

# MISSION

Magazine

May-August, 22

Encounter, Experience, Evangelize

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

Mk 16: 15

Reaching out Peripheries



The most valuable possession of a family consists in fear of and devotion to the Lord. A family in which the fear of the Lord pervades will enjoy the fruit of divine blessings in this world as well as in eternity. Blasphemous language and vulgar conversations will fade away the brightness of a good family like dark clouds.

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





No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people. Did not Jesus say: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"

Pope Francis on Vocation

# CMISSION '22

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

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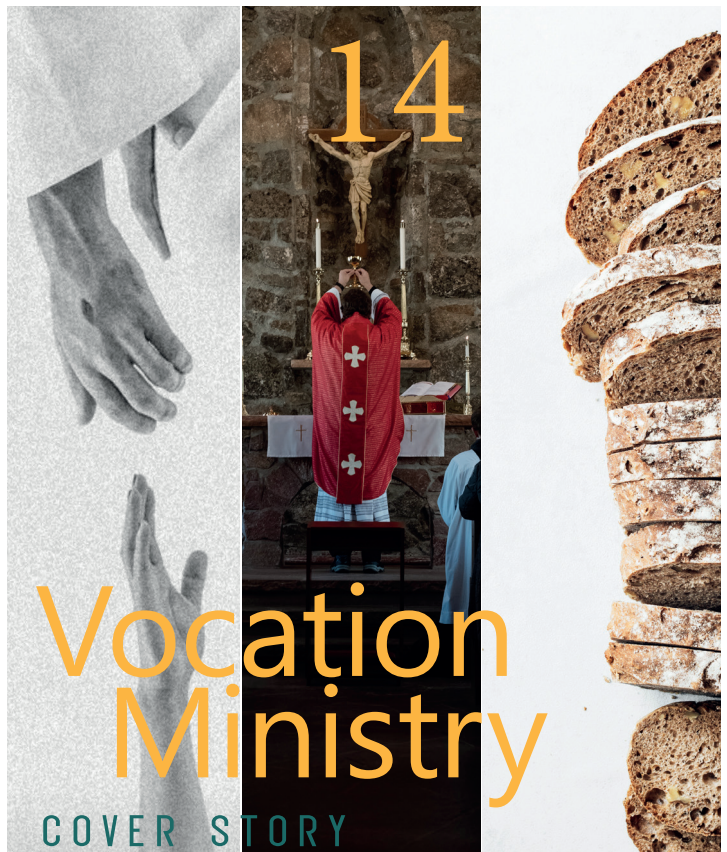
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## Vocation Ministry

COVER STORY



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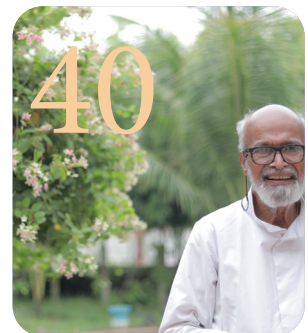
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**Josey Thamarassery CMI**  
**Vicar General, Chief Editor**

**T**he month of October is dedicated to the Mission. We remember and pray for all the missionaries in the world who have committed their lives to the spread of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom values in this world. The mission has always been the hallmark of the Church, for “she exists to evangelize” (EN, 14). Our life of faith grows weak and loses its prophetic power and its ability to awaken amazement and gratitude when we become isolated and withdraw ourselves from being a missionary. By its very nature, the life of faith calls for a growing openness to embracing everyone, everywhere. God needs people who are committed to his mission from time to time whom he needs to “send out.” “Go therefore to the highways and byways, and invite everyone you find” (Mt 22:9). Consecrated people are persons who are called to have a deeper immersion into the world as radical disciples of Jesus. The first and most essential purpose of consecrated life is to be committed God-seekers. Without a committed pursuit of God in contemplation, all kinds of activities lose all purpose and relevance.

The current issue of CMission, as usual, presents articles and writings in three categories. The first one: **ENCOUNTER** deals with various aspects of the vocation to consecrated life, as a life to fall in love with God. The CMI congregation while preparing for the Bicentennial of the Congregation (1831-2031) is reflecting on the Call and Commitment of the religious life. They deal with various aspects of formation in consecrated life, the dynamics of vocation ministry where young minds are encouraged to discover their vocation to consecrated life and the role family plays in nurturing and promoting vocation to consecrated life etc. All the articles in this section are aimed at deepening our understanding of our Call and commitment to consecrated life.

In **EXPERIENCE**, the CMission deals with Chanda Mission which celebrates the diamond jubilee of its foundation. Chanda, being the first mission of the CMI congregation developed a mission strategy of its own. According to Msgr. Januarius, the first mission and visionary of the mission, the acquaintance with a person should lead a missionary to reach further to the family, the village and its leaders. In experience, we also come into contact with the second Bishop of the mission Msgr. Vijayanand. Besides, Fr Sebastian Thattil, one of the pioneer missionaries of Chanda, shares his experience in the mission of Chanda.

In the section **EVANGELIZE** besides a beautiful mission mediation, we are introduced to the Nepal mission of Bijnor province which is a promising mission. Being a new mission, the missionaries of that place are trying to get into the life of the people who need the gospel message of liberation and love. Besides, we are also introduced to Asha Ashram, a house of hope, an apostolate dedicated to the mentally and physically challenged people by Fr. Santhosh Kotheril and the team. As the best practice of evangelization, we come into contact with Fr. Devasiachan Kanatt CMI of Jerusalem retreat centre, who during the Covid time, through online ministry has brought Jesus and his healing touch to thousands of people.

The call to consecrated life is a radical choice, especially when the world around us has become very much secular, consumeristic and individualistic. Someone said: “Don’t ask what the future of religious life is, but ask what type of religious life we want in the future.” The challenge today for the people who wish to respond to the call of the Lord is to work for a future that is relevant and meaningful to spread the message of love to the world today.





Thomas Chathamparampil CMI  
Prior General

**T**hrough the Sacrament of Baptism, every Christian has a personal vocation- a call from God - to holiness and service. God's call is an invitation, an invitation that expects an answer from each baptized person. This call is lived out in different ways: by being married, ordained as a priest or deacon, or consecrated as a religious priest, brother or sister. The Holy Spirit urges all of us to answer this call, to enter into this relationship of love with God. God calls us from a silent voice deep within to "Come and follow me". All states of life are to lead to a relationship of love with God, the pursuit of His will, and the ultimate achievement of holiness and its eternal reward. The call to holiness, to love, is the same; only the way is different.

Some of the faithful are offered a special gift, an opportunity to love and serve God and his Church in a way that demands a voluntary and personal commitment of one's whole life to the exclusive love and service of God. At the heart of a call to consecrated life is a desire to give oneself in love to God in a way so total that the pursuit of union with God makes it impossible for anything or anyone to be more central. This call and commitment is called a "vocation to consecrated life" which is discussed extensively in this issue of CMission.

In Vita Consecrata that Pope John Paul II wrote in 1996 after a Synod about the Consecrated Life, the Holy Father explains: "In every age, there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father's call and the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ, to devote themselves to him with an "undivided" heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:34). Like the Apostles, they too have left everything behind to be with Christ and to put themselves, as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of the Church shine forth, and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society."

Of course, consecrated life is an essential and integral part of our society and of the Church. Although we are experiencing a profound transition in the way this life is led in the Church, I strongly believe that consecrated life will continue to exist, most probably in different forms as there have been always newer forms and openings to serve the Church, with enhanced fervour, zeal and enthusiasm.

Looking at the challenges of consecrated life Pope Francis asks: What kind of consecrated life do we expect today? He goes on to answer the question by saying: "One which offers a special witness. You must truly be witnesses of a different way of doing and being (Acts 1:8). You must embody the values of the Kingdom."

This is the challenge the consecrated life has today. It is expected, rather demanded, that every consecrated person should consciously strive to be an authentic follower of Jesus in this century through a radical shift in the way we live our consecrated life.

“



Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice out there calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice in here calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.

Thomas Merton  
Catholic Theologian



Let's face God in context and text



**Encounter**



# The Mission of the Voiceless

Protests of the coastal people,  
a struggle not for some rights  
or recognition but for survival  
and the mother sea.



Paul Kalliadickal CMI  
Bengaluru



**T**hese days we witness in Kerala one of the largest massive protests of the coastal people, a struggle not for some rights or recognition but for survival and the mother sea. The Catholic Church is on the front leading the protest against the construction of the deepwater port and container transshipment terminal at Vizhinjam, a multi-billion dream project of the Kerala Government. The protest led by the Latin Archdiocese of Trivandrum has received explicit support from all the Catholic flock. The KCBC, the Syro Malabar Jagratha and Family Commissions and so on have formally announced their stand against the unscientific construction of the Vizhinjam port in support of the protesters. It is not surprising that the Church has a special affinity towards the fisherfolk just like its head who was a great friend of the sea and fishermen.

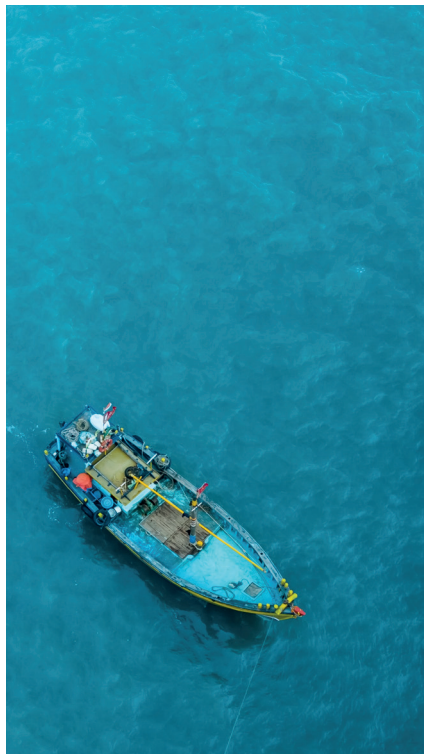
The Vizhinjam port is of utmost strategic importance as it is located so close to the international shipping routes. On completion it can emerge as a significant competition to the transshipment ports of Colombo, Singapore and Dubai as it is the only transshipment hub in the Indian subcontinent. It could be one of the deepest ports of the country, handling about 80 per cent of the country's cargo transshipments. The Rs. 7,525 crore project, entrusted to the Adani Group by the UDF government, was set to be operational by 2019. But it got delayed due to several roadblocks and controversies and is now expected to be completed by 2023.

Developmental projects are indeed crucial for the growth of any state and its economy, but when it is at the cost of the life and safety of the common people and the sustainability of nature it has to be checked. The primary demand of the protesters at Vizhinjam is to conduct a proper environmental impact study before continuing the construction works because they are experiencing the adverse effects of the unsustainable work. Hundreds of families have lost their homes to coastal erosion during the last year and there are apprehensions that the proposed shipping channel would affect the tranquillity of the sea and can lead

to the loss of livelihoods. There are studies including that of the UK Marine Special Areas of Conservation Project which sheds light into possible dangers to the sea caused by the unchecked and imprudent activities in ports. It is the duty and responsibility of the state to ensure that the common people and the natural resources are safeguarded when it ventures into any such developmental activities.

Parallely there is another protest taking place in the state against the recent Supreme Court judgement regarding the Eco-Sensitive Zones. The 1 km buffer zone across the boundaries of every protected land as per the order would cover lakhs of acres of human settlements and farmlands.

This would be a matter affecting the livelihood of several lakhs of common people. The Church has already declared its solidarity with the uproar of these people demanding an immediate intervention in the new rule.



Gen. 2:15 says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." To preserve and maintain the land is one of the first responsibilities entrusted by God to humankind and at the same time they are to earn their livelihood from the land. Neither should nature be affected due to human exploitation nor should the common people suffer in the name of nature protection. To strike the balance between the care for nature and the sustainable developmental activities lies at the root of the problem we discuss. The intractable needs of the fast growing economy and globalisation often take the toll on the lives of the common people and sustainability of the environment.

It is indeed the mission of the Church to intervene when this happens. As Pope Francis rightly puts it in *Laudato Si*, "Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society." It is laudable that the Catholic Church is active today participating and leading the struggles of the common people in protecting mother nature and their livelihood. The fundamental mission entrusted to us is to love, it should encompass the whole creations especially those who are being exploited and made voiceless.

# Call & Commitment



“

Dear Children, by the special grace of God, we have been called to be members of the Congregation, dear to the Mother of God. Beloved brethren, this Congregation of ours is not man-made. You are witness to the truth that God has nurtured it with genuine care and helped it to grow."







# The treasure in the clay pot



**Jibin Koottanal CMI  
Kottayam**

**T**o fall in love with God is the greatest romance. To seek Him is the greatest adventure. And to find him is the greatest achievement.”

A religious nun, on her silver jubilee was asked to narrate her views on religious life from the wealth of her 25 years of live in experience as a religious. In her own words “the following helps me to live this life with enthusiasm and confidence. (a) My close intimacy with Jesus my Lord and master. (b) Faithfulness to my vowed life. (c) Healthy and joyful community living. (d) My commitment to my mission (e) Support and motivation from my family and friends.” In her viewpoints are hidden the secrets of leading a contented and fulfilling religious life.

The days of formation spent at the seminary are so crucial in nurturing the vocation. The term seminary comes from the Latin word *seminarium*, meaning “plant nursery” or “seed plot”. True to this very meaning, seminary serves as a breeding ground, upon which grows and flourishes the seeds of vocation of the candidates. It is their home away from home. And since it is their home, care should be taken that, the formees get the right ambience for their growth.

If what the young see is a loving, forgiving and lively community with passion for Jesus and passion for his mission they will be attracted to the religious life and to the apostolic activities. Conversely if our community and ministry lack fire and passion for Jesus and if we are unattractive and mediocre it may be better that we do not mislead the young by inviting them.

“To fall in love with God is the greatest romance. To seek Him is the greatest adventure. And to find him is the greatest achievement” Says St. Augustine. Our seminaries should serve as such a breeding place where the candidates fall in love with Jesus so passionately, seek him with all their soul, and find him as the greatest achievement of life.

Some congregations will cease to exist as their major mission is no more meaningful to the modern lives. Others will continue but with a significantly reduced membership. The congregations whose structures are not personally satisfying or appropriately responding to the major needs of today’s church and the world, may slowly die down. I believe that the congregations which are ready to change according to the signs of the times and adapt to the present situation and go for frontier innovative or challenging ministries will surely get vocations and continue their mission as religious. The formees from the very time of their formation should be well exposed to the sufferings and realities of society: the huge number of young Christian men remaining unmarried, the drug menace, enormous cost of medical treatment, the love jihad, competitive educational market where the poor Christians have no entry, Christian youngsters migrating to foreign countries leaving their elderly desperate, the agonies of the lonely elderly people these burning issues should constantly haunt the formees during their days of formation, so that they find out solutions for the same, once they are sent out on their mission.

Even today when vocation to priesthood and religious life is looked upon so scrupulously, and is a subject matter for the heated discussions on TV channels, many aspiring and promising young candidates come forward so bravely, and join our seminaries and convents responding to the call of God. A new and hopeful generation of men and women still desire to be part of the remarkable legacy of vowed religious life. There has to be a model into which the candidate seminarian must grow. That model for the seminarian is Christ the perfect man. It is about growing into the likeness of Jesus Christ maturing into his full stature. Human formation is impossible without the Father’s pruning, the Son’s growth-giving, and the Spirit’s indwelling. His formation is a journey of transformation that renews the heart and mind of the person, so that he can discern what is the will of God, what is good

and pleasing and perfect. And if transformation does not take place, deformation will happen to the candidates. It is to be directed toward forming priests whose life and motivations are centered on Jesus Christ. Human formation is fundamental to all other aspects of formation of the priest. Seminaries need to be adequately equipped to provide adequate human formation with sufficient number of trained counselors and spiritual directors who are comfortable and competent in helping candidates who come to them.

There should be no room in a seminary for sluggishness or sloth. There should be no substitute to working out one’s salvation with fear and trembling. A seminarian in sincere pursuit of spiritual growth and holiness can courageously say I can do all things in the one who strengthens and empowers me. If the seminarian does his part he can be sure that he who called him will ever be faithful and assist him in his human progress.

Here is an interesting narrative of how God calls His followers.

He doesn’t care about age – No wonder He blessed Abraham  
He doesn’t care about Experience – No wonder He chose David

He doesn’t care about gender – No wonder He lifted Esther  
He doesn’t care about your past – No wonder He called St. Paul  
He doesn’t care about your physical appearance – No wonder He chose Zaccaeus.

He doesn’t care about fluency in speech – No wonder He chose Moses

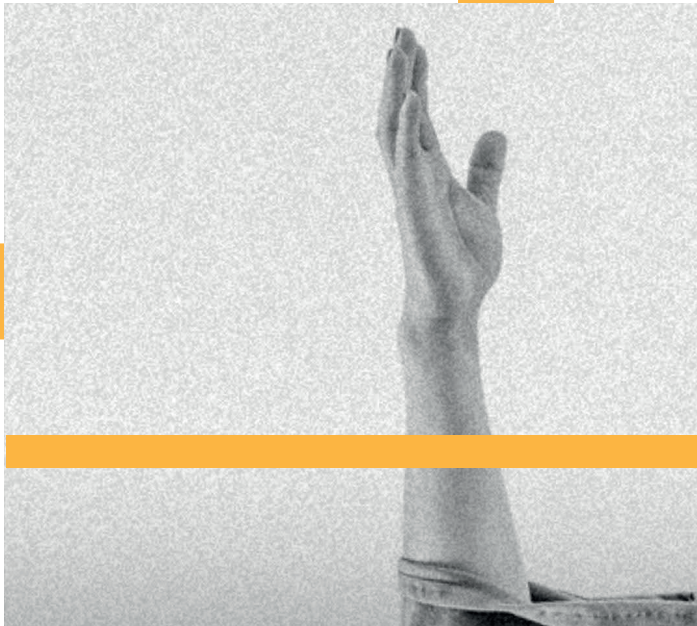
He doesn’t care about your career – No wonder He befriended Mary Magdelene; a prostitute

He doesn’t care about class – No wonder He sent His own Son on earth.

True to this very nature of God’s calling, the candidates who join seminary are vulnerable and weak, in various capacities. And its upto the formators to handle them so gently and lovingly, remembering that vocation is a treasure given in the clay pot, unless we hand them with utmost care and precision, possibilities are more that they get broken forever. Pope Francis puts it rightly when he says “the formees are ‘uncut diamonds’; to be formed both patiently and carefully, respecting the conscience of the Individual, so that they may shine among the people of God” (Addressing the plenary of the congregation for the clergy on 3rd October 2014.) Therefore the formators need to be flexible to the vulnerabilities of the formees under their care, knowing well that they are dealing with the treasure in the clay pot and if, handled with care and sensitivity they can transform them into beautiful instruments for the mission of the Lord.



## The Challenges of CMI Vocation Ministry



Johnson Valiyakulathil CMI  
Coimbatore



**S**urvival of any organization—both religious and secular—depends on the recruitment of followers and prospective leaders. This is what Jesus did when he began his mission in Galilee. Right at the beginning of his ministry, “Come and Follow Me” was his catchphrase. Ultimately, his invitation was adhered to and people took it upon themselves as a vocation to follow him. The vocations the Lord send to us are the visible signs of God’s approval of our Congregation and its mission. The presence of numerous vocations speak of the fervor of religious life in the Church. Vocation promoters of any time have great challenge in identifying and selecting the right candidates for continuing the mission of the Church and the congregation. This highly advanced world of today proffers the young with any material goods of their choice and they live in such a world where the spiritual values are ignored. So, it is a herculean task for the vocation promoters to attract them to the hard terrains of Religious and Priestly lives.

Vocation is God’s gratuitous gift and persons respond to this call freely and consciously. Vocation promotion is the duty and the responsibility of every member and it should become a priority carried out with love and dedication by all. A congregation that attaches this ministry to a member as merely an additional work or a part-time job is doing disservice to their societies and to the entire Church. Probably they also do harm to individual vocation. Vocation promoters help the candidate to discern and accept the call of God. The goal of vocation promotion is to search, identify and select genuinely motivated young men. Once a candidate is identified, vocation promoters follow him up through personal contacts, and enquire about the candidate from parish priests, catechists, teachers and neighbors. The candidates who wish to join us are selected to the camps organized by us in a suitable place or in any one of our communities. This is in view of making known to the candidates our way of life, Charism, founder, spirituality, community life and apostolic life, and for the promoter to gain a better understanding of the personality, the aptitude and the motivation of the candidate.

## CMI Vision of a Vocation Ministry

The Constitutions speak of two important qualities of the formation personnel, namely the personal credibility of the individual formator and the technical training he has received. As regards the first, “formators are to be men of exemplary life, endowed with knowledge and virtue, as well as those human and spiritual gifts by which they can inspire and animate candidates, foster fraternal co-operation and help everyone develop into a mature person.” In the case of technical training of the formation personnel, there is a very clear mandate in the Constitutions. “They must be provided with adequate opportunity to train themselves for the task.” In general, he must be endowed with the knowledge and ability to fulfil the tasks assigned to him by the Congregation in the context of the present-day society. The specific ideals of our congregation also should be borne in mind of the vocation promoters, to serve the actual needs of the living Church through the apostolate of intense prayer and active ministry according to the spirit of our founding fathers.

The prime preoccupation of the promoters should be that of St. Paul: to be in travail, until Christ be formed in the candidates (Gal 4:9) and this concern should give orientation to our entire vocation programme. Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis invites the formators: “To cooperate joyfully with the major superiors when they are asked to take up this responsibility, and willingly to go for the necessary training, and being conscious that this mission in our congregation is a demanding task, to take up the responsibility with a sense of dedication to the mission of our evangelical fraternity.”

## Creating a Sense of Divine Call

The foremost duty of the Vocation promoter is to instil a sense of divine call in the aspiring candidates and channelize their desire to take up the challenge that lay ahead considering their innate talents, aptitudes and other qualities. They should be motivated to create an attitude to serve God unconditionally and their fellow beings altruistically, without clinging to their ambitions and unrealistic expectations of future. A promoter should foresee the probable conflicting thoughts that may arise in them. Coming from families of few children, they have been brought up in luxury with tender care and freedom. Candidates coming from very poor families also are not rare. Perhaps, they would be seeking what was lacking in their secular life. So, it is their duty to help them to discern their vocation.

By the influence of the mass media, the young adults responding to a religious call have very little moral formation and psychological maturity. At this juncture, it is the challenging responsibility of the promoter to direct his candidates as willed by God. So the promoter has to be competent enough to inspire them by arranging classes on religious and priestly life and its challenges and dignity before admitting them to the seminary. The Constitutions also clearly affirm that, “The prime actor and principle agent of formative process of an individual is the Holy Spirit.” The promoter, therefore, is bound to discover the working of the Holy Spirit in the aspiring candidates. Therefore, the promoter should help the candidates to take mature decisions by responding to the working of the Holy Spirit.

## An Agent for Decision Making

Vibrant Community for Renewed Humanity reminds the vocation promoters, “We begin our formative service with young adults at the psychologically creative period usually between fifteen and seventeen with a fairly good knowledge of the realities of life. Candidates have self-confidence, efficiency and organizational talents, task orientation, freedom from inhibitions, spontaneity and sociability and plentiful information about all aspects of life. This calls for an attitudinal change in the promoters to treat them as adults appealing to their intelligence and conscious self-direction with serious appreciation of their call.”

The promoter acts as a guide and counsellor to help them to take a mature decision by themselves in the light of faith. The candi

dates unsuitable for life in our Congregation should be persuaded to seek their vocation elsewhere. This must be achieved by personal conferences with each candidate and the atmosphere we create in the vocation camps. If the relevant guidance is missed at a definite stage of selection and supplied later, may not be valued and will not be beneficial for the candidates.

## Required Qualities in the Candidates

Constitutions give a clear picture regarding the requisite dispositions of candidates, "In admitting candidates or promoting them to each stage of formation, care must be taken to see that they have the necessary qualities for the stage. Among the requisites for candidates to religious life in our congregation should be included, besides the supernatural virtues, those human virtues that render the apostolate more fruitful and religious life happier: goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of mind, careful attention to justice, politeness, honesty, reliability and proper motivation. Candidates for priestly life should also have the necessary intellectual capacity for priestly studies."

The world of entertainment has created a less inhibited attitude towards sex and so they are not very much attracted to a celibate life. Care should be taken in order that the candidates during the period of vocation camps are educated in the matter of sex in a suitable, positive and prudent manner so that they may properly understand and appreciate not only the meaning and excellence of celibacy but also the duties and dignity of Christian marriage. They should be prepared in advance to face successfully the various crises of maturation. Those who are accepted as members into our community must have the required degree of psychological maturity before they undertake the vow of chastity, so that they do it with the correct understanding of the meaning and relevance of such a life. There should be a change in selecting the candidates as there is a trend today to admit anyone who approaches him at the last moment. It is the responsibility of the vocation promotor to identify and select the suitable candidates for our congregation as per the expectation of the congregation.

## Challenges to Attaining Objectives

The mission of the Church and the Congregation can be efficiently materialized only with highly motivated, spiritually enriched and intellectually competent vocation promoters. In the present scenario, the dearth of the genuinely motivated candidates is the serious setback every Congregation encounters. We are forced to admit candidates of average or below average category both intellectually and spiritually which impedes the realization of the visions. Many of the candidates entering the seminary lack proper motivation and are very weak in their studies. The absence of proper screening and evaluation, especially at early stages, lead to more dropouts in the later stages of formation. The task of finding the suitable candidates for priesthood is shouldered on the vocation promoter when cooperative effort of all the members is inevitable. Lack of trained personnel in the formation field is an indisputable fact and this is reflected very

Vocation promotion is one of the ventures that need the patience to wait for the timing of God, to collect the harvest. It was a great time to reflect and refine my thought horizons on the encounters of our Lord in many lives when I did the ministry of vocation promotion soon after my ordination. Combining both positive and challenging experiences of being a vocation promoter, it did happen as a moment of epiphany by the grace of God. Vocation promotion needs another realm of faith- vision and trust in the providence of God than any other responsibility is what I am convinced after completion of the duty as a vocation promoter.

I could encounter the work of God through many situations during my vocation promotion and sometimes I went wonder-struck. I came across unexpected incidents and their results in this ministry beyond my expectations. The moments I journeyed, the families I entered, and the faces I met, all left an ocean of life experiences for me. Sharing of my experience as a vocation promoter of St. Thomas Province, Calicut indebted to the providence of Almighty lord, who worked through me to touch the young minds for Christ. One of the main challenges faced during this venture was the lack of convictions of people about the value of religious life, especially on religious priesthood. I found many families have a conceptual error that, congregational priests are doing their duty as job oriented rather than charity. I came across this experience while I was talking with a mother. She isn't happy with the job-oriented lifestyle of a religious priest (Institutionalised ministries), but she values becoming a parish priest to serve the people to the congregational priests.

Secondly, most families are bringing up their children by providing them with enough space and freedom for them. And the young minds of today prefer freedom over religious aspects. Thirdly, many of the families are not aware of the charity work we provide to society, and they are solely conscious of the institutions we are running. There is a common misunderstanding that congregational priests are not contributing to charity works as the diocesan priests. The lack of rapport with the families and young adults also causes difficulties in vocation promotion.

Every vocation promoter has to undergo a time of examining his faith in God as well in humans. Prayer and patience along with social skills and convictions will help to become an influential vocation promoter in this age. It solely matters the impacts, through the influences.

Fr.Nishanth Pathuppallil CMI  
Former Vocation Promoter



much today as the strong and ardent spiritually enhanced formators are dwindling. Mutual interaction, encouragement and sharing among the vocation promoters are yet to be fostered and improved by frequent get-together and orientation and updating programs. Transferring the responsibility of defects in the candidates to the vocation promoters is widely seen and this has to be avoided. In the current social situation—saturated by issues of pornography, homosexuality, sexual abuse, family issues—it is a big challenge in recruiting vocations free of emotional and moral glitches. In today's situation, it is rather difficult to see Catholic families free of social ills such as alcoholism, drugs, smoking, marital separation and related social ills. These issues affect the prospective candidates however motivated they are. They undergo self-guilt and anxiety often caused by their family situation. Being aware of the present scenario, the vocation promoter should give such candidates proper guidance and counselling with the help of the trained personnel in the field, before admitting them. In cases of doubt concerning the candidate's suitability, admission to the seminary will sometimes only be possible after a psychological evaluation of the candidate's personality.

Detecting defects earlier would help avoid many tragic experiences. Hence, the need for every vocation promoter to possess, in due measure, the sensitivity and psychological preparation that will allow him, insofar as possible, to perceive the candidate's true motivations, to discern the barriers that stop him integrating human and Christian maturity, and to pick up on any psychopathic disturbances present in the candidate. The vocation promoter must accurately and very prudently evaluate the candidate's history. Nevertheless, this history alone cannot constitute the decisive criterion which would be sufficient for judging whether to admit the candidate or dismiss him from formation. The vocation promoter must know how to evaluate the person in his totality, not forgetting the gradual nature of development. He must see the candidate's strong and weak points, as well as the level of awareness that the candidate has of his own problems.

Among the candidates can be found some who come from particular experiences like human, family, professional, intellectual or affective, which would have left psychological wounds that are not yet healed and that cause disturbances. These wounds, unknown to the candidate in their real effects, are often erroneously attributed by him to causes outside himself, thus depriving him of the possibility of facing them adequately. Such wounds are to be identified and healed before they are admitted with personal encounters by the professionals.

One of the serious threats that the vocation promoters face today in getting the candidates is the lack of role models in the Church and the congregation. Probably church and religious leaders have not lived enough what they preach. Many have been turned off by the scandals in the church – sexual and material. More significantly, church and religious may have not always succeeded in communicating the real reasons of their consecration and ministry. They, sometimes, fail to show how their way of life and spirituality can respond to the needs of the present

generation, especially, the young. Another great challenge the vocation promoter finds today is the lack of entry to the parishes as the diocesan priests do not welcome our presence to their parishes. The candidates we receive are often the left-outs after selection for the dioceses and those who are willing to join are even discouraged as well.

Unless the congregation takes up the pastoral work seriously, good vocations are not possible. It is only through examples of holy lives we get vocations. Unless we evangelize the family after the model of St. Chavara, we cannot harvest vocations. Family prayer and examples from parents are the foundation for vocations. As the spiritual practices are given less importance in this modern world, our ministry, especially in spiritual matters plays a significant role in getting right vocations. These include instilling a “culture of vocations” and involving membership and leadership in concerted vocation promotion efforts; having a full-time vocation director who is supported by a team and resources; using new media, especially websites and other online tools; offering discernment programs and other opportunities for potential candidates to meet members and learn about the institute; and targeting college students and young adults as well as elementary and high school students to expose them to the possibility of religious life and inform them about the Congregation.



**The mission of the Church and the Congregation can be efficiently materialized only with highly motivated, spiritually enriched and intellectually competent vocation promoters.**

A culture of vocation promotion invites each CMI to take personal responsibility for attracting men through praying each day for vocations, welcoming men into our communities, and giving witness to lives that inspire and attract the young. Certainly, fostering such a culture goes far beyond the work of vocation promoters alone. A culture of vocation promotion that begins by making every CMI, every community and every apostolic work of the Congregation feel responsible for transparently presenting the charism and the invitation to be part of this body. Getting closer to people, especially young people, opening our houses, improving our hospitality, making ourselves accessible are basic elements of a culture of vocation promotion.



# FAMILY THE CRADLE OF VOCATIONS



Prof. Kochurani  
Kochi

**B**y the term vocation we generally mean a call from God to a distinctive state of life, in which the person can reach holiness. The word vocation comes from the Latin word *vocatio*, means a calling or summoning, and comes from the word *vocare*, means to call. The Second Vatican Council made it plain that there is a universal call to holiness in the Church (L.G, 39). Since it is a universal call all states of life like priesthood, religious life and family life are specific unique vocations. The particular way that we live out that call to holiness in love is our vocation.

We know that vocation is a gift of divine grace, received through the Church, in the Church and for the service of the Church. In responding to the call of God, the man offers himself freely to him in love. Religious vocations are essential to the life of the church. From the very beginning, certain people within the Christian community were called to follow Jesus in this unique way; willing and capable to bear witness to a consecrated, vowed life and ready to bring Christ to others. This legacy has been handed down to each generation and remains alive within our church today.

When we speak of Christian vocations we don't generally mean a job or a profession. The vocation is the way that God is inviting a person to love and give oneself to others. It is not simply giving one's skills, talents, abilities or expertise rather giving the whole self for the betterment of humanity. It is a total surrender to the will of God. To quote the words of St. Catherine of Siena, it is tempting to think of vocation with something to do, but vocation is in terms of 'being' than doing. In other words, vocation is not simply something that you do, but it is a genuine and authentic expression of what you are and of your very identity and presence to God and others.

There are different expressions of vocations like family life, priesthood, religious life, single life etc. Although there is fundamental diversity among these vocations, at its very true nature, each carries a common commitment to love. We find that it is the family life that leads to other states of life. In that sense family is the cradle of all other vocations. In order to have good consecrated people, we need good families. God is calling many for religious life and our response to this call matters most. The choice depends on the response not only in the initial level but throughout the journey of faith. Pope Francis comments during his Wednesday Public Audience, 'to become priests, religious is not our choice. I don't trust the seminarian or novice says 'I have chosen this path'. I don't like to hear like this. It is not right. It is a response to a call and that is the call of love and holiness'.

Bible gives lots of examples of such calls and responses. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Samuel, Mary, Peter, Andrew, Mathew, Samaritan Woman, Mary Magdalene, Paul etc are a few examples of divine call and its personal responses. Considering this personal invitation to follow the master we can say that each one is important to God and He loves and counts each one in a very special way. To understand this and respond is the secret of joy. As we find when Mary Magdalene realized that she is loved by Jesus and that matters all changes in her life afterwards.

Experiencing this personal love of God is the secret of all vocations. St. John Paul II aptly explains "love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (*Familiaris Consortio* II).

The question arises, where do the vocations to priesthood and religious life mainly arise, fostered and flourish? The answer is in strong catholic families. Also these vocations become wane when catholic family life is weak. Family is the custodian of faith and love and transmission of these virtues take place through families to next generations. Pope Francis says, behind and before every vocation to the priesthood or to the consecrated life, there is always the strong and intense prayer of someone: a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, or a community. You ask any brother, sister or priest living a vocation to consecrated life and they will tell you that family life cultivated the seed of their vocation. Catholic family life and strong family ties among the faithful do promote good vocations to the service of the Church.

The family is the divinely instituted place for generosity, humility and charity to first take root with divine assistance. As such, In His ordinary providence the Lord prepares those He plans to choose by making sure they are reared in a family where generosity as self-sacrifice is shown to their children and required of them by the parents. As Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later pope Benedict XVI), the Prefect of offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote in 2004 "since it is here above all that the features of a people take shape; it is here that its members acquire basic teachings. They learn to love in as much as they are unconditionally loved, they learn respect for others in as much as they are respected, and they learn to know the face of God in as much as they receive a first revelation of it from a father and a mother full of attention in their regard. Whenever these fundamental experiences are lacking, society as a whole suffers violence and becomes in turn the progenitor of more violence". (Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World, 13).

For such wonderful families we need to have two things - a Domestic Pentecost experience and training in Evangelical Discernment. Let us have a note on these factors.

## Domestic Pentecost

Family is the dream of God as we see in Genesis 2.18. The Creator of all things has established the conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society. Family is the way of the church and is the first and vital cell of society. To foster the faith life and vocations at the 9th World Meeting of Families 2018 held at Ireland Pope Francis gave a missionary mandate to families to relive in a domestic Pentecost. In order to have the fruits of celebration of family life, let each new day in the life of families and each new generation, brings the promise of a new Pentecost, a domestic Pentecost, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit. To prepare families for this is the prophetic mission entrusted to each one of us. In the current state of affairs of marriage and family and in a world that

paint a dark picture and crises, Church should provide for families the need for a Domestic Pentecost, an upper room experience for each family. Such an experience is very essential for nurturing vocations in and from.

## Evangelical discernment

The discernment effected by the Church becomes the offering of an orientation in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized. When a person is discerning their vocation, it is a special grace-filled time for them and their families. It is a time to listen to the call of God. It is a time for conversion, not only for the one considering religious life, but for those around them. Each family member is called to sacrifice something, some dream, some hopes for experience with the person who is now contemplating choosing the road less travelled. The domestic church is where we are educated about the faith and encouraged to discern where God is calling us. Also the domestic church is where anyone choosing a life of radical discipleship looks for the courage, strength, and support. This process of determining God's call for your life is known as discernment.

The Church very much needs men and women who are eager to remain faithful, give witness to the living God, and call others to follow the way of love. For that a culture of love for God and His people should need to be inculcated in the family. As we find when he was a teen Jesus was found in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. I wonder if our children are missing for a while from families can we find them in Church. We need prophets like Eli who said Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if He calls you again, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" (1 Samuel 3:9). Pope continually tells young people, "Be brave, be courageous, entrust yourselves to God, to live in His love and be grateful for His infinite mercy." It is important to realize the beauty of vocations as led by the hands of God and just allowing one's life as instrument of this love that makes life easy, happy and fruitful.

There is a communal character for human vocation. We read in Catechism of Catholic Church that "all men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God. The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation". (CCC 1878-79).

Now in modern times we find serious scarcity of vocations to consecrated life to meet the growing needs of the times. We cite lots of reasons for it. We can classify these reasons into external and internal factors. The external factors are secularism, mate-

rialism, individualism, innumerable professional options for youth, having less number of children per family, influence of social media and lack of knowledge regarding consecrated life. The internal factors include mainly lack of inspiring models, proper care and understanding from those who are entrusted with the process of guiding vocations and insufficient training module suited for current challenges and needs of present society. Besides, one of the main reasons is lack of family who supports vocations. The witness of parents sacrificing for each other and their children prompted imitation and generous self-donation. Parents are the greatest role models in all aspects of their children's life, including religious formation. They need to identify the gifts of family members, especially their children. When they become adults, children have the right and duty to choose their profession and state of life. They should assume their new responsibilities within a trusting relationship with their parents, willingly asking and receiving their advice and counsel.



As we find when he was a teen Jesus was found in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. I wonder if our children are missing for a while from families can we find them in Church.

Let us continue to pray for vocations to consecrated life, but pray also for an increase of stable families and dedicated parents, the primary educators of their children who cultivate seeds of goodness and generosity that mature into vocations of witness and service to the Church and society. Just as at the dawn of Christianity Aquila and Priscilla were presented as a missionary couple, so today the Church shows forth her perennial newness and fruitfulness by the presence of Christian couples and families who dedicate at least a part of their lives to working in missionary territories, proclaiming the Gospel and doing service to their fellowman in the love of Jesus Christ. Christian families offer a special contribution to the missionary cause of the Church by fostering missionary vocations among their sons and daughters and more generally, by training their children from childhood to recognize God's love for all people (Familiaris Consortio 54). Let us jointly build a culture of vocations at home.





The vocation to the priesthood is a gift that God gives to the Church and to the world. It is also a path to sanctify oneself and others. Priesthood is a vocation to serve the people of God in the way God guides. God wants to shower humanity with abundant blessings and graces, and He has chosen priest to be the special instrument for this task through their service and ministry. Priesthood and the sacraments are very essential for attaining the heavenly company. This is why discerning true priestly vocations is of the utmost importance.

Comparatively, vocations to priesthood are gradually decreasing nowadays. Candidates and Vocation promoters faces different hurdles and challenges in today's context. Invariably, there is a lack of support from some of the parishes and dioceses especially the diocesan parish priests. There are parish priests who do not want students to be sent to religious congregations and it has grown to an unhealthy competition between the vocation promoters of different Eparchy's or congregations. Lack of faith and the decrease in the number of children from 'nuclear families' are another reason. Influence of media especially on the negative news regarding the scandals of priests and churches has a high role in this matter. Over all, parents in many cases are confused of the sacredness of priestly vocation and candidates are demotivated or not genuine due to personal and social causes.

It's a prime time to boost and nurture the sacred priestly vocations. Some of the steps to nourish and foster the priestly vocation are praying earnestly for genuine vocations. We should conduct vocation camps and 'come and see' programs in a solemn way with experience sharing of missionary priests, and the senior religious priests of our congregations, etc., Always be open to the chances we get for pastoral ministries and maintain good relationship with parish priests which may smoothen the vocation promotion. Try to help each other and keep contacts with other priests and sisters beside the parish priests, and thereby getting access to the new possible candidates. Retreat preaching by young preachers in schools is a very helpful way to relate with those students who show genuine aptitude for religious life. We shall also look into conducting altar boys gathering in our parishes, visiting the schools besides the Sunday schools, inviting the catechism students to our ashrams to experience the silence, solitude, prayerful and peaceful atmosphere of our ashrams and keeping constant contact with the families and candidates can be a booster shot for the same.

Jijo Pulikkathazhe CMI  
Vocation Promoter





Call & Commitment '22



Jobi Thomas Thurackal CMI  
Bengaluru

# MEANING IN LIFE AMONG CATHOLIC SEMINARIANS

Every true man...lives so as to give a meaning and a value of his own to life", writes Luigi Pirandello, an Italian playwright (1964, p. 240). Life becomes meaningful when it serves an end beyond itself and becomes meaningless as a result of the feeling of being futile and of not being wanted in the world (Heschel, 1965). In this context, the concept of meaning in life has long been neglected within psychology but has gained increasing interest in the recent decades (Dezutter, Luyckx, & Wachholtz, 2015; Reker, 2000; Steger, 2009; Steger & Kashdan, 2013). Michael Steger (2009), for example, has elaborated further on the concept of meaning in life as it was introduced by other scholars (Frankl, 1963; Yalom, 1980). It can be described as "a sense of one's life having purpose or investing time and energy into the attainment of cherished goals (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006, p. 179). Steger and his colleagues have explored the concept of meaning in life further and distinguished between its two dimensions, namely, Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning (Steger, 2009; Steger, Oishi, & Kesebir, 2011).

## Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning

Presence of Meaning is defined as "the extent to which people comprehend, make sense of, or see significance in their lives, accompanied by the degree to which they perceive themselves to have a purpose, mission, or over-arching aim in life" (Steger, 2009, p. 605). It can be described as a valued outcome or a highly desired psychological quality that appears to be an indicator of leading a healthy life with psychological strengths (Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008). Moreover, Presence of Meaning is uniformly accepted as beneficial with mounting evidence for its positive impact on wellbeing, physical health, and psychosocial functioning (Dezutter, Casalin, Wachholtz, Luyckx, Hekking, & Vandewiele, 2013; Dezutter, Luyckx, & Wachholtz, 2015; Steger & Shin, 2010; Van der Heyden, Dezutter, & Beyers, 2015).

Search for Meaning, on the other hand, is not an already achieved destination but can be interpreted as the way to it (Steger & Kashdan, 2013). It is defined as "the strength, intensity, and activity of people's desire and efforts to establish and/or augment their understanding of the meaning, significance, and purpose of their lives" (Steger et al., 2008, p. 200). In this sense, Search for Meaning describes a significant process (Dezutter et al., 2014; Steger, Kawabata, Shimai, & Otake, 2008). With regard to the consequences of the Search for Meaning, research could not yet clarify if the process of searching for meaning is related to beneficial or detrimental outcomes (see Steger et al., 2008). Initially, Frankl (1963) described searching for meaning as a primary motivational force and thus as a natural, healthy aspect of one's life, helping to face new challenges in life and to seek for new possibilities in life (Steger et al., 2008; Steger et al., 2011). But Baumeister (1991) views it as a warning sign of losing meaning in one's life and Klinger (2012) as symptomatic for ill health. Some scholars hold a more balanced view in acknowledging that the process of searching for meaning can be functional as well as dysfunctional (Reker, 2000). Subsequently, a widespread assumption emerges that when people have little meaning, or lose meaning, in their lives, or lack psychological strengths, they will search for meaning (Steger et al., 2008).

However, it is remarkable that Presence of Meaning has been consistently perceived as a positive factor both in Western as well as in Eastern cultures, whereas Search for Meaning seemed often perceived as a more negative, or at least dual factor, in Western culture, but as a positive factor in the Asian population (Dezutter et al., 2013; Gohil & Charak, 2013; Steger et al., 2008). In this sense, the Indian population may perceive Search for Meaning positively as a means to reaching the highest form of spiritual meaning in life. Furthermore, the association between Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning shows considerable cultural variation as well. No correlation or a negative correlation was found in Western and African populations, (Dezutter, et al., 2015; Grouden & Jose, 2015; Khumalo, Wissing, & Schutte, 2014; Van der Heyden, Dezutter, & Beyers, 2014; Vanhooren, Leijssen, & Dezutter, 2016), whereas a positive association was observed in the Eastern population (Steger et al., 2008).

## Indian Perspective of Meaning in Life

To examine the meaning-in-life profiles from the Eastern perspective, we have selected the Indian population. For, in the Indian culture, meaning in life takes a prominent place in life and is based on the fulfillment of objectives of human life (Klostermaier, 2007). If a person achieves these goals, his/her life becomes meaningful; if not, his/her life is considered to be meaningless (Atreya, 1949; Sharma, 2004). To be more specific, Indian culture recognizes the concept of meaning in life as purusharthas (purusha is 'self' and artha is 'meaning'). It includes four important goals of human life: wealth (artha), pleasure (kama), virtue (dharma), and liberation (moksha). These factors of meaning in life may show resemblance to a materialistic meaning in life, a hedonic meaning in life, a eudaimonic meaning in life, and a spiritual meaning in life (Klerk, 2005; King & Napa, McGregor & Little, 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sharma, 1999). In this sense, the materialistic meaning in life can be found in artha or wealth, which is the material possessions or the worldly achievements that are required to satisfy the necessities of life. The hedonic meaning in life can be kama or pleasure, which is derived from physical intimacy, cultural pursuits, creativity, and other activities whereby one enjoys life, varied from focus on bodily pleasures to appetites and self-interests. The eudaimonic meaning in life can be seen as dharma or virtue, which stands for righteousness that instructs a person to do the duty towards one's family, society, and humanity at large, by doing the right things and respecting the societal laws, and thereby living in accordance with one's true self with congruence, values, and authenticity. Finally, spiritual meaning in life can be described as moksha or salvation that means the liberation from the earthly bondage and union with the divine. Notably, artha, kama, and dharma contribute to the realization of the final goal of moksha or liberation in one's life (Kautilya, 1992; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sharma, 2004). In the Indian context, and in line with the idea of purusharthas, searching for meaning does not imply a lack of meaning in life, but rather a searching for the highest level of meaning in life.



Furthermore, the Search for Meaning can be described as an aspiration to achieve an in-depth awareness of what makes a person's life meaningful (Steger et al., 2006). In this way, it is contrary to the concept that Search for Meaning occurs when there is no experienced meaningfulness in life (Steger et al., 2008).

## Meaning in Life in Catholic Seminary Formation

A specific group in the Indian population for whom meaning in life might be even more salient is the young adult seminarians. A seminary is a special type of educational institution, "dedicated to the spiritual, moral, and intellectual formation of the clergy" (Padinjarekuttu, 2008, p. 904). During the formation period, the seminarians train themselves to be "balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities" (Aniagwu, 2011, p. 213). In India, the seminary system was similar to the Indian tradition of gurukulavasam, where the seminarians lived with the teacher/priest in order to be trained for priesthood. From the fifteenth century onwards, a Western form of seminary formation was established in India, and it continues even today without major changes (Padinjarekuttu, 2008). It resembles the brahmacharya stage of Indian tradition, where the seminarians leave their family of origin and stay with their teachers and other candidates of priesthood to train themselves to lead a meaningful life (Brooks, 1965; O'Donohoe, Baumgaertner, & Schuth, 2002).

Moreover, we focus on the seminarians who are in emerging adulthood, a life stage between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2011). It is characterized by in-depth exploration and the making of commitments in different life domains in order to form a strong and stable identity (Schwartz, Donnellan, Ravert, Luyckx, & Zamboanga, 2013). During this period of life, the question "Who Am I?" becomes central and refers both to exploring a philosophical set of questions concerning meaning in life as well as to the more narrow domain of identity. In relation to this, Steger and others (2009) noted that meaning creation is likely to unfold in conjunction with the development of identity. We assume that the difference in Searching for Meaning between Eastern and Western traditions might become visible in emerging adulthood, when searching for identity and for meaning has a central place (see Arnett, 2011; Seiter & Nelson, 2011). In this way, it would be interesting to examine how the meaning-in-life profiles are formed in the seminarians in India. More specifically, the study can focus if patterns of meaning in life similar to those found in Western emerging adults can be found amongst Indian seminarians.

## The Current Study

The aim of the current study is twofold: a) to replicate meaning-in-life profiles found in Western secularized populations in an Eastern population, using a person-oriented approach and (b) to study the relationship between Presence of Meaning and Search

for Meaning, using a variable-oriented approach among the Indian emerging adult population of Catholic seminarians. Based on earlier studies on meaning profiles among the Western secular population (Dezutter et al., 2013; Dezutter et al., 2014; Dezutter et al., 2015; Van der Heyden et al., 2014), we assume that specific meaning profiles will be found within Catholic seminarians of emerging adulthood in India. We expect at least three profiles to emerge: (a) High levels of Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning (High Presence High Search); (b) High levels of Presence of Meaning and Low levels of Search for Meaning (High Presence Low Search); and (c) Low levels of Presence of Meaning and High levels of Search (Low Presence High Search). We assume that seminary formation will nurture the experienced meaningfulness, which is a highly valued aspect of Indian culture, resulting in two profiles with high levels of Presence of Meaning. We assume that some seminarians would have already attained high levels of Presence of Meaning by going through the stages of artha, kama, and dharma resulting in moksha and thereby experience low levels of Search for Meaning. Other seminarians, however, may still going through this Search process and this will be reflected in high levels of Search for Meaning. We finally assume that some seminarians are still in the beginning of the process (stage artha or kama) and will show low levels of Presence of Meaning combined with high levels of Search for Meaning. Contrary to the earlier studies of meaning profiles (Dezutter et al., 2014; Vanhooren et al., 2016), we do not expect to find a profile characterized by low levels of Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning. Because Search for Meaning is a crucial aspect within the Indian culture and because seminary formation focuses on finding ultimate life meaning, we assume that seminarians who do not experience meaning in life will show high levels of searching.

With regard to our second hypothesis and in line with other studies in Asian populations, we expect a positive correlation between Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning in our sample of Indian Catholic seminarians. The focus within the Indian culture to achieve an in-depth awareness of what makes a person's life meaningful (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006) can be reflected on the cultural perception where searching for meaning is the pursuit to fulfil objectives of human life (Klostermaier, 2007), rather than a warning sign of losing meaning in life or as symptomatic for ill health (Baumeister, 1991; Klinger, 2012).

## Participants, and Procedure

The participants of the present study consisted of 583 emerging male adults of Catholic seminarians from eight major seminaries in India, originally from Kerala, a southern state of India. The participants, who were between 18 and 30 years ( $M = 24.10$ ,  $SD = 2.88$ ), were enrolled for a bachelors' degree either in philosophy or in theology. The majority of the participants came from a rural background (87.7%) and a minority were from the urban areas (12.3%), and be longed to one of the three Catholic churches (rites)





Correlations between sociodemographic and study variables in the seminarians

|                      | 1      | 2     | 3      | 4    |
|----------------------|--------|-------|--------|------|
| <i>M</i>             | 24.06  |       | 5.81   | 5.35 |
| <i>SD</i>            | 2.90   |       | .94    | 1.05 |
| 1 Age                | 1      |       |        |      |
| 2 Education          | .38*** | 1     |        |      |
| 3 Presence of        | .02    | .06   | 1      |      |
| 4 Search for Meaning | -.10*  | -.10* | .30*** | 1    |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,  $n = 551$

in India (Latin - 21.1%, Syro-Malabar - 77.9%, and Syro-Malankara - 1%). The level of education was Pre-University (41%), Bachelor's (42.4%), Post-graduation (PG) Diploma (3.6%), and Master's (7.6%). With regard to the data collection procedure, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form that explained the purpose of the study in general (explore personality in early adulthood), the nature of the voluntary participation, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant. Once they expressed their consent by signing the form, another form of demographic variables was given. After its completion, the proper questionnaire was given to the participants in a class room setting with oral and written instructions and the filled out questionnaires were collected directly.

### Discussion

The objectives of the study were to replicate meaning-in-life profiles found in Western secularized populations in an Eastern population using a person-oriented approach, and to examine the relationship between Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning among the Indian emerging adult population of Catholic seminarians using a variable-oriented approach. Based on a person-oriented approach, we could group seminarians with meaning similarities to examine the first hypothesis. Four distinctive meaning profiles of Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning in life were found among the seminarians in India. Three clusters, namely, High Presence Low Search, High Presence High Search, and Low Presence Low Search are parallel to earlier studies on meaning in life (Dezutter et al., 2013; Dezutter et al., 2014; Dezu

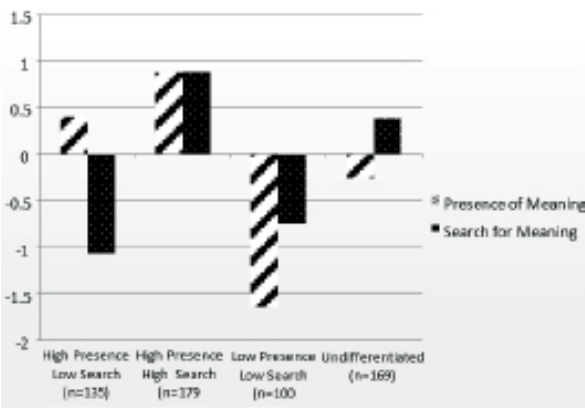
tter et al., 2015; Van der Heyden et al., 2014; Vanhooren et al., 2016). A fourth cluster, labelled Undifferentiated, could be found in a sample of American emerging adults alone, a sample in the same life stage as our respondents (Dezutter et al., 2014). Moreover, the findings of the present study could help to categorize the Catholic seminarians on the basis of the meaning in life.

### Self-realized Seminarians

The presence of a High Presence Low Search cluster supports the Indian theoretical understanding of meaning in life in relation to the concept of moksha, which is the liberation from any condition of bondage in life and union with the divine. Seminarians who belong to this group can be emancipated from the earthly servitude, as well as from artha, kama, and dharma, and may enjoy self-knowledge and self-realization and find meaning in union with God (Sharma, 1999). Moreover, they may achieve the highest form of purpose in life that makes them “free of hitherto fettered faculties, a removing of obstacles to an unrestricted life, permitting a person to be more truly a person in the full sense” (Klostermaier, 1985, p. 66). The seminarians with such a meaning profile have a distinct purpose in life and, therefore, are willing to take responsibility in life in order to make radical change in their personal life, whenever it is necessary (D’Sa, 2007). In this sense, seminarians who belong to this meaning profile can be called as “self-realized seminarians.”



Subsequently, the meaning-in-life profile of the High Presence-High Search seems to indicate that some seminarians search for meaning inspite of the fact that they already experience meaning. This may point to the desire of some seminarians to generate deeper levels of meaning in life. The seminarians belonging to this group utilize the Search for Meaning in a healthy way to reach for new or complementary aspects in their experience of the meaning in life





## Highly Motivated Seminararians

Subsequently, the meaning-in-life profile of the High Presence-High Search seems to indicate that some seminararians search for meaning in spite of the fact that they already experience meaning. This may point to the desire of some seminararians to generate deeper levels of meaning in life (Dezutter et al., 2014; Frankl, 1963; Reker, 2000). The seminararians belonging to this group utilize the Search for Meaning in a healthy way to reach for new or complementary aspects in their experience of the meaning in life (Reker, 2000; Steger et al., 2006). In relation to the earlier studies, this type of seminararians may enjoy high levels of wellbeing and acceptance (Dezutter et al., 2013). Moreover, seminararians who enjoy high levels of meaning in life can grow in self-knowledge that gradually leads to maturity. Therefore, those seminararians can be called “highly motivated seminararians” (see Hagmaier & Kennedy, 1965).

## Unmotivated and Discontented Seminararians

Another profile found in the study was characterized by low levels of Presence and low levels of Search which might point to a group of seminararians who have a negative attitude towards meaning in life. Such individuals can be susceptible to depression (Frankl, 1963; Van der Heyden et al., 2014) and to low psychosocial functioning (Dezutter et al., 2014). In this way, seminararians with the Low Presence Low Search profile of meaning can display a negative attitude towards meaning in life, because they neither search for, nor feel meaning in their lives. Furthermore, this group of seminararians may be mostly unsatisfied with their present way of living due to the existential vacuum, characterized by meaninglessness, emptiness, and apathy (see Frankl, 1963; Hagmaier & Kennedy, 1965). The seminararians who belong to this group can be called “unmotivated and discontented seminararians” (see Padinjarekuttu, 2005; Parathazham, 2000).

## Ambiguously Motivated Seminararians

A fourth profile found in our sample was an undifferentiated cluster characterized by moderate scores on Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning (see Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Duriez, 2009). Dezutter and her colleagues (2014) argue that the respondents belonging to this cluster might not be fully involved in the meaning-related queries. Seminararians who belong to this group may consider priesthood as a haven in an ambiguous world. They join the seminary with the hope of finding what they have not been able to identify elsewhere. Those seminararians may have too many personal needs to be fulfilled and be looking for status in life (Coleman, 1991). Such seminararians may feel confusion regarding their vocation to priesthood. This group of seminararians can be called “ambiguously motivated seminararians” (see Coleman, 1991).

Furthermore, supporting the second hypothesis, a positive association between Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning was found, which falls in line with the earlier findings among the Asian population (Steger et al., 2008). The correlation high

lights in general that seminararians who search for meaning also experience life as meaningful, which is contrary to the finding of the studies in the Western and African populations (Dezutter et al., 2013; Khumalo et al., 2014; Steger & Kashdan, 2013; Steger et al., 2008). Moreover, the same result was seen in the studies of the Asian population (Gohil & Charak, 2013; Steger et al., 2008). The possible reason can be based on the fact that Indian culture promotes positively the search for meaning in life. The individual continues one's search for meaning positively until he reaches the fullness of meaning in life, i.e., liberation or Moksha (Kautilya, 1992; Sharma, 2004). Hence, in a Christian perspective of seminary formation in India, the seminararians are in search of meaning to reach the fullness of meaning in life, and to identify themselves with Jesus.

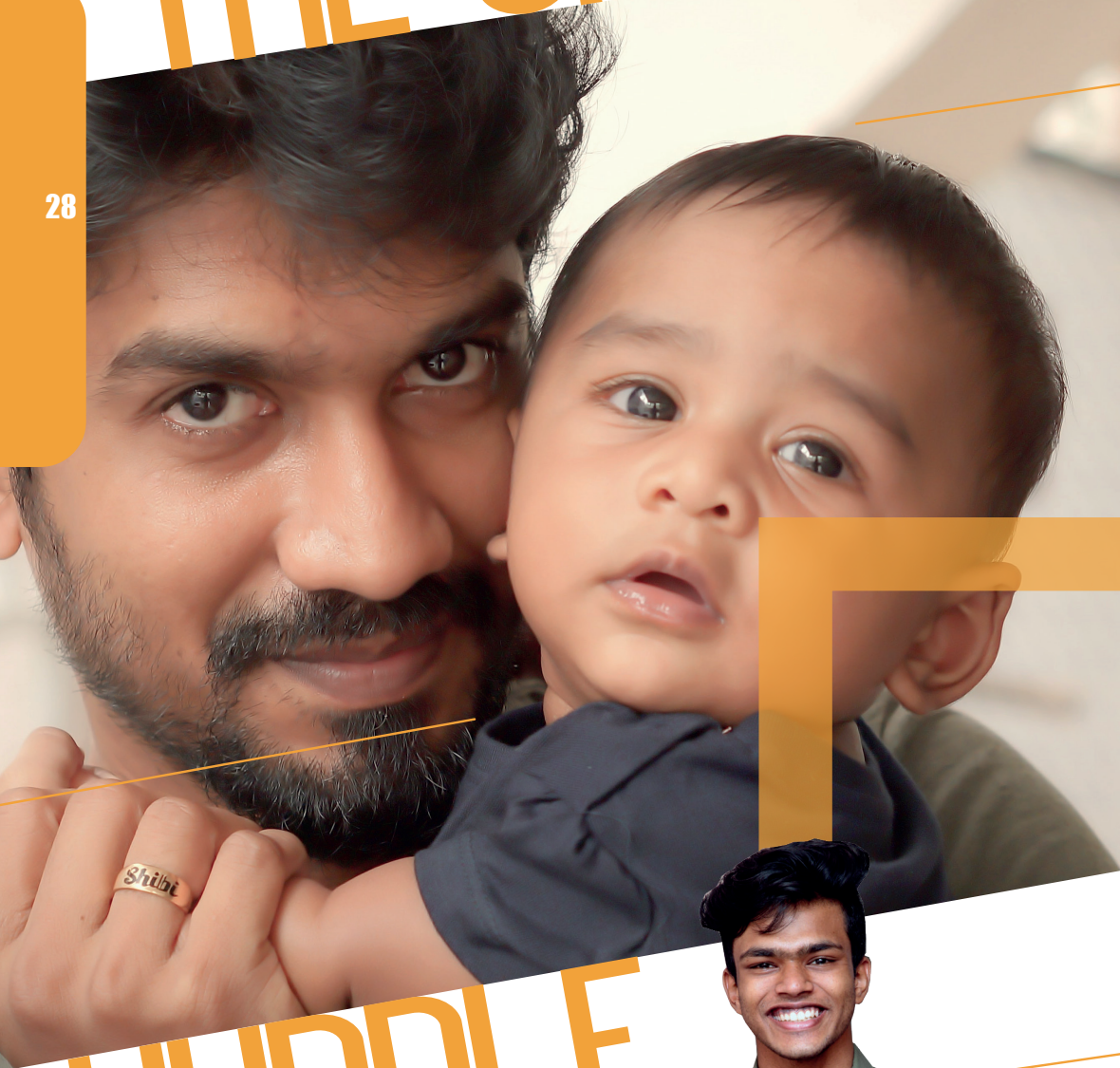
## Conclusions

The present study has its limitations and they have to be considered when interpreting the results. First of all, the study was limited to a homogeneous group of Catholic seminararians in India and it naturally limits a generalization of the findings. Secondly, the study faces the limitations of using self-reported data based on subjective assessments. Thirdly, no comparison could be made with emerging male adults who were not seminararians. Future studies can replicate the findings in diverse samples, for example, in emerging adults from both gender and from other religious and cultural backgrounds, to examine the possibility of the same meaning profiles in the Indian context. Further studies can examine the clinical aspects of the seminararians who represent the meaning profile of Low Presence Low Search. Besides that, the literacy rate of the geographical area of research is higher than any other Indian states; it would therefore be advisable to replicate the findings among the illiterate Indian communities to replicate the results of meaning profile found among the seminararians.

The present study provides a new picture of meaning-in-life profiles in the Indian population of seminararians. It enables to understand the complex relationship of the Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning in the context of the seminary formation. The study has found four types of meaning profiles among the emerging Indian male adults of Catholic seminararians: High Presence Low Search, High Presence High Search, Low Presence Low Search, and Undifferentiated. Surprisingly, a clear negative attitude towards meaning in life (Low Presence Low Search) was perceived in a group of seminararians linked with psychosocial malfunctioning. Furthermore, Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning were positively correlated among the seminararians, which differed from the findings of the Western population.

# THE CHRISTIAN

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## HURDLE



David Johnson  
Bengaluru

Life is a privilege denied to many. According to William Barclay, “there are two great days in a person’s life – the day we are born and the day we discover why.” God himself bestows life as man’s most valuable treasure. In the Bible in Psalm 139:14 it says that “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.” It means that God really gave us the gift of life. So why would you waste such an amazing opportunity to see the beautiful creations of God. To experience what life has to offer you. According to Voltaire, “God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well. Don’t worry if you’re feeling lost today; we all develop and succeed at our own pace. God has a grand plan for you. Sure, there will be issues, hurdles, and obstacles to conquer in life, but that is because they are inevitable. People always complain that life is unfair, but that is precisely why life is fair. Life is fair because everyone faces adversity from time to time. Some of them even have them both at the same time. These issues, barriers, and obstacles are what will shape you into a better person by tomorrow. As a student, for example, you may encounter several challenges with time and numbers. The deadlines are usually the most dangerous. These deadlines will psychologically and physically exhaust you. Tasks, projects, and ultimately the completion of each are all completed in a single week. You are concerned about your deadlines because you are concerned about your marks. It’s simply exhausting. But don’t let this deter you. Everything is a blessing, whether it is terrible or wonderful. “I feel that whatever occurs at a certain time is a blessing from God,” says A. R. Rahman. Everything was predetermined by God from the beginning. Everything was arranged before you were born. He planned everything because he has a role specified just for you. Even every person you meet is not by accidental, but providential.

There have been issues with the human family dynamic from the beginning of humanity. If we proceed in chronological sequence, we may begin with man and woman (Adam and Eve) and go to the difficulties in our modern families. When man and woman ate the fruit that the man was instructed not to eat, but the lady opted to eat and he followed, there was conflict. Even back then, God had a plan to handle the issue and help them heal their connection with one another and with Him. Adam and Eve’s relationship began with some communication difficulties. Effective communication may have avoided some of the heartbreak they experienced early in their relationship. Adam and Eve knew the rules, yet they didn’t speak with one another when it was most important. Poor communication is a huge issue for couples who are in a relationship nowadays. Marriage troubles might feel permanent and uncontrollable due to a lack of communication. Honesty is a major component of good communication. God teaches us how to connect with our partners so that we might live inside God’s will for our life. When couples pray together and are purposeful in their relationship, it is much easier to make positive decisions. Sometimes the issue stems from the actions of more than one or two people. The Israelites were a large community of people who had problems for many years. They were enslaved at beginning and needed to be

released. Then they were free, but they made bad decisions that forced them to roam around in uncertainty for a time. Because of the challenges that surrounding them, God had to often intervene and make modifications with this group of individuals. God was always perceptive and noticed the problem as well as the cause of the problem. He would then set limits to keep the people safe and inform them of the hazards. Even today, communities are dealing with similar issues from the past, trying to manage the effects of individuals from within and outside the community who causes problems which remains.

S Irudaya Rajan, a well-known demographer and the head of the International Institute of Migration and Development in Kerala, stated that Christians were typically seen to be travelling with their families to foreign nations to reside permanently. Their children become foreign citizens and refuse to return to Kerala. In the case of Muslims and Hindus, only males travel in pursuit of work, while their families remain at home. This trend of migration has drastically caused for a larger impact of the community in India. As a huge population has uprooted themselves with their families and migrated to foreign lands with no scope of returning. Another major hindrance for the growth of the community is that the Christian community was far ahead of other religions in adopting the small family culture.

It has been fiercely polarised on the topic of abortion for many decades. While the abortion debate affects secularists as well as individuals of all faith traditions, the subject has grown especially contentious among Christians due to strong opinions on both sides. In general, the discussion has been framed in terms of “pro-life” and “pro-choice” perspectives, although it is a far more complicated matter for Christians. Pro-life Christian advocates maintain that every human life is precious and that human life begins at conception. Aborting a foetus is the same as killing an unborn baby, according to pro-life Christians. As Pope John Paul II explained, “The legalization of the termination of pregnancy is none other than the authorization given to an adult, with the approval of an established law, to take the lives of children yet unborn and thus incapable of defending themselves.” The issue of whose “voice” counts in the choice to undergo an abortion is equally contentious. Pro-life supporters frequently depict the pro-choice movement as overly individualistic and dismissive of pregnancy and abortion. They equate the movement with a so-called “sexual revolution,” in which abortion is viewed as a vital way of birth control. According to this viewpoint, pro-choice proponents deny any acknowledgment or moral validity to foetal life, essentially leaving the foetus’s life out of the process of ethical decision-making. The pro-choice side, on the other hand, advocates for the woman’s ultimate autonomy in making physical and reproductive decisions. Pro-choice activists frequently portray pro-life campaigners as exclusively concerned with the life of the unborn, with no regard for the lives and bodies of women.



They say that pro-life proponents grant the foetus virtual sovereignty, prohibiting abortion regardless of the conditions of the pregnancy or the mother's health. Someone who is "pro-life" believes that the government has an obligation to preserve all human life, regardless of intent, viability, or quality-of-life concerns.

In the lights of above stated facts, issues and difficulties faced by Christian minority in India and the other issues faced by in and around community holds an unsettling matter in the lives and constancy of the members of the community. A Christians life is filled with difficulties and hurdles to live by this one should follow God's calling and adhere to it. Vocation is a live manifestation of commitment to the God who has given us the gifts of our own selves, then there are as many vocations as there are individuals. Traditionally, the term vocation has referred to a certain type of lived discipleship: especially, a specific form of the celibate, vowed life of nuns, priests, monks, or brothers. But the vocation to family life is a different kind of monastic life, founded on vows made before God that ask us to dedicate our families to God's unfolding mission in the world. Husbands and wives swear in the Rite of Marriage to "receive children gladly from God and raise them up according to the rule of Christ and his Church" and to be true to each other "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." The language used in these vows is holy, urging couples to see family life as ordered by God and part of his unfolding purpose for the wellbeing of all people.

“The trend of migration has drastically caused for a larger impact of the community in India. As a huge population has uprooted themselves with their families and migrated to foreign lands with no scope of returning. Another major hindrance for the growth of the community is that the Christian community was far ahead of other religions in adopting the small family culture.







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If I, as an Oriental have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way, that is, to worship him as God and nothing else.

Swami Vivekananda  
Indian Spiritual Writer



Experience is shared and transmitted  
to the next generation in Mission

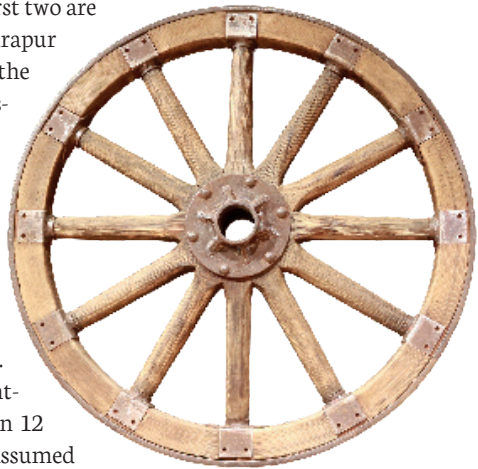


**Experience**

# Chanda



Chanda Mission was established through the papal decree “Ad Lucem Sancti Evangelii,” dated 31 March, 1962. The territory consisted of the three civil districts of Wardha, Chandrapur and Adilabad. The first two are part of Maharashtra (Chandrapur was divided, resulting in the emergence of Gadchiroli district in 1982). The Adilabad district, comprising the territory north of the River Godavari within Telangana State (then Andhra Pradesh). This territory until then formed part of the Archdiocese of Nagpur. Msgr Januarius was appointed the “Mission Superior” on 12 June, 1962 and he formally assumed office on 15 August, 1962 during a simple ceremony in the Archbishop’s House, Nagpur. Chanda was raised to an Exarchate in 1968, and was made a diocese in 1977. Msgr Januarius was appointed its first bishop. His Episcopal ordination took place on 3 May, 1977. Msgr Januarius was at the helm of affairs till 1990 when he retired on superannuation. He passed away on 28 March, 1995



# nda



60

A Milestone in the CMI's  
**Call and Commitment**  
Toward Mission *Ad Gentes*



Tomy Chirapurath CMI  
Chanda

years mission



Chanda' is the shortened name of Chandrapur, a municipal corporation and district in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. It was the name of the town during the British Raj; it was renamed as Chandrapur in 1964. The first Syro Malabar Mission was established in 1962 with Chanda as the headquarter. Two years later, when the Government went for a change of the name from Chanda to Chandrapur, yet, the Mission didn't go for a corresponding change, for the beauty and attraction for 'Chanda' the name.

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He was succeeded in office by Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI in 1990. Mar Vijay Anand who was earlier the Vicar General of the Mission, and also the former Prior General of the CMI congregation, guided the Mission for the next 24 years, till he retired in 2014. The current incumbent is Mar Ephrem Nariculam, who was earlier Rector of the diocesan minor seminary, and professor

at many institutions in India and abroad.

The Mission witnessed a division in the 27th year of its existence. The Telugu speaking area, then Adilabad district, was separated in order to form the new diocese of Adilabad. Mar Joseph Kun-nath CMI, one of the veteran missionaries, was appointed the first bishop. He was succeeded in office in 2015 by Mar Prince Antony Panengaden, the youthful pastor and Bible scholar.

The Mission was inaugurated at a time when the Second Vatican Council was still in session. Times have passed and also radically changed. A perusal of the six-decade long history of the Mission shows that the Mission has grown enormously. It was all due to the Mission policy which was evolved and meticulously followed in the context of the Mission itself.

From the already existing four stations on the main railway lines with some 500 plus Catholics, there emerged in every nook and corner of the area Mission stations which were centres of life and activity. They were service centres - educational, medical care, social welfare, charitable, etc - through which the people came to experience the merciful love of Christ, the Redeemer.

At the silver jubilee celebration of the Mission, Mar Januarius, the architect and first bishop spoke of the mission method that himself and his band of missionaries followed in Chanda. In the initial days, when Msgr Januarius would address the CMI scholastics at Dharmaram College, Bengaluru, he would challenge the young minds with the following words, referring to the three Mission areas that were open to the CMI congregation in the 1960s and each of which characteristically differed from the other two: "Those of you who want French dinner may go to Iraq, those who want to gain souls may go to Raigad-Ambikapur and those who want to labour without any returns may come to Chanda."





It was a challenge to the scholastics to realize the value of their call and then commit themselves accordingly to the One Who called, and also for the cause of the Mission for which they were called. When the Mission was entrusted to the CMI Fathers, there were just two priests (of the Archdiocese of Nagpur) residing in the large territory. They were at Wardha and Kagaz Nagar. There was only one single community of Sisters – the Sisters of the Holy Cross. They were in charge of the Fatima Nursing Home at Kagaz Nagar. The first batch of the CMIs consisted of six priests along with the Mission Superior. A few more joined in the succeeding years. With the establishment of the Chanda Region of the CMI congregation in 1965, there were a number of priests readily available in the Mission.

Priests and scholastics joined the Chanda Region in large numbers. Language training and exposure to a few Missions outside Chanda did a yeomen service to getting the missionaries closer to the people. The target was clear: service to the people in the remote areas. Huge institutions and centres were not to be a priority, but only the barest infrastructure in the rural set up for the missionaries and core team members to survive and interact with the local populace.

There were multitudes of difficulties and problems faced in the beginning. Mar Januarius himself once narrated them, a glance into which will convince us the grit and will with which the early missionaries faced and overcame the difficulties:

We found the CMI Congregation, Kerala Church and Sacred Oriental Congregation and their authorities and leaders were quite unprepared for this great task. We found everywhere ignorance, indifference. We found ourselves unprepared – in language, knowledge of the land and of the people. No money, no facility

and aid for movement, no know-how of the mission work. No one to guide us: We came and settled down in a dilapidated house at Balharshah, which was not a residential centre at that time; our friends were some old Christians – drunkards, illegal distillers, who occupied the church compound and building. But they actually helped and guided us. My efforts to get information and to study from the neighbouring dioceses failed.

Some of the other difficulties and hardships, according to Mar Januarius, were due to certain attitudes towards the role that money can play, the Superiors' difficulties in getting proper personnel for the mission, etc. There were also difficulties due to diverse perspectives towards factors like culture, Rite, province, etc. The Mission Superior took cautious efforts to see that these considerations were not over and above the primacy of evangelization.

These hardships turned out to be beneficial one way or another, especially inspiring the missionaries to go to the peripheries of the society: priests made very conscious attempts to go to the downtrodden and interior villages. They were single mindedly devoted to the expansion of the Church's services and growth of the Church.

## Entry Points to the Peripheries

Reaching out to the people and getting identified with them cannot be an easy thing for the missionaries especially when they are new comers to the place, culture, language and people themselves. In the light of the emerging thought patterns at the Vatican Council, sessions of which were attended by the Mission Superior himself in person, he was able to discern the way ahead in the context of Chanda. He guided his missionaries to the peripheries



Vani Parish Church of Chanda Mission

of the society, for he knew that only the people on the peripheries have ears for the Gospel of the Lord. The Word says: "Gospel is being preached to the poor." Hence the importance for the "peripheries," as far as the Mission was concerned. A missionary would reach a 'centre' in order to reach the otherwise 'unreached,' i.e., those who were on the peripheries of the society.

Chanda developed a missiology of its own with regard to the first contacts that are established in a new place. According to Msgr Januarius, an acquaintance with a person should lead the missionary further to reach the family, the village and its leaders (the mukhya/tribe's head in the case of Adivasis). A medicine kit was part of a missionary's gear on a village visit for it was a dire need. Another entry point was buying agricultural land for model farms. The Chanda missionary was careful not to have a farm house, bungalow, gaadi-ghoda kind of appearance before the poor peasant folk of the village. Perhaps, he was the only Catholic/Christian in the village. His life style should not be a hindrance to the missionary in establishing a centre in a strange place and among a people to whom he would belong. The remote station at Koparali in the district of Gadchiroli was named Kisanwadi, where the missionary began with agricultural operations and went on to establish a Christian community. Almost similar was the case of Balapur (Talodhi) where the Mission Station was established even without a single local Catholic family.

The CRS sponsored Food-for-Work programme was a great relief for the underemployed and starving thousands in the villages for several years. In addition to the social and economic benefits that the villagers received, the programme was a means to contact the villagers. It was also envisaged as a self-help programme for the poor village farmers. Under this scheme, practically all the Mission Stations of Chanda, had undertaken projects of levelling the agricultural land, construction of the village roads and water reservoirs, sinking wells for drinking water and agriculture purpose, etc. Fr Mathew Njarakkat notes that under such schemes, up to 600 people were employed under the supervision of Prabhu Sadan, Tarsa on a daily basis.

In the beginning of the Mission, attached to every Mission Station, there was be a rural dispensary, helped by a central hospital. Alapalli, Wirur, Wasa, Brahmapuri, Bheemaram and Inderveli were such hospitals, which were a consolation for the sick and the invalid rural folk. None of these were in the urban centres. Christ Hospital, in the heart of Chandrapur came into existence only in 2002.

Balbhavans at practically all Mission Stations were means for

the education and all-round development of the village children as responsible citizens. These boarding houses also became a means of establishing contacts with new families and villages, and of consolidation of the faith of the neophytes.

Chanda Mission had made a preferential option for the rural folk. Agricultural activities attached to a Mission Station were envisaged as an entry point to a new setup. They also provided the priest-in-charge with plenty of opportunities to acclimatize himself with the ground realities there. The vision behind it was captivating, and easily tempting the potential collaborators to be part of this noble and modest project. However, the missionary was constantly reminded of his mission, i.e., evangelization, and not any other subsidiary work. See for example a project submitted to the CRS, a leading agency noted for its contributions for charitable works:

"To bring under wet cultivation using the best available methods about 10 to 15 acres of land; to make the mission centre basically self-supporting at the cost of \$5,000/- which will include: Price of land, fencing, levelling, 2 wells and 2 pump sets, 2 pairs of bullocks, other agricultural implements, fertilizer, improved seeds, and a small farm house. If we can raise 200 cwts of rice or wheat per year, we can reasonably support a station of 12 persons.

The advantages of the scheme are:  
(1) This will avoid the danger of the "Mission Station becoming a big business and agricultural concern."

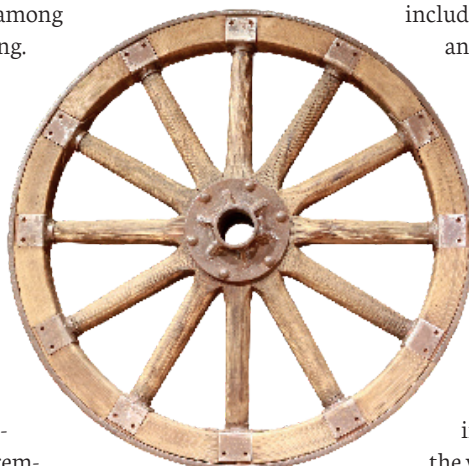
(2) The Mission Station will easily get integrated with the small farmer group of the village; (3) This can easily become a source of inspiration and model for all the people around;

(4) The centre can easily form co-operative societies of farmers, becoming itself a leading member of it!" (Msgr Januarius' Address at the CMI Bishops and Major Superiors' Meet, Ernakulam, 1978.)

The above-mentioned policies and programmes were part and parcel of the vision for the expansion of the Church activities in Chanda for several decades.

Mission as "Sharing Everything Dynamically Divine"

In the Sixties, i.e., the beginning of the Chanda Mission, the socio-economic situation of the majority of the people was deplorable. The Mission did not ignore the material needs of the people while meeting their spiritual needs. However, the social engagement was met with indifference and prejudice on the part of many people. Recalling the hard times, Bishop Januarius once said, "We found the people non-receptive and even prejudiced against Christianity. Together with the spreading of the message of the Gospel, we aimed at the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the people.





As we preached the Word of God, we fought against hunger, disease and ignorance.” These activities were helpful to create a helpful disposition among the people and to gain their good will.

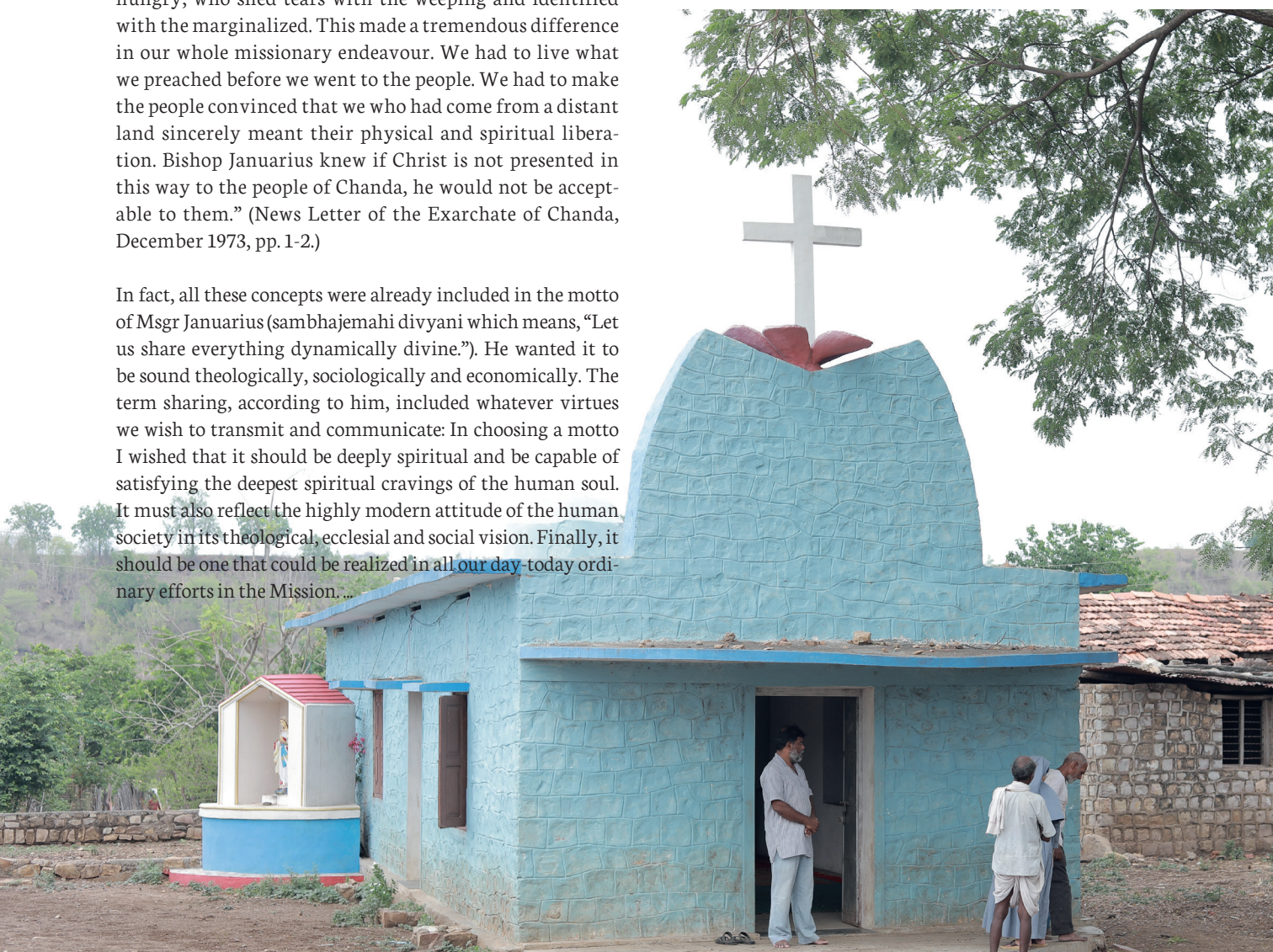
According to Fr Eugene Thomas Kizhakkethalackal CMI, who belonged to the first batch of missionaries, and worked in Chanda for over four decades, Bishop Januarius asked his team not to give to the people the creed as it is:

“What Father Januarius asked us to give to the people was not the creed as it was. Because it would have been indigestible for the the people. If the creed was preached, I doubt whether Christianity would be planted here and grown at all Most of the interior villages of Chanda were neglected by the government and the non- governmental agencies at that time.

In this context, Bishop Januarius asked us to give Christ who took birth from a poor woman in a manger and who lived a poor man for the salvation of humanity. He wanted us to present Christ who was rejected, persecuted, abused and killed for sinners. We were asked to communicate the mind of Jesus, who could feel with the people, who fed the hungry, who shed tears with the weeping and identified with the marginalized. This made a tremendous difference in our whole missionary endeavour. We had to live what we preached before we went to the people. We had to make the people convinced that we who had come from a distant land sincerely meant their physical and spiritual liberation. Bishop Januarius knew if Christ is not presented in this way to the people of Chanda, he would not be acceptable to them.” (News Letter of the Exarchate of Chanda, December 1973, pp. 1-2.)

In fact, all these concepts were already included in the motto of Msgr Januarius (sambhajemahi divyani which means, “Let us share everything dynamically divine.”). He wanted it to be sound theologically, sociologically and economically. The term sharing, according to him, included whatever virtues we wish to transmit and communicate: In choosing a motto I wished that it should be deeply spiritual and be capable of satisfying the deepest spiritual cravings of the human soul. It must also reflect the highly modern attitude of the human society in its theological, ecclesial and social vision. Finally, it should be one that could be realized in all our day-to-day ordinary efforts in the Mission....

The vision of Chanda included the mission to rescue and lead the people, especially the vulnerable sections towards a new society based on love, freedom, equality and justice - the Kingdom of God, which was Christo-centric. In his Christmas message to the fellow Chanda missionaries in the tenth year of the Mission, Bishop Januarius said: “God-made-man is a sign and symbol of the great transformation of man and matter to which we are totally committed. It is incomprehensible that God be found in a manger in a dark and silent night. It is likewise almost incomprehensible that men of great learning, talents, imagination and abilities exile themselves into the rustic labyrinths of an unknown land, clad in hated rags, relishing the rustic bite of jowar, enjoying the comforts of an unfurnished cottage, seeking the company of illiterate, forlorn, uncouth, half-clad and poor people, mixing themselves with their misery and needs. It is equally blissful to witness, through this identification and transformation, the same poor people sprout, grow and emerge into a handsome, respectable and responsible people of God.” ( Bishop Januarius Palathuruthy CMI, “Christmas Letter, 1972.”



Chanda

Mar Vijayanand



an Epitome of Commitment to the Call

As a missionary and the leader of the Chanda missionaries, Vijay Anand was an epitome of zeal. He was convinced of his call as a missionary in the CMI religious congregation, and got himself ready and equipped. He opted for the new and infant Chanda Mission when he was a student of theology in Dharmaram College. With the first interactions with the people of the mission land, he realized he has to change and adjust radically so that he becomes acceptable to the people. The newly ordained Fr Victorian, thus becomes Vijay Anand!



Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI was the second bishop of Chanda. He took over from his mentor (and spiritual father and professor of the seminary days) Mar Januarius in 1990 and continued till 2014. Born in 1938 at Cherpunkal, Palai diocese, Kerala, he made his religious profession in the CMI congregation in 1959 and was ordained priest in 1967

Fr Vijay Anand came to the Chanda Mission in 1968. His first appointment was in the Bishop's House, Balharshah helping Fr George Kalappura CMI, the procurator of the diocese. Assessing the area and studying the people of the region, he soon realized that as a missionary, he needs to get prepared to involve in the social concerns of the people of the region. Accordingly, he oriented his academic interests towards social work. He joined the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai and obtained a master's degree in Social Work with specialization in Urban and Rural Community Development from (1969-1971). Once back in Chanda, he was soon appointed the Vicar General of the diocese, the diocesan Director of the Social Works along with a few pastoral assignments.

Though very young in age, and comparatively a junior missionary, Vijay Anand carried out the duties of his office commendably under the inspiring and unconventional leadership of Msgr Januarius. It was in 1977, during his tenure as the Vicar General, that Msgr Januarius Palathurathy, until then the Apostolic Exarch, became the first Bishop of the newly erected Diocese of Chanda.

One of the main activities of the department of Social Works under Vijay Anand's directorship was that of CRS (Catholic Relief Services). He executed developmental schemes like Food for Work, Mother and Child Health, etc. These schemes became a means to come in contact with many poor villages in the diocese. The various plots of land that were purchased for the future development of the mission stations were also trimmed and developed under these schemes. There were many other socio-economic projects being implemented in the diocese.

While pursuing his Marathi studies at Pune, he was elected to the CMI General Synaxis 1978. There he was elected the General Councilor for the Social Apostolate. Three years later, when the Vicar General, Fr Canisius Thekkekara (now Servant of God) resigned on health reasons, he was elected the Vicar General and the secretary of the Council. In the subsequent General Synaxis (1984), Fr Vijay Anand was elected the Prior General of the Congregation.

## Radical Vision as the Bishop of Chanda

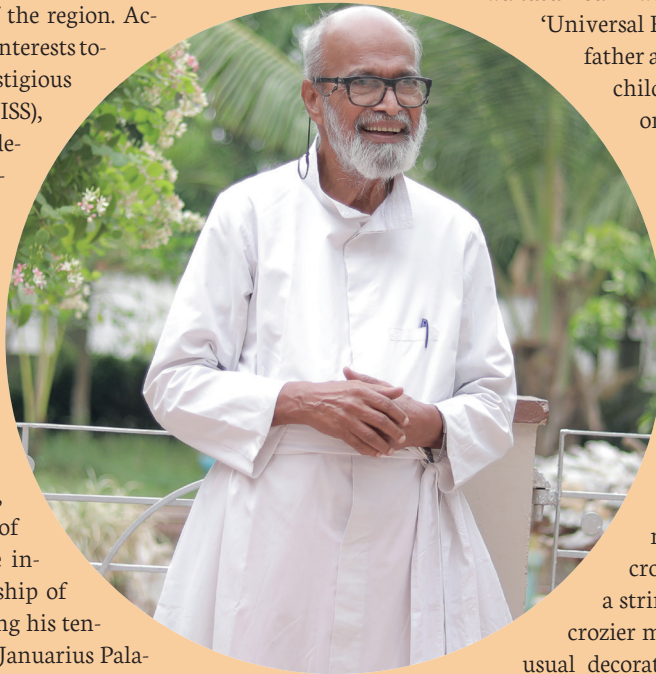
No sooner than he relinquished the office of the Prior General, that Father Vijay Anand was informed that he was elected the second bishop of Chanda. On July 3, 1990, Msgr Vijay Anand was ordained the second bishop of Chanda at Balharshah. The ceremony was modest after which there was a common meal served for all at the same venue – the dignitaries and the ordinary people alike, all participated in it. The new bishop insisted that no one participating in the ceremony might receive a preferential consideration. It was a signal to what was in store, his world vision which was manifest in his episcopal motto and logo. Vish-

wakutumbam was his motto. It meant the 'Universal Family,' in which God is the father and all human beings are the children. The whole world is the one family of God, the "common home," if we are to use Pope Francis' vocabulary. The ideal of the vishwakutumba was inspired by Ephesians 1:10 and the Vatican Document Lumen Gentium 28:7.

The radicality of his vision was exemplified in the insignia of the new bishop of Chanda: a ring made of copper; the pectoral cross made of wood, worn on a string made of cotton fibre; the crozier made of bamboo without the usual decorations; the usual mitre was replaced by a shawl with sign of the Cross and

the name 'Jesus' inscribed in the three languages of the diocese – Marathi, Telugu and Hindi. The most visible red sash and red skull cap of the Catholic bishops in general were totally avoided (he continued with the sash which was part of the CMI religious habit). The coat of arms was a simple design which suggested 'a home and a praying community sheltered by the divine halo and illumined by a lamp.'

The challenge before Mar Vijay Anand was primarily to nourish and cherish what was gained by his predecessor. In order to see to the pastoral care of the new Christian communities, he passionately followed the seven-point programme which was envisaged by Mar Januarius. As far as the fellow missionaries were concerned, he insisted with them to follow the triple language formula: local language, national language and English, the lingua franca. He insisted on the local language because that was one way of respecting the local people, their culture and traditions. He effectively monitored the activities of the Church, by dividing the whole area into different zones. Programmes would be





designed and executed for each section of the people – children, youth, women, etc – at the Zonal level. The bifurcation of the diocese resulting in the creation of Adilabad was another expression of his commitment to the welfare of the local Church. The bifurcation has obviously contributed to the growth in both the dioceses.

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Mar Vijay Anand spoke of “a poor Church of the poor, and for the poor” some twenty five years before Pope Francis came on the scene and spoke in similar tongue. The tragedy was, perhaps, that his call had then fallen on deaf ears! He constantly reminded the priests and religious that we are only trustees of the wealth – material, spiritual and mental – entrusted to our care, and that while administering it, we need to exercise the maximum accountability and transparency. Following up with Mar Januarius’ policy of ‘walking distance,’ ‘cycle distance,’ etc, he inspired the missionaries to take to the simple but difficult ways as missionaries, always shunning the show of power and affluence.

As he himself practiced the policy of decentralization of power and resources, he insisted with his missionaries to participate in the local self-government of the area, attending the gram sabha, mohalla meetings, etc. In all these realms of life, he was sounding Gandhian for whom he had an admiration from the beginning. Fr Joy Puthussery CMI, his long-time associate and Proto Syncellus of Chanda for nine years recalls: “Local Church was his ecclesial dream. In order to achieve this, he emphasised on local vocation, local language and local culture. He encouraged his colleagues about regular family visits which he insisted on. In his pastoral life, he always led by example as he maintained simplicity in personal life style, food, accommodation and mode of travel. He insisted that there might not be any use of fire-crackers for celebrations and that flowers purchased might not be used for feasts and other celebrations.” His life was his message; nobody could question his directives for his life carried the stamp of authenticity and integrity. After retirement from the office of the bishop, Mar Vijay Anand withdrew from the scene as he entered the CMI Ashram at Tarsa a remote village. For a full year, he observed sort of a maun vrat, not uttering a word on the affairs in the Church or in the country. It was for the first time in his priestly and religious life, that was enjoying the life in a mission station and an ashram (the Tarsa ashram of the CMI has a mission station attached, and eucharistic communities in various villages around).

Now completing 84 years of his age (on 24 September 2022), he continues to be an inspiration for the missionaries of the younger generations, in Chanda and beyond. His mentor and predecessor, Mar Januarius sounded iconic with his words: “We did not imitate, or compete, but Chanda was a challenge of the time.” So is Mar Vijay Anand who did not want to prove a point to anybody, but is a challenge and inspiration for generations to come!



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**H**e insisted on the local language  
because that was one way of  
respecting the local people, their  
culture and traditions.

Benny Mukalel CMI  
Chanda





# SEBASTIAN THATTIL CMI A MISSIONARY TEACHER

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Binoy Checkonthayil CMI  
Chanda





**B**orn on June 13, 1943 at Varakkara parish in the eparchy of Thrissur, Fr. Sebastian Thattil spent his childhood around the Varandarappilly CMI monastery. When Fr. Sebastian Thattil CMI was preparing for his 10th examination, a sacristan named Devasia conveyed the information that a holy priest from Varandarappilly monastery named Fr. Dunston Olakkengal CMI (who later joined Coimbatore mission) wanted to meet him. After the examination when young Sebastian came to the monastery, the priest asked him, if he liked and loved Jesus; and told him to attend the vocation camp to be held at Elthuruth.

Fr. Sebastian joined the CMI congregation in 1960, completed his novitiate at Ambazhakad, made his first profession on May 16, 1963 and was ordained on April 26, 1972. When he was undergoing his ecclesiastical studies in Dharmaram College Bangalore, four students from each batch were being selected for the mission. Fr. Sebastian also gave his name but unfortunately, he was not selected so he asked Fr. Prior General Maurus Valiaparampil CMI for a chance to work in the Chanda mission.

Fr. Sebastian landed in Chanda in 1973 and was appointed as an assistant priest-in-charge at Christanand Church Brahmapuri where he rendered the pastoral services to the people helping and preparing them for first Holy Communion and sacrament of reconciliation. When people were reluctant to do confession, he showed them a model by confessing to Fr. Paul Kattamkottil CMI before all the people on Sundays which made them realize the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation.

After that Fr. Sebastian went ahead to start a new mission station at Balapur and worked there for long 11 years. Balapur in those days was such a place of violence, conflict and intolerance that every month at least a brutal murder used to take place. The reason for such a plight, according to Fr. Sebastian was the illiteracy and so wanting to start a school, he established an educational society named 'Vidyabhushan Shikshan Sanshtha'. Inspired by the social activities of Fr. Sebastian, two BJP Sarpanch (Village Heads) and many joined the Congress Party which pleased the congress leaders like Mrs. Yashodhara Bajaj, the then local MLA and Minister of State. During one of her visits to Balapur in the Christmas season, she visited the mission station and appreciated the crib in the church campus. In her interaction with Fr. Sebastian, she promised to help in getting all the necessary permissions to start a school in her constituency. Fr. Sebastian has the collections of news articles that published against his missionary activities in Balapur.

After the commendable service in Balapur, Fr. Sebastian concentrated his attention in Mul for 8 years, came in close association with Mr. Wamanrao Gaddamwar, congress leader and former minister of state and was instrumental in getting 'Indira Convent School', currently managed by St. Ann's Sisters in Mul. Fr. Sebastian bore all the initial difficulties in purchasing the land for the present Carmel High School in Gadchiroli and its construction but he was transferred soon to Nav Jyoti Church, Aksapur to continue God's work. Accepting the unexpected transfer, he made Aksapur church community vibrant by regular village visits and inspiring them to be regular for the Sunday mass. Through the mission appeal in parishes of various dioceses in Kerala, he raised the much needed fund for the mission and headed the CLC (Catechetical and Liturgical Committee) of the diocese of Chanda for 6 years during which he was also the cathedral vicar at Balharshah for 3 years. Fr. Sebastian also served CMI Mar Thoma province as the provincial councilor for Pastoral Ministry and Evangelization, Vicar Provincial and the provincial auditor.



Having spent about two months in Krishnadham Ashram near Satara under Raghunath Ganesh Pandit, Fr. Sebastian follows the existential philosophy. Once in that Ashram he went for the night's rest, the night was bitterly cold due to chilly winter. But after waking up Fr. Sebastian found hot blanket covered on his body. In the words of Fr. Sebastian, "God was there with him throughout the night acting through different people". Since then Fr. Sebastian wears only Khadi clothes and takes vegetarian food.

Once when Fr. Sebastian was in Balapur, he was preaching on Mt: 15: 21-28, i.e. about the faith of the Canaanite woman. After the sermon, the catechist filed a case against Fr. Sebastian accusing that he insulted his wife. Following this, the entire village gathered in the church campus but Fr. Sebastian beautifully explained the same gospel passage and clarified all their misunderstanding. Fr. Sebastian expects that the coming generation missionaries would contribute in the God's mission by understanding peoples need, learning their language, culture and tradition with commitment and hard work. For him late Fr. Remigi Nadackal CMI was a role model for hard work and late Bishop Januarius CMI is a role model for his vision. In spite of his growing age, Fr. Sebastian currently is the director of 'Sant Chavara Kruti Vikas Vidyalaya' at Majri which is the sole Marathi medium school run by the province.

“

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



Dear,

Every baptized  
is a missionary.  
We can become  
a missionary in different ways,  
in whatever situation you are.  
St Therese of Child Jesus,  
Patron of missionaries  
had never been to a mission yet was  
a missionary to the core of her heart.  
She became a missionary  
by praying for  
the mission and the missionaries.  
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“



The unique corner stone of Christian civilization provided by Jesus is that he transformed the divine dialectic into a framework of personal relationships that forms the foundation of all human relationships and of a comprehensive world order.

Late, J B Chethimattam CMI  
Indian Philosopher

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



Evangelize



# Mission Meditation

Climbing Himalaya



**T**hough the climate was freezing my body, the ambition was warm and mind was cool for the trekking to the top of The Himalayas. There were many with us for the pilgrimage with an evergreen ambition. Pilgrims were warming the frozen climate by reciting the name of Lord Shiva; within a short time they made entire atmosphere prayerful and I really felt the change of mood, from trekking to pilgrimage. The cold made us speechless and made us to observe the surroundings. I really enjoyed the beauty of the place with rising sun. The pilgrims were encouraging us to move forward. The hours passed and we defeated mountains one after another; the sun was bright, nature did not offer us a shade for shelter. we started to wither because there were no trees around. As I went ahead the journey became tougher and tougher. Many of us became tired because of hypoxia. There were no trees around; it was really a rocky place surrounded by rocky mountain dressed in snow. I was very tired and I had no strength to go forward, no friends for support and I was thirsty and hungry. Still I kept moving to my destination. I went ahead and I saw the beautiful Gomukh like a white lamb among the black buffalo because it was surrounded by black rocks. I was happy to reach there; it was situated among the mountains. So I had to climb down to see it but there was lack of oxygen. Yet I went down to actualize my dream. It is a little cave with ice similar to an opening part of an igloo; the water was too cold. I could not spend much time there because of hypoxia. I was very happy because I reached my destination. I have seen many people who were flocking to the place, they were not tired. I have heard from people that it is the real dwelling place of God. When I was coming back to my residence many questions came to my mind; why do they go for the pilgrimage to Gomukh? What really attract them to go to Gomukh? Why don't they become tired? Ganga is the holy river, according to the mythical story it starts from the hair of the Lord Shiva; it means a personal encounter of God and to have a holy bath to purify oneself. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51-7)

We can see this purification literally in Gomukh, for a sight seer it will be the face of a cow but for a believer it is the face of god; they really wash their impurities there. People go to Gomukh and never become tired. Usually they don't talk to each other. They are always in a prayerful mood. They literally suffer the hardships and difficulties to reach God. Mt 16: 24-26, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take their cross and follow me". If we simply walk, after a while we will be tired, if we carry something then definitely within no time we will be tired, that is quite natural. If we do something for our own benefit we will not be that tired. If we do something with a clear cut aim or goal then we will not be tired; take the cross and follow Christ, will we be tired? Definitely we will be tired because it is something peripheral. That is why Jesus told to deny oneself and take up the cross, denying; leaving one's own bodily passion, desire and worldly things. Periphery to internal, deny oneself means leaving externity and focusing in God. In this state we will not be affected by the external difficulties; this is the state of a faithful pilgrim. I could see real example of this Word of God during my pilgrimage to Gomukh. When I reached back to the hotel I was examining myself with two questions; what is the focus of my life? Most often I meet with disappointments and do I really set a goal for my heavenly journey? When tiredness conquer me and push me to sleep I go with a firm decision that "I am ready to deny myself to carry my cross with Jesus the savior.



**JOMET CHAKKALAYIL**  
Jagdalpur



Nepal

Mission

Mission  
Villages



Faith grows when it is lived as an experience of love received”, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Faith working through love becomes a criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole of human life. A commitment to such praxis would also demand from us an uncompromising prophetic courage to lead a self-emptying life. We see an authentic, genuine healthy contextualization in the Life, teaching and spirituality of Jesus.

In the context of Nepal, we see missionaries coming from the different continents of the world and assimilate themselves to the ground reality of Nepal culture. CMI missionaries from Bijnor province, U.P, have been rendering their service in various sectors in the far western region of Nepal since 2011. Here my humble task is to narrate geographical, political, socio-cultural, economic and catholic background of a village where CMI missionaries commenced their journey and also the challenges that hinder the growth of the mission.

Among the seven provinces of Nepal, Tribhuvan Basti village is a part of Sudur Paschim province of Nepal in Kanchanpur District. This village comes under Punarbas municipality where about 2000 families were rehabilitated after the settlement of Nepal during the time of Indira Gandhi in 1977. There is an unknown border to India - Basahi which is 4km away from here and two official borders; Gauri Fonda border to U.P which falls after 18km and Banbasa border to U.K which is 93km away from here. Climate of this region is a little extreme of North India; that is extreme hot and extreme cold. Till 2007, it was kingly rule in Nepal. In comparison with present democracy, people realize that kingly rule was a time of peace and harmony. The main political parties in Nepal are Nepali congress, Nepali communist, Maoist (Madhav, Viplav), and Himal. The present ruling party in Nepal is Nepali congress.

Nepal follows its own calendar. In accordance with Nepali calendar, the present year is 2079. They, however, live 57 years ahead in comparison with international calendar, they are culturally very much backward. They preoccupy themselves with a lot of superstitions. The major religion in Nepal is Buddhism. Main stream religions in Nepal are Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

In 2011, most of the children in the village were school dropouts. They had the capacity to study but they didn't feel like going to school. Quite unfortunately, uneducated parents failed to convince their children about the importance of education. In addition to that, school system in Nepal was not up to the mark. In Government schools, there were hardly 90 working days in a calendar year. Nepali children were deprived of quality education because it had been turned out to a mere business.

One of the main reasons for increasing the number of school dropouts is early marriage. Most of the children aged between 14-16, find their partners during the school days and develop intimate relationships with them. On a fine morning, they flee together either to their distant relatives' house or to India. They

come back home after staying together for three to four months. As per the existing custom in Nepal, parents welcome them without any objection and are given in marriage. There after some of them resume their studies and some do not.

At present, Nepal government faces a huge financial crisis. And they have imposed bans on certain foreign goods to import to Nepal and trying to stabilize their economy. They get financial assistance from India and China. Fuel price in Nepal is high and consequently the living cost too. There is a widening gulf between the rich and poor. Roads in Nepal are in a pathetic condition. But things are gradually changing.

Villagers are economically very much backward. Consumption of alcohol is not a taboo in Nepal and it is readily available in all the shops. And it is a part of Nepali culture. Most of the villagers have not adopted so far, the culture of saving. Villagers mainly depend on cultivation for their livelihood. They cultivate paddy, wheat, maize and all kinds of pulses. Many people in the village go in search of job either in India or abroad. Villagers mostly live in unfurnished houses. There is no proper conveyance to the village from the city, during the initial days people solely depended on our vehicles to go to hospital.

As per the records of the vicariate of the Nepal, there is catholic presence in Nepal from 17th century onwards. At present, under the apostolic vicariate of Nepal, 11 parishes, 5 quasi parishes, 11 mission stations and 53 mass centers exist. Among the 11 parishes, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Punarbas is entrusted to CMI congregation. Succeeding the late Bp. Antony Sharma, Bp. Paul Simick is the bishop of Nepal vicariate. There are 22 priests for Nepal vicariate and 73 priests from different congregations work under the vicariate of Nepal. Seven men congregation and twenty-one women congregation work under the Nepal vicariate.

Carmel CMI mission officially inaugurated on March 22, 2011 in Tribhuvan Basti village, Nepal. In the beginning of CMI mission in Tribhuvan Basti, there were only three catholic families and there were around 900 protestant families. Protestants were more in number because of the influence of 'Peace Core Group'. Among the Peace Core Group, there were many protestant pastors who played a huge role in allocation of lands for rehabilitants during the living settlement of the India-Nepal border. Nepal government commissioned this group to allot the land and they were generous in allotting more lands for protestants. As a result, under the municipality of Punarbas, there was a settlement of more protestant families.

From time to time, protestant pastors kept on catechizing people that other religions including other denominations in Christianity were satanic. Hence people were indifferent to catholic church in the early stage. At the outset, CMI fathers opened a tuition Centre with 6 students and later there were about 250 students for tuition. It was a starting point for fathers



to have access to the houses of those students. Fathers were successful to a certain extent to wipe out their prejudices and preoccupations regarding the catholic church. Gradually fathers during the house visit introduced the core of catholic teaching and taught them to recite rosary. Fathers identified a house in a village and started offering Holy Mass. A group of people started coming for Holy Mass. Eventually people got attracted to catholic church and voluntarily came forward to receive baptism. Meanwhile, SD sisters from Ghaziabad province joined this mission in 2015 which further helped to enhance the growth of this mission.



**Joji Velikkakathu CMI**  
**Nepal**

Today there are 112 baptized catholics and around 120 catechumens under the St. Mary's Catholic Church, Punarbas. Two prayer centres function under this parish; one is in Tribhuvan Basti and the other one is in Dhangadhi. Daily Holy Mass for public, regular house visit, weekly adoration, tuition, catechism, annual retreat and celebrating the special occasions like international Parents' day, youth day, girl child day and so on are the services being rendered here. In Nepal, Saturday is holiday and the catholic church in Nepal observes sabbath on Saturday and there is a solemn Latin mass in Nepali. In Tribhuvan Basti, we had run a day boarding for boys and tuition centre for both boys and girls. This year we started running a residential boarding instead of day boarding exclusively for catholic boys in view of promoting vocations to priesthood. In Dhangadhi, realizing the need of the time, we set in a school named, 'Carmel School Dhangadhi'. Society owns a land in Phulwari where the office of 'Carmel Mata Samaj' is to be shifted. It is a matter of great satisfaction that a candidate from Tribhuvan Basti village makes her first profession and vestition on 12th October, 2022 in St. Mary's Church, Punarbas with the paternal blessing of Delhi Arch Bishop Mar Anil Kutto.

Challenges in Mission: Just like in India, Nepal government also has passed the anti-conversion bill which restricts the scope of evangelization and proclamation of the Gospel. Another challenge is the lack of man power which makes the mission handicapped to a certain extent. Jesus saying “Harvest is plentiful but labourers are few” (Mt.9:37) is very much applicable in this context. Nepal vicariate also is running shortage of priests and managed by the help of priests from different congregations. It saddens that there are no local vocations for priesthood for last 10 years in the vicariate. Baptized catholics do not get catholic partners and catholic girls leaving faith after marriage turns out to be an accepted custom here. Most of the catholics do not have the deep-rooted faith owing to which small dislikes and misunderstandings become a concrete reason for them to leave the catholic church. Carmel Mata Samaj solely depends on projects and benefactors for the mission work. Bp. Paul Simick asked CMI’s to take over 9 districts of Nepal out of which we managed



to reach out only in two districts; that is Kanchanpur and Kailali districts. Only four CMI fathers render their services right now. Financial constraints and lack of personnels are a barrier to expand the mission territory.

Nepal is a fertile land where we encounter ordinary people with simple faith. Jesus’ method - going after the lost sheep - is a strategy that may be befitting to this mission context. We meet people in person who are inconsistent in the church. However, they are backward in many realms of life, their simplicity and open mindedness is so much so that they are ever ready to adapt a renewed life. On the other hand, looking at the hard work and ordinary life style of people around, there arises a moment for self-introspection for those involved in the mission work. Encountering the absolute in the ordinary people gives vigor and enthusiasm to one’s own spirituality. Amidst various hurdles, mission work in Nepal is dynamic, progressive and future oriented.





Ashad

**Frontier  
Missionary**





**Prince Punnan Puthettu CMI  
Jagdalpur**

**T**he Hindi word Asha literally means Hope. Hope is one of the three theological virtues in Christian tradition by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promise and relying not on our strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Asha Ashram which is a Home for the differently abled Children in Jagdalpur run by the CMI Fathers of the Nirmal Province is an initiative towards the abandoned and homeless Children of the society giving them Hope to regain their happiness and placing themselves as children of God. The children and the carers always believe in the providence of God and they are guided specially by the help of Holy Spirit. Asha ashram focuses on what Children can do; we try to discover their abilities than their disabilities. The beginning of the Ashram in the year 2009 was very humble, with one beneficiary, minimum shelter and financial support, and now it has become a realized social apostolate with a greater vision, with 25 children making it a beautiful residence of Hope. The Home has now become a witness for all kinds of people in Jagdalpur, and it has changed the attitude of people towards the Christian missionaries. Families in and around the city visits the Ashram, spend time celebrating their family events with their children, feeding them a meal, spending time, caring them etc.

The children are also equipped with learning music, yoga, computer, games, gardening, envelop making, broom making, soap and phenolic cleaner making etc with an aim to bloom their talents and potentialities. They are engaged in playing both

indoor and outdoor games like cricket, football, chess, ludo carroms etc, during the time of recreations. They also spent time with the Lord praising Him for the Providence and protection they enjoy.

As the institution which is inspired by the Gospel of St Matthew 25:40 "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you have done it to me" people coming here, return home happily witnessing this Gospel verse. The ashram has also created mass awareness on the plight and status of the mentally handicapped who belong to an extremely marginalized section of the society. Regular visits by the Doctors, Physiotherapists is also making their mental and physical health strong and stable.

As we had a great woman, Mother Teresa, called "A Living Saint", who changed the world through charity, compassion and selflessness, and St Chavara who was very much compassionate towards the poor and marginalized, started the first Home for the Destitute in 1869 by the Kerala church, who reflected the merciful face of Jesus, Asha Ashram is also trying to reflect the merciful and compassionate face of Christ by taking care of these brothers. We pray and hope the Lord will enable us to serve more of the poor and needy.







*Exposure  
at Vaitavada*

**For  
Mission**





**Stephin Vayalil CMI**  
Bengaluru

The exposure to Vattavada, the border village between Kerala and Tamil Nadu, was a blend of different experiences for us. The days of exposure at Vattavada were a breakthrough in our life. New culture, lifestyle, ideas, behaviors, and genuine love of the people taught us new practical lessons for our life. It paves us to write new chapters in our lives with extraordinary energy. We could reflect and decide upon the different dimensions of our life.

The people in the village are genuine and they care for each other. The hospitality of people is something really appreciable. Most of us were not having a brood-minded heart like them, but they, through their lives taught us why we don't love all without limitations. The openness of the people inspired us to stand by the truth throughout life. Being simple and genuine in our life is what their motto is, and we were really influenced by it. We were astonished when we realized that they toil day and night to prepare their land without any modern machines. The people working on their lands by using traditional tools were a common picture for us, whenever we went outside. They were teaching us to work hard to achieve the fruits of our life. We got chances to work on their farmlands, which helped us enjoy and reflect on the value of hard work. Life is happier for them than ours because the fruits of their hard work are something big for them. The people over there are ready to help each other whenever it is needed. This value is diminishing in our life. The big farmlands, the scarcity of water, and the landscape are not positive for them, but still, they are not bothered about it rather are making the hardships and obstacles a boon for them through their hard work and mentality. It was an inspiration for us to mold our attitudes like theirs to face the stumbling blocks of our lives.

A one-day camp named 'Nirakutt' was conducted for the chil-

dren at the school had helped us to make access to them and to know more about them. The children were so friendly and open. The aim of the camp as the name indicates was to give color to their life by helping them to enhance a better future with firm convictions. The camp was a blend of sessions and games for their integral growth. The classes were about moral values and a deaddiction class from drugs. Even after the camp, the children used to visit us and invite us to their homes where they shared the problems of their lives with us. It was an eye-opener for us to realize what real life is because we are still in a comfort zone

The interactions with the people and working out with them at their farmlands, were the moments which we enjoyed a lot. It paved us to have a social responsibility in our life. Preparing the land, plucking up the weeds, building a new garden and volleyball court for the school, painting the auditorium, and so on..were helping us to be good social apostolates for Jesus and tightening the bond between our brothers.



The true lives in front of us taught us to lead a prudent life in the world. They don't know big physical or chemical theories but in certain situations of life by their experience, they are using the practical steps of the theories which they don't even know before. They showed us the aim of our education is not only to achieve high ranks or results but also to make those things practical in our life. The children over there made us have a thrust for knowing more about the good. The camp and the interactions were an indicator to be equipped for anything at any time.

Jesus Christ was not living in big mansions or with the rich, He was always with the poor. The open books of their life taught us to stretch our hands to the needy. The compassionate and merciful heart of Jesus was the inspiration and energy for us to live in the midst of them, like one of them. Prayer and divine providence are truly vital in ministries like these. When we look back at our social outreach now, it was these powers that were leading us each day. We felt that we were the instruments in God's hand

The people influenced us to be simple and more socially available to the needy. They opened our eyes that the advanced technologies in this world are not what we needed. It is a simple and pure heart that is always ready to work for the ones who are around us. It can be summarized as "Be Holy and Be Simple".



*Online  
Divine  
Mercy  
Healing  
Adoration*



**Best  
Practices**





**Sumal Alookaran CMI  
Thrissur**

**O**ur ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”(John 4:20). During the time of the pandemic, when the people of God really struggled to adore and bless the Lord, the Holy Spirit revealed the idea of an Online Divine Mercy Healing Adoration to the Jerusalem community. The only aim was to provide a chance to people who could not reach out to the churches, to pray and adore the Lord. Though there were constraints for the people to go to the Church for the Eucharistic celebration, adoration and other prayer services, no one who wishes to pray to the Eucharistic Lord must be deprived of that chance.

The first online Healing Adoration was held one 16 July 2021 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. From then it was a blessing for a lot of people. There are many from various states and even countries participating and praying in the Online Divine Mercy Healing Adoration. Even now, there are many who attend the adoration. Thousands of people contact the retreat center to request prayers and to communicate their personal intentions. During the adoration, their names and intentions are specially mentioned and prayed for

The Divine Mercy Healing Adoration usually includes rosary, reflection on the Word of God, special prayers to the Holy Spirit, praise and worship, prayer for the intentions for those who have requested prayer, etc. Hundreds of people visit Jerusalem to visit Fr. Devassya Kan-nat CMI. He prays for them and gives proper orientation and directions regarding spiritual life either in person or through the telephone

It is evident that the Jerusalem recenter has spiritually grown

so much as a result of this Divine Mercy Healing Adoration. For the long retreats too, there are people coming even from various districts, states as well as countries. The services which are conducted online draws many people and families toward the Word of God, the Holy Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. A lot of people experience the healing and deliverance granted by the Eucharistic Lord. Ju-

dith 6:18 “Then the people fell down and worshiped God, and cried out.” The Online

Divine Mercy Healing Adoration was really a gracious gift of the Lord to the people of God so that many

could cry out to the Lord during the time of the pandemic. When their near and dear ones were called back to the eternal abode or were sick due to the virus, they could offer their grief and pain to the Lord through the online adoration.

Those who experience the loving presence of the Lord online, have started coming to attend the adoration in the retreat center. All of them are gifted with an abundance of blessings by the Lord. There are many who really experience the Lord by being able to successfully pass through the tough times of their lives.

There are also many who come to the retreat center to give testimony and to praise the Lord for the blessings they have received. Moreover, there are also many who send their testimonies online. All of them proclaim how Jesus has changed and influenced their lives miraculously.

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was made on the 16th of July after thirty three days of preparation from June 13. Thousands of families prayed together and offered all the families to the Immaculate Heart of Virgin Mary. By the grace of God, we are able to continue the Divine Mercy Healing Adoration for more than a year.







# Mission Collaborators *Krupalaya*



Shaju Vadassery  
Bengaluru

**Y**es, I can still recall the day, which eventually turned into the personal pride of this St. Thomas parish. Fr. Marius and some elderly uncles were seriously discussing a space which set apart the preparation for the peaceful death of the orphans. SD sisters and Fr. Marius firstly tread the path for this venture. Mother Sr. Paschal was the new team's superior, and she came along with Sr. Ann Paul for this new mission. When I visited the inmates of Krupalaya for the first day with Fr. Koikkara, Sister asked, "Will you come daytime tomorrow?" "Not day time, I will be busy with work in the daytime, but after that, surely I will come", I replied. Then she told me it was ok. Even after the job, I was most welcome to visit the patients here.

I just went for a visit to Krupalaya the following morning before I went job. But when I reached there, what I witnessed was shocking. I saw Sr. Ann Paul giving bath to one inmate with a lot of compassion. My eyes were filled with tears; I was in a state to identify whether it was sad or happy; that sight was for me.. it touched my heart so profoundly. That was the moment I witnessed what I read about the mission of Mother Theresa in the streets of Bengal. Sisters of Krupalaya are taking care of people, those who have no one to look after them. It was an eye-opening experience. They are doing that service with satisfaction and love towards Jesus. So much moved by their compassionate mission, I asked their permission to give baths and other care to the male inmates. But sisters told me it's ok, Vadachetta; we are doing that as a continuum of our prayer life. Out of my compulsion, they trained me to look after the inmates there the next day itself. Since that day, for ten years, I have been continuing this service in Krupalaya, with much happiness, as compensation to all those who abandon their parents in tier old age. My wife and family first resisted taking up this new initiative in Krupalaya, but later they joined me in this mission. Then we started to celebrate our wedding anniversary, our children's birthday celebrations, and my Krupalaya family.

The love I have received from all of Krupalaya is an immense treasure. Even amidst of the time restraints, I couldn't stop my steps towards Krupalaya. Slowly, many people from St. Thomas parish joined us. I always feel great joy in my heart whenever I went there for a cleaning, giving bath, cooking and other services to them. My outing with them is one of the evergreen memories in my life. Day after day, I have been felling that, Krupalaya is becoming a part of my family; in other words, they all are mine, like a family bond. When I look back to those ten years in which I have been a part of Krupalaya service, I am thankful to God that we could give an atmosphere for a peaceful death for all the inmates who departed from us during this period. I am indebted to all vicars and trustees of all past years because they are always ready to welcome my suggestions for Krupalaya as one among them. There is one incident that is still evergreen in my memory. There was a man who was dumb, and then, as a result of our efforts to speak to him, slowly, he started to talk. Krupalaya got him from Aakasaparavakal team by Fr. George kuttikkal and Shajappan and Sijiyamma. Through

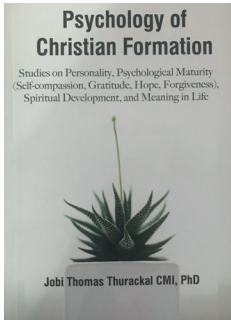
him, we got his address, and we took him to his house. But when we took him there, the response of the family members was so cruel. His name is Basavaraj. He was in a quotation team at a young age, and his family and society were so fed up with his inhuman activities. So they left him by cutting his nerve on the road. But he didn't die, but one of his hands and legs got paralysed. The entire family astonished by saw him, and they couldn't believe that he was still alive.

Like Basavaraj, I found many more in Krupalaya during my service there. Krupalaya is indebted to the Aakasaparavakal team because they used to give inmates to Krupalaya for our service. Even though I cannot recollect all the people, who helped in Krupalaya, some names are still imprinted in me. CO Jacob, Isaac, Ambulance driver Aadugodi Davis, and Rijo were the early serving team of Krupalaya. I remember A C Chako, P L Jacob, K M Francis, Dominic Paul, Matha Raju, CG John, and Ani from the studio. All these are always available at any time for Krupalaya. Krupalaya taught a great lesson in my life; when I started to look after the poor of God, God took more initiative to look after my family than me. I didn't meet with any hospital cases in my family; God is always keen to protect us because I believe God loves the poor and the orphan. I gratefully remember and pray for the SD sisters and all other sisters who did their valuable service for Krupalaya. Krupalaya is still in power. It has successfully continued its service. At this juncture, I thankfully remember all the sisters and parish members doing their service in Krupalaya. Exceptionally, I remember Akka Biju, Ayyob, Ravi and Panjikkaran Thomas with love.





## Books/ Vidoos

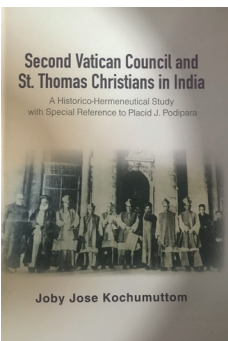


### **Psychology of Christian Formation**

By Jobi Thomas Thurackal  
Dharmaram Publications

Psychology of Christian formation is an innovative work with great vision that takes the reader to the new horizons of psycho-spiritual development. Being lucid and at the same time ground breaking, it offers radically fresh interpretations of Christian formation. The author inspires the formators and shed light into the unseen areas of Christian formation.

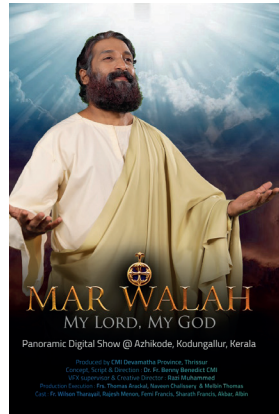
This is an excellent pointer to the unsolved personality disorders either masked or unaddressed in the seminary atmosphere and registers its uniqueness through a comparative study of catholic seminarians and their peer group non-seminarians. The work is very scientific and with its two-wave longitudinal study makes a solid contribution in the field of psychology of religion.



### **Second Vatican Council and St Thomas Christians in India**

By Joby Jose Kochumuttam CMI  
Dharmaram Publications

This doctrinal research obviously renders a unique contribution towards the historical aspects on the Vatican council 2nd. Having meticulously studied and gone through the original documents and available sources, the author has made historico-theological research regarding the role and the notable interventions of bishops belonging to the Indian Oriental Churches in the council. This book, to my mind, is nothing but that beautifully summarizes the ancient and rich heritage and historical traditions of the St. Thomas Christians in India.



### **'Mar Walah Digital Show'**

based on St. Thomas, the Apostle at Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine, Azhikode, Kodungallur

In the context of the 150th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle, CMI Devamatha Province Pastoral department has initiated various projects and activities at Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine at Azhikode, in order to promote and strengthen the devo-

tions and traditions of the St. Thomas Christian Community in Kerala. One of the major projects that is already launched as Phase I is a Digital Show, titled 'Mar Walah' (My Lord, My God). The Digital Show will be made available to the pilgrims and the public at 'Marthoma Smruthi Mandapam' soon, by the end of September.

The Show titled 'Mar Walah' is a 35 long audio-visual presentation, with light and sound effects to enhance the show. The main location of the Show is 'Azhikode', the site of the Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine, under the care of the CMI congregation, where the right hand of the Apostle, is kept and venerated as relic. The Show also takes the viewer on a pilgrimage to all the 'Seven and Half churches' for which St. Thomas paved the way to be completed by his disciples. The churches featured in the Show include Maliankara, Palayur, Kollam, Niranam, Nilakkal, Kokkamangalam, Kottekkavu, Thiruvithamgod, Malayattoor, Little Mount and St. Thomas Mount in Chennai. We also get glimpses of St. Thomas, his meeting with the Risen Lord, his first journey by the sea to the coast of Kerala and the emotional moments of his death, the glorious martyrdom at Mylapore. The main thrust of the Show is to utilize the audio-visual potential of the Show in such a way as to inspire and inform the ordinary audiences, the faithful. We expect a good number of pilgrims and parish groups to visit the Shrine and watch the Show in this 150th anniversary year.

On behalf of the Devamatha Province Pastoral Department, a committee of Fathers Thomsun Arackal, Wilson Tharayil, Naveen Chalisery and Benny Benedict Chiramel have coordinated the production of the Digital Show. It is scripted and directed by Fr. Benny, with support from Razi Muhammed, senior faculty at Chetana College of Media and Performing Arts, Thrissur and a team of creative professionals and alumni from various units of Chetana.

## CMI Foundation Day 11

May is celebrated as the Foundation Day of CMI Congregation. This year it marked 191 Foundation days of the Congregation. A solemn Divine Mass was celebrated at St Joseph's Church Mannanam in which Rev Fr Thomas Chathamparampil was the main celebrant. All the General councillors and Rev Fr Sebastian Chamathara, the Provincial of St Joseph's Province, Thiruvananthapuram concelebrated the Mass. After the Holy Mass Bicentennial Candle was lit by Rev. Fr Prior General marking the decennial preparation for the Bicentennial of the Congregation. Besides, the year beginning on 11 May 2022 -10 May 2023 was declared as the CMI year of Call and Commitment by Rev Fr Prior General.



## Address of the Apostolic Nuncio to CMI Plenary Assembly

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli visited the General Plenary Assembly of the Congregation on 26 April 2022. He celebrated the Holy Mass and delivered the Homily. After the Holy Mass, he came to the Assembly and addressed the Plenary Assembly and interaction with the members of the General Plenary Assembly. Addressing the members of the plenary assembly, the Archbishop spoke of the impending jubilee of the foundation of the congregation in 2031, which as he pointed out, comes close to the jubilee of redemption in 2033. He spoke of the four founding fathers of the CMI Congregation, who had the vision for the inception of the congregation. Giving statistics of the congregation, he expressed his admiration for the number of CMIs serving in the global missions. He pointed out that through the varied activities of the members they are sharing with others the fruits of contemplation.

Please send information on releasing books, videos, Apps and its images for the next issue before 25 November 2020  
✉ cmissionmagazine@gmail.com, 94255 29603, 9539747947



## Seminar on the Diamond Jubilee of Chanda Mission

CMI Mar Thoma Province, Chanda organized a one-day Seminar on Mission in the 21st century on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Chanda Mission (1962-2022). The seminar remembered the veteran missionaries' contributions, hardships and hard-works and relished 60 years of CMI Presence



in Chanda. It included papers on – “Mission as Walking With” –by Rev. Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI, “A Renewed Passion for Mission” by His Excellency Bishop Mar Prince Panengadan, “Roadmap to the Mission of Future India” by Rev. Fr. Davis Varayilan CMI, Rector, Samanvaya Theologate, Bhopal and “Chanda Mission: Historical Reflections” by Rev. Fr. Tomy Chirapurath

The afternoon sessions were dedicated to honour and pay homage to the veteran missionary and a trailblazer in Evangelization, late Rev. Fr. George Canisius Kachiramattom CMI. Rev. Fr. Varghese Puthuparampil, Vicar General of the Diocese of Chanda shed the light on the inspiring personality of Father Canisius as the St. Paul of Chanda. It also included a panel discussion in which the panelists spoke about different aspects of Father Canisius as a loving father, zealous missionary, a caring pastor and a true shepherd with the smell of the sheep. The programme was organized under the leadership of Fr Benny Mukalel, the Provincial of Chanda.



### Mission Jubilee Conclusion

The 50th year of CMI presence in Bijnor, Jagdalpur and Rajkot was celebrated solemnly in all three missions.

#### Bijnor

The Bijnor mission thankfully remembered the fifty graceful years of its beginning by the first missionaries of Bijnor under the leadership of Bishop Gratian Mundadan. 3rd May was the solemn conclusion of the CMI presence in Bijnor. To mark the event, a symposium was organised in the morning in which the missionaries including the first veteran lay catechists, sisters and fathers of the mission came together and shared their mission experiences. Thanksgiving Holy Mass was officiated by Rt. Rev. Dr Vincent Nellai-parampil of Bijnor at 3.30 pm. At 6.00 pm a public function was organised in which the veteran missionaries were felicitated.

#### Jagdalpur

25th May marked the conclusion of the jubilee of the CMI presence in the Jagdalpur mission. A well-attended celebration of the Solemn Holy Eucharist which was presided over by Mar Sebastian Vadakkell of Ujjain diocese specially delegated by the Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alanchery was concelebrated by 13 bishops from the mission dioceses. The participation of a good number of priests, religious and faithful of the mission made the celebration more colourful. A public gathering followed the Holy Mass in which early missionaries were felicitated and honoured. The whole Jubilee celebration was enriched with various tribal cultural elements and programmes.

#### Rajkot

The conclusion of the golden jubilee of the CMI presence in Rajkot was celebrated on 10th September with a Thanksgiving Holy Mass presided over by Mar Jose Chittooparampil CMI, the Bishop of Rajkot and was concelebrated by the Bishops of the Gujrat region. Archbishop Thomas Macwan of Ahmedabad Archdiocese delivered the homily in which he thankfully remembered the yeoman services of the CMI members in building up the mission of Rajkot. During the felicitation that followed the Holy Eucharist, the first missionaries were honoured and gratefully remembered for their committed service in the mission.









Priestly Ordination of Deacon Simon in Kenya





# October '22

## Mission month

# Celebration of God's Mission

For the last few years, we have been setting apart the month of October specially to pray for the CMI missions and missionaries across the world. We shall continue our practice of dedicating a day each during this month to pray specifically for a mission and missionaries in each country. Accordingly, the following schedule has been drawn up by the General Department for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry to assist the whole Congregation to remember and pray for all our CMI missions and missionaries therein.

**Date Country**

Oct 3: Argentina  
Oct 4: Austria & Australia  
Oct 5: Belgium  
Oct 6: Botswana  
Oct 7: Brazil  
Oct 8: Canada  
Oct 9: Ecuador  
Oct 10: France  
Oct 11: Germany  
Oct 12: Ghana

**Date Country**

Oct 13: India  
Oct 14: Ireland  
Oct 15: Italy  
Oct 16: Kenya  
Oct 17: Madagascar  
Oct 18: Namibia  
Oct 19: Nepal  
Oct 20: Paraguay  
Oct 21: Peru  
Oct 22: Philippines

**Date Country**

Oct 23: Singapore  
Oct 24: South Africa  
Oct 25: Sweden  
Oct 26: Switzerland  
Oct 27: Tanzania  
Oct 28: Uganda  
Oct 29: UK  
Oct 30: USA  
Oct 31: Qatar





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