



CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

CMI PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE



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

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01 November 2022

FILE: Provincial Synaxes

Circular No. 12

Prior General's Circular PROVINCIAL SYNAXIS 2023

- Reference:
1. CMI Constitutions and Directory 2021
 2. Acts of GS 38 (*Communitarian Witnessing Beyond Borders*)
 3. Grace-Filled Presence for a Transformed World (CMI Vision 2031)
 4. General Council Decision: GCA 51/535/2022, dated 10 October 2022

Dear Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

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

We now begin the preparations for the next Provincial Synaxes in our Congregation which will be held in April 2023. The Provincial Synaxis is an extraordinary event in the life and history of the Province. It is an 'Upper Room Experience' which has to become very much foundational to our Province as it was to the Christian community and to the Church. The upper room is where the Risen Lord breathed on the apostles the Holy Spirit "on the evening of that first day of the week" (John 20:19). It is where tongues of fire appeared to them on Pentecost and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). That event marks the birthday of the Church in the presence of our Blessed Mother (Acts 1:14). It is from there that the apostles went forth with boldness sharing the Good News.

As Pope Francis speaking from the Cenacle on 26 May 2014 said: "How much love and goodness has flowed from the Upper Room! How much charity has gone forth from here, like a river from its source, beginning as a stream and then expanding and becoming a great torrent! All the saints drew from this source; and hence the great river of the Church's holiness continues to flow: from the heart of Christ, from the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit."

During this time of the Synaxis, the Lord is inviting us into the Upper Room to receive the same gifts He gave to His apostles and disciples. Therefore, every provincial synaxis needs to become an Upper Room Experience, which is the source of our life in the religious congregation, the source for all our apostolates and ministries and the source for our becoming a "*grace-filled presence for a transformed world.*" As we are in the decennial preparation for the bicentennial, the Lord will feed us, teach us and prepare us to go out on a mission into the world to bring the light of Christ's love to everyone we meet in the new century.

From this perspective, the provincial synaxis offers us a time to take an honest look at the state of the Province as a religious community and as a community of love (C 1) which was founded (1831) as a lamp lit and kept on a lampstand so that it gives light to everyone (Mt 5:15). The Provincial Synaxis, the top legislative body of the Province, has a responsibility to



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evaluate our religious life in the Province and to see how we have carried out the thrust of the XXXVIII General Synaxis during the last three years. This examination shall lead us to face honestly certain challenging questions: Are we faithful to our CMI call and mission or have we slid into mediocrity? What can we do as a province to ensure the significance of our congregation as we enter into 200 years of our existence in living the charism and patrimony of our founding fathers faithfully? How are we being asked to change or renew ourselves? Therefore, the Synaxis should never be narrowly viewed as a mere gathering for the election of a new leadership team for the next three years. It shall be a grace-filled time in the history of the Province and shall become a turning point in the history of the entire congregation in our collective search for the future direction of our congregation taking unambiguous decisions for the province and as a result for the entire congregation.

In line with the thrusts of GS XXXVIII and the decennial plan for the bicentennial of our Congregation we also need to think and plan more concrete ways in the province of living the charism of our congregation for the next three years under the leadership of the newly elected provincial team. Hence, while the reports of the last three years are presented and discussed and the policies and plans for the future are shaped in the Provincial Synaxis, we shall see that there is a continuity in what we have already planned and initiated. Therefore, all the resolutions and the action plans of the last General Synaxis, and particularly the thrusts of GS XXXVIII and the vision 2031 envisaged in the document "Grace-filled Presence for a Transformed World" shall be given priority during our discussions and deliberations in the Provincial Synaxis.

Being a very significant event in the context of the bicentennial of the congregation, we need to prepare ourselves faithfully and sincerely for this event with a genuine love for our congregation. A Synaxis does not automatically have the guarantee of the action of the Holy Spirit. We need to be open to the Holy Spirit for guiding us in our deliberations and the actions we initiate. The Provincial synaxis will become a grace-filled event only when it is accompanied by our fervent prayer, deep study and intense preparation. Hence, I would appeal to you to prepare spiritually and emotionally to celebrate the unity and fraternity of each Province during the days of the Synaxis and also during the period of the election of delegates to the Synaxis.

To ensure better participation of all members in the preparation of the Provincial Synaxes, each Provincial Council is requested to give proper and sufficient orientations and guidelines to the members. Similarly, all members of the Province must actively contribute to the fruitful celebration of the Synaxis by sending their valuable comments, suggestions and proposals to the Synaxis. In the true spirit of religious life, we shall shun every type of campaigning or canvassing even secretly and perform the sacred duty of electing the delegates and office-bearers in a spirit of prayer for discerning the will of God. If, however,



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any unbecoming activity, such as canvassing, is formally reported, it will be seriously dealt with in the spirit of CMI Constitutions.

May our Blessed Mother of Carmel and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara accompany us in our preparations for the Provincial Synaxes during the coming weeks. May I request everyone to pray for the successful conduct of the Provincial Synaxes according to the letter and spirit of our Constitutions.

So, I, with the consent of the General Council, hereby issue the following guidelines and schedule for the ordinary Provincial Synaxes, elections and appointments at the provincial and local levels to be held in 2023.

I. The Dates of the First Session of the Provincial Synaxis and Election of the Provincial and Councillors:

Province	Days of Synaxis	Date of Election
St Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram	10- 14 April 2023	13 April (12 pm)
Sacred Heart Province, Kochi	10- 14 April 2023	13 April (12 pm)
Devamatha Province, Thrissur	10- 14 April 2023	13 April (12 pm)
St Thomas Province, Kozhikode	10- 14 April 2023	13 April (12 pm)
St Paul's Province, Mysuru	10- 14 April 2023	13 April (12 pm)
St Joseph Province, Kottayam	11-15 April 2023	14 April (12 pm)
Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha	11-15 April 2023	14 April (12 pm)
Preshitha Province, Coimbatore	11-15 April 2023	14 April (12 pm)
Mar Thoma Province, Chanda	18-22 April 2023	21 April (12 pm)
Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur	18-22 April 2023	21 April (12 pm)
St Paul Province, Bhopal	18-22 April 2023	21 April (12 pm)
St Xavier's Province, Rajkot	18-22 April 2023	21 April (12 pm)
St John's Province, Bijnor	18-22 April 2023	21 April (12 pm)
Mary Matha Vice Province, Hyderabad	19-23 April 2023	22 April (12 pm)
St Chavara Vice Province, Bhavnagar	19-23 April 2023	22 April (12 pm)

II. Other Dates

1. Notification of the Election of Delegates to the Provincial Synaxis: **01 December 2022**
2. The last date to return the ballot: **15 February 2023**
3. Counting of Votes: **16-17 February 2023**
4. Declaration of the List of Delegates to the Provincial Synaxis: **17 February 2023**



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III. Post-Election Session Programmes

1. Last Date for the Announcement of Local Superiors: 20 May 2023
2. Major Superiors' Advisory Council: 02-03 May 2023 (Chavara Hills)
3. GCPC (Meeting of the General Council with the Provincial Councils): 11-14 May 2023 (Chavara Hills)
4. Proposed dates for the Animation Programme for the Local Superiors which shall be organized by the Provincial Council in the respective Provinces and guided by the General Council.

Province	Days of Animation
St Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram	25-27 May 2023
St Joseph Province, Kottayam	25-27 May 2023
Carmel Province, Muvattupuzha	28-30 May 2023
Sacred Heart Province, Kochi	28-30 May 2023
Devamatha Province, Thrissur	28-30 May 2023
St Thomas Province, Kozhikode	28-30 May 2023
Preshitha Province, Coimbatore	25-27 May 2023
St Paul's Province, Mysuru	25-27 May 2023
Mary Matha Vice Province, Hyderabad	25-27 July 2023
Mar Thoma Province, Chanda	25-27 July 2023
Nirmal Province, Jagdalpur	25-27 July 2023
St Paul Province, Bhopal	21-23 July 2023
St Xavier's Province, Rajkot	28-30 July 2023
St Chavara Vice Province, Bhavnagar	28-30 July 2023
St John's Province, Bijnor	14-16 July 2023

IV. Other Points to Remember

1. The Provincials are requested to send the following materials to the Prior General:
 - a. Samples of the election materials described in Directory Article 259 on or before 15 November 2022.
 - b. List of the elected delegates to the Provincial Synaxis together with the substitution list on or before 26 February 2023 (The number of substitutes shall be fixed as per the decision of the previous provincial synaxis or the norms given in the Provincial statutes).
2. **Counting of the Panel for Provincial:** Since there is a lack of clarity about the counting for the panel of Provincials in those provinces which have opted for the



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- panel system, as recommended by the Major Superiors' meeting held on 17-18 September 2022 at Rishikesh, the General Council in its meeting held on 10 October 2022 has made the following decision: The counting for the panel of five for the election of the Provincial shall be held on the previous day of the election of the Provincial (D288) and the counting of the votes shall be done by the Provincial council and two members elected from the Provincial synaxis for this purpose at the beginning of the Provincial Synaxis (GCA 51/536/2022).
3. The panel shall be declared by the Provincial at the beginning of the prayer session immediately before the session of the election of the Provincial. Thereafter, the members do not discuss about the names proposed (D. 285).
 4. All other norms about the panel shall be followed as it is prescribed in our Directory concerning the panel for the election of the Prior General wherever it is applicable (D 281-288).
 5. **Envelops to return the Ballots:** While dispatching the Ballot papers to the elector, in those Provinces where the Panel system is opted for the election of the Provincial, there shall be two separate envelops (Ballot Paper Covers for each kind of ballot) with separate serially numbered declaration papers for acknowledgement for the election of the Delegates of Provincial Synaxis and for election of the panel for the provincial (GCA 51/537/2022) (D 260, a, c). Other details suggested in D 260 shall be followed while dispatching the Ballot papers.
 6. **Vote for the New Priests:** The new priests who are to be ordained in December 2022 and January 2023 shall not be included in the voters' list as they will be given the patent of local ascription only by the end of January 2023 (C. 157).
 7. The Provincials are requested to give clear and definite instructions regarding elections in the notification letter following our Directory Articles 258-288.
 8. The delegates to the Provincial Synaxis shall be elected in the ratio of 1:1:1 of the 75% of the vacancies of the total number of vacancies (after deducting the number of brother delegates to be elected). The remaining 25% shall be marked without considering the constituencies (See Directory Article 262, c, ii).

V. Prayer for the Synaxis

Since the fruitfulness of the Provincial Synaxis depends necessarily and primarily on the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, I earnestly request the entire congregation to start praying from 1st December 2022 onwards for the synaxis members and the entire province so that we become open and docile to the working of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the personal prayer and penance, each one will be doing for the fruitful conducting of the Provincial Synaxis, a common prayer which is sent along with this letter shall be recited either after the Community Eucharistic celebration or after the Common prayer in the evening from 1st December 2022 till the dissolution of the Provincial Synaxis.



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Conclusion

Praying for the abundant blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ upon all of us during Provincial Synaxis and the process of electing a new team of animators for our Provinces, and commenting the entire Congregation to the protection and intercession of our Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph, and our beloved founders, especially Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara,

Fraternally yours in the Lord,

Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General



Fr Martin Mallathu CMI
Secretary, General Council



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PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESS OF PROVINCIAL SYNAXIS 2023

(From 01 December 2022 till the dissolution of the Provincial Synaxis 2023)

Almighty and ever-loving God, who causes every new beginning, as we prepare ourselves for the forthcoming Provincial Synaxis, send your life-giving Spirit on all the delegates of Provincial Synaxis guiding and inspiring us to have a thorough evaluation of our lives and activities making us grace-filled presence in this world. Bless us with a new vision, to discern the horizons for a communitarian witnessing beyond borders in this world of today. Open our ears, to hear your ever-creating Word and to listen to the voice of those who hope and long for a transformed world. Anoint our tongues, to proclaim the joy of the Gospel of Christ and to speak of your love and mercy for all people. May we rejoice in the richness of our diversity and strive to foster among us a deeper communion of life and mission. May Mary, our Blessed Mother of Carmel, teach us by her example to be docile and prompt to fulfill your will. Help us to follow the footsteps of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara and other founding fathers, in pursuing the spirit of Carmel. This prayer we make to You our beloved Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master on our pilgrim path, in the Spirit that binds us together,

Amen.