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TESTAMENT of A LOVING FATHER



ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

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TESTAMENT OF A LOVING FATHER
ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA
(Original in Malayalam)
1868



Edited by
Fr. Thomas Panthaplackal CMI

Translated by
Enrico Calzolari

Dedicated to
The Holy Family

Published by
Chavara Central Secretariat
Chavara Hills, Kakkanad, Kochi, Kerala, India
2014

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NALLA APPANTE CHAVARUL-1868

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Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

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A CHAVARA LEGACY TO CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

Pope Francis, has announced a Synod of Bishops, to take place in two sessions this year and the next, to study the issues and challenges related to families. In this context it is most appropriate to make a serious study about the perspectives of St Chavara on families. Testament of a Loving Father (*Nalla Appante Chavarul*) written by St Kuriakose Elias Chavara is a road map given by him for families. It deals with how families were renewed through sacramental life, how fraternity and charity should be nurtured in families, what is the spirit with which we could grow in holiness, and the duties and responsibilities of parents and children to live in a society. When I realize that they were written a century and a half ago, I am amazed at how relevant his writings are for this day and age. And the saint himself mentioned that he wrote this testament to the families while at prayer seeking the light of inspiration in a special way.

This book which is very handy throws light on how a family should lead a life according to the Divine Providence leading a fruitful life in the church and in the society. Through many anecdotes, stories, examples and other figures of speech, he unfolds a forty point action plan detailing the duties and responsibilities of the parents and children. It is quite gratifying to know that this testament is being used widely in many dioceses for family renewal. Quite a few of the official teachings about the families found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the *Documents of Vatican Council II* are reverberating in this book of St Chavara, is a matter of pride for the Syro-Malabar sui iuris church. It is a testimony of the importance of the subject covered in this book that thousands of copies of this book have been published in umpteen editions over the years and they reached so many families.

During this time and age in which we live, when families, the fundamental unit of human society, are undergoing tremendous crises and challenges, let us turn to St Chavara, who is a special patron for various needs of families in the divine presence, and earnestly study his directives for making our families ideal. It will be a unique contribution for family renewal from the patrimony of Syro-Malabar Church to the universal church to have it published in more languages as it is translated into English and Italian. I sincerely wish that this very year when St Kuriakose Elias Chavara is canonized, our dioceses, priests, religious and faithful take keen interest and undertake serious studies on this book, *Nalla Appante Chavarul*. I pray for the special grace and blessings to CMI Congregation and to all who worked behind the translation of this great spiritual book.

f. George Alencherry



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A Loving Tribute to Testament of a Loving Father



Fr. Paul Achandy, CMI
Prior General

Recollecting the sweet memories of the tradition that piled up over 146 years, from 1868 onwards, among the members of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), I scribble a few lines here. It is astounding to think about how much care, concern, insight and commitment of our beloved founder St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara went into the writing of his book *Nalla Appante Chavarul* (The Testament of a Loving Father) which is a programme for the renewal and sustenance of Christian families. The excitement and joy are the consequence of convincing evidence of the fruits of this vital renewal happening in families for the last century and a half on account of these guidelines. Although addressed to a small group of families, the practical directions and guidelines given by him are welcomed in umpteen families irrespective of their religious and social affinities. Such authoritative and practical guidelines for the renewal of families, although written in the second half of nineteenth century, are relevant even in contemporary societies, as proved from the popularity of it in the past, and hence we are encouraged and duty bound to attempt to translate this booklet into various world languages and to make it accessible for wider readership and family renewal world over.

While preparing for an extraordinary synod called by Pope Francis on the theme of family, to study and propose guidelines for families, it would be beneficial for all to look for practical guidelines in the writings of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Of course they are from a different century, but they carry some guidelines of a perennial nature as the author looked always to the Holy Family in all issues, especially those of Christian families for guidance. And hence I hope that this will be subjected to further studies and practical applications.

Joining my confreres in the CMI Congregation and the sisters belonging to the CMC Congregation, the spiritual children of our founder St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who are engaged in family apostolate and in many other spiritual ministries of the Church, I express my sincere joy and appreciation for the reprint of this book and its translations. The revived interest in the spirituality of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara and his writings make us all rededicate ourselves to work for family renewal with added commitment.

CMI Prior General's House
Chavara Hills, Kakkanad, Kochi
September 8, 2014

TESTAMENT OF A LOVING FATHER

My dear beloved,

In flesh and blood, I am the son of Kuriakos of Chavara, of the parish of Chennenkary. The omnipotent God most kindly gave me existence in this world and in this family and of these parents. So in the natural order, according to charity and justice, I am bound to be specially grateful to you and to do you a good in turn. But I have not done anything specially for you. Hence I am leaving this document for you, in my own hand-writing. This script will live even after I am dead. So I entrust this to my children of the Kainakari sub-parish to be preserved as a treasure (bequeathed by me.)

Let this be a sign that this is my testament to you my brethren and children in the double order (of spirit and flesh). The countless favours God has bestowed on you are not entirely due to your meritorious lives: they are also earned by the merits of your fore-fathers; take care that you do not render yourselves unworthy of such blessings. That you may remember that I came into this world and that I have left it, copy out of this document by all who can do it so and preserve it in your homes. Keep the original locked in a box in the chapel. On the first Saturday of every month, all of you come together and read it through. Do it to remember the day of my death. I do not ask for any other remembrance. But Month after month, after you have read this, I beseech you, breathe a short prayer in my behalf—Oh Lord, keep the soul of this thy servant also in the abode of the just.

13th Kumbhom (February) 1868

Father Kuriakos Elias of the Holy Family
Prior of the Mannanam and other monasteries of the
Discalced Carmelite Tertiaries.

INTRODUCTION

A good Christian family is the image of heaven, where members live together by the bond of blood and affection, duly respecting and obeying the parents, walking peacefully before God and people, seeking eternal salvation according to each one's proper state of life. The only sweet consolation for a person experiencing trials and difficulties in this valley of tears is the membership and life in a family where love, order and peace reign. Likewise it is most distressing to live in a family where there is no order or peace and where the members are unconcerned about the service of God and their own salvation. How unfortunate the families are that have no concern over peace at their homes. How often these have led to quarrels, sins, destruction and death. To prevent such unfortunate developments, praying for God's light and peace, I have framed this rule of conduct for families. I wish that you accept and enforce this as a mandate coming from your old ancestors.

PRECEPTS FOR FAMILIES

Love

1. Love Ye one another' St. John X, 18. Each one shall forgive the short-comings of others. That will give you peace on earth and eternal joy in heaven. How regrettable it is to find in the home discord between the brothers and the womenfolk. The country that is divided against itself cannot survive, says our Lord Himself. Those families where there is discord, will soon perish. If you won't forgive among yourselves, how will outsiders forgive you? If tomorrow they should forgive you, should you not forgive them today? If you love only that is good to you, what more do you do than those outside the faith? We have inherited from our great father

Adam enough trials and difficulties. Should you add to them voluntarily? Woe unto the heads of families that give reason for such quarrels in the families. Once an old woman provoked several quarrels in her home and the devil appeared and offered her a bag of gold and took her to hell, saying that she had achieved in three days what he was not able to achieve in three years. The blessing and honour of a family consist in its peaceful existence without any quarrel. Even animals can retaliate. But to ignore wrong is possible only for the prudent, strong and dignified man. Once the Emperor Constantine was walking along a road escorted by his royal troops. A man from the street came up and dealt a blow on the king's cheek. The whole army sought his permission to kill the offender. But the Emperor replied, "Even my lowest officer can do that. That is not a big thing. But I forgive him. That is the sign of my strength."

2. Any litigation ruins the family. Even in the most just case, we will finally feel that it was better not to have gone to court. Nobody has been happy or better for having gone for litigation.

3. Do not hold family festivals, and other celebrations on Sundays. It leads to much evil and ruin of souls. It is the Lord's Day. Such celebrations are inventions that would make of it a devil's day. Moreover, it is a very bad custom for all people to stay away from mass on Sundays or Holydays of obligation, even if somebody dies in the house on such days. Necessary helpers may stay at home. For the rest, it is a custom forbidden by God and the Church to stay away from the church on days of obligation.

4. Do not borrow money except when it is absolutely necessary. Try to clear all debts as quickly as possible. Do not lend also except on grounds of charity. The family without debt is the richest family. If there are outstanding obligations of mass or debt left by parents, hasten to discharge them

zealously. It is dangerous to ignore it. It brings down divine wrath on the family.

Humility

5. Do not show off your wealth and power. He who shows off all that he has is really of a lower standard. The one who styles himself as rich will soon have to beg. It so happens in the world often. Once king David proudly ordered a census of his people. Lo! a contagion soon spread as an expression of Divine Wrath. (Sam. 24)

6. Do not spend more than what you can on festivals and celebrations. You don't know how long you can keep it up. It is better to light a small lamp and keep it longer, than blaze a haystack and light up for a short time. Democrates once answered that the most important man is the one who shows himself as the least. As a scholar once observed to a man who was lamenting over his bad days which followed his extravagance: "Brother, if you did not burn away your lamp at day time, you could have lighted it at night".

Contact with others

7. Do not go round the houses of others and seek information about them. For, if you will discharge your own responsibilities properly, you will have no time to look into the affairs of other people.

8. Do not contract relationships with disorderly families or do not live with no fear of God. It is not the disorderly, godless, and rich families that will enrich your family, but the orderly, God-fearing relatives that would bring joy and be helpful to you. How many are the families that rue their relationship with rich families and ruined themselves.

In France a certain man had an only son. He made strenuous attempts to make his son marry a high-born knight's

daughter. At last on condition that all his family property should be bequeathed to his son, he agreed and the marriage was solemnized. After some time, the bride and her parents started resenting his low birth and status and he was dispelled from the household. He went begging and was forced to feed himself on the waste thrown out from his son's house during feasts and celebrations.

9. Do not let all sorts of people freely move about your house. Only let courteous, god-fearing people be free there. The saying is, "Tell me who your friends are, I will tell you who you are."

10. Make it clear that your house is not the place for indecent talk, unchristian behaviors, and uncharitable criticism of your neighbours or other people. If the evil deeds of another is being discussed in your home, the punishment for that crime will fall on your home. There was a man who habitually went round speaking ill of others. He ended his days as a mad man biting his own tongue and to festering with worms and boils.

Industriousness

11. Try to improve what holdings you have before trying to acquire more. The wealth of the family is not in the amount of possessions but their quality. An industrious man used to live happily with his small assets. Some envious people complained in court that he had found some treasure and was hiding it. The king ordered that he should render a full account of his wealth. He declared in the court that his treasure was his small compound and that the soil of the land turned gold when wetted with his sweat. He was acquitted honorably.

12. Work according to your status in life. It does not make a man respectable by refusing to do any work. It fits people who have no home and kith and kin. Laziness is mother to all other vices. It leads to the habit of drinking. Drunkenness is

disgraceful before the world and guilty before God. Kathon, chief of Rome, once ordered that all people desirous of settling in Rome should show their hands toughened by labour as evidence of their disposition to work and that Knights and Lords should carry with them utensils of work when they go out as a symbol of their status.

13. Business or trade involves risk of both soul and wealth. However, if that is the only opening for you to make a living, there is no objection to your pursuing it. But do it very carefully and be exceedingly just. The unjust trader has never maintained a steady progress in life. Riches amassed through deceit and fraud will soon melt away like snow. There were two merchants who never prospered in their trade. They adopted many tricks and frauds. Yet they did not come up. One day they both went up for confession and revealed the facts to the priest in confession. The priest advised them to be honest. They obeyed him. Within one year they prospered immensely. Days on which you have not rendered any good to others will not be reckoned with as days in your book of life. Be more zealous about other people loving you than fearing you. Do not let beggars leave your home empty handed. Do not refrain from giving alms whenever you can.

Act of Charity

14. There was a man who considered it obligatory on himself and rendered somebody some good work every day. He did this believing that God had commanded men to help each other. One day, while at supper, he remembered the omission of the charitable deed for that day. Suddenly he rose up, went out, did a neighbour an act of charity and then only took his supper.

15. Extravagance and miserliness are both sinful. The luxuries of the extravagant will disappear like smoke. The wealth of the miser will be devoured by worms. Once there

was a man who lived generously according to his means. He prospered well. As he grew richer, he neglected charity and started amassing wealth. Then he was laid up with an ulcer on his leg. Several physicians were brought in. Much expenditure incurred on this account. Then an angel appeared to him and told him. "Know ye that the miser who stints in charity and hoards will have to spend money like this."

16. Do not have many friends. Choose one carefully from among a thousand. One who does not love God will not truly love you either. David and Jonathan loved each other truly. They were of one mind. They loved each other truly and till the very end. Small things did not lessen this friendship nor did dangers threaten it. In fact, they endeared them all the more.

Justice

17. Do not let stolen things remain in your house even for a short while. The Holy Spirit warns us that houses harbouring stolen goods will be consumed by fire. Do not mix with people who steal other people's property. For tomorrow they will not hesitate to steal your property. Moreover you share their guilt and sin. There was once a rich man who had amassed much wealth unjustly. On his death-bed he dictated his will to the scribe: "I bequeath my soul to the devil." The children were shocked and they enquired of the father whether he was in his senses or he was in delirium. The sick father clearly replied. "No my dear children, I am fully conscious and let him take down what I say. I bequeath to the Devil, my soul, as well as that of my wife who encouraged me to unjustly acquire the property of others. I surrender to him your souls too, for it was for you that I thus unjustly came by these holdings which belong to others." And he died an unfortunate death.

18. Do not deny or delay payment of just wages to labourers. For that is a sin which cries up to the throne of God for

retribution. Do not belittle or humiliate the poor. For God will demand of you an account of their tears. There was a rich man in the city of Louven. A widow lived on his estate with her four children. He harassed them often to such an extent that one day, she sorrowfully prayed "Oh Lord, deliver me from pain." The rich landlord fell dead at the same instant.

Fear of God is true wealth

The essential worth of a family consists in its holiness and fear of God. Such a family will enjoy divine blessings both in this world and the next. Slander and vulgar conversation at home will darken the light in good families. Try to participate in mass daily. If it is not possible, do so at least on Mondays for the sake of the souls in purgatory, on Fridays in memory of the passion of our Lord and on Saturdays commemorating the Dolours of our Lady. If all cannot attend daily mass, let members take turns, so that one or two of them at least can hear mass every day. Go to confession and communion at least once a month. Participate in the Novena prayers and other services preparatory to the feasts of our Lady, and in the monthly devotions to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, in the parishes, if possible, or at least conduct them at home.

19. Be exceedingly chaste, modest and careful, in all your movements, whether sitting or walking, or lying or playing. Immodesty is disgraceful before God and man. In the judgement day we will know how many souls have been lost because children, boys and girls were not dressed properly and parents did not prevent immodest dress and un-chaste contacts.

In France, a boy lived in perfect modesty and even while he was alone he would cover his whole body and even his arms. When he heard that he will have to be naked in hell, he became awfully scared and wept. See how much this boy prized his modesty.

Patience

20. When diseases, trials and difficulties face you, resign yourselves to the will of God. One who is patient only when everything goes well with him, is a weak man. A devout soul once observed: "Everything happens to me in the world according to my desire, for I desire only such things as are willed by God." St. Ambrose once visited a house. He was told that in that house there never was any instance of disease or grief experienced by any member. He immediately left the place observing "Let us get away from here quickly. For very soon, divine wrath will be falling on this house." Very soon the house fell down and killed all the inmates.

Good Books

21. Pagan books spread error and ignorance. Keeping such books or other lewd and heretical books in the house is like hiding fire in haystacks. Books of wisdom and philosophical knowledge help us to increase our devotion and they form the treasure parents should acquire and make available for the children. Buy such books according to your capacity. There was an illiterate beggar who bought books out of the alms he received. He got the literate to read them out to him. He conformed his life to such exhortation as he received from them and was an edifying example to many.

Days of Obligations

22. Do not be satisfied with mass on days of obligation. Spend most of the day in listening to sermons, in reading, in visiting the poor and in exercising charity in general.

23. Engage only such servants who fear God. Let their number be small. How many homes are under the sway of the devil which uses them as agents to get things done for him. Let masters be always alive to their responsibility for the moral

conduct and spiritual welfare of their dependants and servants and watch over their activities.

Daily Routine

24. Be careful to go to sleep in time and rise also punctually. All should get up at least by six o'clock. Say the morning prayers. Let those who can attend mass, do so. Have breakfast at 8.AM. Lunch at 12 noon. In the evening, after the angelus, say the family prayers in common. Then meditate for half an hour. It can be on some subject inspired by the spiritual reading from any good book. Do not interrupt this routine because of some important worldly person being in your house at that time. For men will call you towards them and God will call you towards Him. And He is watching which way you go. So do not fail to observe this regular feature on any account. You will be setting a good example to others. If they ridicule you for it, count it as your blessings. After eight O'clock, have supper and then make an examination of conscience, say the night prayers and go to sleep. The head of the house must carefully see to this routine being kept up. Read out this routine every Sunday and the first of every month before all the members of the house.

UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

1. Parents, remember that it is your primary duty and responsibility to bring up your children. **Children are sacred treasures entrusted to you by God. Know you that these children have been entrusted in your hands, to be purified with the most precious blood of the Lord, to be trained up in His service and to be returned to Him on the judgment day.** If any of the children is lost to hell, because of your fault, what a big hindrance will it be for your salvation! Origen records that on the last judgment day, God will ask of the parents who are lost because of their children a justification of

all the activities of those children. If you desire your children to be good and helpful to you in your old age, take care that you give them training as good Christians when they are young. When they are young, if they do not fear and love God, later they will not respect or love their parents. Parents should frequently commend their children to the protection of the Holy Family and pray for them often. God will listen to mother's petition as that of the child.

2. Teach them to call on Jesus, Mary and Joseph, as soon as they are grown up enough to understand. Show them their pictures and teach them to honour and love them by helping the children to kiss them. Teach them the 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary', the 'Angelus' and other small prayers as soon as they can lisp out these prayers. How commendable it is to nourish the souls of your children also as you bring them up in the physical plane!
3. Do not let your children run about naked even inside the house. Do not engage in unbecoming conversation in their presence, thinking that they are too young to understand what you say.
4. Out of respect for the parents, do not let children sleep in the same room with parents. Do not let little boys and little girls sleep in the same room. For the devil will teach them what they may not know naturally.
5. Do not let your little children go out of your sight to play with others. Do not trust careless servants. Often they are the ones who spoil the little ones.
6. When they are grown up a little, send them to school. Enquire after their progress from time to time. Every Sunday, monitor what they have studied.
7. Do not send your children to stay with your relatives, for very often they leave your house as angels and return as devils.

8. When they are about seven years old, instruct them on confession and prepare them for it. Teach them to be specially devout to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

9. Do not be very stiff or very lenient towards your children. Too much affection will make them proud. Excessive stiffness, anger and punishment will make them desperate, dejected and even unashamed. Before inflicting corporal punishment, advise them prudently, control food, get them to kneel on the floor, etc. Do not use bad words while correcting them. For it will only encourage them to deal likewise with their children. The mother should set an example to the children in honouring and loving their father. So also the father should show love and respect for the mother. If the parents do not respect each other, neither will their children respect them.

10. Do not train the children in the worldly habits of lying, or cheating, or playing tricks for the sake of expediency, telling them that it is the way of the world. When you find faults in them, reprove them and punish them. Develop in them a regard for truth and justice.

11. See that all the children are home by the time the angelus bells ring. Teach them to greet the parents after family prayers. Let them kiss the hands of the parents. When they grow up to be about twelve years of age, take particular care of them as it is a dangerous period. Keep them busily engaged at home in occupation becoming their age. Do not send them out to festivals and marriages and other celebrations in other places. Dressing up girls and sending them to festivals and as maids of honour to brides are customs and tricks devised by the devil.

12. Parents proudly dress up and decorate their daughters with costly clothes and ornaments to show off their aristocracy or riches or vanity, God only knows how many souls are drawn to hellfire because of it. The most desirable ornaments for a girl are her modesty, devotion, silence and the control of her eyes.

13. Let there be no quarrels in your homes arising from pettiness on behalf of children. That your children have been slighted or insulted should not provoke you to bitterness. It is childish to be thus excited.

14. Give the children due freedom to choose their vocation when they come of age. For it is God who inspires them and it is their responsibility to choose. It concerns them essentially, and not the parents. How many parents and children have gone to hell owing to mistakes in this matter? Decisions must be taken when boys are about sixteen to eighteen and girls about fourteen to sixteen years old. Don't postpone much longer. Their consent must be ascertained before marriages are arranged. Look more for qualities of conduct in your marriage proposals rather than of wealth or status. Otherwise both parents and children may come to grief.

15. Parents should not show weakness or indecision before their children even when the latter had grown up to be wiser and more efficient. As far as possible they should keep the control of the household affairs. How often have parents come to grief by imprudent conduct?

16. Parents should take steps to establish their children to homesteads of their own. They should effect partition of properties before they grow too old. They will be held accountable for dissensions between children arising on account of their failure to do so in time.

Finally, dear children, you are bound before God, to respect your parents and never to cause them any grief. Remember that a violation of the fourth commandment brings down God's punishment not only in after life, but even in this life.

In a heathen country, Japan, there lived a mother with three children. They were extremely poor so much so that the children could not support mother as she deserved. In this

land thieves were invariably executed to death and if anybody captured a thief and handed him over to the Government authorities, a large reward was promised. In order to get some money to support their mother, one of them pretended to be a thief and the other handed him over to the authorities and received their prize. When the authorities in the jail saw the two brothers bidding farewell to the thief and encouraging him to be brave in facing death, the authorities began to doubt why the two men were so anxious about the thief and made enquiries and discovered that the man was facing death in order to make a living to support his mother and his brothers. The authorities felt great admiration for him on learning this truth and informed the king of this fact. Besides setting the youth free, the king decreed that a pension should be given to the mother till her death. My children remember this story always.

THE TESTAMENT OF A LOVING FATHER

The Special Features of the Text

1. It is a precept from a loving Father

This is morally binding, as Chavara affirms in the introductory letter to accept it as it is coming from a Progenitor and Spiritual Head and to welcome it as a Testament of a loving Father

- The matter is presented in the form of a code of conduct giving numbering. (Subject division was given by the publishers later. Now it has a long tradition). He also calls it a mandate for families
- St. Chavara was very prudent in bequeathing such a document first to his own kiths and kins and parishioners at Kainakary, without giving an authoritarian colour from the Vicar General of a Particular Church, thereby making the document more acceptable with 'we' feeling. For the suggestions proposed in the text were more radical and called for an attitudinal change in all relationships, towards God, relatives, neighbours and to oneself.
- With an inner compulsion St. Kurikaose Elias wrote the 40 Point Instruction Manual for the well being of husband and wife, parents, youth and children in the family calling their attention to take social and moral responsibilities.

2. St. Kurikaose Elias wrote it inspired by Divine Light and Discernment

Realizing the calamities going to happen in the families where love, peace, order, fraternal charity and fear of God are missing, St. Chavara meditated to find out solutions and prayed for Divine Assistance, as he has mentioned in the

introduction. After getting the Divine Light from above only he started writing the directives as an Instruction Manual for the families.

- Since he wrote it with the Divine Inspiration, the Testament remains as a true guide to families for more than 145 years. Because of its worth in renewing the families, many many thousands of copies of the text were circulated among the families in more than 30 editions since 1868.
- It is also a fact that many retreat preachers and animation teams are making use of this Testament of St. Chavara for their renewal programmes related to family, youth and children.

3. The text Resembles or Reflects:

I The Last Blessings of Jacob to his sons. Here Jacob tells about the future of his children and then what is right and what is wrong in them. (Gen, 49: 1-27)

II The Last Testament of Moses to the people of Israel. Here Moses blesses them according to the nature of their life. (Deut. 33: 1-29)

III The last Exhortation of St. Paul to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus. There he says that he was not lazy in giving them correct directives needed for their life. (Acts 20: 18-25)

IV Farewell Discourse of Jesus to His disciples in which Jesus promises them the gift of love and life and what is expected of them (John 13: 31-16:33)

4. Style of Writing :

St. Kurikaose Elias Chavara uses similes, maxims, philosophical thoughts, stories, parables, life events,

scriptural texts, etc., in expounding his teachings on family creating practical and in depth conviction in the readers. The presentation is something similar to that of the Gospel chapters of 5,6,7 of St. Mathew and Chapter 6 of St. Luke.

5. The approach to various topics:

Chavara applies Scripture, Moral Theology, Philosophy, Psychology, and Spirituality in dealing with various subjects. He exposes the matter through the practical treaties of Ten Commandments

6. This text can be viewed in three angles:

- Family in the plan of God
- Family in the plan of the Church
- Family in the plan of the society

7. Topics Covered:

- Prayer and sacramental life in the family
- Charitable life in the family
- Healthy relationship in the family
- How to handle wealth and money transaction in the family
- Education of the Children in the family
- Choosing marriage partners and friends in the family
- Dealing with the poor people
- The Servants in the family and their spiritual care
- The communication in the family
- The time table and the use of time in the family
- Modesty and holiness of children in the family
- Upbringing of children in the family
- The discipline in the family
- Festivals and Celebrations in the family
- The choosing of vocation in the family
- The fear of God in the family
- Justice and peace in the family
- Responsibility of the parents in forming children in Christian values
- Responsibility of Children towards parents, and society

8. From the Historical Perspective:

St. Chavara's text on Family (1868) was the first comprehensive instruction manual on family, not given in the form of a decree for the whole Church. Even though it was given to his parishioners, it appeared universal in character as it was received by all families irrespective of religious differences in Kerala.

- Prior to this document, it seems that there was only one magisterial teaching on marriage promulgated by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). It was in answer to the Protestant Reformers on the issue of marriage.

9. Some of the official teachings of the Church related to the family by the Popes :

- On Christian marriage - 10 February 1893 by Pope Leo XIII
- Encyclical, Casti Connubi (Chastity in marriage) 31 December 1930 by Pope Pious XI
- Humane Vitae (on Human life) 1968 by Pope Paul VI
- The First Exhortation given to the family is on the Sacredness of marriage and family in Gaudium at Spes of Vatican Council II
- The vocation and mission of the Laity in the Church, the Apostolic exhortations of Pope John Paul II, 1987.

10. St. Chavara's definition on Family:

“A good Christian family is the image of heaven, when members live together by the bond of blood and affection, duly respecting and obeying the parents, walking peacefully before God and people, seeking eternal salvation according to each one's proper state of life.”

A good Christian family is the Image of Heaven when there

are these five elements in the practice:

- Bond of blood and affection
- Respect and obedience to parents
- Peace with God and People
- Seeking eternal salvation according to the Divine call
- Unity

“Children are sacred treasures entrusted to the parents by God. Know you that these children have been entrusted in your hands, to be purified with the most precious blood of the Lord, to be trained up in His service and to be returned to Him on the judgment day.”

Thus the duties of the parents towards the children are:

- They are to be purified with the most precious blood of Christ through sacramental life
- They are to be trained up in His service
- They are to be returned to Him on the judgment day

Even though the text 'The Testament of a Loving Father' by St. Chavara is a small booklet in appearance, it contains matter for several volumes for the sustenance of a good Christian family. Only very few lines in the text may be found not very reasonable according to the modern context. Now it is our task to suit this testament to the needs of the family members by making it a study material for the good of the universal Church.

A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH OF SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

1. The Early Days Of Kuriakose Chavara

Kerala, the birthplace of Kuriakose Elias Chavara, is from the point of view of its geographical position, the joint gift of the ever-blue Arabian Sea on the west and the evergreen Western



Kerala in India

Ghats on the east. Though very small in area among the states of the Indian Union, the picturesque variety of the landscape and the abundance of plant and animal life, invest this region

with a distinct personality. Kerala culture has been an integral part of the mainstream Indian culture. At the same time its special geographical position enabled Kerala to enjoy its own outlook, way of life, culture and institutions peculiar to itself. From ancient times Kerala emerged as the meeting ground of all Indian religions and philosophical systems as well as the most important world religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

On the Arabian coast at Kainakary in Kuttanadu, in the diocese of Changanaserry, Kerala, India Kuriakose Elias Chavara was born on February 10, 1805 as the sixth child of



Home of Chavara at Kainakary in Kerala - 250 years back

parents Kuriakose and Mariam. The Chavara family is believed to be the descendant of the Pakalomattam family, one of the four that claim descent from the time of St. Thomas at Palayur, central Kerala. He was baptized on 18 February and on 8th September 1805 the child Kuriakose was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Marian shrine in Vechoor.

At the age of five, he began his studies in the village school, called Kalari under a village master called Ashan. There he continued his studies until he was ten years old. Then Malpan Thomas Palackal invited him to his seminary at Pallipuram. Subsequently as he was too young he spent about two years in the parish rectory under the care of the zealous and loving parish priest. Here his parents also discerned his divine call. In the year 1818 he joined the Pallipuram seminary under the tutelage of Malpan Thomas Palackal. Not long after the tonsure he received, there was an epidemic in Kainakary and surroundings. His loving father, his good mother, and his only brother fell prey to the epidemic.

As there was no heir in the family, relatives compelled him to discontinue seminary life and comeback to the family. But he arranged the family affairs in such way that he could continue his priestly studies. On 29 November 1829, at the age of 24, Bishop Aurelius Stabilini, Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly ordained him priest at St. Andrew's Church, Artungal.

2. Foundation of CMI Congregation

Frs. Thomas Palackal, Thomas Porukara and Kuriakose Chavara having the same motivation of starting a religious community life, had several occasions to meet together at the vicariate of Verapoly or at the seminary of Pallipuram to

Founding fathers of CMI Congregation



Fr. Thomas Palackal Fr. Thomas Porukara Fr. Kuriakose Chavara

discuss the idea of a religious institute. By the words of blessed Chavara, from the first page of his chronicle, we may allude to the request fathers Palackal and Porukara placed before the bishop Maurelius Stabilini *Seeing that a lot of good has not been done due to the absence of a Thapasu Bhavanam (house of discipline) in Kerala even for priests, we desire to start a 'Darsana Veed' (house of vision) at least for priests.*

The Vicar Apostolic, finally on 1st November 1829, granted permission to establish a religious house. On May 11, 1831, the foundation stone for the proposed religious house was laid at Mannanam near Kottayam in Kerala dedicating it to St.



*Jacob Kaniyanthara
First brother
co-operator of CMI*



*Laying of the foundation stone of the
first Indian religious congregation,
CMI at Mannanam May.11, 1831*

Joseph. This was the first indigenous religious institute for men in the Indian Church of modern times, known now as Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI). For, if at all there existed any religious institute before, no one continued upto that time. Jacob Kaniyanthara, who in 1865 became the first professed brother co-operator in the congregation also co-operated with those three founding fathers from the beginning.

3. The Whole Responsibility on Chavara's Shoulders

More members began to join the religious institute at



Chavara and 11 fathers took the religious profession at Mannananam.

Mannanam. However they did not have any written rule or regulations. In 1840, the members then present resolved to start a community life, sharing their assets in common and meeting all their expenses from the community. In 1841, on January 16, Malpan Thomas Palackal, and on January 8, 1846 Malpan Thomas Porukara died, leaving the whole responsibility of organizing the religious community to Malpan Kuriakose Chavara. On December 8, 1855, the first anniversary of the official proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, Chavara made the profession of the religious vows before Fr. Marceline Berardi OCD, the delegate of the Vicar Apostolic, assuming the name of Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family. Then his eleven companions made their religious vows before Kuriakose of the Holy Family, who was constituted the Superior of the religious community. The new religious community was known at the time as 'Servants of Mary Immaculate'. Later from 1856 by the influence of the Carmelite missionaries, the community began to be known as

The Monasteries during the time of Chavara



Mannanam 1831



Koonammavu 1857



Elthuriath 1858



Plasanal 1858 (Not now)



Vazhakulam 1859



Pulincunnu 1861



Ambazhakad 1868



Mutholy 1870

'Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel'. In February 1861 the congregation was affiliated to OCD first order with name Third Order of the Carmelite Discalced (TOCD).

4. The Establishment of New Institutions

St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara governed the Congregation for 16 years as the Superior General, under the name 'Common Prior'. The people at large took note of the transformation that was taking place in the Church and in the Malabar society through the apostolic activities of the members under the able guidance of Chavara. Thus priests and people from various parts of Malabar began requesting Chavara to open houses in their midst. Thus Monasteries were started at Koonammavu-1857, Elthuruth-1858, Plasnal-1858, Vazhakulam-1859, Pulincunnu-1861, Ambazhakad-1868, and Mutholy-1870. In order to carry out the apostolic activities in the Vicariate more efficiently, the Vicar Apostolic, in 1864, transferred St. Chavara to Koonammavu, which was near the Curia of the Vicariate.

5. A Religious Congregation for Women

A religious congregation for women in Kerala was a great desire of Chavara. It was a long cherished desire of his and the

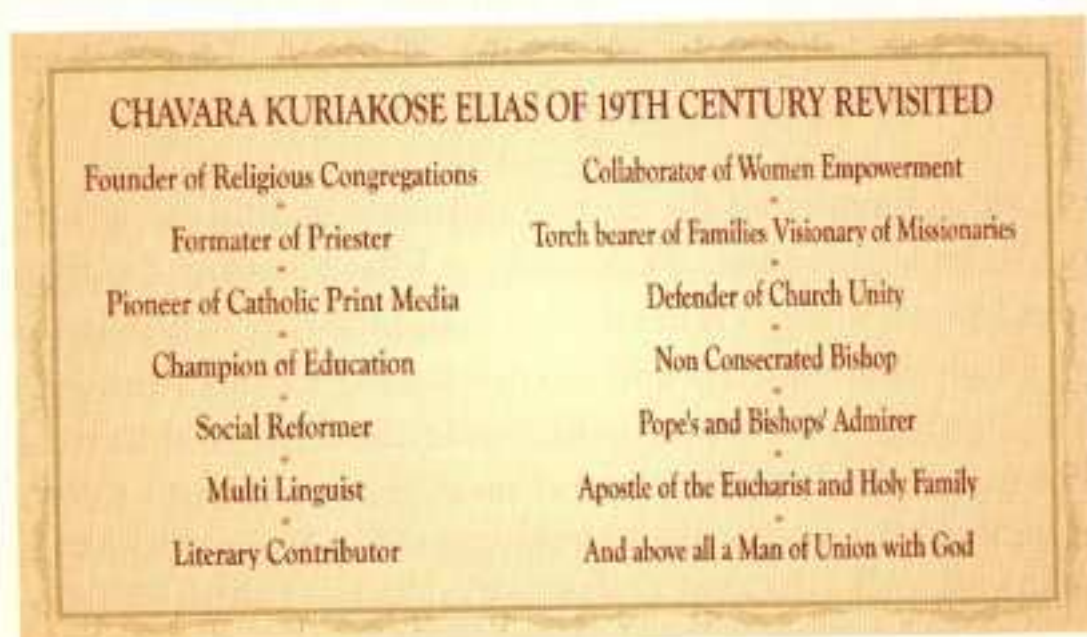


The first convent Chavara started at Koonammavu, Kerala, 1866

result of several attempts, one at Alangad in 1857 and another at Puthanpally in 1859. In 1866, on February 13, with the co-operation of Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD, an Italian Missionary, the first convent of the sisters was inaugurated at Koonammavu, under the name "Third Order of the Carmelites Discalced". The motive of starting such an institute of religious life was for the education, empowerment of women folk and to take care of their spiritual needs.

6. A Man Zealous in the Service of the Church

Starting seven religious houses, besides the first one at Mannanam, in different parts of Kerala within a period of twelve years, the new congregation made great strides in the spiritual renovation in the Kerala Church. Seminaries for the education and formation of clergy at Mannanam in 1833, at Vazakulam in 1866 and at Elthuruth in 1868; introduction of annual retreats for priests and laity; publishing house at Mannanam in 1846 for the propagation of Catholic doctrine and social information; special attention to start catechumenates at Mannanam in 1853 and with other monasteries, house for the destitute and dying at Kainakary



in 1869; reunion movement; Sanskrit School at Mannanam in 1846 and school for the general education at Mannanam in 1865, a school and boarding house exclusively for girls at Koonammavu in 1868 etc. were among the few of various activities under St. Kuriakose Elisa's leadership. Thus he focused the area of ministry in (1) Educating the uneducated, (2) Helping them who desire to enter the Catholic fold, (3) Working for the reunion of the separated brethren. (4) Safeguarding the well being of all (5) Aiming at the renewal of the Church and (6) Willing to do all that are seen good for the



Writings of Chavara

Handwriting in Syriac and Malayalam

people of God. In this way he prepared the religious, priests and the laity for the spiritual and social up-lift of the Church and society.

A schism threatened the church of Kerala in 1861, creating a very critical situation. Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the then appointed Vicar General of Syro-Malabar Church, is gratefully remembered and acknowledged for his strenuous fight, strong stance and effective leadership in thwarting Thomas Rocco's intrusion and saving the church of Kerala from the Schism. On this account, the Holy Father Pope Pius IX sent him a letter expressing his great appreciation.

7. The Author of Many Spiritual and Liturgical Works

Amidst his diverse and manifold activities, he found time and leisure to write a few books, both in prose and in verse like *Atmanuthapam* (The lamentations of a Repentant soul - a poem), *Marana-veettil Padunnathinulla Pana* (A poem to sing in the bereaved house), *Anasthaciayude Rakthasakshyam* (The Martyrdom of Anasthacia), *Dhyana Sallapangal* (Colloquies in Meditation) and *Nalagamangal* (historical notes as chronicles). He took initiative in codifying the liturgical books like canonical prayers for priests and prepared the liturgical rubrics called 'Thukkasa', liturgical calendar; Solemn sung Mass, Little office of Blessed Virgin Mary and office for the dead. His Eclogues are 10 Shepherd plays related to the birth of Christ. His counsels to the Christian families given in 1868 in the form of the "Testament of a loving Father" are universally applicable and are relevant to this day. As an instruction manual for families, already its lakhs of copies in 32 editions were circulated to the Christian families.

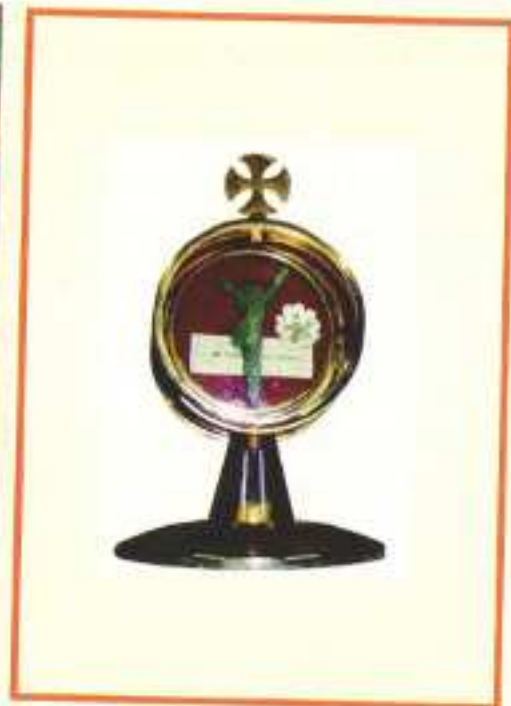
8. Spirituality of Blessed Chavara

The general theme that runs through Chavara's thinking is the mystery of man in relation to God: the greatness of God the creator and the ungratefulness of man, the creature. This consciousness created in him great sorrow for sin. At the same time he recognized the great love and mercy of God, the Savior, whom he calls 'My Father'. This confidence in the Father gave him hope and solution for all his problems and for the problems of others.

In Jesus he realized the mercy of the Father, the greatest expression of God's love. The heart of Saint Chavara was a living abode of the three traditional virtues or ways (*marga*) of spiritual realization of India, such as *Jnana* (wisdom), *Bhakthi* (devotion/love) and *Karma* (action), very much promoted in



*His spirituality is : way of knowledge,
way of love, way of action*



*The Remains of the crucifix
Saint Chavara used*

the gospels and well extolled in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

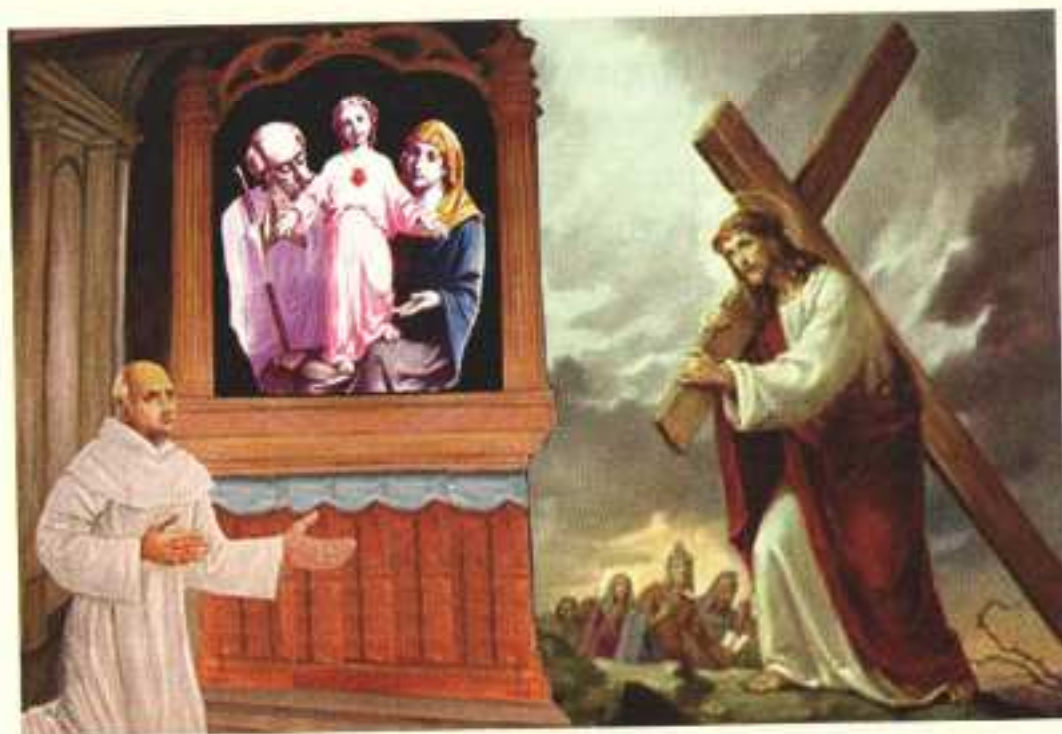
Real Jnana (knowledge/wisdom) is realization. Blessed Chavara, acquiring sacred wisdom from the Holy Scriptures, was always on the way of realizing his Divine Guru, Jesus Christ through his contemplation. This led him to think about the greatness of God, and there he met Jesus in *bhakthi* (love/devotion) as his Father. In his deep Father-Child relationship with Jesus, Chavara identified the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of his fellow being and it led him to serve others with *Niskama Karma* (Selfless action or service).

9. Chavara in the Path of Suffering

Suffering is part of human life. When one accepts sufferings as a participation in the sufferings of Christ, it becomes conducive to his/her salvation and sanctification and partaker with Jesus for the salvation of others. When one accepts suffering with this vision, it becomes an experience of love.

Rheumatic fever, which Chavara contracted at a young age in his priestly career, was a constant companion of his till his death. Once in his apostolic activities he was affected by fever, so as to lose his senses for two days. He had to be carried in a palanquin to the nearby monastery. His legs were also affected by swelling which caused him severe pain now and then. For about three months prior to his death, his eyes were affected seriously and had acute pain. During that time he lost his vision completely. The medicines applied by doctors to regain his vision were also really painful though he never complained about it.

More than the bodily pains what could have affected him most were his mental sufferings. For example, when his loving parents stood in the way of his divine call in the beginning; much more when his loving parents and the only brother died, prey to the epidemic in the region; when the family itself became an orphan by the death of his parents and brother. He also had a very humiliating experience from his own parishioners and parish priest, when the traditional official



Christian Suffering : Partaking of the sufferings of Christ

entry to the church after receiving the tonsure was denied due to certain misunderstanding.

The impediments that happened when the construction of the monastery had begun, impeding in a way the very project of the religious institute; when 2 priests 8 scholastics and one aspirant left the budding congregation on account of the hard rules imposed on it in 1855 by the apostolic vicar and missionaries, at the time of the first profession of the members; the schism that threatened the Malabar Church carrying off the great majority of the churches into schism, when the prominent people of the Church, like the Malpans, one after another left the mother Church and joined the schismatics; when the schismatics threatened to occupy by force the monasteries of Mannanam and Elthuruth etc, his sufferings should have been immense.

But his faith in the divine providence was never shaken. It was in the providence of God that he found refuge on all these occasions.

10. A Peaceful and Hopeful Death

Essentially a man of prayer and intense charity, he stayed in close communion with God amidst his several religious and social activities, permeating his spirituality to all around him so much so that he was accepted and referred to as a man of God. He spent his last days at Koonamavu. It seemed that Blessed Chavara had an insight about his death much before he was laid to his death-bed. In October 1870 he became very sick. He was totally blind for about three months. During this period he fixed a small note on the door requesting visitors to speak with him only spiritual matters. He also wished that good spiritual books might be readout to him in his room. Sensing the death of the founder all assembled around him in



Tomb of Chavara in the church at Mannanam

tears at his deathbed on the eve of January 2. There he said to them in a feeble voice: *Why are you very sad, and are crying? Every man whoever he be, has to die one day. Now it is my time. As I had the protection of the Holy Family, I have never lost the grace I received in the baptism. I dedicate our little congregation and each of you to this Holy Family. May the Holy Family reign in your hearts.* After these words he asked for the sacrament of anointing. On 3 January 1871 at 7.30 in the morning he calmly slept in the Lord and was buried there. His mortal remains were later transferred from Koonammavu to the Mother House at Mannanam in 1889 and re-interred in the St. Joseph's monastery chapel.

11. Way to Chavara's Sainthood and the Honour Given

Immediately after the funeral, the novice, Bro. Leopold gave the sealed envelope to Fr. Leopold the missionary. On reading the testament of St. Chavara he was so impressed that he immediately took manuscript copies of the same and sent a

copy of the testament to all the monasteries then existing. Along with the copy of the testament he distributed to the monasteries some of his belongings, like his cassock, books, religious articles etc. asking the monasteries to conserve them all safely as sacred relics. We presume that he did this with the firm conviction of his saintly life and with the hope that he would soon be canonized a saint. Fr. Leopold might have taken the initiative to start the process of his canonization soon after his death. But he was called back to Italy by the end



Beatification of Chavara at Kottayam by Pope John Paul II, 1986
of 1875. Hence he could not do anything regarding the process of his canonization. However, the note which he wrote in his personal diary on the day of Chavara's death is very important, which ends with the words: *Anima bella e santa, prega per me* (O beautiful and holy soul pray for me).

Chavara's canonization process was begun only in 1955. In 1957 the Archbishop of Changanassery officially started the process. In 1984 April 7th Chavara was declared venerable

and on 8th February 1986, Pope John Paul II on his pastoral visit to India declared him, Blessed at Kottayam, Kerala. In 1987 Government of India released postal stamps in honor of blessed Chavara for his humanitarian services to the country. In 2006 Kerala government honored him by erecting his portrait painting in the hall of 'Kerala Sahitya Academy portrait gallery' at Thrissur, considering him as one of the literary genius in Malayalam of the 19th century.

12. Chavara's Reputation and Saintliness

Bishop Francis Xavier Pescetto (1831-1844) constituted the Servant of God Malpan (worthy to teach and direct in the seminaries) and examiner of priests.

Bishop Ludovic Martini (1845-1852) nominated him preacher of spiritual exercises in the vicariate. Bishop Bernardin Baccinelli (1852-1868) constituted him the vicar general for the Syrians of the vicariate and wrote in the



Postal stamp, the recognition of the Govt. of India



Pinch of the hair of Chavara in a reliquary, venerated by a seminarian while Chavara was alive

appointment letter: "I am convinced that you have the fortitude, zeal, wisdom and the virtues necessary for the right fulfilment of this office." The same Baccinelli described him before the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide recommending him for a bishop with these words: *A man truly Christian, virtuous, very prudent, who in the circumstances has shown with deeds, most attached to the Catholic faith and to the Holy See... He enjoys great esteem of the people and their respect and consequently wields great influence over them.*

A disciple of Saint Chavara, Fr. Varkey Muttathupadathu, had so much veneration for him that he treasured up a wisp of the hair of Chavara and later, he passed it on to his nephew. Bishop Leonard Mellano (1868-1897) esteemed him so much that he instructed Fr. Gerard and Fr. Philip who were the prodelegate of the vicar provincial of the Congregation and the provicar apostolic of Verapoly, respectively to do everything according to the counsel of Chavara.

The testimonies on the life and activities of Kuriakose Chavara came to the congregation for the cause of saints in Rome, from a variety of sources, from bishops, priests who were his masters and superiors, co-disciples, his own disciples, confreres in religion, public officials, nonCatholic bishops, Hindus etc. All are unanimous in recognizing in Chavara "a man of eminent sanctity, who has practiced all the virtues."

The Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, after describing him as "a man of prayer", completed the description, by saying that "he practiced all the Christian virtues and that in a heroic degree." They further elaborated: *Divine faith, confidence in God, intimate and personal union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, a tender love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, humility and charity were shining in him.*

Acknowledging him, along with the historical consulters,

(Antonius Petti, the promoter general of faith) says that *every page of the Positio brings to one's notice one or the other of the characteristic virtues of St. Kuriakose, namely union with God, spirit of prayer, loyalty to the Church, humility, obedience, spiritual equilibrium and the zeal for the good of souls.*

13. Chavara a Question Mark to the Modern World

Saint Chavara is an answer to the modern world; a world tensed with activity and tired of involvement; a world which feels loneliness without a God and neighbor; a world which cannot stay silent for a moment and pray. For, Saint Chavara was a person who could live in harmony with God and the world, prayer and action, solitude and companionship. To a world, which is losing the sense of sin, he is a question mark. In a message by Cardinal Peter Palazzi, the prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, during the Beatification of Blessed Chavara said: *Even though he (Chavara) could declare on his death-bed that he had always kept his baptismal innocence, he had a deep sense of sin. In this sense, he is a question mark to the modern world which seriously lacks the same sense of sin.*

Chavara - A man in harmony with God and World



“Even though he (Chavara) could declare on his death-bed that he had always kept his baptismal innocence, he had a deep sense of sin. In this sense, he is a question mark to the modern world which seriously lacks the same sense of sin.”

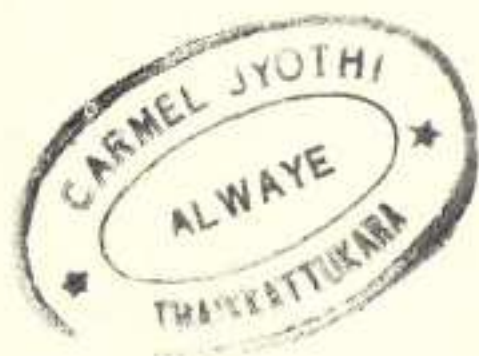
- Cardinal Peter Palazzini

LIFE AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SAINT CHAVARA IMPORTANT MILESTONES

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Born at Kainakary, Kerala, India | 10-02-1805 |
| 2. Baptized at Chennamkary parish church | 18-02-1805 |
| 3. Dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary
as her servant at Vechoor Church | 08-09-1805 |
| 4. Started primary education at Kainakary | 1810 |
| 5. Joined the parish seminary at Pallipuram | 1818 |
| 6. Ordained priest at Arthunkal church | 29-11-1829 |
| 7. Foundation of the First Indian Religious
Congregation for Men, Carmelites of
Mary Immaculate (CMI), along with
Fr. Thomas Palackal and Fr. Thomas Porukara | 11-05-1831 |
| 8. Popularized Sunday Homilies and introduced
Retreats for priests and laity in the
Kerala Church | 1831 |
| 9. Establishment of the first Syro-Malabar
Common Seminary at Mannanam | 1833 |
| 10. Introduction of 'Way of the Cross'
devotion at Mannanam | 1838 |
| 11. Appointed Malpan (Tutor of sacred subjects)
and examiner of scholastics with authorization
to issue atents to the newly ordained to hear
confession and preach in the Church | 16-02-1844 |
| 12. Foundation of the first printing press and
publishing house of the Syro-Malabar
Church at Mannanam | 03-07-1846 |
| 11. Foundation of the First Catholic Sanskrit
School at Mannanam | 1846 |
| 12. Foundation of the First Syro-Malabar
Catechumenate at Mannanam | 1853 |

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 13. First priest to profess as religious in the Indian Church | 08-12-1855 |
| 14. Wrote 10 Eclogues (Shepherd Plays) on the nativity events of Christ | 1856-1857 |
| 15. OCD Affiliated the Congregation as third Order of Carmelites Discalced (TOCD) | 27-07-1861 |
| 16. Appointed as the First Vicar General in the Syro-Malabar Church after the time of Archdeacons | 08-06-1861 |
| 17. Fought for Syro-Malabar Church against schismatic intruder bishop Roccas | 1861 |
| 18. Wrote the First Malayalam Narrative poem, Anasthaciyayude Rakthasakshyam, an inspirational story of a martyr | 1862 |
| 19. Edited the Divine Office for priests, Compiled and Composed Liturgical Rubrics, Liturgical Calendar, Office for the Dead, Little office of Immaculate Mother etc, in the Malabar Church | 1862-1869 |
| 20. Introduced the 'May Devotion of Blessed Virgin Mary' from Mannanam | 1864 |
| 21. Implemented the concept, 'A school for a Church' (Pallikkudam), in the Syro-Malabar Church as Vicar General | 1864 |
| 22. Foundation of the Indian Religious Congregation for women now known as Congregation of Mother Carmel (CMC) at Koonamavu together with Fr. Leopold OCD, an Italian Missionary | 13-2-1866 |
| 23. Introduced 40 Hours Eucharistic Adoration in Kerala at Koonammavu | 15-2-1866 |
| 24. Started the first boarding house and school for girls in Kerala at Koonammavu together with Fr Leopold OCD | 02-01-1868 |
| 25. Wrote the first instruction manual, 'A Testament of a Loving Father' for christian families, the first of its kind in the Church | 13-2-1868 |

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 26. Foundation of the first lay charitable organization, the 'Confraternity of St. Joseph for Happy Death' at Kainakary | 1869 |
| 27. Foundation of the first Home of Charity, Upavisala, for the sick, old and destitute at Kainakary | 1869 |
| 28. Initiated Catholic re-union movement | 1869 |
| 29. Slept in the Lord at St. Philomina's Monastery at Koonammavu | 03-10-1871 |
| 30. Mortal remains reinterred at Mannanam, the Mother House of the CMI Congregation | 04-05-1889 |
| 31. Canonization process started at the congregational level | 21-12-1936 |
| 32. Official permission to start the process of Canonization | 09-12-1955 |
| 33. Diocesan process started with the title Servant of God | 03-1-1958 |
| 34. Declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II in Rome | 07-4-1984 |
| 35. Beatification at Kottayam, Kerala by Pope John Paul II | 08-2-1986 |
| 36. Release of the postal stamp as the social reformer by Govt. of India | 20-12-1987 |
| 37. Portrait in the Literary Academy Hall of Thrissur by Govt. of Kerala for contribution to Malayalam literature | 04-05-2006 |
| 38. Date of Canonization | 23-11-2014 |



My dear beloved,

In flesh and blood, I am the son of Kuriakos of Chavara, of the parish of Chennenkary. The omnipotent God most kindly gave me existence in this world and in this family and of these parents. So in the natural order, according to charity and justice, I am bound to be specially grateful to you and to do you a good in turn. But I have not done anything specially for you. Hence I am leaving this document for you, in my own hand-writing. This script will live even after I am dead. So I entrust this to my children of the Kainakari sub-parish to be preserved as a treasure

Let this be a sign that this is my testament to you my brethren and children in the double order (of spirit and flesh). The countless favours God has bestowed on you are not entirely due to your meritorious lives: they are also earned by the merits of your fore-fathers; take care that you do not render yourselves unworthy of such blessings. That you may remember that I came into this world and that I have left it, copy out of this document by all who can do it so and preserve it in your homes. Keep the original locked in a box in the chapel. On the first Saturday of every month, all of you come together and read it through. Do it to remember the day of my death. I do not ask for any other remembrance. But Month after month, after you have read this, I beseech you, breathe a short prayer in my behalf-Oh Lord, keep the soul of this thy servant also in the abode of the just.

13th Kumbhom (February) 1868
Father Kuriakos Elias of the Holy Family