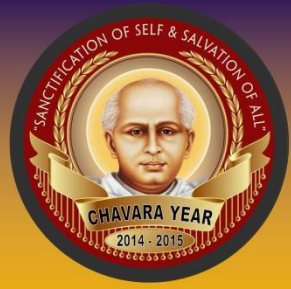


Dharmaram

ENFLAMED TO ENKINDLE

St. Chavara and Open Source Approach

Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI



Jesus Christ... St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara... Lighted to enlighten...

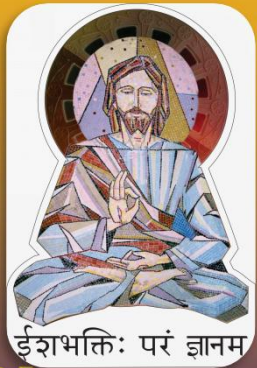


A light, not only radiates its glow around itself; if another candle is placed close to its flame, it also gets lit... Thus, the light is shared and the glow is enhanced...

Deivathinte

kaiyyoppulla manushyan

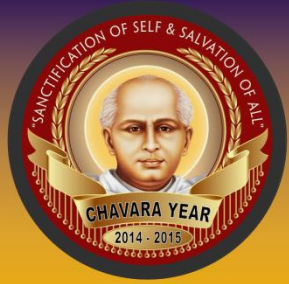
(Saint Chavara was a “man with a signature of God”)



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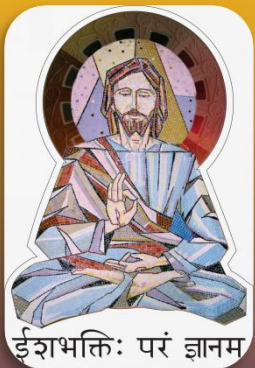
“Unbelievable” “Impossible”

19th century Kerala and the greatness of Chavara:

AMBAZHAKAD, just four km away from my parents’ home; how remote it was when I was boy...

Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara started a monastery in this remote area in 1868; how hard it would have been for him and his companions to conceive of these projects, as they practically started from scratches... no money, no institutional strength, no expertise, not much of a political clout.

His Resource: (1) absolute trust in God and (2) unreserved commitment to people.



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Openness to God, Authorities, and People

Bishop's Reply to the Founders:

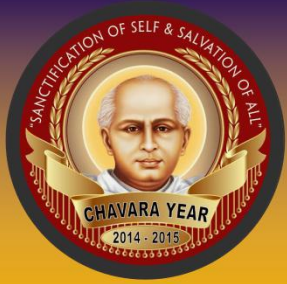


“We have only a handful of priests like you to guide the people of God in the proper way and if you go for contemplative monastic life who will take care of them? *If you prefer going for monastic life to teaching the people, start a monastery that may benefit all.*”



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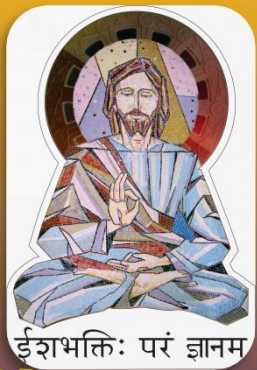
Part 1: Appa-Experience as the Source of Saint Chavara's Vision and Mission

Meditation was natural to him...

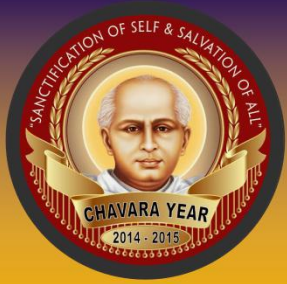
Father Chavara wrote: *“Meditation is a conversation with God. As you would with a friend, you sit close to God, moved by love, intimately communicating with Him.*

Meditation then is speaking with your beloved spouse Jesus Christ, sitting very close to Him... You converse with God as you would with a friend...”

Long hours of prayer and adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament...



Dharmaram



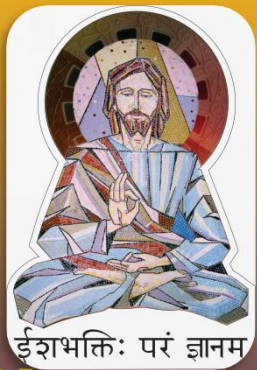
“Kanakanam...” crystallizes an intense desire of Saint Chavara to look and feel, and to have an intense personal experience of Jesus.



*“Radiance of the merciful Prince of God
My heart longs to behold!*

*Highest God born of the Virgin Mary
My heart longs to behold!*

*Emmanuel, God being united with us
My heart longs to behold!”*



**Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara,
(Atmanuthapam, Part 3)**



Open Source: *Besrauma*

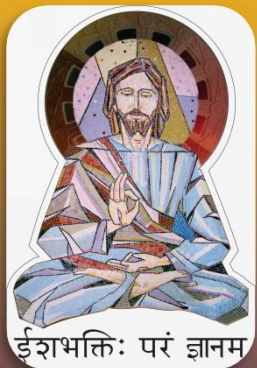
To receive grace...

*To share and disseminate grace,
wisdom, hope, goodness...*

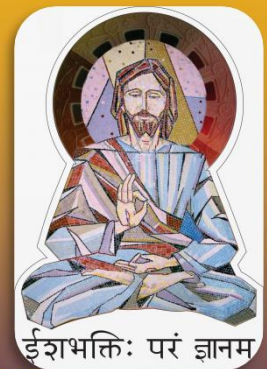
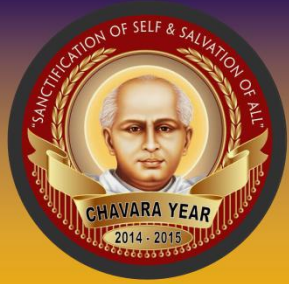


Besrauma (a house on the hilltop/a light house)

Punyasanketam + Tapasubhavanam
(an abode of virtuous life) + (an abode of
committed and high-powered
transformative action) = a Christian
religious community (*Besrauma*)



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Dharmaram

Transformed to Transform...

Father Chavara had a transformed consciousness, rooted in the experience of the person of Jesus Christ.

MISSION: It is sharing this transformed consciousness and his attempts to establish such a consciousness in everyone else, especially in those who were entrusted to his care and the least among the hapless masses, that we see in Chavara's multifarious mission activities.



Part 2:

OPEN MISSION FIELD OF CHAVARA:

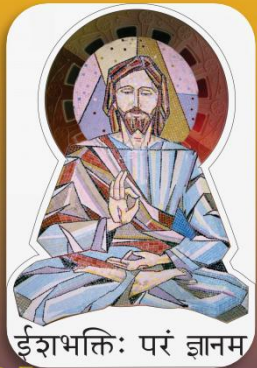
Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam

वसु धै व कु टु म् ब कम्

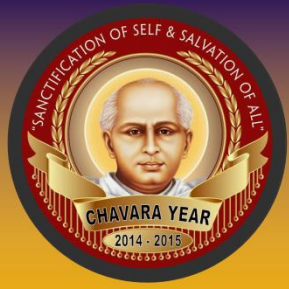


K. C. Chacko: “... [Chavara] withdrew from the world so as to permeate it more forcibly.”

A. M. Mundadan: “He retired from the world not because he was afraid of it, or tired of it, or disliked it, or belittled it, but because he wanted to leaven the dough, to educate and to reform the sons and daughters of God, so that they became really His children. With a singleness of purpose he tried all through his life to equip himself with knowledge, wisdom and virtue and disseminate them to his fellow religious, priests, nuns and the laity at large.”



Dharmaram



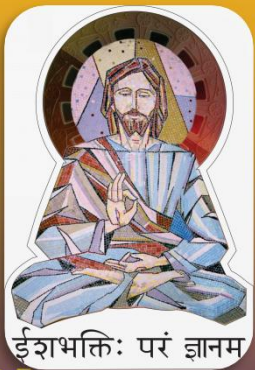
COMMUNICATING HIS SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH WORDS AND ACTIONS

Pulpit and Press

Pulpit: reaching out to the in-group members locally...

The time of liturgical celebration was the best opportunity to instruct the faithful and to guide them to a transformed consciousness and way of life.

An ideal setting to offer instructions in religious and social value consciousness.



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Press: reaching out to the larger society beyond the bounds

Literary and spiritual writings...

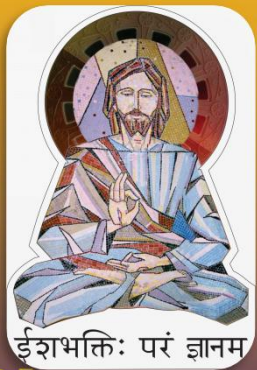


! to understand the relevance of written word and media communication in the present world...

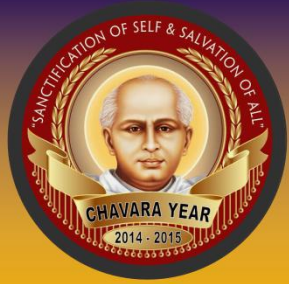
! to explore the immense potential of communication media...

Example: *Pasamalar* (Tamil Magazine)

Anything similar for CMI Kenya Mission?

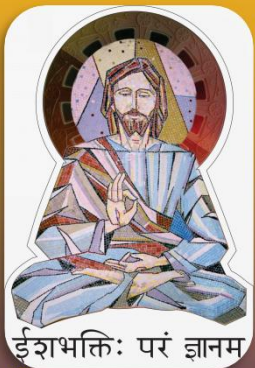


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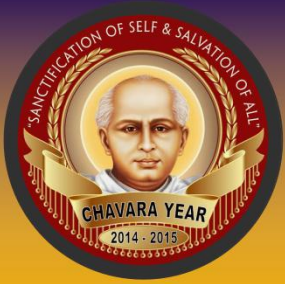


OPEN SOURCE APPROACH IN ESTABLISHING A TRANSFORMED VISION

- 1) Foundation of Religious Communities (TOCD for men and women)
- 2) Seminary for the Formation of Devoted and Integral Pastors
- 3) People Participation in Projects
- 4) Inclusive Approach
- 5) Strategies for Self-Respect and Self-Reliance



Dharmaram



PURPOSE OF STARTING MONASTERY AND CONVENT

*(from the first letter of
application submitted to the
Bishop)*

CMI

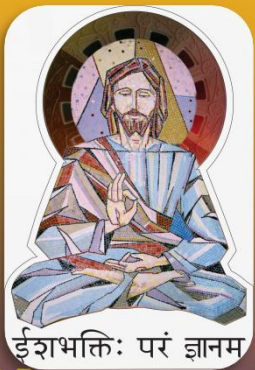
“It is necessary that in
this territory there are
persons who are
continuously engaged
in prayer and good
works for the greater
glory of God and the
edification of the
Church.”

[Darsanaveedu and Tapasubhavanam]

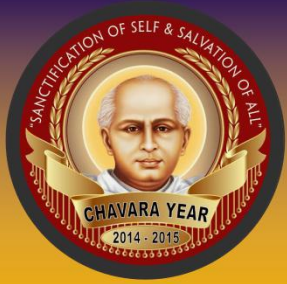
*(from the chronicles of
Koonammavu convent)*

CMC & CTC

“Besides striving for
their own spiritual
realization, the
members of the
Congregation have to
teach other girls, and
train them in some
handicrafts.”

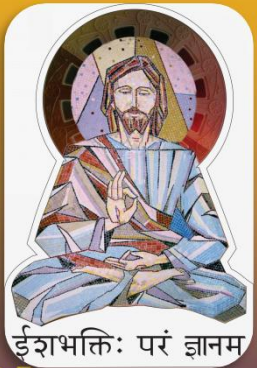


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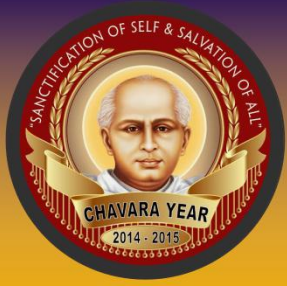


OPEN SOURCE APPROACH: ORIENTATION FOR COMMUNITY

Chavara wrote: “On 18 June 1840, the feast of Corpus Christi, Frs Thomas Porukara, Geevarghese Thoppil and myself began living as a community in *Besrauma* [Mannanam]. *We were already enjoying spiritual brotherhood; but we wanted to have unity in temporal matters as well.* Therefore, following the example of [the early Christians led by] St. Peter, we began to hold in common all our material goods and possessions, and to keep a common account [of income and expenses].”



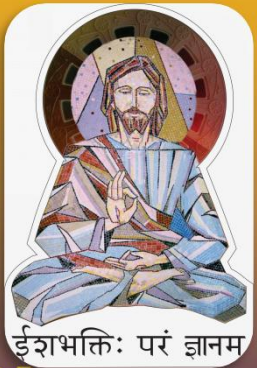
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SEMINARY FOR THE FORMATION OF DEVOTED AND INTEGRAL PASTORS

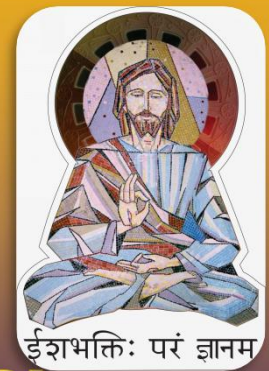


According to the first biographer of Chavara, Leopold Beccaro, an Italian Carmelite missionary, Chavara, even as a young cleric, realized that ***“an uneducated priest was not only inefficient to do anything worthwhile in his pastoral work, but may be even detrimental to the salvation of souls.”***



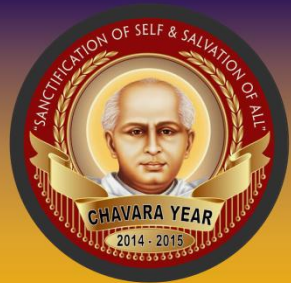
ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम

Dharmaram



Kaniampampil: *“What prompted him to start a serious and systematic seminary formation was his deep conviction that the growth and wellbeing of the Church could emerge only through the instrumentality of priests spiritually deep-rooted, morally upright, intellectually erudite, and well-trained in communication skills.”*

Those who completed training at Mannanam Seminary, according to Father Chavara, should be more effective in realizing not only the salvation of souls, but also the renewal of the society as a whole and the uplift of those people who were segregated against in the social and religious structures of the society.

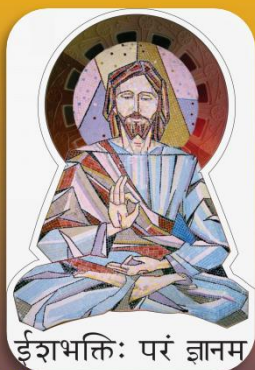


People Participation

Most of the institutions, in the secular or religious sphere, were started by Chavara relying on the financial and political support of the people of the locality.

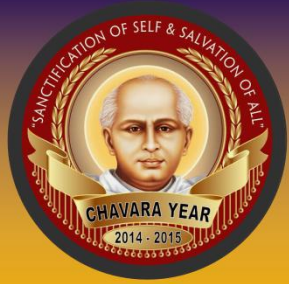
For example, the first religious house in Mannanam, the foundation of the seminary in different locations, the setting up of schools in Mannanam and Arpookkara, the printing press, the starting of the convent in Koonammavu, and the Charity Home (*upavisala*) in Kainakari.

Pidyari (a handful of rice), *kettuthengu* (a dedicated coconut palm), etc., for the **participation of ordinary people** in the new missions.



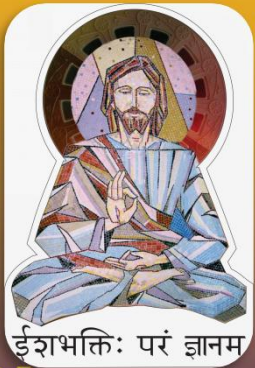
ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम्

Dharmaram

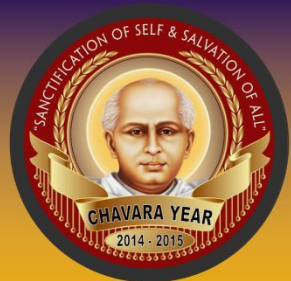


Upavisala or Dharmasala (Charity Home)

Chavara wrote: “Now my intense desire and earnest request to you is to begin such a confraternity, which has taken origin from such a motivation... Keep a charity box with the label “Happy Death Charity Box,” unashamedly beg of others and raise a fund yourselves; build a modest bungalow-like house of bamboo and other cheap materials, with just two rooms on either side of a veranda near your small chapel. You may call it an *Upavisala* or *Dharmasala* (Charity Home), and shelter there orphans or the aged or sick or beggars who have no one to take care of them. By God’s grace in the course of time it will be the first of the Charity Homes in Malabar. In following my advice you must be prepared to become shameless for the sake of the Lord! Initially people may even call you fools! But, once started, it will easily be done.”



Dharmaram



Inclusive Approach

In Church activities...

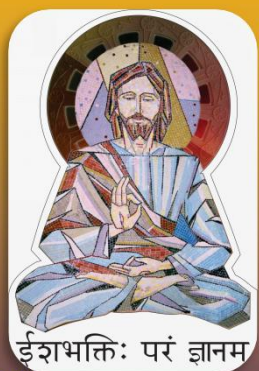
In Educational endeavours...

Charitable activities and institutions...

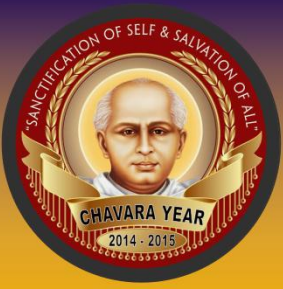


Neither his prophetic vision for a better tomorrow nor the innovative practical action needed for realizing the vision was restricted to the members of his own religion, i.e., the Syro-Malabar Catholics of Kerala.

A paradigm shift can be seen in the emphasis that Chavara laid on the uplift of the Dalit communities and women.



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Strategies for Self-Respect and Self-Reliance

CASTE SYSTEM

&

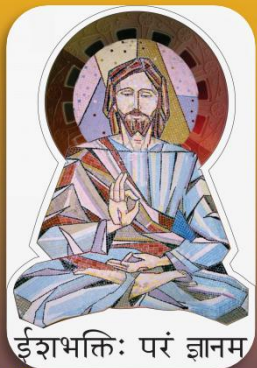
UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF WOMEN



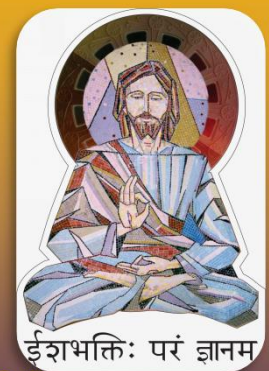
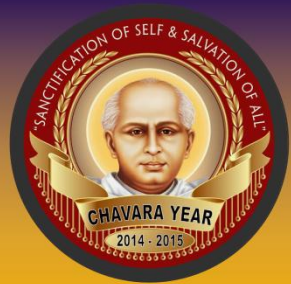
Means: EDUCATION



Goal: SELF-RESPECT AND SELF-RELIANCE



Dharmaram



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Christianness

As institutions become stronger and better established, we run the risk of losing sight of the original vision and thrust so as to slip into more of self-centred interests.

If a Christian – be it an individual or an institution – begins to function for the sake of self-interest or begins to exist for oneself, it is the beginning of losing one's *Christianness*.

For, when a Christian ceases to exist for others, he or she would cease to be a *Christian!*



Today's two prominent tendencies:

Our society is becoming *more*

individualistic (this is against the call for community) [‘What would I get?’ is the basic question; PROFIT is the MOTIVE...

Our society is becoming *more secular*

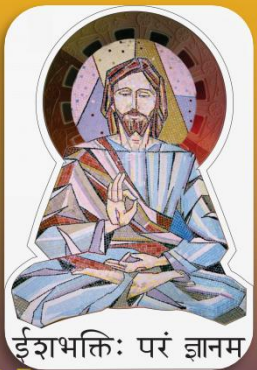
(this is against the quest for spiritual)



Darsanaveedu should lead us
to *Tapasubhavanam*

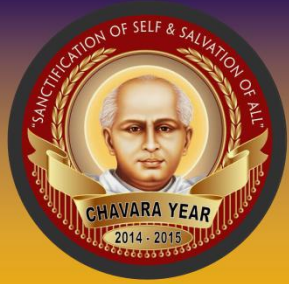
+

Tapasubhavanam calls for its
foundation in *Darsanaveedu*



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Saint Chavara had only
ONE VISION:
vision of Jesus
Christ, his *appa*
experience

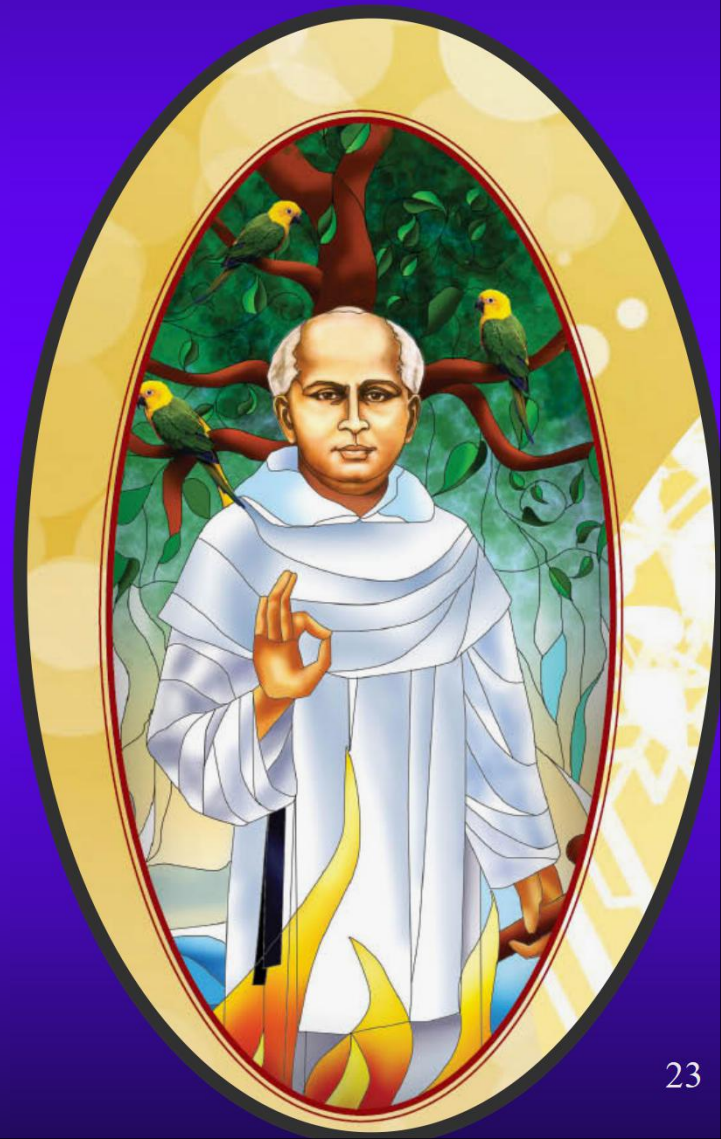


Saint Chavara had only
ONE MISSION:
to share his Jesus-
Experience without
any reserve



ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम

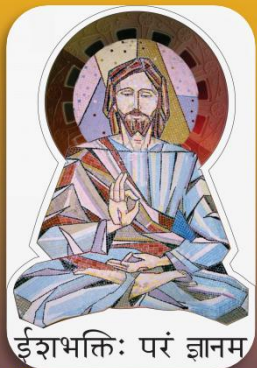
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Analogy of a lit candle...

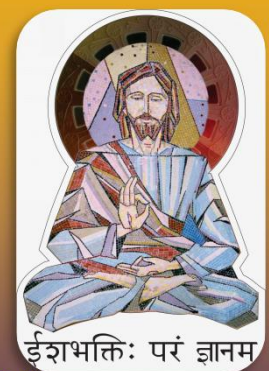
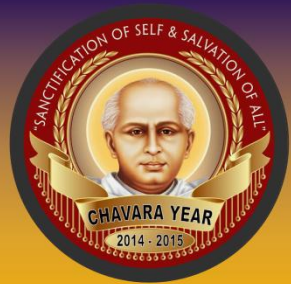
The lit candle is consumed slowly; as it is lighted, it must spend itself; in the course of time, if it should continue to glow and enlighten others, new fuel must be supplied. Here is our task. **If we are enflamed by joining hands with Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara to enkindle the world, we must ready ourselves to spend, to burn ourselves** so that through those whom we reach out, we could enkindle others, so that others may continue to receive the divine glow, the glow of the Divine Spirit...



ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम्

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ENFLAMED TO ENKINDLE

St. Chavara and Open Source
Approach

Thank You!