

# CMission

magazine January - April

# 22

Encounter, Experience, Evangelize

**Go into all the  
world and  
proclaim  
the good news  
to the whole Creation.**

Mk 16: 15

Reaching out Peripheries





LUXURY AND  
MISERLINESS ARE  
THE TWO SIDES OF  
THE SAME COIN.  
BOTH CAN LEAD  
YOU TO EVIL DE-  
SIGNS. YOUR MONEY  
SHOULD BE UTILIZED  
FOR COMMON GOOD.  
OTHERWISE YOU WILL  
BE DOING UNETHICAL  
THINGS.

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871)  
Founder of CMI-CMC Congregations





### Pope Francis, LAUDATO SI

We have forgotten that  
we ourselves are dust  
of the earth, our very  
bodies are made  
up of her elements,  
we breathe her  
air and we re-  
ceive life and  
refreshment  
from her  
waters.



# CMission '22

FEATURING CMI MISSIONS

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Mission of God is ever moving, transforming and converting the hearts of many. It is an opportune time to think about our mission dynamically and creatively for the kingdom of God and His works. CMission is a publication from the Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry engaging in transmitting the views and the visions on CMI missions around the globe.

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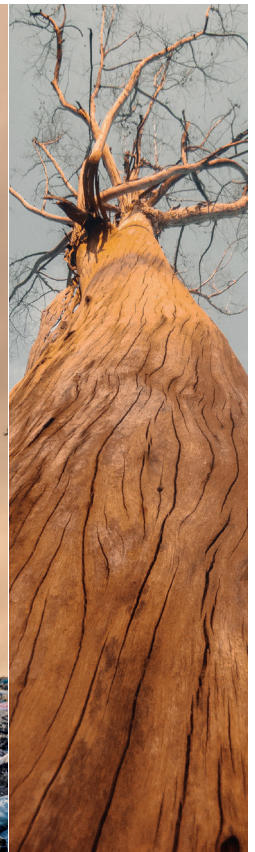
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Land  
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COVER STORY





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### A MISSION HOME







**Josey Thamarassery CMI**  
**Vicar General, Chief Editor**

The current issue of CMIssion reaches to you with interesting and captivating experiences of the missionaries and relevant themes from the mission regions, immediately after the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord. The experience of the Risen Lord was the igniting force for the disciples of Jesus for reaching out across the globe. In his last words to the apostles, Jesus entrusted them with a mission: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20).

Christ’s instruction to the apostles was a great call to go ad gentes—that is, “to the nations,” and to proclaim the Gospel. Christ is the first of all the missionaries since he himself was sent to live among us by the Father. The Father sent him into the world as an outpouring of love. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). Pope John Paul II described this in Redemptoris Missio: “the ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son” (no. 23).

A personal encounter with Christ, especially in the sacraments, compels us to a greater participation in mission: what we have been so wonderfully given, we pass on to those who stand in need of Jesus and his Gospel. CMIssion narrates various experiences and incidents of such a missionary journey undertaken by different people at different times and at different places. The different sections of CMIssion presents these experiences to the readers.

In *ENCOUNTER* we come across with the themes of loving and preserving mother earth—our common home, a theme which is very much appropriate and con-

temporary today. There is an intrinsic and inseparable relationship existing between the human beings and our environment. Therefore, the articles in this section deal with themes on the need to protecting our mother earth and the environment, to see that there is a need to rise above one’s own self-interest and to consider it valuable in order to solve all the environmental issues.

In *EXPERIENCE* we encounter various experiences and stories of the missionaries of present and past. This issue dedicates mostly to the mission of Jagdalpur which is celebrating its Golden Jubilee of the missionary presence. This mission, started by the CMI missionaries with Msgr. Paulinus as their leader bishop, has penetrated deep into the tribal land of Bastar. Besides, we can also read in this section the success stories of the Church of Arunachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

In *EVANGELIZE* we are introduced to a tribal village called Mardum in the diocese of Jagdalpur where we find the people celebrating their faith. As mission collaborations the Disciple Sisters of Don Bosco are introduced to the readers, who dedicate their lives for the family apostolate and village mission living a very simple and hard life in accordance with the Gospel values. We also come across some with some of the best practices of protecting the nature and the frontier ministries.

CMIssion presents real inspirational life experiences of missionaries and people who live a life of the joy of the Gospel in order to motivate and inspire the readers to be mission-oriented and to commit our lives for the mission as each of us by the very virtue of our baptism is called to be missionaries.





Thomas Chathamparampil CMI  
Prior General

As the CMI Congregation is at the threshold of the third century, we ought to reflect on the need to have a renewal of our commitment of missionary call. It basically means the renewal of our faith that God so loved the world that he sent his Son to be the saviour of all. This Son, went about doing good and healing all who were in the power of evil (Acts 10:38). Filled with the Spirit, he preached the Good News of the Kingdom of God, and commanded his disciples to do the same. The Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, and ever-present and active in the Church, in the world and in the human heart, leads all to their unity and fulfilment.

From this perspective, mission, being a continuation in the Spirit of the mission of Christ, involves a being with the people, as was Jesus: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). Therefore, mission includes: being with the people, responding to their needs, with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God's Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing and word.

Why the mission, is a question we often ask. We get involved in the mission primarily and most importantly from a deep sense of gratitude to God, the father "who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing" (Eph 1:3), and sent the Spirit into our hearts so that we may share in God's own life. Mission is above all else an overflow of this life from grateful hearts transformed by grace of God.

That is Why it is so important for us Christian to have a deep faith-experience of the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39), that love which has been poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom 5:5). Without a personal experience of this love received as gift and mercy, no sense of mission can flourish.

But mission is also a mandate. We do take up the mission as we are sent into the whole world to make disciples of all nations. Unfortunately for many Catholics and even for consecrated people, faith is only something to be received and celebrated. They do not feel it is something to be shared. All must be helped to realize that God has called us to be Christians not only so that we may be saved but that we may collaborate in the work of the world's salvation, and invite those whom God draws to the Church to share in our faith.

The Church exists in order to evangelize (Evangelization in the Modern world, 14), and each member, by virtue of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation has received the right and duty to the apostolate from the Lord himself (Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 33).

Therefore, let us rededicate ourselves to the mission for which we are called by the Lord. He needs us to carry forward His mission in this world.



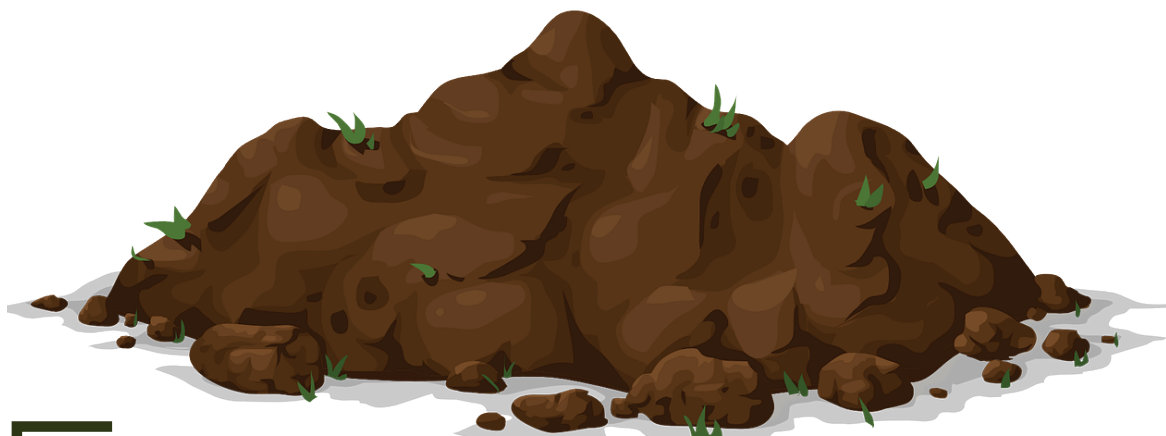
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A sense of the universe, a sense of the all, the nostalgia which seizes us when confronted by nature, beauty, music - these seem to be an expectation and awareness of a Great Presence.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin  
Catholic Philosopher

Let's face God in context and text



# Encounter







# LAND ETHIC



A PERENNIAL PANACEA TO THE PREDICAMENT OF THE NATURE

Jaision E S CST, Calicut



There emerges a worldwide scramble to explore an end to the COVID-19 pandemic today. The havoc wrought by the imperceptible virus have been felt drastically in every domain of our life and even our social movements and associations are at stake. We have become more aware of human vulnerability as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which turned to be a provenance of human miseries. Besides, it has put an end to one crore individuals in the last two years. Perhaps, we should now be more conscious of the ecological mayhems inflicted by us. Nature has been revivifying itself in its entirety over the past two years. Studies betoken that the erosion of the ozone layer has been decreased as vehicle use has decreased during this covid period. People maintained a distance from others in order to protect themselves, and this ultimately allowed nature to regain its freshness and pristine state. What really instigated this situation? Who is responsible to an extent for the current mayhem? Is there any panacea to retreat to the pristine state?



**People are inseparable from the inorganic or organic nature that encapsulates them, rather than being fixated on organisms like biocentrism. We should redefine the anthropocentric ethical rules for a better world.**

The serious discussion of these questions will surely facilitate and prompt us to deliberate an alternative way of happy living. Whether we agree or not, the human intervention and new innovations of scientific explorations cartelized the pollution rate in all manner. The name 'Wuhan' will surely be either a stumbling block or a signboard for us in the future to reflect over the aftermath of the human interventions. Whether it is human-made or mutated, this tiny virus has transformed the course of the world. It is high time to pore over the role of human beings in this world. The anthropocentric thinking should be substituted with a new way of thinking, a way that will aid all beings to flourish and to have a sustainable world. Humans should adhere to certain ethical principles in order to ensure that their conduct is fair and just

to all creatures on this planet.

Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism are two extreme poles on the environmental approach continuum. Anthropocentrism is also known as 'human-centeredness,' according to which, human beings and their needs form the pivot of everything. Other beings either have no value or have less value than human beings. In the ecocentric view, people are inseparable from the inorganic or organic nature that encapsulates them, rather than being fixated on organisms like biocentrism. We should redefine the anthropocentric ethical rules for a better world.

Aldo Leopold's 'Land Ethic' is one such ethic that can keep humans on the right path, as it views humans as a part of nature and not separate from it. Consequently, this requires a shift in the current paradigm in which we perceive ourselves as part of the natural world, rather than as its rulers. A Sand County Almanac contains an essay, titled 'The Land Ethic,' in which he appeals for moral responsibility to the natural world. Community members are expected to treat one another with deference according to ethics. Leopold wrote that a Land Ethic 'enlarges the frontiers of the community to encompass not only humans, but soils, waters, plants, and animals as well.' He recognized that his dream of a widely accepted and implemented set of values based upon caring for people, for the land, and for all the connections between them, would have to develop in the minds of a thinking community.

A Land Ethic is a philosophy or theoretical framework about how humans should regard the land ethically. The term 'Land Ethic' was a classic text of the environmental movement wherein he argues that there is a critical exigence for a new ethic, an ethic dealing with human's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. He renders an ecologically-based Land Ethic that repudiates stringently human-centered views of the environment and accentuates the conservancy of healthy and self-renewing ecosystems.

Being a conservationist, forester, philosopher, educator, writer, and outdoor enthusiast, Aldo Leopold was widely considered the father of wildlife ecology. He was a professor at the University of Wisconsin and is best known for his book A Sand County Almanac, which has been translated into fourteen languages and has sold more than two million copies. In addition to his contributions to the development of environmental ethics, he was a kingpin in the movement for wilderness conservation. Using his ecocentric or holistic ethics regarding land, he profoundly influenced the environmental movement with his ethics of nature and wildlife preservation. The land ethic developed by him advocates a caring, ethical symbiosis between humans and nature. Besides his emphasis on biodiversity, he was a pioneer in wildlife management.

The Land Ethic also implies that humans have obligations above their own self-interest. Consequently, the Land Ethic can assist us in finding solutions to the current environmental crisis like pollution, global warming, etc. Rather than just considering the benefits of a project for humans, we should consider its outcomes in terms of the entire biotic community. It also means valuing the natural world as it is, rather than as a commodity. Using economic motives to conserve land is inefficient since much of the land community is priceless. This stems from the attempt to conserve natural areas through determining their value based on the ecosystem services they provide to humans; however, this effort to make conservation meeker has in effect made conservation trivial. It is inevitable that some of the components of the land that are less valuable will be neglected when establishing economic values for ecosystem services.

Leopold's Land Ethic has three main tenets. Primarily, to achieve an ecological ethic, we must limit our freedoms and actions, which results in cooperation between individuals and groups; secondly, humans must consider themselves as a member of the biotic community and not as the conqueror of the natural world; and finally, the land ethic affirms the right of the natural world's continued existence, in and of itself.

Leopoldian understanding of the Land Ethic is one that limits freedoms of action in the fight for existence. In today's world, this can be translated to limiting human actions to benefit coexistence between humans and the natural world, while eliminating the dichotomy that currently exists. Our current economic situation, however, has not allowed the efficient use of resources as is seen in natural cycles. Our econ-



omy has allowed for intense population growth, mass consumption, and changes within ecosystems, all while producing waste that cannot be re-used. We may be able to limit human actions by shifting to an economic system that considers itself an extension of nature, thus fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Limiting development may be easier than we think if we re-ground our moral beliefs in an understanding that respects the natural world of which we are members and custodians. Our current path of development shows no bounds; therefore, we must urge the global populace to revere the natural world as well as base their decisions on an extensive scientific understanding of the world. In other words, ethical decisions must be

made in order to limit development and impacts on the natural dynamics of ecosystems.

Land ethic tells us that in order to develop an ethic in which we revere the natural world, we must consider ourselves as members of the community and not separate from it. This concept is more difficult to translate into policy, although it must be considered when making new policies if not explicitly made into its own. These services do not function solely for the use of humans, but in and of themselves for the functioning of the entire ecosystem. Once we move away from the notion that we are conquerors of the land, to one where we feel connected with all species of flora and fauna, only then will the ecosystems be revered as an end in themselves.

In indigenous communities, this form of ethics is seen in their understanding that they are part of something greater than the human society, which is the entire natural community. The final tenet is that nature must be valued in and of its own right. By giving nature its rights, it can continue to exist in its natural state. Through political frameworks, these rights would have to be set and legally enforceable. However,

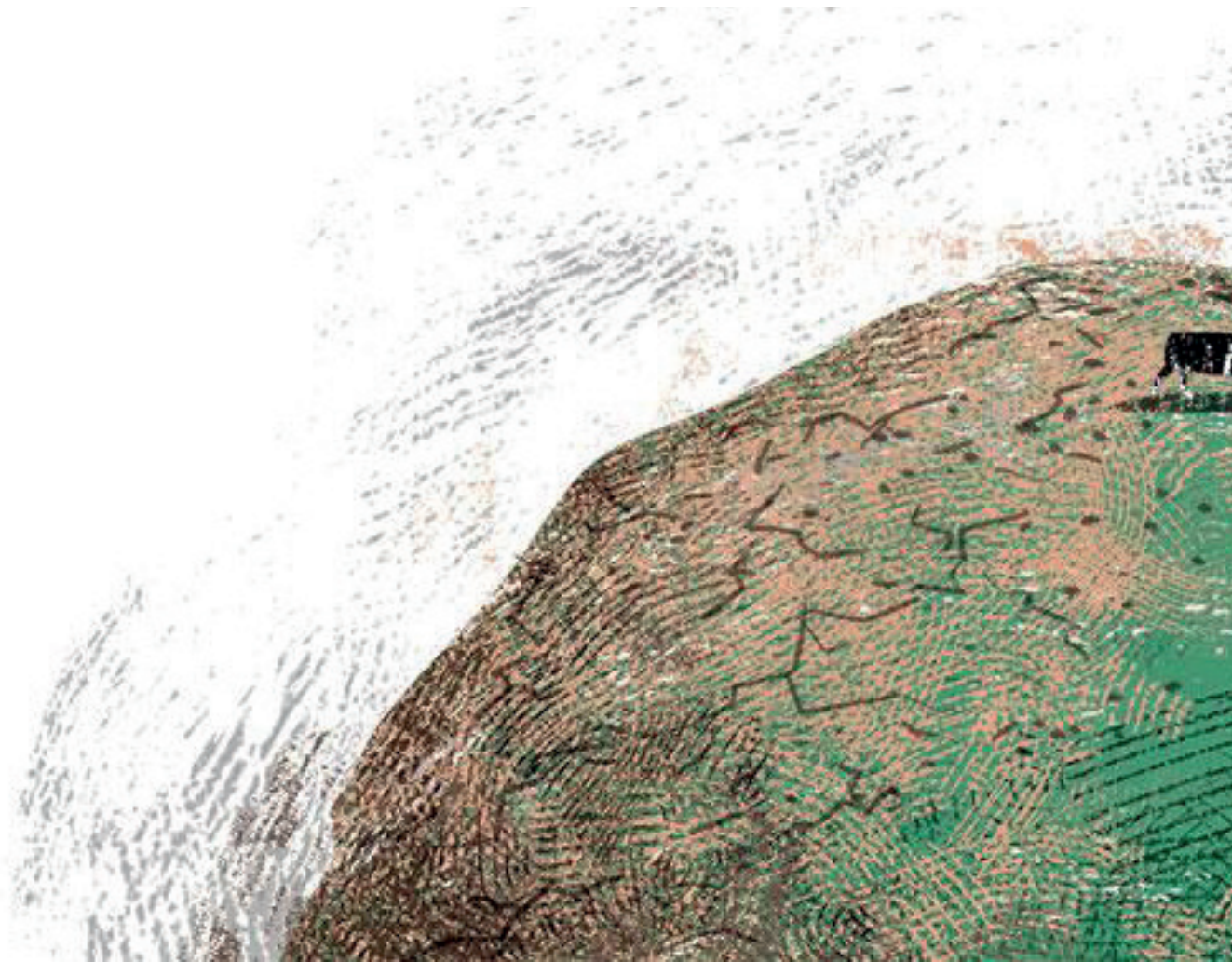


this kind of policy seldom becomes reality. In Leopold's vision of a Land Ethic, the relationships between people and land nature are intertwined. Care for people cannot be separated from care for the land. A Land Ethic is a moral code of conduct that grows out of these interconnected caring relationships. Direct contact with the natural world was crucial in shaping our ability to extend our ethics beyond our own self-interest. The Land Ethic repudiates strictly human-centered views of the environment and focuses on the preservation of healthy, self-renewing ecosystems. The fundamental principle of the Land Ethic is that morally right actions are ones that tend to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community, while morally wrong actions are ones having the opposite tendency.

With his encyclical 'Laudato Si,' Pope Francis challenges the minds of people to change their anthropocentricity to ecocentrism in this new millennium. Pope Francis' open, genuine view of reality is also his starting point for the debate on the ecological crisis, which is detailed in the first chapter of Laudato Si. As no Pope has done before him, Pope Francis seeks here to enter into a debate with the natural sciences while trusting in their expertise, resulting in a text that is scientifically up to date. Specifically, the encyclical is a plea to realize the impact that the ecological crisis has on people,

particularly the poor. The Pope looks at reality from the point of view of the poor, which is why we cannot separate ecological concerns from social concerns. Even if the causes differ, the link between poverty and environment-related issues is self-evident: "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental." Given this analysis of the situation, Pope Francis points the way toward addressing the ecological crisis with the aim of an integral human and environmentally friendly solution.

The Pope's realistic perspective leads to the realization that everything in the world is connected. Impacts on nature are not without consequences for other areas of the ecological system, even though they differ in intensity. No area of the environment exists by itself alone; everything is connected. Yet for a long time, particularly in the industrialized nations, people believed that they could ignore these fundamental connections. We can successfully solve environmental problems by once again realizing that, in the reality of creation, everything is interwoven. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that Pope Francis discusses the fundamental concept of the integral ecology. It follows from this that addressing the ecological issue affects our understanding of humankind, the world, and creation, as well as God himself.



**The Pope's realistic perspective leads to the realization that everything in the world is connected. Impacts on nature are not without consequences for other areas of the ecological system, even though they differ in intensity. No area of the environment exists by itself alone; everything is connected.**



We still need to teach our society to recognize the truth that our existence is completely dependent on non-living beings. This interconnectedness brings and binds our existence. The present-day requires cultivating a new eco-consciousness that promotes the well-being of the land. Living and non-living things depend on the land for their survival and sustenance. We will be able to have a better world only if we have this new consciousness. In order to promote and encourage an Ecoconsciousness approach to land, we must conscientize the people and the younger generations. The awareness that we should uphold and foster in future, I would say, is an Ecocommunitarian consciousness. In Ecocommunitarian consciousness, human beings come to an awareness of their responsibility for all living creatures and non-living things on the planet. To achieve human fulfilment and self-realization, it is necessary to discover that one belongs to the ecocommunity, to the earth and to the universe. We are all part of the thinking community that needs to shape a Land Ethic for the 21st century and beyond. To do that, we must engage in thoughtful dialogue with each other, inviting a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. Together, we can form a new Land Ethic that can be passed down to future generations.







# **DHARMARAM**

# **LEGACY OF AN**

# **INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**





Sebastian Alakapally CMI  
Bengaluru

There is a general awareness world-wide that if we do not take care of our planet now, one day life on it will be miserable and eventually even impossible. Everything and everyone on this plant is inter-relational. The human beings and the mother earth are inter-related and inter-dependent. This awareness has not become a common concern of humankind as a whole, and violence against the nature is being perpetrated by people and nations with vested interests. Therefore organizations, people's movements and political parties have sprung up in recent years in every nook and corner of the world to tell and teach people to respect and protect the nature, our mother earth. This article is an attempt to look into the prospects of Dharmaram College in the context of the invitation of Laudato Si for an integral ecology and the call for connectedness in Fratelli Tutti which guides the harmony of person in harmony with nature.



## Dharmaram Model for an Integral Ecology

The concern for natural environment and actions to reduce its degradation mark the main ecological discussions since 1960s with the slogan-Back to Nature. The founding visionaries of Dharmaram College, Bengaluru much before the ecological discussions of 1960s started to showcase a symbiotic relationship with the nature in the Dharmaram premises. Dharmaram continued this legacy over the years and is even to this day yet another beautiful garden in the vicinity of the famous Lalbagh botanical gardens. There is a long list of staff and students from 1957 who toiled hard to beautify this almost a barren land at the outskirts of the then city into a real garden - a breathing space - in the heart of Bengaluru city with all its hassle bustles of life. The flower gardens, the vine gardens, the mango groves, cool canopy of verities of seasonal flower trees, the agriculture and farms, poultry, piggery, vegetable gardens, systematically planned coconut plantation, teak wood trees creating a boundary line around the long stretch of Dharmaram land speak volumes on a magical touch given to nature adding beauty and charm to every heart.

Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Christ Deemed to be University, Kannada, English Christ schools and the special school campuses are all extensions of a splendid panorama all in bloom as gifted freely to all by the mother garden - aram of dharma for an enthralling harmony. Besides, all its extended campuses on Bennerghetta Road, Gaziabad, Delhi-the national capital of India, Lavaza- the first Indian eco-city, Pune, Christ property at the lake city Bhopal, property at Gandhian Ashram city, Wardha, Christ University Nodel office in the territory of Sri Padmanabha swamy, the capital of Kerala, all of them strike a note on care for nature and nature bound interconnectedness of life vibes very much in tune with eco-balancing, beauty and serenity.

## Devadan Farm, Kenkeri

It was in the year 1962 we bought a plot of land in Kanmanike village at Kenkeri by the side of the Bangalore-Mysore highway and named it Devadan (God's gift) Farm. It is developed in to an agricultural and dairy farm with the hard work and dedication of our fathers and brothers. A natural water source in the middle of the property was a great attraction for Fr. Jonas Thaliyath- the luminary Bishop of Rajkot, Gujarat in later times, who visualized self-sufficiency of Dharmaram, skills in farming and orientation in rural development for brothers in formation at Dharmaram. The beautiful scenes of sparrows with their intricately engineered hanging homes along the water channel on the Wild Date (Khejur) palms are amazing. A new turn in the history of Devadan Farm happened in March 2002 when Dharmaram discussed the possibility of establishing residential schools in the Farm. As a result, Christ PU Residential College was established in Devadan which was followed by the Engineering College, Management School etc. Along with the growth of educational infrastructure, the entire landed property is designed into a garden park without much disturbance to the natural eco-ambience. The attempts to preserve the water bodies intact and the scientific tree planting drive especially the forest like Mahogany, the golden coloured coconut plantation and verities of Bamboos and palms along with the traditional tamarind trees deserve the appreciation of all. The rain water harvesting check-dams, the flora and fauna all around the water ponds, multicolour display of bougainvillea plants and all sorts of flowery trees and plants along the pathways, the meadows and willows

everything has turned Devadan in to a sanctuary of life, revealing the web of mutual relations.

It is interesting to note that along with plans for Schools in the Farm there was also a proposal for the establishment of a Dharmaram Centre for Environmental Studies. Though no such Centre has come in to existence, over the years Devadan is developed itself into a well-maintained eco-diversity Agricultural Farm and an educational hub to enlighten the young minds, all in the backdrop of the book of nature that offers and opens up vistas of learning.

## St. Mary's Farm, Kenkeri

The visionary architect of Dharmaram, Fr. Jonas managed to buy a plot of land at Kanmanike village in 1964. He had great plans to integrate priestly and religious formation in the context of dairy farming and agriculture. In fact, he believed that the very rhythm of nature is maintained through agriculture which was perhaps the major source of sustenance for the reli-

gious communities of yester years including the CMI's. Even when agriculture is found as non-profitable and people move to more and more profit-oriented businesses, it is heartening to see that there has been a renewed interest in the field of agriculture, mainly due to the awareness of the adulterated and inedible food, vegetable items supplied through the markets. Fr. Jonas wanted to create a culture of agriculture among the seminarians and to develop the habit of toiling in the nature for livelihood and survival. In addition to the idea of self-sufficiency he had in mind the integral training of the seminarians who are destined to work in the remote villages of India. Agriculture and Dairy farming keep us in touch with nature, a closer proximity and a loving relationship which would contribute to formation of character. Agriculture is inevitable if one has to know and understand the mind of the rural India, the land of the peasants. Fr. Jonas, was perhaps influenced by the ideal of education and character formation in ancient Indian system of education, Gurukula, in a natural eco-friendly ambience in harmony with nature.



The gates of St. Mary's are wide open to all to enjoy a natural habitat and experience the butterfly touch of the caring nature all around. The dancing sandalwood plants in the gentle breeze invite everyone to the land of Coconut plants, mango groves, thick green carpet coverage of grass for animal feed, check dams to harvest rain water and fish farming natural ponds and to the eco-settings of animal and birds farm. Anything and everything in St. Mary's are indeed in tune with the ecological thinking of today, living in harmony with nature. Fr. George Nellikunnel the long serving director of this beautiful farm is an exceptional man of the soil who always directed the farm activities into a holistic eco balancing and fine tuning of the land. What is more interesting about Fr. George is that he has set apart a space - a shelter - protection for all plants, all creatures - a Kavau - a sacred grove, the ancient tradition of nature conservation a reality for us to live with and feel with the mother earth. Such a sacred grove (Kavau) protects several valuable plant species of food, medicinal and other valuable plants and animals providing a serene at-



mosphere in all bio-diversity. In the spirit of Laudato Si, the XXXVIII General Synaxis recommends that 'at least a small area within our campuses shall be set apart to develop a grove for the conservation of rare and medicinal plants is already reality in the context of St. Mary's Farm.

An eco-based Agri-farm is where we are integrally part of nature and experience that every living being is constituted of the elements of nature and essentially interconnected. Nature has a decisive impact on our lives in realizing that life is a network of interrelations. The food we take, the water we drink, the vital breath we inhale are all precious and gratuitous gifts of nature. The Bhumi Sukta- the hymn to the mother earth of Atharva Veda presents the earth as our mother who has a place for everyone and everything in her bounteous lap in all graciousness and harmony. She invites humanity to share the gracious gift -the earth rather than amassing for the ego-istic self-gratification.

The Jonas Memorial Park inaugurated at St. Mary's in Dec. 2021 is an attempt to recall and share the memories of late Bp. Jonas, the Architect and visionary of Dharmaram College. It is an amazing addition that offers an eco-ambience where people can walk in to relax, exercise, play, pray, learn and be with the nature to spend some quality time. The burbling sound of stream and the chirping of the birds in the park are a sight to behold. The tress, plants, flowers all take away the stress and strain and turn the park as a haven of divine healing.

Along with the modernisation of Dairy Farm, developing a Horticulture and fish Farm for learning and research under the Life Sciences Department of Christ Deemed to be University is a welcome and timely initiative. The care for the mother earth gets a greater boost by this project in planting of varieties of fruit trees and extinct varieties of plants in St. Mary's Farm. The mutuality of care and protection is the testing stone for a healthy and life enabling co-existence of humans and the nature which makes the life line of St. Mary's farm.

## Integral Ecology in Laudato Si

The encyclicals of the Popes are generally addressed to the members of the Catholic Church and often limited to the teachings of the church on faith and morals. But the encyclical, "Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home," (LS) is addressed to every person on this planet. Pope says: "In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home" (LS.3). According to the Pope only by radically reshaping our relationships with God, with our neighbours and with the natural world, we can hope to tackle the threats facing our planet today.

The document has touched all aspects of climate change and its impacts on the present and future generations. The relationship between the poor and the consequences of climate change, the inter-connectedness of everything in the world, the critiquing of the present development paradigm and the proposal of a new eco-bound life style are some of the major discussions in LS. The Pope has called for quick action on the part of the world leaders to save the planet from the environmental ruin.

Pope Francis defines the notion of "integral ecology" as the idea that everything including the well-being of humans is connected with the well-being of Earth. The LS provides us with a thorough analysis of our connectedness with God, with our neighbour, and with the earth, our common home. Further there is a deep-down connectedness between humans and other living beings. Thus, a sense of deep communion with nature requires tenderness, compassion and concern for all fellow human beings. All of us are linked by an unseen bond to form a universal family. Pope proposes that if we genuinely feel united to nature, there is hope that our atti-





tude can shift from being consumers, masters, and exploiters to one that exudes sobriety, care, and joy (LS.11).

Coinciding with the Synod for the Amazon, Pope Francis has published a new book in 2019 *Nostra Madre Terra -Our Mother Earth: A Christian Reading of the Environmental Challenge*. The book explains a Christian vision of ecology. It underlines that the Pope's appeal to care for creation is an appeal to care about life - for all people, all creatures, land and resources. The Green Pope is biblical and prophetic in addressing how we live God's love for the planet. In fact, the health of the planet is vital for the health of humankind. The human vulnerability exposed during the COVID-19 situations point to the importance of building up immunity by being closer to the nature. In this context Dharmaram has to take up further steps to realise an integral ecology as envisioned by Pope Francis.

## Nature Connectedness in Fratelli Tutti

The Fratelli Tutti (FT), the third encyclical letter (Oct.2020) of Pope Francis speaks of how to channelize the notion of integral ecology envisaged in *Laudato Si* through fraternity and social connectedness. The same sentiments of fraternity and interconnectedness echo throughout the FT. Pope Francis acknowledges that it is St. Francis, the saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy, who inspired him to write the LS, and prompted him once more to write FT focused on fraternity and friendship with nature. Pope speaks about the need to take care of the planet in order that the planet takes care of ourselves (FT.17). After the model of St. Francis, Pope wants all of us to listen to each other and listen to nature (FT. 48). While speaking of the need to care for our common home, the Pontiff appeals to the spark of universal consciousness and mutual concern in people's heart to conserve the resources for the sake of the greater human family (FT. 117) to which all of us belong.

FT passionately instructs us that our concern for common home and the intertwining of the human family can only be done together, as sisters and brothers in solidarity and social friendship realizing our deeper connectedness. Our connectedness invites us all to dream together and to have hope for a future of greater peace, love, and justice for us and for the earth. Through FT Pope Francis calls us for such human fraternity and solidarity. Everyone must be given respect because all creatures share a common dignity. The right of some to free enterprise or market freedom cannot supersede the rights of peoples and the dignity of the poor, or, for that matter, respect for the natural environment, for "if we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all" (FT.122).

A true ecological concern is always a social responsibility. It is a commitment to sanctity of life and a commitment to unity

resulting from a deeper experience of interwovenness with one another and the nature. As persons, in the spirit of FT we need to develop a culture of encounter with one another and with our natural environment. While recognizing one another as brothers and sisters we should sharpen our ears to hear the cry of the earth; heal the earth with selfless love and care. Our deeper communion with the mother earth and our fellow brethren spontaneously leads our lives closer to the sacred immanence. It is high time that Dharmaram revitalise and strengthen the bonds with the nature, with all Fratelli and with God on a profound sense of connectedness. A Green Policy for the care of the Mother Earth

Today the human race is destructively changing not simply the structures and functioning of human society, but the very chemistry of the planet. We are altering the ecosystems; we are changing the topography and even the geological structures of the planet earth. In spite of high ideals the fact remains that creation is wantonly destroyed; there is a situation of injustice in our attitude to nature; violence is being exercised every time against others often violating the fundamental principle of relationality and interconnectedness. A genuine ecological outlook should enable us to rise above the narrowness of human irresponsibility and attitudes of domination

We need to become aware that the earth is a gift from the creator handed over to us for sustaining our life and for completing our life-span in its bounteous lap in peace and happiness. While using the earth for our survival and happy living, we have the grave moral responsibility of relating to it with love, respect and care, and transmitting it to the future generations intact for their survival and happiness. Developing a kind of friendship with the nature to bring back values and principles which are the basis for our symbiotic relationship and responsibility for nature is the need of the times. When each individual discharges this responsibility it is the beginning of the harmony of persons resulting in harmony of nature. Annals of history speak loudly that the CMI founding fathers led a life of proximity with nature. These fathers and the generations that followed them have bequeathed to us the spirit of responding to the problems of our times. Today we should respond to the consumeristic practices and the consequent degradation of the nature and reassert our commitment to nature. Dr. Martin invites every CMI, personally and communally to adopt a green policy-an integral ecological approach, wherein a nurturing attitude will reign supreme and holistic practices will be adopted both in dealing with nature and people.

In this process we need to have personal initiatives to work for the protection and preservation of our common home. Since the conserving and preserving the common home is both part of our heritage and our responsibility, we have to adopt a "cul


ture of care” while responding to the cries of the nature. This will help every CMI to nurture and promote the cultivation of a green and eco-friendly lifestyle starting from the early stages of formation, especially the formation years at Dharmaram. Such a vision comes true when we are able to nurture a culture of agriculture and when our institutions operate as effective catalysts of integral ecological practices. Ashtanga Margas for a Dharmaram Ecology

The 38th CMI General Synaxis 2020 has adopted “Conserving and Preserving Our Common Home” as a major thrust of the CMI life. It calls for an integral ecology and environmental education in practice, reminding all us to be responsible CMIs in nurturing the Common Home adopting a ‘culture of care.’

Dharmaram and its constituent units far and near promise to be eco-friendly campuses but over the years it has suffered a lot of ecological degradation. Its bio-diversity is disappearing slowly and steadily mainly due to concrete forestation in the campus. It is high time that we take immediate steps to conserve, preserve and care for ‘our portion of the nature’ in Dharmaram, Devadan, St. Mary’s in Bengaluru and other Campuses elsewhere in different parts of India, so that we nurture it as a ‘breathe easy space’ for everyone. It is a culture embedded in the ethos of Dharmaram College and its extension centres of learning and training.



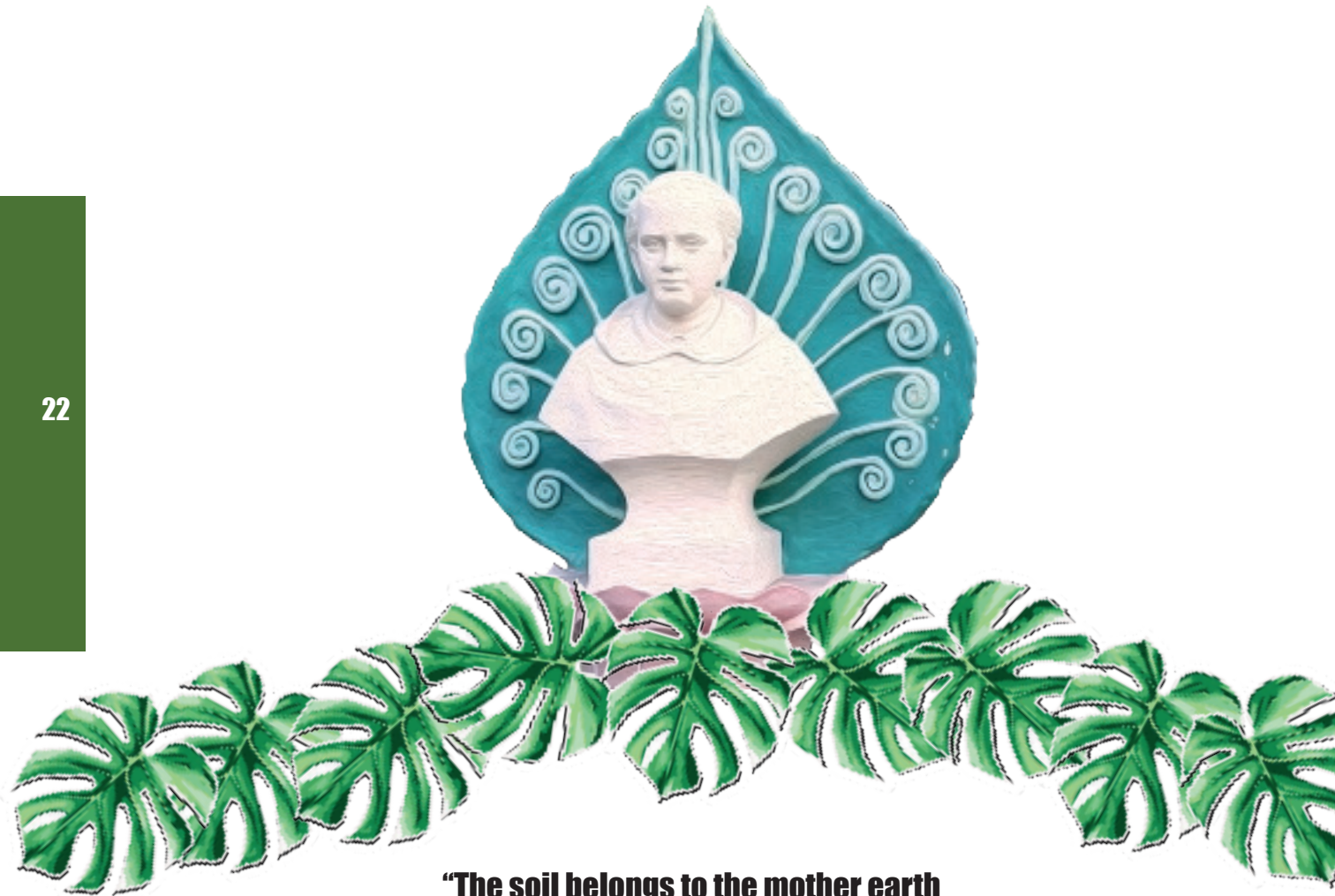




The following **Eightfold Paths** (ash-tanga margas) may help us in this noble task in respect and reverence to Nostra Madre Terra-Our Mother Earth.

- 1.** Educate our younger generation in formation, the leaders of tomorrow, how to conserve and preserve our mother earth.
- 2.** Stop the Greenocide: A moratorium on cutting/killing of the trees and plants. Let all in authority humbly accept that the authority is not a license to destroy nature. In unavoidable situations of cutting the trees etc. make sure that at least three saplings are planted when one tree is cut.
- 3.** Stop burning dry leaves and other bio-degradable waste.
- 4.** Process scientifically both dry and wet waste into quality organic manure.
- 5.** Follow the RRR policy: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
- 6.** Preserve waterbodies and harvest/save rain water through simple natural methods.
- 7.** Make our campuses "Plastic Free" and collect plastics periodically and dispose it scientifically.
- 8.** Stop Littering. Stop the use of harmful chemicals. Say goodbye to all forms of pollution.

Images: Joseph Thelekkat



**“The soil belongs to the mother earth  
And so are the water, air and fruits.  
O Lord! Let everyone be enriched.  
Our body and Mind also belong  
To the mother earth;  
And we are all brothers and sisters  
O Lord! Purify us from within.”**

Mahatma Gandhi

The poem written by Mahatma Gandhi reminds the ideology of treating nature and its resources as our own. God brought the world into existence and appointed human beings as its trustees. But from its inception onwards man plundered it. It has been well said that forests precede mankind, deserts follow. Finally, we have shifted from the mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological view of the world. The earth's vital signs reveal a patient in declining health. We have begun to realize our ethical obligations to be good stewards of the planet and responsible trustees of the legacy to future generations.



Darsana Institute of Philosophy planted in the heart of Gandhi city of Wardha has promoted this holistic view of sustainable development. It offers a wide range of formation that enables everyone to understand nature and nurture it. While philosophical studies enrich the intellectual capabilities of a formee, it, in return fails to provide the practical aspects of becoming a true human being. Keeping this as an integral part of formation Darsana provides quality time on manual work which enables the pupils to openly interact with nature. This contributes to the growth of environment consciousness and in turn helps in shaping a healthy future generation.

Every year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of its non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. Like any other institutions waste management was a major concern in Darsana. To cite one example, most of the paper are being thrown away and not recycled here. When this problem was diagnosed the curious minds of the institution came up with a better solution to tackle it. A project named “waste into wealth” has been started in the campus for the collection and recycling of waste papers and other debris. This is done with the collaboration of an institute named “Science for villages.” In every veranda of the house baskets are placed for the collection of waste papers. On a monthly basis this waste papers are sold to the institute for a good profit and these are recycled into envelopes, pen stands, colour charts etc for our own use. The money obtained from selling of other solid waste materials are systematically used for charity works.

Darsana campus is densely populated with variety of trees and it is also home to numerous flora and fauna. The Luxuriant vegetation is always welcoming to organisms. Taking care of domestic animals and cultivation such as pisciculture and mushroom are introduced here to get a firsthand experience of nature rather than aiming profits from it. Indulging in these diverse activities helps to use the natural resources creatively for an eco-friendly living. For example, instead of chemical fertilizers the slurry from the Biogas plant is used for vegetables and bio-degradable waste materials are converted into vermicompost for the cultivation. The waste water from the fishpond is used for watering the garden which helps the plants to receive sufficient nutrients. These harmless ways of sustainable activities help to build a natural ecosystem for the living beings. All these activities are perceived and conceived in the minds of brothers itself. The holy Bible says “When we realize how vast and beautiful the creation is, we are learning about the creator at the same time.” (Wisdom 13.5)

This is an open invitation for human beings to become more responsible towards our planet. Pope Francis in his apostolic encyclical ‘laudato si’ explains about the three fundamental relationship of a human life: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself. Thus, the definition of formation is redefined as follows forming future missionaries God oriented, other oriented and nature oriented. We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our future generation. All we have to do is to preserve it for them.



## CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Akheer Mekkattuparambil CMI  
Warda






Francis Kurissery CMI  
Thrissur

24

# Prior mango challenge!





In the collection of letters written by St. Chavara to the nuns at St. Philomena's convent, Koonammavu, is one ( P. 161, Chavarayachante Kathukal (Mal), Published by Chavara Central secretariat, 2011), in which there is mention of chillies and mangoes which St. Chavara fondly sends to the nuns, with clear instructions regarding what is to be done with the mangoes. He says that the mangoes were gifted to him by one Mr. Parai. The Prior goes on to say that the mangoes are very special, delectable, and therefore, she is to peel them, cut them to slices and to give them to the nuns. He further requests her to plant the seeds of the mangoes and distribute the saplings to other convents/ monasteries. Needless to say the nuns religiously followed the instructions of the 'Prior' and today we have these fabled mango trees -Prior mango- arguably named after the Prior. St. Chavara was known as Senior Prior - 'Pothu prior' because the TOCD (later CMI) did not have an elected Prior General, at that time. Incidentally, these mangoes deserve to be called 'prior' also because in taste, appearance and fragrance these fabled mangoes are presumably prior/superior to most of the varieties of mangoes available in India.

We eat so many mangoes or fruits, but seldom does it occur to us to do something creative so as to pass on the benefits to our posterity. How many fallen flowers we would have seen! But seldom do they prompt us to write a stupendous poem like Kumaranasan's " Veena Poovu"! Then, that is the difference between great men and most of us.

In the act of St. Chavara's sharing the mangoes with the nuns and in the accompanying letter, we cannot miss 3 points: i) His inclusive, motherly concern for the nuns ii) His love for the future generations iii) His love for nature.

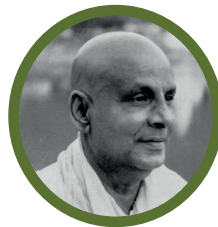
In St. Chavara's act of sharing the 'goodies' with the nuns, we find new heights of his spirituality, the like of which is seen in Jesus' waiting, at the dawn of the day, on the shore of Tiberias, with cooked breakfast for the worn out disciples. Towards the end of His physical life on earth, we find Jesus increasingly using imageries of a mother's tender loving care and finally becoming a mother. When Pope Francis wrote "God's name is Mercy", what is implied is, God is basically mother (only women are given the name Mercy). As St. Chavara grows to Jesus' measure, he also becomes a mother.

In his instruction to the nuns to plant the seeds of the mangoes and distribute the saplings to other houses, we could obviously see his enthusiasm to preserve the species and ensure that the coming generations also be able to eat and enjoy the fruits. In the throw-away culture which characterizes our age, we can only wonder at the far-sightedness of this saint. He was a trail blazer in various fields of life. Remember, this happens in the 19th century when there was not so much discussion about or awareness of 'going green' or creating a green umbrella for the planet earth. St. Chavara was a clairvoyant who ran ahead of times. Would that we could imitate and improve upon St. Chavara's edifying examples with path-breaking, futuristic initiatives!





“



The inward battle --against our mind, our  
wounds, and the residues of the past--is  
more terrible than outward battle.

Swami Sivanada  
Indian Spiritual Writer

Experience is shared and transmitted  
to the next generation in Mission









# Jagdalpur 50 Mission years



Vineeth Payyappilly  
Jagdalpur





## Chhattisgarh State

Chhattisgarh, which literally means ‘Thirty-Six Forts’, is a landlocked State located in the region of Central India. Formerly part of Madhya Pradesh it was granted statehood on November 1, 2000. It is the 9th largest State in India. As of 2021 Census, it has a population of roughly 3 crores, making it the 17th most populated State in the country. The State was formed by the partition of ten Chhattisgarhi and six Gond-speaking districts in the southeast of Madhya Pradesh. Its capital city is Raipur. It borders 7 States – Uttar Pradesh to the north, Madhya Pradesh to the northwest, Maharashtra to the southwest, Jharkhand to the northeast, Odisha to the east, and Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to the south. Currently, it comprises 32 districts. Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing States in India. A resource-rich state, Chhattisgarh provides electricity, coal, and steel to the rest of the nation. In 2020, it won the title of cleanest state following the ‘Swachh Survekshan 2020’. There are several theories as to the origin of the name Chhattisgarh, which in ancient times was known as Dakshina Kosala (South Kosala). The most popular theory claims that Chhattisgarh takes its name from the 36 ancient forts (chhattis meaning thirty-six and garh meaning fort) in the area. The old State had 36 feudal territories. At one time there were 36 strongholds in this area, that is why its name was Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh is the State of India which has been given the status of ‘Mahtari’ (Mother). It is a State full of forests and vegetation.

## Bastar Division

Bastar Division is an administrative division of Chhattisgarh. It includes the districts of Bastar, Dantewada, Bijapur, Narayanpur, Sukma, Kondagoan and Kanker. Bastar Division was created in 1999, when the larger Bastar District was divided into the present-day districts of Jagdalpur, Dantewada, and Kanker. In 2000 the division became part of the newly created State of Chhattisgarh. Later in 2007, Bijapur and Narayanpur districts were also divided, and Sukma and Kondagaon in 2012. Bastar is the southernmost region in the State. It is a forested mineral rich region with a population of 2.5 million people and a rich cultural heritage. It is spread over a geographical area of 39,117 km<sup>2</sup>. In recent times, the area has become the hub of Naxal or Left Wing Extremism (LWE) related conflicts. The latest Census of India (2011) indicates declining population trend in the LWE districts in Bastar. Some of the most vulnerable population groups in India live in Bastar. The area is home to a number of different tribal groups (Scheduled Tribes). A variety of languages and dialects are spoken locally. Local agriculture, animal husbandry and forest-based livelihood systems, weekly markets and transport networks are the specialties of Bastar region. In some parts of the Bastar region, where standard human development indicators are relatively low to begin with, widespread absence and worsening access to healthcare, ed-

ucation, drinking water, sanitation and food is creating an alarming situation. Availability of State functionaries responsible for delivering these



Mar Paulinus Jeerakath CMI, The First Bishop

**Many of the developed centers and prestigious institutions in the mission are the fruit and effect of the hard work of many CMIs. Many of the success stories of our centers, institutions and individuals remind us of the efficient and effective leadership of many of the CMIs, especially Late Mar Paulinus Jeerakath, CMI, the first Bishop of the Diocese**

health and nutrition indicators of all the districts in the division are well below the State average.

## Diocese of Jagdalpur

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Jagdalpur is an Eastern Catholic Eparchy in India, under the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. It came into existence when in 1977 it was raised to a Diocese by Pope Paul VI by the Bull "Nobismetipsis" of 26 February; Mar Paulinus Jeerakath, CMI was ordained and installed as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Jagdalpur. In March 1993 Mar Simon Stock Palathra, CMI was appointed as the second Bishop of the Diocese of Jagdalpur. On 2013 July 16, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Mar Simon Stock Palathra, CMI and appointed Mar Joseph Kollamparampil, CMI as the third Bishop of the Diocese of Jagdalpur. St Joseph's Cathedral Church and the Bishop's House, established on 23 March 1972, are in the heart of the city of Jagdalpur. The Major Archbishop of the Diocese of Jagdalpur is Mar George Alencherry and the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Diocese of Jagdalpur is Archbishop Victor Henry Thakur. The total number of the Catholics in the Diocese of Jagdalpur as of 2009 Census is 7,869 (0.3%).

### Mission in the Bastar Division in Chhattisgarh

The Eparchy of Jagdalpur is situated in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. The major portion of this region is covered with forests. It is one of the most backward and underdeveloped parts of the country. The inhabitants of the area are mainly tribal groups known for their ancient traditions, customs and culture. Agriculture offers basic sustenance to them. Bastar Division is divided into 7 revenue districts. The Eparchy of Jagdalpur covers an area of 39,176 sq. kms. Its population is constituted of Adivasis, Harijans and other groups of tribal people. Adivasis, who form the major portion of the population (68%), are of different tribes. People speak almost 78 dialects. Hindi is the official language of the people. The literacy level is very low. The majority of the people are poor and their livelihood mainly depends upon agriculture, vegetation, fishing, hunting, etc. The tribal culture of Bastar has its own uniqueness and beauty. Navakhana, Ama Tyohar, Matti Pooja, Hariyali, Diyari, Dussehra, etc are some of their major festivals and celebrations.

The CMI Congregation is the first indigenous religious congregation in the Catholic Church in India. The apostolate of the CMI Congregation attained a new momentum and a new dimension when it was entrusted with territories outside the State of Kerala to do mission works and pastoral activities. Bastar was made a separate ecclesiastical unit named Jagdalpur in 1972 and was entrusted to St. Joseph's Province, Kottayam. The CMI Region of Jagdalpur was erected in 1976 and the XXX General Chapter in 1978 raised it to the status of a Vice-Province and the XXXV General Chapter in 2002 raised it to the status of a Province which is called Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur. The efficient leadership and inspiring

life style of the pioneer missionaries like Late Mar Paulinus Jeerakath, Mar Simon Stock Palathra, Late Fr Kuri-an Macheril, Late Fr Mathew Kandathil, Late Fr Thomas Tharappel, Late Fr Louis Mathew Valiyaveetil, Late Fr Michael Mundathanath, Late Fr Antony Maris Vattakkunnel, Late Fr Abraham Thuruthimaly, Late Fr Prasad Puthukulangara, Late Fr Patrick Kaipuzhavakkal, Late Fr Thomas Vadaparambil, Late Fr Jose Palathra, Late Fr Thomas Poothakuzhy, Late Bro. Joseph Vadakkekannanchira, Fr Augustine Srampickal, Fr Jaiswam Irupuzhickal, Bro. Gabriel Koorkkalayil, etc were rooted in the vision and mission of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, our founder and in the true religious spirit of Carmelites. This made the way clear to achieve remarkable progress in the various missionary activities and pastoral ministries in the Bastar division. The devoted life and zealous activities of the CMIs helped the development of the mission in its perfection and completion. The close collaboration and co-operation of the CMIs (priests and brothers), diocesan clergy and other religious men and women made a remarkable impact in the development of the mission in the land of Bastar. Many of the developed centers and prestigious institutions in the mission are the fruit and effect of the hard work of many CMIs. Many of the success stories of our centers, institutions and individuals remind us of the efficient and effective leadership of many of the CMIs, especially Late Mar Paulinus Jeerakath, CMI, the first Bishop of the Diocese, responding positively and creatively to the needs of the times and also their readiness to take up the challenging missions in different risky stations/institutions in different parts of Bastar. Many of the successful institutions in the different parts of Bastar division in Chhattisgarh, as we have today, have the stories of many inspiring CMIs who were the pioneers in the mission in Bastar. Nirmal Vidyalaya Higher Secondary School, Vidya Jyoti Senior Secondary School, Mar Paulinus Memorial Hospital, Social Welfare Center, Christ College and Christ College of Nursing at Jagdalpur, St Michael's Higher Secondary School at Kanker, St Joseph's Higher Secondary School at Bhanupratappur, Prakash Vidyalaya at Kirandul, Nirmal Niketan High School at Dantewada and Chavara High School at Dugoli remember with gratitude the founder fathers and other fathers and brothers who toiled day and night for the establishment and existence of these institutions providing maximum services to the society and the nation for development with the motto of perfection and achievement.

### Missionary Activities and Ministries in the Mission

The members of CMI Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur commit themselves as far as possible, in accordance with the Constitutions and Statutes of the CMI Congregation, to work in the Eparchy of Jagdalpur under the authority of the Bishop



doing missionary and pastoral ministries and shouldering special tasks as when entrusted to it either fully or partially. As our missionary activities are opened all through the Diocese and centered on mission stations, parishes and centers, doing pastoral ministry, we are ready to co-ordinate and co-operate with the Diocesan clergy as well as with the other religious congregations. We foster respect and reverence towards them all. We honour their charism and individuality considering that God has called them to the mission as we have been called. The services rendered by the CMIs in the Eparchy of Jagdalpur for the glory of God and for the welfare of the people are worthy to be mentioned:

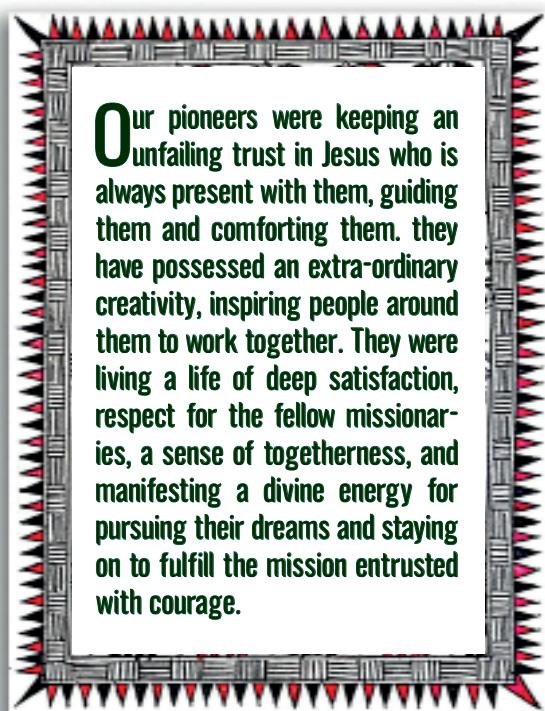
- (a) Animation and formation of aspirants and other religious (Seminaries)
  - (b) Educational ministry (Schools and colleges)
  - (c) Social Apostolate (Social welfare activities)
  - (d) Hostel Ministry (Chavara Balbhavans and Boardings)
  - (e) Health Apostolate (Health care activities/Mobile Health Clinics)
  - (f) Family Apostolate (Family welfare programmes)
  - (g) Youth Ministry (Youth animation programmes)
  - (h) Legal and Administrative Services
  - (i) Balwadies and Community Health programmes
  - (j) Home for the Specially Challenged Children and Youth
  - (k) Skill Development and Vocational Training Centers
  - (l) Mahila Mandals and Bal Panchayats
  - (m) Preaching the Word of God and Preaching Annual Retreats
- Tribute to the Great Visionaries of the Bastar Mission in Chhattisgarh “Nirbhikata se Samrtya se” (Without fear and with all strength) was the motto of Late Bishop Paulinus Jeerakath, CMI in establishing and developing the Diocese of Jagdalpur. His vision in establishing the new diocese was very closely associated with the life and culture of tribal people of the area. The concept of missionary work for him was “Making strangers our friends”. Bishop Paulinus, through his charismatic approach, established a strong basement for the growth and development of the Diocese of Jagdalpur.

Significant growth and development of the Diocese of Jagdalpur could be attributed to Bishop Simon Stock Palathra, CMI, who was one among the pioneer missionaries of the Diocese. It is he who encouraged his co-workers to initiate and promote new, promising tasks and endeavours in challenging stations. As an empowering administrator, he divided the structure of the Diocese into three deaneries-North, South and Central for the smooth functioning which helped in the development of the mission to a great extent.

Bishop Joseph Kollamparambil, CMI is known for his humble nature, positive attitude, leadership abilities, and scholarly approach towards everything. His long and influential approach in the mission and in the missionary activities, his excellent rapport and support with all the stake holders of the mission, his commitment and readiness, etc are effective strategies for the holistic development of the mission.

Late Fr Kurian Macheril, CMI was elected as the Administrator of the Diocese when Mar Paulinus Jeerakath was called to eternal rest on 6th August 1990. His term lasted for two years and seven months. He was a great administrator and it was during his period the financial condition of the Diocese got improved constantly. He was a strict disciplinarian both in the religious life and in the administrative affairs.

Rev. Dr George Kaniarakath, CMI, who is a Bible scholar, is a man of initiatives, a prolific writer, and a prophet with creative insights. He wrote extensively on almost all the important discussions that affected the life of the ordinary people. We could easily identify an attitude that is people oriented in his books and articles. He is man of great vision and mission for Bastar which he proved through his writings and also his life style.



Late Rev. Fr Thomas Manickam, CMI was a prolific writer who published a great number of research articles in national and international journals on different subjects in the areas of Cross-cultural studies, Inter-religious studies, Comparative studies, Eco-philosophical and Eco-theological studies. He also helped in the development of the mission as well as Nirmal Province with his vision and commitment especially when he was the Provincial and councilor of Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur.

## Reminiscences from Missionaries from Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur

According to His Excellency Bishop Joseph Kollamparambil, CMI “Our pioneers were keeping an unfailing trust in Jesus who is always present with them, guiding them and comforting them. Our pioneers possessed an extra-ordinary creativity, inspiring people around them to work together. Our pioneers were living a life of deep satisfaction, respect for the fellow missionaries, a sense of togetherness, etc. Our first missionaries were manifesting a divine energy for pursuing their dreams and staying on to fulfill the mission entrusted with courage. Our first missionaries were keeping an attitude of hospitality in their relationship with others, openness to the world, and also towards strangers who could enrich our lives more than

According to Rev. Fr Thomas Muppathinchira, CMI, VG of the Diocese of Jagdalpur, “As we make a retrospective reflection on the activities and commitment of the pioneers of Jagdalpur mission, we could say without doubt that they loved the mission, the people and their culture. So, the people had the impression that we are one among them and we are here for them. The pioneers were taken to their villagers with great enthusiasm, love and affection.”

In the words of Rev. Fr Alexander Maramattam, CMI, who celebrates Golden Jubilee of the First Religious Profession, “The mustard seed of the Gospel planted in the land of Bastar in 1972 by the Late Bishop Paulinus Jeerakath, CMI and the CMI Congregation has grown up into a large tree branching out into the other parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. The love



Pioneer missionaries of Jagdalpur Mission

we can know.” In the words of Rev. Fr Thomas Vadakkumkara, CMI, Provincial, Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur, “Jagdalpur mission is a great example of God’s marvelous interference for his poor and abandoned people through CMI Congregation for last fifty years. We became the catalyst in the developmental process of Bastar and the tribal people here. It is my experience for last 48 years that God Almighty has done great things through the simple and hardworking CMI members of Jagdalpur mission. Bastar was away from modern civilization but has now developed to be a participant of it through education, health services, agro-based innovations, improvement of connectivity and empowerment of women and children”.

of Christ impelled these people not only to give the Gospel, but their life also to the people of Bastar. Their endeavours in the fields of health care, education, and social development changed the face of Bastar to a great extent. Many of these veteran missionaries penetrated into the interior forest villages to meet the needs of the native tribal people, who welcomed them wholeheartedly. Their only asset was the heart of Christ throbbing for the lost sheep. Facing the challenges raised by the fanatics, the terrorists, and the other extremist groups they put their heart and soul in building up the edifice of the Diocese of Jagdalpur.”

The socio-economic face of Bastar mission is changing rapidly. The idea and mentality of the people also consequently undergo changes. In such a social background, the CMIs are finding ways and means to encounter these new developments in a perfectly sound Christian perspective based on the Gospel values and teachings of Jesus Christ, our Lord. CMIs believe that we cannot keep away from people and emerging social movements. As our Lord said we have to become the real salt to every modern and contemporary situation emerging and existing in the mission. This of course needs a lot of reflection, recollection and planning from our part. CMI members in the Bastar (Chhattisgarh) mission are trying to make it a mission with a difference with their attitude towards the mission of Bastar and aptitude for the mission of Jesus Christ. The encounter with the people of Bastar mission and the awareness of their interest in co-operating with our ministries and activities have made us to think about more people oriented ways and means for preaching the word of God imparting the Gospel values along with the values emphasized in the great Indian traditions and also prevalent in the culture of Bastar. The CMI members of Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur play a significant role in the overall development of the people of Bastar Mission in Chhattisgarh (Personality development, Social development, Career development, Educational development, Economic development, etc). We, the members of Nirmal Province in the Bastar Mission believe strongly the words of St Paul in the Letter to the Ephesians 4: 11 - 13: "The gifts he gave were that some would

be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." We, try to preach the Word of God and live the Gospel values, in the institutions where we are and in the activities which we undertake, after the example of our Founder St Kuriakose Elias Chavara. We are ready to render our services to humanity in educational, social, healthcare and other fields aiming at the integral development of the people in the Bastar Mission. We are dedicated to uplifting the lives of people of Bastar Region to make them happy and peaceful in their personal and social life. We rely on the grace and power of God Almighty which make us renewed in heart and committed in our ministries. We try to transform the lives of the people of Bastar Mission and help them to be positive and creative. We enable the people of Bastar Region to be constructive and supportive in the betterment of the welfare of the community, society, and nation with the motto of serving the Lord in the Bastar Mission to bring them the message of Christ and to bring them hope so that God could work in their hearts. We feel with the Psalmist as we read in Psalm 96:1-3: "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples."









# An Icon of Living Proclamation





# Mar Simon Stock CMI

Interview with Bp. Simon Stock conducted by the Novices of Bhanpuri







On 19 March 1993 Fr. Simon Stock CMI, one among the pioneer missionaries of Bastar, was elevated to the rank of the second Bishop of Jagdalpur. The choice fell on this humble soul, who was well-known for his simplicity, hard work, missionary zeal. As a pioneer of Jagdalpur mission he knew his people and their struggles through and through. The decision to choose him to lead the diocese of Jagdalpur and to succeed Bp. Paulinus CMI, the first Bishop who laid a strong foundation for the mission in Jagdalpur was appreciated and accepted by all. Fr. Simon Stock was assigned as the first one to reach the mission as Jagdalpur was entrusted to St. Joseph's province Kottayam of CMI congregation and hence, he could understand the thrust of the missionary movement initiated in Bastar. He was in a better position to understand his collaborators in mission and so this decision was endorsed with great joy and regarded his election as the right one for this noble mission of leading the diocese.

## Childhood of Bp. Simon Stock

Bishop Simon Stock was born on 11th October 1935 as the third son of Kunjachan Philippos Achamma couple of Palathara family which is a branch of Perangattu Mulammoottil family. He has got eight brothers and four sisters. He had his Nursery (Kalary) training at Gethsameny Capuchin Ashram and did his primary studies in St. Theresa's school Vazhapally. From there he moved to St. Berchaman's school Changanassery for the preparatory class (Class between 4th-5th classes). His school period marked the zenith of Indepen-

dence movement in India and little boy Appachan (so was Bp. Simon Stock called at home) too was also influenced by patriotic sense and anti-British feeling. Therefore, he did not want to learn English because of its association with the colonial power which resulted in his passing of 10th exam.

## Desire to be Religious Priest

But from the very childhood onwards he was desiring to be a religious priest in the CMI congregation. His Uncle Fr. Berard and Fr. Joachim from the family were inspirations for him and implanted in him the intense desire to become a CMI religious priest. After joining the seminary, he made effort to study English and to pass 10th. After completing his initial formation, he was admitted in the novitiate with Fr. Benjamin Kottoor as the novice Master. On 15th May 1958—he made his first profession in CMI congregation and Appachan became Br. Simon Stock.

A lot of exemplary priests of that time influenced young Br. Simon Stock to be an exemplary religious. Servant of God Fr. Canisius was his confessor in Chethipuzha whose exemplary religious life really fascinated Appachan as a young boy and later Br. Simon Stock. Fr. Benjamin, his novice Master was a role model for him. Frs. Berard and Joachim, both his uncles enthused him in his decision to be a religious priest. After completing his philosophy and theology studies in Dharma-ram college Bangalore, Fr. Simon Stock was ordained a priest on 1st December 1964 on the occasion of the Eucharistic congress held there.

## Call to be a Missionary

His first appointment after ordination was as the secretary to then Prior General, Servant of God Fr. Canisius. But to be a missionary was a strong desire that he nourished and nurtured from the very childhood onwards. So, whenever there was chance for him to opt for the mission he did it. During his theological studies itself as Chanda Mission was entrusted to the CMI congregation in 1963 he wanted to join for Chanda. But he was not permitted by the authorities that time. As Sagar was again entrusted to CMI congregation he attempted again to opt for it. He was then serving as secretary to Fr. Canisius, who was the prior General. Now, the prior General himself encouraged others to decide for the mission citing the example of his own secretary joining for the new mission. In Sagar mission he was made the Cathedral Vicar and had the chance to learn Hindi language. Besides, the St. Joseph's sisters of Sagar helped him to improve his English language. But this missionary life did not last long as they had to come back to the province as Sagar mission was allotted to Thrissur province of the congregation.

At that time discussion was going on regarding entrusting Bastar to St. Joseph's Province Kottayam. Bp. Paulinus who was the provincial of that time chose Fr. Simon Stock along with Fr. Kurian Macheril to reach Jagdalpur as the first missionaries. Since Fr. Paulinus, the newly appointed Exarch and Mission Superior was under medical rest after a surgery, he reached the new mission only on 22nd July 1972. Fr. Simon Stock had the responsibility to organise the handing over ceremony of the new mission territory from Msgr. John Weidner, the Apostolic prefecture of Raipur. Building Up of a new Mission From then onwards, Fr. Simon Stock was given various assignments in Jagdalpur mission like Cathedral Vicar, Director of the Social Work Department, Vicar General etc., which provided him opportunity to toil along with Bp. Paulinus and other pioneer missionaries to put a strong foundation for the church in Bastar. In the infancy period of the diocese he tried to establish contact with different villages in and around Jagdalpur and tried to reach places even when there were no basic infrastructures and means of conveyance. The story of starting the mission centres like Karithgaon and

Chivurgaon were inspiring examples of how to venture into new places to establish mission centres and to work for the welfare of the people.

## Missionary Strategy

Fr. Simon Stock laid more focus on learning the language of the people, understanding their culture and customs and appreciating them. This helped him to establish contact with the people. In starting new centres, he deemed it important that the demand for such centres come from the people and

they contribute in their own way in building up the centres. Therefore, in Karithgaon he motivated the people both Brahmins and tribals to come together to construct the house for the priest and sisters. Similarly, the story of starting Chivurgaon is again a paradigm of people's participation where the village panchayat allotted land for the school and centre. While ensuring the participation of the people he made it sure that the people desired our service. That was the reason why they stood with the fathers and sisters even at the time of great trials and difficulties.

## Icon of Living Proclamation

Bp. Simon Stock became an icon of living proclamation. His life became the message that was to be proclaimed. For, he tried to live as a real religious true to the spirit even when he was the bishop. The leadership he offered as Bishop was a spiritual leadership. Through his life he tried to communicate that every consecrated person and missionary need to be men and women of prayer. He was a man with few words but proved to be man of action. Simple life and hard life were the attributes of the early missionaries of Bastar. Besides, the mission centres which he built reflected this simplicity. He used to tell us that the first house in Karithgaon had only three rooms: one for the sisters, one dispensary and the third one for the priest. Even when he was made provincial or bishop he did not possess anything personal for him. He says that he tries to remain a true, renounced religious all through his life. He never demanded anything or required to make his life comfortable. Even after retirement while coming to the novitiate, he insisted that no A/C should be fixed in his rooms.



## Through which ministry you wished to serve the Church and the congregation after the ordination? Or what type of ministry you had in your mind during seminary formation time for your future?

I wanted to go to the mission to serve the poor. The zeal for mission was very fervent and strong in me. In order to realize this dream, I gave my name for Chanda during my theology studies. But I could not join Chanda mission. But there was the news of getting three more missions. One among them was Sagar mission. Immediately I gave my name for Sagar. At that time, I was serving as the secretary to the then Prior General Very Rev. Fr. Canisius CMI. Thus, I reached Sagar mission. After two years of my service I had to return to Kerala as this mission was entrusted to Thrissur province. Now, there was the process of entrusting more mission regions like Jagdalpur and Bijnor mission. Thus, two new missions Jagdalpur and Bijnor were entrusted to the CMI congregation.

## Do you feel that you have been preparing yourself during the seminary life itself for the future mission that was awaiting you?

I did not have such a feeling to prepare for the mission at that time. I had the desire to go for mission. That is why I gave my name to join the Chanda mission. But it did not get realized. The then Provincial of Kottayam, Fr. James Pallivathukkal, did not permit to opt for the mission. Afterwards, as Jagdalpur mission was entrusted to St. Joseph's Province Kottayam, Bishop Paulinus was the Provincial of Kottayam. I gave my name for the new mission to him and he happily agreed. Since I was in Sagar for some time, I had the working knowledge of Hindi and could manage with that knowledge.

## When was your ordination? Can you share with us something about that day?

On 1st December 1964 at Mumbai I received my priestly ordination. It was conducted on the occasion of the International Eucharistic congress which was held in India in that year. We were four in my group. One of my uncles, Fr. Antony Edanad, was also among them. He was younger to me and it was a relation from my mother's side. He was a scripture professor at Dharmaram College. The other two were Fr. Thomas Kalayil and Fr. Joseph Muttath. Bp. Tharayil was to ordain us together at one place. The ordination was conducted at Oval Stadium in Mumbai and there were 5 or 6 Bishops

for the ordination. Everything was arranged from Dharmaram college. We had arranged our first Mass on the next day. From my home, my parents and other relatives were present for the ordination. They had arranged a church in Mumbai for our first Mass next day. As we reached there for the first Mass we found no one at the Church. One Mr. Martin who belonged to the family of my sister helped us to make all arrangements for the first Mass. We celebrated the first Mass with all of them.

## What was your first Assignment in Bastar Mission?

If my memory is correct, we started our journey to Bastar on 26th June 1972. As mentioned earlier, Fr. Kurian Macheril and 3 CMC sisters were with me. Bishop Paulinus could not join us as he was under rest after an appendicitis operation. He joined us on 22nd July 1972. My first appointment was as parish priest in Jagdalpur. There was a small room for me along with the chapel which was used for the parishioners. I enjoyed my life as pastor together with the small herd there and it increased my zeal for mission.

## Did you face problem with language during those days? How could you gain proficiency in language?

I had already forgotten the Hindi which I learned earlier in Sagar. When I reached Sagar, we got tuition from two teachers. That helped us a lot and we started speaking without much difficulty. Therefore, it was not very difficult to speak Hindi as I reached Jagdalpur. I had also the chance to teach in English medium school in Sagar. After reaching Jagdalpur, I was sent to Ranchi to deepen my knowledge of Hindi. In order to have more vocabulary in Hindi, I also started studying the Gospel of Mark in Hindi. That helped me a lot to start giving short Homily on Sunday in Hindi. Through my language study in Ranchi, I could improve my Hindi vocabulary.

## How was the situation of the new Mission Region as it was entrusted to the Congregation?

Bastar was one of the most backward regions at that time. No development, no infrastructure. Three Pilar fathers were already working here in two centres. Besides, they had purchased a few plots of lands in different places. But we had to start practically from nothingness. Bishop Paulinus took care that we start centres in main places like- Bijapur, Geedom, Konta, Kondagaon, Kanker etc. He wanted that we start simple and simplicity become the character



istic of our life. From those centres he also wanted that we reach out to the interior villages.

## Do you have any unique experience during your missionary journey in Bastar Mission?

Majority among the tribals whom I served in the beginning were Bhatras. I started my contact with them from the very beginning. But these tribals, as a community, had made the decision earlier that they would never accept Christianity or join with Christians. I did not know of this. Still we maintained good relation with the tribals. That is why we could start more centres in Karithgaon and Chivurgaon. We had Food for work programme of CRS. We constructed a warehouse for keeping the goods of this programme and distributed the materials for them as incentive to do the developmental works in their own land like land levelling, road construction etc. Through this programme we had established good contact with the tribal people of Bakkawand and Karpawand areas. We could also start a school at Chivurgaon and MSMI sisters reached these centres through these initiatives in the villages for the tribals. These sisters lived in their villages, learned their language and dialect. The villagers themselves made all the necessary arrangements for their stay in the villages.

In the initial years, we did not face much problems in our activities. There was a food scarcity in Bastar in the year after our reaching Bastar. Through food for work programme we could help the people at the time of food scarcity. Besides, I had also selected some villages near to Jagdalpur. Thus, I could establish contact in Kumargaon, Koppaguda villages. We could also purchase some plots of land in these villages. Now DBS sisters are working in those places. During the beginning years, as the number of priests was less, I could not move out from Cathedral. But as Fr. Thomas Poothakuzhy replaced me in the Cathedral, I started concentrating in Karithgaon and Chivurgaon centres. I continued the food for work programme there. I found it as an effective means and took initiatives to construct warehouses as it was really needed. It gave relief to the people during drought period.

## What was your feeling as you were elected to be the second Bishop of the diocese of Jagdalpur

I was really surprised to read my appointment letter received from the Nuncio. I wrote back saying I am not qualified for it and I did not have any higher studies or higher degree in Theology. I also requested them to appoint somebody who is more qualified than me to this post. Nuncio wrote back telling that they made the appointment after studying all these



aspects and they were convinced that they made the right choice. Therefore, I did not have any reason now to deny the appointment. I accepted it now as the Will of God.

## How did you adjust to the new situations after your retirement? How do you view this change at present?

After retirement I wanted to spend my days at Karunyadham Ashram with Fr. Joseph Kavalam. But I could not reject the request of Fr. Provincial to go to the Novitiate as I was needed there. I accepted this suggestion joyfully. I did not have any difficulty to accept this suggestion. In Mardum I wanted to spend my time in solitude and prayer. Here in the novitiate too, I have the chance for that. The life of a religious becomes meaningful when he obeys the order of the religious superior. I was told that I was needed in Novitiate and I obeyed. I do not also feel that I am leading a retired life because then and now I continue to be a religious.

## Do you find any possibility to be active in the congregation again?

After the retirement I wished always to be back in my religious congregation. I cannot imagine religious bishops staying alone after retirement without coming back to the congregation. Therefore, I had informed Fr. Provincial of my desire to be back in the province and to go to Mardum. But, I am now in the novitiate. Since I told him that I am not able to keep the names of the novices in my memory, he assigned me as special confessor in the novitiate

## What contributed to the growth of the Jagdalpur mission?

As the mission was entrusted to the CMI congregation, we had only the CMI fathers in the mission at the beginning. Later we recruited a few diocesan priests. Bishop Paulinus also recommended to recruit vocation from the locality to the congregation. It was the hard work and the commitment of the CMI Fathers along with the sisters from different religious congregations that brought development in Jagdalpur mission. Bishop Paulinus, the first Bishop along with the CMI fathers gave right direction and leadership to the mission and thanks to their missionary zeal and spirit that we have the present mission.

## What is in your perspective the prospectus of

## the diocese and Congregation working together?

The success and scope of working together depends on the understanding of both the bishop and the provincial. Another factor is the readiness to give and take. If we work together mission will be successful. Co-operation also means reducing the distances between two parties.

## You served also as Novice Master in the congregation. How do you assess this period?

I was novice master for a short period. As Fr. Ligouri wanted to go back to Kerala because of the extreme hot weather in Manjeri, Rev. Fr. Thomas Aykara, then Prior General, asked me to take up the assignment as novice master. The only qualification I had was that I had attended a short course of Novice Masters. I was not an expert in giving classes to the Novices. But Fr. Mathew Kaniampampil, who returned from Rome after his studies, helped me in this regard and engaged many of the classes for the novices. I had a batch of 18 novices whom I had trained for the full period of their novitiate. Fr. Josey, the present Vicar General of CMI congregation, is my student. I did not have much difficulty with them. Since I knew them as I was also their provincial, my job became easy.


## What advice would you like to give to formees of the CMI Congregation and to the diocese?

We should try to learn the language, dialect and the culture of the people. Along with the language we also learn to appreciate the culture and customs of the people. Only then we will be able to make correct contact with the people and to mingle with them freely. Only when we speak their language and know their customs and cultures, people will accept us and we can establish contact with the people.

## What is your advice to the missionaries of Jagdalpur?

We should deepen our commitment and love to God. We can share with others what we really have. We should show through our life that we have something to share with the people. Our prayer life should inspire others to come to us. Our life witness is the best way to evangelize. We should initiate programmes that would benefit the people as well as they should feel that by approaching us they get special grace and blessings of the Lord. For that we should become men and women of God.



A photograph of a traditional building. The roof is made of dried palm leaves, some of which are hanging down. The wall is made of light-colored mud or plaster. On the left, there is a vertical wooden lattice structure. In the center, there is a blue door with a yellow base. The text is overlaid on the right side of the door.

We should try to learn the language, dialect and the culture of the people. Along with the language we also learn to appreciate the culture and customs of the people. Only then we will be able to make correct contact with the people and to mingle with them freely.



# COME THY TO DO WILL



Abraham  
Kochukarackal CMI

MAR JOSEPH KOLLAMPARAMPIL CMI

Diocese of Jagdalpur

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**M**ar. Joseph Kollamparampil CMI, the third bishop of Jagdalpur diocese, was enthroned to the seat of bishop on 16th July 2013. Mar. Joseph Kollamparampil is well known for his humility, leadership and scholarly approach. His long association with the mission and excellent rapport with all in Jagdalpur mission will stand in good stead. His experience and way of approach in formation and on-going formation of priests, religious and laity is very much appreciated everywhere in the diocese as well as in the Congregation. Bishop Joseph's commitment for quality education for the common people of the area is indisputable and many schools are opened in the diocese and also by many congregations and societies for the same purpose during his tenure as Bishop. His approach in evangelization and ecumenism along with inter-religious dialogue is also praise worthy and the result of these efforts are clearly visible in the diocese. With his humility, leadership ability, challenging but compassionate and unifying capacities and scholarly approach the diocese is growing to the heights.

Bishop Joseph Kollamparampil CMI was born at Cherpunkal, Kerala on 18 April 1958. He had his early education at St. Antony's School, Mutholy. After his high school education, he joined the Jagdalpur mission of the CMI Congregation in 1975. He had his aspirancy at Mutholy, Pala and higher secondary education in Bastar High School, Jagdalpur. He took his first religious profession on 3 June 1979 at Chethipuzha and final commitment on 1 January 1985. He was ordained priest on 6 May 1985. He did his regency at Kothagaon in 1982. He studied Philosophy at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore and theology at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. After his ordination he pursued M.Th. in Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (1985-1987). He took a Doctorate in Systematic Theology from St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University (Angelicum), Rome (1993-1996). He has served in a number of pastoral roles, including priest in-charge at Chindgarh in 1987, priest in-charge and manager of Vimal Vidyashram, Mariguda (1987-1989), team member of Vinayalaya, CMI novitiate at Bhanpuri (1989-90), Rector of minor seminarians at Karithgaon (1990-1991) and at Suman Ashram, Palligaon (1991-1993, 1999-2002), secretary to bishop and assistant to cathedral parish (1993), parish priest and rector of minor seminary at Dugoli (1996-1999), finance secretary of the CMI Nirmal Province Jagdalpur (2002-2005), master of the theology students at Samanvaya Theological College, Kolchoor (2005-2008), chancellor of the Eparchy of Jagdalpur and Chairman of the eparchial commission for catechism and evangelization (1999-2008) and provincial superior of the CMI Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur (2008-2011). He served as the Rector of Samanvaya from 2011 to 2013. He also rendered his services as the confessor of various congregations, spiritual director of seminarians, Formation coordinator of Nirmal Province and secretary to provincial. On 16 July 2013, he was appointed the third Bishop of Jagdalpur to succeed Bishop Simon Stock Palathra CMI, his predecessor. His Beatitude George

Cardinal Alencherry ordained him a bishop on 17 September 2013.

## BRAVE AND CHALLENGING NATURE

During the hours of controversy of Chivurgaon incident of destroying school building, Presbytery and Convent, a time of confused teenage era of the diocese of Jagdalpur, so much compulsion was there from the local Administration as well as from our own well-wishers to withdraw from the activities at Chivurgaon. But Bp Paulinus learned the mind of MSMI sisters who were working there and were willing to face any challenge and continue their service there for the poor, marginalised and uncared people of the area. Rev. Fr. Thomas Vadakumkara, the present provincial of Jagdalpur, recalls the event of a meeting held at the Bishop's house regarding the question of continuing the service in midst of such a difficult atmosphere in Chivurgaon. Bp. Paulinus was not in favour to discontinue the service there and enquired if any priest is willing to take up the task. With courage and earnestness, Fr. Joseph Kollamparampil (present Bishop) expressed his willingness to accept the challenges and it was a great comforting situation for Bp. Paulinus. Thus, the rebirth of the station was made possible and a rejuvenating energy to the members of the diocese. Such similar incidents are there to be seen in the life of Mar Joseph Kollamparampil CMI who is the Shepherd of Jagdalpur diocese. He is a brave and challenging person.

## COMPASSIONATE PERSONALITY

To the needy, especially the sick and afflicted Mar Joseph Kollamparampil is always ready to render any support and help with his kind heart. All those sick people, who are not economically stable and are coming to the hospital, if it comes to his knowledge, are supported very much financially and emotionally by the Bishop. While he was financial councillor of the province, he used to assist the poor and sick coming to the hospitals with the help of Rev. Sr. Dr. Merly DBS, who is serving in the government hospital at Jagdalpur. He has a special mission and kind heart for such needy people.

## CARING AND UNITING SHEPHERD

Difference of opinion is present in every community but the ability of the leader is very much depending on how they tackle those differences and establish unity among the members. And such cases of differences and conflicting situations speak of the leadership quality of Bishop Joseph with his vibrant but at the same time flexible nature, promoting unity of the community.

For, he faces any controversial issue very calmly and interact with all the persons concerned and finds a way out for the issues and thus brings them all united into one-fold treating all of them equally and caring them to unite with each other. His ability to tackle the issues are highly appreciated by all. As an expert in formation he has learned it by his ample experiences from the formation houses he has served in for a long time.

## MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS THE PULSE OF THE CULTURE OF BASTAR

During the mission webinar 2022, in connection with the Jubilee Year, we have experienced Mar Joseph Kollamparampil who explained voluminously how he had undergone special training and formation to learn the culture of the Bastar people. During those days he used to go to the villages very often, especially during the village feast of any sort to imbibe the spirit of Bastar culture like Hariyali, Navakani, Mela etc., etc. He was very close to the culture and practices of Bastar Region.

## COME TO DO THY WILL: A CONVINCED MISSIONARY

In his mission to save humanity, Christ Jesus always reminded us that he has come to do the will, not of himself. Similarly, Mar. Joseph Kollamparampil has taken up the will of the God to be with the rejected, isolated, needy, poor, marginalized people of Bastar and to cherish the will of God, he has daringly absorbed the motto of Jesus himself “come to do thy will”. He has no choice of himself other than that of the will of the Lord. Yes, he committed only for this cause: Bringing everyone without discrimination to the fold of humanity that Jesus revealed to us: THE KINGDOM OF GOD where all respect each other, support each other and promote co-existence.

## DREAM HE CHERISHES

In an interview with his excellency, he enumerated the objectives and dreams of the diocese as a shepherd “Reaching out to maximum people through loving services like social, educational, pastoral and health care activities. Thus, to proclaim and establish the kingdom of God by that to gather the people of Bastar, irrespective of caste and creed into one family (VasudevaKudumbakam) where all are brothers and sisters.

## PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES

To achieve the dreams, he has a clear plan of activities

through spiritual animation, qualitative and value-based education, involvement to create and maintain socio-economic equality, safe environment and better health for all for a happy living.

## PRESENT STATUS OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JAGDALPUR

More than 118 Priests, about 340 religious sisters and 8 Lay Brothers from different Congregations serve in the Diocese to bring the Good News to the people. Our services and presence make the tribal people believe that God cares and loves them though they are poor, downtrodden and far away from the mainstream of the society.

The majority of the Catholics are tribal and aboriginal people migrated from northern part of the state. The local people are attracted by the simple life and prayerful nature of our missionaries. They are amazed to see the missionaries in this remote barren and forest area leaving their own families and kith and kin. They could not understand the reason why they have come to this underdeveloped remote area. But slowly they realized that the missionaries are here not seeking any job opportunities, rather to work for their betterment. Majority of our people live in rural areas of the diocese. For them, the rural areas look more promising as agricultural land is cheaper and majority of them are marginal farmers. Many of them are very familiar and happy with our communities.



The diocese, under the leadership of His Excellency Mar Joseph Kollamparampil cmi, is planning to concentrate on following developmental issues such as (1) Education (2) Health (3) Women and Children (4) Youth (5) Laity and (6) Environment & Social Justice. Education and health will be prioritised everywhere because they are the foundations of any social growth. Yearly revision of the planning will be held in every grass root level communities. To implement the concept of Vasudevakudumbakam both ecumenism and inter religious dialogue programs will be conducted more often in the diocese along with spiritual animation activities. The media face available in the diocese will be restructured for the purpose. To realize the motto “Come to do Thy Will”, we may have to travel a lot further ahead.



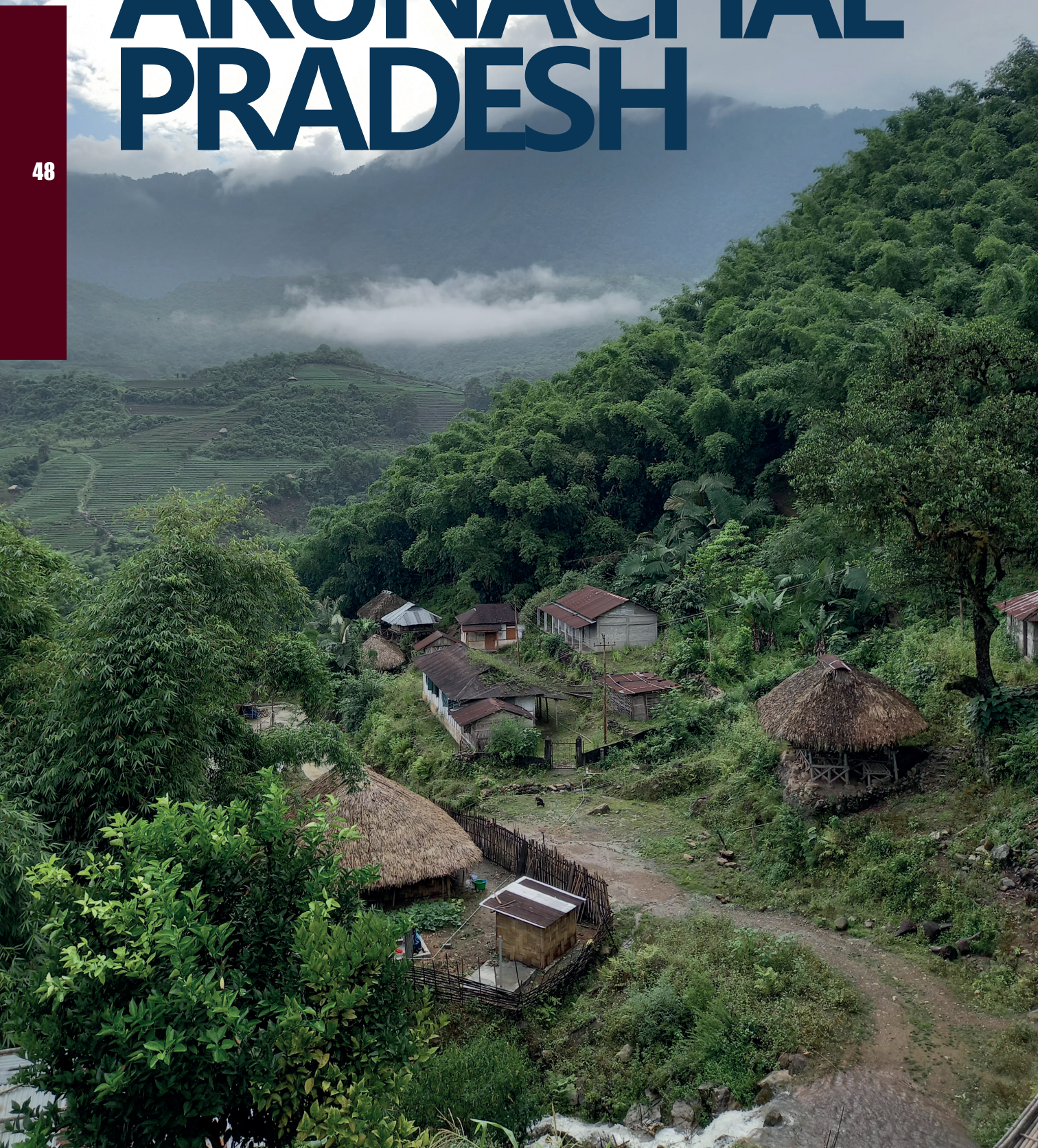
**B**ishop Joseph Kollamparambil, CMI is known for his humble nature, positive attitude, leadership abilities, and scholarly approach towards everything. His long and influential approach in the mission and in the missionary activities, his excellent rapport and support with all the stake holders of the mission, his commitment and readiness, etc are effective strategies for the holistic development of the mission.





# ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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# A Mission Travelogue



Justin Akkara CMI  
Bhopal

I started writing this note from our rented house in Tuting on 24 February. Today we are supposed to go to a place called Singha which is about 100 kms from Tuting. A new road is being built to the last outpost in the Indian territory. However, it rained in the night and continue to drizzle and the journey was cancelled. Hence, I thought to write this note to share with you.

The whole of Arunachal Pradesh is sparsely populated, and the land is hilly and roads are rough. Electricity and network are erratic. However, the roughness of land and the difficulty of the area is more than compensated by the beauty of the hills and rivers. If you are filled with love for people and are burning with the zeal of Elijah, you will be content and happy and there is much to do.

I am writing this travelogue in appreciation and with a sense of wonder about our members working in Arunachal Pradesh. They are a beautiful bunch of flowers trying to bring the presence of the Lord among the people. All of them are enthusiastic about their life and completely immersed in their mission. The focus on mission enables them to go beyond all differences and face all the difficulties.

Pope Francis in his Joy of the Gospel speaks about those who look to a 'brighter horizon of utopian future' EG 222. Our Missionaries in Arunachal Pradesh belong to this category. 'This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us patiently to endure difficulties and adverse situations, and inevitable changes in our plans. It means being concerned about initi-

ating processes; what we need after all is to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events. Struggling against enormous difficulties, missionaries open out such suitable processes and have concern for the long run. (EG 225). Our mission in Arunachal Pradesh is an example of this process.

I started my journey from Bhopal on 20 February. I spent one day in Delhi with Fr. Anto. He is doing well in the Parish and community is energetic and motivated. I flew from New Delhi to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh via Guwahati. It seems that I am the first one among us to make use of flight service to Pasighat. It is recently started. It is erratic and depend very much on the climate. Fr. Paulson was there to receive me and Boleng is about 2.30-3.00 hrs travel from Pasighat. Road is good and travel was pleasant. We had to take a diversion because of landslide on the road. Though at times chilly and cold, the climate is pleasant. The season of severe cold is over and the people and the land is preparing for summer and rains. Fr. Lijo was in Boleng to take me to Tuting. I have spent the night at Boleng and started the journey to Migging at about 5.30 in the morning with Fr. Lijo.

The road to Migging is under construction. Unlike earlier times (usually GREF undertakes the construction work in the boarder areas) the construction work is given to private contractors mostly from Uttarakhand. Heavy machineries are at work, levelling the hills and making plain the valleys. It seems to be a herculean task and apparently endless.

May be next time we shall have good and all-weather roads soon. We have reached Migging at about 3.00 pm. We had some rice and chicken from a local hotel on the way. I have spent one day at Migging where Fr. Shaju is looking after the Christian communities in the nearby villages with new energy and hope. He is staying in a two-room wooden house given by the community for the priest to stay. It is cosy and but very cold in the night. The construction work of the Church and priest's residence at Migging is going on. It is about half kms away from the village on a new road that is being constructed to connect Arunachal Pradesh on the upper side. Considering the terrain and distance, it may take a few years to complete.

We have visited a place called Bono (hope I got it right). It is about 18 kms from Migging and we went there to see the snow. Unfortunately, most of the snow is already melt but we could see patches of snow on the road and nearby. Fr. Cejo joined us at about 9.30 am. He came by line Sumo from Tuting. Together we have reviewed the construction of the church and what should be done further. We are planning to have the blessing of the church by the end of May. Though much is to be done, things are going on as planned. Migging is a small village and everything for the construction must be brought from elsewhere. It makes the construction very costly and time-consuming. I thank all our fathers who are helping the construction of the church. It is costing more than what we initially planned.

The road construction is going on in the nearby area. We hope that within two-three years we may have better and wider roads. The people at Migging have shown their willingness to offer a few more acres of land adjacent to the existing plot of land. All together it is a quite big plot of land about 15 acres; some hilly and some plain. However, at present we can't do much in the land as it needs huge investment in terms of development, fencing etc.

We started from Migging to Boleng in the afternoon. The road is comparatively good. Construction work is going on at most of the places. Near to Tuting the road is quite wide and almost completed. Considering the terrain and distance the road is a miracle happening. We reached home at about six in the evening. Some of the parishnors were waiting for us. In the 'paggar' (traditional kitchen) the fire was burning. In the morning we have visited the new road made to the church. Though the church was built at the site for the last many years and was rebuilt in the last year, there was no proper road. Fr. Cejo, with the cooperation of all, was able to negotiate will all the neighbours, mainly Buddhists to give land for the construction of the road. It was possible only because of the gentle nature of Fr. Cejo to go along with all the people of the area. The parish community spent days and nights doing labour for cutting the hills and paving it with stones. Much work is to be done. Local Govt has already agreed to construct the retaining walls and complete the road construction, which is very costly and something that we can't afford by ourselves.

We came to Tuting in November 2016 and till now we are staying in a rented house of four rooms. At present the Province is planning to build a priest residence near the Parish. We hope to start the work by April. Together with Fr. Cejo and Lijo we visited the proposed site near the Church. Since there is not much space we may have to go for a multistorey building. The Diocese owns a plot of land about three kms from Tuting on the main road which was given to the Province when we have taken over the Parish. Fr. Cejo was able to level a part of the land with the help of PWD department. We have given only the Diesel charge for the machine. It may take few more weeks to complete. We hope to construct some institution for the welfare of the people soon. Sunday Mass was a joyous occasion celebrating with the local community. After the mass there was small welcome program with songs and dance.





On Monday we started back to Boleng at 7.00 AM. On the way we stopped at Migging to pick up Fr. Shaju. We had our meals on the way from a beautiful but local hotel near a river. We reached Boleng at about 6.00 pm. It was about 11 hours of continuous journey. With the company of Frs. Cejo and Shaju it was never boring and it was an enriching experience of shared views of their experiences and observations of the culture and people of the land. Fr. Paulson was waiting at our house in Boleng and in the night we have played rummy for some time.

Next day we have visited the plot of land bought by the Province at Boleng. It is about 4.5 acres of land and before purchasing the land we have made sure to fence it with the help of the owner to avoid any dispute in the future. The land is in the town itself near to the Police Station. It is less than two kms from our existing house. There is no gate for the land, and I had to jump over the fence which was not so easy with my big body.

The land is near a valley and it is an irrigated paddy field. There are about 40 orange plants in the land. It is a steep terraced land. For any sort of construction, we have to make a road and level the grounds. It is practically true for any plot of land in Arunachal Pradesh. We had some discussion about the use of the land in the future. It is good for a quality school as Boleng is a developing town and the headquarters of the District of Siang.

By noon Fr. Martin has come back from Kerala. Since it was a sunny day some of us did our laundry. (Sunny days are rare and we must make use of it). In the evening we had a common meeting with all the fathers except Fr. Lijo who remained in Tuting. We discussed the current developments and possible future plan of action for the mission especially for strengthening the Christian community.

Next day was Ash Wednesday. It was a fasting day and we had the service in the afternoon. On 3rd of March I started my return journey at 6.00 am. I used the regular taxi service to Pasighat. The distance between Boleng to Pasighat is about 100 Kms. In the present situation it takes about three hours to reach with teabreak in between. The regular taxi charges Rs.500/- for one way trip. It is convenient that the taxi picks up the passengers from their residence. My taxi was a Winger with 13 seats. There were only eight passengers and the journey was pleasant and comfortable. At Pasighat I used another taxi, again a Winger, to continue my journey to Dibrugarh in Assam which is about 150 kms. The taxi charge is Rs.500/- I had my brunch at Pasighat. Again there were less passengers and journey was comfortable. The road to Dibrugarh goes through the newly constructed bridge at Boghiweel across the Brahmaputra, one of the longest in India. It took about three hours to reach Dibrugarh at about 1.30 in the afternoon. At Dibrugarh I stayed in the convent of MSMHC sisters (who are working in St. Paul School, Bhopal) adjacent to the Bishops house, for the night. My flight from Dibrugarh was on 4th morning to Indore.

The days I spent with our fathers in Arunachal Pradesh was very enriching. It has made me think about our mission in life. No matter where we are or what we are doing, we can do much if we are clear about our call and mission in life. There is joy and hope in the air which is permeated in all aspects of our life.

The spirit of the lord is tangibly alive on these hills. The prophesy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, It shall come to pass in the later days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say; come let us go to the mountain of the Lord.. that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths (Is 2: 2-3).



CMIssion Series

When

God



4

Called

Paulson Muthipeedika CMI  
Bhopal On His Usri mission



We had a few Dalit students in our school. These were considered untouchables in the village. They were made to sit separate for any common function in the village like marriage, death anniversary etc. They were not served tea in the village tea shop with same kind of cup as with others. We thought of bringing about some change in this regard at least in the mind of the young students in the school. So, we introduced food sharing programme in which each student was encouraged to share a bit of food from his / her tiffin with the student sitting right and left to him / her while they sat in the long veranda for lunch in our school. Most of the students liked it and they shared tiffin enthusiastically with their neighbours. But students especially who were sitting close to the students belonging to the Dalit students did not do it and reported it at family. So, some of the parents

came to me asking me to stop that practice as they told that it was very unhygienic to share tiffin. In the first instance I told that it was the policy in the school and all should follow this norm. But when they insisted that it was not possible, I agreed that only those who wanted

to share tiffin need to share it with others. So, the parents were satisfied and they went back home happily. But again a few days after, a few more parents came to ask me to stop that programme as they told that their students were feeling pressurized as most of the students were sharing and only their children were not doing it. Then I told that we could not stop it as most of the students enjoyed it and if their children had any reservation towards that, they were absolutely free not to do it and there was no pressure what soever from the side of the school in this regard. So, they were satisfied and went home. But the same issue came up during the next parent teacher meet and a few parents raised the issue. I told them very politely that it was not mandatory and only those liked it should do it. So, the issue was settled even in the parent teacher meet in which over 300 parents were present out of about 400 students in the school then. But after two weeks a group of 50-60 parents and a few villagers came to school and demanded to stop the tiffin sharing programme altogether. I told them quite calmly that it was not mandatory and only those who liked to do it should do that and no pressure would be exerted on those who were not doing it in anyway. But they were not satisfied and insisted that that programme should be done away with altogether. Then I told them that they were only 60 out of about 400 students in the school and if the others wanted to continue that pro-

gramme, I could not stop that just because some of you did not like it. But it was not acceptable to them either. We talked over this issue again and again for over one hour, both parties sticking to their own stands. At last I asked them to leave as I had many other works to do. They went out of my office but did not move out of the campus. They tried calling up more people and friends from Sangh Parivar, but since we did not have proper mobile connectivity in the school, they did not succeed in getting more people. But in the afternoon, they called up the police and four police personnel came to my office along with the people who were still in the campus. I explained the issue to the police constables and said it was optional and not mandatory. The police said it was perfectly ok, then what was the issue. But the people insisted that the programme should be done away with altogether. I stood my ground and was not willing to give in to their demands. But then the people started getting aggressive and there were slogan shouting and more commotion. Now the police told me that it was better that I agreed to their demand as the situation was getting out of control. I also sensed a feeling if the people should manhandle me, I agreed to their demand and promised them that the next day during the morning assembly in the school I would announce that the food sharing programme was totally stopped. With this the people were satisfied and went away. But it shattered me completely as well the staff. The parents and people who had come, I knew most of them by name and they were not willing to listen to me, was very shocking for me and the staff. So, dejected, we decided to stop all the extra activities other than teaching and learning in the school. But soon we found that it had a very laxing impact on the students as they stopped doing home work and even proper learning. So, we reintroduced all activities other than tiffin sharing programme. Then students slowly started coming back to the normal learning level. But my heavy feeling for those parents continued though one or two had come to apologize and had normal relationship with them. It was the year when Pope Francis became the new Pope. For his first Maundy Thursday as Pope he had announce to go to one of the prisons in Rome to wash the feet of the prisoners including two women. It was already a hot news, even Indian main stream TV channels announced that through news scrolls. When I saw this on our TV, I thought I should also do some thing similar. I got the idea that I would call the leaders of the parents who had come to our school to oppose us, for Maundy Thursday and wash their feet. I put this suggestion to our small Catholic community including the Sisters. They said that it was good and if I as the priest who was to do it, had no problem, they too did not have any problem with it. So, we sent invitation letter to 12 leaders of the people informing about washing the feet and inviting them for the feet washing ceremony. Out of 12, 11 came to the Maundy Thursday ceremony. One was out of station. During the introduction to the holy mass and during the homily I spoke in details about the significance of washing the feet as Jesus had done to his disciples

and Pope Francis was doing it with the prisoners in Rome. After the homely I washed their feet and kissed the feet. It was really a heart touching experience for them and my heavy feelings and burden were removed as I could reconcile with them with washing their feet. It was for the first time that any of them had attended our Holy Mass. After the mass they all said it was a great experience and we shared some snacks with them. Then onwards they all became our great friends and collaborators.

During the feast of Raksha Bandhan we organized a prayer service in our church and invited over 100 people from the village for it. Most of the invited came for the prayer service. We had reading from Holy Bible and also from their scripture. We prayed for them and their sisters and brothers. After the prayer service many of them spoke about the significance of the feast of the Raksha Bandhan. We also gave a message on the occasion, of course quoting from Bible.

Whenever we had Diwali Milan and Christmas Milan programme in the school with the parents and villagers, we started the programme not just with a prayer song but with a short prayer service with songs, readings from different scriptures and intercessory prayers for the people. We felt the need to give more chances to the people to participate in our prayers and listen to Word of God.

When I was at Yesu Ashram in Bhopal we had a Christmas Milan Samaroh for the villagers in 2017. We invited our associates including the Sarpanch and ward members and neighbours for this celebration. Over 90 people gathered for this Christmas Gathering. I gave the message of Christmas explaining well about Christmas, Jesus Christ and Christianity. Some of the people also spoke on the occasion. All participated in the Christmas dinner.

At our Provincial House in Bhopal city, a Christmas Gathering for our neighbours was organized the following year. There were over 80 people who came for the gathering from the neighbouring apartments and houses. We gave the Christmas message, had some group games for them and snacks were distributed to them. We also provided copies of New Testament and told them if any of them wanted to have a free copy of Bible they were free to have it. Four or five people took the copies of the New Testament provided. The next year we again organized Christmas Gathering for the neighbours in the Provincial House. This time some of them also spoke on Christmas, sang songs, told some jokes etc. Of course, there was message from us as well explaining Christmas, Jesus Christ and Christianity. We had provided copies of Bible this year as well.


When I was at St. Antony's church, Dwaraka Nagar, Bhopal as parish priest, we organized a Christmas Milan Samaroh for the neighbours of our parishioners in 2019. We had in-

itation cards and asked our parishioners to invite five or more of their neighbours for the gathering. Over 350 came for this Christmas celebration in which the local MLA was the chief guest and DSP was the special guest. The Vicar General of Archdiocese of Bhopal presided over the function. The parishioners presented songs, dances, small skit on Christmas etc on the occasion. We gifted the dignitaries with a complete Bible each and free copies of New Testament were provided for the people to have it. 13 copies of Bible were taken away by the people during the celebration.

As principal in the school I got many chances to address the students, staff and parents. I made it a point to speak to them with some reference to Word of God every time. During the Gandhi Jayanti on second October we used to take out a rally to Usri village with students shouting slogans, displaying placards etc to bring about awareness on cleanliness and sanitation. This was before Swachh Bharath Abiyan. The students used to put up a street play at the village square during the rally in which many villagers used to attend. Some of the students also spoke about the need and importance of cleanliness and sanitation. I too gave the message on the need to be clean and keep the surroundings neat and tidy. I referred to Gospel and told that not only our surroundings and body but our heart and mind also had to be clean. Though I told them that it is from Bible, nobody had any objection that I was quoting from the Bible in the village square publicly.

Once during the parent teacher meet in our school, we printed out the last testament of St. Chavara - Chavarul - in Hindi and distributed it to all the parents present for the meet. Then during my message to them I explained to them clearly telling them that it was from our founder St. Chavara and they would do well to follow that to bring up their children well. It was well taken by the parents. Nobody had any objection that we were propagating Christian teachings in the school. Some of the parents came to tell me that it was very good.





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“

I am a mission, always;  
you are a mission, always;  
every baptized man  
and woman is a mission.



Dear,

Every baptized  
is a missionary.  
We can become  
a missionary in different ways,  
in whatever situation you are.  
St Therese of Child Jesus,  
Patron of missionaries  
had never been to a mission yet was  
a missionary to the core of her heart.  
She became a missionary  
by praying for  
the mission and the missionaries.  
So CMission offers  
the forum to become  
a missionary by praying  
for the missionary.  
Those who are interested- parishes  
families, religious communities,  
retreat centres, and prayer centres-  
can adopt missionaries and  
pray for them.

Those who wish to join,

## One Family One Missionary Prayer Programme

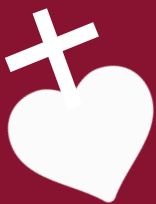
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Mission work is not a second class  
work, it is the primary work  
of the Church.

**Late, Canisius Kachiramattam CMI**



Chosen ones are ready for it.  
Let's always do it together.



# Mission Meditation

Jebin Jose CMI

## The Play of Dialogue



Entering into a conversation worthy of the name dialogue, is all about a play between I and the other. In this it is not a matter that who wins or fails rather who understands the other in a better way. In other words true dialogue happens only when I understand the other more positively and personally. Moreover, it is an acceptance of and appreciation of the others' ideologies along with what is mine. Now let's look at what is I and other in a dialogical process.

Normally, ideologies from a subjective point of view are understood in terms of I which has a superior dimension and the freedom to be dominant and personal. On the contrary other is considered from an objective point of view and compared to I the other is inferior and always subservient to I.

This phenomenon coins many binaries of superior and inferior notions in the process of creating ideologies like majority and minority, man and women, white and black, west and east, centre and peripheries, occidental and oriental etc... in the society. These are socially constructed notions which need to be corrected. It means the subjective objective dimensions must be reconstructed in order to have a better understanding of one's and others ideologies.

The openness of I to understand the notion of the other is always a challenging task. In religion, dialogues between/among different ideologies are essential and necessary. And if any religion takes the role of I, means a subjective, superior, centre, major, and consider the other as objective, inferior, peripheries, minor; a true dialogue will not happen. Therefore to have a meaningful dialogue; the 'normal play' of I and other must change into an 'interplay'. In other words, I must enter into the space of other and other must be allowed to occupy the space of I. It means I must take the risk of inferiority in order to make other superior. This is the philanthropic and positive vision a society must have towards all other forms of ideologies, irrespective of religion, politics, culture, caste and creed etc... We have beautiful examples for this interplay of I and other. In the Gospel of St. John we see Jesus enters into the space of Samaritan woman to speak about the nature of true worship which is in spirit and truth in spite of different religious and political controversies. (John 4) St. Paul could win over the gentiles in preaching of Gospel; since he had the quality to enter into the "others" world by accepting their space like culture, language, politics and conjoining the mysteries of Jesus Christ into them. (Rom 15:7-13, 1 Cor 10: 23-33) Even in our context, Vandanamathaji was appreciated by UCA news that, "Mataji's practice of Christianity in a land of rooted Hinduism assures us that it is a loving religion that promotes peace and cordiality, despite what other people say about Christians forcible conversion of Hindus."

Pope Francis' recent visit to Egypt can be considered as a welcoming step from the part of Egypt towards Christian religion which is 10% (among this 10%, are Catholics) among the 90 % Muslim population. His entry into the space of Egypt was a step of true dialogue and an inter play of understanding each other for a better future. There he addressed the Christian community and invited them to be a positive presence in the Egyptian society. He pointed out the significance of interreligious dialogue and proposed three notions to enact it. they are: the duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and the sincerity of intentions. (Vidyajyothi, June 2017).

Reaching out to the space of the other by putting one's ego down is the real character of any religiosity. Therefore ideologies, especially religious ones, must go beyond the subjective/objective normalities into a point of convergence, where truth and unity of religions flow and constitute the vision of real humanity. It is like a sangam of two independent rivers into one and flowing without any difference.

# Mission Villages

and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can rise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Mt 3: 9).

This word of God has, in all the sense, become true in the land of Bastar where we have many indigenous communities coming to Christianity. Mardum Mission is one of those indigenous communities where tribal people belonging to Gond tribe constitute the majority.



# Mardum Village



Anu Vellappally CMI  
Jagdalpur

-The speciality of this community is that this is for the first time that we have a response from such a tribal group of Gonds to accept the Christian faith. These tribals are from the region called Bastar where we have been involved in witnessing Gospel since 1972.

This community is strengthened in faith and nourished with the sacraments through the pastoral care of CMI priests, Don Bosco Lay Sisters and SABS sisters, respectively. This community is an authentic witness to the command of our Lord; "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the holy Spirit" (Mt 28: 19). Today we have strong catholic communities in Mardum united under St. Alphonsa church, Kasturpal.

## The Starling Face

Mardum is a very interior village almost 70 km away from Jagdalpur city. There were a few Christian Families without any pastoral care. A pastor from a protestant church was caring for this community many years ago. But gradually, this community was left with no pastoral care since the protestant pastors did not turn to this community for many

years. So in 2006, these families from Kasturpal met the then Bishop of Jagdalpur, Mar. Simon Stock Palathra CMI and requested pastoral assistance from the Diocese. Considering the felt need of the faithful, Bishop entrusted the new mission to CMI fathers. In the beginning, the Don Bosco Lay sisters started to live in a small hut at Kasturpal and started teaching the faithful our catholic prayers and liturgy. Our pioneering fathers of this mission used to visit this community on every Friday and Sunday, travelling 70 to 80 kilometers from Jagdalpur and other mission centers to cater to their spiritual needs. As a result of the pastoral services given by the CMI fathers and Don Bosco Lay Sisters, many people joined our faith. More than 150 tribal catholic families, consisting of more than 700 members, are under our pastoral care now. In the early stage of its growth, villagers themselves took the initiative to construct a temporary village chapel, a small hut, for prayer and gatherings in a plot of land offered by one of our faithful himself. These families are scattered in different villages which are far away from the centre. However, on Sundays and Fridays, they all come from other villages to the place of worship to participate in the Eucharistic celebration and spend time in prayer.

Now more and more people are thronging to our church seeking God's experience, healing, blessings, peace of mind, etc.

## Mardum Now

Today when we look back to the long 16 bygone years of our service among Gond Tribes in Mardum, we can proudly say that our selfless services and hard work have been recognized and acknowledged by the people in the village now. Mardum was not the same when we started our mission in the village. Our presence in the village has brought changes in all the spheres of society. The development of the Mardum was the prime concern of the province all these years.

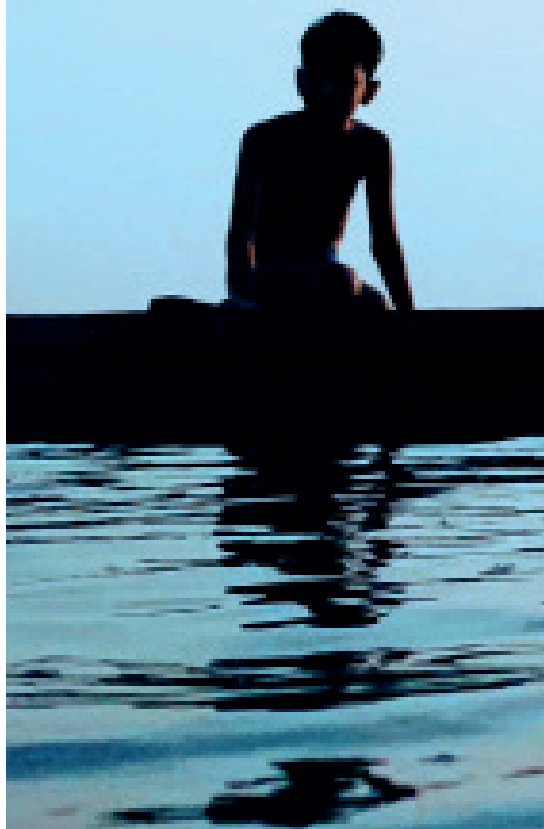
For the education of the tribals and underprivileged children, the province has started an English medium school, Christ Public School, in 2014 in the Mardum village. The school has grown up to 5th standard, and more than 150 village students are given free education in our school. And also we provide hostel facilities for boys and girls from far away villages since daily commuting to these villages is impossible for them. The social work wing of our province has been working for the people in the village in collaboration with National and International NGOs to alleviate the plight of the people of the village. The NGOs focus on the welfare of women, children and families. Women's self-help groups are formed, and skill development training is given to them. They also work for the eradication of malnutrition deficiency among children and women. They run many social welfare programs from which all people of the Mardum village benefit.

In the starting face of this mission, priests used to come from far away stations to administer sacraments in the Mardum church. But now, a full-time parish priest is available since the new CMI community has been started to live in the new house built for the cmi priests in the Mardum village. A new parish church has been blessed by Bp. Mar. Joseph Kollamparambil CMI in 2021 at Kasturpal with the help of Missio München. Many more small prayer centers have been built in the faraway villages with the help and support of the villagers. On Sundays, more than seven holy masses are offered in different centers of the parish.

## Spiritual Life

"Truly, I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. (Mt 8:10) If Jesus had visited Mardum community now, I am sure he would have repeated the exact words again to them. Such is the faith of the people that they don't go home empty handed but with the blessing of the Lord after the Eucharistic celebration and prayers. They strongly believe in the words of Jesus that all that you ask for in prayer believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. (Mk 11:

For the education of the tribals and underprivileged children, the province has started an English medium school, Christ Public School, in 2014 in the Mardum village. The school has grown up to 5th standard, and more than 150 village students are given free education in our school.







24) When they fall ill or are faced with any difficulties or uncertainties, they first turn to God. Like Hannah in the book of 1 Samuel, these people also spend days after days in prayer and fasting, seeking blessings either in the parish church or in the prayer centers built for them in different villages. Praying and worshipping God with them was really an experience for me. From children to old, praise and worship God in one voice, closing their eyes and stretching their hands to heaven. It is their genuine experience of God that binds them in Christ. Every faithful in the village has some God experience to tell us. I would like to share one or two occasions that touched the core of my spiritual life.

Pooran Karttami was a 55-year-old man from Anjer village which is 10 km away from Kasturpal parish. He was completely paralyzed after a severe stroke which made him confine himself in the bed all the time. His family tried everything, including 'Jadhu Dona' (Black Magic), to make him walk. But nothing could heal him. As a last resort, they approached us and requested us to pray over him. Sr. Mariam SDB along with a few parishioners went to his home and prayed over him. As they were praying for him, he struggled hard to stand on his legs, and miraculously he stood straight without anybody's support. But he couldn't stand long. He fell down. That was a great sign of a miracle for everyone. They continued to pray for him for two more weeks and by this time, he was completely cured. After this incident, the whole family was converted to Christianity.

Phulo was in her 40s when she was diagnosed with cancer in its last face. She was admitted to the MBM hospital Jagdalpur. Soon her health deteriorated, and she was moved to ICU care. Since medical science had nothing to do with anything more, the doctors left her to her fate. Doctors even told her relatives that she would not live more than a week. Her family approached us to pray for her. Sr. Mariam SDB and a few other parishioners together prayed over her for two weeks and she miraculously regained her health, started to eat food and slowly came back to normal life. She died after a long three years of normal life.

These people also spend days after days in prayer and fasting, seeking blessings either in the parish church or in the prayer centers built for them in different villages. Praying and worshipping God with them was really an experience for me. From children to old, praise and worship God in one voice, closing their eyes and stretching their hands to heaven.







## Challenges

It wasn't easy at all to develop this mission to the present stage. What we have now is the toil and moil of many of our CMI priests and SDB Lay Sisters. A number of times we were threatened by RSS workers. One day hundreds of RSS workers came from Jagdalpur to demolish our church and convent where our SDB sisters stay. When they rushed to the church to desecrate it, they saw our sisters praying in the church. They made a commotion there and asked sisters to move out of the church, but they continued praying quietly. After a few minutes all of them have vanished from the scene without doing any damage to the church or to the convent. We still face many challenges from RSS groups. Our faithful are also intimidated and forced to abjure their faith. Our faithful are ostracized and secluded from the social life where they are a minority. The stigma of being Christian goes so severe when they are denied of burial places in their village when our faithful die. Amidst all these challenges and difficulties we keep on doing the work of our father. Our motto is "Vasudaiva Kudumbakam" and our prayer is "Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu"



# Frontier Missionary

# FM

**P**remdham Ashram is an adobe the last, the least and lost in the society. It is located in najibabad, a small town in Bijnor District, Uttar Pradesh. The ashram was founded in 2009 and is run by enthusiastic team of volunteers led by Father. Shibu Thomas and Benny Thekkekara. All the inmates of the ashram are orphans and destitute who are either mentally, and/ or physically challenged or differently able and terminally ill. The organization provides care and love to all its inmates irrespective of their caste, creed or religion without any discrimination. Premdham depends mostly on the goodwill and support provided by the local people. This continues to remain one of the greatest strengths of the organization over the last 12 years, seeing it through all unforeseen challenges along the way.



# Premdham Ashram



Julia Kujur  
Delhi

Compiled by Ajomon CMI

Premdham Ashram is an abode for the last, the least and the lost in the society. It is located in Najibabad, a small town in Bijnor District, Uttar Pradesh. The ashram was founded in 2009 and is run by an enthusiastic team of volunteers led by Father Shibu Thomas and Benny Thekkekkara. All the inmates of the ashram are orphans and destitute who are either mentally, and/or physically challenged or differently able and terminally ill. The organization provides care and love to all its inmates irrespective of their caste, creed or religion without any discrimination.

The seed of this noble cause was sown many years ago in the heart of these men. They have diligently carried their dreams through their formative years, nurturing and testing them at various stages along the way. Long hours of prayer, meditation, reflection and discussions have gone into deepening their faith and convictions. They were actively encouraged and motivated by their peers and fellow priests. Once they were fully convinced of the will of the Lord and their own personal preferences, both Father Shibu and Father Benny took the courageous step of starting the mission of Premdham and serving the underprivileged and unwanted. A non-descript and sleepy north Indian town of Najibabad in Bijnor District in the state of Uttar Pradesh. On March 19th 2009, their dreams bore fruit with the establishment of Premdham as an abode for the unwanted, abandoned and unloved. True to its literal meaning, Premdham turned out to be an abode of love, loved ones and love givers. Since then, the portals of Premdham remain open to anyone irrespective of caste, creed, color, religion, language or nationality. In short, love reigns here.

Premdham works for the holistic development of an individual, especially the differently abled and abandoned ones; be it physical, mental, intellectual, psychological, emotional and spiritual development of the inmates. The various activities in the organization revolve around these objectives in order that they become better human beings. This is also true for all those who interact or volunteer for Premdham; a slow but definite growth in their personal life.

A structured daily activity routine is the central feature at Premdham. For the inmates with different abilities, the opportunity to work gives a new meaning and dimension to

their life where they can apply their latent skills and abilities in an encouraging environment.

A person with good health in body, mind, spirit alone is able to live a happy and contented life. Inmates of Premdham when they arrive lack this in some or other measure. Therefore, the emphasis is to improve the personal health and hygiene of each and every individual in the best possible manner.

The organization believes that all things depend on God for their existence and they all unfailingly return to him at the end of the life's journey on the earth. The prayerful atmosphere of the organization engages the inmates in yoga, meditation, daily prayers etc. The spiritual activities, undoubtedly, lead all the inmates to be more contented and joyful which enlivens the whole organization environment.



# For Mission

The Seasons of Summer, Winter, Autumn, and Spring give us all a varied experience of nature. Every season has its specialties and goodness to hand over to coming seasons. Every season is interlinked with each other, one complementing the other to fulfill the cycle of our wonderful nature. The seasons of Autumn and Spring are enjoyable times, Winter is bearable, and we do not have the so-called season of Monsoon.



-The season of summer is comparatively very warm having the temperature of 40°C to around 55°C in our Samanvaya campus, Bhopal. Luckily, we all leave Samanvaya for the summer holidays during April, henceforth we normally do not struggle much by being exposed to the scorching heat of the sun. When our campus home is all alone without the mischievous presence of its kith and kin, it does not go for a nap but instead, with more enthusiasm and care, it keeps on protecting and nurturing all varieties of species that live on our campus. Sometimes I wonder and use to observe the credibility of nature for its immiscible potency to nurture all its members. The bees that surround the flowers, the squirrels which climb all the trees even during off seasons, the birds that sing every morning, the fish which swim in our water pond, even the mosquitoes that thirst for blood everybody is fed, nobody starves, and everybody is given shelter even the tree stand as dry wood, that is our mother earth. The wonder of God's creation.

Samanvaya theology college, Bhopal is surrounded by cities, lakes, schools, colleges, and people of good faith. The people of our area are mainly Christians, from Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. People of compassion and love. They are Government employees and School staff, whose residence is amid cities. We live in an enclosure where the gentle breeze visits, the birds remind us to rise, the flowers wave their petals, the plants dance to wish us a good day, and even privileged to listen to the song played by the corporation of the municipality every day by which we develop our waste management system eco-friendly.

The time has come for Samanvaya to update the existing system of our former running status and now it is in the process of being updated. Our predecessors were blessed to have the campus-friendly context to integrate their theology in Jagadapur and Rishikesh respectively. The Tribalism and the Darsan of Holy River Ganges and Sages now became a non-visualized dream for the Samanvaya updating generation. The integrated vision of Samanvaya from text to context has limited its territory for textual analysis. Thus, today we miss the paradise of our dream, but we will never give up our dreams to the circumstances to be blamed. Instead, we create an ambiance for our contextual realization, fostering an attitude of bloom where you are planted. Thus, we have social work ministry in different villages nearby, where all our brothers go and teach the students of poor villages all Wednesdays and we go for pastoral ministry every Sunday since Samanvaya, is attached with a parish under the Arch Diocese of Bhopal.

The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it. As Einstein said, we learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.



# Nature From a Window Seat

A Samanvayic View

Amal Mannuserry CMI  
Bhopal

71



# Best Practices

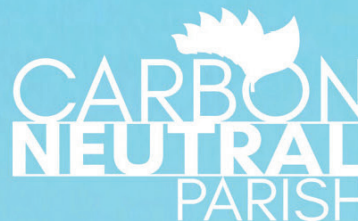
# BP

There is an inner connectedness between man and Nature. Man cannot live without Nature, and Nature can continue its existence - without Man. It is the fundamental duty of the humankind to protect the Mother Earth from exploitation. Carbon Neutral Village is a project which we have done in the Kandankary Ward of Champakulam Village – Alappuzha District, Kerala.



This initiative is done by the leadership of a parish in Kuttanadu, named St. Joseph's Church, Kandankary - Arch Diocese of Changanacherry. This project was conducted by Fr. Rajeev Palakkacherry. Concept and creation of "Carbon Neutral Parish and Village" done by "Idea Factory" (it is a Think Tank in Kuttanadu- Kainakary.) Through this project we have tried our best to conscientize the villagers about the reduction of carbon emission. The carbon emission is increasing day by day. Everybody should get basic awareness about this ecological degradation. In the village level we can do much changes. Through this project we have created different sub projects and they really helped to motivate people for the welfare of the village and protection of Nature. The Encyclical of Pope Francis "Laudato Si" was the central message of this movement. The code book of Carbon Neutral Parish is the Laudato Si and document of Amazonian Synod in Rome. Our central concern was the reduction of Carbon Emission. At least the carbon reduction from village level. The Kandankary parish is situated the central part of Champakulam village. Around 500 families are residing in this village. It is a village, where all religious people are living in harmony. Project Kandankary village started with 15 projects and still people are continuing those projects in their own way. More than that the awareness of Eco-friendly life is the gift of this project for the village. The local people got the awareness of carbon neutrality and its importance in the context of climate change.

We have done all these projects - with the coordination of of the Grama Panchayath and Agriculture department of Kerala. Different political parties were cooperative with us. Panchayath President and Agricultural Officer were part of our Team. The Ward Member was part of our core group and discussion forums They were always with us for the implementation of this Carbon Neutral Parish and Village. Actually it was aimed at the whole village. We have got the idea that, we have to cooperate with all government agencies and all political parties for the sustainability of our local village. They can help us and support us in all levels. This Project was not limited to a particular parish community. But we tried to change a village through a particular parish. This project is an upgraded version of modern parish. Our primary target were 500 families in the Kandankary Ward of Champakulam Panchayath. Our Aim was to achieve carbon Neutrality through 15 projects. We have concentrated on sustainable development through small small activities. Journalists made good news about our projects. That encouraged our village family groups. They have got many markets for their sustainable products. It is a humble beginning of self sufficiency for the Kandankary Village. We have no absolute claims of hundred percentage of success. It was a worthy attempt from our part. A small candle light for carbon Neutrality and protection of Mother Earth. Climate change and the poor are the two sides of the same reality. All through this project we have motivated our Team to focus more on poor villagers who carries the



**Rajeev Palakkacherry**  
Changanassery



burden of the severe flood (2018) and climate change. That is what Pope Francis inspired us through Laudato Si.

Documentary films - are the powerful tool for environmental education. These films are very essential tool for creating awareness about the environmental issues. Visual language has no barriers. Anybody can watch these films and get inspired by the value of Nature. Youth and children from the village began to watch these environmental films in small projector rooms and homes. We have created an ambience of Film culture in the village. Eco-communication is the first step we have made to conscientize the public about Carbon Neutrality. These documentaries were very helpful for villagers to know and appreciate the value of Nature. Mainly we have focused the films of David Attenborough. A Life on Our Planet (2020), The Blue Planet (2001) The Life of Birds (1998), Planet Earth (2006) Frozen Planet (2011) Extinction: The Facts (2020) Our Planet (2019)

Creating a core team was our central focus. For this purpose we have created a core team called "Mother Earth." Mainly youngsters were the members of the group. This group conducted meetings and ideas sharing sessions on a weekly basis. They have conducted meetings in different parts of the village. It gave them the real focus of the central issues of the village. Each village is unique. It has its own issues to address. This core team, "Mother Earth" was the brain behind all our projects. For Ecological Awareness and Communications we have created a whatsapp social media group. The villagers and common people were part and parcel of this Whatsapp group. The Office of Mother Earth core group was extended through Whatsapp communication. We have understood that Eco-Communication is very important for the success of our carbon neutral projects.

We have certain aims in our mind for this projects. Through Ecofriendly and scientific methods, reduce the carbon production in the village level was our primary aim To make the villagers more conscientized in the concept of carbon neutrality was our second focus. Formation of a group of people - who have realistic sense of carbon neutrality in village level was our primary aim.

Inculcating the idea of "Mother Earth" in the hearts of people, was our primary objective. We have promoted the views and practical plans of effective and sustainable ecofriendly farming and other ways to generate income for their family members. Sustainable development of the village and improving their quality of life were the prime focus. We tried our best to conscientize villagers to reduce the carbon production in the village level. We have found out that, teaching them the value of group work is an authentic long term service. Ultimately Encouraging them to plant trees and do agriculture in an ecofriendly way is the practical solution for carbon neutrality. As a result our core team promoted small

scale business groups from villages

Our core team followed all Scientific methods to implement this project named "Carbon Neutral Parish and Village" Water Testing, Quality of the product testing, Person to Person interviews, Group sessions, Home visiting, Discussion with Gramasabha, Person to Person hearing, Family get together, all forms of methods we have used to implement this project. Carbon Neutral Parish and Village Projects We have adapted 15 projects for the village. It was on experimental purpose during the initial stages. Then we have slowly concentrated on to each project and made some sustainable impacts in village level.

## Water Project

Kuttanadu in Alappuzha district normally called as the Land of Lagoons and Lakes. But in reality these people are struggling due to the lack of fresh drinking water. In earlier days they have used the water from lakes for drinking purpose. But nowadays, because of irresponsible tourism and pollution of the water sources, drinking water is less. For finding a solution for drinking water we have introduced the project called "Water Project". We have conscientized the villagers about the value of "Rain water Harvesting." Rain water Harvesting is the best method for the villagers to meet their needs of drinking water. People can collect rainwater from their roof tops through special pipes. If they have no facility like this, they can use all natural methods of collecting rainwater with cloths. During the initial stages we have contributed a Purifying tank for each family units. These tanks were placed in different parts of the village. These purifier tanks were placed in collaboration with Mexican company. It is a the technology used by the military for drinking purpose. We can drink any polluted water through this filtering device. These purifying machines inspired the villagers about the value of fresh water. All diseases in the village, especially the increasing number of Cancer cases in Kuttanadu, is because of the polluted drinking water. We have placed the purifying tanks all over the village through an organization called "Cadena International."

## Mother Earth Space

This is a practical space in the parish for thinking in favor Mother Earth. In parish, we have different pious organizations. We have created a social organization called "Mother Earth" movement. On weekly basis this core group conducted small gatherings and talks, related to environmental protection. This group was the brain of Carbon Neutral Parish and Village. The members of the group were different. The members were youth and school children. The parents and teachers were also part of this group. This group was a spontaneous group.



They have discussed all problems of climate change and all other village level climate issues.

## Redchillies Village

This a project helped the villagers to trust in their own self sufficiency. Redchillies are the best cultivatable plant species in Kuttanadu. They can easily cultivate Redchillies in their kitchen garden. This is an organic farming project. We have trained them to cultivate different kinds of Chillies. We have collected Redchillies from different family units and preserved it. Later, once in a month, we have made Redchillies pickle in a collective way at the parish level. This pickle is distributed to different distant parishes and shops. The income of this pickle given to the responding family units who have contributed Redchillies to the project. Thus, the Kandankary village became Redchillies village. Each families have got an inner idea, how they can make some profit out of their kitchen garden. They began to use every part of their land to cultivate organic products.

## Stitching Unit

With the help of some Religious agencies we have collected around 12 stitching machines. These stitching machines are two types. One type used for normal stitching of the cloths. The second type stitching unit for heavy stitching like, bag and leather products. We have arranged stitching classes for the local women. Professional teachers came to the parish hall to teach local women about different kinds of stitching. The womenfolk in the village were privileged to spend much time in their houses. Thus they have effectively made use of their time. Stitching classes lasted for one year. After classes they bought their own stitching machines and they began to start their own way of stitching. More than that they got an idea of group work and friendship. It really helped the womenfolk to come out from their homes and do some sustainable work. Their psychological health improved and their positive way of looking at the world began to increase.

## Cloth Bag production

This was a major project from the parish and village level. During the initial stages we have created cloth bags from old cloths. We got the idea that, in the village, there are lot of old cloths which are considered useless. Our core group started to collect old cloths from houses. These old cloths were converted into different cloth bags. These cloths were converted into attractive cloth bags.

## Fish Pickle

This project became the most famous and most rewarding for the villagers. This is a sustainable organic project. In the village we have special small fish called “Vayamb”. It is a small





type of rice fish. These fishes are normally seen in paddy or rice fields. With villagers we have collected the rice fishes from the paddy field and we have distributed this fish to villagers. They have cleaned it and they gave back this processed fish to parish center. Once in a month we have fried this huge amount of fish and made pickle out of it. The same Fish pickle, we have distributed to different parishes and shops. We collected around 3 lakh Rupees from fish pickle project for the villagers. The reward of this project became a charity account in the parish level for the whole village named “St. Joseph Care and Share.”

## Energy Saving at Prayer time

This is a spontaneous project which has emerged with the help of school children. In the village, we have different people from different cast and creed. But one thing is sure, they all have some kind of evening prayer. We have conscientized them to have a culture of saving energy during the prayer time. So normally evening time, while praying, the villagers began to switch off their electricity and used candle or natural lights to pray.

This project really helped the villagers to have an idea of saving energy. We have also started a side project of this concept, named “Second Entry.” It is about rechecking the electric switches. Because, when you go out from home for any travel or long route journey you have to make a second entry to home and check whether all lights or devices are off. This helped them to imbibe a culture of energy saving in their local and home level.

## Paper Carry Bags

The most tragic expression of pollution is plastic pollution. We have made a survey with the core group about plastic pollution. Our core group made some boat journeys through the village to find out the accumulation of plastics. The findings were terrific. They have found out plastics even from the mouth of fish. This was an eye-opening incident for us. That means, the fishes under the lakes literally eating plastics, which is accumulated under the lagoons. We began to collect plastic from rivers and canals through boats. This collected plastic were given to “Haritha Karma Sena” (a special unit of women run by government support) to process plastics. Later we have got the realization that, the people still follow the plastic culture and throwing plastics into rivers. In order to compete this behavior, we have trained them to produce paper carry bags. In the initial stages we have used newspapers to make paper bags. Later they began to make professional paper bags for different shops. Our core group encouraged the people to be proud of using paper bags. They began to negate plastic carry bags from shops.

## Dont Burn Straw

The villagers are basically farmers. They have their own paddy field. They have a custom to burn their paddy field after the harvest. They have their own reasons for that. As we know, air pollution is very high environmental problem in India. We conscientized the villagers about the value of Air. The value of oxygen tank, for a daily usage, is huge. We have typically made some practical sessions with oxygen cylinder. We have made some classes in village level, how to use oxygen cylinder, in future, because of air pollution. Then we have addressed the Burning straw issue. It was a time consuming and a hard project for us. We have literally visited the farmers in different groups. Convinced them about the impact of burning straws in national and international level. We have got assistance from agricultural department and from government.



## Sustainable cooking stoves

In villages, normally people uses open cooking method. They are burning the woods and making their food out of the heat from these stoves. But the women folk normally consume lot of carbon from this open cooking stoves and it causes infections to their lungs. In order to train them in Sustainable cooking stoves we have made some exhibitions in the parish hall, and convinced them to change into less carbon emitting cooking stoves. These stoves were distributed by trusted agencies. For initial implementation of this cooking stove is expensive. But in long-term, it is good for lungs and good for Eco-friendly village.



## Cycle Club

This project was basically oriented to children. There are some small roads in the village. People are normally using bikes and AutoRikshas to travel to towns and markets. We have promoted a culture of cycle club. In initial stages we have distributed some second hand cycles to the students. Then we encouraged the children to buy some new cycles. We have conducted some kind of group sessions for the students, those who have cycles. This became an efficient way to communicate with the children; the lessons of Zero Carbon production. This project became an efficient help for the children and even for women. In the village, the catholic Nuns began to use cycle for their daily usage. Alappuzha district in Kerala is the best place for Cycle journey. Because, it has no hilly areas. It is the best place to teach Zero Carbon Emissions. This cycle club idea still exist in the village.

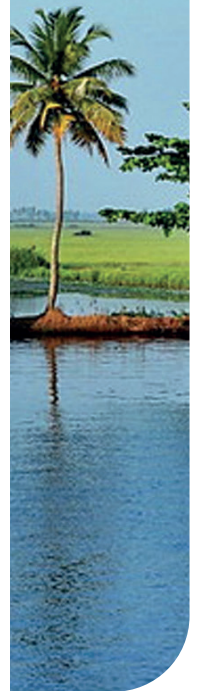


## Goat Farming

Goat farming is a sustainable approach in Alappuzha District, especially Kuttanadu region. We have found out this project from grassroot level studies and applied it in the village. There are lot of grass and vegetation that can be very useful for goat farming. With the help of other parishes and agencies we distributed goats to different families. But each family has a duty. They have to give back a female child from the given female goat. This theory worked well in the village. They have given back small female kids and we have distributed again to the other families. Most families in the village got goats and their life improved. Especially women got a job in their own houses and they got milk and meat from goat cultivation.



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# ...Mission Collaborators...

**t**he congregation of the disciples' is a Don Bosco Secular Institute of religious sisters more commonly known as SDB Congregation. The sisters in the Congregation are consecrated to Christ animated by the spiritual vision of their founder Ver. Rev. Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB to serve the poor and helpless in the Church in remote areas. Their charism is to proclaim the Good News of Christ by serving people in rural areas.



# Mardum Sisters



Renjith Xess CMI  
Jagdapur

## THE CONGREGATION OF THE 'DISCIPLES': A NEW FORM OF CONSECRATED LIFE

'The Don Bosco Secular Institute' was started in 1973 by Rev. Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB in Krishnanagar Diocese. Jesus having great pity for the poor people because they were like sheep without shepherd [Mt. 9: 35-38], the choosing of the 12 Apostles [Mt. 10:2] and sending the 72 disciples on a mission two by two [Lk- 10:1-12] are the Gospel inspirations of the SDB congregation. In 1973 Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB was the Vocation Director of the Diocese of Krishnanagar. During those days some elderly girls who neither wanted to become Religious Sisters nor wanted to get married, approached him for spiritual direction. Taking inspiration from the Gospel he gave them the idea of a secular institute because they were staying with their families and had to have their own profession and works. Soon the number of girls grew up to 16, who periodically gathered for recollections, spiritual direction and ongoing formation.

The Sisters follow the spirit of the good shepherd which Don Bosco used in his apostolate, i.e. loving kindness, dialogue with kindness, cultivating faith and reason. So they welcome and accept one and all as children of God, as their brothers and sisters. They try to be kind, humble and gentle with all, specially sinners, the sick, the poor, children, youth, orphans, the aged, the illiterate and all those in need and all those they meet and try to be one with them. They make themselves available to others so that they can see them, talk with them, listen to them; thus they can help others, serve others, make others better and give others peace and consolation. By visiting villages and families, the sisters become friendly with one and all especially those in need. By staying in the villages they become available to the poor, they begin to understand other's difficulties, share their joys and sorrows and help them in their needs. Staying in the village they talk with the poor, have good dialogue with them and gradually bring

them to faith in Christ. They donate themselves for others, in dedicated service, detaching themselves from their relatives, lands, goods in order to be free to tour, preach, teach, heal and serve the rural poor. With courage they go to new and remote villages where no missionary else wants to go. They are happy to suffer for others, trusting in providence to help them in their needs, material and spiritual. Their security is depended on God, the Bishop and Parish Priest and on the people. In whichever diocese they are called by the Bishop or Parish Priest they are looked after by them, the same when they get sick. In their old age their institute will look after them. Every diocese has a common fund for the future of the institute which is sent to the institute once a year.



Founder, Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB



They own neither land nor institutions but live among the people and like the people in the villages, accept and live by whatever food and lodging is offered by the parish priest and villagers. They live a very simple dedicated life of poverty for the spreading of the Gospel among the rural poor. Thus they are ready to go and serve in any village, parish or diocese wherever they are wanted. They accept a temporary center in each diocese for their monthly recollections, for treatment and rest when they are sick and for their gathering. They use the centre as long as they are working in the diocese.

They try to live Jesus' Way of Life, try to go back to the Gospel living and teaching as Jesus taught, spoke and acted. They consecrate their lives to God and their neighbors and devote their lives in spreading the Gospel among the poor sharing their joys, hardships and difficulties. Their life of obedience is to do the will of God in following the mission of Christ. Their obedience consists in following the Gospel Way of life. Their consecrated members try to be faithful to the Promise made to God and at least for one year they remain in the place they are chosen. They have no superior nevertheless, in every diocese where they are working they take counsel from the coordinators of their institute and from their ecclesiastical authorities like the Bishop, the Parish Priest, their Chaplain, their Moderator. In staying two by two they are equal and respect each other, share responsibility and authority as required. As far as possible they try to do whatever the parish priest or Bishop tells them to do. They can remain in the place as long as the authorities and people want them and as long as they want.

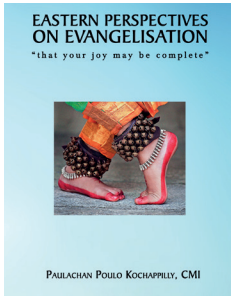
Their mission is that of 72 disciples and their spirit is that of Christ. They visit families, proclaim the good news by making the Gospel available to the people, insist on the daily reading of the Gospel and help them to live a good life. They teach catechism to little children, preparing them for the first Communion and Confirmation, and give talks to adults for faith formation. They visit the sick and help them with prayers and ordinary medicine or refer them to the dispensaries, health centers and hospitals. They serve the poor and needy according to their means and capacity. They teach in non formal Balwadi centers when necessary. They try to be always available to people loving and serving them as their own brothers and sisters.

In the year 1997 Mar Simon Stock Palathara CMI, the Bishop of Jagdalpur and Rev. Fr. Alexander Maramattam CMI, the Councilor for Social Apostolate, Nirmal vice Province Jagdalpur happened to meet Ver. Rev. Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB at Chanda in a seminar and came to know about SDB Sisters. In the nineties the Jagdalpur mission also was in its initial stage, knowing the zeal and enthusiasm of SDB sisters and

their readiness to work in the most interior and rural areas made Bishop Simon Stock to have the presence of SDB Sisters in the mission of Jagdalpur. He requested the founder Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB to visit Jagdalpur mission and to send SDB Sisters for the Jagdalpur mission. Accepting the invitation of Bishop Simon Stock, Fr. Joe D'Souza visited Jagdalpur. On 10th December 1997 Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB arrived to Bishop's house Lalbagh, Jagdalpur along with two sisters - Sr. Asrita Runda and Sr. Balamdina Toppo. The very next day both Sisters were taken to Bande Parish and from there Bishop Simon Stock, Fr. Josh Panthlanickal CMI, the parish priest and their founder Fr. Joe D'Souza SDB reached the Sisters to a very remote village called Aakmeta. They lived there with very few amenities and slowly began to visit Christian families, taught catechism to boys and girls and got them ready for the sacrament of Holy Communion and Confirmation. After a few months Sr. Mariyam Xaxa SDB and Sr. Stella Lakra SDB also were sent by the Founder Father to join the sisters in Aakmeta. As days passed more SDB Sisters were called in Bande mission area and slowly they moved to Chotebethiya, Jamkutni, and Junavar mission stations as more members joined. In the Month of July 2012 SDB Sisters were called in Mardum area. At present they are working at five mission stations- Junavar, Jamkutni, Chotebethiya, Kasturpal and Sataspur. They look after hostels, teach in school, helped the priests in so many ways other than visiting families, going to see the sick, pray for the sick and help them to get good treatment, take care of the parishners in spiritual matters, form boys and girls for sacraments of holy communion and conformation etc. They face myriads of challenges and hardships daily, their life style requires inescapable elements of sacrifice as they work in remote areas.



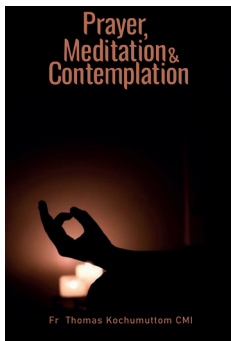
## Books



### Eastern Perspectives on Evangelisation

By Paulachan Kochappilly CMI  
Dharmaram Publications

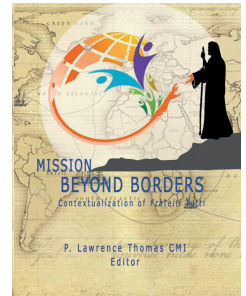
Joy is the fountain, force, and focus of all things. So also joy is the alpha and the omega of the evangelizing mission of the Church. Nothing stops people from sharing their joy with others with a view to making the joy of the recipients complete. The reason for Jesus' sharing is to bring joy, as revealed in the fourth gospel. The title of the book, Eastern Perspectives on Evangelisation: "that your joy may be complete", is taken from the sharing of Jesus. As per his saying, joy is central of the mission of Jesus. The dharma of Jesus is joy. The marga of the Church is joy as well. Every disciple of Jesus Christ is a mission – a joyful mission of love and life celebrated in a free, friendly, and faithful setting of covenantal communitarian consciousness.



### Prayer, Meditation & Contemplation

Thomas Kochumuttam CMI  
Dharmaram Publications

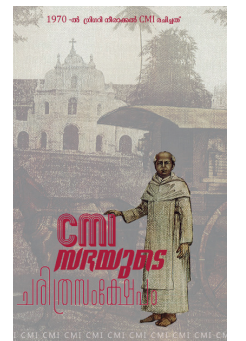
Prayer, Meditation and Contemplation is more an insightful work of Fr Thomas Kochumuttom which he has brought out on the occasion of his sacerdotal golden jubilee. In view of helping youngsters, especially those who are in their religious, priestly and missionary formation, he deals with themes like, spirituality of Carmelite tradition, call to consecrated life, prayer and God's response to it and so forth. Efforts are also made to incorporate and substantiate the text with Indian insights and practices. The fruitfulness of our missionary and pastoral works presupposes our personal union with the Lord realized through prayer, even incessant prayer.



### Mission Beyond Borders

Ed, By Lawrence Thomas CMI  
Dharmaram Publications

Mission beyond borders: Contextualization of *Fratelli Tutti* is a timely contribution from Samanvaya Theology College. This book attempts to situate the third Papal Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* in the context of the theme and thrusts of XXXVIIIth General Synaxis of CMI congregation which appeals its members to transcend all narrow barriers that can prevent them from moving beyond borders in witnessing the Gospel message. The articles in this book highlight various dimensions of the Encyclical and will lead the readers to an enlightenment to equip themselves for a new normal.



### CMI Sabhayude Charithra Samkshepam

Gregory Neerackal CMI  
Chavara Central Secretariat

*CMI Sabhayude Charithra Samkshepam* is an elaborated history of CMI Congregation from her birth up to the year 1972. It retrospects the way, the congregation has come into existence over coming various exoduses which had happened in her history. This book narrates every incidence with details and facts. Its worth reading to know the reality of the growth and establishment of Congregation with the other civil and Church history.

Please sent information on releasing books , videos, Apps and its images for the next issue before 25 Noveber 2020



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Benny Karuvelil CMI



Taiju Thaliath CMI

**St. Charles Lwanga Seminary** in Windhoek Namibia is the regional seminary of the Namibian Bishops' Conference (NCBC) and has been taken care by the CMI Congregation since almost 25 years. It has received a new Rector in the person of Rev. Dr. Taiju Thaliath CMI, who will be replacing Rev. Dr. Benny Karuvelil CMI who has been serving as the second Rector. Rev. Benny Karuvelil CMI is appointed by the Namibian Bishop's Conference (NCBC). Special congratulations to both of them in their new offices. The CMI Congregation is happy to serve the Church in Namibia by providing teachers and formators for the Regional Seminary.



**The Major Superiors' meeting-** a forum of the meeting of all the Provincials along with Prior General, Vicar General and the General Councilors- the highest decision-making body of the CMI Congregation met together on 5&6 of January 2022 at Trivandrum to think together on various points relevant for the coming years for the Congregation. Mainly the body made reflections on the various programmes to be planned as decennial preparation in the congregation in view of the Bicentennial of the Congregation which is to take place in the year 2031.





## IN BRIEF news / events

**The Jubilee year** declared on 3rd January 2020 to mark the 150 year of the entry of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara into the heavenly bliss at Mannanam. The whole year 2020- 2021 was thus observed as Jubilee year both in the CMI and CMC Congregations. Due to Covid situation prevalent in the country a formal conclusion could not be conducted in the year 2021. But as the situation became favourable in the year 2022, the conclusion was held on 3rd January at Mannanam where the mortal remains of the Saint was interred. The honourable Vice President of the Republic of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was the Chief Guest of the function who duly acknowledged the significant and valuable contributions of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara to reform the Church as well as the Society of Kerala through various initiatives and making education popular in the society.



**The Provincial Councillors** of Evangelization and Pastoral work of the CMI Congregation along with the General Department of the Congregation met together at Rajkot mission and assessed the activities taken up in the provinces and Congregational level. It was an occasion to hear the experience of Bp. Gregory Karotemprel CMI, the second Bishop of Rajkot, who tried to implement the plan prepared by Bp. Jonas, the first Bishop and Architect of the diocese. The present Bishop Mar Jose Chittooparampil also shared his vision for the mission which celebrates the Golden Jubilee of the CMI presence as it was entrusted to the Syro-Malabar Church and to the CMI Congregation in 1972. Fr. James Dabhy S J, a veteran missionary and theologian from Gujarat shared his missionary vision for the Church in India. The visit to different mission stations helped to see how the Gospel message is proclaimed through a life of witness in the land Gandhi who was greatly influenced by the teachings of Jesus.



Missionary Bishop's Meeting at Chavara Hills



**Utsah** 2022 CMI Scholastic's Meet





News Priests at Prior General's House



Jubilee Celebrations of Priestly Ordination and Religious Profession.



Aspirant's meet at Prior General's House



Quinquennial Program for Junior Priests

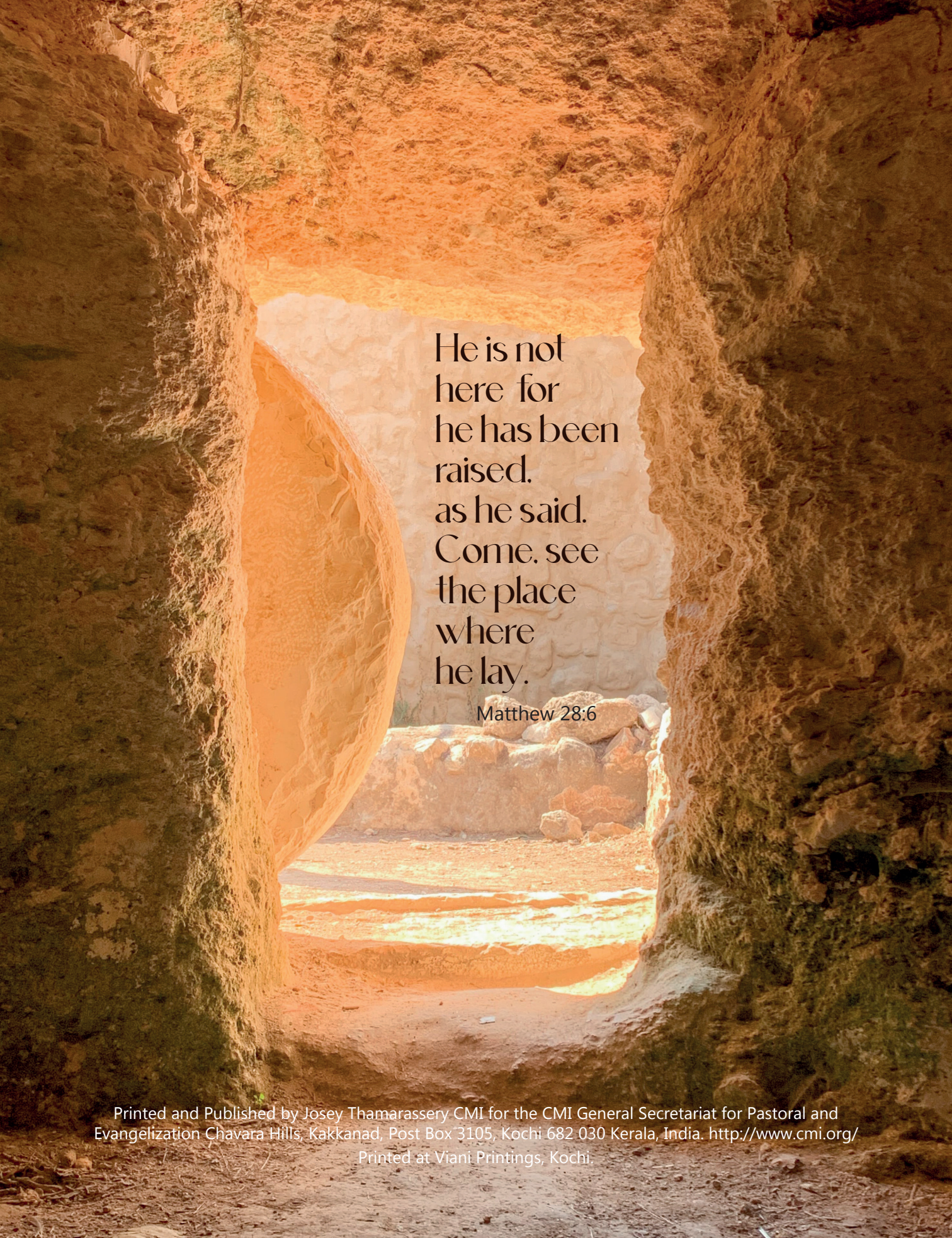


The honourable Vice President of the Republic of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu offers flowers at the tomb of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara on January 3rd 2022.



Logo Bicentennial Jubilee, By Sabeesh Vettiyadan CMI



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a tomb entrance. A large, smooth, light-colored stone is rolled away from the entrance of a dark, rocky cavity. Bright light emanates from the opening, illuminating the interior of the tomb and casting a glow on the surrounding rock walls. In the distance, through the opening, a body of water and a rocky shoreline are visible under a bright sky. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, earthy tones of brown, orange, and yellow.

He is not  
here for  
he has been  
raised.  
as he said.  
Come, see  
the place  
where  
he lay.

Matthew 28:6