



CMISSION

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

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**CMI General Department of Evangelization
and Pastoral Ministry
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CMIssion

News and Views on CMI Mission around the Globe

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

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Editorial

CMI GLOBAL MISSIONS AND GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI

General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry

As the CMI Congregation is marching forward with the kairotic momentum in realizing its global mission, which the last two General Synaxes have given, resuming publication of the *CMIssion*, the half-yearly magazine of the CMI Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry on the news and views about the evangelization mission and pastoral ministries offered by its members and their associates, is a matter of joy and satisfaction. In this regard, first of all, let me place on record my personal gratitude to the entire CMI fraternity for their trust and confidence in entrusting me with the responsibility to assist Fr. Prior General through the animation offered in the domains of evangelization and pastoral ministry. As we believe that there is a 'Providential' intervention in everything that happens in our life, although we may not succeed in deciphering it clearly as and when it happens or till the larger frame opens up before us, trusting in the Divine Providence and the intercession of our Mother of Carmel, St. Joseph, Patron of our Congregation, and St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, our founder, this new responsibility was assumed on 25 July 2016. In this spirit, may I request every member of the CMI fraternity and the readers of the *CMIssion* to pray for me and for the entire General Council so that we may successfully accomplish the mission entrusted to us by the Congregation.

Secondly, I must place on record, the person and accomplishments of Rev. Fr. George Thanchan CMI, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry for the last nine years, whose untimely death on 4 July 2016 has

saddened all those who knew him and took advantage of his unassuming but irreplaceable expertise and good will in many areas of religious animation and administration. I must thank him for taking to heart the orientation for global mission that the 36th and 37th CMI General Synaxes have given and for introducing a new culture of accepting global mission in the larger CMI consciousness. The new kairotic momentum that we see within the CMI Congregation for the missions outside India partly tells the successful story of Fr. Thanchan's silent but effective strategizing and counsel. Moreover, he would be remembered by many in the CMI Congregation and other religious congregations in India for the expert guidance he offered in sailing through the murky waters of religious administration and animation, most of which he gained through his continued study of the canon law, his silent observation and synthetic reflection upon various events in the life of a community, and his own religious and administrative acumen for all of which we must continue to thank him, whose demise has brought to us a vacuum in the contemporary CMI consciousness. May his soul rest in peace and enjoy the eternal bliss in the presence of the Lord! May his unique contributions and the lasting legacy that he leaves behind continue to inspire our commitment to the global mission and the effective animation of religious communities for the good of the Church and humanity!

As the publication of *CMIssion* is resumed, I must also sincerely thank Rev. Fr. Sunil Jose Kizhakayil CMI, a member of the Departmental Council of the Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, who rendered his services for last few years as the editor of the *CMIssion*. He worked hard to gather material for publication and to edit them to perfection. The CMI Congregation in general and Rev. Fr. Prior General and the General Council recognize the excellent services offered by Fr. Sunil and congratulate him

for the same. *CMIssion* looks forward to the continued support from him in bringing more stories from our missions to the readers.

Brasil Calls!

As we march forward in our quest for global mission, of course, without shying away from our commitment to the missions that we have already undertaken in our homeland, I would like to bring to the attention of the readers the fact that the new missional venture of the CMIs in Brasil is taking a concrete shape. It is very heartening to know that all our ten CMIs in Brasil, particularly in the Diocese of Santarem (Para), are well received in the Diocese and are recognized for their selfless commitment and availability. As they continued their language (Portuguese) studies and familiarising themselves in the local parish setting, they are well-integrated into the life and activities of the Diocese of Santarem. Rev. Fr. John Elavathingal CMI, who is the Coordinator of our Brasil Mission, has been nominated by the Bishop to the Presbyterian Council of the Diocese of Santarem. Given the short period of time that our Fathers have been in the Diocese, this is a great recognition.

Further, the Bishop has also facilitated the installation of the CMIs in five different parishes. On 3 January 2017, providentially on the feast of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Fathers John Elavathingal and Benoy Ittikunnel were installed as Parish Priest and Assistant Parish Priest, respectively, in Our Lady of Aparecida, Santarem. In the coming weeks, all other eight CMIs will also be installed in their respective parishes (Frs. Joby Virippamattathil and Linto Punnassery in Our Lady of Nazare, Monte Dourado; Frs. Dipin Karingan, Sebastian Thekkinieth and Shinto Kanjiramattam in Immaculate Conception, Almeirim; Frs. Tomy Vattukulathil and Saji Valamangalam in Our Lady of Grace, Prainha; Fr. Jose Koikara in the Risen Christ Church,

Santarem). This is, indeed, a great achievement in our CMI mission history. It is a moment of great joy and we must wholeheartedly appreciate our CMIs in Brasil who have made this possible.

Another noteworthy information is the choice of the location or parishes. Although the Bishop of Santarem offered them opportunity to work in the parishes in the towns, all of them had their preference for the tough terrains of the Amazon River, most of which remains underdeveloped and far away from the more developed areas. Our young CMI missionaries consciously opted for the marginalized areas for their mission. The readiness of our Fathers to be at the service of the people in these remote regions of the Amazon River and their unassuming ways of reaching out to the people in these mission centres bring to us a sense of kairoitic accomplishment.

At this stage, it is opportune that the CMI Congregation places on record the lead offered by the Preshitha Province, particularly by Rev. Fr. Winson Moyalan CMI, and very specially by Rev. Fr. Antony Kalliath CMI. If not for the personal interest and missionary enthusiasm of Fr. Kalliath, we may not have launched this mission at this pace. As a new team of three Provincials have assumed the coordinating role of the CMI Brasil Mission, along with the General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, let us acknowledge and thank Fr. Antony Kalliath for his timely interventions and initial thrust for establishing the mission in Brasil.

May our CMI Mission in Brasil flourish through the selfless availability and effective witness to the Good News offered by our young and energetic CMIs! Let us hope that more and more youngsters will be inspired to join this mission in the coming years.

New Horizons in CMI Missionary Formation

It is heartening to know that the CMI missionary formation is making strides in the recent times. Kenya has a very successful formation programme, and we are proud of the fact that we already have Kenyan priests and scholastics already engaged in missions and in studies; the attempts on the part of the missionaries in Kenya and the Devamatha Province, Thrissur, to offer opportunities of ecclesiastical and secular studies in India or in other countries are praiseworthy.

Recently, in Ghana mission, we have opened up new formation facility; as it is an initial step, they have started with small numbers; yet, the attempt itself is worth it and the whole CMI Congregation joins in appreciating both the missionaries in Ghana and the St. John's Province, Bijnor, for daring to take this step.

In November 2016, Devamatha Province has made yet another praiseworthy move in opening a new formation facility in Madagascar; they have completed the first phase of the construction of their Aspirants' House and plan to admit the first batch of candidates in July-August 2017, when the new academic year begins.

In this regard, I must appreciate the fact that different Provinces send their Scholastics to pursue their theological studies in Kenya; although the costs incurred are quite high, the theological formation as well as initiation into the global missionary outreach is significant and impactful.

Our investment in formation for the global missions, carried out in our missions as well as in our home-based formation houses, is worth it. It is important that we widen our horizons both by admitting new candidates from these missions and by facilitating the formation of our candidates, especially from India, in these mission countries. Staying and studying with the native seminarians and having a hands-on experience of the missions outside India will

enable our CMI candidates to know and to cultivate genuine respect for the people, their cultures and traditions, which is a basic necessity in grooming a global missionary consciousness in our CMI Congregation.

Provincial Synaxes 2017: Kairos Continues!

General Synaxis XXXVII, held in 2014, gave a great momentum to the global mission initiatives already put on track by the previous General Synaxis. As the CMI fraternity and its mission initiatives were uniquely blessed by the canonization of our founder Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, on 23 November 2014, the momentum for our missions was further accentuated and made more vibrant through a lot of new and meaningful initiatives. While being happy and proud of the new horizons opened up during the last nine years, especially in expanding our global missionary outreach, the forthcoming Provincial Synaxes of all our fifteen Provinces offer us a God-given opportunity to deepen our missionary commitment and strengthen our missionary investment.

I, therefore, earnestly appeal to all the Provincials, Provincial Council members, and members of the Provincial Synaxes that will be constituted on 8 February 2017 to initiate a collective deliberation on our achievements in the last three to nine years in the arena of global mission that each Province has undertaken and to scientifically and strategically plan for focused investment – personnel as well as finances – in the next three years (as a short-term goal) to strengthen our global mission initiatives. I strongly believe that no one can defeat us if we are capable of a collective decision making; we must also empower the Provincial and the Provincial Council with a clear mandate in favour of the global mission thrust of the Congregation. However, focusing on any special thrust would call for certain sacrifices in some other areas of interests; as we have

already made a sizeable investment in certain specific ministries on our home missions, we are called to rationalize our strategies for personnel and financial investments in the coming years, especially in favour of our collectively identified thrust on global mission.

Specifically from the General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, I appeal to all the fifteen Provincial Synaxes of our Congregation to make collective deliberation with regard to the investments that each Province makes. Our global mission thrust can take us farther and further in our quest for quality mission outreach only if we are ready to invest in the following areas: (1) Personnel, (2) Finance, (3) Education of members in missions, and (4) Thrust on community living.

Personnel

All our missions have been opened up with an intense desire of one individual or a group of individuals who wanted to reach out to the ends of the earth. However, we have developed those missions only when more members have willingly joined such individuals or groups. When the collective consciousness of a Province is in favour of a particular mission, and when it receives due recognition among the members of the Province, more members, especially youngsters, opt to join such missions. For a healthy growth of any mission we need a healthy mix of members: we need youngsters and middle aged members, as missionary vigour would match with experience and wisdom that the age brings along; a few seniors also may bring in more elegance to the team, especially to keep the CMI community charisma more vibrant and alive in our missions. Most importantly, recognition for the options made by those who are already in the missions and the approbation that the whole Province bestows upon them

would make a difference and would attract more members to join such missions.

At the same time, a clear mandate must be given to the Provincial and the Provincial Council by the Provincial Synaxis to ensure that more efficient members are inspired and allocated to join the missions. As Pope Francis advises us, we must be able “to send the best, the most gifted people into these situations...”

So, if our Provinces are in favour of realizing the major thrust of the 37th General Synaxis for global mission, we need to definitively decide that, at least for the next three years, we will earmark the best and talented members, especially the newly ordained priests, to be sent to the global missions undertaken by the Province. Even if some of them would eventually return to the home missions in India, their experience would not only enrich them personally, but also would create a very conducive atmosphere to the missions within the Province’s collective consciousness. Promoting more members and allocating more financial resources for the missions would become easier when more members know the existential realities in the missions.

Finance

Developing our missions, especially in developing countries outside India, calls for financial commitment on the part of our Congregation. Although in some instances international funding agencies may be of help, seeking such support directly may not be very easy. Our thrust for global mission should be taken in a comprehensive manner: along with sparing personnel to reach out in the missions, each of them should be also supported with some financial resources as well. Given the limitations these mission countries face, financial resources become very important in making our mission outreach more effective.

There was a time when most of our home missions were supported by external agencies in terms of financial resources. Some of such institutions, especially in the South India, are said to be rather self-reliant with regard to their financial management. Then, it must be possible for us to channelize a portion of our financial resources into the new missions that are in need of substantial support to make their presence effective.

Moreover, all our Provinces have their members working in the missions in the economically developed countries, and the financial returns that we receive from these missions are said to be channelized to support our home missions (or, as many other put it, “for our missions elsewhere”). Although it is a fact that the maintenance of many provinces, especially meeting the formation expenses, depends substantially on the funds accrued from these missions in the economically developed countries, our collective will to focus on the global mission would call for further collective decision to set apart a substantial portion of this fund to support our global mission initiatives. Despite the difficulties our Provincials may face in managing the local financial affairs, I would earnestly appeal for a drastic decision to earmark at least 25% to 50% of the total funds received from our missions in Europe, North America, and Australia, etc., for the development of our missions in countries in Africa and South America. Indeed, this would also call for clear and stringent policy decisions affecting both the missions in the home-front and in the missions outside India to ensure that these funds are exclusively spent for the development of the missions.

Education of Members in Missions

In my assessment, there are some youngsters who earnestly wish to join the missions, but do not want to jeopardize their continued education by being away from the mainstream

locale of the Province, which seems to be a legitimate aspiration given our contemporary education scenario in the larger society. Although our missions are largely understaffed, it shall not be a justifiable reason for withholding the opportunities for higher education from our young priests. If not undertaken at the opportune moment, most of us may not make it. It is a legitimate aspiration to undertake higher studies, as higher standards are called for in our society and a person who has undergone higher education is generally found to be better performing than the others, especially when it comes to institutional settings.

Hence, it is my submission that the CMI Congregation, especially in the context of our continued thrust for global mission, should consciously create opportunities for our missionaries to undertake their higher education in the mission countries, if they wish to do so. The most likely argument against this proposal is that it is very expensive, especially in comparison with the higher education costs in India. While this may be true, our collective commitment to the identified thrust for global mission would also call for our readiness to train as many of our members as possible in these mission countries, which, in turn, would also provide them opportunities to learn not only the language and culture, but also to build up larger local networks of relationships that would serve our own mission goals.

Moreover, our commitment to the global mission would also mean that we respect and recognize the value of the educational facilities that are available in these countries; our readiness to immerse ourselves in these situations may open up opportunities to renew or revamp their educational facilities and programmes, if our members succeed in proactively involving in the inner dynamics of the education sector. We can become critical stakeholders only to the

extent that we build up credibility in the areas of our competence.

Thrust on Community Living

Although our CMI charisma has a clear emphasis on the communitarian living, over a period of time, especially with some of our experiments in the North Indian missions and later in our overseas missions, we have partly overlooked it, especially due to the dearth of persons to be present in small mission stations and parishes entrusted to the care of one priest. 37th General Synaxis has given a clear mandate to the entire Congregation to once again resuscitate the communitarian ideal in our missionary outreach, as it is a time-tested successful frame of religious missionary endeavours (see *CMI Charism and the Prophetic Call for Global Mission*, Vision Statement §§44-49). In the Synaxis, there was a collective resolve that the CMIs sent to the missions, whether in the home missions or in the global missions, will have a thrust for community living. This resolve is being experimented in our Brasil Mission, as all the five centres have two CMI priests each, both of them working together in the administration of sacraments as well as in the temporal matters.

It is my firm belief that the presence of a missionary in the context of a religious community that facilitates common living, praying, and missionary outreach, from a Christian point of view, will be far more effective than a person who carries out his mission in isolation. Hence, the communitarian dimension of CMI global mission must be emphasized and promoted both by the Major Superiors and the formators in the Congregation. It should become an integral part of our missionary endeavours and, therefore, we should reinstate it in the CMI collective consciousness.

Call for a Copernican Revolution in the CMI Missions

It is common knowledge that most of the dioceses in Kerala – particularly the Syro-Malabar dioceses – and some dioceses in South India already have excess priests; every year a good number of new candidates are also being ordained. That means, such dioceses do not experience any dearth for priests. Moreover, there is a growing tendency among the diocesan clergy to conduct institutions that were till recently owned and managed almost exclusively by consecrated persons. Naturally, therefore, there is an increasing tendency among the diocesan clergy and religious priests to compete with each other in grabbing a sizeable chunk of the ministries that are mostly in popular demand. Given these two facts, we the CMIs must realize that the ecclesial environment in our home turf has undergone tremendous transformation so that the Kerala Church may be in a position to carry out its mission even without any further contributions from our side, unless and until we are ready to totally revamp our strategies and approaches.

At the same time, we are aware of the fact that there is a serious dearth for personnel and finances in our global missions, which can be remedied only by the collective decision of all our CMI Provinces as to whether they would spare their resources for the global missions that we have already opened up. This would be a reality if we can effect a Copernican revolution in our approaches to the CMI ethos and existence, in our understanding of missionary involvement, and in our rationalization and allocation of resources – personnel and finances. If we realize that most of our services would be increasingly welcomed by the people in the mission territories in other countries and continents, isn't it our responsibility to reallocate our resources and relocate ourselves and our priorities?

Hence, it is time for the CMIs to launch onto the new pastures with an explicit thrust upon the global missions,

especially in Africa and South America. We must change our central focus from Kerala and Kerala-related existence and the increasing interest in becoming part of secure institutions to a more meaningful thrust upon the people located in the other continents which continue to thirst for the Good News and for our proactive involvement in redeeming them and their socio-religious existence. It is a call for a displacement or redefining of our priorities. As Kerala-related ecclesial communities can continue to exist on their own, we have a reason to reach out to the peripheries and the marginalized. Indeed, the call is to bring the peripheries of yesteryears to the core of the CMI consciousness; in fact, that is the Copernican revolution that we must bring about in the twenty-first century CMI ethos. Just as Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara was ready to get involved in responding to the needs of the people around him, as he found them to be sheep without a shepherd, today, the mainstream CMIs should move themselves to those peripheries that are existentially in need of our immediate and redemptive involvement.

Practically, therefore, the kairotic moment that we are in call for changing our priorities upside down and decide more in favour of moving into the global missions – on to the peripheries – than remaining within the comfort zones of our home-based missions. Let the decision of the 37th General Synaxis to duly recognize the importance of global mission continue to inspire every member of the CMI Congregation; let our collective resolve be instrumental in shifting our focus from our home-based missions to our global missions, even though that would mean that we would be launching ourselves onto uncharted waters, but accompanied by the Divine Providence and inspired by the charisma that we share with St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and other saintly founding Fathers of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate.

MISSIONARIES ARE OUR GLORY

Missionaries are the 'evangelization heroes' of our times. With a sense of pride, Pope Francis added: "They gave up their young lives: they had consumed their lives. I'm thinking of them in their last moment on earth, far from their homeland, their families and their loved ones, who said: 'What I did was worth it!'"

Genuine missionaries find the call within the call and the Spirit compels them to leave their land and people to encounter strange terrains and peripheries. It is never a calculated journey or well charted out strategy. But it is a Spirit-guided journey and the Spirit will strengthen them to be effective witnesses despite all their shortcomings. This has been the legacy of the missionary movement from the time of the apostles.

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Good News (Rom 10:15). The mission of the Lord was to preach the Good News to the poor. Every missionary has an irresistible drive to be possessed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Good News. According to Pope Francis, one key quality of a missionary is "docility" towards the Spirit. The voice of the Spirit compels them to give over their lives for a noble cause.

The CMIs have inherited the missionary passion from its very beginning and apostolic mobility has been always our strength. Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara evangelized members of other religions through the catechumenates attached to the first monasteries. Later, in due time, the missionary movement of the CMI family resulted in the reunion of Jacobites and the beginning of Syro-Malankara Church, High Range Mission and Malabar Mission in Kerala. With the initiatives in Raigarh-Ambikapur and, later, in Chanda, the Indian mission became a reality. Now

the CMI gives focus more on the global mission, especially reaching out to the African, Latin American, and other Asian countries.

It is challenging to share the Good News of the Lord in the world of today. The mission has undergone changes in terms of New Evangelization, namely, evangelizing the evangelized. The evangelization in the 'developed' world is so challenging, especially to encounter the secular culture and isolated individuals and broken families. A missionary spirituality and life of witnessing become more essential in this effort.

CMI family is proud of our missionaries across the globe and grateful to them for their contribution to the universal Church. We salute all our missionaries who built up our mission legacy and today we take inspiration from their lives and unforgettable experiences. *CMIssion* has played such a great role in bringing the Good News of our missionary endeavour through its issues. The challenging life of our missionaries has been always inspiration to the new generation. I congratulate Rev. Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry for taking all the pains to resume the publication of the *CMIssion*. I am sure that the readers will get inspired by the stories of our missionaries and travel along with them.

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI
Prior General

In Loving Memory of



06.06.1957

04.07.2016

Rev. Fr. George Thanchan CMI

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**CMission Acknowledges Its Gratefulness to Rev. Fr.
George Thanchan CMI for His Selfless Services to
Empower CMI Missionaries across the Globe**



**Fr. George Thanchan with Rev. Fr. Prior General
and CMI Missionaries in Peru**



**From Fr. George Thanchan's Heavenward
Pilgrimage**

FATHER GEORGE THANCHAN CMI **A Thorough Gentleman and an Erudite Scholar**

Jacob Peenikaparambil CMI

Every human being is a unique gift of God and is expected to leave a unique legacy when he or she leaves this world. "We are all sent to this world to perform a unique role," says Nasrudin Shah in the film *Iqbal*. The success of a person's life depends on the extent to which he becomes aware of his unique role and fulfils it. My acquaintance with Fr. George Thanchan, as a member of the provincial team of St. Paul Province, Bhopal (2005-2008), has imprinted in me his picture as a thorough gentleman and an erudite scholar. He did his best to perform his unique role.

The *Free Dictionary* gives the definition of a gentleman as "a well-mannered and considerate man with high standards of proper behaviour." The gentlemanliness of Fr. Thanchan was expressed both in his behaviour and style of functioning. During the three years of our teamwork I do not remember him getting angry on any occasion. He kept his cool when heated discussions took place in the Provincial Council meetings or in the meetings of the province members. He always allowed others to speak and he gave his views at the end and that too in measured words. Fr. Thanchan was well known for his soft spoken nature. At the same time, he was firm in his decisions and never compromised with core values and principles.

His style of functioning was participatory and transparent. All issues related to the province, including the issues concerning the individuals on which he was eligible to take decisions, were discussed in the Provincial Council meetings and decisions were taken on the basis of consensus. He never rushed to take decisions. Before taking decisions issues were discussed thread bear and the members of the Provincial Council were encouraged to

express their views. Since he had no personal agenda, issues were discussed openly and decisions were taken collectively.

Another aspect of his style of functioning was respecting the departmental autonomy. St. Paul Province, Bhopal, has developed a system of participatory administration. All departments have their annual action plans and annual budgets. Once they are approved by the Provincial Council, the Provincial Councillors have the freedom to implement the activities with the approved budget. Fr. Thanchan respected the autonomy enjoyed by the departments and he never interfered in the functioning of the departments. Moreover, he delegated some of his tasks to the Provincial Councillors. As I was the Councillor for Social Apostolate, I was given the responsibility of dealing with Rural Development Service Society (RDSS, Silwani, a joint venture of the Diocese of Sagar and St. Paul Province, Bhopal). He never took a decision regarding RDSS without taking me into confidence.

He encouraged individual initiatives. I had a few happy experiences during the three years of our teamwork. When Fr. Alex Ukken CMI, the former Prior General, died in 2006, I expressed my desire to publish a book on him. He accepted the proposal as a project of the province and entrusted me the task of editing it. But if not for Fr. Thanchan, the book, *Alex without Wax*, would not have been published. He also accepted my suggestion to institute an award for social workers, namely, "Alex Memorial Award for Prominent Social Worker." The task of organizing a workshop every year on a relevant social issue and honouring a prominent social worker with a cash award of Rs. 20,000/- and a certificate was entrusted to CDH (Centre for Development and Harmony) of which I was the Executive Director. In 2014, this task was handed over to the Social Work Department of the province.

When Fr. Thanchan was sent for higher studies in Canon Law I was not very happy because I thought study of Cannon Law was a waste of time. In fact, I wrote a letter to him discouraging him from pursuing the study of Canon Law. Even now I am not very fond of Canon Law because I consider it a legacy of Jewish and Roman legalism and its main objective is to protect the hierarchical structure of the Church rather than promoting the values and ideals of Jesus. But, later, I realized that church leaders often fool priests, religious and the lay people quoting Canon Law. Hence, as long as Canon Law exists, the people of God, especially women religious and lay people, should have correct knowledge of Canon Law so that they may not be exploited. There were a few occasions on which I found Fr. Thanchan interpreting the provisions of Canon Law from the perspective of Jesus' teaching. He knew the purpose of the law thoroughly and, therefore, he could interpret various provisions of the Canon Law from a human perspective. I have seen some bishops misusing the provisions of Canon Law to serve their vested interests. Therefore, Canon Law experts like Fr. Thanchan, are needed to protect the ordinary faithful from the abuse of Canon Law by educating them. His untimely death is a great loss to the people of God.

Let us take inspiration from Fr. George Thanchan to become gentlemen in our thought, speech, and behaviour and become experts in the field of our apostolate through hard work, deep knowledge, and constant updating. That, I presume, could be an appropriate tribute to him.

CMI AMAZON MISSION, BRASIL

Fr. John Elavathingal CMI and Team

Some Significant Details of the Diocese of Santarem

Continent: South America

Rite: Roman (Latin)

Area: 171,906 km²

Population: 316,500 Catholics (70.2% of 451,000 total) (2014)

Ecclesiastical Province: Belém do Pará

Neighbouring

Dioceses: Itaituba (↙), Óbidos (↖), Paramaribo (↑), Macapá (↗), Xingu (→)

Depends on: Congregation for Bishops

Statistics: 22 parishes, 53 priests (26 diocesan, 27 religious), 90 lay religious (39 brothers, 51 sisters), 19 seminarians (2014)

Bishop of the Diocese of Santarem: Rt. Rev. Dr. Flavio Giovenale SDB

Beginnings of the CMI Amazon Mission

XXXVI and XXXVII General Synaxes of 2008 and 2014, respectively, have emphasized the Global Mission as one of the major thrusts in the CMI (see GS 37, Resolution 56). Understanding the signs of the times and the mind of the General Synaxes to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the world, especially in Brazil, more particularly in the Amazon Region, seven CMI provinces came forward, namely, Carmel, Muvattupuzha (Frs. Benoy Ittikunnel and Shinto Kanjiramattam), Sacred Heart, Kochi (Frs. Saji Valamangalam and Dipin Karingan), St. Thomas, Kozhikode (Fr. Tomy Vattukulathil), Preshitha, Coimbatore (Fr. John Elavathingal), Mar Thoma, Chanda (Fr. Jose Koikara), St. Paul, Bhopal (Frs. Sebastian Thekkinieth and Linto Punnassery), and St. Xavier's, Rajkot (Fr. Joby Virippamattathil). This inter-province missionary venture got the assistance of Rev. Fr. Antony Kalliath, especially in

initiating the Global Mission in Brazil. Rt. Rev. Dom Flávio Giovenale, Bishop of Santarem of Para state in Brazil, welcomed the CMI missionaries to his Diocese.

After having two months long Portuguese language course in Ooty and Coimbatore, the ten enthusiastic missionaries from the aforementioned provinces were ready to take up their mission in the Amazon Region. After the initial hiccups with regard to the visa process, the first batch of missionaries reached the Amazon Region on 14 December 2015 and the second batch reached Santarem on 10 February 2016.

The Diocese of Santarem was established on 21 September 1903; originally, it was established as the Territorial Prelature of Santarém from the Diocese of Belém in Pará. On 16 October 1979, it was promoted as the Diocese of Santarém.

The well-organized Diocese of Santarem is situated on the banks of River Amazon and its tributaries. It is a beautiful city with a long history of 357 years. The population consists of indigenous people, people from different countries, especially Portugal, Italy, and some other countries of Latin America.

The scope of the mission work here is immense. People are very religious and want to come closer to God. Bishop Flavio Giovenale is an efficient pastor and a good friend with no need to be formal with him; we the CMI missionaries never feel out of place in his presence. The whole Diocese seems to be very happy to have Indian Carmelite Fathers to serve and help the "People of God" to be "Children of God." As per the plan shared by the Diocesan authorities in the presence of Rev. Fr. Prior General and Rev. Fr. Antony Kalliath, who visited the Mission in June 2016, we were sent to five different parishes, in the month of August, to be with the parish priest and the people so that we could learn the language and gain

expertise both in sacramental and parish administration. From January 2017, we will be fully in charge of the five important parishes in the Diocese. All the concerned parish priests were informed about the upcoming changes and they have welcomed the news. In the Diocese of Santarem, there is a weekly meeting of the priests with the Bishop in different parishes. These occasions give us ample opportunities to know the priests in the Diocese and to know the actual situation in the parishes. In short, all of us are very happy about the present situation we are in and we are hopeful of the future prospects awaiting us.

The following are the parishes where we serve at present:

1. Our Lady of Nazare, Monte Dourado

In the 1970s, Daniel K. Ludwig, an American, acquired a large area in the municipality of Almeirim, on the banks of river Jari and started 'Jari Project'. Jari Project was to plant a tropical tree farm in Brazil for producing pulp for paper. Lots of people settled in the area as part of this project. Soon Fr. Ademar Ribeiro arrived to assist people in their spiritual needs.

For many years, Monte Dourado was ministered by Franciscan priests of the parish of Almeirim. Fr. Ricardo constructed an ecumenical chapel to be used by all denominations of the local community. The area had a population of about twenty-five thousand, of which about 90% are Catholics.

To reach Monte Dourado one has to travel around eighteen hours through Amazon River by boat, followed by around four hours ride by car (120 km) from Santarem, the diocesan headquarters. As we can see, it is a rather tedious journey from Santarem to Monte Dourado.

In 1981, a piece of land was granted to build the church by the project officials. The Church of Our Lady of Nazare at Monte Dourado was inaugurated in October 1982. It was

raised to a quasi-parish in 1983 and was declared a parish on 26 January 1997.

According to the Directory of 2006, it has 4,579 families with 15 outstations. At present, CMI priests – consisting of Fathers Joby Virippamattathil and Linto Punnassery – are ministering in the parish.

2. Immaculate Conception, Almeirim

In the mid-seventeenth century, Jesuit missionaries started arriving at Almeirim. But there was still no established mission until 1693. In the same year, Capuchin Franciscans of the Santo Antonio Province started their ministry there. The Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception was started on 22 February 1758. Construction of a new church was begun in 1785. This church, however, was demolished in the year 1975 to make way for the current array built by Fr. Renat. In 1995, it was declared a parish by the Prelate of Santarem, Monsignor Frederico Costa. Still, for lack of priests, it remained attached to Prainha parish. Since 2001, the parish was managed by priests from the diocese. At present, CMI Fathers Sebastian Thekkinieth and Dipin Karingen are serving in the parish.

Almeirim is around 18-hour journey through Amazon River by boat from Santarem, the diocesan headquarters. According to the Directory of 2006, the parish has 883 Families. The parishioners are scattered in 58 local communities, mainly on the banks of the Amazon River.

3. Our Lady of Grace, Prainha

The ancient mission of Urubuquaras Indians was a little deeper into today's city of Prainha. It was dedicated to Our Lady of Grace. Jesuit missionaries managed the mission. Although the seat of the parish is on the left bank of Amazon River, most of parish territory is on its right side.

At the time of the creation of the prelature in 1903, Fr. Victor Perron, a French missionary, was the parish priest.

Later, with the arrival of the Franciscans, Prainha was attached to Monte Alegre. Since 2000, however, it was under the care of diocesan priests. CMI Fathers Tomy Vattukulathil and Saji Valamangalam are now taking care of the parish.

According to the Directory of 2006, there are 4,212 families grouped into 22 local communities. Prainha is around 8-hours journey through Amazon River by boat from Santarem, the diocesan headquarters.

4. Our Lady of Health, Alter Do Chão

The village of Alter do Chão had been known since the seventeenth century. The Mission of Our Lady of Purification of Borari Indians was erected a parish on 6 March 1758. In 1953, both the village and the parish suffered decay to the point of having the parish seat transferred to the then Belterra village, which was duly erected a parish later replacing Alter do Chão. The present Church of Our Lady of Health is the third church in the village. Since the 1980s, tourism grew considerably in Alter Do Chão. Soon the diocese decided to reinstall the parish seat, and on 9 April 2006, reinstallation took place. At present, CMI Fathers Jose Koikara and Shinto Kanjiramattam are serving in the parish.

As per the available information, there are nineteen local communities in the parish. Alter do Chão is located around 35 km from Santarem, the diocesan headquarters.

5. Our Lady of Aparecida, Santarem

The community of Our Lady of Aparecida was formed in 1947. This was necessitated in order to extend catechetical services to the growing population in the outskirts of Santarem. The first chapel of the community was in a shed where liturgical celebrations were conducted. It was in 1962 that Fr. Juvenal Carlson started building a church using masonry in the place where the present church is located. In

1993, the church building was renovated to give it the current appearance. Franciscan priests administered the parish until 1988, after which diocesan priests took over. At present, CMI Fathers John Elavathingal and Benoy Ittikunnel are serving the parish community.

According to the Directory of 2006, the parish has 1,441 families with a lone local community. The parish is located very near to the diocesan headquarters (2 km). The headquarters of the CMI Amazon Mission is located in this Rectory, and it is from here our mission activities are coordinated. It is 10 km away from Santarem airport and 2 km away from the ferry.

Conclusion

Given the above details and the launching of the CMI Amazon Mission, we are aware of the challenges that we face, especially in the areas of culture, devotional practices, language, food, etc. But we have firm faith in the One who called us and sent us in to this great mission that He will give us the strength to overcome whatever challenges we may face in the course of time. We request you to keep us in your blessings and in the intercession of our founder St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias.

IMPRESSIONS FROM ONE OF THE CMI BRAZILIAN MISSIONARIES

Jose Koikara CMI

Amazon region in Brazil is a beautiful place and the people are also simple and faithful. Around 50 priests minister in this diocese; they are Franciscans, Salesians, and diocesans. Para is the one of the northern states of Brazil. Climate is almost like Kerala. There are only two seasons here in this region of the state, summer and rainy seasons, though summer is a bit longer. Generally, in December, the rainy season begins; last year, however, we received only very few showers. Though there is the Amazon River, there is shortage of drinking water; hence, we drink only filtered water.

We are here since February 2016 and we continue to learn Portuguese language and about the Diocese of Santarem and the culture of Brazil; we have been helping in the parishes by administering sacraments and visiting families. We engage in conversations with them with the hope of improving our language skills. We will take charge of the parishes in January 2017. All of us are happy and we do well here in this Amazon Mission. Thank God that no one is sick until now. We are also learning to drive four-wheelers, and we hope to procure the licence of Brazil.

Please keep all of us in your prayers so that our mission in Brazil will be successful and that it will be beneficial to the faithful the most.

CMI GERMAN DELEGATION
Fr. Georgekutty Kuttiyanickal CMI
Delegate Superior, German Delegation

The CMI Congregation has been serving the German Church since 1964. Some of our Fathers came in 1960s to study in Bonn. Some more came in the following years to help in the parishes. They had good contact with the Archdiocese of Cologne. In 1981, we took charge of a parish in Bonn, specifically in Friesdorf. Cardinal Joseph Höffner, Archbishop of Cologne, in 1983, blessed our House in Bonn, which, till recently, was the main centre of CMI Congregation in Germany. Several of our Fathers came in the next years to take over the pastoral duties in other German dioceses. At present, there are hundred and twenty eight CMIs working in Germany. Since 2011, we have shifted our CMI house to Pützchen, Bonn.

The CMI Fathers are spread all over Germany in sixteen dioceses. We, the German CMIs, are well integrated in the life and culture of Germany. Our Fathers are well appreciated for their friendly approach, compassion, and availability. They stay in parishes assigned to them from the diocese. Most of them are living alone. But we foster and strengthen our CMI community experience through zonal, provincial, and general gatherings.

The last three General Synaxes of our Congregation have reviewed our presence and apostolate in the developed countries and proposed several measures to improve the quality of our apostolic activities as well as the coordination of our members in those countries (see “Vibrant Community for Renewed Humanity,” pages 53-54, 7-78; “CMI Charism and Prophetic Call for Global Mission,” pages 41-46, 61-64).

According to the decision of the General Synaxis 37, the General Council was entrusted to constitute a Delegation in Germany and very Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior

General, has promulgated the CMI Delegation for our German community on 15 October 2015. The delegation consists of a Superior and four Councillors.

Officials of the Delegation

Fr. Antony (Georgekutty) Kuttiyanickal, Delegation Superior

Fr. Mani Kuzhikandathil, Councillor

Fr. Sebastian Elavathungal, Councillor

Fr. George Vadakkinezhath, Councillor

Fr. Rajesh Choorapoikayil, Councillor

The purpose of the Delegation is to ensure the practice of community spirit as per our CMI charism, religious discipline, and ministerial support to the CMI members in Germany. Although the CMI Delegation is still in the initial phase, it has brought to the CMI community in Germany a specific structure and order.

The German Church and society have changed themselves a lot in the last few decades. The society has become more free and secularized. Of the total German population 29.5% are Catholic and, according to statistics, 10.9% of the Catholics actively participate in sacramental life of the Church (see census data of 2014). In spite of the material riches that the Germans possess, they continue to long for spiritual nourishment. Unfortunately, however, there are not enough priests to meet and satisfy the spiritual needs of the people. So, our service is still required and welcomed in Germany. There are still opportunities for our Fathers to serve the Church and people in Germany.

NORTH AMERICAN CMI DELEGATION

Fr. Davy Kavungal CMI

Delegate Superior, USA and Canada

On 6 October 2016, Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy, the Prior General, promulgated CMI Delegation for the USA and Canada. It has been more than half a century that the CMIs have started ministry in North America. Currently, 110 priests are involved in multidimensional ministries and studies across the continent. We assist many dioceses and institutions that are in need of priests to fulfil their mission. For long, it has been a question as to how we can minister to the North American Church more effectively and fruitfully.

Although the American Church is going through a 'Faith Crisis', the Christian faithful are very much religious in mind. They are thirsting for an authentic religious experience. Our founder, Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the other co-founders had a twofold vision: sanctification of the souls and the renewal of the Church, which they achieved through their life of prayer and ministering to the people of God. We dwell on the same vision in our CMI missions and contribute our best to fan the flame of faith across the globe through our CMI global mission.

The North American Church today is looking for priests after the Heart of Jesus. They are thirsting for priests with spiritual and moral credibility and integrity. Most of our priests serving in North America are engaged in pastoral ministry. Our main challenge is to make our ministry unique and efficient so that each CMI could be the mercy of God the Father incarnated amidst them.

Rooted in the CMI charism and the Tradition of the Church, the members of the new CMI Delegation in the USA and Canada are called to respond to the signs of the times and needs of the North American Church. We are challenged to revive and rejuvenate the American parishes

through liturgical, catechetical, and spiritual formation and the celebration of their faith in Jesus Christ. To materialize this vision we need a structured and organized administration. It is in this context the CMI General Synaxis 37 mandated the General Council to establish more effective administrative structures for the global missions.

The promulgation of the CMI Delegation for the USA and Canada and the newly set up administrative team will facilitate the working together of all CMI members in making the CMI North American Mission more vibrant in tune with the charism of our Congregation and the needs of the local church. Let us congratulate Rev. Fr. Prior General and the members of the General Council for working tirelessly to achieve this goal. Although our priests are away from the homeland, they are incessantly inspired by the words of Jesus: "Do not be afraid, I will be with you till the end of the time" (Matt 28:20). The North American Church is calling us. Let the newly established Delegation help us respond to this call positively and prove that we are the faithful followers of the vision and mission of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Letter of Appreciation from the Bishop of Beaumont, Texas

Diocese of Beaumont

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November 9, 2016

Dear Father Paul,

Congratulations to you and your councilors in appointing Father Davy as your delegate to the U.S. and Canada. Having a local delegate, as you mentioned, has many positive aspects in helping to advance the mission of Jesus. The local delegate is closely in communication with the members. Furthermore, he is more familiar with the local church and its mission. I look forward to collaborating with Father Davy.

Again thanks for the presence and the ministry of the C.M.I. in the Diocese of Beaumont.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Curtis J Guillery, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont

**A Note of Appreciation for the CMI Presence and Services
in the United States of America from His Grace Joseph E.
Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville**



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Archdiocese of Louisville

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November 8, 2016

Reverend Kavungal Davy, CMI
St. Anthony Church
862 Manhattan Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Dear Father Davy:

May God bless you!

I am honored to have this opportunity to express my appreciation for the ministry of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate in the Archdiocese of Louisville.

The first CMI priest joined the Archdiocese about four years ago, but these priests, now numbering five, have made a major impact during this short period of time. They have been a great gift to a number of our parishes, rural and urban, large and small, throughout the 24 counties of the Archdiocese of Louisville. A constant is their love of Christ and the people they serve. I know the Catholic faithful greatly appreciate their humble and selfless ministry and their willingness to collaborate with other clergy, religious, and lay leaders to serve in Christ's name.

Please know of my gratitude for all the CMI's serving in the United States and for the creation of the new CMI North American Delegation.

With assurance of my gratitude, esteem and prayers, I am,

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville

SOME THOUGHTS ON CMI MISSION IN NORTH AMERICA

Fr. Isaac Chackalaparampil CMI

Introduction

Knowledgeable North Americans do know that Indian Catholics who follow the Syro-Malabar Rite and the Syro-Malankara Rite have their Apostolic heritage from St. Thomas the Apostle and they are known as St. Thomas Christians. Although the people of Canada and the USA have in general a Christian tradition, they cannot point to a direct Apostolic foundation. They, sure, follow Jesus in the style of Peter the Apostle because the faith for them has been mediated especially by religious orders from Europe. During one of recent CMI Zone-get-togethers of the CMIs serving in Canadian communities in July 2016, there was a scholarly sharing of ideas and prospects of Canadian Church by a Catholic school principal, Paul LaPlume'. He was trying to explain what the CMI priests should be aware of in their planning to serve the Canadian Catholics in current situation. Part of this write up, I should admit, is influenced also with his analysis of the current situation of the Canadian Catholic Church. The situations he was trying to explore are not much different for the entire North American Church.

A Little Historical Note

The North American Church is not that old. The first Holy Mass in the New World is recorded as on 6 January 1494. It was celebrated by a chaplain accompanying the explorer Christopher Columbus. This priest was Fray Buil who was either a Franciscan or a Benedictine monk. We should also be aware, at this time, that in a similar circumstance, the following of the Latin Rite began in India with the

Portuguese missionaries when explorer Vasco da Gama made contact with our country.

We the Catholics of India are not unaware of how the European missionaries in the early 1600s, partly out of their blissful ignorance of the history and tradition of native Indian Christianity and partly due to prejudices and power politics of Portuguese 'Padrovado' power-net, brought in unnecessary struggles for the native Christianity in India culminating in division and confusion. Almost at this time, Canada and the USA were just beginning colonization by France. The early explorers to the interior of the country, including the regions now known as Quebec and Ontario, were accompanied by Franciscan priests - a group called Recollect Brothers. Due to the repercussions of war in Europe, in 1629, the British forces expelled the French priests from Canada.

After French sovereignty was partly restored, the Jesuit Province of France sent missionaries to Canada, who lived among the aboriginal people in the Quebec-Ontario region and eventually established their own settlement between 1639 and 1649 in Midland, a township now a well-known pilgrim centre. Due to the tribal warfare among the indigenous peoples several of these missionary priests had to lay down their lives and become the first martyrs and saints of Canada. Their mission collapsed and for about a hundred years Christianity retreated completely from this interior region.

Slowly and steadily, it was again the religious congregations like the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Sulpician Fathers, the Ursulines, the Hospitallers of Saint-Joseph and the Augustinians who helped to continue and sustain the Church in Canada. They founded schools, set up hospitals and opened seminaries in the province of Quebec. The first fully independent diocese - with a bishop - was established only in 1674. Incidentally, the pioneering Bishop Laval was

canonized in the same year (3 April 2014) as Kerala's St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara CMI (23 November 2014).

Religious congregations continued to play an important role as the dioceses began to spring up in the New World. Beginning in 1871, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate from across Europe served as missionaries among the aboriginal peoples in the far West and North of Canada including north of the Arctic Circle. While discussing this evolution of Catholicism in Canada, LaPlume tries to set our CMI presence in North America today in a perspective very much in keeping with the North American history.

Entry of the CMIs in North America

It was in 1940s that the CMIs began to further consider extending and building up new vistas in India into one of their CMI charisms originally envisioned and put into practise by their Founding Fathers. They had realized that literacy and education are steps to progress and righteous living. Our Founding Fathers had a generous and inclusive vision of progress of the whole society not just of their own community. Their vision was of an enlightened Indian (Kerala) society irrespective of caste, creed, or social status. In their vision, there were opportunities for all. Everyone was welcome and they all have equal opportunities to freedom and growth. CMI schools at different centres in Kerala were flourishing. It was time, they realized, to take further steps for higher education and excellence. One important step in this direction was the establishment of Sacred Heart College, Thevara, in 1943. Statistically, today about 30% of the entire CMI community is involved in the apostolate of education.

The initial CMI encounter with the New World, therefore, was triggered by our need of well-trained priests to shoulder their daring venture into the field of higher education. Already the CMIs had their priests going to

Rome and Europe for staffing their major seminaries for priestly training. The new venture of extending their educational apostolate to higher levels, they had many pioneering members with training in the West. For example, Fr. Theodosius (University of California), Fr. Aggaeus (University of Montreal), both with higher degrees in English were later also principals at the Sacred Heart College. Fr. Francis Sales, with degrees in sociology from the USA, was instrumental to start the Department of Social Work at SH College, which later became a flourishing autonomous institution at Rajagiri Campus. Eventually, the CMI's started more university colleges in various parts of Kerala, Bangalore, and now also in other states extending and widening further the vision of our Founding Fathers.

Consecrated Life: A Missionary Movement

Our awareness that consecrated life being a spiritual and prophetic movement, as also equally a missionary movement, made our members enter strongly into this arena of missionary life from the very beginning as retreat preachers all over Kerala and, then, eventually extending to other parts of India and abroad. Remember how the CMI pioneering members were deeply involved in the 'Reunion Movements' at home in the 1930s, then in 1960s their missionaries going to Iraq Mission, and afterwards in 1970s and 80s taking up Mission Dioceses elsewhere in India. CMI's entry into the Global Mission was, in fact, envisaged by our Founding Fathers.

Our Missionary Entry into the New World

While pursuing their studies the CMI priests also engaged in helping with the spiritual needs of the North American Catholics of the parish communities where they were residing. The Kerala Catholic immigrants, then, were not many and, naturally, were integrating into the mainstream Catholic communities of their places of living. But they were

happy to have the Kerala priests helping them with their spiritual needs when necessary.

Eventually, in the last 40 or so years, apart from pursuing higher studies, many of our CMI Provinces took initiatives to supply priests exclusively for pastoral ministry in various dioceses of both the New World and Europe, especially in Germany. The remuneration derived from these pastoral services in the 'developed' world was well utilized in part for the infrastructure development of the home Provinces and their fledgling institutions and projects both educational and other. It was natural that these CMI members serving in the 'developed' world were to support the respective Provinces in sustenance and projects. There were no concerted thoughts at this time and even today to invest at least a portion of these members' remuneration in a pool for investment in the areas of their service with a view to establish a longstanding, well-planned presence in these 'developed' countries. Any idea of investment engagement in North America or Europe to establish a permanent CMI presence there was not considered a serious need although our continued presence there have been relentless.

Acts of the General Synaxis 37 recognizes our Mission in Developed Countries: "The pastoral exigencies of various dioceses in the developed countries gave opening for our Congregation to send our members to serve the pastoral needs of the '*established Churches*'" (§61). The Synaxis Fathers recognize that "While this has been identified as a need of the time and place, it has also been a source of support for 'our missions' in other parts of the world" (§61).

I think that this special observation of the Synaxis would give interesting matter for our history students and researchers to study, compare, and calculate the proportionality of the total remuneration derived from our members' services in the developed countries through these

years and the investment made in developing 'our missions in *other parts of the world*'.

Establishing CMI Presence in the Developed World in the Vision of Our Global Mission

It was a pioneering venture of Fr. John Britto Chethimattam when he established a CMI centre in East Orange, which was a humble house for the CMIs serving the USA to come together once in a while and to renew our community joy and *koinonia*. This centre was later shifted to Brooklyn, when the CMIs were assigned a small Brooklyn parish (Holy Family Parish on Brooklyn's Nassau Avenue) for themselves to take care of and serve. This parish remained for a long time the centre for the North American CMIs to come together and to receive our major superiors and other members when they come for visiting the USA. The pastor of this parish was also given the title of a 'Coordinator of the CMIs in North America'. After Fr. Britto's time, great CMI's like Fr Moses Kallarackal, John Menonkary, Fr. Sebastian Kochupura, etc., were in charge of this parish. Then, the title was changed to "Coordinator General for the USA and Canada" with the appointment of Fr. Jose Panthaplamthottiyil, who later became the CMI Prior General. It was during the time of Fr. Cyriac Madathil, now Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Trivandrum, that the CMIs were assigned to a larger parish on the Manhattan Avenue of Brooklyn (St. Anthony's) with more living space in the rectory. Fr. Davy Kavungal now runs this parish with much vibrancy to the best appreciation of the parishioners and the bishop. It is during Fr. Davy's tenure that the CMIs serving in various regions of the New World are conveniently divided into zones for the ease of meeting together and each zone was provided with a Zone Chair for convening intermittent meetings. Fr. Davy coordinates everything from our Brooklyn Centre.

It may be mentioned that in 1980s there were ideas and proposals flashed for establishing a CMI region in North America by veteran CMIs like Fr. L. F. Jose Padinjarepeedika and others, which was nibbled in the bud especially by the Provincial Superiors, who were not interested in diverting their members' remuneration away from their own Provinces' needs and "for support for our missions in other parts of the world" (General Synaxis 37, Acts §61).

A Welcome Venture

It was a welcome move on the part of the North American CMIs to agree to take over the "Peabody Mall Chapel Service" in Boston from OCarm Fathers. Congratulations to both our Prior General and Fr. Davy Kavungal in undertaking this service for the people there. The OCarm Fathers were running this facility for a long time. When they realized the dwindling number of their members which came in the way of keeping all their projects going they were generous to offer this facility to the CMIs to take over.

This Mall Chapel Service Centre is a pioneering venture, a beginning of a visible sign of long-term CMI commitment in North America. In the vicinity of this Mall Chapel in Boston, the CMI Fathers have purchased a small house for the two priests now serving the facility to stay. With over hundred CMIs now serving the 'New World', this small house owned by the CMI Fathers would serve as the nucleus and a welcome symbol for the next generation of the CMI priests to consider the feasibility of undertaking other such or similar engagements of long-term planning in order to initiate a stable presence of the CMIs in the 'developed' world to serve the people of God there and, may be at a later stage, to fulfil the dream, perhaps, of creating a CMI region like in Kenya or Peru or Brazil. We have to envision that the branding of 'developed' and

'under-developed' are relative in nature and the concepts liable to change as economy and situations change. The whole world should be liberally open to the CMI's to serve its people in the very situations these 'children of God' happened to be set.

Conclusion

North America, the 'New World', indeed, is known as a 'developed' country, mainly in terms of material prosperity and progress, as are Germany and other European countries. The first 'Immigrants' from Europe had their share of difficulties before they achieved the present-day progress and modernity. European immigrants also brought with them 'Christianity'. For example, Canada's Quebec Province was almost exclusively comprised of immigrants from France and they were all Catholics. Until 1960s it had a strong and vibrant Catholic culture and way of life. But in this once vibrant 'cradle of Catholicism' now about 35% of couples simply live together and about 38% of marriages end in divorce. Traditional understanding of sexuality has been largely abandoned. There was a time (before 1960s) when sex was understood to be tied to procreation; moral place for sex was inside of marriage; not any more. Sex in modern times has become an expression of interpersonal relationship. In a 2010 report in Canada, it was found that 66% of 15-24 year-olds had sexual intercourse at least once, and one-third of them had multiple partners. In Canada, there are no laws regulating abortion. Same sex marriage was legalized in 2005. Recently, Canadian Parliament has passed a law permitting doctor-assisted suicide (euthanasia). They are also witnessing today the phenomenon called "hook up sex," a kind of free involvement which is close to prostitution without exchange of money!

The question is whether the world vision of the CMIs regarding our Global Mission should also systematically address the situation of the Church in 'developed' countries as well and take reasonable initiatives, involvement, planning, and integration into this society rather than just providing remunerative services to the parishes in various dioceses as we have been doing so far. This urgency is more so when we recognize that the western religious communities that always contributed to the vibrancy of Catholicism in the West are leaving the scene due to shrinking personnel and dwindling vocations.



DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

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November 2016

I congratulate the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate on having established the CMI North American Delegation and I wish them every blessing in this new endeavor.

I have been acquainted with the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate for more than ten years now. They have been of tremendous assistance in the Diocese of Covington and have touched the hearts of so many people here. I am so grateful to them for their ministry and for the wonderful spirit of fraternity they continue to exhibit in that ministry. They are beloved by the people they serve who observe their selflessness. They are indeed true missionaries who bring God's love to those entrusted in their care.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Foys'.

Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, D.D.
Bishop of Covington



Dr. Thomas Mar Eusebius
Bishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy
in USA & Canada

St. MARY, QUEEN of PEACE
SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC EPARCHY in USA & CANADA

Eparchial Chancery · 1500 DePaul Street · Elmont, NY 11003 · USA

November 15, 2016

Message

I am very glad to know of the recent establishment of the CMI Delegation of the USA and Canada and of the appointment of Very Reverend Father Davy Kavunkal as its first Coordinator. I take this opportunity to congratulate Very Reverend Father Paul Achandy, the Prior General and the whole Congregation for this significant achievement and Very Reverend Father Davy Kavunkal for the new responsibility vested on him.

As I understand, the presence of the CMI Fathers in the USA and Canada dates back to many decades and there is presently a considerable number of priests exercising laudable pastoral ministry in the many dioceses and other mission areas of this vast region. The establishment of the new Delegation, I am sure, will enhance better coordination of their religious life and pastoral ministry. I wish and pray that the newly established Delegation, basing itself on the great spiritual values of the great Founder of the Congregation, St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias, will always strive to be a source of spiritual light and promoter of the Gospel values in a culture that is greatly in need of them. May the Lord strengthen Reverend Father Davy Kavunkal to carry out this important ministry in the Congregation and in the Church. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in the USA and Canada will consider it to be an honor to work in collaboration with the new CMI Delegation. May the Lord bless all of us.

+ Eusebius

+ Thomas Mar Eusebius
Bishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in USA and Canada.



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Brooklyn

310 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, New York 11215

November 23, 2016

Reverend Kavungal Davy, CMI
Delegate Superior
United States and Canada
862 Manhattan Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11222

Dear Father Davy:

Allow me to congratulate you on the establishment of the North American delegation for the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. Your presence in the Diocese of Brooklyn now for over 20 years has been blessing to our diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. Not only are you staffing a parish, but many of your members are working in various parishes of the diocese.

Your members come with the highest educational qualifications and are much appreciated by the pastors in Brooklyn and Queens with whom they work, as well as the faithful whom they serve.

I congratulate you and pray for your continued success in the pastoral care of the people assigned to you.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Nicholas DiMarzio".

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn

AGONY AND ECSTASY OF MY SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION

Fr. Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI

The Call

The official letter of appointment, dated 12 April 2012, which I received from the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants, Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, Kochi, was quite explicit and clear-cut. It read: in South Africa, “your primary responsibility is to strengthen the faithful of the Syro-Malabar community and to help them grow in accordance with the Syro-Malabar heritage and identity.”

The CMI Legacy

This was not the first time a CMI was called to duty and entrusted with challenging tasks. In fact, the foundational charism and the *raison d'être* of the CMI Congregation are to work for the wellbeing and progress of our mother Church, both on local and universal levels. Right from its very inception, the CMIs have played that role commendably well. Through the troubled waters of schisms and foreign domination, which threatened even the survival of our ancient Nazrani Catholic heritage, it was St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who almost singlehandedly captained the ship to safer shores. Not only for her survival but also for most of her present-day achievements the Syro-Malabar Church is much indebted to the CMI Congregation more than to any other institution. Being the firstborn, resolute and responsible offspring of the Nazrani Church, the CMIs are duty-bound to embark on such missions. In the past, the brave sons of the CMI Congregation have courageously and heroically led our fettered and bruised mother Church beyond her confinements to endow her with global

perspectives and outreach. That legacy and patrimony need to be upheld and emulated by each and every CMI generation!

Return to SA

My appointment has a prehistory. At the invitation of the Seminary Commission of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), I had the opportunity to serve the South African Church as the Dean of Studies at their National Seminary, Pretoria, from the beginning of 2002 until the end of 2007. During that period, at the request of the migrant Christians from Kerala I teamed up with them to launch the South African Malayalee Catholic Association (SAMCA) in view of bringing together the scattered Malayalee Catholics to facilitate their social and spiritual cohesion. When I bid farewell to South Africa by the end of 2007, the late Fr. Thomas Manickam stepped in to carry on that service. His unexpected demise in 2010 forced the SAMCA leadership to approach the Major Archbishop Mar George Alencherry as well as the CMI Prior General of that period, Fr. Jose Panthaplamthottiyil, for assistance. On account of their acquaintance with me the SAMCA leadership preferred and suggested my name as their choice.

Missionary Zeal

It was with reluctance and under certain conditions that the CMI General Council, the DVK administration, and the Dharmaram Rector, Fr. Thomas Aykara, approved my return to South Africa. Since the initiative and idea were coming from the lay people, I was quite excited and enthusiastic to return to South Africa to steer this new mission. Fr. Joseph Pinakkatt, a young diocesan priest of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam, also was assigned to accompany and assist me to organize the South African Syro-Malabar community. Though I managed to expedite

my South African visa and work permit, Fr. Joseph's visa application and processing dragged on. Stirred up by my missionary zeal I wanted to reach South Africa as early as I could and, hence, I booked the first available flight and landed in South Africa on 17 April 2012.

CMC Hospitality

Prof. Celia Curie, my academic colleague and her husband Prof. Derrick were there at the airport to pick me up. They, first, took me home for refreshments and later on to the parish of Fr. James Thazhoor CMI, who served as the parish priest of West Park Parish of the Archdiocese of Pretoria. Since he was out of station, it was the CMC Sisters from the neighbouring convent who welcomed me. The cordial welcome of Sr. Rose and Sr. Molly made me feel at home.

Rotti-Kappada-Makkan

As soon as I managed to get my mobile connection, I informed the SAMCA leadership of my arrival. They were happy and agreed to come and meet me at their earliest. Within a few days Fr. James Thazhoor too came back. A meeting of the Syro-Malabar families living in Pretoria was convened. Around fifty people turned up for the Malayalam Mass, which was followed by the meeting. The President of SAMCA, Prof. Thomas Jacobs welcomed me and informed the community of the new developments and the consequential demands on the community. He told them that my new avatar is as the Coordinator of Syro-Malabar Catholics in South Africa and not as a seminary professor who would assist the Malayalee Catholics during his free time. It is the duty and responsibility of the Syro-Malabar community to support their priest, who will work for them fulltime. He also reminded them that, in the South African context, a priest needs a car to move around besides the basic needs of "*rotti-kappada-makkan*"!

The CMI Billionaires

The above statement seemed a surprise or an eye-opener or even a shock to some of the listeners. They might have been expecting 'free service' as they were accustomed to. Some of those people expressed their difference of opinion a bit aloud:

"CMIs are billionaires, why should a CMI priest be financially supported by the lay people?"

"Fr. Kurian is sent by the Syro-Malabar bishops; why can't they support him?"

"Let the Archbishop of Pretoria give Fr. Kurian a parish which will meet his needs."

"Let Fr. Kurian resume teaching at the seminary; then, he will be taken care of by the seminary."

"Our Pretoria community is not big enough to support a priest. Moreover, he is here not for us alone."

"We are frequenting various Latin parishes; we need Syro-Malabar Mass only once in a while."

"Ever since our arrival in SA it was the Latin Church, and not Syro-Malabar Church, that helped us."

As discussion got heated up there came a proposal as follows:

"It is a fact that the SAMCA leadership failed to let us know all the implications of bringing a priest. Anyhow, they contacted the bishops and the superiors of Fr. Kurian, who responded positively to our request. Now, it is our turn to support Fr. Kurian who is already here with us. Let every family contribute fifty Rand each per month towards his maintenance. Fifty Rand (about Rs. 225/-) is mere peanuts for us."

This proposal was objectionable to some. They said: "All families are not financially the same. Let those who can, give more. Let us propose a minimum of twenty Rand per month. Moreover, Fr. Kurian is not here for us alone. There are hundreds of families dispersed all over South Africa. Let

them also contribute. Why should we bear the whole burden?"

Thus, it was decided that the SAMCA leadership shall urgently bring to the attention of all the Syro-Malabar families in South Africa the 'Good News' of the arrival a "priest according to their own rite and taste" and what is expected of them to do for him.

Reality Revealed

Anyway, by the end of that meeting it became clearer to me that my walk is not going to be on a "bed of roses" but on sharp thorns. A real "uphill battle" awaits me!

On 12 May 2012, after reflecting for about two weeks, I wrote a long letter to His Beatitude Mar George Alencherry to let him know the unfriendly situation I was facing. Let me quote here a part of that letter:

"Priyamulla Pithave,

I could not write to you earlier though I often thought of doing so. I knew that you might be eagerly waiting to know about the situation I am in. My intention was to let you know the situation once things are more or less settled. Since that is not happening and may take time, I decided to let you know the situation here as it is at present. A few days ago, I wrote to Fr. Thomas Aykara, the Rector of Dharmaram, revealing the situation and he immediately asked me to bring it to your attention as well as of Fr. Prior General so that you both may remain informed and, if possible, do whatever is possible from your side to improve the situation...

[After explaining in detail my situation and the problems I face, as conclusion I wrote as follows:]

... What is going on here now is a war of nerves!!! Everybody thinks that they have done what they ought to do and now the ball is in the court of others. All are waiting!!! Everybody is afraid that if they come out they

will be responsible. I am not worried or frustrated about these developments! I knew that this could happen and was mentally prepared to face these challenges. However, if ball has to start rolling, people should come out and play their game. I am standing in the middle of the court ready to play my role. Now, it is the rest of the players to decide whether the play has to take off or to be called off. I am ready for anything.

I can survive periods of uncertainty and abandonment because God has furnished me with a lot of patience. For me being in the darkness is being with God. I can wait until my time comes. Even if it never comes I am least worried because I have no special ambition other than to carry out God's plan. I am ready to hang on here if that is going to do some good for our people here in South Africa. I am also ready to return. To me both are the same... doing and not doing. In my world there is no success or failure... I am merely a collaborator... trying to be a faithful instrument in the hands of God.

Therefore, please do not think that I am requesting you to do something immediately. I am not starving, not depressed or even in big trouble. Fr. James is taking care of me well. If you think that my patient waiting is going to bear better results than we pushing forward with our own plans and proposals or demanding people to act, I am ready to hang on, until things start happening on their own. Meanwhile, if you think that something you can do from your part, to improve mine as well as the overall situation, please feel free to do so. What I would suggest is to write a paternal letter addressing the various communities (King Williams Town, East London, Mafikeng, Limpopo, Umtata, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and others) greeting them, letting them know about my appointment and arrival, and asking them to unite and grow as a powerful community so that they may not lose

their identity. If you have better proposals, please let me know. Before sending Fr. Jose Pinakkattu, since he is a diocesan priest, it is better to have clear ideas and plans about his upkeep here in South Africa.

Requesting your prayers and paternal blessings,

Affectionately yours,

Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI

Boomerang

Though there was no formal reply to my letter, it did not go unattended. After two months I received a letter from Mar Alencherry, dated 18 July 2012. To me that letter was not just a surprise but a real shock. In disbelief I read it again and again to make sure that what I was reading is true! The letter read as follows:

Dear Fr. Perumpallikunnel,

Greetings from Mount St. Thomas, the Major Archbishop Curia of Syro-Malabar Church!

Before going to Rome for XIII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome, I thought of taking a few days to make a short visit of the Syro-Malabar faithful in South Africa... I plan to visit both the Archbishops of Pretoria and Cape Town and have written to them. I have also indicated that you will be organizing this visit in consultation with them...

I plan to visit South Africa from 3rd to 6th October...

Although the time is short, I hope you will be able to organize this visit fruitfully.

With prayerful wishes,

Yours cordially in Christ,

+ George Cardinal Alencherry

Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

As I mentioned earlier, this letter was to me like a bolt from the blue. Of course, I have no doubt about his good intention. He wanted to surprise me by doing more than

what I asked for. By coming to South Africa he wanted to show his paternal care and concern for us and to affirm me personally. Though the letter was dated 18 July 2012, the South African Postal Department took their time to deliver it. By the time I received the letter it was already too late and I was panicky. Within a short time so much has to be done. Unfortunately, I myself was still struggling to find a foothold! But, now, there is no time to waste. I began calling the leaders of various communities to let them know of the coming of Mar Alencherry and asked them to pass on the information and to organize their communities. It was only then some of them came to know that I have returned to South Africa!

All Hell Let Loose

There is something important one should be aware of: All the members of SAMCA are not belonging to the Syro-Malabar Rite. SAMCA was an attempt to bring together the entire Malayalee Catholics (Latin, Malankara and Malabar, including Knanaya) and some orthodox families too, though the Syro-Malabar people were the majority. Soon, among the Malayalees, both the news regarding my return to South Africa and the coming of Mar Alencherry spread like wildfire. Those who belonged to other communities felt threatened. They regarded this move as a stealthy 'take over' of their SAMCA by the Syro-Malabar hierarchy. They cried foul and began dispatching leaflets and messages through internet. Meetings were organized and letters after letters were drafted and circulated among the community members calling for a boycott of Mar Alencherry's visit.

"Zeros, Get Lost"

They alleged that the hidden agenda behind the visit of Mar Alencherry is to announce a new South African Syro-Malabar Diocese with Fr. Kurian Perumpallikunnel as its first Bishop!!! I was portrayed as a "power crazy, cheat,

crook and a schemer. A façade! (sic)" Some even said that I have already bought and brought my regalia: pectoral cross, ring, mitre and crozier! Some of the messages claimed to delineate how the Syro-Malabar Church brought about division and conflict among people in various countries. Some priests and bishops are craving for power and the money and they are coming to dig deep into the pockets of the laity. We are tired of the greed and arrogance of the "Syros"! They are coming after our money. Keep those "zeros" away! I am not going to dwell on all the accusations that were circulating. They even send delegations to their respective local bishops warning them of the impending danger and asking them to check the invasion of a foreign Cardinal into their territory!

Some of the bishops, since they knew me personally, contacted me and asked what was going on and why your people are so much agitated and upset. I smiled and told one of them:

"Up to now you know only the 'Korean-Gangnam-style'. Now we will demonstrate our unique 'Kerala-style-welcome'! Whenever anything new is proposed, we Malayalees will oppose it fiercely with tooth and nail! It is part of our culture! We cannot help doing it even though we live in South Africa for decades! It is in our blood!"

I do not know whether my explanation convinced them; anyway they smiled. I told them that we have not finalized anything yet. We were just considering a possible visit. These people are jumping the gun!

Fight, Flee, or Wait

Soon I sent a message to inform Mar Alencherry about the big fuss some people made when they heard about his possible pastoral visit. He sent me a reply cancelling his proposed visit. This incident opened my eyes and taught me

a valuable lesson: SAMCA cannot serve the purpose of my arrival! My beloved SAMCA, in fact, will be my opponent! Should I fight “my child” or flee like David from Absalom? My CMI formation taught me another option – to wait, wait patiently! However, to wait for God should not be my first option but the last, because God steps-in only when I have exhausted all my options and done my 100%. Even 99% is not enough! Only when I am totally lost, he will find me, not before!

Hanging On for Dear Life and Green Pastures of Tzaneen

It was in that situation, Tomy Mathew, an IT professional, came to meet me. He is by nature a reserved and withdrawn type. When he came to know that I may return to India due to the absence of cooperation from the people, he decided to come out of his comfort zone and to do what he could. He requested me to hang on so that he might try to bring together some people.

Fr. James and I considered various options. Then, it was the Archbishop of Pretoria, William Slattery who proposed us to meet the Bishop of Tzaneen, who was visiting him that day. We met him. He was eager to welcome me to his diocese which was experiencing a shortage of priests. He agreed to appoint me as the Director of the Schools and Religious Education of his diocese.

Tzaneen is a thinly populated, large mission diocese at the north of South Africa, around 400 km from Pretoria. Soon I left Pretoria and reached Tzaneen. I stayed with the bishop and took charge of the diocesan schools. I found Bishop Joao Rodrigues an unassuming, amiable, gem of a person. We both cherished and looked forward to our evening walks, which gave us ample opportunities to discuss every subject under the Sun.

Indians of South Africa

Now a bit more history about the Indian presence in South Africa: South Africa can claim the biggest Indian diaspora in the world. In fact, 3% of the South African population is called Indians. Those Indians are often referred to as 'Durban Indians'. More than 170 years ago shiploads of people were bought and brought from India to South Africa by the British to work in their sugarcane plantations. They were mostly Tamils. They were accommodated predominantly at Durban region of Natal. Gujratis also arrived in South Africa to do business. Mahatma Gandhi came to South Africa mainly to cater that group and worked there for about 23 years. Due to the Apartheid regulations, Indians were confined to their exclusive territories and were, thus, forced to keep their culture and identity intact.

Apartheid and Malayalee Teachers

After Indian Independence from the British, on account of India's opposition to the Apartheid regime, the Government forbade Indians from travelling to South Africa. However, Malayalees who were hunting for jobs in foreign lands managed to reach South Africa via other African nations! They got a golden opportunity to fill-in the vacuum created by the running away of the white people at the end of the Apartheid. Unqualified and ill-equipped Malayalees also utilized this opportunity to get employed as teachers in Black schools. Even though they could not teach their Black students properly, they educated their own children by sending them to top quality schools. Thus, their second generation became well qualified professionals, especially doctors and engineers. The members of SAMCA belong to this group who are now well settled and financially well-off.

Nursing Opportunities

Recently, there occurred a new inflow of migrants from Kerala. They were nurses, both male and female. They are

still struggling financially to get settled and to pay off the recruiting agents who made them pay huge amounts for organizing jobs for them in South Africa. They have yet to feel at home with the South African ways. They live in rented flats even though a few have already managed to buy their first car. During my first term in South Africa this group was not there yet. But during my second tenure I come across quite a number of them. Soon I realized that there are thousands of them and are in need of pastoral assistance, though they are not in a position to support the pastor financially.

Tomy and Resmi

Soon, there came a request from Tomy and friends to come to Pretoria every month to celebrate Malayalam Qurbana for the new migrants. Tomy assured me to meet all my travel expenses, even by flight. His generosity was extraordinary. Normally, I do not allow people to surpass me in generosity. However, Tomy's case is different. He is a silent actor. He acts like a duck. After laying big eggs, ducks walk away as if nothing has happened while hens cluck aloud to broadcast their great contribution to the entire world. Tomy never bothered whether others made their contribution or not. He always did what he can - unassumingly. His lovely wife Resmi too was of the same genre. She would slip into my kitchen and pack my fridge with tasty food that she prepared and would disappear undetected. She won't even bother to let me know that food is waiting. The day I bid farewell to the Pretoria community, I had instructed Tomy to let everybody know that I would not accept any gift. After the function, when all were gone I found a small packet on my table. I opened it to find out who left it there. It was Tomy's parting gift - an iPad mini, the most recent model! Let me stop, or else I will go on and on.

Two Communities

I brought up the issue with Bishop Joao and he gave me permission to drive all the way to Johannesburg and he even wrote a recommendation letter to Archbishop Buti Tlagale of Johannesburg towards the use of Rivonia Catholic Church. Thus, began my long monthly travels to Johannesburg to say solemn sung Mass with a small group of people. Their enthusiasm was an assurance that things will gradually improve. The nurses living in Pretoria were finding it difficult to come to Johannesburg due to the lack of transportation. Tomy talked to his parish priest at Queenswood, Pretoria, and got the permission to celebrate the Mass at his church as well. Thus, two communities came into existence. This arrangement continued for more than three years. Meanwhile, we managed to celebrate the Holy Week as well as other important feasts according to the Syro-Malabar Rite and customs.

Divide and Rule?

However, the SAMCA members remained suspicious and sceptical about the new developments and preferred to keep a distance from us. They accused me of bringing division when they heard that I initiated a new community called "South African Syro-Malabar Catholic Community" (SASMCC). Some of the Syro-Malabar priests working in various dioceses of South Africa also got irritated and wrote me that it is not right to divide people on the basis of Rite.

Symptoms of Burnout

Gradually, I found myself getting exhausted and depressed. My initial energy and optimism began to plummet. I began to feel that I am left alone by the authorities and they do not care about the South African Mission at all. The high spirit that made me jot down the letter that I sent on 12 May 2012 was no more there with me after four years, in 2015. I felt extremely tired and burned-out. To me the future of South

African Mission seemed bleak. I wrote to Mar Alencherry and Fr. Prior General that I am returning to India since my period of appointment was only for three years and now four years have already passed. The reply I received from Mount St. Thomas was a reappointment letter for another three years! I was not ready to take it anymore. I felt abandoned and fragile. I wrote to Fr. George Edayadiyil, my Provincial, explaining my inability to continue like this. He suggested that I wrap up and come back to the Province by the end of 2015. I informed the authorities concerned of this.

Laudium: The Ultimate Challenge

From Mount St. Thomas soon I got the message saying that they are trying their level best to find a replacement and requested me to continue or drive on until a replacement arrived. Tomy and those two communities I served were worried about my possible return to India without a replacement. Tomy went and met the Archbishop William Slattery and requested him to bring me back to the Archdiocese of Pretoria, as he thought that it was the distance and the loneliness that drained my spirit. He told the Archbishop that they needed weekly Masses and more pastoral care. Archbishop Slattery invited me for a meeting. He suggested that I come back to his archdiocese and take charge of the Laudium parish, which is in disarray for quite some time. He told me that he is confident that I could put that parish back on track. If I agreed to become their parish priest, he would allow the Syro-Malabar people of his Archdiocese to use the Laudium Church and its facilities for their needs as well. That was a fantastic deal, take it or leave it!

To Be or Not to Be

I knew it would be a real challenge, because I had some acquaintance with that parish ever since 2002. It was built for the Durban Indians during the Apartheid era. The name

of that parish is very significant: St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church! Can anybody ever conceive a better place than this to sow the seed of Syro-Malabar Church in South Africa? I considered the implications involved. Anyway, I was contemplating on running away from South Africa, since I had lost all my hope. Therefore, I have nothing to lose even if I fail in this attempt. But if I succeed, the Syro-Malabar Community that I was sent to serve will have a foothold in Pretoria! Using St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Laudium, as a launching pad, SASMCC can spread its wings and soar high in the South African Skies. This must be a God-given chance! Now or never! I must whip up my last snippets of energy and give it a try.

Assurance of Backup

I told the Archbishop that I am ready to accept the challenge and would try my best to reinstate the Laudium parish to its former glory. However, once I completed that task, he should let me return to India, because another priest will come from India to take my place. Archbishop Slattery had no problem with that arrangement. However, he told me not to let the parishioners know that my service is only for a limited period. By October I got the message from Mount St. Thomas that Fr. Albin Paul Nallakuttu, a diocesan priest from the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, had agreed to come to South Africa. I wanted to bring Fr. Albin as early as possible to South Africa so that he could stay with me and get acquainted with the South African situation. I did everything possible from my side to speed up the process.

Cleaning Up the Augean Stables

Archbishop Slattery gave me the appointment letter as the parish priest of Laudium parish. Along with Fr. James I made a visit to the parish house. To my distress, besides water and electricity connection, nothing was in working condition. A total mess! I invited some pious ladies of the

parish to come and assist me to clean up the place. It took days for me to make the place habitable and functional. Even the liturgical vestments were missing.

Fortunately, the parishioners were very cooperative, happy, and supportive. In due course, I informed the parishioners that their parish church and facilities will be shared by the Syro-Malabar people. With few exceptions most of the parishioners were happy to accommodate the new group.

Light at the End of the Tunnel

By the grace of God, within a few weeks, I managed to sort out the problems and brought that dysfunctional parish back to its regular ways. I introduced daily Mass, regular home visits, distribution of Holy Communion to the sick and the elderly people on every Friday, etc. I could count on Tomy whenever I needed help. He sent messages to the Syro-Malabar people informing them that there will be Holy Qurbana every Sunday. The Syro-Malabar community organized a choir and bought musical instruments and a sound system. On 31 January 2016 at 10.30 am we had our first solemn celebration of Syro-Malabar Qurbana for the first time at Laudium Church. There was a good turnout. I could see great joy and enthusiasm among our people. Even from faraway places young people started coming to attend Qurbana on Sundays. Tomy and I decided to empower those youngsters by entrusting them with responsibilities, especially the management of the money collected. Even though they were still financially struggling, I could see how generous they were.

Women of Heart

When ladies came to know that I cook my food and I am not very good at it, they made it a point to stock my fridge with enough food so that I just needed to warm them up and eat. Sr. Molly CMC, with her sisterly care, made my life at

Laudium comfortable. My wait for the arrival of Fr. Albin got prolonged beyond all my expectations. Though I was expecting him to arrive by the beginning of 2016, he got his SA visa and work permit only by the first week of May. Since this was his first missionary endeavour I decided to organize things to make his life as comfortable as possible.

New Dawn

Finally, on 17 May 2016, Fr. Albin arrived. Tomy and I went to the airport to pick him up. Though Fr. Albin requested me to stay on for another two months I agreed to stay for two more weeks to introduce him to the parish affairs and the South African ways. I took him around to see different places and introduced him to many people who could assist him when in need. Archbishop Slattery invited him for a lunch and gave him a warm welcome. I took him to the Seminary as well and introduced him to the rector and the staff members. Since Fr. Albin has a master's degree in pastoral administration, I proposed that he could teach at the seminary as well.

Final Farewell

Though they didn't expect my announcement that I was leaving South Africa, entrusting the parish to Fr. Albin, the parishioners were in good spirits and grateful for what I had done for them within a short time. On 2 June 2016, with a heart brimming with gratitude towards God and with immense satisfaction I flew back to India.

God Sees, But Waits

To be frank, the last lap of my missionary venture was a miracle! Even in my wildest dreams I never expected such a spectacular conclusion to my South African Mission. It was agony and uncertainty that dominated most of my days in South Africa; I was determined to run away accepting defeat. However, God thought that His South African

Mission should have a better preamble and foundation than that. Now I know that it was not I but my Daddy who waited patiently for me to strip my intellectual pride and self-confidence that boarded arrogance. My 99% was not enough for Him! Even when I exhausted all my options and did my 100%, nothing happened. What a humiliation! In my helplessness, I even got depressed. When God saw me eating humble pie His motherly heart bled. It was when I got totally lost, He stepped-in and found me, and not before! Then I realized that there is no independent space for me and God in this universe. When I am totally lost and found in Him and Him in me, agony gives way to sheer ecstasy!

True Mission Is Self-Sacrifice

Missionary life is martyrdom. Experience of failure and death are its essential ingredients. If our missionary life does not involve personal sacrifice, we are not losers. In that case, what we give is what we have and not what we are. My South African mission taught me the benefit of giving over getting, and losing over gaining. Jesus says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (Jn 12:24).

PRESHITHITES' CMI MISSION IN KENYA

St. Theresa's Sub-Region

Fr. Francis Xavier Vellanikaran CMI

Superior, St. Theresa's Sub-Region, Mount Kenya

A Brief Outline

The Preshitha presence in the Kenyan soil started with Fr. Paulson Kannanaickal who started living at Mbiuni in the year 1998. Then, he was brought to Magumoni by Fr. Jose Kallely. Rt. Rev. Silas Njeru, then Bishop of Meru, made Fr. Paulson the priest-in-charge of the parish at Magumoni known as Little Flower Catholic Mission. After a few months Fr. Raphael Kanjirathingal joined him. Fr. Raphael returned after two years and, in March 2000, Fr. Sebastian Parayil came. The next Preshithite in Kenya was Fr. George Puthenchira; then came Fr. Alex Ukken (Devamatha Province) and we were entrusted with another parish at Mikumbune, namely, St. Joseph Catholic Mission. After one year Fr. Alex left for India due to ailments and Fr. Sebastian became the priest-in-charge of the parish. Fr. Paulson returned to India after completing the magnificent church at Magumoni, and Fr. John Elavathingal took charge of the parish at Magumoni. Meanwhile, we started a centre at Naromoru in the place given to us by the bishop of Nyeri.

Context for Starting the School

From that time the Preshithites began feeling the need of a place for the Province and a boarding school to provide a Catholic upbringing to children from all walks of life. It became a pressing need, especially in the context of the burgeoning individual churches and degradation of morals all around. All the Provincials since then - namely, Frs. John Peter Muringathery, Francis Kizhakkumthala, Antony Puthenangady - were in favour of this idea. Frs. Rupert Panikulam and George Puthenchira started searching for a

suitable place. At last, the present land at Embu was chosen after enquiring more than 40 locations. Fr. Blassius (DOE) helped us purchase this land. The Bishop was more than happy to grant us His Paternity's permission and blessings.

Humble Beginnings

In a meeting held at Magumoni, members of the Preshitha Province proposed that we should start the school by January 2012. So, Fr. John started staying with five workers in a temporary shed. Frs. Sebastian, George, and Xaviour took turns to visit him and encourage.

On 20 December 2012, Fr. Rupert, Regional Coordinator, laid the foundation stone for the kindergarten. Fr. John, riding his motorbike from Naromoru, and at times staying in the tin sheet shed in Embu, supervised the 'marathon of a work'. "Going on" was the refrain of Fr. John, which showed the march of his mind and the work of the school. On Sundays after Mass at the Felician Convent nearby, he went to Magumoni to help Fr. Xaviour.

On 16 May 2011, Fr. Rupert returned to India owing to the difficulty with the climatic conditions. The words of Fr. John surmise the role of Fr. Rupert in establishing the CMI presence in Embu: "It is Fr. Rupert who identified the land at Embu, took the initiative to acquire it and organized to start a primary school here. He is the one who named it Mount Carmel. The service he rendered here is unforgettable."

10 July 2011 was the first Carmel Day at Mount Carmel CMI Residence, Embu. On that day came our two young turks - Bros. Raju and Joby Muriankariyil. On 18 August 2011, Fr. George, then Regional Coordinator, blessed the foundation for the dining hall and kitchen. On 12 December the same year, Fr. John hosted a party for all the collaborators and workers. All the Preshithites and Fr. Karaya were present. Everyone admired the speed with

which Fr. John had led the construction of the nursery block, dining hall, kitchen, and toilets despite the various constraints regarding finance, personnel, and so on. It is indeed impossible to look at the school without wondering at the fact that all the preliminary buildings were constructed from scratch within a short span of ten months.

School Started

On 10 January 2012, the school was started with 25 students, of whom four were in the boarding. On 23 January, we had the solemn blessing and inauguration of the school. The Bishop of Embu, Prior General, Provincials of Devamatha and Preshitha Provinces, along with more than twenty Fathers - some of them were in Kenya for the Priestly Ordination of the first three Kenyan CMIs and the Pan-African Conference - graced the occasion. The Bishop spoke very highly about the Carmelite presence in his diocese and the future of the school. Everything fell in place so well and it was a real blessing of Mother Carmel for the school.

Growth of the School

By the end of February 2012, Fr. George handed over the reins to Fr. Sebastian as the manager of the school. The frontage of the school was fenced by 15 November and the application for registration of the school was forwarded by 21 November. On 7 January 2013, the girls' dormitory was blessed. Considering various factors, the school was renamed Mount Carmel CMI School, changing its earlier name Mount Carmel Academy. The appreciation for the good work at Mount Carmel led to a nearby school management to send their students here as they were planning to close down their school due to internal struggles within the managing committee. Hence, the strength grew to sixty five.

On 19 July 2014, Mount Carmel Day was celebrated inviting the priests and religious of the area as well as the

parents of the students. During the celebration, Fr. Winson Moilan, Provincial of Preshitha Province, blessed the boys' dormitory and appointed Fr. Francis Xavier Vellanikaran as the manager. By 8 August 2014, the application for registration was again forwarded to the county office after a hectic week of running to various government offices. By the end of August the county council had approved the registration of the school. We should specially remember the help from various people especially Gobia, DQASO, who continues to be a constant support and guide. The provisional registration was granted in November 2014 for one year.

Catholic Formation

The prayerful atmosphere at Mount Carmel CMI School is a given. Holy Eucharist is celebrated every day at 6.30 am for the boarders and resident staff. The whole school participates in the Holy Eucharist on Fridays by 8.00 am. We have adoration and administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Saturday. On Sundays, the community goes to the nearby parish centre for Holy Mass. The students lead the choir and liturgical dancing, alternating with two other schools.

The introduction of 13-hours adoration of the Holy Eucharist is a watershed event in this area. As part of the canonization of our founder St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, a 13-hours adoration was organized in November 2014. Rt. Rev. Paul Kariuki, the Bishop of Embu, presided over the concluding Mass and benediction in which a large number of students and parishioners from around participated. Due to the overwhelming response and the request by the Bishop to give Carmelite contribution to the people around, this holy event is continued every year.

Now, for the third year, the event has grown in its solemnity and the number of participants, as schools take

turns in leading the adoration every hour. The benediction and concluding Holy Mass is offered by different priests from the surrounding parishes, who also assist in administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the day.

The arrival of the Sisters of Charity was a landmark event. The gracious presence of the Sisters has been an edifying factor in the school atmosphere. The Sisters now manage the school in their capacities as head teacher and class teacher, and provide the much needed medical assistance on the school campus. One of the sisters, who is a qualified and experienced (23 years) nurse, is also serving in the diocesan hospital.

Further Developments

With a strength of 14, the first batch of Class 8 candidates sat for their KCPE board exams in 2015. Rt. Rev. Paul Kariuki visited the school exclusively to bless the candidates and pray for them. Fr. Jose Valiyaveettil offered Holy Mass and blessed the candidates and their parents who were present to encourage their wards. The result of the first batch was encouraging with a high score of 362 and a mean score of 266.6 considering the various factors. We have 94 students at our school now from Baby Class to Class 8.

The group of teachers working at Mount Carmel CMI School led by Sr. Rinitha CSC, the head teacher, put in a lot of hard work with commitment and dedication. Their efforts are seen in the way the students bloom from the time they are placed in their hands. The parents would happily appreciate and recognize the effort of the teachers.

Other Facts

The annual expense for a student works up approximately to 650 Canadian Dollars. This includes the boarding, uniform, food, and tuition fee.

On the side of infrastructure, with the help of Fr. Paulson Kannanaickal (from Canada) and Fr. Thomas Thottumgal (from Germany), along with local contributions, we have been able to put up the bare necessities like the classrooms (14), dining hall, kitchen, prayer hall, dormitories for boys and girls and a very small place for the Sisters. In fact, they stay in the underground of the boys' dormitory while the priest-in-charge stays in the store room near the kitchen. Much more, obviously needs to be done.

Challenges

The teachers are underpaid due to the present financial situation of the school. This can be improved with time when we get more students. This is possible only when the parents are helped with monetary assistance to meet the growing needs and spiralling cost of living. As school NOC is not a must, once they are asked to pay the tuition fee, the parents take them to another school. Some parents make this a practice by moving from school to school paying a little and absconding. Of course, this is due to their inability.

The school, out of the little we are able to muster out of the little sacrifices of teachers and management, continues to help a few parents. Certainly, this is in no way sufficient. We need a lot more to actually realize the dream of the founding fathers to be a centre of excellence to students from all walks of life without any consideration to their financial situation.

The running costs are spiralling and the need to provide better amenities for the students remains imminent. The need for finding a permanent solution for water and power needs have to be resolved soon. These could be made possible if we install solar systems and a borehole; obviously, they involve huge costs. Again, the construction that has been done is yet to be fully paid for since much of the materials have been procured with promissory notes

believing in the loving Providence of God. The good Lord will provide as He has done until now since the time of our founding father St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. May the good Lord inspire more and more benevolent souls to contribute their mite.

PRESHITHA CMI MISSION IN KENYA: A STUDY

Following is the result of a self-analysis carried out by the CMI missionaries in Kenya (the Mount Kenya Region) from the Preshitha Province, Coimbatore. They have dwelt on their experiences and the context of the mission in the light of the CMI charism and the orientation for Global Mission in identifying the challenges and opportunities in offering these insights. They hope that the suggestions proposed, if implemented, would make significant enhancement of the CMI Mission in Kenya, particularly in Mount Kenya Region.

Editor

Strengths

- The Fathers who worked here from the beginning have built up a strong supportive network.
- They have built up a good image of spiritual, committed CMI missionaries.
- Preshitha has diverse missions: pastoral, social, educational, administrative, etc. Thanks to the Fathers who worked here earlier!

Weakness

- Lack of personnel; even the ones who are sent come with resentment and spread it around.
- No proper awareness of the Kenyan Mission among the members in the Province.
- Lack of clarity in the mission policy of the Province.
- No necessary training in local language and culture.
- Lack of strong support from leadership.
- Lack of a leadership with vision for the mission.

- Lack of resources which has been augmented because of the laxity in planned use of the available resources and personnel.
- No planning for the future like recruiting local vocations.

Opportunities

- Positive atmosphere and proactive responses are emerging among the members in the mission.
- There is open discussion on every matter with everyone belonging to the mission contributing their ideas.
- There is no special coterie or individual to decide; decision is made as a team.
- The bishops are happy with our members and want us to take over more missions.
- They religious around are very much receptive of our efforts as they see us as learned priests with a deep-rooted spirituality.

Suggestions

- We need to branch out to other places and ministries lest we become out of place.
- Of course, this requires more personnel with long term commitment to mission.
- They need to be empowered with decision-making powers and necessary resources - both personnel and financial.
- Those who work in the mission could be sent for either higher studies or pastoral ministry in some developed countries where English is sufficient like the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, etc.
- Someone who has worked here should be sent to Germany exclusively for connecting funding agencies, initiating projects and seeing through the projects to the end.

- We need to cooperate with other Congregations and agencies for making ourselves more effective in the mission.
- The idea of sending only newly ordained priests should be rethought. A few other priests should be sent. New priests feel that they do not get pastoral satisfaction as they engage in pastoral ministry in a language that they are not comfortable.

BARAKA COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE, NANYUKI
Chalice Sponsorship Project

We are currently supporting 500 children for their education through the donor agency called 'Chalice Canada'. We are reaching out to 900 families in 23 villages. We target that all the future generation should have at least primary education in Kenya. We have some university going students at present and many technical training students too. Through this sponsorship program we are encouraging children to attend school in spite of their traditional life style like grazing cattle, supporting in farm without going school etc. We have adopted 8 schools for school feeding, and we provide lunch for them through our sponsorship projects to attract children to the school. We involve in community development projects by providing good learning facilities to the schools (construction of classrooms), providing learning materials (Textbooks and other equipments), providing sanitation facilities (toilets to schools) etc.

We have housing projects occasionally to the sponsored children. We support abandoned elderly people through the sponsorship by providing food, medicine and other daily needs. We also encourage their saving attitude and at present we have 23 microfinance groups having an amount in circulation of 4 million KSH. We also do support to the street children with available funds for their rehabilitation. Last 4 years 30 street children were rehabilitated and supported for their education in collaboration with the government authorities. We also make sure the children's health by our nutritional programs and continuous assessment and regular checking of children. We have Programs for HIV affected and we support them by providing food and medicines, through collaboration with hospitals and other organizations.

For the uplifting of families we encourage agriculture in all the families and they are given training in modern and urban technologies of farming by experts. Our social workers monitor all the activities in our site. We have a model farm where we cultivate by the support of donor agency and spent the produce to the schools for school feeding. We have goat farming, chicken rearing, and pig rearing and fish farming projects for the families. We occasionally distribute energy saving equipments of lighting and cooking with available funds. We encourage small scale industries in the families and we provide equipments for them to start. Last year 25 families were given different kinds of business support and successfully retired from the sponsorship now, because of their self-sufficiency or improved life facilities.

We also provide psycho-spiritual and social support for the youngsters and children in the 'Kerala model of Christeen retreats' (started 2015) and it was highly in demand by the education institutions. Last year we covered 3000 children (directly or indirectly) in 17 schools in and around Laikipia and Nyeri counties. We celebrated year of mercy with practicing the corporal acts of mercy in our site. (feeding the hungry, drink for thirsty, clothing, visiting imprisoned, home for homeless, visiting sick and burying dead).

We have monthly programs of social and spiritual support for prisoners (started in 2015) to reduce the pain of rejection and to give a Christian formation and conscience in them. It helps the prisoners to be self-disciplined and God-fearing after their term in prison.

Environmental protection is also our concern and last year we planted 2000 saplings in public places on the foot of Mount Kenya as part of afforestation projects. We joined with other partners and it has a significant impact on the climate.

As part of these activities, there is a gradual improvement in their life standards. Their socio-economic and spiritual life is getting better due to the interference of Canadian sponsors/staff, Indian animators and other volunteering staff from abroad. We are insisting nothing upon them to broaden their vision, and exploring the existing possibilities of human survival in African ground. Some of our sponsored children are working now and supporting their homes. Some engage in farming and do it as business rather than the traditional thinking of feeding purpose.

“Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu” (Zulu) means that a person is a person through other persons. We affirm our humanity when we acknowledge that of others.

CARMEL GARDEN CHAVARA RENEWAL CENTRE
St. Theresa's Sub-Region, Mount Kenya

Carmel Garden Chavara Renewal Centre is a community of three CMI priests from the Preshitha Province, Coimbatore, namely, Fr. Joy Chirayath (Director), Fr. Raju Nellissery, and Fr. Jose Kaithavalappil. From Monday to Thursday people from the surrounding places come to Carmel Garden Chavara Renewal Centre for intercessory prayers; every Friday we observe a prayer day with Rosary to the Blessed Mother, Rosary of Divine Mercy, Way of the Cross, Adoration, talks, and Holy Mass with around 50 faithful participating in it and deepening their faith. On every second Saturday around 200 people come from different places and are benefiting from the one-day recollection. Many of them witness to the real change happening in their lives and find life more meaningful. A lot of healing and deliverance take place in the retreats on Fridays and second Saturdays. In this way, this Centre carries out faith formation, counselling, Sacrament of Reconciliation and motivate people to live a fruitful spiritual life. Occasionally, our Fathers also avail themselves to celebrate Holy Mass in the houses of needy.

From our Centre Priests are moving around 400 kilometres for pastoral ministry, including annual retreats and one day recollections. In 2016, we covered more than 12 schools with around 4000 students, spending at least three days in each school. It enriches the life of the youth and young people through spiritual animation talks, leadership training, and counselling. We hear from the teachers and students that this program boosts them to live a good life. Additionally, we cover a few parishes and few retreat centres to conduct retreat and around 4000 benefit through these programs.

CMI MISSION IN GERMANY: A REVIEW

Sebastian Elavathingal CMI

Introduction

For the past five years, I am serving in a parish in Germany in the diocese of Limburg. It has given me some experience to reflect on our mission as CMIs in Germany. I came to Germany with my missionary background in Madhya Pradesh in the CMI St. Paul Province, Bhopal. Besides, my twelve years of engagement in the CMI priest-missionary formation programme of 'Samanvaya' has kept my interest in missionary questions alive. I consider that my experience in Germany - such as knowing the people, their culture, social life, and religious attitudes - has animated my thoughts and enriched my life as a religious priest and a missionary.

Mission and Missionaries

To begin with, I find it necessary to revamp our notion about mission in the context of Germany. We have already in our minds some traditional images and impressions of mission and missionaries, which we have acquired in the past. These notions are so deeply rooted in us that we need to take an extra effort to understand and accept the deep human and theological meaning of mission, which is often taken for granted, without giving proper attention.

In the Kerala context of Christian life, we have often a 'romantic' understanding of mission. The images of distant lands and heroic men and women preaching the Gospel come spontaneously to our minds. As we know, the CMI Congregation was restricted to a small geographical area till the beginning of 1960s. The Chanda mission was its first significant opening to the outside world. Later, the Congregation took up other mission areas and more members were sent as missionaries to these areas. It was

natural to develop a corresponding notion of mission and missionaries in the mind-set of the members. Mission means the villages in North India and missionaries are those few members who venture to go to these areas to preach the Gospel.

Now, with the new awareness of global mission, we consider also the poor, underdeveloped countries outside India as missions. The African countries and the Latin American countries are now included in our notion of mission. Even though most of our members are living and working in Kerala, nobody considers Kerala as a mission area or the activities done in Kerala as mission activities.

Besides the geographical notion of mission, we have also some preconceptions of missionary life and activities. Living a hard life of privations, suffering poverty, doing service among the poor and the illiterate, and caring for the sick and the marginalized are some of the typical aspects a missionary life in our common understanding. Since not all are capable of living such a life, there are some of the members who are chosen and sent as missionaries away from the homeland.

‘Missionaries’ and ‘Non-Missionaries’

Against this background, today we have come to develop a division between ‘missionary’ and ‘non-missionary’ members of the Congregation. What are the ‘non-missionary’ members in Kerala doing? They are doing pastoral service, running schools, hospitals and institutions of various kinds. Those members who engage themselves in the service to the poor and the marginalized in Kerala are doing ‘social work’.

Among the ‘non-missionary’ members, some members of the Congregation are sent to developed Christian countries of Europe and North America for doing pastoral service. They are not generally considered as missionaries, since

their field of work and lifestyle do not correspond the general perception of mission. They engage themselves in parish activities, live supposedly in material comfort, without knowing the challenges faced by the missionaries in North India or in other poor African or Latin American countries.

The Essential Content of Mission

At this point, we have to revamp our hitherto held notion of the mission and the missionaries. First, 'mission' is not merely a geographical notion. It could be any place, where humans strive and struggle for their life's fulfilment – be it material or spiritual. I am a missionary, when I live my life in any part of the world as truly Christian and truly human in a concerned and committed manner. 'Being sent' need not necessarily imply a physical displacement. It is the awareness of a personal call to come out of oneself and live for others. In this sense, all are missionaries in one way or other. The essential content of mission is the human exigencies and experiences, which are addressed and transformed by the Gospel message of joy, peace, forgiveness, justice, healing, and celebration. The essential quality of a missionary is enthusiasm with commitment to the cause, for which he is called and sent.

It is neither the place where we are, nor the activity we are engaged in, nor the poverty or affluence of the people among whom we are working that counts as decisive. What matters is the sense of 'mission' that inspires and motivates us, that enables us to interpret the given conditions of life around us. We fulfil our 'mission' when we discover the 'human' content in every person's life, irrespective of his or her age, status, nationality, colour, or creed. Our preaching of the Word consists in leading the person to the fullness of life, which faith in Jesus promises to all. It is the meaning of

global mission, which makes our presence necessary and relevant in any part of the world.

The German Mission and Its Challenges

Our task as missionaries in Germany is to discover our 'mission' in the given conditions of life. Germany is supposed to have a Christian culture from a historical point of view. It has a glorious Christian tradition in terms of social, cultural life, and achievements. But, in the past 50 years, the attitude of the German people towards Christian faith has undergone drastic changes. The big churches built with the enthusiasm kindled by the Vatican II are now symbols of failed hopes. A flourishing Church is nowhere to be seen. Besides the fall in church attendance, there is the crisis of vocation to religious and priestly life.

These developments may be looked at either positively or negatively. What does the dwindling number of the faithful in the Church mean? Is it the outcome of a growing material culture and economic progress, which relegate religion and spirituality to the basement? On the other hand, from the positive point of view, is it a process of purification for the Church to rediscover its authenticity and credibility? Does this crisis indicate the emergence of new ways of living Christian faith with true Christian freedom, conviction, enthusiasm, and fairness? Is it not a chance for the German Church rather than a setback to realize in life the vision of Christian universality based on humanity alone, transcending race, language, colour, and gender?

Arrival of Guest Priests in German Parishes

The shortage of priests made some German dioceses invite foreign priests to help out in the vacant parishes. The opening of the Eastern Europe led to a flow of Polish priests to German parishes. Still, the number of priests from Kerala, belonging to various religious congregations is increasing in all German dioceses. Naturally, there are serious discussions

on this growing trend of foreign priests taking up pastoral duties in Germany.

What are the future prospects of this policy? Are the guest priests so indispensable that the Church will collapse without them? To this question, Professor Philipp Müller of Mainz University responds: "That the pastoral care would collapse in our country without foreign priests is probably an exaggeration. But they make an important contribution to maintain the existing pastoral structures reasonably." Looking at the statistical data, it is found that 2,386 priests came from abroad in 2014. Out of them 30% were from India and 25% from Poland. Nearly one in six priests who do pastoral work in Germany are from outside. 40% of them have more than ten years of experience in Germany.

Scepticism about the Guest Priests

The evaluation of this situation is found in media and in Church circles. They reflect the uncertainty of the Church in facing the emerging scenario. A recent issue (Number 40, 9 October 2016) of the *Church + Life* weekly of the Diocese of Muenster has the lead article with the title "Chance or Risk?" which deals with the question of guest priests in Germany. The study of a theologian, namely Karl Gabriel, leads to the remark: "the German priestly Church cannot be saved in this manner." There is more pessimism than rays of hope in his interview with the guest priests all over Germany.

According to Karl Gabriel, Germany needs "highly qualified, language-trained and mentally flexible" priests. But such a kind of 'global priests' are rare. The reason, according to him, is "Most of the foreign priests come, since they are sent by the bishops or religious heads, obliging them by an agreement for five years at first." It amounts to saying that most of them come rather unwillingly. Karl Gabriel observes that today financial interest plays an

important role in sending the priests by the dioceses and religious congregations. Originally, the guest priests were welcomed based on a “give and take” policy. “You have priests, we have money.” It was considered that this worldwide intercultural exchange will give the Church in Germany a new impetus. But, gradually, it has turned to be that the Indian, Polish, or African priests are here to compensate the shortage of native German priests. This cannot save the Church in Germany.

A Critical Look at the Role of Guest Priests

Karl Gabriel is not, however, against the service of guest priests in Germany. He finds a chance for them in building up the intercultural and universal dimension of the Church in Germany. They can, for example, play the role of a connecting link between continents by collaborating with the relief and charity work organizations. Besides, in the present context of massive migration movements, they may be helpful as an interface in bringing people closer.

According to Karl Gabriel, today it is not the vision of a world-church that motivates both the sending and receiving sides. Rather, it is money on the one side and shortage of priests on the other. As a stopgap measure, it has no future, either for the priests who are sent against their will or for the Church and the parishes in Germany.

These critical observations of the Karl Gabriel offer an eye-opener to the dioceses and congregations, which send their priests as well as the German Church, which receives them. Both sides have to set the level of their expectations still higher. The priests are sent here neither as well-paid employees nor as substitutes to the absent German priests in the parishes. They are to be given a different job description, which affirms the dignity of their vocation, evokes their creative potential, and kindles their enthusiasm for Christ and his Gospel.

Challenges of the German Pastoral Field Today

The guest priests serving in Germany cannot find the fulfilment of their duties only by doing pastoral work in the traditional form. They are faced with the challenges of a field, which does not present a blooming landscape of flourishing faith. There are the preliminary problems of learning the German language and knowing the mentality of the people. The image of the priest is different in Germany than that of a priest in India. Apart from that, a great challenge is to observe with concern and involvement the newly emerging forms and configurations of Church life in Germany.

An article by Ulrich Waschki in a Church magazine shows the contours of the emerging Church in Germany. It will be a colourful Church. The uniform parish concept will give way to diversity. What in one place works need not be applicable in another place a few kilometres away!

The Church will be smaller, since many are leaving the Church and few are entering. The sacraments are attended only by a few. Hence, services are reduced or deleted. Participation in the church life has decreased. Many churches are closed. Organizations and groups are dissolved. In the city areas, however, due to immigration from abroad there is an increase in the number of Catholics.

Faith becomes a decisive option. There is no compulsion or social pressure to go to church. Practice of faith is a conscious decision. When the membership of the Church shrinks, there will be a financial crisis, since the flow of the Church taxes will cease. The reduction of the supporting staff is one of the possible consequences. The positive aspect of this development is the demand for increasing involvement of the lay volunteers to support the priest. It need not be seen as a stopgap measure. It is a call to the laity by baptism to live their faith consciously. The people of God take faith into their own hands as their responsibility.

The future Church in Germany is a Church of freedom. People give precedence to their conscience rather than to the Church laws. People seek of ways of spiritual life, independent of the Church structures. Pilgrimages, prayer, and meditation groups, Bible study and charity services are means to satisfy spiritual need, sought by people on their own responsibility. People who go to the Sunday Mass do it without feeling compelled to do it. This exercise of freedom can tell upon the parish-centred community building.

The future German parishes will be of people who consider their faith seriously and practise with conviction. The purpose of the church attendance will be the experience of God. The parish community, merely seen as a social get-together or organization, will lose its relevance.

The final observation is that the future Church has a missionary potential. It comes from the faith lived out like the true disciples of Jesus, although they are very few. They will try to change the world, to stand up for the weak and the marginalized. They will live their life unselfishly, cheerfully, and confidently. They will profess their faith publicly and talk about it when it is appropriate. Mission, in this sense, has an infectious nature. There is no strategy for enlarging the fold by converting the neighbour.

Constitution of XXL Parishes

The trend I find in my parish in Hachenburg in the past five years is the dissolution of the small parishes and bringing them under a newly constituted big parish of XXL size. Thus, seven previous parishes are brought under one administration. This new arrangement is necessitated because of the shortage of priests and the dwindling number of church-goers.

In the present set up, I am in the team attending to all pastoral needs in the entire area. It consists of, in our case, three priests, one deacon and three pastoral assistants.

Nobody is assigned any particular place or community. Only the tasks are assigned to each one in the team according one's charism, aptitude, and ordination. It means, all for all and nobody for anybody.

In future, many such XXL-parishes will come into existence as a measure to save workforce and resources. The Indian guest priests coming to the German parishes should be aware of this situation, in which the classical sheep-shepherd relationship may not be evident. It is physically impossible, since the parish is spread out in a large area. The centralized parish offices play, then, the pivotal role.

Evangelization through Presence

Mobility is indispensable in today's lifestyle. It is the trend in all areas of life, since life as in earlier times in self-sufficient villages with a small church, school, post office, grocery store, and eating point is now history. Anonymity is increasingly gripping the lifestyle, even in church-life. The classical missionary method of evangelization by building contacts with people through charity works may not work anymore. The challenge of this situation is to go deeper into the sense of mission with greater 'intensity'.

The essence of Gospel witnessing, in this sense, is not action, but 'presence'. Anonymity can be countered only by our graceful presence in the place and among the people where we are sent to. It should not be limited to our presence to the few faithful, the Catholics or Christians for that matter, but to all humans. I would think of extending the notion of our pastoral and missionary presence even to the landscape of the parish area, including the flora and fauna!

The tendency to close oneself in one's apartment, after doing the required pastoral services, will reduce our presence to the space within the four walls of the church.

We become visible only to the few churchgoers. Even our silent but visible presence has its effect in our surroundings.

Learning through Insertion into the Context

Insertion into the given context is the challenge before us. Insertion helps us to learn from first-hand experiences. We can look at the context with appreciation. Factors such as scientific mentality, sense of commitment, and fanatic exactitude have brought development to Germany in all spheres of life. Evidently, as missionaries, we have nothing to offer to them in these areas of life. But this does not mean that in the midst of affluence the Good News of Jesus has no place. In fact, the pedestal for Jesus is vacant in every heart. The Church has to find an appropriate image of Christ, which would fill the emptiness in the people. I do not advocate that we have to 'relativize' Jesus and his message to appeal to the waging tendencies of the people, but to re-examine our inherited concepts and practices, making it relevant to today's human concerns. It demands from us a creative response.

We have to invent a new vocabulary of faith to bring the Good News to all. The problem is that with the usual religious vocabulary we use in the Church circle among believers we cannot speak on Christian faith to people who are totally cut-off from the Church. We have to invent new words and expressions when it comes to speaking on faith. In fact, inventing new forms and expressions for communicating faith is nothing but re-discovering the original language of Jesus and his approach to genuine human situations.

Humanness after the Model of Jesus

Humanness is the universal key to open the heart. While visiting the sick every week in the city hospital in my parish area, I have been sometimes touched by the response of some patients. Even though they appear bold and tough,

when you pray and give a blessing with a sign of the cross on the forehead, they break into tears. Tears come from the depths of humanness. The shimmering of tears in the eyes of a person is a sign of God's saving presence. Human experiences of loneliness, sickness, anxiety, and frustration are part of our day-to-day life, even in affluence and plenty. Need of love, acceptance, appreciation, and forgiveness is deeply ingrained in human nature, whether it is in India or Germany. It means that the Good News of Jesus has relevance and need everywhere, since they are rooted deeply in the exigencies of human nature itself.

We are invited to learn from the pastoral approach of Jesus the Master. Jesus preached the Good News in the contexts of different human experiences such as suffering, sickness, death, sin, injustice, poverty, greed, selfishness, and hypocrisy. The Good News of Jesus was neither an ideology nor a theory but actions of love and compassion as forgiving, healing, blessing, sharing, self-giving, and liberating. True and lasting happiness, peace and love constitute the core of human yearning today as it has been always in human history. Evangelization is nothing but responding to this yearning with the Gospel of Jesus through actions of love and compassion.

Spirituality in a New Key

In the German context, there is a great need to promote spirituality in a new key. Today's German society is not inclined to religiosity in its traditional forms as practised in the Church for centuries. But people are sensitive to human issues. They hold high the values such as freedom, human dignity, gender equality, justice, honesty, responsibility, and solidarity. While the traditional understanding of religious spirituality is losing its currency, the notion and practices of 'wellness' become increasingly popular. It is often based on a holistic view of the human person as body and soul.

Can the values of 'wellness' be a starting point for practising a holistic spirituality? Of course, there are pastors who dislike seeing Christianity as a 'wellness religion'. However, seen from the positive aspect, a spirituality which takes in its stride health and ecological concerns can be attractive and convincing. The advantage of this approach is that it is based on authenticity and simplicity. Traditional religious practices are sometimes burdened with obsolete elements, which have become meaningless in the contemporary society. That is the reason why people spontaneously reject them. They need to be purified from many unwanted layers of culture, which have obscured the simple truths of spiritual life. Faith has to sprout from the authentic and original inspirations of nature. Jesus has always rejected the cultural burden of law and tradition and turned to nature to convey with freshness the great truths about his Abba.

To develop a spirituality which recognizes these values and priorities of life seems to be the actual challenge of our ministry in Germany. It demands a new missionary enthusiasm coupled with a proper understanding of the realities of the German context, which is entirely different from the contexts elsewhere. The result of this missionary engagement would be an entirely new Ecclesia which would take its form responding to today's social and human exigencies in Germany. Those who are sent to Germany need to be made aware of this challenging mission awaiting them.

Theological Resources of Indian Wisdom and Spirituality

It is our experience here that the traditional forms of church life and practices have lost their relevance to the masses. The existing clerical structure cannot infuse life into new possible forms of spirituality. Here comes the relevance of our Indian background with its worldview and wisdom in

our pastoral engagement. The great wealth of Indian wisdom comes handy as an effective tool to interpret many questions of spiritual life, which the western mentality finds hard to crack. The fascination for Indian religions and spiritual practices among the people can be channelized to a true Christian spirituality through our creative and effective intervention.

It calls our attention to the need of preparing the priests who come to serve in Germany with some contextual experience of the diversity of Indian ethos and resources of Indian spirituality. It is not enough that they know only the Kerala background of faith and culture. A wider vision and experience of Indian culture and life could be of great help, when they confront questions about Indian culture and religions. Today the people in Germany are exposed to world cultures more than ever. This exposure has influence upon their spirituality. A sound interpretation of Indian reality is possible only to those who are well equipped with Indian philosophy, worldview and ethos. It is equally important as the knowledge of the German language, mentality, and culture, which they get in the preparatory course.

Conclusion

Our CMI mission in Germany can become relevant and meaningful only if our Congregation sets a new benchmark for the performance of our priests in their parishes. They are sent not as substitutes to fill the gap created by the shortage of German priests. They are not supposed to forego their Indian identity and adopt a German lifestyle. They are sent there as 'missionaries', in the human and theological sense of the term, to inspire the people with their spiritual resources and to contribute creatively to the growth of the Church in Germany in the given conditions of life. It may demand a lifelong commitment, which can be effectively done with the mandate of the Congregation.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2016

Implications for Evangelization

Fr. Sebastian Thekkedathu CMI

General Councillor for Education

Introduction

The world had been undergoing unprecedented turmoil in the demographic front resulting from the mass refugee influx to Europe and rest of the world. A recent book published in France created quite a flutter among the French. It was titled *Les Cloches Sonneront-Elles Encore Demain?* ('Will the Church Bells Ring Tomorrow?') and was authored by Philippe de Villiers. The title itself was indicative of the apprehension among the traditional Christian Europeans with such a long tradition. By mentioning this, I was not casting any aspersion on the generous decisions of the European leaders to be humanitarian in the face of uprooted people from another side of the globe. Indian situation was quite different; yet, given the trends, it would be to an unpredictable future we would all be heading in terms of religious equations and traditions.

In India of yester years, it was awkward and inappropriate to find any connection between the National Education Policy and Evangelization. Those were years we were proud of our national ethos and were basking in the post-independent glow of patriotism, national integration and secularism, which gradually faded, the immediate jolt being that of partition of the country and the violence resulted thereafter.

It was in this context that the new draft of National Education Policy had been approached here. Without going into the nitty-gritty details of the Draft, an attempt was made to look at it from evangelization prospects. However

far-fetched it might look, there would be an essential connection between evangelization and the Draft National Education Policy 2016 if we approached it from various angles.

Changing Times

In the constituent assembly of India, Fr. Jerome D'Souza SJ and the Protestant leader H. C. Mukherjee were able to ensure rights of minorities, especially of worship and for propagation of religion. It was said that Christians were not included under the scheduled category as beneficiaries of reservation in education and jobs because these men, especially men like Fr. Jerome D'Souza, believed in the democratic set up and the openness of the leaders of the time that minorities would never be denied of their rights. However, any limitation, if it was there, on the parliament to amend the Constitution was lifted as a result of the forty second amendment (1976) to the Constitution of India during the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi. It became easier to alter or amend the Constitution of India thereafter. It was through the same amendment that education was brought under the Concurrent List moving it from the State List. These days people belonging to the minority religions would be not as confident as the leaders who joined hands to frame the Constitution due to the turn of events during the six decades of independence in India and would be worried about the rise of fundamentalism and the clandestine attempts to alter the clauses in the Constitution of India denying the rights and privileges of the minority. From two Members of Parliament in 1980, the BJP grew up into the largest single party in India by 1986 and it was a political party that had clear links to the ideological and organizational set up of Hindu nationalist group, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In other words, the policies of the BJP at the centre were being steered by the Sangh

intelligentsia and think tank based in Nagpur. The Freedom of Religion Bill by Shri Om Prakash Tyagi, a member of former Janata Party, in 1978, evoked so much of protest at that time from the Christian believers and the believers of other minority religions. With these sample trends we could get a clear idea of the progressive deterioration in the idealistic dreams of a secular and democratic India. The Draft National Education Policy 2016, however innocent it might appear upfront, had to be read with this in the backdrop.

The NEP 2016

In 2015 itself, the Government of India initiated the process for a New Education Policy. On 30 April 2015, the committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy submitted the report under the Chairmanship of T. S. R. Subramanian, a bureaucrat. The members of the committee were J. S. Rajput, Shailaja Chandra, Seva Ram Sharma and Sudhir Mankad. The committee claimed to have prepared the report after elaborate consultation, namely, at the grass-root level of villages, consultation with the experts, empirical research, etc. In the history of independent India, this was the first time a committee of such national importance and grave consequence and bearing on future had been exclusively handled by bureaucrats. Out of the members, J. S. Rajput was Director of NCTE with RSS ideologies. The committee did not reveal to the public in a satisfactory manner the inputs received and the response of the committee to those inputs. What was initially uploaded on the website was an extract of 43 pages which was itself dubbed as inputs even by the MHRD minister in his response to the discussion in the parliament. The full report of 217 pages was unofficially available later on internet after T. S. R. Subramanian threatened to publish the full report on his own. Widespread protests and legal action resulted in

extending the last date several times to facilitate receiving the response from different stakeholders although, initially, it was scheduled for 31 July 2016.

Education as a Mission: Christian Contribution

Education, in itself, was not a means or an instrument for conversion for Christian missionaries. Just as Pope Paul VI stated, “Evangelizing means to bring the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new, ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new’ (Revelation 21:5).” Of course, by the very term ‘missionary’ evangelization is essentially a mission that missionaries undertake. This should be distinguished from ‘so-called’ expressions like forceful conversion and proselytization which were objectionable and disliked by many. Evangelization in the sense of propagating one’s own religion was being carried on by most of the religions of the world. Hare Krishna, a subsect of Hinduism, or similar organizations undertook such propaganda throughout the world in order to attract people to their movement. Spiritual leaders and so-called ‘god-men’ travelled around the world to attract followers. Viswa Bharathi and similar organizations, which had very close affiliation to VHP and RSS, run thousands of educational institutions all over India with religious leanings and educational programmes.

Christian missionaries considered education as a catalyst to eliminate exploitation of the poor, the downtrodden, the marginalized, the outcastes, and the indigent. Of course, with the light of education, the missionaries hoped that people would become enlightened enough to throw away all sorts of oppression, superstitious beliefs and injustice. It would enable people to make an informed choice even in matters of belief and choice of religion. If a fraction of all the students who went through the Christian educational

institutions were to be converted due to the education they gained, the percentage of Christians in India would have grown to arithmetic proportions. In my own career as a teacher in a college, I have not converted a single pupil of mine to Christianity through baptism. It would be a fact to reckon with that many a political and religious leader of today who were staunch Hindus had been educated in Christian educational institutions and they were encouraged to continue in their own religious beliefs throughout their education and after too. Christian schools continued to educate students from all religions without any discrimination.

Even when the caste-ridden society in India denied education to the lower castes and outcastes, and the tribal people, Christian educational institutions opened their doors to all irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion. As early as 1713, St. George Anglo-Indian School was opened in Chennai with these ideals. Even before British Parliament came up with the Compulsory Education Act in 1870, Christian mission of education reached out far and wide through the villages and towns of India. St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who hailed from the Syrian Christian strain, started a Sanskrit School way back in 1846 in Kerala which was open to all irrespective of religious or social affinity. The missionaries generally were appreciating the richness of Indian philosophy and spirituality and many of the translations of the Indian classics and religious literature to European languages were undertaken by the missionaries themselves. They started writing Lexicons and Grammar for many Indian languages. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the education provided by the educational institutions run by Christian missionaries equipped the native Indian population uniting them to fight against foreign domination through the education they received. This contribution would never be acknowledged

by a theocratic-minded political party or organizations which would want to wipe out that fact from the history books which they would like to rewrite in their favour.

In spite of the massive contribution of the Church in educating the poor and the marginalized, under the stigma attached to the word 'conversion', it had to face discrimination even from the Government. For example, in order to discourage the members of the Scheduled Castes from embracing Christianity, they were denied the privileges of reservation in jobs and education which would be restored to them if they embraced Hinduism. G. S. Reddy, a Member of Parliament from Andhra Pradesh (although his claim about the 300 years of Christian presence was far too short of the actual Christian presence in India), rightly put it in 1978 regarding anti-conversion law: "If Christianity was in India for the last 300 years or more, what had happened in the last 30 years which necessitated the enactment of such laws? The Government itself offers inducements for conversion. Under the 1950 Presidential Order on Scheduled Castes, if a converted Christian re-converted to Hinduism he became entitled to Scheduled Caste privileges." They would not be denied these privileges if they embraced Buddhism or some other religions. Such unjust measures were being tolerated by Christians for so many years with feeble voices of protests at times which were largely ignored; minority voice naturally would be feeble. Strictly speaking, the injustice and separation in the guise of preserving the culture of many tribal people, were to isolate them from being mainstreamed and to deny them modern education and facilities. To claim that they were Hindus was not factually true. Christianity used to migrate to various cultures through and through in many a cultural milieu. To turn a blind eye or to gloss over the contributions of Christians in education and not to acknowledge them would be a terrible injustice done to

history, let alone the fact that the committee framing the Draft had no representation reflecting the diversity of true India. What the Draft had done was to appropriate the significant contributions of Buddhist religion in establishing ancient universities like that of Nalanda and Taxila as if they were Hindu contributions. This could have been acknowledged as such. The Draft jumps from the days of those universities to quote Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, skipping many centuries in the abyss of forgetfulness.

Equation Changed

Huge changes occurred in independent India. Education was brought under Concurrent List, as mentioned earlier, of the state and central governments. Different types of educational institutions started to come up. Christian institutions became one subset among so many educational institutions. Political climate also underwent so much of change and vested interests at times unleashed vicious propaganda against them. Even for the native Indian Christians, although Christianity was introduced in India in the first century of its birth, it was not always easy to carry on with the educational activities due to the threat from religious fundamentalism which was gaining strength over the years and wanted to portray Christianity in a very poor light. Moreover, there was a clear strategy to present Christianity as the religion of the colonizers and an import from the West. The tremendous influence of education in the life of the pupils who underwent systematic training in the educational institutions was noticed by so many and it gradually changed the mind-set of so many. Realizing this influence, most of the religious groups also opened up educational institutions of their own in independent India.

In Appreciation of the Draft

The new Draft presented so many positive steps and ideals for the cause of education and for the improvement of the system. It focused itself on quality and excellence in education. The reiteration of the Kothari Commission's recommendation of raising the allocation of 6% of the GDP for education was commendable, though the recommendation itself had been ignored by all subsequent governments. The recommendation to intervene in pre-school education could also be looked at as a positive development. The intention of the Commission in recommending eradication of corruption in the educational front was another positive move although repeated very often in similar recommendations. The draft mentioned so many idealistic dreams about developing life-skills, moral and value education, diversity of India's heritage, social cohesion, lifelong learning opportunities, linking learning and research, access to education, equity, inclusion, etc.

The Hidden Dangers

Apart from the noble ideals and dreams mentioned in the Draft National Education Policy, the other side was quite dismal and of serious consequences. It virtually made true the saying "the devil is in the details." Article 30 (1) of the Constitution provided for the minorities to establish and run educational institutions of their choice. However, gradually, that provision had been watered down and the minorities would be deprived of this privilege totally if the trend in the Draft National Education Policy continued. Creating a new supervisory cadre like Indian Educational Services would create one more elite bureaucratic setup which could add to the bane of corruption rampant in most of the government supervisory bodies. The assumption that any setup at the government level was the perfect solution for problems would not be realistic. While permitting multinationals and

business houses to open educational institutions on the basis of financial stability, commercial interests also would creep into the vital area of educating the young. Service organizations and religious groups would be deprived of their ability to open educational institutions of non-profit mode when business houses and corporates would pump huge capital into the educational front. Even in evaluation and accreditation multiple standards were being used, in the sense, the norms applied to a private institution was much more stringent compared to a government institution. While national institutions were favoured with huge government funding, the private establishments required to maintain higher standards disproportionate to the funds raised through fees and frugal grants. Such a system encouraged hypocrisy and capitation. Poor students who would not be able to show academic excellence due to poverty or social standing would never be able to climb up the social ladder as they were likely to be left in their low status for ever. Making yoga and such disciplines obligatory, if imposed without discretion, could become another oppressive structure for religious minorities. National curriculum could become a façade for implementing Hindutva to the young minds without choice, denying new generations their right to be exposed to their own regional culture and ethos, in a nation that was so proud of its diversity. Ideals of a federal setup would also be at stake in this context. In a stereotypical framework, where would be the place for national and global excellence?

Oblivious about History

When the circumstances and the strategies appeared to go hand-in-hand with a supposedly hidden agenda of rewriting history, it would not be a mere suspicion but a systematic attempt to wipe out some of the historical aspects which happened in the formative years of independent

India. The fact that the full text of the draft was not published before a public outcry and that this committee did not reflect the national character and diversity point to the domination of a school of thought which idealized Vedic system as everything. Nobody could deny the contributions of ancient India to the scientific repertoire of the human civilization. However, it was not a universal ideal and lived experience all over India. There were only a privileged few who enjoyed the benefits of education and, hence, it was not universal in character and reach. Western and Persian civilizations, different religions like Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity, etc., had contributed to the aspirations of a new independent India with secular and democratic ideals. Stereotyping of any religion or practitioners of any one religion, as it happened in media or entertainment, was not factual and true. Independent India respected the cultural practices of ethnic, religious and cultural groups without in anyway offending any particular group. It was not a monolithic cultural growth that was visualized by those statesmen who framed the Constitution of India. Personally, I felt offended when Christianity was presented merely as a religion of the West and imported a few centuries ago to India while the fact remains that Christianity in India was as old as the religion itself and of an oriental origin. To be questioned about one's patriotism, just because one belonged to a particular religion, was obnoxious.

Vanishing Secularism

What became more alarming than what had been mentioned in the Draft National Education Policy 2016 was what it did not mention in it and the skewed manner in which it was presented for national consumption. What it augured was not the best for India and its future as a secular nation with freedom of expression and the right to practice

and preach one's own religion. The lurking saffronization agenda behind the new Draft was very clear and, hence, the important question was whether this nation *en masse* would support such an agenda which the leaders of the past had resisted vigorously. Under the guise of a robust new policy on education, it should not be any vested interest that decided on the ultimate fate of the nation which had withstood so many such vicious attempts. Education with its ever changing dynamics should not be arbitrarily caged and sealed according to the vested interests and sectarian agenda. Being secular meant accommodating the valid and healthy ideologies and viewpoints appropriating knowledge from all over the world; any preference for a particular religion's beliefs over that of another would encourage fundamentalism and communalism adversely affecting communal harmony. India's avowed ideals of pluralism and diversity should be encouraged in its place.

Conclusion

The Draft National Education Policy 2016 appeared to be an attempt to test the waters in terms of the sensitivity of people and their will to cherish the noble ideals behind the making of India as a nation. If somebody accused the Draft to be an attempt to saffronize, it couldn't be ruled out altogether. Using governmental machinery for a communal agenda would be against secular ideals. Ultimately the collective will of the people and a vigilant public response would prevent any such eventuality that would jeopardize the national ethos and the democratic ideals of the people of India.

16 YEARS OF MISSIONARY LIFE IN KENYA

Fr. Jacob Achandy CMI

Rector, Carmel Seminary, Kenya

It was immediately after my retirement from Deepthi High School, in 2000, that I was sent to Kenya. In 2001, CMI Kenyan Mission was raised to the level of a sub-region and formation of our new candidates was begun the same year with the Aspirants' House in Donyo Sabuk and I was appointed the first Rector of the four aspirants. My only qualification was the twenty-two years of teaching experience and giving retreats to school students and religious sisters. I overcame the initial difficulties of cultural differences, and the brothers grew more free and responsible. I trusted them and they became trustworthy. In 2007, I was transferred to the Regional House as the Superior and the Rector of the Scholastics. I could evaluate the growth of the Scholastics from the aspirancy stage. As the sub-region became a region in 2010, I was sent to assist the Parish Priest in Ngunga for two years. When the first batch of the aspirants received Sacerdotal Ordination in 2012, I was again made the Rector of the aspirants in Donyo Sabuk; at present, I continue in the same position and assist the parish which is managed by two of our CMI priests. It was a circle of exploration reminding me what T. S. Elliot said: "We should not cease exploration and end of all exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

As I look back, I see that the events and experiences in my life were well connected, progressive, and creative. Though my arrival in Kenya was unexpected, the events, I believe, were well planned by God. I was denied visa for the USA three times while my companion priest was granted the visa at the first attempt with the same set of documents. But I was well prepared for anything because the day before

we went for the visa, Father George Kalathil had already prayed over me and assured me that I was not to be given visa to the USA; he, in fact, asked me to read Philippians 4:4, which I read. When I became the Rector aspirants, I understood why I was denied visa to the USA. I accepted God's plan for me. Six of the aspirants with whom I journeyed are now priests working in Kenya and Tanzania. They are doing well. We are planning to hand over the first phase of formation to Kenyan priests. As I reached seventy, I thought of going back to Kerala. During the Regional Plenary Meeting in Mombasa this year, Captain Sing, a Catholic convert and a charismatic person, addressed us and inspired us. I meet him personally and he prayed over me. Then, he asked me whether I have a plan to go back after two years. When I answered in the affirmative, he told me to leave that decision to God, and I did.

As the Rector of the aspirants, the first thing I did was to have a motto for the Carmel Seminary to motivate the aspirants and to mould them with Christ at the centre. I always remember the quote of Nietzsche: "If you have a 'why' to live, you can bear with any 'how'." With the brothers we created our own motto: "Be Holy and Make Holy." Holiness is wholeness with Christ at the centre. With time, the motto became the philosophy of Carmel Seminary: Be holy in being, and become righteous in doing. The main thrust was placed on the human character formation with Christian vision and religious commitment. "A Book a Week" program has helped the candidates develop reading and reflective habits; now, we have five brothers from different parts of Kenya living in one community, free and responsible, transcending the tribal and cultural differences.

I would like to share an experience I had in 2005. One day, early in the morning, along with Fr. John Karukuttikaran, I was travelling to Machakos, 70 km away from our house, in order to attend a diocesan program; I

was driving the car and we were stopped by another car from behind after a distance of only 1 kilometre. Pointing the gun I was pulled out of the car and the key of the car was snatched from me and one of them drove our car. We were pushed into their car and were driven back with our eyes closed and hands tied back. We had to stay in their home for five hours till our car reached its destination. I felt that everything unfolded like a drama. In the evening, we were driven back into a forest and left there, tied to two different trees. When they left the place, we untied ourselves and the place was familiar to us. They had stolen everything except the clothes that we had on ourselves; when we walked further 5 km, we saw a doctor known to us. He took us to the police station in his car and we reported the matter. There was no investigation because it looked as if it was carried out under their supervision. That day the Holy Mass in the adjacent FCC convent was in the evening; I went there walking and offered the Mass after narrating to them what had happened to us. The purpose of the event was revealed to me when I read the 'Communion Antiphone': "I am with you until the end of time" (Matt 28:20). That made me deeply emotional. The next year during the vacation, when I went for retreat in Kulathuvayal, I was given the same passage at the end of the retreat. It was the *confirmation* day!

Our vision of the CMI mission is to become a spiritual movement in Kenya and other East African countries with the same missionary spirit of our Founding Fathers which inspired them at the starting of the Congregation. Now, we are twenty-two CMI Fathers from Devamatha Province working in eight parishes in five dioceses. We run with efficiency and effectiveness six primary schools, three secondary schools, and a rehabilitation centre with the assistance of religious sisters of different congregations. As a spiritual movement, we give more importance to the faith formation in the parishes with family renewal through

retreats, youth development through seminars and cultural programs and, in our schools, spiritual excellence is given more importance along with academic excellence. The aspirants are creative partners in the apostolates of our Congregation, especially during their second term. Active participation in the apostolate makes their formation more realistic and contextualized.

The long period of being in the formation process reminds me of the importance of having daily meditation with a dynamic personal spirituality to help the candidates develop their own spirituality with Christ at the centre in relation to one's own self, with one another, the world, and God. A personal philosophy of life with a vision and mission rooted in genuine Christian spirituality will make life enthusiastic, meaningful and worth-living, helping us walk over the waves of life, never letting the waves of life rise over us.

CHAPEL IN THE MALL AND THE RELIGIOUS GIFT SHOP IN THE USA

Fr. Davy Kavungal CMI

Delegate Superior, USA and Canada

On 30 January 2016, CMIs officially assumed the responsibility of Saint Therese Chapel in the Mall and the Religious Gift Shop in Peabody, Massachusetts, USA.

Call for a Unique CMI Ministry in the USA

In 2015, Fr. Herbert Jones OCarm contacted us enquiring whether we would be interested to continue the ministry offered at the Mall as they have severe shortage of personnel in their Carmelite community. Our gradual contact with the OCarm Fathers as well as the Episcopal Vicar, Fr. Gerard Petringa and Cardinal Sean O'Malley of the Archdiocese of Boston gave us a clear picture about the responsibilities as well as the prospect of this new opening for pastoral ministry. A personal visit of four CMI priests, Rev. Sebastian Thekkedathu (General Councillor for Education and the In-Charge of CMI Mission in North America), Paul Chemplamparambil, Marialal Pullooruthikkariyil, and Kavungal Davy (Coordinator General) to the chapel and the gift shop gave us a good impression about the challenges as well as prospects of the ministry in the mall. After completing the required formalities, on 30 December 2015, Cardinal O'Malley expressed his desire to entrust the Chapel and Gift Shop to the CMIs. Accordingly, on 14 January 2016, a formal meeting was held to discuss the details of the transfer of the responsibility from the OCarm Fathers to the CMI Fathers; this meeting consisting of Rev. Fr. Robert Blaney (Clergy Personnel Director) along with the Archdiocesan representatives such as two OCarm Fathers and five CMI Fathers was also blessed by Cardinal O'Malley. As the decision was in favour of the CMIs

formally assuming the responsibility of the Chapel in the Mall, Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy, our Prior General, nominated Fr. Davy Kavungal to be the Director of the Chapel. Sean Cardinal O'Malley, the Archbishop of Boston, appointed Fr. Davy the Director of the Chapel. In tune with this, on 30 January 2016, the OCarm Fathers handed over the Chapel and the Gift Shop to the CMIs during the Holy Mass at 4:00 pm. Subsequently, in order to facilitate this ministry, in the month of August 2016, we have purchased a house in the vicinity, which was blessed by Bishop Mark O'Connell, the Auxiliary Bishop of Boston on 28 September 2016.

Initially, Fathers Janesh Moolayil CMI and Rajesh Kavalackal CMI started offering pastoral ministry in the Chapel, by staying in a convent building in the Bishop Fenwick High School Campus, Peabody. Other Fathers such as John Ollukkaran, Johnson Thaliyath and Joby Kochumuttam also served in the Chapel on a temporary basis. Currently, Fr. Jilson Naduviledath and Fr. Janesh Moolayil are formally assigned to offer ministry in this Chapel.

History of the Saint Therese Chapel in the Mall and the Religious Gift Shop

It was in 1959 that Archbishop Cushing extended an invitation to the Carmelite Friars to participate in a new ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston. As the website mentions, "The developments of shopping centers (i.e., clusters of stores in the suburbs) were in the experimental stage at the time and Archbishop Cushing thought that the Church should be a part of that experiment. The Carmelites readily agreed to be a part of this new ministry and signed a lease with the developers of the North Shore Shopping Center in Peabody, Massachusetts."

The Chapel in the Mall started functioning from January 1960, and it was probably one of the first of its kind at that

time in the United States of America, providing spiritual care and sacramental assistance to the employees, visitors, and public who started flocking this place of worship.

The Carmelite Friars, due to paucity of personnel, handed over the administration of the Chapel in the Mall to the Carmelites of Mary immaculate (CMI) after 55 years of spiritual care and leadership to the people of the area through the uninterrupted service from 1960. God willing, it is the hope that the worship in this busy shopping mall will be carried on for many more years through the support and at the behest of the CMIs.

Location

Northshore Shopping Mall is about 20 miles away from the city of Boston in the state of Massachusetts, USA. Boston boasts of its rich history, universities, and the ideological stalwarts of New England who laid the foundation for American culture and revolution.

Liturgical Services

The Chapel offers two daily masses, Monday through Friday, at 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm. On Saturday, the daily Mass is offered at 12:00 noon and the Vigil Masses of Sunday are offered at 4:00 and 5:30 pm. On Days of Obligation, there is a Mass on the Vigil of the Feast at 4:00 pm. The Masses of the Feast Day are offered at 12:00 noon, 4:00, and 5:30 pm.

The Chapel can accommodate about 350 people. The Chapel and the Gift Shop are located in the basement of a shopping mall, in a setting of silence and quiet, and well-insulated from the commercial activities going on in the floor on the upper level. The chapel and the shop are well-maintained and renovated in the last few years spending almost \$300,000.

The Chapel is closed on Sundays so as not to disturb the services conducted in the neighbouring parishes. We also

offer Mass for the Carmelite nuns (active) twice a week and for the Discalced Carmelite nuns every Sunday. Our relationship with the local clergy is very good as we are able to assist them on Sundays, or whenever needed. Many of the local clergy take advantage of our confession schedule for their own sacramental needs.

Gift Shop

A Gift Shop is also attached to the Chapel. It carries an array of religious articles, gifts, Bible, and books. The Gift Shop also functions as a place to get Mass cards and to have the queries about the Chapel. The facility provides various supporting services to the Chapel.

New Prospects for the CMI Mission in North America

For the CMI community, it is a new ministry in the USA. We don't have the responsibilities and obligations normally associated with running a parish. The people who come to attend services in the Chapel belong to various parishes and our responsibility would be limited to the spiritual welfare of these people. In other words, our main responsibility is sacramental, such as hearing confessions on a daily basis (i.e., Monday through Saturday), celebrating Holy Mass, etc.

It is, indeed, a very special grace that we could begin this unique ministry during this Jubilee Year of Mercy. While being grateful to His Eminence Sean P. Cardinal O'Malley for extending to us an invitation to serve the Archdiocese of Boston and for entrusting us this beautiful Chapel with confidence, we thank the Carmelite Friars (OCarm) of the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Chicago, for initiating and carrying out such a remarkable ministry for almost six decades. Fathers Herbert and Felix are well known not only in the Chapel but also all around Peabody for their commendable spiritual leadership.

Let us be united in prayer so that this new mission entrusted to the CMI community in the USA will bring

renewed vitality to the pastoral services that we have been rendering to the faithful in the USA for almost half a century. Let the zeal of our beloved founder Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara for the spiritual welfare of the people, strengthen us in ensuring our total availability and goodwill to reach out and enrich the lives of the faithful with genuine Christian outlook and generosity.

PLEASE NOTE THE ADDRESS

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THIRST FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Fr. Mathew Kalathoor CMI
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Palitana

From my short experience of three years in Palitana as parish priest I can very well say that there is a real thirst for God, a thirst for the Word of God in the hearts of many of our non-Christian brethren living in and around St. Mary's Catholic Church, Palitana. To satisfy their craving for God, attached to the church, we have a small Catholic Information Centre with Bibles, prayer books, and other religious books. It is indeed a matter of joy to recall that, in the last three years, I distributed more than 300 Bibles (NT) in Gujarati language and a few copies of the *Imitation of Christ*, pamphlets, leaflets, etc. Many people especially students and ladies come for Rosaries. When I ask them why they want Rosaries, they say that it helps them study properly and it keeps them from disease and sickness.

About a month ago, a teacher in Gujarati school came to the church to pray; after prayer, she asked me for a Gujarati Bible (NT) saying that she is very much interested in reading the Bible as, according to her, she has an intense desire to know Jesus and love him. Hence, she requested me to give a Gujarati Bible. I told her that all the copies of the Bible are given away and that she has to wait for few more days to get a copy. When I said that she must wait for a few days, she became very upset and unhappy. So, I gave her my personal Gujarati New Testament, which she began reading with great interest and devotion.

People who receive Bible really read them and do come back to me for clarifications. Some others think that Bible is a Holy Book and keep it at home with great respect and devotion as it is considered to be a means of getting blessings from God. A few others keep it out of curiosity, to know the content in this most famous book, which is widely

read by millions all over the world. Together with the Holy Bible (NT) we provide some other books like the *Imitation of Christ*, prayer books, etc., for their reading and meditation. One young man from the village came back to me after reading the *Imitation of Christ* and told me: "Father, that *Imitation of Christ* is really an excellent book; it is more appealing to me than the Bible. It is a beautiful guide for a happy and holy life."

From my short experience in Palitana as its Parish Priest, I can say with confidence that this is the most important aspect of evangelisation, namely, making the Word of God available to the public, especially in the towns and cities where educated and retired people are available and interested in the study of the Word of God. While inaugurating the Synod of Bishops for the Word of God in October 2008, Pope Benedict XVI said: "Only the Word of God can profoundly change the heart of man and the need for such conversion is great in today's confused society, in which human beings sometimes proclaim themselves." He also mentioned that the purpose of the Synod was to consider "how to render more effective the proclamation of the Gospel in our own time" and to underline the need to "place the Word of God at the centre of our life." Like St. Paul, who evangelised with enthusiasm and urgency, the Church today senses new opportunities for spreading the Gospel. Let us, therefore, give utmost importance in making the Word of God available to all who thirst for it, especially in big towns and cities of our great nation of religiosity. This is the only way to attract educated Hindus and members of other religions to Christianity.

CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2016¹

S. L. Agenzia Fides

As the Church celebrated its 90th anniversary on Sunday, 23 October 2016, *Fides News Service* offered some statistics to give a panorama of the missionary Church all over the world. The tables are adapted from the latest edition of the *Church's Book of Statistics* (updated to 31 December 2014), which includes updated information on members of the Church, church structures, healthcare, welfare and education. Increase and decrease, emerging from comparison with last year's figures, are marked by + (increase) or - (decrease) in brackets.

World Population

On 31 December 2014, the world population was 7,160,739,000 with an increase of 66,941,000 units compared with the previous year. Population growth was registered on every continent above, except Europe: increases were registered above all in Asia (+37,349,000) and Africa (+23,000,000) followed by America (+8,657,000) and Oceania (+649,000); but a decrease was seen in Europe (-2,714,000).

Catholics

On the same date, Catholics in the world numbered 1,272,281,000 units with an overall increase of 18,355,000 more than the previous year. The increase affects all continents, except Europe. Increases were registered above all in Africa (+8,535,000) and in America (+6,642,000) followed by Asia (+3,027,000), and Oceania (+208,000); there was a decrease in Europe (-57,000).

¹Adapted from a Special Feature Prepared by S. L. Agenzia Fides and Published by *Fides News Service* (23 October 2016)

The world percentage of Catholics was increased by 0.09 %, settling at 17.77%. By continent: increases were registered in Africa (+0.38), America (+0.12), Asia (+0.05), Europe (+0.14), and Oceania (+0.09).

Persons and Catholics per Priest

This year, the number of persons per priest in the world was increased by 130 units, averaging at 13,882. The distribution by continent: increase in America (+79), Europe (+41), and Oceania (+289); decrease in Africa (-125) and Asia (-1,100).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world was increased by 41 units, averaging at 3,060. There are increases in Africa (+73), America (+59), Europe (+22), and Oceania (+83); there is a decrease in Asia (-27).

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions and Mission Stations

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions reached 9 more than the previous year to 2,998 with new circumscriptions created in Africa (+1), America (+3), Asia (+3), and Europe (+2). Oceania remained without variation.

Mission stations with a resident priest number 1,864 (7 less than in the previous year) and increases registered in Africa (+39) and Europe (+2). A decrease is seen in America (-35), Asia (-8), and Oceania (-5).

Mission Stations without a resident priest increased in number by 2,703 units, to 136,572. Compared to the previous year, increases are registered in Africa (+1,151), America (+2,891), and Oceania (+115). The numbers dropped in Asia (-1,452) and Europe (-2).

Bishops

The total number of bishops in the world was increased by 64 units, to 5,237. Contrary to previous years where diocesan bishops increased in numbers, while religious bishops decreased, this year they both increased. Diocesan bishops number 3,992 (+47), while religious bishops number

1,245 (+17). The increase in diocesan bishops is registered in all continents except Oceania (-1): in America (+20), Asia (+9), Africa (+1), and Europe (+18). The number of religious bishops increased on every continent: Africa (+5), America (+2), Asia (+3), Europe (+6), and Oceania (+1).

Priests

The total number of priests in the world was increased by 444 units, to 415,792. The only continents which registered a decrease was again Europe (-2,564) and a slight decrease in America (-123) and Oceania (-86), whereas figures grew in Africa (+1,089) and Asia (+2,128). Diocesan priests increased by 765 units, reaching a total of 281,297 with increases in Africa (+1,023), America (+810), and Asia (+848). A drop was seen in Europe (-1,914) and Oceania (-2). The number of Religious priests was decreased by 321 units to a total 134,495. Increases were registered as in recent years in Africa (+66) and Asia (+1,280), whereas numbers dropped in America (-933), Europe (-650), and Oceania (-84).

Permanent Deacons

Permanent deacons in the world were increased by 1,371 units to 44,566. The highest increase was registered again in America (+965) and in Europe (+311) and an increase in Africa (+25), Asia (+65), and Oceania (+5).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are 43,954, with an overall increase of 1,304 units. They increased on every continent: Africa (+8), America (+971), Asia (+36), Europe (+285), and Oceania (+4).

Religious permanent deacons number 612, increased by 67 units compared to the previous year, with increases in Africa (+17), Asia (+29), Europe (+26), and Oceania (+1). The only decrease was registered in America (-6).

Men and Women Religious

The number of non-religious priests was decreased by 694 units to 54,559 with an increase in Africa (+331) and Asia (+66), while a decrease was registered in America (-362), Europe (-653), and Oceania (-76).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious by 10,846 units to 682,729. An increase was registered in Africa (+725) and Asia (+604), and decrease in America (-4,242), Europe (-7,733), and Oceania (-200).

Members of Secular Institutes, Male and Female

Members of male secular institutes number 654 with an overall decrease of 58 units. At a continental level there is an increase only in Africa (+2) while a decrease was registered in America (-13), Asia (-16), Europe (-31), Oceania remaining unvaried.

The members of female secular institutes increased this year by 243 units to a total of 24,198 members. Increase was seen in Asia (+44) and Europe (+515) while a decrease was registered in Africa (-7), America (-306), and Oceania (-3).

Lay Missionaries and Catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is 368,520 units, with an overall increase of 841 units. Numbers increased in Africa (+9), Europe (+6,806), and Oceania (+41). A decrease was registered in America (-5,596) and Asia (-419).

Catechists in the world were increased by 107,200 units to a total of 3,264,768. A significant increase was registered in Africa (+103,084), Asia (+6,862) and a slight increase in Oceania (+271). Decrease was seen in America (-2,814) and Europe (-203).

Major Seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious, decreased this year; they are globally 1,312 units, reaching a total of 116,939. Increases occurred only in Africa (+636),

while even this year a decrease was seen in America (-676), Asia (-635), Europe (-629), and Oceania (-8).

Major diocesan seminarians number 70,301 (-1,236) and religious major seminarians 46,638 (-76). Diocesan seminarians increased only in Africa (+222), while decreases are seen in America (-595), Asia (-373), Europe (-471), and Oceania (-20).

Religious seminarians decreased in three continents: America (-82), Asia (-262), and Europe (-158). Increases were seen in Africa (+414) and Oceania (+12).

Minor Seminarians

The number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious, was increased by 1,014 units to 102,942. Overall increase was reported on all continents, except Oceania (-42): Africa (+487), America (+1), Asia (+174), and Europe (+394).

Minor diocesan seminarians number 78,489 (-67), whereas religious seminarians number 24,453 (+1,081). The number of diocesan minor seminarians decreased in America (-47), Asia (-668), and Oceania (-37). Increases were reported in Africa (+291) and Europe (+394).

Religious minor seminarians increased in number in Africa (+196), America (+48) and Asia (+842) and decreased in Oceania (-5); but Europe remained unvaried.

Catholic Schools and Education

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 73,580 kindergartens with 7,043,634 pupils; 96,283 primary schools with 33,516,860 pupils; 46,339 secondary schools with 19,760,924 pupils. The Church also cares for 2,477,636 high school pupils, and 2,719,643 university students.

Catholic Charity and Healthcare Centres

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include 5,158 hospitals, most of them in America (1,501) and Africa (1,221); there are 16,523 dispensaries,

mainly in Africa (5,230), America (4,667), and Asia (3,584); 612 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (313) and Africa (174); there are 15,679 Homes for the Elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8,304) and America (3,726); 9,492 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3,859); 12,637 creches, mainly in Asia (3,422) and America (3,477); 14,576 marriage counselling centres, mainly in America (5,634) and Europe (5,670); 3,782 social rehabilitation centres and 37,601 other kinds of institutions.

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

The ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) as on 4 October 2016 are 1,108 with a decrease of 3 circumscriptions compared to last year. Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions are mainly in Africa (508) and in Asia (480), followed by America (74) and Oceania (46).

ST. ANTHONY BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ERA OF GROWTH²

Andy Telli

For nearly a decade, the parishioners at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fayetteville have been dreaming of a new parish hall with enough classrooms for its cramped religious education program. After countless fundraising dinners, parish festivals, and a capital campaign, the dream has started to take shape.

On Father's Day, Sunday, 19 June, Bishop David Choby was on hand for the official ground-breaking on a new, more than 10,000 square foot parish hall that will include 12 classrooms, an office, a library, a kitchen, restrooms, and significant storage space.

"I think it's fantastic we can have our father in faith on Father's Day," said parishioner Richard Paladino, chairman of the parish's Planning Board and the capital campaign for the new building. "It was exciting," parish Director of Religious Education Patty Wright said of the ground-breaking. "We've been talking about this for years. We've been raising money for a good couple of years and praying for this campaign to be a success. It all came to be more real" to see dirt being turned.

The parish first began planning for a new hall and education building in 2007. "We asked the parishioners what they wanted in a new building," said Paladino, and the answer was a nice social hall, classrooms, a kitchen, storage space, all the things included in the design. The parish started working on a capital campaign when the

²A report on the contributions of Rev. Fr. George (Mariadoss) Panthanickal CMI, Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Fayetteville, USA, reprinted from *Tennessee Register*, 1 July 2016, page 16.

Great Recession of 2008 hit. The plans and the campaign were put on hold, Paladino explained.

When Father George Panthanickal CMI arrived in 2013 as the new pastor, one of the first parishioners he met was Paladino, who wanted to talk about re-starting the capital campaign for the new building. The parish's religious education program, which averages about 100 students every year, had long outgrown the space available. Classes were meeting in the living room and kitchen of a yellow house next to the church.

Moveable walls were erected in the current parish hall to create more classroom space. That sometimes caused problems. "Socialization is important for our parish too," Wright said, but "we kind of have to police the social hall ... so the kids can even hear in the classrooms." To maximize their space, "we ordered little skinny tables to have more room" in the classrooms, Wright said. "We've just tried to maximize our space."

In November 2013, with approval of the diocese, the parish began a new pledge campaign to raise the money to start construction. The project is expected to cost \$1 million and the parish has reached the 80 percent benchmark required by the diocese to move forward. The campaign has unified the parish, said Father Panthanickal. "Everybody worked on it together. It's an expression of the faith." Parishioners made pledges to the campaign and all the parish organizations, including its growing Hispanic community, hosted fundraisers. The parish also received crucial support from the Diocese of Nashville, the Bishop Miles Foundation, which provides grants to small parishes to finance capital improvement projects, and the Catholic Extension Society, which supports efforts in mission dioceses across the country, Paladino said.

St. Anthony received a total of \$270,000 in grants from the agencies, most of that in matching grants that kept the

parish energized about the fundraising efforts, Paladino said. "How many spaghetti suppers can you have?" The parish will borrow \$200,000 to cover the remaining cost with eight years to pay off the debt. "We hope to pay it off sooner than that," Paladino said. "That depends on the economy and other circumstances." The new two-story, 90-feet-by-120-feet will have a social hall at its centre that can also be used as a gymnasium. The hall will be able to accommodate 280 people seated at tables. In the current hall, "We're lucky to get 100 in here," Paladino said. "And if the fire marshal saw it he'd probably fuss."

Surrounding the hall in the centre of the building will be 12 classrooms, an office for the director of religious education, a library, a kitchen, restrooms and significant storage space, Paladino said. Some of the classrooms will have moveable walls that can be removed to combine two classrooms to make a larger meeting room and then converted back to classroom space as needed.

For the ground-breaking, the entire parish was involved. After the parish leadership and Bishop Choby turned a shovel full of dirt, the children in the religious education program did as well, and then all the parishioners were invited to do the same. "This facility is for the kids, so they should be part of the ground-breaking," Paladino said. "We're trying to make sure everybody has a chance to participate."

The parish has a design-build contract with builder Howard Ridner of Manchester who is working with architect Jerome Headley of Tullahoma, a Catholic, who is working on the design. Once the detailed plans for the building are complete and approved by the fire marshal, the parish will apply for a building permit from the City of Fayetteville. Paladino hopes the permit will be issued by August. "We hope to be moving dirt in September," and

complete construction on the steel building by February 2017, he said.

“It means a lot” to the parish, Father Panthananickal said of the new building. “We don’t have the facilities ... for the whole participation of the people.” Because the parish’s religious education program has been so cramped, the membership of the parish has been stagnant for several years at 250 families, Paladino said. Several families have gone to other parishes because there was no room in the religious education program for their children, he said. Once the religious education program has adequate space, parish leaders expect more people to come.

Under Father Panthananickal’s leadership, the youth ministry program has been growing, DRE Wright said. He’s pushed the parish to become more involved in diocesan activities for the high school youths, such as the Youth Leadership Workshop, SEARCH and Break at the Lake, she explained. The activities for teens have helped boost the teens’ involvement in the parish, Wright said. In the past, the religious education program would lose most students after they were confirmed as eighth graders. The result was essentially no enrolment in the high school classes. “Now, high school is one of our largest classes,” Wright said. The middle school program has also become more active. A healthy youth ministry will help boost the parish’s overall numbers, Wright said. “When the kids are there, the parents are there. So, that will help the numbers for our parish.”

THE CLEMENTINE WAY

“Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone!”

(Motto of Bishop Clemens Thottungal CMI)

Fr. Kurian Kachappilly CMI

Provincial, St. Paul Province, Bhopal

“Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose [or vision], life has no meaning” (Rick Warren). Bishop Clemens Paul Thottungal CMI (+ 15 September 1991), the first Bishop of the Diocese of Sagar, had a vision and mission of life, which he beautifully captured in the form an optative sentence: “Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone!” The choice of this life-motto clearly reveals Bishop Clemens’ boundless affection for his favourite saint, St. Therese of Lisieux, and her ‘Little Way of Spiritual Childhood’.

‘Love’ is a very ambiguous term with different usages and meanings in the social parlance, like “I love ice-cream,” “I love this book,” “I love Mary,” “I love Jesus/God,” etc. Do all these usages employ the term ‘love’ with the same meaning? Definitely not! That is why we find it difficult to define precisely the meaning or nature of ‘Love’. However, we find a striking or unusual paradigm of love in the Gospel of Saint John, the disciple whom Jesus loved: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). As per the Johannine hermeneutics, ‘love’ by its very nature is other-centred; and love to be authentic, should be salvific, salutary, or life-giving (‘to have eternal life’).

Love, by its very nature, is other-centred: “God so loved the world.” A phenomenological analysis of love would reveal that human love is twofold: I love the other (‘X’) for myself, or I love the other (‘X’) for the other. In the first type of love, for instance, I love ‘X’ (human or divine) for my gratification, satisfaction, realization, or for my unification

with the other (as in mystical love). The annals of human history are replete with stories of such 'egoistic' love, whether it is labelled as possessive, manipulative or utilitarian love. But to love the other ('X') for myself, strictly speaking, is not love at all. Moreover, it is not justifiable, from an ethical perspective, to use the other as a 'means' to achieve my 'ends'.

In the second model of love, I love the other ('X') for the other. Love the other as he or she is; not for anything in return, but some sort of unconditional love. Hence, there is no room for bargain, and for 'ifs' and 'buts'. Surprisingly, to love somebody ('X') means 'necessarily to forget myself'. If I don't forget myself, I do not love the other. But I can't choose to forget myself, when I love the other. The more I try to forget myself, the more I am engaged with myself. In other words, so long as the 'forgetting of myself' is an act of the ego, I remain involved with 'myself'.

'Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone' is an earnest appeal to love the other (God) for the 'Other' alone! But, as explained above, it is not something which we can achieve by our efforts or works (*labora*), but something gifted by the mercy of God. Emmanuel Levinas has rightly underlined the twofold function of the genitive 'of' the other: subjective and objective. The other (God) is, at the same time, the 'subject' of my desire and the 'object' of that desire. In religious terms, God is both the beginning and end of my desire to 'Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone'. So says the Lord God, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev 22: 13). That is to say, the desire in me - 'Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone' - is not the result of my personal merits, but "infused by God" (St. John of the Cross) or by the "Grace of God" (Theresa of Avila).

"Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16). In order to test or identify the good fruits of the "Grace of God," the

question we have to ask ourselves, as Pope Francis exhorts, is: "Is Jesus really our first and only love?" (*Witnesses of Joy*, Art 2). Only if Jesus is, will we be empowered to respond positively and creatively to the appeal of Bishop Clemens Thottungal: "Love Jesus and Live for Him Alone." Only if Jesus is our first love, will we be assured that we are on 'the Clementine Way': "Live for Him Alone." *Deo volente* (God willing), let this be my way of life!

CMI Mission in Arunachal Pradesh

St. Paul Province, Enochal

Tuting, Diocese of Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

November 04, 2016

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from CMI Provincial House, Bhopal!

November 04, 2016, will be a red-letter day in the annals of St. Paul Province, Bhopal, on which we, the Paulines, begin, in a humble way, a new mission in the North East. The pioneer team of Rev. Fr. Cejo Chakkery CMI and Fr. Nijo Palatty CMI, along with Fr. Abish Perumbully CMI and Fr. Joseph Chakkalackal MSFS will reach the Holy Rosary Church, Tuting, and will celebrate the Holy Eucharist with the parish community, marking the beginning of CMI Mission in the Diocese of Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

His Excellency Rt. Rev. Dr. Jon Thomas, Bishop of Itanagar and his Vicar General Fr. Jacob have blessed the pioneering members of the CMI Mission in Arunachal Pradesh. Let us all be happy and grateful to God for the new mission journey, after the model of St. Paul, our Patron, who himself made several mission journeys, in spite of all dangers on his path. Let his powerful witnessing, like "Woe to me, if I don't preach Gospel" (1Cor 9:16) and "Who can separate me from the love of God" (Rom 8:35), inspire all of us to take up the challenges of the new mission.

Let us all pray for the success of the mission and wish Fr. Cejo, Fr. Nijo and Fr. Abish God's blessings and success in their mission: "God's will, always and everywhere" (St. Chavara).

Fr. Kurian Kachappilly CMI
Provincial

News

Kuriakose Elias Chavara Chair

KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA AND SOCIAL RENAISSANCE IN KERALA

Christ Nagar School Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram

A symposium on “Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Social Renaissance in Kerala” was organized by the Kuriakose Elias Chavara Chair at Christ Nagar School Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871) is a pioneer who brought social change in the Kerala society. In the nineteenth century, not many felt the need for an egalitarian society. Kerala was in the stranglehold of the caste system. Polarized thinking along the lines of caste and creed was very much the norm. However, people started to revolt due to the rigidities of caste and religion. Every caste had a dialect of its own, each alien to the other. This could be one of the reasons why Swamy Vivekananda called that society “a mad house.” Kerala housed a chaotic crowd during those years. Caste biases held sway over societal unity and noble human values. Each caste presumed itself to be superior and maintained a distance from every other.

The mutual distance practised by those holding various jobs made any sort of space sharing impossible. Public roads were few, and the outcastes could not pass through them. *Kayal Sammelanam*, that is, the backwater convention, led by Pandit K. P. Karuppan, the Lincoln of Kerala (born only on 24 May 1885) took place much later. Even Sree Narayana Guru, who tried to build the structure of a progressive Kerala society based on his core message “one caste, one religion, and one God for all men” was born only in 1855. Thus, we see the significance and import of the person and

contributions of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara towards the social renaissance of Kerala.

Rev. Fr. Cyriac Madathil CMI, Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram, presided over the meeting. During his inaugural address, he opined that "before 1960, Syrian Christians were not allowed to move beyond the Pampa River, even in Kerala; hence, it is highly appropriate that we study the contributions of St. Chavara who pioneered the cause of the Kerala people during the nineteenth century irrespective of caste, colour, or creed." According to him, it is clear from the past historical experience and present day testimonies that we have miles to go before we can take rest and really relax if we must take Kerala renaissance to greater levels.

Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, the Chairman of Chavara Chair at MG University, who offered the Keynote Address, acknowledged the truth about himself as a true devotee and beneficiary of the CMI hegemony and spoke about the true strength and power of spirituality that can become the catalyst in transforming the society in which he lived. St. Chavara opened the Sanskrit school not for any particular sect or caste. The economic boom of the present Kerala society owes a lot to St. Chavara's vision to redeem the people through education. Today Kerala stands very high in the Human Development Index rate of the United Nations Organization. *Vasu Deiva Kudumbakom* was the vision of life for Saint Chavara. Education for all or universalisation of education was implemented in the nineteenth century Kerala by St. Chavara. He affirmed: "What Lenin tried to bring through the pistols, St. Chavara implemented through the power of the Cross of Christ. The attempt for *Vazhappindi* Revolution was more far reaching than that of Paulo Freire, Lenin, and Fidel Castro."

Vatican Document

**THE BURIAL OF THE DECEASED AND THE
CONSERVATION OF THE ASHES IN THE
CASE OF CREMATION**

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Vatican

Instruction *Ad resurgendum cum Christo* regarding the burial of the deceased and the conservation of the ashes in the case of cremation

1. To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must “be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8). With the Instruction *Piam et Constantem* of 5 July 1963, the then Holy Office established that “all necessary measures must be taken to preserve the practice of reverently burying the faithful departed,” adding however that cremation is not “opposed per se to the Christian religion” and that no longer should the sacraments and funeral rites be denied to those who have asked that they be cremated, under the condition that this choice has not been made through “a denial of Christian dogmas, the animosity of a secret society, or hatred of the Catholic religion and the Church.” Later this change in ecclesiastical discipline was incorporated into the Code of Canon Law (1983) and the Code of Canons of Oriental Churches (1990).

During the intervening years, the practice of cremation has notably increased in many countries, but simultaneously new ideas contrary to the Church’s faith have also become widespread. Having consulted the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts and numerous Episcopal Conferences and Synods of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has deemed opportune the publication of a new Instruction,

with the intention of underlining the doctrinal and pastoral reasons for the preference of the burial of the remains of the faithful and to set out norms pertaining to the conservation of ashes in the case of cremation.

2. The resurrection of Jesus is the culminating truth of the Christian faith, preached as an essential part of the Paschal Mystery from the very beginnings of Christianity: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve" (1 Cor 15:3-5).

Through his death and resurrection, Christ freed us from sin and gave us access to a new life, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rm 6:4). Furthermore, the risen Christ is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep [...] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:20-22).

It is true that Christ will raise us up on the last day; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. In Baptism, actually, we are immersed in the death and resurrection of Christ and sacramentally assimilated to him: "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12). United with Christ by Baptism, we already truly participate in the life of the risen Christ (cf. Eph 2:6).

Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning. The Christian vision of death receives privileged expression in the liturgy of the Church: "Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made

ready for them in heaven." By death the soul is separated from the body, but in the resurrection God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul. In our own day also, the Church is called to proclaim her faith in the resurrection: "The confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead; believing this we live."

3. Following the most ancient Christian tradition, the Church insistently recommends that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places.

In memory of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of death, burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.

The Church who, as Mother, has accompanied the Christian during his earthly pilgrimage, offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of her grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.

By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity. She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with Mother Nature or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the "prison" of the body.

Furthermore, burial in a cemetery or another sacred place adequately corresponds to the piety and respect owed to the bodies of the faithful departed who through Baptism have become temples of the Holy Spirit and in which "as instruments and vessels the Spirit has carried out so many good works."

Tobias, the just, was praised for the merits he acquired in the sight of God for having buried the dead, and the Church considers the burial of dead one of the corporal works of mercy.

Finally, the burial of the faithful departed in cemeteries or other sacred places encourages family members and the whole Christian community to pray for and remember the dead, while at the same time fostering the veneration of martyrs and saints.

Through the practice of burying the dead in cemeteries, in churches or their environs, Christian tradition has upheld the relationship between the living and the dead and has opposed any tendency to minimize, or relegate to the purely private sphere, the event of death and the meaning it has for Christians.

4. In circumstances when cremation is chosen because of sanitary, economic or social considerations, this choice must never violate the explicitly-stated or the reasonably inferable wishes of the deceased faithful. The Church raises no doctrinal objections to this practice, since cremation of the deceased's body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God, in his omnipotence, from raising up the deceased body to new life. Thus cremation, in and of itself, objectively negates neither the Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality nor that of the resurrection of the body.

The Church continues to prefer the practice of burying the bodies of the deceased, because this shows a greater esteem towards the deceased. Nevertheless, cremation is not prohibited, "unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine."

In the absence of motives contrary to Christian doctrine, the Church, after the celebration of the funeral rite, accompanies the choice of cremation, providing the relevant liturgical and pastoral directives, and taking particular care

to avoid every form of scandal or the appearance of religious indifferentism.

5. When, for legitimate motives, cremation of the body has been chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or, in certain cases, in a church or an area, which has been set aside for this purpose, and so dedicated by the competent ecclesial authority.

From the earliest times, Christians have desired that the faithful departed become the objects of the Christian community's prayers and remembrance. Their tombs have become places of prayer, remembrance and reflection. The faithful departed remain part of the Church who believes "in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church."

The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect, which eventuality is possible, most especially once the immediately subsequent generation has too passed away. Also it prevents any unfitting or superstitious practices.

6. For the reasons given above, the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence is not permitted. Only in grave and exceptional cases dependent on cultural conditions of a localized nature, may the Ordinary, in agreement with the Episcopal Conference or the Synod of Bishops of the Oriental Churches, concede permission for the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence. Nonetheless, the ashes may not be divided among various family members and due respect must be

maintained regarding the circumstances of such a conservation.

7. In order that every appearance of pantheism, naturalism or nihilism be avoided, it is not permitted to scatter the ashes of the faithful departed in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way, nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewellery or other objects. These courses of action cannot be legitimized by an appeal to the sanitary, social, or economic motives that may have occasioned the choice of cremation.

8. When the deceased notoriously has requested cremation and the scattering of their ashes for reasons contrary to the Christian faith, a Christian funeral must be denied to that person according to the norms of the law.

The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect on 18 March 2016, approved the present Instruction, adopted in the Ordinary Session of this Congregation on 2 March 2016, and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 15 August 2016, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Gerhard Card. Müller, Prefect

Luis F. Ladaria, S.I., Titular Archbishop of Thibica, Secretary

Appeal

**CONTRIBUTIONS SOLICITED
FOR
FREE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
DISTRIBUTION**

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, and Friends and Well-Wishers, and Readers of CMission,

There is an increasing demand for copies of the Bible and other Christian literature from among the faithful of different religions. Educated people, both from the villages and cities, express their desire to procure and possess a personal copy of the Bible (especially the New Testament) and to have access to good Christian literature that would give them a clear idea about the faith tenets of Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular.

There are frequent requests reaching our Department of Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry both from CMIs and other religious communities, seeking support to distribute Bible and Christian literature among those who earnestly seek to know more about Jesus Christ.

Given the increasing number of requests in this regard, the funds at the disposal of the Department of Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry is insufficient, especially if a proactive approach must be taken with initiatives of individual missionaries and different institutions, especially located in the North Indian Missions. These seekers ask for Bible either in English or in the local languages and many of our missionaries report that they read it earnestly and come back seeking clarifications and more detailed information. This opens up a very meaningful opportunity for the Christian communities to respond and quench their thirst for knowledge about the person of Jesus Christ.

Hence, may I approach the readers of the *CMIssion* and the well-wishers of the CMI Congregation to extend a supporting hand to the CMI Department of Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry by making some moderate financial contributions in order to promote the free distribution of the Bible (especially the New Testament) and some basic Christian literature. As all of us have received the mandate to spread the Good News across the globe, may I request both individuals and institutions to spare some of their financial resources to support this cause of free distribution of Christian literature.

Here are the required details for facilitating the contribution:

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

Account Number: 0313053000000182

Name of the Bank: South Indian Bank

IFSC Code: SIBL0000313

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

Awaiting your wholehearted support,



Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI
General Councillor for Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry

PASTORAL ELIGIBILITY TEST (PET)

To Enhance CMI Formation for Global Mission

Fr. John Neelankavil CMI

36th and 37th General Synaxes of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) have called for a definitive focus on Global Mission among its members. Various CMI Provinces have proactively responded to this call by sending more members to various countries, especially to Africa and South America. In view of enhancing our global missionary reach, CMI formative programme also should have a clear mission focus, both in theoretical and practical formation. Rev. Fr. John Neelankavil, formerly the Provincial Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry of the Devamatha Province, has developed a Pastoral Eligibility Test (PET), especially to ensure that all CMI members are ready to launch themselves as global missionaries.

Editor

What Is PET?

It is 'Pastoral Eligibility Test'.

What Do We Test?

Test is less important but one's own personal life and earnest preparation for the test are more important. Therefore, we shall test the following: (1) How do I dream my future as a missionary and effective CMI religious priest? (2) How do I foresee my ministry in detail? (3) What can I do today (in terms of formative preparation) for the future?

Four Modules of the Test

1. *Prayer and Study* (prayer, meditation, spiritual

preparations, philosophy, theology, secular studies, etc.)

How can I prepare myself as an expert in the Word of God, teacher of prayer, guide in meditation, retreat preacher, trainer for stress management skills, etc.?

Have I learnt any specific prayer or meditation method? Have I acquired expertise in a method of meditation? Am I capable of training ordinary people in this method? How would others appraise my expertise in this domain?

Am I confident about catechism? Have I learnt catechism well? Am I conversant with the new methods of imparting catechism in an effective manner, especially for children and youth?

Am I able to connect my present study – be it philosophy, secular studies, or theology – with my ministry, my faith, traditions of the Church that I subscribe to, my understanding of basic catechism, etc.?

Am I capable of managing, *infotaining*, and motivating a group of children and youth?

What have I personally done to attain confidence in the above areas? Am I ready to launch myself as an ambassador of Christ?

2. Practice

What all the practices with which I can transform myself for my future ministry?

For example, I can learn the rules of playing basketball. Suppose I play the game regularly; after playing for many days, weeks, months, and years, I need to ask myself as to what would it contribute to my mission?

Can I be a consultant for constructing a basketball court? Do I have basic knowledge about the measurement for the basketball court, board, lining, etc.?

Am I able to referee a game of basketball? Will I be able to train youngsters in basketball game? Will it help me to bring about discipline and character among the children, youth, and the grown-ups in my community or institution?

Have I shown any interest to learn, practise and assist in various aspects of any one game, or any such practice that would enhance the quality of my future mission?

3. Relation

Do I know the personal details, strength, weakness, special skills, likes, dislikes, etc. of my community members?

Do I know all the members of my province?

Do I have the contact details of all the members of my province? How frequently do I contact them?

Do I know the persons, activities, and life situation of the neighbours of my house and the houses I have lived earlier?

4. Ownership

How do I own my Province, its various apostolates and missions?

Do I visit various houses and institutions belonging to my Provinces, if opportunities are offered?

What are the specific ministries carried out in my house?

What are the apostolates and ministries undertaken by various communities in my Province? In how many of such ministries, am I directly involved?

Do I know the history, culture, customs, caste system, important church and government institutions, prominent persons of the past and present, etc., in the locality of my Province, mission and house?

Do I know the languages, manners and traditions of the locality of my Province, missions and house?

Additional Preparations

Can List: What is my 'can list'? How much have I enhanced it this year?

Strategy: Each candidate must prepare a pastoral strategy. How do I modify this pastoral strategy this year? What are my reasons for effecting these changes?

An 'Extra Mile': Prepare a list of 'extra mile' activities based on your mission context.

A HEURISTIC JOURNEY OF SAMANVAYA Experience Seeking Theological Understanding

Fr. Joshy Pazhukkathara CMI

The theological programme in Samanvaya is heuristic in nature, which makes it unique from other theological formative endeavours around the world. Heuristics, as a method in hermeneutics, is employed in theologizing only by a few theologians. The term 'heuristic' comes from the Greek word '*heuriskein*', meaning 'to find out' or 'to discover'. Therefore, a heuristic method is just like a seek-and-find dynamics of any empirical search. For this reason, a heuristic search is open to possibilities and differences, but in a challenging fashion and with a specific purpose.

The important features in a heuristic search (as developed by Newell and Simon) are "goal-directedness," "interruptibility," "sub-goals," and "problem space." Goal-directedness of Samanvaya formative program refers to equipping the candidates for their varied future apostolates. The feature of interruptibility offers the possibility of pausing the goal-directed activity in view of attaining the sub-goals on the go. Thus, the three centres of Samanvaya proffer the sub-goals ("God and the World" in the first year; "Christ and Human in the second year; and the Spirit and the Church in the final year) in the programme, with a specific orientation for the various contexts of the future mission. These pathway goals would guide, motivate, and prepare the students in attaining goal-directedness. The "problem space" is the four contexts of Samanvaya formation (Kolchur in Chhattisgarh, Rishikesh in Uttarakand, Bangalore, and Bhopal) which contributes to the goal achievement. It is in these various contexts the students meet people of different faiths and culture and form themselves in view of responding to the exigencies of their lives.

As a heuristic formative programme, Samanvayic formation is more flexible, dynamic, and more person oriented and, at the same time, aiming at the holistic development and transformation. Its most fundamental feature, "freedom with responsibility," refined with friendly monitoring and accompaniment, helps the students to be more creative and innovative. As students manage the household activities along with their rigorous academic exercises, they are well equipped for their future mission. As in a heuristic program, the "trial and error" method helps the students to get acquainted and informed about the various pastoral and socio-cultural activities. The student-staff relation is another feature, where a heuristic approach is visible in the Samanvaya programme. It aims at reducing the distance between the staff and students by adopting an interactive and dialogical approach. Students of theology are approached as potential priests and, therefore, are given the central focus in all formative and administrative style of Samanvaya.

It is this student-centred style of theologizing which is practised in each centre of Samanvaya. In Samanvaya-Jagdarpur this thrust is actualized through its central theme "God and the World" with the focus on the tribal culture of Bastar. Through regular village visits and participation in village feasts, besides the three-week Action-Reflection-Programme, the students prepare themselves to do theology from their contextual experience. In this view, St. Anselm's definition of theology, "faith seeking understanding" is adapted and modified with a more contextual focus in Samanvayic heuristic approach, that is, "experience seeking theological understanding." Heurism is active in theologizing from contextual experience. Indeed, it is this heuristic character that makes Samanvaya unique, in its theological approach and outcome.

THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Practising Contextual Theology at Samanvaya

Nithin Airukattu CMI

The basic definition of Christian mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human to speak or do God's will. The biblical concept of 'mission' consists of the authority of the one who sends, the obedience of the one sent, a task to be accomplished, the power to accomplish the task, and a purpose within the moral framework of God's covenantal working of judgment or redemption.

Theology of mission fundamentally involves reflection about God. It seeks to understand God's mission, God's intentions and purposes, God's use of human instruments in the mission, and God's work through His people in the world. Theology of mission deals with all the traditional theological themes of systematic theology.

In addition, because of its commitment to remain faithful to God's intentions, perspectives and purposes, theology of mission shows a fundamental concern over the relation of the Bible to mission, attempting to allow scripture not only to provide the fundamental motivations for mission, but also to question, shape, guide, and evaluate the missionary enterprise. It draws its incarnational nature from the ministry of Jesus, and always happens in a specific time and space. We begin by borrowing from sociology, anthropology, economics, urbanology, the study of the relation of the Church and state, and a host of other cognate disciplines to understand the specific context in which we are doing our theology of mission reflection. Such contextual analysis moves us, to more particular understanding of the context in terms of a hermeneutic of the reality in which we are ministering. This, in turn, calls us to hear the cries, see the faces, understand the problems, and

respond to the living needs and hopes of the people who are integral to the contexts.



Fr. Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI with the Eucharistic Community in South Africa (2016)



Fr. George Panthananickal CMI along with His Bishop David Choby at the Ground Breaking Ceremony to Construct a Social Hall and 12 Classrooms for St. Anthony Church in Fayetteville



Holy Mass Being Celebrated at the Chapel in the Mall at Peabody in the USA



Bishop and the Concelebrants soon after Celebrating the First Holy Mass on the Day of Taking Charge of the Chapel in the Mall



New CMI House at Peabody, USA



CMI Missionaries in Brazil with Rev. Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Prior General and Rev. Fr. Antony Kalliath CMI



Veneration of the Relics of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Chile



School Children at the Tomb of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Mannanam