and communal effort. Every family took responsibility for their own section of the wall. Jerusalem represents a society where technology is not rejected but actively designed and governed by the community to serve the common good.

The Leading Statements

The six salient points made by Magnifica Humanitas surround the disarming of AI, Truthful communication, dignity of work and security threat, algorithmic bias

and moral responsibility.

Disarming of AI

In MH §110–118, Pope Leo compares the dangers of AI to nuclear weapons and calls for artificial intelligence to be “disarmed” to prevent it from becoming an instrument of domination. This does not mean rejecting technology but rather stopping algorithms and tech monopolies from dominating humanity. AI must be freed from “armed” competition, which is driven by a desire for geopolitical or commercial dominance rather than the common good. He warns against autonomous weapon systems and AI-driven arms races, stating that delegating life-and-death decisions to algorithms strips away human moral responsibility. Furthermore, artificial intelligence should not make critical decisions regarding human coexistence, especially in warfare, where traditional “just war” narratives are frequently used to justify violence.

This has to be read in the light of the Trump administration’s fall-out with AI company Anthropic transpired when the company refused to remove guardrails that restricted the military from using its AI for autonomous weapons and mass surveillance. The US

Defence demanded unrestricted access to Anthropic’s technology for lethal autonomous weapons, which Anthropic refused to grant due to its ethical safety limits. The falling out peaked in February 2026 when the administration officially designated Anthropic as a “supply-chain risk” to national security - an unprecedented label usually reserved for adversarial foreign firms. President Trump subsequently ordered all federal agencies, like the Treasury, to immediately cease using Anthropic technology and phase out its services, publicly criticizing the company as a “radical left, woke” firm. These decisions of the Trump administration go against the Papal stipulation that technical and corporate entities should not be the sole decision-makers on how AI is used.

Truth and Communication

Chapter 4 §131-148 calls for an “ecology of communication” based on objective truth to prevent technology from destroying human community. The Pope warns that indifference to truth and lack of transparent communication will inevitably lead the society to a descent into totalitarianism. Truth is a common good, not the property of the powerful. It emphasizes that the search for

truth is essential for democracy. AI tools imitate language and simulate empathy without moral conscience. Hence, AI must be protected from manipulation and disinformation. The document warns that deepfakes, synthetic propaganda, and opaque algorithms can easily manipulate public opinion and destroy democratic trust. Societies need to strengthen serious journalism founded on verification and argumentation, giving voice to victims to raise awareness of the realities of war and violence, enabling families, schools, and individuals to use digital tools critically and to cultivate authentic, in-person relationships over passive media consumption. Truth presented in any platform must rely on human verification rather than centralized control.

A recent example of AI manipulation that violated truth in communication is the “Biden” Robocall Scandal in 2024. In January, tens of thousands of voters in New Hampshire received a robocall featuring an AI-generated voice clone of President Joe Biden. The synthetic audio instructed Democrats to “save your vote” and skip the primary, directly interfering with democratic participation. The highly realistic clone was

designed to suppress voter turnout. This incident intentionally obscured the truth by using AI, weaponizing synthetic audio to masquerade as a trusted public figure, misleading voters about an official process. The plot, which utilized AI cloning platforms like ElevenLabs, resulted in massive fines and criminal charges for the perpetrators and the telecom company involved. Truth is not the private property of those who hold power and influence, but a shared fundamental element of democracy.

Dignity of Work

Magnifica Humanitas §148-155 teaches that work is a requirement of the human condition and serves as a natural path toward personal growth, development, and fulfilment. It is not merely an economic instrument, but a vital expression of human dignity. The Pope cautions that algorithms and automation should not force humans to adapt to the speed of machines, but rather that technology must be designed to support the worker. He strongly warns against treating human value as a measure of a person’s output, efficiency or profit. This section discusses the value of labour, the problem of unemployment, and the importance of just wages. He

further expresses hope for a renewal of labour organizations to protect workers' rights and ensure meaningful participation in society.

Globally, AI and automation contributed directly to tens of thousands of job cuts in 2025. According to employment trackers like Challenger, roughly 55,000 layoffs in the US alone were directly attributed to AI. A reshaping of jobs took place when automation restructured labour across various industries. Last year, over 77,000 tech jobs were directly affected by AI-driven workforce reductions. Major corporations cited AI as the reason for restructuring. For instance, Amazon eliminated 14,000 corporate roles, and Salesforce cut 4,000 customer support positions due to automation. Investment banks and financial institutions predict thousands of jobs at risk globally. However, other studies indicate that rather than termination of workers, companies are using AI for task elimination or reassignment to reshape workflows. In the Indian context, IT and professional service hubs in Bangalore and across India saw subtle workforce adjustments. Several major companies cut hundreds of mid- and senior-level roles, shift-

ing strategies toward AI redeployment rather than outright job destruction and termination. MH cautions against the repetition of the experience of the skilled labourers who lost their jobs to the machines during Industrial Revolution, as AI powered automated machines begin to replace the labour force.

Security Threat

Unchecked artificial intelligence poses severe threats to democracy and global peace. MH addresses security threats across multiple sections, particularly focusing on how artificial intelligence and advanced digital technologies are reshaping warfare and public safety. MH Chapter 4 addresses personal risks of dehumanization, online grooming, deepfakes, and automated blackmail, warning that AI tools lower barriers to malicious cyber exploitation and threaten personal safety. The document specifically highlights the dangers of mass surveillance, and erosion of truth through algorithmic manipulation and misinformation. A "culture of power" where critical technology is monopolized by a few unaccountable tech giants evading public oversight can drive dire dependencies and gross inequalities in the society. Economic security is threat-

ened when mass job displacement happens, calling for the protection of workers, their families, and local communities. In the families, early, unsupervised exposure to digital devices and social media impairs attention spans, sleep, and emotional control, leaving children vulnerable to addiction and manipulation. Above all as AI lacks moral conscience, bodily experience, and genuine emotions, simulating care or empathy by AI machines ultimately threatens genuine emotional bonds, leading to pseudo-relationships and the loss of personal creativity.

Children often rely on AI chatbots for personal advice or emotional support and young people use these systems to navigate real-life conflicts instead of talking to humans creating severe security threats. Children frequently share sensitive details with conversational AI companion, assuming it is a private human person. Similarly, as AI lacks emotional intelligence, it sometimes provides harmful or false advice for managing real-world harassment, bullying, or stalking. Predators utilize generative AI to create deepfake images or synthetic voices, which they use to coerce, blackmail, or scam unsuspecting children, youth and even adults into send-

ing compromising photos or money. One cannot be too careful in this regard. Even the people who are at the echelons of power in the society can come under the AI scanner. The release of the Jeffrey Epstein case files that took place in January 2026 triggered a wave of viral disinformation. Bad actors used AI tools to generate highly realistic, fake photographs and videos that falsely connected high-profile figures to the Epstein network.

Algorithmic Bias

Technological tools are directly related to human agency and intention. Pope Leo XIV asserts that technology is biased, stating: “In practice... technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate, and use it” (MH 8). Technological innovations and AI are not inherently evil and can be used for the common good, they embody specific values and hierarchies. However, because algorithms and digital tools reflect the economic and political priorities of their creators, they can either promote justice and fraternal coexistence or exacerbate inequality, exclusion, and control. While technology is a “profoundly human reality” and has improved human life, it car-

ries a deep moral ambiguity when it is not actively oriented toward the good (MH 4). Although technology is not inherently evil, its underlying architectures can easily divide or exclude depending on who governs them (MH 9). Hence, the document calls on humanity to actively shape a vision for technology centred on human dignity rather than machine efficiency, using the biblical metaphor of choosing to “rebuild Jerusalem” over constructing a modern “Tower of Babel” (MH 16, 117).

Amazon abandoned an experimental AI recruiting algorithm in 2018 after it was discovered to be systematically biased against women. The system had penalized female applicants by downgrading resumes containing the word “women” and favouring candidates who used male-coded verbs. The algorithm was trained by observing resumes submitted to Amazon over a 10-year period. Because the tech industry is historically male dominated, most of these successful historical hires were men. Even when developers manually edited the program to make these specific terms neutral, the system simply devised other, more obscure ways to filter out women, leading executives to lose all confidence in its fairness. The

failure of the algorithm offers a case study in how machine learning can inadvertently institutionalize real-world prejudices.

Moral Responsibility of the Machines

Pope Leo XIV asserts that AI machines do not possess moral responsibility. Because algorithms lack interiority, empathy, and moral conscience, they can never be held accountable, making the idea of an inherently “moral machine” an illusion (§102). Machines cannot discern right from wrong. Therefore, moral responsibility cannot be outsourced to algorithms. The document warns against the “compliance trap”, the idea that it is sufficient to program algorithms to “align” with human values. We must apply shared standards of human social justice rather than blindly trusting the morality of machine outputs. The Pope argues that every technical artifact carries choices and priorities based on what it measures, ignores, and optimizes. Because machines are built by human actors, the responsibility for their ethical framework rests firmly with the humans who design, fund, and deploy them.

Applied to AI powered automated robotaxis, the Trolley Problem

is a famous ethical thought experiment asking how a self-driving car should be programmed to react in an unavoidable accident. For example, if a robotaxi's brakes fail, must the AI sacrifice its passenger to save multiple pedestrians, or save the passenger at the cost of the pedestrians? In a utilitarian approach, the AI chooses the path that minimizes overall harm swerving a robotaxi into a single pedestrian to avoid hitting a group, the car is programmed to sacrifice the one to save the many. In a passenger protection approach, the AI prioritizes the life of the person who paid for the ride, operating under the assumption that consumers will refuse to use robotaxis if the car is legally allowed to decide to "kill" the passengers. In all cases of AI driven machines, the moral agency cannot be left to the machine, rather, it must remain in the hands of morally grounded human beings.

Magnifica Humanitas and the Three Gaps

One needs to be aware of the fact that it would be too presumptuous on the part of one to evaluate the monumental work that Magnifica Humanitas is, especially on a current and relevant topic like the impact of AI in the modern world. However, a few thoughts

on the temporal, ecclesial and hermeneutical gaps that one might find in the document would be in place.

Temporal Gap

There is a huge gap between the release of Magnifica Humanitas and the already-entrenched reality of mass artificial intelligence. There are observable indicators in the society where the tech industry has already outpaced ethical guidance. Many AI companies are irreversibly locked in the production and distribution of AI products. Major tech conglomerates integrated AI into their global ecosystems many years prior, centralizing unprecedented power before the Vatican released its structural ethical blueprint in Magnifica Humanitas. Algorithms, autonomous weapons, and AI-driven military tech were heavily deployed in wars long before the encyclical asked whether or not they were acceptable. Chatbots, digital companions, and transhumanist systems are normalized and are already shaping public consciousness, before the encyclical's warnings about treating humans as optimizable resource.

The situation is almost comparable to the promulgation of Hu-

manae Vitae. Humanae Vitae by Pope Paul VI in 1968 did not bring down the global use of contraceptives. Instead, it met with widespread dissent from Catholic theologians, physicians, and the lay faithful, and global contraceptive usage continued to rise significantly in the decades following its release. Most of the Catholics in countries like the United States and across Europe ultimately chose to use contraceptives. The modern era of mass-produced contraceptives began in the mid-1800s with the invention of vulcanized rubber, which allowed for the commercial manufacturing of contraceptives. A massive leap in contraceptive technology arrived in 1960, when the first oral contraceptive pill and plastic Intra-uterine Devices were approved. Any ban on a material is less effective if it is made when it is in wide use. AI has been around for at least 75 years and the young generation has been raised with it. Hence, the concern regarding the effect of Magnifica Humanitas is possibly comparable to Humanae Vitae.

Ecclesial Gap

Rerum Novarum of 1891, issued by Pope Leo XIII, addressed the global impact of the Industrial Revolution. It defended the

dignity of labourers, just wages, and workers' rights against unchecked capitalism. It affected the entire working class directly by establishing foundational principles for modern labour and social welfare. Whereas Magnifica Humanitas addresses the impact of Artificial Intelligence establishing an ethical framework to ensure algorithms and tech giants serve human dignity rather than enslave it.

The ecclesial gap refers to the reachability of the document to the Catholic population. During the industrial revolution, the loss of jobs and the sustenance of the common man in the pew were threatened and would have an immediate impact on his family. Whereas, although far reaching in its effects, Magnifica Humanitas would directly impact the common man on a much lower scale.

Hermeneutical Gap

The hermeneutic gap pertains to the semantic dissonance between what the Church understands AI to be and what the scientists from the labs say what it is. Paragraph 99 explicitly states that AI systems “merely imitate certain functions of human intelligence”. The Pope goes on to clarify that machines “do not undergo expe-

riences, do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature” and that their power remains entirely tied to data processing. However, Christopher Olah, the co-founder of Anthropic, who was an official speaker invited to be present at the official presentation of the encyclical, in his address, had something different to say.

“We understand an airplane because we designed every part of it and we understand the physics that act on it. AI models are not like that. They are grown on a structure roughly modelled after the brain, on an enormous inheritance of human thought and speech... They are not the cold, calculating robots we were promised. They are made from us, from our words... they remain in important ways mysterious even to those of us who train them. I am a scientist. I lead a research team that studies the internal structure of these models – what is actually happening inside them. And I will be honest: we keep finding things that are mysterious, even unsettling. We find structures that mirror results from human neuroscience. We find evidence of introspection. We find internal

states that functionally mirror joy, satisfaction, fear, grief, and unease. I don’t know what that means, but I think it warrants ongoing discernment.” The state of affairs within AI is far more unpredictable than the Magnifica Humanitas seems to admit.

Conclusion

AI is the best of the scientific advancements yet. It has the capacity to make human beings think and create on another level. Pope Leo has recognized this potential of AI and hence, unlike nuclear weapons that were condemned by the Church in 1963, he does not reject this technological innovation, rather, he simply wishes to warn the world against the misuse of digital technology, which he describes as a “space of predation”.

The document recognises AI as revolutionary precisely because it treats AI not merely as a technical tool, but as a crucial shift in human anthropology. At the same time, with a sweeping critique, the Pope has established a firm moral baseline to ensure that humanity dictates the future of algorithms rather than being subjugated by them. ●



Members of XXXIX General Synaxis at Chavara Hills, Kakkanad



CMI YEAR OF MEDIA 2026–2027

Symbolism & Theology

Christ-centered, Spirit-led, and Mission-driven Communication for the world

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- Cross at the Center** – Signifies Christ as the core of all communication; every media effort must proclaim Him.
- Radiating Signals** – Symbolize modern media and digital communication, spreading the Gospel to all corners of the world with missionary zeal.
- Human Figure** – Represents the CMI missionary and every believer, actively participating in God's mission through communication.
- Open Book** – Stands for the Word of God and formation, the foundation of all authentic media ministry.
- Flame-like Pages** – Indicate the Holy Spirit, inspiring, enlightening, and transforming communication into a life-giving mission.
- Green saplings** – Symbolizes growth, hope, and the fruitfulness of evangelization through media.

Motto: “Media pro Missio Dei” – Affirms that media serves God's mission, reminding that mission belongs to God and we are its instruments.

- Year 2026–2027** – A kairos (grace-filled time) to creatively engage media for evangelization in today's world.

Designed by Fr. Anto Chakiath CMI