

**COMPLETE WORKS  
OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA**

**Volume 4**

**LETTERS**

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**Volume 4**

**LETTERS**

Translation  
**Augustine Keemattam CMI**

**2020**

**Chavara Central Secretariat**  
Kochi 680 030 Kerala, India  
&  
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*Complete Works of Kuriakose Elias Chavara*

Volume 4: Letters

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## FOREWORD

Letters of the dear ones are so precious to every person. Letters go a long way; they are much more than the message. It is the bond of relationship and we feel the warmth, affection, and all the more the concern for the other. There was a time when people waited for the postman every day to get a letter and receiving a letter was a moment of excitement for many. Through letters we used to converse and we felt the love and fostered the connections. "To send a letter is a good way to go somewhere without moving anything but your heart," said Phyllis Theroux.

The letters of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara reveal the person and personality of Chavara and through them we come to know the depth of his spirituality, deeper love for the Church and Holy Father, genuine concern for others, ideals of religious life, pastoral acumen, and practical wisdom. Being encountered by the Lord, he could not keep himself aloof and idle. He proactively responded to the signs of the time as guided by the Holy Spirit and got involved in the concerns of the time for the greater good of the society and the Church. He has written to people of all strata in the Church from the Pope, Prefect of the Congregations, the Archbishops and Bishops, priests, religious, laity, families, and children. The letters of St. Chavara unveil the saint and prophet in him and even today his teachings are not only relevant but they gain more relevance than the time in which he wrote those letters. He had the audacity to state that "this script will not perish even when I am dead and gone. So, I entrust this cherished

treasure to you, my children of the Kainakari Church (*The Testament of a Loving Father*).

His letter to Pope Pius IX is the real proof for his great concern for the Church, its unity and harmony, his filial devotion, obedience, and docility to the Holy See. At the same time with freedom, he dares to propose his solutions to the challenges in the Church in Malabar. With all reverence he makes a request to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide for separate Latin and Syrian Bishops to settle the issues in Malabar, especially in the context of Roccas controversy. He rose above petty and narrow-minded outlook of the existing time. He had an approach of integration and imbibing the best pastoral practices from other churches for the greater good of the people of God for their renewal and spiritual growth.

His letters to the members of his religious congregation portray his vision of religious life and his expectations from the members for an ideal life. They are really inspirational documents and even today, for our charism and legacy, there is no better document. He wanted his confreres to live up to the spirit of the religious call without any compromise and gave specific and clear instructions for seniors, lay brothers, and the junior priests with regard to religious vows, community life, and prayer life. He wrote: "Being religious your duty is to help the faithful to grow in spiritual matters; kindly do not get involved in the affairs of temporalities and do not bring these things into the discussions and conversations in the monastery." According to him, no one should take exception from humble works like cleaning the monastery; he wanted the senior priests to set good example, being the first in doing such works. He urged the members to pray that the persecutions against the Holy Mother Church may end and that the Church as a

whole experiences peace and progress. While selecting a place for the monastery, he insisted that the place be sufficiently away from the market so that the noise of market may not disturb the members of the monastery; water must be clean, the site must be close to the river so that conveyance by boat also would be feasible. It must be wide and spacious to plant trees and with sufficient space to develop sidewalks. He had his own vision of ongoing formation. He wrote: "The ordained, if they are given follow up and on-going education, they would become efficient and fruitful in their ministries."

His educational vision becomes evident in his letters. He wrote that the second means for vision is education. Just as we cannot see things without vision in the eyes, without knowledge, we will not be able to see heaven and God who dwells therein. Those who cannot see are blind; similarly, those who are not educated are spiritually blind. It is because of this blindness that the Christians of Malabar, although they are followers of Jesus of Nazareth from the very beginning, are without the seed and sprout of holiness. He insisted that if God has given riches, it is to be used to serve God and to spend it for common good. According to him we must practise accountability without compromise. For example, he insisted that the amount you give must be entered into the stamp paper they bring with them (accountability).

His letters to the sisters are instructions to groom them in the true spirit of religious life in the initial days of the community of sisters. He educated them on the greatness of the call to religious life and to be the brides of the Lord. His instructions on prayer life and contemplation reveal his prime concerns and expectations from the community. To learn the art of loving Jesus and to live in the love of Jesus!

Remain always in His presence. Walk by His side; converse with Him always... He explains different stages of mystical experiences as reading, solitude, vocal prayer, and mental prayer (meditation). He insists that everyone must reach at least the fourth stage. His instruction on the Holy Season is: I have locked in the chest of our Lord Jesus Christ my heart and yours together until the feast of resurrection. For him religious life is obedience and submission to the will of God. The more one renounces one's own will, the more that person becomes dear to God. He wants the sisters to write chronicle daily without any compromise. He instructed them: "Please encourage Sr. Anna to note down all the news. If you note down all the details of even those events that you find unimportant, without any laziness, you will be very happy when you read them later."

His instructions to the parents and children in the family constitute a classical document on family life. It is really a wonder that he could prophetically read the signs of the time from a strong pastoral perspective. For a healthy family life, he insists on keeping and reading the document with awe and reverence. He writes: "Do remember that I came into this world and that I left it by copying this *Testament* by as many as possible to preserve and perpetuate it in your home. On the first Saturday of every month, all of you shall come together and read it; this shall be a commemoration of my death anniversary; there is nothing else you need to do to remember me." The letter to his parish community is good enough to confer on him the title "Doctor of the Church."

Congratulations to Fr. Augustine Keemattam CMI, who prepared the new translation based on its original Malayalam version published in 2011; the services of Sr. Jossy Maria CMC also should be acknowledged and

appreciated as she has contributed to enhance the quality of this work with her vast knowledge of the source books related to Saint Chavara. I also appreciate the contributions of Fr. Saju Chackalackal CMI, General Councillor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, for his efforts to get the Collected Works of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara translated into English. Congratulations and sincere gratitude to Chavara Central Secretariat and all who have got involved in the process of publishing these volumes.

Fr. Paul Achandy CMI  
Prior General



## INRODUCTION

### Augustine Keemattam CMI

Letters, informal notes and scribbling betray what is hidden in our minds. They are mirrors of our feelings, emotions and inner dispositions. The letters written by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara reflect his saintliness, humanness, simplicity and practical wisdom. He boldly responded to the challenges of his times. In order to understand him and his writings and letters we must recollect and reflect on the historical background of his times.

#### **St. Thomas Christians of Malabar**

St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus came to India, through the Roman trade route and landed at Kodungalloor port in the year 52 CE. The first Christians of India were the disciples of St. Thomas. He was martyred at Mylapore, near Chennai in the year 72 CE and was buried there. St. Thomas Cathedral Basilica at Mylapore is built over the tomb of St. Thomas, the Apostle (Vadakkekara 2007, 66-67).

The Christians of Malabar are known as St. Thomas Christians, since they consider St. Thomas as their Father, who gave them the life of faith. The liturgical language of St. Thomas Christians is East Syriac (Aramaic) the mother tongue of Jesus and his disciples.

A small group of Jewish Christians from the Middle East (Chaldea) under the leadership of Thomas of Cana migrated to Malabar in the fourth century (Kochumuttom 2014, 56-57). The migrated group strengthened the local Christians of Malabar. Initially they were settled in the southern side of the port of Kodungalloor and were called "Southists"



(*Thekumbhagar*). In contrast, the local community was known as “Northists” (*Vadakkumbhagar*).

Both the groups claimed St. Thomas as their father in faith; used the same liturgical language, East Syriac and followed similar traditions and customs. From that time, the spiritual heads (Bishops) of St. Thomas Christians used to come from the Oriental Church of Chaldea.

### **Struggles and Division of St. Thomas Christians**

St. Thomas Christians of Malabar were in communion with the Roman Church through the East Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Bagdad. Their bishops came from Bagdad, ordained and appointed by the Patriarch of the East Syrian Church. Mar Abraham, Archbishop of Angamaly was the last bishop ordained and sent to Malabar by the East Syrian (Chaldean) Patriarch. Mar Abraham died in 1597.

Vasco Da Gama, the Portuguese explorer and his companion sailors had reached Kozhikode in 1498. By the middle of sixteenth century, they established themselves firmly in Kochi. By an agreement between the King of Portugal and the Roman Pope, ecclesiastical patronage was granted to the Portuguese King. By this patronage, *Padroado*, the Portuguese gained ecclesiastical power over the colonies they established. The Portuguese gained control over the St. Thomas Christians by the subtle use of this power (Kochumuttom 2014, 58).

Archbishop of Goa, Don Alexis Menezes took control over the Malabar church and convened the Synod of Udayamperoor on 20 January 1599. He saw to it that 130 priests and 660 lay representatives from Syrian Churches participated in the Synod. They took an oath that they would not accept any bishop unless sent by the Holy See. The synod by its decisions decimated the Liturgical

traditions, customs and ways of life of the St. Thomas Christians which was well integrated with the local culture. The Liturgical and Theological books of the St. Thomas Christians which were in Syriac, Tamil, Persian, Greek, and Arabic Languages were destroyed completely.

The systematic Latinization process initiated by Archbishop Menezes wounded and shattered the community. It culminated in the *Coonan Cross Oath* of 3 January 1653 at Mattanchery by which they vowed not to remain under the Jesuit Bishop, Francis Garcia SJ (Kochumuttom 2014, 59). In a rather quick response in 1657, Pope Alexander VII, pulled out the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar from *padroado* jurisdiction and entrusted the Malabar Mission to the Carmelite Missionaries under the Propoganda Fide Congregation. On 3 December 1659, the Vicariate Apostolic of Malabar was erected for the St. Thomas Christians. The Latin churches of the area were also brought under the Vicariate. Later on 13 March 1709, Pope Clement XI suppressed the Vicariate of Malabar and erected the Vicariate of Varapuzha.

The efforts of the Holy See through the Carmelite Missionaries yielded its fruits. By 1662, majority of the rebellious St. Thomas Christians were brought back to the Catholic fold. One group was in contact with the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, also known as the Jacobite Church.

The new group of St. Thomas Christians who were affiliated to the West Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch were known as "*Puthenkoottukar*" (New Group) and those who continued in the Catholic fold were called "*Pazhayakoottukar*" (Old Group).

In 1663, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese at Kochi. They ordered all the Catholic Missionaries to leave Malabar.

Bishop Sebastiani and other Carmelite Missionaries of Varapuzha left India after ordaining Fr. Chandy Parambil as the Bishop of the Vicariate of Varapuzha (Kochumuttom 2014, 60). The Carmelite Missionaries were later allowed to return to Malabar. Thus, the community of the St. Thomas Christians were divided into splinter groups; *Puthenukoottakar*, *Pazhayakoottakar*, those under *Padroado* jurisdiction, those under Propaganda Jurisdiction, the rebels who insisted on getting Bishops from Chaldea (Bagdad), etc. However, in the nineteenth century the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar were under the care of the Carmelite Missionaries, one or the other of whom, exercising the power of the Local Ordinary, as Vicar Apostolic of Malabar from their seat at Varapuzha.

### **Life of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara**

During the nineteenth century, St. Thomas Christians of Malabar were recovering from the shocks of the Synod of Udayamperoor, Coonan Cross Oath, process of Latinization and the division of the Church into splinter groups. In the church, priestly formation was in shambles, religious life, monasteries and convents were non-existent, pastoral care of the people was minimal, discipline of the clergy nominal, efforts for evangelisation was non-heard-of and works of charity and homes of charity were absent. Church administration was with the Carmelite Missionaries from Italy and local leadership was never recognised nor promoted. God sent his servant St. Kuriakose Elias to fill this vacuum of the Church of St. Thomas Christians.

Kuriakose was born on 10 February 1805 as the youngest son, among 2 brothers and 4 sisters, of Kuriakose and Mary of Chavara Family at Kainakari of Chennankari Parish of the Present Allapuzha district of the State of Kerala in India.

Young Kuriakose had his early education in 'Kalari' (Tuition house) under an 'asan' (tutor). Malpan Thomas Palackal, on a visit to Kainakari happened to meet Kuriakose, 11 years old at that time. He was impressed by the gracefulness, manners and intelligence of the young boy and welcomed him to join the seminary at Pallipuram. As it was very hard for the parents to part with the child at a very young age, they decided to entrust him to their parish priest at Chennankari for acquainting him with priestly life. Later in 1818, at the age of 13, he was admitted to the seminary at Pallipuram according to the Syrian custom; Peter Alcantara of Varapuzha initiated him to priestly formation with the tonsure-ceremony. Seminarian Kuriakose proved his Christian charity by forgiving his parishioners who purposefully denied him the traditional welcome at his parish church after the tonsure ceremony (Mundadan 2008, 60-61).

In the seminary, Scholastic Kuriakose was the dearest disciple to his Malpan and a model to his companions. He was selected along with two others to study Latin. Malpan Palackal took with him these three students to Varapuzha; made arrangements for their stay, with an intention to get them admitted to the Latin Language Course in Varapuzha seminary. The students were humiliated and sent back as they were not permitted to attend the Latin Classes. This experience did not deter young Kuriakose from his decision to learn Latin. He mastered the language through private tuition and self effort.

### **"The Lord Is My Portion"**

The greatest trial of his seminary life was when the scholastic Kuriakose had a message from his home that both his parents and his brother died, due to an epidemic. His

uncles asked him to return home from the seminary. 'The Lord is my portion' (Ps 16:5) was the motto of Kuriakose. He went home; made arrangements for the care of his sister in law and niece, the only survivors in the family, and came back to the seminary.

Trials and crosses accompanied him. His ordination to priesthood was scheduled for 13 September 1829 at Varapuzha. But when Malpan Thomas Palackal reached Varapuzha with the deacons for ordination, he was told that the scheduled ordination ceremonies were cancelled since Bishop Maurelius Stabilini was indisposed and sick. Deacon Kuriakose was not disappointed, but it increased his dependence on and trust in God. Later, on 29 November 1829, he was ordained a priest at Arthungal Church and he offered his first mass at his parish church Chennankiri on 30 November 1829.

### **Monastery at Mannanam**

Fr. Kuriakose shared with his mentors Fr. Thomas Palackal and Fr. Thomas Porukara an ardent desire to start religious life in the Malabar church. He was convinced that if there were religious communities for men and women in the Malabar church, it would have been fruitful and vibrant. The first step towards the founding of religious life in Malabar was establishing a monastery at Mannanam. The foundation stone for St. Joseph's monastery Mannanam was laid on 11 May 1831; A community of zealous religious, pastorally oriented and committed, consisting of priests, scholastics and a lay brother emerged at Mannanam under the leadership of Fathers Palackal, Porukara and Chavara.

### **Trials for the New Initiative**

The Mannanam initiative of the three fathers was with the blessing of Bishop Maurelius Stabilini of Varapuzha. The foundation laying at Mannanam on 11 May 1831 was in the presence of the Bishop. In 1832, Archbishop Francis Xavier was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha. He received several complaints against the Mannanam initiative and the fathers related to it. Fr. Kuriakose was managing the work at Mannanam. Bishop appointed him Vicar at South Pallipuram. Fr. Porukara who was involved in raising funds for the project and also was managing the work at Mannanam was transferred to Kollam. Fr. Palackal was at the seminary in Pallipuram. All expected that the Mannanam project would fail; or, the fathers would disobey the bishop to continue with the work. They obeyed and work continued; Bro. Jacob Kannianthara was there at Mannanam. The bishop was pleased at the obedience of the fathers. Frs. Porukara and Chavara were relieved from their assignments so that they could continue with the work at Mannanam.

### **Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel**

Mannanam initiative for religious life culminated in the first profession of the 11 fathers and the canonical founding of the community of the Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel on 8 December 1855. (Kochumuttom 2014, 133) During the 24 years (1831-1855) the fathers constantly requested the Vicar Apostolic for the canonical approval of the religious life at Mannanam; but before it was granted two of the founding fathers left for their heavenly abode, Fr. Palackal in 1841 and Fr. Porukara in 1846. From among the first three, Fr. Chavara was left behind to carry forward the destinies of the community at Mannanam. The first printing

press and publishing house of the St. Thomas Christians and the first Sanskrit school opened to all sections of the society were established at Mannanam by 1846. By this time, Mannanam was the spiritual capital of the Malabar church. Seminary for the formation of the diocesan priests, renewal retreat for priests and examinations for priests were conducted at Mannanam. Retreat preachers were sent from Mannanam to different parishes for conducting retreats for the laity. Liturgical and spiritual books were printed and distributed from Mannanam. Bishop Francis Xavier, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha by patent letters dated 16 November 1844 had appointed Fr. Porukara and Fr. Kuriakose Chavara as Malpans. Fr. Kuriakose Elias was the First Prior of Mannanam monastery. He continued as the prior of all the monasteries till his death. Under his leadership, the community grew fast and monasteries were founded at Koonammavu, Elturuth, Plasanal, Vazhakulam, Pulinckunnu, Ambhazhakad, Mutholy and Chettipuzha. In his last testament and will addressed to his conferrers, Fr. Chavara laid down a road map for establishing future monasteries.

### **The Leadership of Kuriakose Elias Chavara**

After the demise of Frs. Palackal and Porukara, Fr. Chavara led the community with prudence and patience. The waiting for the canonical approval of the community was too long; twenty-four tiring and taxing years. Finally, when they were preparing for the first profession, the Carmelite Rule (OCD) without much change was given to them. Twenty-two members of the Mannanam community started the retreat led by Fr. Marcelline OCD in preparation for the canonical erection of the congregation; only 11 of them completed the retreat. The other eleven left the community finding its rules

hard to practice in the climate and context of Malabar. Bishop Bernadine was not ready to make any change to the rules given. With a painful heart Fr. Chavara kept together the eleven who opted to be the members of the community 'The Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel'.

It was an independent indigenous religious community for the St. Thomas Christians under the Local Ordinary, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha. On 1 October 1860, the Superior General of the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD) met at council in Rome and decreed that the monasteries and the members thereof which they founded in Malabar under the name 'The Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel' be received as a Carmelite Third Order.

The monasteries were not founded by the OCD. No one from the members of the monasteries had asked for this affiliation; they were not even aware of this process. An independent community was reduced to the Third Order of another Community. The name of the community was changed without the knowledge of its members. There was wide spread resentment among the members of the congregation against this high-handedness. The prudence, piety, humility, obedience and wisdom of Fr. Prior kept the community together and steered it through the turbulence.

### **Roccas Schism**

The St. Thomas Christians of Malabar were eager to get bishops of their own rite. Archbishop Thomas Roccas and companions, some of them who had gone to Babel from Malabar, landed in Kochi on 9 May 1861 claiming that the bishop was sent by the East Syrian Patriarch of Babel with the consent of the Holy Father Pope Pius IX. Malpans, vicars and lay leaders of Malabar rushed to meet him with great enthusiasm. Fr. Chavara loved his community which was



under the jurisdiction of the Vicariate of Varapuzha at that time; he did not want his community to be split again. He sent a circular letter to all the parishes and monasteries asking them to be cautious regarding the Chaldean Bishop who had arrived in Malabar. On 8 June 1861, Fr. Chavara was appointed as the Vicar General of the St. Thomas Christians of the Vicariate of Varapuzha. On 18 June 1861, Fr. Chavara wrote to his Holiness Pope Pius IX to know the truth about Bishop Thomas Roccas. On 5 September 1861, Pope Pius IX replied to the letter of Fr. Chavara stating that Bishop Roccas was sent to Malabar without his permission and that he has asked the Patriarch to call him back. Fr. Chavara and his religious community fought vigorously against Roccas Schism. There was threat to the lives of the members of the monasteries and to the monasteries. It was Fr. Matthai Mariam Kappil, superior of Koonammavu monastery who delivered the excommunication order for Bishop Roccas to his secretary. After delivering the letter, Fr. Matthai had to run away from the scene and he hid himself in a house to save his life. Bishop Roccas was called back by his Patriarch, but he found it difficult to leave Malabar because the people would not allow him to leave. He was helped by Fr. Chavara by arranging for the expenses of his travel and he escaped from Malabar by a ship leaving Kochi on 10 March 1862. At that time 86 churches fully and 36 churches partially were on the side of Bishop Roccas. After his departure from Malabar, through the efforts of the monasteries and the Carmelite Missionaries, gradually most of the churches returned to the Catholic fold.

### **Religious Congregation for Women**

The dream of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara to “to have a ‘*darsanaveedu*’ at least for priests” concealed another dream;

a dream for founding a religious community for sisters. On 4 February 1859, a plot of land belonging to the Syrian Parish of Puthenpally was leased to Archbishop Bernadine Baccinelli for the purpose of building and conducting a convent in the name of the immaculate Holy Mother of Carmel. A building for accommodating 33 persons was completed in a year's time. In 1861, in the context of the Roccas episode it was hurriedly decided to use the building for starting a seminary rather than a convent. It was a disappointing experience for Fr. Chavara but he continued his prayers and efforts for this dream.

In 1864, as decided by Bishop Bernadine, Fr. Prior shifted his residence to Koonammavu.

Fr. Leopold Maria Beccaro, Provincial Delegate and Fr. Chavara were living at Koonammavu. They shared this dream of starting a convent. Two women, Eliswa a widow and her daughter Anna wanted to lead a life of renunciation and solitude. They were in contact with Fr. Leopold. Fr. Chavara was in contact with a lady, a widow, leading a pious life for many years. She also wanted to join the community leading a life of renunciation. The idea of starting a convent was presented to the Bishop. It was approved by Archbishop Bernadine Baccinelli. A small plot of land belonging to Eliswa and her daughter was given for the construction of the convent. A small building with a mud floor, thatched roof and bamboo mat walls was constructed and all the necessary furnishings and arrangements for a convent were made. On Tuesday, 13 February 1866, three women - Eliswa, her daughter Anna and her younger Sister Theresa - started living as a community in the new building. On 14 February 1866, another widow Eliswa whose name was changed to Clara also joined the community.

The community was lovingly guided by Frs. Leopold and Kuriakose. The people supported the new venture. Construction of a new convent building started on 18 July 1866 and was completed by 27 March 1867. The '*panambu math*' (Bamboo Mat Convent) was replaced by a convent built in mortar and stone within a year. The community grew fast and later developed into two religious congregations; CTC, Congregation of the Teresian Carmelites of the Latin Rite and CMC, Congregation of the Mother of Carmel of the Syrian Rite.

### **A Prolific Writer**

Fr. Chavara was prior of the monasteries, Vicar General of the Syrians of the Vicariate of Varapuzha, a preacher in much demand, publisher and distributor of spiritual books, Malpan - Professor and Examiner, Settler of disputes, trouble shooter of problems in parishes, evangeliser of Dalits, Founder of Schools, initiator of pious associations, liturgical reformer, a warrior against schisms, a man of prayer and contemplation, founder of monasteries, founder and guide of convents and sisters. In the midst of all these, he found time to write books. He knew Malayalam, Syriac and Tamil well. He had a working knowledge of Latin, Portuguese, Italian and Sanskrit.

### **Liturgical Works**

In 1866, he wrote and published '*Tukasa*', rubrics for the Syriac Missal printed in Rome in 1774 which was in use in Malabar till 1962. The liturgical calendar was prepared and published by Fr. Chavara from 1866 onwards. By 1869, he completed compiling and editing of the Canonical Prayers of the Syrian Church in Syriac Language and got it approved by Rome. Before it was printed, he passed away.

Archbishop Mellano published this work in 1876 and it was in use till 1962. Office for the Dead and funeral services were prepared by Fr. Chavara; but it was published only in 1882. He translated from Latin, the Liturgy of the Holy Saturday, prayers for 40 Hour Adoration and Benedictions.

His literary works include '*Nalagamangal*' (Chronicles) which gives us a detailed account of the events of his times.

'*Atmanutapam*' (Compunction of the Soul) is a major poetic work in Malayalam. It consists of 3000 verses reflecting on the life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The work reflects his own life; it is autobiographical.

'*Anastasiyayude Raktasakshyam*' (Martydom of Anastasia) is a minor poetic work in Malayalam. '*Maranaveetil Paduvanulla Paroum*' contains 1162 verses to be sung in a house where someone has died. '*Dhyanasallapangal*' is a collection of meditations. '*Dhyanakuripukal*' contains meditation notes. He has also composed prayers for different occasions.

### **Eclogues**

A set of ten short Christmas-plays, in the form of dialogue between shepherds, mostly duets, known as eclogues, written between 1856 and 1857, staged first in the Monastery at Koonammavu and later in CMI and CMC formation houses elsewhere, are considered to be authored by Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara. They are the first short plays in Malayalam. Classical Latin poems 'Eclogue' were written by the great poet Virgil. Father Chavara might have read Italian or Latin Christian eclogues of his times. The ten eclogues in Malayalam are: the eclogue of the wise; the eclogue of the unbelieving; the eclogue of the announcement of the birth of Jesus; the eclogue of the Holy Innocents; the eclogue of Faith, Hope, and Charity; the eclogue of St.

Joseph; the eclogue of the angels; the eclogue of the believing; the eclogue of the animals; the eclogue of the sleeping. This is a great contribution to early Malayalam literature. These short dramas bear witness to the biblical knowledge, devotion and pastoral commitment of the author.

### **The Letters**

*The Complete Works of Saint Chavara* was published in four volumes by CMI Prior General's House during 1981-1982. The first volume contained the *Chronicles*, second volume *Literary Works* including the poems, the third volume containing the *Spiritual Works* and the fourth volume containing the *Letters*. The Letters are grouped into 10 categories:

1. Letters addressed to the Holy Father
2. Letters Addressed to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide
3. Letters Addressed to Bishops
4. Letters Addressed to the Superior General of the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD), Rome
5. Letters addressed to the Members of the Congregation
6. Common Circulars to the Members of the Congregation
7. Letters Addressed to the Sisters
8. Letters Addressed to the Diocesan Priests
9. Circular Letters sent by Fr. Chavara
10. Letters related to Transactions

### **The Present Translation**

The letters were published in Malayalam in 1981-1982. Sr. Mary Leo CMC translated the letters to English and it was published by the 'Committee for the Cause of Bl. Chavara' from Mannanam in 1990. A critical edition of the letters in

Malayalam, with the photocopies of the original documents attached, was published by Chavara Central Secretariat in 2011. It was edited by Thomas Panthaplackal CMI and Jossy Maria CMC. The present translation is totally based on the above edition. The focus of the translation was to render the original text faithfully in simple, lucid language. The letters mean Formal Letters, Informal Notes, Circulars, long Discourses addressed to a community, legal documents, statements, etc. It reveals the inner depth, raw reality, delicate feelings, human frailties, shortcomings and limitation of the person writing. St. Chavara's letters are windows offering glimpses of the society, culture and religious struggles of his times. May Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara intercede for us so that we may be inspired and enlightened by his life and writings!

Birthday of Saint Chavara  
10 February 2020

Fr. Augustine Keemattam CMI  
Darsana, Wardha

# 1

## LETTERS TO THE HOLY FATHER

*We have two letters belonging to this category. Both are addressed to His Holiness Pope Pius IX. The first letter was written on 19 June 1861, after Father Chavara was appointed the Vicar General for the Syro-Malabar Catholics of the Vicariate of Varapuzha. The letter was sent to the Pope to clear the doubts regarding the jurisdiction of Bishop Roccas who had come to Malabar from Babel on 9 May 1861. The reply to the letter by Pope Pius IX clarified the matter and helped to contain the Roccas schism which was spreading like wild fire. It is a sign of great prudence that Father Chavara had insisted on getting the reply from the Holy Father in Syriac language. The letter is also an ample evidence for the filial devotion, obedience and docility of Father Chavara to the Holy See. He was appointed Vicar General on 8 June 1861; he sends the letter to the Holy Father on 19 June. Holy Father sends a reply to Fr. Chavara on 5 September 1861, giving all the needed information.*

*The second letter dated 25 April 1870 informs the Holy Father that some persons coming from Babel to Malabar cause division and dispute in the Church here. The letter also contains some suggestions for solving the problem. The letter of Father Chavara is a proof of his great concern for the Church, her unity and harmony. It also shows his filial freedom with the Holy Father that he could give suggestions for solving the problems.*

### 1.1. First Letter to His Holiness Pope Pius IX

*Father Chavara wrote this letter in Syriac language. He mentions about this letter in his work, "Chronicles" (CWC I 2000: 99). In a letter dated 21 August 1861 of the Pontifical Congregation, 'Propaganda Fide' addressed to the Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, it is mentioned that a letter in Syriac language from Malabar was received by the Pope and it has been handed over to be translated. Now the original letter in Syriac is not found in the archives in Rome, but an Italian translation of the same is preserved (Scritture Originali dei Congre. Gen. per gli affari Orientali, 1865-1866). It is mentioned that the translator is Fr. Joseph Guriel. We are giving here below a translation of the Italian text.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph

To the Most High, the Most Glorious Throne of  
His Holiness Pope Pius IX,  
exercising the Supreme Authority in the Church of our Lord,  
holding the key of Saint Peter who was assured, against the  
Church 'the gates of Hades will not prevail' (Mt 16:18).

We, the humble, poor, sick, 'weak in faith and charity,'  
children of Your Holiness, belonging to the Congregation of  
Mother of Carmel of Immaculate Conception, obedient to  
His Grace Archbishop Bernardine, Vicar Apostolic of  
Malabar, and to the faithful co-workers and Fathers of the  
Order of Discalced Carmelites, together with our Superior,  
Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, kneeling down before Your  
Holiness in spirit and kissing Your sacred feet, submit to  
Your Holiness these few lines:



On 9 May 1861, Bishop Thomas Roccas, sent by Mar Joseph Audo, the Patriarch of Babel has arrived at Malabar from Mosul with a patent letter of the Patriarch. Kathanar Anthony from here, who had been to Mosul is also accompanying the Bishop.

This Bishop, however, preaches to all our faithful that he is sent to Malabar with the permission and order of Your Holiness. Further, he says that he is granted jurisdiction by the Patriarch to govern the Syrian churches in Malabar. But Monsignor Bernardine, in his pastoral letter states, "The Patriarch has sent Bishop Roccas to Malabar by his own authority, order and will, against the will and order of the Holy Father. Hence, any priest-candidate who receives or anyone who confers any ecclesiastical faculty or holy order, under the authority of the above bishop, is excommunicated *ipso facto*."

In spite of this, we feel some priests and the faithful go to him, almost daily, as if, they approve of all his actions and follow his foot steps. Perhaps, before we receive a reply to this letter from Your Holiness, all our churches may line up in obedience to him; the only exception may be a few churches led by the Carmelite priests. The Omniscient God who foresees everything knows this.

Therefore, Holy Father, humbly and with tears in our eyes, we request Your Holiness that the truth about these matters be communicated to us, that too, in our Chaldean language (Syriac). Kindly make it clear to us what the Patriarch has requested Your Holiness, what reply has been given to him, and of the two Bishops whom should we obey. From this troubled and confused atmosphere, lead us through the right path as Your Holiness, adorned with all blessings and graces, believes as right and proper. Thus, we pray that we, the 'doubting', be confirmed in truth.

Finally, we kneel down in spirit, before Your Throne, kiss Your Feet and pray that Your Paternal Blessings be bestowed on us abundantly so that we may continue to be your obedient children.

The same blessing be bestowed in abundance on all our churches, families, on our nation, and all its citizens, for, we are under the rulers who have not yet known Our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the Monastery at Mannanam,

19 June 1861

Kuriakose Elias, Prior

Fr. Alexander	Fr. Eliseus
Fr. Antony Sylvester	Fr. Kuriakose
Fr. Kuriakose	Fr. Alexander
Fr. Joseph	Fr. Jacob
Fr. Alexander	Fr. Johannan
Fr. Kuriakose	Fr. Joseph

P.S. Holy Father, kindly send us a reply to this letter in our Chaldean (Syriac) language, at the earliest.

### **Reply of His Holiness Pope Pius IX to the letter of Saint Chavara**

*His Holiness Pope Pius IX, on 5 September 1861 sent a reply to Father Chavara and his conferrers. It was in Latin and was signed by the Pope. The letter is preserved to this day in the Archives of Mannanam Monastery. Together with the letter in Latin, its Syriac translation too was sent from Rome. Fr. Bernard TOCD in his work, Marthoma Kristyanikal, Vol. II, pp. 272-275, published in 1921 gives the Syriac version and its Malayalam translation.*

Greetings and Apostolic Blessings to my beloved children,  
Kuriakose Elias, Prior, Fr. Alexander Joseph, Fr. Kuriakose  
Eliseus and other priests of the Syrian rite of Malabar.

My beloved children,

I am happy to inform you that I have received the letter you have sent to me on 19 June. You wanted to know how you should deal with Bishop Roccas who has come to you on 9 May, this year, with the letter of Mar Joseph Audo, Patriarch of the Chaldeans of Babel, my Respected Brother. I understand that Bishop Roccas claims to have been sent by Mar Joseph, the Patriarch as per my orders to govern the Syrian churches of Malabar.

I am very happy that regarding this very serious issue, in order to clear all doubts due to different opinions, you have approached the Apostolic See, the Great Church of Rome, mother and teacher of all other churches to seek advice and guidance.

Beloved children, let it be known to you that on 26 November 1860, by a written order I had asked the Patriarch of Babel not to get involved in any manner in the affairs of the churches in Malabar. And also, be informed that Bishop Roccas has come to Malabar now only by the decision and order of this Patriarch. Hence beloved children, Bishop Roccas has no ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the churches in Malabar; he has been illegally appointed and is under many ecclesiastical censures.

Therefore, Monsignor Bernardine (Archbishop of Parsalia), my brother, representative and vicar of the Holy Apostolic See alone is the Ordinary of the Churches of Malabar. Legally you all are subject to him.

I also inform you that I have ordered Patriarch, Mar Joseph to call back Bishop Roccas from Malabar at the earliest.

As a sign of all heavenly blessings and my paternal love for you, my beloved children, I cordially bestow on all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

Sixteenth Year of my Pontificate, 5 September 1861  
From St. Peter's Basilica, Rome  
Pope Pius IX

## 1.2. Second Letter to His Holiness Pope Pius IX

*This letter dated 25 April 1870, is written in Syriac and signed by Father Chavara. It is preserved in the archives of the Oriental Congregation, Rome (Scrit. Rif. Mal. 1875). It is regarding the anxieties of the Christians of Malabar with respect to the interventions in their matters by the church of Bagdad, which used to be affected by heresies often. St. Chavara was very much concerned that such heresies may not affect the faithful in Malabar. Hence, he takes precautions against such possible situations.*



Jesus Mary Joseph

To His Holiness Pope Pius IX enthroned on the Apostolic See, holding the key of Saint Peter and the rightful Head of the Church!

At the most revered feet of Your Holiness, we, your humble children – Vicars, priests, scholastics, together with the members of Third Order of the Carmelites Discalced, and their Prior Kuriakose Elias, confess this great grief:

A few days back, Bishop Mar Thomas Roccas was sent to us from Euphrates with the letter of Mar Joseph Audo, the Patriarch of Babel. It has caused a lot of division among our churches and the faithful. The deep wound and trauma due to this event, caused to the faithful who are not deep-rooted in faith are not yet healed. Your Holiness is well aware of this fact. After this incident, now, two monks belonging to the Order of St. Anthony the Great have come to us for collecting alms and donations. In the beginning, they appeared to be very noble and gentle and the faithful enjoyed their presence. Later, it was found that their way of behaviour, rituals and blessings, and manners were strange and frightening. We are afraid that this latter event may

become more serious a problem than the former. Hence Holy Father, we humbly request and pray that Your Holiness may directly, give a strict, clear and strong order to the Patriarch of Babel, who is staying with Your Holiness, in Rome, these days. The order may state that here after, with the permission of the Patriarch or with the letter of someone on behalf of the Patriarch, Bishops or Priests be not sent to us for any purpose. We are requesting this not due to any enmity to them, but because we see that this causes the faithful to renounce the Holy Catholic Church and risk their salvation.

Finally, we pray that the blessing of Your Holiness be on all of us, on our kingdom and on our 'Maharaja' and his ministers so that their hearts may be illumined and drawn to the light of faith.

We, your humble children kneel before Your Holiness in spirit and kiss your feet. With our beloved Bishop, Monsignor Leonard, we declare our readiness to abide by all your orders and to be obedient to Your Holiness. Once again, requesting Your Holiness that all our prayers be granted to us by the power of your authority. Amen.

25 April 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior, Third  
Order of Carmelites Discalced (Sd.)

## 2

### LETTERS TO THE PREFECT OF THE CONGREGATION OF PROPAGANDA FIDE

*We have with us six letters sent by Fr. Chavara to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Five are addressed to His Eminence Alexander Cardinal Barnabo and one addressed to His Eminence Cardinal Simeoni. One letter is a repetition of the contents of a letter sent to His Holiness Pope Pius IX. The first two letters are regarding Bishop Roccas written during the period of Roccas controversy. Two letters are regarding liturgy and one on the benefits of having separate Bishops for Latin and Syrian rites. Another letter requests the Cardinal to control, from time to time, the interventions of Bagdad in the affairs of the Church in Malabar.*

*These letters reveal how much Father Chavara loved the Syrian Church in Malabar and how eager he was to promote its unity, identity and traditions. His great desire to renew the Liturgy and the canonical prayers for the priests according to the Syrian tradition is evident in these letters. He requests permission to adapt the Holy Saturday rituals of the Latin rite to Syrian rite, since such rituals were not in the Syrian tradition. It was to manifest the Catholic identity of the Church in the context of Malabar where Latins, Syrians, Jacobites, Jews, Muslims and Hindus were living in harmony. This initiative of Father Chavara was misunderstood as pro-latinization attitude and criticised by some while ignoring his efforts to maintain the Syrian traditions.*

## 2.1. Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide

*This letter is in Syriac language. It is preserved in the archives of the Congregation for Oriental Churches (Scrit. Rif. Mesopotamia – Persia: Caldei e Latini, 1856-1863 (Vol. 21 f. 875).*

To His Eminence Alexander Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, worthy of all praise and honour in the name of our Lord Jesus,

I, your humble son, religious priest Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior of all the monasteries of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Mary Immaculate, with the religious priests of all the monasteries, subject to Monsignor Bernardine, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, write the following:

Spiritually kissing your sacred hands and requesting your paternal blessings, we would like to inform Your Eminence, with great pain, the events which were happening in our midst, these days. Mar Joseph Audo, Patriarch of Babel has sent Bishop Thomas Roccas to our midst. This Bishop preaches to the Christians in Malabar that he has been sent by the Patriarch to govern the church in Malabar by the order of His Holiness Pope Pius IX. The faithful and even some priests believe fully his words. They have been reiterating often that the orders of Archbishop Bernardine are very heavy and hard to bear.

Your Eminence, we feel that within a couple of months all the faithful of Malabar will follow him unless Bishop Roccas is prohibited by Your Eminence or His Holiness the Pope. Even those who were very obedient and faithful to the Church have slipped into their group. Hence, with great anxiety, tears and sorrow we request Your Eminence to let



us know the truth about these matters without any delay. If the reply is in our Syriac language, all will be able to see and read the same and all the priests in Malabar will be convinced.

Finally, we would place before Your Eminence some facts and the thoughts of our hearts. Since some time, the faithful and the clergy are moving away from Monsignor Bernardine, the Vicar Apostolic. The reason they find is that his orders are strict and his directives beyond limits. But in truth, he is doing his duties justly and with great zeal. But our clergy and the faithful, weak in faith and lacking in charity, are not able to understand this fact. Hence, with an open heart we suggest that another Bishop, may be, Monsignor Carlose, Vicar Apostolic of Kollam or any other Bishop, Your Eminence feel worthy and suitable, be appointed as the Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha. Unless such a step is taken, those followers of Bishop Roccas will not be converted and return to the fold of the Holy Catholic Church. Even, an interdict against Bishop Roccas will not have much effect.

Your Eminence should not misunderstand this request as a sign of our leaning towards the Chaldeans. Because, from the very beginning we know that the rule of the Chaldeans is not of much profit for us. They always lead us with great joy, but their interaction with the schismatic Jacobite Christians living among us causes scandal for our faith. Opening our hearts, we apprise your Eminence all facts so that your earnest attention and care be upon our souls, our churches and our monasteries. For, we are weak in faith and lacking in charity. We earnestly entreat you that Your Paternal Blessings be showered on our nation and pray for us that the merciful God may not abandon us. We believe

that God will not forsake anyone who prays with a clear conscience and repentant heart.

From the Monastery at Mannanam,

22 July 1861

Prior, Aha Kuriakose Elias (Sd.)

## **2.2. Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide**

*This letter dated 2 October 1861 addressed to His Eminence Alexander Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide was written in Syriac language. It is preserved in the Archives of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, Rome (Script. rif. Mesopotomia-Persia: Caldei e Latini, 1856-1863 Vol. 21ff. 953-955). The purpose of the letter was to know the truth about Bishop Roccas. It is mentioned in the letter that it was the fifth letter being sent for this purpose.*

To His Eminence Alexander Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, worthy of all praise and honour,

I, Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior of all the communities of the Congregation of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Mary Immaculate, together with some priests obedient to Monsignor Bernardine, Archbishop of Barpola, kissing your hands write this fifth letter describing a painful fact. Since it has been truly noted that MarThomas, the Chaldean Bishop from Babylon who came to us has not received any reprimand so far for the evils he has committed and since we have not received any reply to the letters we have sent to Rome after his arrival, we are extremely sad. Moving around in all our churches, by the laying of his hands, he is conferring Holy Orders on 'Shamsanas' (Scholastics) worthy or unworthy, learned or not. He has conferred priestly Orders, Diaconates and other orders on many, irrespective of their duration of training. He has conducted the ordination rites in Chaldean rite which we are not familiar with. Here we celebrate Mass with unleavened bread. His ways of celebrating the liturgy are unbearable for us. The

people share the Body and Blood of Jesus from the same chalice of the Bishop; their sons and daughters are anointed with Sacred Chrism, and so on.

We had published the warning against Bishop Thomas which you had sent to us through our Bishop Bernardine. But in the churches which obey Bishop Thomas Roccas, he speaks publicly, "The letter being circulated is not sent from Rome. It is only the creation of Archbishop Bernardine's imagination." He continues, "His Excellency David, Latin rite Bishop of Celeusia in his letter sent to me from Rome, said that when the Patriarch of Chaldea reached the gates of Rome the Holy Father himself had sent all the Cardinals to welcome His Beatitude. They welcomed him with great solemnity. Moreover, when the Holy Father heard that the Delegate Apostolic had made false accusations against Bishop Thomas, the Holy Father being annoyed, called him to Rome and reprimanded him severely." (Till now, no reply has been received for the letters sent to the Holy Father by the clergy from here.) Daily, Bishop Roccas moves around and visits the churches and addresses the people.

Hence, we humbly request Your Eminence to send us urgently a reply to the letter we had sent to His Holiness the Pope. We want the reply to our letter in Chaldean (Syriac) language. It should bear the signature and seal of the Holy Father. By this, the priests who are allegiant to Bishop Thomas Roccas may also read the letter; the faithful also will understand the truth and the mouth of the opponents may be shut. We hope that this Bishop will be immediately called back to Baghdad and that once he is removed from Malabar, the crisis over here will be solved. But, in case, he continues here, the unrest among the people will, for sure, endure. It seems even if excommunicated, those who are allegiant to Bishop Roccas may not return.

Hence, kindly do the needful urgently so that Bishop Roccas is called back to Babel by an order of the Patriarch of Chaldea.

Finally, we request your apostolic blessings on us, on our monasteries and on our churches, persecuted by infidels and apostates, like a ship tossed in waves. Amen.

Written from Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)  
St. Joseph's Monastery,  
Mannanam

2 October 1861

Servant of Christ Youseph  
Kathanar (Vicar) (Sd.)  
Aha Kuriakose Albertose (Sd.)  
Servant of Christ Geevarghese  
Kathanar (Vicar) (Sd.)  
Servant of the Lord, Fr. John (Sd.)  
Servant of Christ Scaria (Sd.)

### **2.3. First Letter Addressed to Cardinal Simeoni, the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide**

*This letter is written in Syriac language. The handwriting is of Saint Chavara. But we do not find the date and the signature of Fr. Chavara in this letter since it was sent to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide by Bishop Bernardine with an introductory note. This might have been written in 1864. The letter is preserved in the archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (Scrit. rif. mal. 1862-1877ff. 120-121). The content of the letter is a request to scrutinize and approve the book of canonical prayers in Syriac, which has been sent to Rome for approval, to accept a liturgical rite for Holy Saturday adapted from the Latin rite, and to ratify certain modifications in the liturgical text.*

To His Eminence Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, all the Diocesan and Religious Priests and Scholastics of the Syro-Malabar Church write:

We are very happy about the keen interest Your Eminence has taken in the scrutiny and approval of the book of canonical prayers in Syriac, which we had sent to the Sacred Congregation, around two years back, through Monsignor Bonnand. We have come to know through our Bishop Bernardine that the work of examining those books is going to be completed soon and we are exceedingly happy about it. We hope that the scrutiny will be concluded and the approval granted at the earliest. Especially, our elderly priests are eagerly waiting for seeing the approved new text of the canonical prayers in Syriac.

Along with this, we are sending for approval the Liturgy of Holy Saturday in Syriac language translated from Latin ritual. For, at present, according to the Syrian rite, there is

no service in the Syrian churches on Holy Saturday. Like Jewish places of worship, our churches remain closed on that day. Hence, we request Your Eminence to get this rite approved for us at the earliest. Moreover, we request Your Eminence that the reading from the Gospel of St. John, commencing with the verse, "In the beginning was the Word..." which used to be chanted at the conclusion of the Holy Qurbana, and is no more in practice, be permitted to be restored.

We pray that, in view of our spiritual advancement, all our requests be granted at the earliest.

We entreat that the Good Lord grant you a long life and bestow his choicest blessings on you. In spirit we kiss your hands and implore that the Lord may bless abundantly all your daily endeavours.

Requesting your paternal blessings,  
We remain.

## 2.4. Second Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide

*There are two letters written on the same date, 31 May 1869, in the same language, Syriac, addressed to the same person, the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, having the same content, regarding liturgy; one signed by Fr. Chavara alone and the other signed by Fr. Chavara with other priest members of the Congregation. Here below is a translation of the letter signed by Fr. Chavara together with his conferrers.*

Your Eminence, Cardinal, worthy of great honour and praise, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, our beloved father,

We, the subjects of Monsignor Leonard, Bishop of Olymba, all priests and scholastics of the Syro-Chaldean Church, all the religious priests of all monasteries of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced, humbly submit at your feet this written petition.

We have translated the Liturgy of the Holy Saturday of Lent according to the rite of the Holy Roman Catholic Church from Latin to Syriac. We have already sent the same to Your Eminence's office. For, we have in our Missal all the rites of liturgy from the Ash day of Lent to Good Friday of the Passion of Our Lord. Moreover, a reading from the Gospel of St. John is chanted at the conclusion of every Holy Mass in all other rites and churches of Syro-Chaldean tradition. Kindly grant us permission to follow this tradition of reading as per our rite on all days. At present, we use frankincense in daily mass. In many places it causes difficulties, especially since this custom is not followed in Latin churches and in some Syrian churches. In those churches incense is not used except on the occasion of



solemn Mass, solemn feasts and Sundays. But the priests of the Syrian Jacobite churches, who are not in communion with the Holy See use incensing very solemnly vibrating their hands.

Hence, with great expectation, we request Your Eminence permission for: using the Holy Week rites, chanting the Gospel during the concluding rite of the Mass, discontinuing the use of incense in holy Mass, except during solemn celebration of the Mass on special days, introducing the new Syriac book of canonical prayers of week days and feast days and following the rubrics of our Missal printed in Rome in 1844.

At present, however, we offer the Holy Mass of ferial days and recite the canonical prayers of the week.

Humbly we request Your Eminence to obtain for us all the above permissions from the Holy See.

Finally, in spirit we kiss your hands and pray that your paternal blessings be upon us. Entreating your prayers, we conclude.

Written from  
St. Philomena's  
Monastery,  
Koonammavu  
31 May 1869

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior

Third Order of Carmelites  
Discalced, (Sd.)  
Aha Scaria Ephrem TOCD  
Aha Paulose Shavriar TOCD  
Aha Youseph Agusthinose  
TOCD  
Aha Youseph Yohannan son of  
TOCD  
Aha Paulose Mariyam TOCD

## Diocesan Priests:

Alexander Kathanar, Servant of  
Jesus Christ  
Paulose Kathanar, Servant of the  
Lord  
Pilippose Kathanar, Servant of  
Jesus Christ  
Pathrose Kathanar, Servant of  
Jesus Christ  
Youseph Kathanar, Servant of  
Jesus Christ  
Pilippose Kathanar, Servant of  
Jesus Christ  
Anthonese Kathanar, Servant of  
Our Lord

## 2.5. Third Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide

*The original of this letter, written by Father Chavara in 1869 is in Latin. On 27 December 1875, Archbishop Leonard, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, with an introduction, has sent a copy of this letter to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. This copy is with us. (ACO., Scrit. rif. Mal. 1862-1867, f. 314). Since it is a copy, signature and the date of the original letter is not found. (Concordance with the original, dated 10-6-1968, Mannanam, is signed by Fr. Mathew Vayalunkal.)*

*Even if there is no signature, we have reasons to think that it is of Fr. Chavara. Mar Louise Pazheparambil, the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Ernakulum, in one of his books (An Account of a Most Important Period in the History of the Malabar Church, p. 4) states that Fr. Chavara had sent a letter containing a request for a separate Bishop for the Syrians to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. A letter sent to the Holy Father by a group of Syrian Catholics in 1875, too, mentions a letter sent by Father Chavara to the Holy Father with the similar request. Hence even though we do not have the original with us, there is no need to suspect the veracity of the letter. The letter might have been sent by hand through Fr. Leopold Beccaro who accompanied His Grace Archbishop Leonard who went to Rome in 1869. This letter has influenced the Sacred Congregation in appointing, later, a separate Bishop for the Syrians of Malabar. At the same time, it caused great disturbance at Varapuzha. The reason for the displeasure of His Grace Archbishop Leonard towards Father Chavara too is this letter (Parappuram, MSS, 1015).*

10 December 1869 (*date presumed*)

Your Eminence, Cardinal Bernabo, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide,

I, your most obedient and most humble son, Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior of all the Monasteries in the Vicariate Apostolic of Varapuzha, driven by the good counsel of all diocesan and religious priests of Syro-Chaldean Church of Malabar, with a clear conscience, place before Your Eminence the following:

Now, there are no divisions or conflicts among the faithful regarding ecclesiastical matters. For, all have understood well the deception, craftiness and greed of the Chaldeans who come to us in Malabar, especially through the words and actions of Bishop Thomas Roccas. Although they live in peace now, from our experience, we can say that this state will not last long. When their peace is not disturbed even slightly, it is possible that among those who want to live loosely, the thought of conflict may prop up: 'We are St. Thomas Christians. Since several years we do not have a Bishop of our own. But those who received faith recently have their own Bishop. Therefore, we shall depend on Babel to get a Bishop of our rite.' Moved by such jealousy, whenever they get a chance they would turn to Babel. Or they would, at the least, by sending letters, make a request which those ambitious people would definitely accept.

Hence, Your Eminence, I would bring to your kind attention the following: it is good that we have two Bishops here, one for the Latin Church and the other for the Syrian Church. Thus, the craving for having own Bishop would cease to be and the relationship with Babel would end.

This would be very useful and very helpful for the non-Catholic Jacobites, among whom many are our own blood relations, to renounce schism and to re-unite with the Catholic Church.

## **2.6. Fourth Letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide**

*The original letter is written in Syriac language. It is preserved in the archives of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, Vatican. There is another letter with the same content addressed to the Holy Father (1.2). A Complaint regarding two monks of the Order of St. Anthony the Great, from Chaldea, who have come to Malabar, is the content of the letter.*

In the Name of Our Lord!

To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, your humble son, Kuriakose Elias, Prior of all the Monasteries of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Malabar, through this brief letter requests our father Your Eminence:

Your Eminence knows that Bishop Thomas Roccas from Persia had come to us causing great division among the faithful here. The disturbances caused at that time are not yet settled.

These days, with the permission and letter of the Patriarch of Chaldea, two monks of the Order of St. Anthony the Great have come over here in order to collect alms from the faithful. Since they promote divisive tendencies, their presence here has caused to awaken contentious mind-set the people had. Hence, we, the priests and religious of all our churches had sent a letter to the Holy Father through Monsignor Leonard, our Bishop. In that letter, we have requested

that an order be given directly to the Patriarch of Chaldea, who is in Rome now: "Hereafter, any Bishop or priest from Chaldea be not sent to Malabar, with the permission, letter or in the name of the Patriarch of Chaldea."

Therefore, we pray that this request be granted to us from your throne. This is for the renewal of our community and the benefit of our faithful, churches, monasteries and the rites and traditions of the Syro-Chaldean Church of Malabar. Finally, we request your blessings on all of us who are always your obedient children.

On behalf of all priests and religious of Malabar

25 April 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior  
Son of the Third Order of  
Carmelite Discalced (Sd.)





### 3

## LETTERS TO THE BISHOPS

*We have ten letters belonging to this category, written between 1848 and 1856. Two letters are addressed to Monsignor Ludvic, and the remaining eight addressed to Monsignor Bernardine Baccinelli, both Vicars Apostolic of Varapuzha. Eight of these letters are reports sent by Fr. Chavara to the Vicar Apostolic after conducting enquiries in different parishes as per the order of the Vicar Apostolic. The remaining two are requests submitted to the Bishop seeking permission for certain matters. These letters were sent by hand and the replies of Vicar Apostolic are jotted down in the same paper. We are giving here the replies too.*

*An expression in these letters, namely, "to be read out to His Grace the Archbishop of Varapuzha by the priest-in-assistance to..." is noteworthy. This is an expression generally used, those days, to pay obeisance to the position and authority of a Bishop. In these letters, there are many other colloquial Malayalam phrases and expressions, the richness of which may not be carried forward in translations.*

*Most of these letters are signed in Syriac, 'Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant of the Lord, Chavara'. Beneath the signature a seal-like drawing in his own hand is given. In five of these letters the place is given as 'Beth Rauma'. In others, place is not mentioned. In some, the date too is given. However, on the cover it is noted 'from Mannanam'.*

*In the reply, it is written, "To Chavara Kuriakose Elias Malpan/Kathanar of Mannanam Monastery. In four of these letters we find the title Malpan. Fr. Chavara concludes these letters with the words, "Servant of your Excellency Chavara Kuriakose Malpan." Bishop Francis Xavier had conferred the title*

*Malpan (Professor) on Fr. Chavara in 1844. The letters addressed to the Bishops written by Fr. Chavara after 1856 are not extant.*

*Although he was not holding any responsible position like Secretary to the Bishop, Vicar General, etc., Fr. Chavara used to be entrusted with the responsibility of solving disputes and problems of parishes and priests. This is because he was acceptable to all and his ways of handling such problems were appreciated by all.*

### 3.1. First Letter to Bishop Ludvic

*This is a report submitted to Bishop Ludvic, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, regarding Kumarakam Church, dated 13 March 1848, sent by Fr. Chavara, after conducting a proper enquiry. The details of the problem are not clear from the letter and its reply.*

To be read out to Archbishop Ludvic, Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, knight and steward of the household of the Holy Father, servant of the Holy See and Titular Archbishop of Shisha by the priest-in assistance-to His Grace.

Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar, servant of Your Grace writes: Your Grace had sent me the order to examine the agreement and land-deed brought by the parishioners regarding the Kumarakam church as to whether the documents are genuine and sufficient and thereafter, to inform Your Grace of the findings in writing. Accordingly, I conducted the enquiries. In the land-deed one more claimant had to sign, whose signature has been obtained. Necessary documents, petition and agreement have been prepared and signed by the concerned so that the property acquired by the above land-deeds be entrusted to them for management. I am sending herewith to Your Grace the agreement and other documents. Now I feel that by the Grace of God, everything will move smoothly, if their faults are pardoned and a priest is appointed to administer the church. Hence, I request Your Grace to kindly give orders as to what should be done. Ever obedient and ready to serve, I craving for your blessings,

From 'Beth Rauma'  
13 March 1848

Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant of  
Our Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

**Reply**

If you have decided as above, bless the church. In order to forgive the schismatic of the parish and to release the scholastic from excommunication find out a good priest and grant him the faculties of a Vicar and appoint him there. I hereby grant you all the necessary faculties and authority to do the above.

From Varapuzha  
29 March 1848

Archbishop Ludvic (Sd.)

### **3.2. Second Letter to Bishop Ludvic**

*This is a report dated 2 March 1851 to Bishop Ludvic submitted by Fr. Chavara. An enquiry was conducted by Fr. Chavara regarding the dispute between the parish priest and Fr. Thomas Kachiramattam of Ramapuram parish on the issue of allotting rooms in the presbytery to the priests of Ramapuram parish.*

To be read out to Archbishop Ludvic, Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest-in assistance-to His Grace.

Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar, Servant of Your Grace writes: An enquiry was conducted regarding the dispute over 'Fr. Thomas Kachiramattam of Ramapuram parish with his father, breaking the lock of a room of the presbytery and forcefully occupying it and the problem was not settled even after the key of the room was returned to the parish priest. The vicar complained that the father of Fr. Thomas did not hand over the room to the vicar. Hence Your Grace ordered me to conduct an enquiry summoning all those required and find out the truth and report. Here by I apprise Your Grace the matters which came to light through the enquiry conducted.

It is just to reciprocate gratefully to those who have toiled for the church. Fr. Kachiramattam has worked hard for the church. The room which is the cause of the conflict was constructed by him. An elderly priest from his family had occupied it earlier. In view of these, it is proper that the room be allotted to him for his stay.

But, earlier, two or three priests when they were ordained have asked permission to stay in this room, which was denied by the parish priest. Hence it may cause pain for them if it is allotted to Fr. Thomas. During the parish feast, Fr. Thomas Kachiramattam requested the trustees of the

parish permission to stay in that room and they allowed him. However, he did not obtain a unanimous permission of both the Parish Priest and the trustees. Hence there is no sufficient reason for allotting this room to him. In spite of that, whenever this room is allotted to any one he must be given preference. Moreover, I request that an order be given allotting any one of the vacant rooms to him.

Regarding the report submitted to Your Grace by the Vicar concerning the key of the room:

At the time of the first Mass, when the key of the room was given to him, he did not receive it. But, he took the key secretly. He kept the fact secret and pretended that the key was lost and made a new lock. From the enquiry, it is clear for me, the report stating that the room was force-opened is not true. Hence I feel that the punishment given to the father of Father Thomas be condoned, Fr. Vicar's room be re-allotted to him whenever there is an allotment of rooms and ensure that it is considered fitting that the disputed room be allotted to Fr. Thomas. I surrender the issue to the benevolent decision and order of Your Grace. Praying for Your Blessings,

From Mannanam  
2 March 1851

Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant of  
Our Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

## **Reply**

I had given you the order to hold an enquiry to find out who the culprit is in this dispute and to report to me. But you have not reported that matter. Hence report to me, having found out clearly who is guilty the parish priest, Fr. Thomas or the father of Fr. Thomas. If there are many rooms in the presbytery, let the Parish Priest reside in the room of his choice. Allot the other rooms to other priests as per their

choice according to their seniority. This rule must be enforced in all presbyteries.

From Varapuzha  
1851

Archbishop Ludvic (Sd.)

### 3.3. First Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*This letter dated 19 October 1852 is a request for permission to conduct the procession of the Blessed Sacrament at Mannanam Monastery in connection with the feast of Our Lady of Rosary. The custom of extending the procession of the Blessed Sacrament outside the Church was introduced in Malabar for the first time at Mannanam.*

To be read out to Bishop Bernardine, Pro-Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest-in assistance-to His Excellency.

Servant of Your Excellency, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes: It is a custom that on 21 November, every year, we, the priests and scholastics together celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Rosary in our monastery chapel. On that day, as per the permission obtained in advance, we used to conduct the Eucharistic procession. This year also, we want to have the same on the feast day. Hence, I request Your Excellency to be kind enough to grant us the permission for the Eucharistic procession. Craving for Your Excellency's blessings on me, ever ready for obedience and service,

Mannanam  
19 October 1852

Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant of  
the Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

### Reply

As stated in this letter, on the above mentioned feast day, if there is a custom of extending the Eucharistic procession outside the monastery chapel, I hereby permit the same to be done this year as well. I also remind you that on such occasions when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and adored, disrespect and lack of devotions too happen.



From Varapuzha  
November 1852

Bishop Bernardine (Sd.)

P.S. You or someone else on your behalf must be here to prepare for the celebration of the Holy Mass by the Bishop of Mangalore.

### 3.4. Second Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*This letter is dated 6 November 1852. Fr. Chavara is seeking the advice of Bishop Bernardine regarding the conferring of holy Orders on the scholastics studying at Mannanam seminary.*

To be read out to Bishop Bernardine, Pro-Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest-in-assistance to His Excellency.

Servant of Your Excellency, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes:

As we have here scholastics for receiving the holy Orders, we would like to know whether there are ordinations during the coming vacation and which are the orders being conferred. I am sending herewith the list of 'ordinandi'. I request Your Excellency, kindly to send me a reply to this letter.

Craving for your blessings on me ever ready to serve and obey,

Written from Beth Rauma      Kuriakose Kathanar Chavara,  
6 November 1852              Servant of the Lord (Sd.)

### Reply

Since you have asked me regarding ordinations during the vacation, I have decided to confer only sacramental orders, that is, Diaconate and Priestly Ordination. How is the enquiry regarding the matters related to the Vicar of Pulinkunnu church? Did you collect the evidence? I have come to know that again the matter will be brought to my presence for interrogation. In that case, the application must be sent in advance.

From Varapuzha  
8 November 1852

Bishop Bernardine (Sd.)

### 3.5. Third Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*It is a report to Bishop Bernardine by Fr. Chavara after conducting an enquiry regarding the accusations against the vicars of the churches of Paingalam, Thottackattu and Malayattoor-Cheranalloor. It also contains a report based on a study regarding the division of a parish having members from 'Southists' and 'Northists'. The 'Southists' are those Syro-Malabar Christians who claim to have descended from Thomas of Cana and the group which migrated to Malabar from the Middle East in the fourth century. They are an ethnic group practising endogamy. The Syro-Malabar Christians other than the 'Southists' are known as 'Northists'.*

To be read out to Bishop Bernardine, coadjutor - Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest-in-assistance-to His Excellency.

Servant of Your Excellency, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes:

1. Fr. Thomas Kunnathettu of Paingalam parish had borrowed ear-rings and anklets of gold received as dowry by the mother of Mr Luca Pazhayapurackal of Athirampuzha parish. It was for the marriage of his sister that the jewellery was borrowed by Fr. Thomas. Mr Luca complained against Fr. Thomas that the jewellery was not returned. The priestly faculties of Fr. Thomas have been suspended until he returns the ornaments.

Suspended Fr. Thomas and the complainant explained their positions to me. When I questioned them in detail, it became clear that father of Fr. Thomas had borrowed the ear rings and anklets and had not returned them so far. But, he argues that he had not agreed to return the borrowed jewellery. Otherwise, if the complainant states

on oath her position, Fr. Thomas agrees to return the jewellery. She has given in writing, "I shall swear as he wants me to ". Herewith I am sending to Your Grace her letter of consent to swear and my suggestion for further action.

2. Since the priestly ministry of Chothirakunnel Kochukora Kathanar, former vicar of Thottackattu church has been suspended; an order was given to him to make a retreat at Mannanam, which he could not do as he was very sick. He remained bed-ridden without fulfilling his penance. Now, since he has come over here at Mannanam, made his retreat, received the sacrament of reconciliation, I request Your Excellency to release him of his suspension.
3. Ittyra Keezhedath Kathanar of Malayattoor-Cheranalloor too is making his retreat here.
4. As per Your Excellency's order, retreat was conducted at Chungath church by sending Fr. Mathai Kalappurackal, one of us. Regarding the 'Northists' of that parish, since no one among them have held the responsibility of trusteeship and such responsibilities may not be given to them in future too, they are ready to be separated from the parish. The 'Southists' too agree to the proposal that the Northists may get separated, but no share be given to them. I request that the 'Northists' be given financial assistance from the parish funds, at least sufficient to make a small chapel. They cannot join any other parish as there is no other church nearby. Hence, I request Your Excellency to give us orders to collect the offerings of the Northists separately from now on, to be used for the construction of their chapel.

Craving for Your blessings and benediction on me, ever ready to obey and serve,

17 January 1853

Kuriakose Kathanar, Servant of  
Our Lord (Sd.)

### **Reply**

As agreed by Fr. Thomas, his father must return the borrowed jewellery, ear-rings and anklets to the complainant. If not returned, he shall be excommunicated. I withdraw the suspension to Fr. Kora Chothirakunnel and allow him to celebrate the Holy Mass. As requested by you, I allow you to appoint two or three to collect the offerings from the Northists of Chungath church and to construct a chapel for the Northists.

From Varapuzha  
20 January 1853

Bishop Bernardine (Sd.)

### 3.6. Fourth Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*This is a report dated 7 November 1853 by Fr. Chavara, addressed to Bishop Bernardine, after conducting an enquiry regarding certain priests who were punished due to some laxity in priestly ministry at Athirampuzha church. This letter shows that Fr. Chavara has handled the matter with a sense of justice and prudence, paying respect and honour due to the priests.*

To be read out to Monsignor Bernardine, Bishop of Varapuzha and Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest in assistance to his Excellency.

Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes:

Information sent earlier, after having conducted an enquiry by the Vicariate:

1. The Vicar of Athirampuzha parish church, leaving the parish, when he fell ill, without delegating his responsibilities to another priest.
2. The failure of administering the last sacraments to a dying person. Kathanar Kuriala Porayattetta and Kathanar Youseph were requested to administer the last sacraments, but they declined saying that they were sick. Kathanar Thomas said that he did not have the faculty to hear the confessions, and none of the three administered the Sacraments to the dying person.
3. Not paying the funeral fees to the Church - Earlier, it has been reported to Your Excellency that the relatives of the deceased insisted that they would not pay the funeral fees unless ordered by the Bishop. Since they argued that the matter reported was not true, I made a second enquiry. What I have gathered is given here below:

First: The report of the complainants to Your Excellency that 'Kurian Kathanar , nephew of the Vicar and Kathanar Thomas Valiaparambil together had celebrated the feast on Sunday' was true. Fr. Kurian was staying in the Monastery at Mannanam. Since Fr. Vicar of Athirampuzha was sick, Fr. Kurian used to go to Athirampuzha on Sundays, celebrate the Holy Mass there and return to Mannanam the same day or next. Thus he used to celebrate the Holy mass and attend to the pastoral needs of the parish. Some days, he used to stay at Athirampuzha to care for the ailing Father Vicar. Fr. Thomas too used to celebrate the Holy Mass at Athirampuzha, sometimes. The complainants themselves agree that these Fathers used to administer the sacraments to the sick who could not come to the church and to others. It is true, as pointed out in the report of the enquiry conducted by the Vicariate, that no priest was delegated to discharge the duties of the parish priest.

Second: Regarding not administering the Sacrament of 'the anointing of the sick' to a dying patient.

When questioned by me, Fr. Kuriala and Fr. Youseph admitted that they had told those who came to call the fathers for administering the last sacraments to a patient that they were sick and unable to come. What is given in the earlier report is also true that Fr. Thomas told them "he had no faculty to hear the confessions."

It is given in the report that Fr. Kuriala said that he was not well. But, when I asked him regarding this I was told he had been home that day. As per his words, those who came to call a priest for administering the sacraments to the sick and dying person communicated the matter to the sacristan. He conveyed the message to Fr. Youseph. Although Fr. Kuriala was in his room at that

time, he was not informed of the request. When I questioned Fr. Thomas, he answered me that the other two fathers, when they were requested to go for administering the last sacraments to a patient, said that they were not willing to go. Later, in the evening they were not in their rooms. Although, Fr. Thomas had asked the Sacristan to remind the two fathers of the matter, but he did not do that. Later, those who came to invite the Fathers too did not ask for, meet or request Fr. Kuriala for the service. The witnesses say that the next day, the relatives of the sick person got a letter from Fr. Vicar and went to Kosamalloor to get a priest. None of the witnesses say that the relatives had requested Fr. Kuriala for the service. I have questioned the witnesses. I have seen the judgement of the Vicariate. The dying patient was waiting for two days for a priest to administer the last sacraments to him. The relatives went even to other parishes looking for a priest. In spite of all these they did not look for Fr. Kuriala who said that he had been home that day. When I heard these I asked the sacristan why they did not request Fr. Kuriala for the service as he was present in the parish. The sacristan replied to me that they could have gone to him, if they wanted. One has written a testimony that they had met him and requested him. In this circumstance, we cannot conclude that Fr. Kuriala did not know the matter.

It is true, all these Fathers, though they were rendering the priestly services at Athirampuzha church, no one was entrusted with the responsibilities of the Vicar. Among them Fr. Kurian used to celebrate the Holy Mass around noon. Since he was out of station those days, he had no role to play regarding the question of administering the last sacrament. Fr. Thomas had



apprehensions and fears regarding the matter, since, he did not have the faculty to hear the confessions. The next day, he went out for a function elsewhere. He knew that administering the last sacraments was unavoidable; he thought that one of the other two would do it. He says, it is true that when he went out, he had seen Fr. Kuriala outside his room. What the sacristan said, 'if they wanted they could go' is true. Thus, it is proved that they should have acted in such a way that the dying person was not deprived of the last sacraments.

Third, regarding not remitting the burial fees: One of the relatives of the deceased person held that since last sacraments were not administered to the deceased, burial fees would not be remitted. Due to this, in case, the burial rites are not conducted according to the church rite, the case would be reported to the police. However, the burial was conducted. The younger brother of the departed person has agreed to pay the burial fees. They held that in an earlier remittance of burial fees, there was balance, and if not, they would pay the dues, it was agreed upon.

The letter of the complainant also is enclosed.

Requesting your blessings on me, ever ready to serve and obey Your Excellency,

Written from Beth Rauma

Servant of the Lord,  
Kathanar Kuriakose Elias  
Chavara (Sd.)

## Reply

The above mentioned Fr. Thomas too is guilty in this matter. Hence, I hereby suspend him too from priestly ministry. Fr. Kuriala, Fr. Youseph and Fr. Thomas together shall pay to

the church the burial fees of the one who passed away without receiving the last sacraments. Since it is a serious omission that the vicar of the church did not delegate the responsibilities of the vicar to any other priest, the priestly faculties of the Vicar is suspended for thirty days from the date of intimating this decision to him. You have to communicate these decisions personally to these priests and see that they are complied with. When those three priests together have paid the funeral fees, you may inform me so that I can withdraw the suspension imposed on them. During those days when the responsibilities of the parish priest were not delegated to anyone, if marriages were blessed without the permission of the parish priest, those marriages are invalid. Make an enquiry about the above and report to me. One of the relatives had said that he would file a police case against the church, if the burial was not according to the rites of the church. He would have incurred excommunication from the Church, if he had filed a case. Though he did not file any case against the church, he must not be spared without any punishment. Respected Malpan, you shall give him a fitting punishment.

From Varapuzha  
12 November 1853

Bishop Bernardine

### **3.7. Fifth Letter to Bishop Bernardine**

*This letter, dated 15 November 1853, is regarding the follow up action taken with respect to the earlier letter dated 7 November 1853.*

To be read out to Monsignor Bernardine, Bishop of Varapuzha and Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest in assistance to his Excellency.

Humble servant of Your Excellency, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes:

After conducting an enquiry, I had sent a report to Your Excellency regarding Mr Kora Pemala of Athirampuzha parish being deprived of the 'last sacraments' when he died. Your Excellency had given the order that the priestly faculties of the three priests, Fr. Thomas. Fr. Kuriala Poreyattetta and Fr. Ouseph be suspended until they together paid to the church the burial fees of the departed person. I informed Fr. Thomas that Your Excellency has asked for a testimony from the Malpan (Fr. Chavara) that the burial fees were paid to the church so that the suspension could be revoked. His response was as follows:

Fr. Thomas did not have the faculty to hear the Confession. Moreover, since there were two other priests with the necessary faculty, he thought it proper not to go for administering the sacraments to the dying person. The next day he went to another church for a function. He was thinking that one of the other two priests would administer the sacraments to the dying person. At the time of the death and the burial of the person, he was out of station. Hence, he requested that he be exempted from the punishment of paying the share of burial fees. In spite of that, he has already paid his share of the burial fees as per the orders.

The trustee has sent me a note stating that he has received the amount. Hence I request Your Excellency to kindly withdraw the suspension of faculties of Fr. Thomas. Requesting Your Excellency's blessings on me, ever ready to serve and obey,

Written from Beth Rauma                      Kuriakose Kathanar, Servant  
of the Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

### **Reply**

As per the report of your Reverence, Malpan, I found that Fr. Thomas was guilty. Though he did not have the faculty to hear the confessions, when the other two priests did not go for administering the last sacraments to the patient, he had the duty to go for giving the sacraments. But he did not go. Hence, you should not have accepted the explanations presented now. The punishment I gave him for his fault was very mild; it should have been suspension for minimum two years as per the canon law. But, since he has paid his share of the burial fees, I release him from the suspension.

From Varapuzha  
18 November 1853

Bishop Bernardin (Sd.)

To  
Malpan Kuriakose Elias Chavara of Mannanam Monastery

### **3.8. Sixth Letter to Bishop Bernardine**

*It is a report, dated 1 December 1854, submitted to Bishop Bernardine by Fr. Chavara regarding the repayment of money due to Mr Avira Vettath by Lalam New Church and the permission to celebrate the church feast.*

To be read out to Monsignor Bernardine, Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest in assistance to his Excellency.

I have been to Lalam New Church in response to the request of Fr. Vicar and others to preach the homily on the occasion of the feast of the church. When I reached there, I came to know the following: They have not sent the annual financial statement to the curia. A debt of 3000 chakrams is to be repaid to Mr Vettath Avira. Your Excellency has ordered that the church feast should not be celebrated until and unless the debt is cleared. In case the feast is celebrated without clearing the debt of the parish, the priests who participate in the feast will be suspended of their faculties and the faithful will be subject to ecclesiastical sanctions against them. I asked them, in this context, how could they celebrate the feast? They told me that they had already sent the annual financial statement and they were sorry for not clearing the debt. In that case, I told them that those of us who came from other places would not participate in the feast celebration. When we felt that they were intending to act against Your Excellency's order, we did not participate in the vespers and left the place early morning. I went to the Lower Lalam New Church and celebrated the Holy Mass. The priests who came from other places and the prudent faithful did not join the celebrations. When they saw this, they came to call me back saying they would give the money to Mr Avira as per the order of Your Excellency.

When I counted the money I found that it was less than what was required. They gave me 1500 chakram and a Chalice and requested me to hand over the money and Chalice to the complainant only after one more round of negotiations. I told them that they had to give the amount to him as per the order of the Bishop. I agreed that I would discuss with him if he is willing and the Bishop would permit it. When enquired, Mr Avira agreed to discuss the matter. The money was entrusted to a trustworthy priest to be handed over to Mr Avira. The feast was celebrated. But, later when the issue of discussion came up, Mr Avira held that the issue was settled by the order of the Bishop and he was not happy to discuss the matter again. Then why he agreed to discuss the matter, he was asked. To this question, he did not give an answer. The matter might become a cause of sacrilege for many, I am afraid. Since I am also involved in this issue, I will talk to him or listen to him only after receiving orders from Your Excellency. Humbly I request you to give me your benevolent orders. Requesting Your Excellency's blessings on me, ever ready to obey,

Written from Beth Rauma  
1 December 1854

Kuriakose Kathanar, Servant  
of Our Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

### **Reply**

I had sent the order that the money should be given to Mr Avira Vettath. It was not done. Instead, you have entrusted the amount with a third person. After doing this, you should not have joined the feast. Hence, within a month you shall pay the full amount to Mr Avira after selling the chalice entrusted to you. Let it be clear that as long as I am the Bishop of this Diocese, there will not be an order to hear this case again. I hear that the feast was celebrated with out

sending the annual financial statement to me. Hence, I have ordered suspension of faculties of the Vicar and other priests.

Send at the earliest to Tuthukudy the priest chosen for the purpose.

From Varapuzha  
5 December 1854

Bishop Bernardine (Sd.)

### 3.9. Seventh Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*There were complaints regarding some disorder in the financial transactions of Arakuzha church. Fr. Chavara was asked to call the complainants to Mannanam, enquire about the matter and take necessary steps. This letter is a report regarding the issue. He also informs the Bishop of his difficulty in dealing with the issue. It is dated 27 July 1855.*

To be read out to Monsignor Bernardine, Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest in assistance to his Excellency.

Servant of Your Excellency, Malpan Chavara Kuriakose Elias writes:

Your Excellency had given orders to Arakuzha church to put in order the accounts of Arakuzha church working it out here at Mannanam. Last December, Fr. Vicar came and stayed here for a few days for the work and then returned. Afterwards, he did not turn up so far. When he came here he told me about your order that the repair work of the church should be done according to my directives. I had given in writing the directives for the repair work. But so far work has not been done. Moreover, now, there are so many complaints and quarrels regarding the lease collected from the fields of the church given for cultivation. When I enquired about it at Varapuzha I came to know that the trustees have written that until the quarrels are over, the fields may be given to someone else who will not create problems. Accordingly, they have been managing the cultivation of the fields. Your Excellency had ordered that since the question of raising or lowering the lease amount of the fields owned by the church is the prerogative of the curia, raising of the lease amount without your Excellency's



permission was illegal. They have not complied with this order. The former tenant and the middle tenant have complained that the land has been taken away from the one who was cultivating it as per the letter of the trustees and given to some other person according to their opinion of collecting more rent. I feel they will not comply unless they are served an order by your Excellency that the land should be given in lease to the former lessee and the accounts must be submitted to the curia at the earliest. Otherwise, I would beg your Excellency that I may be relieved of this responsibility.

Requesting your Excellency's blessings on me, ever ready to obey,

Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant of  
the Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

## Reply

I have sent many orders. They do not obey. Hence, it is useless to send another order. Now I trust in the Lord that he will do this. I hear that they have been to Puthenchira. Why they do not obey is due to a few priests. So any priest to whichever parish they belong, if they come to you for a certificate of ordination you may give them the certificate only after close scrutiny.

From Varapuzha  
3 August 1855

Bishop Bernardine (Sd).

### 3.10. Eighth Letter to Bishop Bernardine

*A report, dated 21 August 1856, sent by Fr. Chavara to Bishop Bernardine, after studying the circumstances of the vicar of Muttuchira church, who was suspended from the priestly faculties because he had not sent the accounts of the church to the vicariate in time.*

To be read out to Monsignor Bernardine, Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of the whole of Malabar, by the priest-in-assistance to his Excellency.

Servant of Your Excellency, Prior of Mannanam Monastery, writes:

I have received only now the order dated 21 July Your Excellency had sent to me. You had written the following: 'The vicar of Muttuchira church was purposefully continuing in suspension and his nephew has been substituted as the vicar. He is following the directives of the former vicar, his uncle. Members of the Parish Council accuse that due to the above fact many mistakes and shortcomings are caused in the Parish. Since I have received many complaints from the Parish Council the vicar must be made to understand that getting his nephew appointed as the Vicar was not correct. A solution may be suggested.'

Regarding the complaints from the parish council:

1. The former vicar had scolded a person on not repaying a debt he owed to a woman. He is the one who has sent this complaint on behalf of the parish council. No other member of the parish council has any role in this complaint.
2. Regarding the real reasons of why the former vicar is continuing in his state of suspension: He is continuing there because the submission of the accounts of the

- money spent for the construction of the church are delayed. This is because the trustees have not handed over to him the accounts of procuring wood, stone, etc.
3. Regarding the appointment of his nephew as the vicar: I have appointed him as substitute to the vicar after consulting late Fr. Jacob Valliyara since I could not find any other suitable priest in that parish. If your Excellency feels that this appointment was not proper kindly appoint a priest from any other parish. Perhaps, it may cause more squabbles. Since he is the nephew of the former vicar I don't think he would listen to the advices of the former vicar in unreasonable issues. I am waiting for Your Excellency's orders regarding the same.

Requesting your Excellency's blessings on me,

21 August 1856

Kathanar Kuriakose, Servant  
of the Lord, Chavara (Sd.)

### **Reply**

If no other bread is available, eat the bread which is available.

Earnestly look for a priest to be sent to Kollam.

From Varapuzha

Bishop Bernardine (Sd.)

23 August 1856

*Written on the Cover:*

To be given to Fr. Prior, Mannanam Monastery

Sent from Alapuzha



## 4

### **LETTERS TO THE SUPERIORS OF CARMELITE ORDER (OCD) IN ROME**

*There are two letters in this category. The first one was addressed to the OCD Superior General. The letter was written in Syriac language. The original letter in Syriac and its Italian translation are preserved in the OCD Generalate in Rome (440/r/1). The second letter is addressed to the OCD Procurator General. It is written in Syriac language. The original and an Italian translation are in the OCD archives (445/B/175).*

#### **4.1. Letter to the Superior General, Order of the Carmelites Discalced (OCD), Rome**

To

The Prior General of the Order of Carmelites Discalced

Our most lovable and Very Reverend Father, We could not read your letter with out tears, like a son living far away from his father, having no possibility of meeting his father, holding in his hands a letter written by his father, reading it with tears flowing down his cheeks. Though most unworthy of all your children, in the midst of your heavy schedule of works, you have found time to think about us and to consider matters related to us. We consider it as a sign of your love for us. We have no words to acknowledge this fittingly. We are sorry that we are not able to come over there, meet Your Reverence and express our joy, love and gratitude. We thank you for counting us too as your children. We make use of this opportunity to confess our love for you and above all, our obedience to Your Reverence. Our beloved father and shepherd, Monsignor Vicar Apostolic with great attention and interest direct and govern us. We are very happy to have known from the letter that you have been informed of the above matter. Like a loving mother he takes care of all our needs. It is beyond our capacity to describe all his endeavours to save and protect us from all kinds of dangers.

In spirit, we kneel down and kiss your scapular. We, humbly, request you to write to us sometimes, in spite of your heavy schedule of work. Praying for your paternal blessings,

17 December 1863

For all the conferrers,  
Their Prior, Unworthy Servant,  
Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

#### **4.2. Letter to the Procurator General, (OCD), Rome**

*This is a letter sent by Fr. Chavara, Prior on behalf of all the members of the congregation, to the Procurator General of Order of Carmelites Discalced, Rome. As mentioned in the letter, this has been sent through Fr. Leopold who went to Rome on the occasion of the First Vatican Council. The letter is preserved in the archives of OCD Generalate, Rome (445/B/175). It is written in Syriac and an Italian translation of the letter is also found. We can reasonably infer that the Italian translation was prepared by Fr. Chavara himself and sent along with the Syriac version. The handwriting is of Fr. Chavara. At the end of the Italian version, the signature of Fr. Chavara in Syriac Language is also found. 65 members have signed the letter. Among them 14 are priests. 40 are scholastics or novices. Eleven lay Brothers also have signed it. All the names are not clear; hence, we do not include a list of the names here.*

To

The Procurator General of the Order of Carmelites Discalced

Most loving and Very Reverend Father Joseph Louis, Procurator General for the Oriental Missions, we, the members of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Malabar, who have signed here below are very happy to be able to write to Your Reverence. We consider this as a sign of our love and gratitude towards you. We have no words to express our gratitude for the special love and interest you have for this mission and for us, your unworthy children. We do not know how to express our gratitude.

Loving Father Leopold, who brings this letter, will convey our gratitude to you more eloquently than what we could express. And on behalf of us, he will thank you for all

the kindness you have shown towards us by paying attention to all our needs.

We assure you that we will lovingly abide by all the directives that you give us. We consider it as our inescapable obligation to pray for you always. May the Almighty God, giver of all blessings grant you the special graces needed for governing and directing these missions!

We request you to remember us in your valuable prayers. Kissing your Scapular and craving for your blessings, we remain.

On behalf of all your obedient and loving children,

Prior Chavara Kuriakose Elias (Sd.)



## LETTERS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION (TOCD)

*We can infer that St. Chavara might have written many letters formally and informally to the members of the Congregation, but out of them only nineteen are available with us. Of these, eleven are addressed to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara, four addressed to Fr. Alexander Kattakayam (Sr.) and two to Fr. Ouseph Chavara, his nephew. The remaining two are patent letters of appointment.*

*Although these letters are addressed to the members of the Congregation, the subject matter of most of these letters is regarding the concerns of the Malabar Church.*

*In 1861, Fr. Chavara was appointed Vicar General of St. Thomas Christians of the Vicariate of Varapuzha. In 1864, as per the order of His Excellency, Bishop Bernardine of Varapuzha, Fr. Chavara shifted his residence from Mannanam to Koonammavu. Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara was appointed Superior at Mannanam. The eleven letters are sent by Fr. Chavara from Koonammavu to Fr. Eliseus at Mannanam. All the letters are signed by Fr. Chavara in Syriac language. In some, he writes 'Prior'; in others 'Aha Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, Prior, Third Order of Carmelites Discalced (TOCD)'. In three letters it is written 'Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior', in some places instead of Kuriakose he writes only 'Ku'. He sometimes uses colloquial language. In some places the meaning is to be derived from the context.*

### 5.1. First Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is the first letter addressed to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara, signed in Syriac by 'Aha Ku. Elias, Prior, Third Order of Carmelites Discalced.' The content of the letter is regarding the decisions of the General Chapter of the Congregation held on 29 April. The above-mentioned meeting was held on 29 April 1864. Hence, the letter might be written a few days after 29 April 1864. It contains instructions regarding the management of backwaters – fields, bunds, etc.*

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph!

Father Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, Prior of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced, writes:

To

Very Reverend Father Kuriakose Eliseus, Superior of Mannanam Monastery

Decisions and directives of the General Chapter held on 29 April 1864 as per the order of His Excellency Bernardine, Bishop of Varapuzha and our Vicar Provincial:

First: Our paddy fields, *kari*, in the backwaters, meant for creating revenue for the maintenance of our monasteries like Mannanam, will be useless, if they are managed as of now. Our other similar paddy fields also will become gradually useless. Caring for and managing these temporalities would be a permanent hindrance, and a trap for the spiritual life of the members. Hence, this Chapter has decided as follows: Separate the fields and bunds of the Monastery from the block of common fields in the Backwaters. Find out someone who will cultivate the fields on lease of fifty-fifty

percent and entrust it to him for a period not less than eight years and not more than sixteen years. I hereby oblige you that the above decision is executed and the burden on your shoulders is removed.

Second: This chapter has decided that the price of the wine and other things supplied to Carmel Monastery during this year be dispensed with by Mannanam Monastery.

If you inform Kochacko Thuruthimalil and Chacko Thayyil of the new decision regarding the paddy field, before the rainy season, they will return the field.

The procurators Nirappana and Periyappuram have not yet turned up. Therefore, request Fr. Phillip Missionary to call them both and entrust them with the work after giving them admonishment and blessing as usual. You must remember to remind Fr. Phillip of this matter. If you appoint Fr. Matthai Naaganoolil as the President of the project and entrust him with all those papers printed with 'Infant Jesus Deposit,' he will do everything well. The papers could be kept there itself. When the Vicars and Kathanars come there for collecting the sacred oil these papers could be given to them. Hence, today itself, entrust these things to him. Before you go, introduce Fr. Matthai Naaganoolil to Very Rev. Fr. Phillip.

Aha Ku. Elias of the Holy Family  
Prior, Third Order of Carmelites  
Discalced (Sd.)

## 5.2. Second Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is a note written in the handwriting of Fr. Chavara. There is no signature. When we look at the handwriting and the content of the letter, it becomes clear that Fr. Chavara is the author. In January 1864, Fr. Chavara shifted his residence to Koonammavu from Mannanam. In December the same year, this letter was written. The formation of the scholastics studying at Koonammavu is the subject matter. From the content of the letter it is clear that the note is meant for those in charge of the scholastics.*

In obedience to the order of his Excellency Bishop Bernardine of Varapuzha asking me to come and stay at Koonammav, I am staying here. We have been receiving here the aspirants for religious life. As per the interest of the Archbishop to bring up the candidates of the Latin Rite, two of them are selected and are being trained at Koonammav under the guidance of our brother Nicholas.

Frs Marcelinos and Youseph Elia, Missionaries, our Fr. Chirackal Paulose and Aha Yakob, all together, were taking care of these aspirants. Fr. Marcelinos returned from the place after reaching them there. That place was not that good for them to stay. A contagious disease was spreading there. In this context, to console them, Fr. Leopold missionary and Fr. Geevarghese of John the Baptist together went to that place from here early morning 3 'o' clock on Friday. I suggested to Fr. Leopold that they could be accommodated in the monastery at Aranattukara. Fr. Leopold went and met them at their place and consoled them. While returning, he delivered the Sunday Homily at Njarackal Church. When his Excellency, the Bishop was informed of the disease of the seminarians and my suggestion to bring them to Aranattukara, he was very

happy and he gave permission for the same. When I asked him permission to send a boat to reach them to Aranattukara immediately he allowed. On 11 January itself they were reached Aranattukara by boat.

I feel that we should not admitt into our monasteries candidates from the Latin Rite and from the Southists. But, I am afraid that I speak uncharitably. I say this because of the special features of their behaviour which may hurt others. I do not mean to block the good that may accrue to them. I submit it to the will of God and to the prudent decision of the superiors. We are bound to obey the decisions of the superiors always. If you do so they will consider what is good for us.

13 December 1864

### 5.3. Third Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is a reply letter dated 13 February 1866, signed at the end by 'Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior'. It expresses the anxiety of Fr. Chavara regarding a candidate from a rich family to be admitted to the convent at Koonammavu.*

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus, Mary, Joseph

Aha Ku. of the Holy Family, Prior

To

Aha Kuriakose Eliseus, Superior, Mannanam Monastery,

I received your letter and the application of Mathu, but not the letter from the Vicar of Latin Church which you have mentioned. When Very Rev. Fr. Leopold and I read the name at the top of the letter, we were scared. Because, in the convent at Koonammavu, the two, the poor old mother, the Superior and her daughter, the member of the convent are leading a very hard life. Earlier they had earned their livelihood by making coir, weaving mats, husking paddy, etc. They used to wash their clothes, eat rice bran and drink rice water and sleep on a bare wooden plank. Now they live in a convent made of bamboo mats with a leaking roof thatched with coconut leaves. They walk to the church daily once or twice to attend the Holy Mass.

Will it be possible for the new aspirant to follow this lifestyle and obey the superior? She has been living an independent life meeting her own expenses, managing herself the household matters and looking after the children entrusted to her. She leads a devout life by attending the mass daily, participating in the novenas, receiving the sacrament of reconciliation once a week and receiving the Holy Communion once or twice a week. She has been

leading a devout and happy life for a long time. If we admit her to the convent at Koonammavu where the facilities are less and inmates are of a lower status, she may lose even what she has now. I am afraid; in such a situation we would cause evil instead of good, dissatisfaction instead of charity and ill-reputation for us. I have heard that a deaf woman in Alapuzha is interested in this way of life. Welcoming someone of such lower status may better serve our purpose. With reference to Mathu's case, it is good if he is sent here. It is not clear whether he wants to become a lay brother or a religious priest. Let him come here and see. Then we shall decide.

The rite of Holy Saturday, may be conducted this year, only here at Koonammavu and there at Mannanam. Since both these places are not parishes the rite of blessing the water is not to be conducted. In the rubrics it is given how the rite is to be conducted, in case the rite of blessing the water is absent. We have started translating into Malayalam the rite of 40 hour adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the decree of the Holy Father permitting the same and the details of receiving full indulgence.

We have to get the things needed for decoration, a large bell, candlesticks, etc. Since these things are lacking, His Excellency, Bishop Bernardine has ordered that the 40 hour adoration can be conducted days following Christmas and not now. Kindly send the remaining copies of the prayer to 'Infant Jesus' through Mr Kunjuthup or on 25 March through Mr Nellipuzha who is coming over here. At that time, I expect that Mr Nellipuzha will bring some other things as well.

13 March 1866

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior

#### 5.4. Fourth Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is a reply letter. In this letter the affairs of Mannanam Monastery are discussed. It admonishes the members to practise the spirit of poverty. The letter dated 6 August 1866 is signed by Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara.*

+

Jesus, Mary, Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus Christ!

The latest letter sent to me does not require a reply. Whatever reply given earlier is sufficient. That is to say, everything be according to the Will of God; like the saying, "Master's will, slave's blessing". Let this thought be ever present in your mind. People outside and even the authorities think that the members of the Mannanam Monastery live like rich people. But, I praise the Providence of God which helps you to preserve the reward of your vow of poverty, without leaking even a drop of it.

The directive that Rs. 400 shall not be spent for a single transaction does not mean that such an amount cannot be spent in a year. Never such an order is given and never will be given. What we meant is that for food and dress, more than Rs. 400 shall not be spent in a single transaction.

Ask Fr. Porinju, according to his memory, which properties were purchased by him and how much money was spent on each item. Enter this information into the account book and manage the properties accordingly.

Kindly enter into the Mass Account book the details of the property of Fr. Pallipuram and the amount received by him as donation.

There is a saying, "If the presents are cheap, the best among them for the one who toiled hard; if they are costly,



the worst for Fr. Prior." According to this and considering my sickness and with the consent of all, am I making the tours, I don't know? If so, through this, the Will of God be glorified! It was then while travelling, I had the need for the spectacles of Mr Kuttikan. Since it was not available some other glasses were obtained at a cost of Rs. 12 and a half. Now it is not used also because the frame is of silver which is not suited for me. Since I cannot trust the present carrier, I am not sending the specs with him. It is kept safe here. The rest later!

This is my reply to Mr Thaiji, "The one who is immersed in humility will live; he will persevere." There is a so called law in Europe: "the Royal command is 'One who does not want to join the wicked in the street should shut himself up in the room. If he comes down to the street and does not join the group he will be hanged.'"

Giuseppe Mazzini, the famous political leader wrote to General Garibaldi of Italy a short sentence:

"Whether our army wins or loses, be always ready with your weapons, inviting to your fold, the like-minded from other armies."

6 August 1866

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

### 5.5. Fifth Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is not in the form of a formal letter. In the original, date is given in the beginning and Fr. Chavara has signed at the end. It contains a list of various issues to be paid attention to. In the original list, number eleven is missing.*

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus, Mary, Joseph

1. Permissions sought were granted in a manner better than what was expected.
2. I hereby grant you the permission to print the book 'Samgraham'.
3. Among the two who came to join us one of them, Kuncheria, was baptized by me. He was born on the feast day of St. Gregory Nazianzen. I gave him the name of the saint in baptism. Let us educate him and see if he has vocation.
4. The books of meditation, etc., will reach before Friday. I have sent our boat to collect the same.
5. I am sending herewith twenty patent letters.
6. I have taken the carpet with the intention of spreading it at the feet of St. Joseph at Mannanam.
7. When I came here I understood that the mill owner is harassing the Mother Superior. She was waiting for me thinking that I would bring Rs. 120 for paying the tax. Since I was very tired, I did not go there so far. I called the mill owner; asked him clarifications for the mistakes in the bill and sent him back.
8. The Pro-Vicar Apostolic grants you all permissions regarding the retreat.
9. In this there is one thing to be done with great secrecy and prudence. He orders with great anxiety the

following: The girl might have had relationships with several persons while she was in different places but there is no need of disturbing those who are unaware of such things. Be careful not to create suspicion in innocent minds. If you come to know something about this, verify it with the help of two witnesses. It must be kept as a confessional secret by all concerned. You are earnestly requested not to disclose this secret to anyone except to those who may be called as witnesses. Use your prudence, I repeat, use your prudence.

10. The Vicar Apostolic orders that hereafter we do not want priests like Fr. Palladan and Fr. Manadan. Perhaps, if such priests come to the altar, they may not be permitted or prohibited to celebrate, you may order that they may ascend to the altar if conscience permits.
12. In the official list of priests sent to the Vicar (superior) of Mannanam Monastery, the name Philipose has been entered wrongly. The correct name of the member is Varkey. This may be because what I said 'Philippose, father of Varkey' was misunderstood or forgotten. Yesterday when you came, you had heard all these. Yesterday, when I came here, I understood that the letter does not contain anything about Plasanal.. The small letter enclosed is an order on Plasanal which I got written a second time by the Bishop.
13. I shall send through Fr. Madathumchalil two books and the order in response to the petition of the bride of Uthuppan. All the three - Thaliyam, Brocard and Madathumchalil - will be coming. I prefer Raymond of St. John instead of Brocard. But I leave the matter to your discretion. Mother superior has prepared 10 Rosaries; I have blessed them and indulgences are attached to them. They are for Kochiteera, Mother of

Cheriya, Nellipuzha, Ittiappa, Thayyil Kochitha, Thuruthmali-Kuruvanakunnel, sister of Thekumkadan, Mother of Chandyachan, Vayalil Kurumpan and Perumalil Varkey.

Please hand over this small letter enclosed to Fr. Kottuavapalli.

15 November 1869

Prior (Sd.)

### 5.6. Sixth Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This letter, in the first part, gives a description of the journey of His Grace Archbishop Leonard and of Fr. Leopold to Europe. The description might have been sent to Fr. Chavara by Fr. Leopold. The second part gives the details of the First Vatican Council, which started on 8 December 1869.*

+

Jesus, Mary and Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus Christ!

Our Bishop and Fr. Leopold Missionary together with five other Bishops started from Madras on 24 September. They went to Salem from there; on 7 October they reached Mater Dei, Goa. On 11 October they reached Eden. There, two Syrian Bishops joined them. By 18 October, they reached Suez. One Bishop from Bhagdad boarded the ship with them. They left Alexandria and reached Marscille on 21 October. Bishop Leonard went to Lions. Rev. Fr. Leopold went to Port Maurice since his younger brother was living there; from there, he went to *MulterPuther* and proceeded to the monastery at Genova where he had his novitiate. Finally, he reached Aqui where his father was living. Archbishop Leonard reached Rome on 29 November 1869.

*[The following description in the second part, giving the details of the Second Vatican Council, is a note added later. The age-wise number of participants does not add up correctly, but gives us an idea of the age-wise composition of the Synod Fathers.]*

Total number of Bishops in the world now: 894

Patriarchs: 13

Archbishops of Latin Rite: 75  
 Archbishops of other Rites: 35  
 Bishops of Latin Rite: 506  
 Bishops of other rites: 72  
 Titular Bishops: 193

**Age-wise Number of Participants:**

93 years old 03  
 90 years old 02  
 85-80 age group 20  
 80-75 age group 46  
 75-70 age group 79  
 55 years old 164  
 50 years old 60

All except 53, that is to say, 841 Bishops attended the Synod. During 1-9 December strict abstinence was observed, they then started the closed retreat. 8 December was the day of preparation for the synod. The anniversary of the declaration of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady was commemorated on this day. She was pronounced as the Patroness of the Synod. As a memorial of this Synod, construction of a tower was started nearby.

*[The socio-political-religious situation of the Synod is described here below.]*

The kings have collected their armies and are waiting to see as to who might begin when and where. In the midst of all these, in Naples, the Protestants begin their council meeting on the same 8 December. All are silent seeing the Pope of the Catholic Church convening to his place, without fear, the leaders from all over the world. The leader of the

Protestants has decided to postpone their council to a date after this Synod.

Wish you all the goodness and blessings of this time.

30 November 1869

Prior (Sd.)

### 5.7. Seventh Letter to Fr. Eliseus Porukara

*This is a reply letter. Date and signature of Fr. Chavara are there. Newspaper report of the First Vatican Council is quoted. The letter describes the completion of the construction of the monastery at Pulinkunnu and the laying of the foundation stone of the monastery at Mutholy.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus Christ

The letter that you sent to me will be posted tomorrow itself. Sr. Anna had sent to me the receipt and the letter stating that Fr. Cherubin has paid Rs. 5 for the stamp and receipt of the earlier letter. The total cost is Rs. 5.

Today a long letter of two pages has been sent. No cash. I think that the accounts can be cleared later. I wanted to send the land deed to you; looked for it, but could not find. Perhaps it may be in the box of Fr. Leopold Missionary, for, he had taken it along with him for showing it to others. Today by 3 o'clock Fr. Philip and others have left for an excursion to Chennamangalam, Manjali, and other places. The feast of our Lady of Immaculate Conception was celebrated yesterday with great solemnity. There was also the procession. Still we did not feel tired. I am sending herewith three blank papers signed by me so that you can execute land deeds there, if needed.

There is nothing special in the newspapers. Jacinta is in America. She will come for the Synod. It is reported in the gazette that some shameless people say that if she doesn't come for the synod, she must be brought to the synod. We have received, the day before yesterday, a letter from our Bishop. He is keeping well. Fr. Leopold Missionary has



reported that while crossing the Mediterranean Sea on two nights there was a fierce storm in the sea, when he felt that he would die; afterwards the journey was comfortable.

Of the 300 lay people who were travelling with them, three died due to some disease. Archbishop Leonard disembarked at Leone and Fr. Leopold Missionary at Port Maurice. 10 days back from yesterday, our Archbishop reached Rome; and day before yesterday, Fr. Leopold Missionary also reached Rome.

Here, in our new press many things regarding the Ecumenical Synod are printed and published. A prayer to our Lady of Immaculate Conception printed at Immaculate Conception Press, Koonammavu is distributed at a cost of one *chakram* per leaflet. Those who buy it feel that it is worth the cost. This will help them to pray till the synod is concluded. It has been distributed at Alangad, Varapuzha, Njrackal and Aluva. All the printed copies are exhausted. For other places, we have to print more copies. Let those who can, buy it for one or two *chakrams* and distribute it to the poor free of cost, for the remission of their sins.

Fr. Gerard Missionary is making haste to lay the foundation stone of the monastery, though the settlement of the dispute is still delayed. By the grace of God, the construction of the monastery at Pulincunnu is nearing completion. Papi had come here. A written agreement was signed that within two months he would remit 4,000 *chakrams*, cost of the land purchased from the monastery and that the construction of the monastery would be completed. He also promised that he would give 10,000 *chakram* for the profession of his elder brother and 2850 *Chakram* as patrimony for his son. Thus he agreed to pay total 12,850 *Chakram*, but I said that 12,750 *Chakram* was enough. He was very happy and gave me one pound (gold

coin) as mass stipend. He requested me not to make it public until he paid the whole amount on 25 March. Hence do not tell anybody about this now. It would hurt him.

God willing, will continue later...

8 December 1869

Aha Kuriakose Elias of the  
Holy Family, Prior

### 5.8. Eighth Letter to Fr. Eliseus

*This is a personal letter sent to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus. As they are approaching the Christmas, he remembers the Infant Jesus. He is concerned about the purchase of good quality wood for the construction of the monasteries.*

+

Jesus, Mary, Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

May the loving Infant Jesus, raising his tender hands and smiling bless you, as he is sending his armies, the angels to you for accompanying you? I was thinking that I had nothing special to communicate to you. Then I remembered that I had a very important matter to tell you, but only in a personal meeting.

Look for wood of trees like 'kumbil', 'neelampala', etc. For that you should neither get worried nor trouble others. You may do the needful, if they (our co-operators) enquire about it willingly only.

But our Puthenmuri Chitappan may get these things some way or other, by hook or crook. Although we are interested in getting good wood, we cannot resort to unfair means. Oh blindness! How severe is the judgment of God compared to the judgment of Government? What a blessing it is to be a debtor!

The land deeds of Mutholy monastery is not found here. Hence I am unable to send it to you. The rest in person. When you are back at Mannanam, please come over here.

20 December 1869

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

### 5.9. Ninth Letter to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara

*This is a letter written by Fr. Chavara recommending Brother Murickal to be admitted to the seminary. The original is kept in the Mannanam Archives. It mentions a few important topics: 1) Due to some internal problems in some parishes, children joining the seminary are discouraged. 2) There are some directives for Way of the Cross, prayers for the departed souls, etc., to be introduced in the home of charity started at Kainakary. 3) Reminders for certain diocesan priests to come to Mannanam for a retreat. The letter dated 16 May 1870 is signed by Fr. Chavara.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph

If Scholastic Murickal is also admitted in the seminary, it will effect through us, peace and wellness in the parishes of Kaduthurthy, Muttuchira, Vechoor and Vaikom and in the parishes from Muttom to the South. If we consider Athirampuzha to the east, the family of Murickal Chacko will be benefitted. Just as the tender bone which is broken joins fast, the spiritual blindness caused to him would soon disappear; we have decided to receive him back.

I entrust Scholastics Arunootumangalam, Alphonse, Brocard, Valongalam and Murickal Thomma to Fr. Rector as if before God Himself. In case you find that after making a good confession and beginning a new life, they return to their old ways, immediately inform me. I shall remove them. Through Fr. Chandy entrust Scholastic Muriakal to the teacher's trainer at Palai.

If you teach the Seminarians this prayer it would be of great help to the souls in purgatory. From the bundle of Prayer sheets, please give some to Chavara Thommi and

some to Mannampalli Mathai. Even there it would be of great use for those of the confraternity for the dying who nurse the sick. And also for those who serve during the rites after death of the neo-Christians. Small framed pictures of the Way of the Cross can be given to them so that they may be installed in their small chapels. It would be of great help for the confraternity of the dying and those willing to make the way of the cross after the Saturday mass.

Those, like me, who have the responsibility to correct and to point out the mistakes of others, are not doing that. But those who do not have such responsibilities are experts in pointing out the faults of others. It is because they cannot see what is in their own eyes. Only when they look at the mirror, they would see the true nature of their face.

Humility, obedience and charity, if practised, our brethren and those under our authority would practise the same towards us as well. Then we would obtain peace in front of God and humans. If none practises these three, God himself will enquire.

Read what had been written on the wall for King Belshazzar (Daniel 5:5-7).

“I do it because it is not my will but the will of my Father” - Obedience.

“Your master and Lord washed your feet” - Humility.

“Love one another just as I have loved you” - Charity.

Practice all these.

Fr. Vicar of Muttam has begun to see the faults of some. I hear that a seventy year old, has been discharging the responsibilities of the Vicar so far. He was present there. The duty of Vicar was not entrusted to him or to his nephew. I reminded the former vicar of Vaikom that St. Joseph is calling him to Mannanam. Please remind the vicars of Vechoor, Vadayar and Vaikom that there is a retreat at

Mannanam. The entire things above are jotted down only to remind you. May St. Joseph protect and help both you and me.

16 May 1870

Prior

### **5.10. Tenth Letter to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara**

*This letter is regarding the activities of the Monastery at Mannanam like Holy Masses to be offered for the departed, nursing the sick, printing of liturgical calendars, prayer books, formation of the scholastics in the seminary, etc.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

There was no reason for any confusion regarding the requiem mass for Late Kuncheriya Chiramel. It has been decided that till his first death anniversary 19 Holy Masses are to be celebrated for that intention. It was agreed that the stipend for these Holy Masses would be paid in the current year, together for both years, (in kind, as paddy). The account of these Holy Masses might be written separately. So your confusion may be regarding the sixty three *para* paddy.

Since it is written together with last years' account, if you look into the account I have written, you can see how many obligations of Mass are remaining to be fulfilled. Every month, Mass obligations received are added and the Mass obligations fulfilled are deducted and the balance carried forward. At the end of the year all Mass intentions fulfilled are subtracted from all Mass intentions received. The balance of Mass intentions is carried forward to the next year. Total stipend received annually is noted down. One third of it is deducted from the total. The remaining two third of stipend is accounted as stipend received for 12 Mass intentions and correctly noted down.

The 19 Holy Masses for Mr Kuncheriya might have been separately noted. If not, 19 Mass obligations are to be carried forward with the rest to the next year.

I am scared of the monasteries where we have no sick people. Saint Teresa of Avila used to believe that God would shower more blessings on those monasteries where continuously there are sick people. Mr.Thomman told me that you are not paying sufficient attention to the elderly father. Bread and milk is not sufficiently available for him. Is it the reason why he looks so frail? Do you feel remorse about it? Kindly tell me.

I had obtained permission for the celebration of obligatory and changing feasts up to the feast of Ascension. Nothing is mentioned about the eclipses and the feasts thereafter. Hence the whole calendar is not ready to be printed, so need not print the eclipses in the calendar; the rest seems satisfactory. Now it is enough, the annual calendar can be printed later. Mathias has told me that the book titled '*Madhyastham*' is out of print. '*balanikshepam*', '*madhyastham*' and '*Kurisinte Vazhi*' are printed together; so they get out of stock very fast. If these books are available, we can sell as many as possible in the next week. These books are more in demand than '*piyushasangraham*'. Those who have '*piyushasangraham*' will buy this also. After finishing the printing of '*satyavedapariksha*', print these books. Hope you will pay attention to these.

I don't understand why Mathan Mappila came here; may be to stay here. Such a problem being the first, if settled properly, other problems also will be settled likewise. The demand of Scholastic Olickan that the money due to him should be paid in two instalments is just. Find out the means for the same, someway or other. You may approach Chennakkadan for help. The liabilities towards Mazhuve Ammutan, Athirampuzha Madaserri, Pallipravan also must be attended to. We have obtained the permission to print the picture of the feast I am sending herewith. I had written to



you asking for the report of the scholastics after evaluation. It is not yet sent. Very Rev. Fr. Leopold has asked that it should be sent immediately. His Excellency Bishop was very happy with your good will and requests. You were not given the orders by His Excellency earlier because of your illness. The orders to other priests are already sent; in your case it will be sent taking into account your health and your convenience. On this paper covering the picture, I send herewith, please print the matter in small letters and send me a copy. Having seen it, I shall tell you regarding the rest.

According to the order of the Prefect of the congregation for the Propagation of Faith, our Archbishop has asked us to send a copy each of all the books printed at Mannanam. '*Piyusham*', '*Yagarakam*' '*Vedasangraham*', '*Balanikshepam*', '*Novena*', '*Kurisinte Vazhi*', '*Madhyastham-Vasanta*', '*Satyaveda Pariksha*' are these eight books.

The Patrimony of our Fr. Palakunnel has been received in the name of Fr. Thataserry. When Fr. Thoppil comes there together with the Scholastics for ordination, send that to me. Send those books too. Moreover, the account of the transactions between Mannanam and Koonammavu monasteries must be completed before 31 August and that account book also should be sent to me. Buy the mentioned Syriac books from Kottayam and send them along with the bills to me. This picture should be printed ten copies on a sheet of paper and send me three such sheets. I shall send them back after correcting, together with the paper for printing. You may need to dismantle the letters (types) arranged for the calendar to get a few lines and letters for this.

The Scholastics must be sent after their evaluation is done; confidential voting conducted; report prepared and the brothers informed of the result of the evaluation. It is for

this reason I had written in advance about the process; but we are disappointed because the reply is not yet received. We are waiting for the same. I am sending the 'Ottanketta' (competition among the monasteries for growing in spiritual life). I have sent the letter for Kanjirapally. Those things would be there. Since he told me that the cost of the things was Rupees 26, I agreed. But those things might not be that much costly.

I have written about many things, read carefully and implement them.

To  
Very Rev. Fr. Superior

2 September 1870

Prior (Sd.)

**5.11. Letter to Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara**

*This is a reply letter. Fr. Chavara is encouraging the superior of Mannanam to plant mango saplings.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

I have received the money sent, Rs. 540 and the note. I have sent these mango saplings to some of the monasteries to be planted. These mango saplings would outlive me and deliver sweet fruits, a reminder to all the members of the monastery that how weak and passing we humans are. These are to be named 'Dukhran' (for remembering). One sapling is for Mutholy Monastery and one for Mannanam, if you want.

This is for Fr. Rector, Aha Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara.

6 September 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias Prior (Sd.)

P.S. I had mentioned earlier about the situation in Rome.  
The war continues. Pray for the Holy Mother Church.

### 5.12. First Letter to Fr. Alexander Kattakayam (Senior)

*Fr. Kattakayam is one of the eleven fathers who made the First Profession at Mannanam together with Fr. Chavara on 8 December 1855. We have four letters by Chavara addressed to Fr. Alexander. Fr. Alexander was a close confidant of Fr. Chavara.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

You had informed the Vicar Apostolic that you were desirous of establishing the confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus there. His Excellency has gladly permitted the same. Since it is difficult here to establish many confraternities, it may be easy and useful to incorporate with the present confraternity, the rules and practices of other confraternities too. Confraternity for the dying who prepare the terminally ill for a blessed death is a very good organisation. In Varapuzha, Fr. Phillipose has decided to establish the confraternity of St. Joseph together with the confraternity for the dying. Here, with the Third Order, the confraternity for the dying is joined; the rules and rites for the confraternity for the dying are copied and made ready. If you combine the confraternity for the dying with the confraternity of the Sacred Heart being founded there, 80,000 persons who die every day will benefit of your special month-end prayers for the dying. They will diligently do the needful to arrange the sacraments for the dying. The church wants this confraternity to be established everywhere. Therefore strive for this too. If you want I shall send to you a copy of the rules. It costs Rs. 2.

I have come to know that special permission is obtained from the Holy See to establish such organisations. I shall write to His Excellency the Bishop to affiliate these confraternities to the original organisations by writing to the Superiors General of these confraternities.

I have requested the Reverend Fathers who have gone to Rome to bring two varieties of Syriac types and plenty of letters. I have reminded them to raise the matter of our canonical prayers in the synod. For the canonical prayers the psalms are already printed. Keep them there. The rest can be printed after getting the new types they have mentioned.

Some sisters from Kochi have come to the convent for teaching handicraft to our sisters. We do not get here good pictures to make scapulars. Send to us small and large picture-clothes. We shall get them printed here.

This is for Aha Alexander Joseph Kattakayam (Senior).

30 March 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias of the Holy  
Family, Prior (Sd.)

**5.13. Second Letter to Fr. Alexander Kattakayam  
(Senior)****+**

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

I have received several letters from Palai. I am not able to explain the content to Fr. Phillipose Missionary. Hence, he is asking me repeatedly when Fr. Alexander will come. Hope you will come here by Sunday after going to Amphazhakadu and finishing the work there as you were asked to do.

Many things to communicate but cannot due to both the reasons.

20 April 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

**5.14. Third Letter to Fr. Alexander Kattakayam (Senior)**

*It is a note sent along with the letter meant for collecting the signatures of the members. The letter is missing, but only the note is extant.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

Kindly handle the letter sent, with prudence, secrecy and interest. See that the letter is handed down neat. Get it signed only by those whom you trust. Come back quickly and then go to the southern side and get the signatures. I am sending the letter by hand. It is to be posted at the earliest. Approach only those, whose names are written here: Vicar of Amphazhakadu, Fr. Uthupp, Fr. Koonan, Fr. Chully, our Fr. Kappil, Fr. Chirackal, and Fr. Sebastin, only these. If we approach more, I think, the secrecy will be lost. After meeting the above seven, if Puthanchira area is fully covered or not come back at the earliest.

To  
Rev. Fr. Alexander

22 May 1870

Prior (Sd.)

### 5.15. Fourth Letter to Fr. Alexander Kattakayam (Senior)

*The letter dated 3 August 1870 is regarding the efforts to get books from Madras and Puthuserry for the use of the general public. It mentions the conclusion of the first Vatican Council, beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, etc.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

To

Fr. Alexander Ouseph Kattakayam (Senior), Procurator of Mutholy Monsatery!

I have written to Madras and Puthuserry as agreed upon with Fr. Vicar of Aranattukara; I have also collected money for buying books for the general public. I had also sent to them a list of books prepared by Fr. Emmanuel for those who learn Latin. I had made arrangements for bringing the books but they have not replied yet. With that money, I have bought some books for the home of charity at Chennankari and entrusted those books to them for starting a library. I have written to the consulters of the Confraternity of the dying to reach the money needed and a note to Mannanam. If they have not yet come, you must call them. Collect all these and send these to Chennankari. It will be of great help.

I thought that we could print the 1871 calendar here, but I find it impossible to get it done here. Hence, kindly take the trouble to print it there this year too.

The main sessions of the First Vatican Council were over by 20 July 1870. His Holiness the Pope declared on that day the infallibility of the Pope as an article of faith. They were 543 Bishops excluding those who were absent. Two of them



voted against. That night, the whole of Rome shone like heaven and was illumined like day. Since telegram messages were sent to all the churches in Italy, there were celebrations in all the churches. Canons were fired and bells were rung. The ambassadors of France, Italy and Prussia as per the orders of their kings did not participate in the celebrations and registered their protests. On 21 July 1870 morning war between Prussia and France started. 50,000 soldiers of France and 40,000 soldiers of Prussia were killed. Prussia captured two cities of France and hoisted their flag there. France requested the help of the armies of Rome and England. Prussia requested help from Russia.

When the war erupted the Christian faithful and the missionaries of China and Cochin China and the French consul came to know of it. Therefore, the English army at Salem went to China. The Bishop of Salem urgently left Rome and went to Constantinople. Without listening to the advice of the Patriarchs and His Holiness the Pope, the bishops and religious from those places who were in Rome went back to their respective places.

The following night, after their arrival in their cities, 5000 seven storied houses were burned down. The warship of France was anchored in the sea. Due to great effort, the charitable home in that city escaped destruction. Many churches, monasteries, convents and other properties were destroyed. As much as possible relief materials are sent there by the Holy Father.

Fr. Leopold Missionary would start from Rome on 10 September, will reach Mumbai on 5 October and Koonammavu on 15 October.

3 August 1870

Prior (Sd.)

### 5.16. First Letter to Fr. Joseph Chavara

*This is a letter written on 21 July 1868 by Fr. Chavara and is addressed to his nephew, Fr. Joseph Chavara. The content of the letter is an advice given to the nephew by Fr. Chavara that he should live an ideal religious life. He was later in 1876 expelled from the Congregation. He was one among the Seven Dolours of the Congregation who were expelled by Archbishop Leonard. He even pleaded with the Archbishop not to expel him because he was sick. He continued to live in Mannanam, in the seminary building, died there and was buried at Mannanam.*

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to God!

My time of hard work is about to be over. God has given me a longer life than that of my parents. Now I understand it very clearly that in the greater mercy of God, it was given to me, not for my sake but to labour for others. But I did not utilise that; like the one who got one talent, I hid it under the earth; now my conscience accuses me that I did not work hard. Excuses and justifications for that are coming up in my mind.

More than this my anxiety is about you. A sentence you spoke once is ringing in my ears as if of yesterday; "if you want you will have, if you do not want you will not have." So how will it be 'now, if you think more that you have been accepted into this state of life by my will'? Even then it was not for anything bad.

God can transform your life so that through you there will be greater glory and praise for Him than what have been through me. Nothing is impossible for God. Was not St. Peter a mere fisherman and a coward who denied Jesus hearing the words of a woman? Peter, when the Almighty

wanted stood before the Emperor roaring like a lion, considered his roar as the droning of the mosquito and came out victorious. In your case as well, God willing, it can happen likewise. Hence without turning back, "seek the things that are above" (Col 3:1); "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13); Believe firmly in the word of God, he will give you everything. Decide to live only for his glory. Make your conscience clear, having resolved that you do the work according to your call.

'I do not have any talent; I do not know to do anything'. Do not say these two. God gives health to the body and light to the intellect and mind. When your cooperation unites with grace plenty of fruits will be produced, sure. Let this letter of mine impart confidence and courage in you like the lamb which was given to a Duchess in Rome by St. Francis of Assisi who had stigmata. I conclude trusting in the Mother of God that I be rewarded rather than punished or accused for being a small cause of your religious vocation.

I wish peace in the Lord to Fr. Vicar, Rector, other brothers and young brothers. Please request them to pray for me that I may be granted a blessed death.

21 July 1868

Aha Ku. Elias, Prior (Sd.)

P.S. On 18 August, 9 am there will be complete Solar Eclipse. It is happening after so many years.

To

Aha Joseph Thresia of Carmel Monastery

From

Koonammavu

### 5.17. Second Letter to Fr. Joseph Chavara

*The second letter addressed to Fr. Joseph Chavara is non-extant. The Latin translation of the same is kept in the Archives of the Oriental Congregation in Rome. It mentions about the tax paid by Fr. Chavara for the convent at Koonammavu. It was a proof to show that the convent at Koonammavu belonged to the Syrians. Monsignor Andrews Ayuti, the Apostolic Delegate, had sent this letter to Ootty, where the consultations were held. This may be the reason why the original letter is not found in the CMI archives.*

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Please enquire about the availability of wood in the neighbouring places. We need 13 measures long and 12 inches round timber of *Kumbil* and *Nilampala*.

When I came here I found that sisters were worried about paying Rs. 120 as tax for the convent. I paid the tax borrowing money. To get the amount from somewhere, I have made some suggestions to Fr. Alexander. I was never empty handed after casting a net in the name of the Mother of God. Fr. Alexander never speaks like St. Peter who said, "We toiled the whole night but did not get anything."

It is for Fr. Aha Joseph Thresia.

9 December 1869

Prior (Sd.)

**5.18. The Patent Letter Appointing Fr. Jacob Kanattu as the Superior of Vazhakulam Monastery**

*This letter is a proof that Fr. Chavara had authority over the Monasteries. It was he who gave transfers to the members of the Congregation.*

In the name of Our Lord!

Servant of our Mother of Carmel of Immaculate conception and the Prior of all members of the Monasteries, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar writes:

In our Lord, Peace and wellbeing be to Fr. Jacob Kathanar, servant of our Holy Mother of Carmel of Immaculate Conception!

I am convinced that you are enthusiastic of obeying the rules of Carmel, and of guiding others through good administration. I am granting you the authority to correct the failures of our brethren. I trust in our Lord that you who are vigilant will observe the Carmelite rules, instruct others through your abundant sanctity and grow every day in love of God and neighbours.

By the authority of Our Lord and the blessing of His Excellency Bishop Bernardine, Vicar Apostolic of Malabar, and by the authority bestowed on me, I, Prior, entrust you with the following responsibilities: All the religious living in Carmel Monastery of our Mother, Vazhakulam are entrusted to you. I grant you the authority to take care of them in all their bodily and spiritual needs. Until another order is given regarding these matters, you are obliged to strive for them always before God and humans.

I command all those who live in that holy place, all the religious - priests, scholastics, young men and others to

submit to you in obedience and humility. As per our constitutions, you must demand obedience from all.

This is written from *Beth Rauma*.

14 May 1858

Servant of God,  
Kuriakose Kathanar, Prior (Sd.)

**5.19. The Patent Letter Appointing Fr. Scaria Thattassery as the Prior of Koonammavu Monastery**

I, Servant of Mother of Carmel of Immaculate Conception and the Prior of all members of the Monasteries, Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar, wish in our Lord, peace and wellbeing to Rev. Scaria Thattassery Kathanar, our brother and servant of our holy Mother of Carmel ever Virgin.

I see your good will and eagerness to live in accordance with the spirit, rules and regulations of the Carmelite congregation. I hope that of those who obey you and of your genuine zeal and perseverance for following our Lord will last to the end.

I appoint you the Prior of St. Philomona's Monastery at Koonammavu with all the authority attached to it. I expect you to work hard for the wellbeing of all members of the monastery, Reverend Fathers, Brothers, Scholastics and aspirants. Care for them in in all their bodily and especially spiritual needs.

This order will be in force until another order from me. Be strong and healthy in Our Lord.

This is written from *Beth Rauma*.

3 July 1859

Servant of the Lord,  
Kuriakose Kathanar (Sd.)





## 6

### **COMMON CIRCULARS TO THE MEMBERS OF TOCD**

*We have with us five circulars of this category. One circular is signed together with Fr. Leopold Missionary and another signed together with Fr. Gerard Missionary. The other three contain reflections of Fr. Chavara regarding the Malabar Church and the Christian life.*

## **6.1. Letter Addressed to All Members of the Monastery at Elthuruthu**

Aha Prior of the Holy Family

Jesus Mary Joseph

Peace of Our Lord be to Fr. Superior and to all the Brethren of our Monastery at Elthuruth!

I bring to your kind attention a few things according to the order of His Grace, the Archbishop, our Vicar Provincial.

Here by you are prohibited from getting involved in the property disputes of the lay people, even if you feel the matter would cause great loss or it would bring in enormous good. You are not expected to get involved in property disputes, partition deals, settlement of rights etc. Being religious your duty is to help the faithful to grow in spiritual matters. Kindly do not get involved in the affairs of temporalities, settlement of disputes, quarrels and cases and do not bring these things into the discussions and conversations in the monastery.

Let us all pray that the persecutions against the Holy Mother Church may end and that she may experience peace and progress. Holy Father has asked us to pray for the intention by participating in the Holy Mass and those of you who can, get Holy Masses offered for the intention.

From the day this letter is received, for nine days, all of you must assemble in the prayer hall, at the beginning of the community meditation, and recite kneeling down, the litany of All Saints as given in the book '*piyusham*'. Conclude it with the following prayer:

"Lord, God Almighty, we beseech you, have mercy on this community, redeemed by the suffering and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was handed over to the wicked

and suffered patiently on the Cross. Eternal Father, I offer to you the Blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of all my sins and on behalf of the sufferings of the Church.”

Very Rev. Fr. Leopold Missionary has ordered that this prayer must be recited in community as well as privately several times, at least thirty three times a day. When it is recited once 50 days' indulgence is granted.

25 February 1866

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

## **6.2. A Circular Letter Addressed to All Members of the Congregation Written Jointly by Fr. Chavara and Fr. Leopold Missionary**

*Leopold Beccaro came to India in 1859 as a Scholastic. After the ordination, he continued here. In 1863, he was appointed the delegate of the Provincial Superior of TOCD. He held this office till 1873. He was called back to Rome being accused that he had assisted the Malabar priests in requesting Rome for own bishops. The letter is dated 1 July 1869. This translation is based on the copy in Vazhakulam chronicle signed by both Fr. Chavara and Fr. Leopold Missionary.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

Fr. Leopold Maria of St. Joseph, Missionary Apostolic of the Order of Carmelites Discalced, Provincial Delegate of the Monasteries and Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior of the Monasteries together write to the members and other inmates of the monasteries at Mannanam, Koonammavu, Elthuruthu and Carmel (Vazhakulam).

Beloved brethren and dearest children,  
 Due to age and ailments, both of us are to appear soon before the throne of Divine Justice. This religious congregation has been founded as very dear to God and useful for the salvation of souls. In order that we may not be accused of not minding the disorders found in this community and abandoning it on the path of perdition, with a heart full of pain, we send you these words of advice. This may be our last letter to you. Accept these as the last words of those whom you consider as your fathers.

Beloved brethren, this humble community of ours is not founded by humans, but by God Himself. He has founded it

miraculously; you are all witnesses to the truth that God has nurtured and brought it up. Hence, persecutions by humans, rejections or obstructions by creatures cannot destroy it. But one thing can annihilate it, that is, if we forget the meaning of our call, forsake the responsibilities of our religious life and fail in humility, obedience, charity, religious discipline and genuine devotion and are satisfied with appreciating them in words and not in deeds.

With great anxiety, we have been observing the signs of such an eventuality. Hence listen to this painful cry of ours.

“He expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes” (Is 5:2). Since some time, humility, obedience, charity, religious discipline, genuine devotion, etc. are not considered as religious virtues to be practised, but, they are seen as impossible, not needed and meant for only ‘saints’. It has become quite common to act against these virtues without any fear or remorse.

These monasteries which were established to be ‘mirrors of virtues’ and ‘abode of saints’, have, now, become associations of self-willed stewards and administrators and abodes of fence-sitters doing the minimum. They pay attention to observing serious rules only; spiritual conversations have become not desirable, religious modesty and devotional practices are considered to be meant for the foolish and less intelligent. It is considered foolish not to react to the unpleasant words and actions of our brethren. It has become very common: to seek physical wellbeing eagerly, to seek luxury, to be worried about minor ailments and on such occasions, to be sad and complaining, if everything is not available as one wants. It has become a habit: to speak during the time of silence; to have curiosity to know the affairs of other monasteries; to start a conversation the moment any two meet. You have no

remorse or guilt feeling in wandering around and entering your rooms only to sleep. For the reason of any slight ailment or a small assignment or work, you excuse yourself from common prayers and community exercises. You do not feel that permission of the superior is to be sought.

### **Freedom during Journeys**

Thinking that during the journeys one can do whatever he wants, you halt at places and meet persons as you like. Meditation, spiritual reading and other religious exercises are completely abandoned during journeys, considering that time as one of total freedom. Every one has a thousand likes and a thousand needs. To fulfil all the needs of some, one superior is not enough. For the sake of the community and on account of sanctity of life, if some comforts and desires are to be renounced or some inconveniences are felt in some actions and ways of doing things, you escape from the situation on one or other pretext.

To look after the things of the monastery is useful and it is the responsibility of all. Instead, you behave as if they are the property of someone else. If the Superior has not commanded, there are only a few who use them carefully with the conviction that they belong to the community. Some in search of superiors and conferrers of their liking and looking for comfortable and pleasant places, are moving around visiting all our four monasteries. Finally, they find only inconveniences, sorrows and thorns everywhere. If at all, these brethren would seek God and His holy will alone, they could find joy and satisfaction everywhere. But, since they seek not God, but their own will and pleasure, they would never get joy and comfort.

**Disobedience Is Painful**

The most painful and pernicious reality for our Monasteries is disobedience. Now in our monasteries superiors are like inferiors and inferiors behave like superiors. You do your own will. Instead of seeing Jesus in the Superior and accepting the word of God in the words of the superior, weighing the intelligence, prudence and virtues of the superior, assessing their actions and behaviour, evaluating their orders, you obey them if they are according to your own will. If they are not according to your will, you try to disobey the orders bringing in hundreds of justifications. If that is not successful, you obey murmuring and sad. Sometimes, we see that you obey joyfully something asked by a superior, but the same thing, when asked by another superior, it is considered imprudent and unjust. Now the superiors are compelled to give orders not according to the Will of God and the order of things, but according to the will and preferences of the inferiors. When one is entrusted with a responsibility to be fulfilled over a long period of time, no one completes that assignment unless repeatedly reminded and ordered. The present situation is that if things to be done are presented as the wish of the superior, instead of doing that, it is insisted that it should be commanded.

O Beloved Brethren, Is it our call? Did we join the religious life to do our will? To obey only the superiors whom we like? To do only the things we like? If so what difference is there between the obedience of gentiles and ours? If it is to do our own will, what purpose does it serve that we have embraced the religious life and entered the Monastery?

All the above matters are concerning all the members - priests, religious, lay brothers, the elderly and the young. But, great is our pain, when we hear that more than all

others, the young and the newly ordained priests in whom, we and all our monasteries have placed great trust, are conducting themselves as if they do not even remember these things. These young brethren have received more graces than others and have been brought up lovingly being nurtured for many years. Instead of conducting themselves as mirrors of the virtues of humility, obedience and devotion before all, as soon as the novitiate formation is completed, they come out of the novitiate, behaving themselves as if liberated and free of all shackles of religious discipline. Forgetting all the advices heard they become men of a thousand desires and needs. Pretending to be great, they are slow to obey; they do not know to be humble; they want to live according to their whims and fancies. They have an opinion about everything, because they think that they are more experienced and they know things more than what others know and criticize everything.

O Beloved Brethren,

If you have not learned to fulfil the obligations of your call, and if you do not save yourself, what knowledge do you have? What have you learnt?

### **Regarding Brothers Co-operators**

Our own brothers, the brothers co-operators have changed. They do not have humility, obedience and devotion as earlier. Their interest in doing work has come down painfully. Work is done not for the glory of God, some out of fear, and others out of habit; doing things without any lasting fruits. Some of them go for the sacrament of confessions rarely. Their disobedience pains the superiors. To enquire about the news of their own monasteries and of other monasteries, to get involved in the matters related to the priests, to hold secret discussions among themselves,



etc., are there engagements now. O beloved brethren, is it your vocation? Is it what you practised when you joined the monastery?

But, one of the reasons for such failures is due to the lavish consideration and concern of the superiors for the inferiors. They did not pay attention to eradicating the evil tendencies of these, correcting and punishing the erring in time. They allowed their subjects to act according to their will, against the will of God. They yielded to the opinions of the inferiors when there was difference of opinion. They do not correct the mistakes of the brethren. They do not communicate the matter to the major superiors, because of their worldly outlook. The Superiors should know that they are responsible before God for the innumerable calamities caused by this. Regarding the above matter, excusing themselves that they are not responsible for this before God, even after seeing the dangers for the group of monasteries, which are God's hand work, if they do not speak out anything, these monasteries may be annihilated. Let it be known to all that in order that this may not happen, without any compromise in these issues, action will be taken against those who move in the path of perdition condoning the undisciplined life.

O beloved brethren, believe me, suppose it is continued like this, within twenty years, these monasteries would cease to exist. The strength of the monasteries is not the thickness of the walls, but, the zealous and devout life of its inmates. In how many countries, even bigger monasteries were founded, but how it happened, we do not know, those places are today forests and abode of wild animals. We are the beginners of these monasteries and their corner stones, the brothers who come after us as our successors, after fifty years, will imitate us considering our names and actions as

witnessing. The possibility is, in that case, their lifestyle, and services will be of a lower standard than that of ours.

Finally, my dearest children, beloved brethren, none of us joined the monastery due to poverty or due to the lack of livelihood. We had enough comforts at our homes. We could enjoy the same. But we have renounced our possessions and parents only for the sake of God. Now if we renounce God due to our laziness and carelessness what a foolish act it would be? What a madness?

At last, we request you to pray for us, because the time of reckoning is close at hand.

From Koonammavu  
1 July 1869

Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)  
Fr. Leopold Maria of St.  
Joseph, Delegate (Sd.)

### **6.3. A Circular Letter Addressed to All Members of the Congregation Written Jointly by Fr. Chavara and Fr. Gerard Missionary**

*Fr. Gerard Missionary is the younger brother of Fr. Leopold Missionary. He came to Kerala in 1869 and went back to Italy in 1876 along with his brother. When Fr. Leopold was away in Rome, Fr. Gerard was the provincial delegate of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Malabar.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

Fr. Gerard of St. Joseph, Missionary Apostolic, managing the affairs, on behalf of the Provincial Delegate, of the Third Order of the Carmelites Discalced in Malabar and Father Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, Prior of the Monasteries, together, wish peace and joy of our Lord to all of you, our brethren, Fr. Superior of Mannanam monastery, Fathers, Brothers and scholastics and write:

Beloved brethren,

Keep watch and be alert. "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Mk 14:38). These words of our Lord remind us that we, who are weak, should be awakened and energized from time to time. Therefore, we share with you a few words of advice.

1. It is not necessary to highlight the shortcomings, which can happen in the dealings and discussions of the religious with the laity. Hence, be careful in this matter. Everyone, even the priests, should be careful not to speak with the laity without the permission of the superior.
2. No one should take exception from humble works like cleaning the monastery. The Reverend Priests should become good examples, being the first in doing such works.

3. Without silence and solitude, we cannot enjoy the sweetness of religious life and to fulfil its obligations. Hence one may not go out of one's room, except for some needs. That is, for the needs of nature, to fulfil the entrusted duties and for other purposes set forth in the constitutions. To go out for other purposes, permission of the superior is required. It is necessary for the shepherd to know where the sheep is grazing at every moment.
4. If charity, humility, holiness, zeal - these four are in us and around us, they will spread into the whole world.

Written from St. Philomena's Monastery at Koonammavu

Fr. Gerard of St. Joseph (Sd.)

Fr. Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

#### 6.4. 'Alochana' Reflections

*This is an article in the handwriting of Fr. Chavara meant to be read by the members of the Congregation. It discusses the problems of the Malabar Church and he proposes some solutions to the problems.*

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Jesus Mary Joseph

#### Reflections

My reflections on the calamities caused and would cause to the faithful of Malabar through those who come from Babel and the possible ways and means to counter them.

The reason why the believers in Malabar are inclined to Babel: Human beings are attached to their own language, customs and race. In the above three aspects there are similarities between the Malabarians and Chaldeans (Those from Babel). And they do not find such similarities between themselves and the Bishops who rule them and the Apostolic Missionaries who guide them.

In this context, I am thinking about what could happen in the future. If all the Syrian Catholics together, after having a consultation, send a petition to Rome, and if the Holy Father decides to send Bishops and missionaries of our own rite, suppose in that context, the members of the monasteries are having a consultation on the same, we have to note the following: Because of their lack of stability in faith, the church in Babel has got involved in heresies; they are greedy; they practice simony which is forbidden. We see faith, generosity, devotion, zeal for the glory of God and such other virtues in the Bishops and missionaries from Europe.

When we consider all these, not even one among us with knowledge and prudence would select the Bishops from Babel to rule us.

Although the fact is so, we have to consider another aspect, why among the Syrians, there were no good theological works so far? And why there were no experts in languages? Latin and Greek Churches have produced excellent theological treatises and linguistic works. When we think of solving these problems and of freeing the Malabar church from its dependence on the Babel church, we come across a truth.

Not only for Latin and Greek Rites, but also for all language groups, have missionaries and bishops of their own languages and rites. There are among them scholars and theologians. Hence, as time advances they produce scholarly treatises and theological works. In Malabar, Holy Mass and other rites are in Syriac. Bishops and missionaries use Latin for the liturgical celebrations. Thus the language of the Liturgy is different for the missionaries and the faithful. Hence, the unity, love and relationship expected among them is lacking. The relationship like between father and children and the mutual love does not develop. Even the desire for it is blocked. The decisions and plans taken by the Bishop with clear objectives are misunderstood. When the rebels interpret these as plans to delimit our Syrian rite and language, the ordinary people believe the same. They approach Babel to get Bishops of their own rite so that the feared destruction of their traditions may not happen. Those who come to rule us, turn out to be those who enslave us.

Not only this, in ordination rites, the language and the rite of the ordaining bishop and that of those who receive the ordination are different and it causes lack of devotion. The relationship here is sometimes not of father and

children but of master and slaves. This mixing up of liturgical rite may be found nowhere except in Malabar (among the Syrians). Hence the only way to remove all these blocks and to wean the Syro-Malabarians from the Chaldeans is here below:

All the monasteries in Malabar together, having a mutual consultation, write to the Holy See: Send some missionaries to Malabar, who knows the language Syriac or are ready to learn the language and give them permission to use the Syrian rite for their Liturgical celebrations. One among them must be selected as the Bishop of the Syro-Malabarians after the time of the present Archbishop. All the parishes together are preparing a petition of this nature to be sent to Rome. Together with that or later separately, a petition could be sent by us. There is a possibility that our request may be granted. The Europeans are blessed with knowledge and devotion. It will be a great blessing for us if we get some missionaries with those virtues and knowledge of Syrian language and rite. If we get them as Vicars in our parishes, it will be a blessing. There is a possibility that we may get saints from our country. This will have another benefit as well.

When we try to guide the Jacobite Christians to the Catholic fold, the main objection raised is that we do not have Bishops of our own Syrian rite. If this problem is solved, the reunion movement of the Jacobites would be easy. If it is not possible for ordained priests to change their rite and language, kindly send scholastics here, they can complete their studies and get ordained here in Syrian rite.

### 6.5. Will and Testament of Fr. Chavara Addressed to the Members of TOCD

*In October 1870, Fr. Chavara became sick and was bed-ridden. He had prepared his Will and Testament in August 1870. He put it in a cover, sealed it, and entrusted it to a novice, asking him to hand over the letter to Father Leopold Missionary, his spiritual father, after his burial. Fr. Chavara went to his heavenly abode on 3 January 1871. On 4 January, after his funeral, the letter was handed over to Fr. Leopold Missionary. He made copies of the same and sent to all the monasteries. This translation is based on the copy from Mannanam files.*

Jesus Mary Joseph  
Praise Be to Jesus!

August 1870

My beloved and Reverend Fathers of the Monasteries, beloved children, the novices, Brothers co-operators and others, peace be to you in Our Lord. Your servant, Aha Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, intimates to you these advices and directives as my last words.

- 1. Children of the Mother of Carmel:** My loving children, it is the special grace of Our Lord that we have been called to be the members of the Carmelite Order, most dear to our Mother of Mount Carmel. This is by the will of God; not by the will of man. I am convinced of this reality, just as I write this letter on paper.

Very Reverend Fathers Thomas Palackal and Thomas Porukara, the founders of this congregation, desired and made arrangements to become members of a Dominican congregation. That is why they started wearing white cassock, which was not the practice of the times and



place. But seeing our weakness holy Mother joined us in her special care and love.

2. **Obedience:** Loving children, we, you and I have not become real religious so far. The only proof of a true religious is obedience without seeing and hearing, total renunciation of one's will. The one who has this is a true religious. It may not be very difficult to practise; but we should strive forward as if we have not fully practised it. For this, you must submit yourself to the will of Fr. Leopold Missionary, the Provincial delegate and of His Excellency, Our Bishop. You should always obey other missionary fathers in all matters except which are against the orders of the above two and against God. In the beginning, you may feel that it is difficult to practise, but later you will be convinced that it is good and that it should be so always. You will experience great peace of mind. Similarly, you should also obey the authorities who are below them. Finally, obey one another. Those who practise obedience in all these three levels will experience heavenly peace in this small earthly heaven, the monastery, sure.
3. **Children of a Mother:** Reverend Fathers Superiors, loving brethren, the number of monasteries be any, you must have genuine love for one another, as if, born of the womb of the same mother, nurtured by the milk of the same mother. This love should never weaken, instead it should become stronger daily. Remember this as a special piece of advice: ' In order that this love may not grow cold, Superiors of the monasteries should take more interest in doing things requested by the superiors of other monasteries than their interest in managing the affairs of their own monasteries. When the superiors

meet annually for the consultations, they should settle all the accounts till that date.' Another thing that will help to maintain this love among the monasteries is:

'Every year, several times, even if there is no serious matter to be communicated, the superiors must exchange letters among themselves, enquire and report about the wellbeing of our brethren and fulfil mutual needs.'

- 4. Growth of the Congregation, Salvation of Souls:** God in His providence has caused the foundation of this congregation for the salvation of our Christian brethren. Since our number is less, we are not able to offer them due services. Hence request the Archbishop to grant us the following: We need one more novitiate house and a Missionary Father. My opinion is: The first monastery of the congregation, Mannanam shall be made a novitiate house and shall be entrusted to Fr. Gerard Missionary. Since, Fr. Leopold Missionary, the elder brother of Fr. Gerard, is novice master at Koonammavu, it may be easy for both to run the novitiates without much difference of opinion. They will be able to live both at Koonammavu and Mannanam and manage the affairs of both the novitiates. Thus, the novitiate for the monasteries in the south could be Mannanam and for the monasteries in the north, Koonammavu. And God willing, in due course of time, two provinces would emerge.

It is necessary and easy to found more monasteries to the southern side. Hence to the east, west and south of Mannanam two monasteries each and a few convents and boarding schools could be founded. Of these two Missionary Fathers, if one is entrusted with the responsibility of the Novitiate at Mannanam, very soon these monasteries and convents could be started. One

monastery could be at Thathenpilly, other at Mavelikara. South of this, in the east and west one monastery each and convents too are to be established, that would be helpful for the spiritual growth of the faithful of the dioceses of Varapuzha and Kollam. These are needed there. It is also necessary to start convents and schools at Mannanam and Mutholy. All these will be possible with the enthusiasm, hard work and motivation of you my dear brethren.

5. **The Chaldean Leaning:** We must remember with gratitude, the good things done by the Jesuits, Portuguese King and Archbishop Menezes to save our ancestors from Nestorian schism. Unfortunately, they did not try to unite the church in love. I do not know whether it was due to our or their unwillingness.

If the Jesuits had admitted the Syro-Malabar Christians into their order and had taught us Latin and other European languages, our leaning towards the Chaldean church would have weakened and our relationship with the Roman church strengthened. In the absence of such a strong relationship with Rome, whenever someone comes from Babel, saying '*Aahaind manhadgnan*' (=we belong to the same tradition), we used to bend towards Babel and run to Babel to get a Bishop from there and in case, one comes to Malabar, all used go after him.

6. **Those Who Are to Be Remembered with Gratitude:** We were admitted into the Order of Blessed Virgin Mary and our scholastics were taught Theology by His Grace Archbishop Bernardine and by Missionary Fathers Philip, Marceline, and Leopold. Now, we are convinced from the experience of the failure of Roccas schism, by

the grace of God, the possibility of our Church falling into any schism is rare. So we have the responsibility to remember with gratitude, in our prayers these four. Also, remember with gratitude, before God, the family of Petru Beccaro at Aquì in Italy. Because, the members of that family, considered us as one of their own family and made us and others one with them in Jesus Christ. Moreover, they had the prudence to unite different groups of Syrians, 'the seven hundreds', 'the five hundreds', 'the three hundreds', and 'the sixty ones' into one body in Christ Jesus.

7. **Two Subjects to Be Paid Attention to:** Only those who are appointed to be in charge shall attend to the matters of convents and boarding schools. Fr. Gerard Missionary had entrusted me with a sacred relic. If it is proper, give that relic to the home of charity of the Confraternity of Blessed Death at Kainakari. I feel that it may be a great protection and help for the poor new Christians.
8. **Those to Whom We Are Indebted:** Members of Mannanam monastery should give all possible help to the family of Manjoor Kalappurackal Mathan of Muttuchira parish. By this you will bear witness that you are the disciples of the Divine Master. You must also lovingly remember in the Lord the families of Thayyil and Perumalil because, they have donated their land for the monastery. Similarly, the members of Carmel Monastery (Vazhakulam) should remember the Parai family; members of Elthuruth should remember Tharakan and Kallookaran families; the members of St. Teresa's Monastery, Ambazhakadu should remember Ittoop who donated land for the Mother (St. Teresa).

**9. The Final Request:** Finally, I beg pardon from the Most Reverend Bishop, the Vicar Apostolic, Very Reverend Father Provincial Delegate, Very Reverend Fathers, Missionaries Apostolic, and all members of our Monasteries. Before the merciful God, I ask pardon from all my brothers for my failures in my duty to serve you and my failures in other matters. Again, I pray to my brethren in religious life to forgive me, because, I made my profession as the first one in this Congregation; I was the first prior; I failed to fulfil fully my duty to observe and make others observe the rules and regulations of our community; and I did not give a good example for you. I am sorry for the scandals I have caused you. I pray that you lead a zealous life correcting the shortcomings caused by me and rejecting my bad examples.



## 7

### **LETTERS TO THE SISTERS**

*The Carmelite Convent at Koonammavu was founded on 13 February 1866. Fr. Chavara used to communicate with the members of the convent through written letters and brief notes. The sources of these letters are given below: There are twenty-four letters addressed to the sisters, some are copied down in the Chronicles of the convent. Some letters are preserved in the archives of CMC Provincial House, Ernakulum.*

### 7.1. First Letter to the Sisters

*This letter, dated 29 April 1867, is a proof of the loving concern of Fr. Chavara to bring up the sisters spiritually. He sent spiritual books to them, even a personal copy which he was using for his spiritual reading. It is interesting to note his human touch in sending some tobacco powder to the convent which some one there needed.*

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Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joeseph

Aha Prior of the Holy Family

Peace in Our Lord to the Superior of the sisters and to the Sisters, children of St. Mother Teresa of Avila!

I send herewith the book '*aatichuvati*' as per the request of Mother Superior and the book '*Vyakula prasangam*' as requested by Sr Clara. The book of monthly devotion (*Vanakamasa pustakam*) asked for by Mother Superior could not be found, although I searched for it here. Hence, since you do not have any book of ritual with you, that you may not have the pain that you are not able to love and serve our mother as you want, I am sending herewith the book '*jnanapeeyusham*', I have been using. At the end of that book there is May devotion as well. After 31 May, on 1 June, it must be returned to me. (If I happen to die during this period it need not be returned, let it be with you.)

From Easter Saturday to the Sunday of Holy Trinity (Sunday after 50<sup>th</sup> day feast), the three time's prayer is recited standing, I hope. For those who do not know that prayer, to learn by heart that prayer and to recite the same, book mark is kept in place of the book sent. Please tell me which book you require in order to read and learn Tamil, I shall get it for you. Father Leopold Missionary has given for



you a book in Italian, printed in 1864 in Rome, for the annual retreat of sisters.

I am sending some tobacco powder in a small bottle. I shall send you the rest of the news, later. May God protect you?

Please encourage Sr. Anna to note down all the news. If you note down all the details even those you find unimportant, without any laziness, you will be very happy when you read them later. The great joy of the result of our journey and search is this elderly lady whom we have brought along with us.

To  
The Superior of the Sisters of Third Order of Carmelites  
Discalced.

29 April 1867

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

## 7.2. Second Letter to the Sisters

*The sisters used to attend the 40 hours adoration at the Monastery at Koonammavu. From 12 June 1869, there was Holy Mass in the convent chapel. They could have adoration in their own chapel. They wrote to Fr. Prior to find out whether they were expected to join the solemn adoration in the monastery in March 1870. This letter is a reply to the query.*

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Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

O loving children, received your letter. Regarding your participation in the Eucharistic adoration here, your opinion and the opinion of Very Reverend Fr. Vicar Apostolic, Father Missionary Apostolic and of all others is the same; that is, from the corner of that convent, the adoration offered to your beloved spouse Jesus Christ is most pleasing to him. As I have seen with my own eyes, the pagan spouse of our great king is carried on a chariot covered with thick curtains so that she may not be looked at by others. If so, your loving divine bridegroom would, how much more, care for you. Hence, the adoration conducted within your convent is granted the same fruits as the one conducted anywhere else, by the church. O this is a great blessing! When I read a part of the book, *Monaca Sanctae*, written by Saint Liguori for religious sisters, I was jealous of you. This is true. This is verily true. You are blessed. O queens of my Lord and my God, how great and praiseworthy is this state of life you have ascended. Only on the day of judgement you would understand that so many earthly queens have been jealous of your treasures.

God willing, after the Holy Mass, I shall come and apply holy ashes on your foreheads. But, I am not well enough to walk. Hence, please pray for me in the special prayers of the month dedicated to St. Joseph and during this forty hour adoration. Pray for me so that the merciful Lord may remit the punishments due to me caused by my bad examples, careless words and imprudent actions and scandals caused to you my Lord's spouses and to the children entrusted to me by God. Please pray for me so that hereafter, I may lead a life according to the plan of God and may die peacefully in the Lord.

Fr. Pro Vicar Apostolic has allowed the girls of the boarding house and helpers to participate in the Adoration. Let it be according to the will of God. If you have there the monthly devotion book in Malayalam, send back to me the Tamil version. Tomorrow the monthly devotion books will arrive from Mannanam. You or the boarders can buy. I do not know the price. May be Rupees one or Rupees three forth.

May Lord Jesus bless you! Enjoy with the Lord in your room which is his Bridal Chamber. Pray for me too.

1 March 1870

Aha Ku. Elias, Prior (Sd.)

### 7.3. Third Letter to the Sisters

*Both Fr. Prior and the Mother Superior were suffering from arthritis. Fr. Prior, with a sense of humour, prescribes a spiritual medicine for their common ailment. The medicine is to unite their sufferings with those of Jesus and to offer them for the purposes for which Jesus suffered.*



Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Reverend Mother Superior, for me and for you, these days, the sickness is same, treatment too shall be the same. That is, in order to do penance for the sins committed earlier and to do atonement for the present failures, doing virtuous acts is necessary. But, it is not practised. For such persons there is a short cut. That is given here below:

1. We are punished, not only for our own mistakes. We will be punished for rejoicing at the mistakes of others. Similarly, if we rejoice at the virtues of others, we will be blessed. Therefore, remember and rejoice at the virtues and penances of great saints, martyrs, Mary Magdalene who was a sinner and other saints from the beginning and offer them to God as if these are our own.
2. Let us promise to our Lord: That we offer to our Lord as prayers the movements of our nerves, winking of our eyes, breathing, listening to the chirping of birds, etc., each separately and all together.
3. Join all these with the actions of Our Lord, our sins will be wiped off; and we will earn great merit of virtues.
4. All these could be multiplied: For example, when the nerve on my left leg moves, I pray, Lord, by the blood that flowed from your left leg cleanse me of all my sins I have committed by my left leg.

Second, by this movement of the nerve, I desire the fruits of the virtues of all the saints. Third, this movement of my nerve is for the purpose of the movement of the sacred foot. Fourth, multiply the above. For the first movement of the nerve, remember the virtues of all saints; for the second movement double the intention; for the third movement, again double; thus make an intention that every movement is doubled and offered. Later, daily by a single remembering offer everything to the Lord.

When I pray, "Lord have mercy on me," I join all the intentions of prayers offered in all the convent chapels. Since we are united to the Lord through the vows, when we recite once, "Lord have mercy on me," we share in the prayers of all the consecrated. Teach the Novices these prayers.

Fr. Bernardine of Carmel Monastery, Vazhakulam was preaching a retreat at Vadakara church. The last ordination service conducted by Late Bishop Bernardine was the ordination of this priest. On Friday last, he celebrated Holy Mass, preached and had the spiritual reading of the retreat and came back to his room by 12 noon. As he felt unwell, he informed his friend Palakunnel Kochu Chakko of Nedumkunnam parish. He felt severe pain and wanted to go back to his monastery. He was carried to the monastery. He asked for the last sacraments and made his confession and passed away by five in the evening. Kindly pray for him.

To  
The Mother Superior

4 April 1870

Prior (Sd.)

Fr. Bernardine Matheckal TOCD of Arakuzha parish passed away on 1 April 1870.

#### 7.4. Fourth Letter to the Sisters

*Fr. Chavara reminds the sisters to receive Jesus spiritually in their hearts on Maundy Thursday, since they were not allowed to go to the Monastery for the only solemn Holy Mass. He asks them to be united with the Mother of Jesus and the three Marys on those three days.*

+

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Ha! Mother Superior, God's will is that you and I be starving tomorrow: because tomorrow there is only one solemn sung Mass. Those who participate in that Mass can receive the Holy Communion. Apart from that receiving communion tomorrow is not permitted by the Church. Hence, Pro Vicar Apostolic has ordered that there shall not be Holy Mass in Puthenpally Seminary too. On behalf of you, I gave the answer, "no" to the query, "will it be painful for the daughters of Mother Teresa, obeying the holy Catholic Church, not to receive the Holy Communion, tomorrow?" Therefore, welcome Jesus into your hearts, in spirit. Until you see the risen Lord, with the Mother of God and the other three Marys, meditating on the suffering of Jesus and the joy of resurrection wait for him. Meditating on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and on the joy of resurrection, remain united with him. But, Mother Superior may grant permission to the helper or procurator, whoever is willing, to come over here and participate in the Solemn High Mass at noon and receive the Holy Communion.

13 April 1870

Prior (Sd.)

### 7.5. Fifth Letter to the Sisters

*Through this letter Fr. Prior gives instructions to the sisters regarding minor maintenance works in the convent and the work in coconut grove.*

+

Praise Be to Jesu!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Yesterday, you had asked me about the order of Canonical Prayers. I have written down the same in a manner which can be easily understood by you. I wanted to come over there. But, by the time I reached here, I was very tired and feeling head ache. I feel sleepy and fall asleep often. I am writing this note feeling tired.

Request the procurator to ask the masons to come for work Friday too and finish all the work. Raise a platform around the store box and raise the pillar from there. Store boxes, small as well as large must be installed on stone floors so that termite attack may be prevented. The whole floor must be well beaten to form a strong floor and should be cowdung-plastered so that paddy or paddy seeds could be measured out on to the floor.

Coconut saplings planted inside the fence and outside should be tended. Till around each tree; remove the branch roots on the surface; make a bed around and fill it with leaf-moulds. Get the service of the Velas who climb the coconut trees and get the top cleaned; remove the dry leaves, dry and empty bunches etc. Only when the top and the bottom of the coconut trees are kept clean, they would yield fruits. By this the trees grow well and we get sufficient firewood. Tell the procurator to get all these works done. Do not worry about how we can find money to pay the wages. Get works done; God will provide us with the necessary funds.

This does not belong to us. It is the patrimony of Our Lord Jesus; we need to work only.

To  
The Mother Superior

25 May 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

Everyone should fulfil the duties entrusted to oneself. 'Management' for the superiors; 'getting works done' for procurators; 'striving to practice, obedience, humility, charity etc. 'for all members of the community. No one should waste even a second; how great is the value of time?



### 7.6. Sixth Letter to the Sisters

*This letter contains a mystical reflection on the 'love of God'. In the same mystical stream, Fr. Chavara reflects on the mutual human love between the sisters and himself.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

Ha! My children, these days you must meditate well on 'the love of Jesus.' In the coming eight days, turn by turn, without any break, at least one sister should receive the Holy Communion daily and meditate on the love of Jesus.

Ha! I wanted to teach you Latin; there is no way to get it done; may not be that needed. Hence, learn to read Tamil well; because there are many spiritual books in Tamil. More books in Tamil may arrive.

Ha! Abide in the love of Jesus! Remain always in His presence. Walk by His side; converse with him always. When you feel desire, love or attraction towards something, the loving Lord turns towards you and tells you, "Look at me, will that thing make you happier than I will? Is it sorrow or trouble? Then why are you troubled? I can liberate you from your troubles and make you happy. Is it not enough for you? Even for a moment He is not away from you. He wants you to make you happy and he wants only that you love him. He tells you that he can give you everything that you want. Nothing remains to be given, for he has given himself to you. What remains now? The heavens are my creation. Is this small reality greater than me?

Ha! Remember what relationship is between us? Where are you? Where am I? Do I know you? Do you know me?

Now more than your blood relations, you love me and I love you. What reason is behind this?

Ha! Jesus, until we become one in you, depart not from us.

To  
The Mother Superior

Assistant Mother Superior shall read out this letter to all in the convent and all children in the boarding house.

### 7.7. Seventh Letter to the Sisters

*This brief letter begins with a reflection on the 'love of God' and concludes with corrections in writing the accounts of the convent.*

Ha! My dear Children, Who else on earth enjoy happiness like you? How many women greater and richer than you in this world live in tears and troubles?

Remember how sweet is the voice of your loving Bridegroom? He looks into your heart to see whether there is any other love than himself in your heart. Remember that he is always with you, lovingly looking for what you need inside and outside.

When you write the account, the amount must be clearly noted down. For example,

Income:	5 para
Expense:	2 Para
Balance (in store box):	3 para
Stock (in store house):	105 para

Amount must be entered correctly. When I looked into your account, the amounts are not tallying. It is entered as expenses Rs. 672.75. It is not clear whether the amount Rs. 38 for Fr. Delegate is included or not. Balance is shown as Rs. 23. But this too does not tally with other entries.

### 7.8. Eighth Letter to the Sisters

*Ripe red chillies and sweat mangoes are sent to the sisters as presents. The letter continues with an exposition of Teresian contemplative prayer.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph

For the glory of Divine Mother, Blessed Virgin Mary, I send this present to you. The chilly plant was grown in front of my room in a wooden box. I thought its fruits are over. But these few chillies are the last; small too. No one paid attention to them. They have ripened all together. I am sending them to you that they may not be wasted but utilized.

These mangos have been sent to me by Mr. Parai. The two red ones among them are very special, the best variety available in India. But, they are not fully matured; one has ripened on top side. I am sending them to you, to taste them and later to sprout them to saplings to be planted. Peel them and give a small piece each to every one so that all may taste it.

I am sorry that I am not able to give any discourse to you and to the boarding girls. It is due to my bodily weakness. All should pay attention to the following small piece of advice. To ascend the path of perfection, to prevent any descend from where you reached and to progress in the straight path, this would help you.

Do not waste any time in useless conversations. The time available after the recreation according to the time table, should be spent in spiritual reading. Those who are interested in reading belong to two schools: those who read news, strange incidents, etc. and those who read about the passion and agony of Our Lord Jesus Christ and those who

are interested in reading the biographies of St. Teresa of Avila who lead a very devout life and of St. Rosa and others. The first group seeks intellectual knowledge and illumination. The second group seeks knowledge and devotion. To walk in the path of sanctity and to progress, and to remain in the same, the assured path is that of the second group.

Those who have the reading habit of the second group, rejoice in solitude. Thus, Jesus comes into that soul in solitude, in order to be united with it in solitude and starts conversing with it. In the beginning that conversation and language may not be fully understood. Then the Lord will lead the bride to the cellar and make her taste a little of the finest wine. In the beginning only very little. When it is enjoyed the bride starts grasping the conversation of the Bridegroom. When the Bridegroom sees that the bride is following his language, he will speak more clearly. Rejoicing in their love, the Bridegroom presents the bride with ornaments. The doors of union with God are opened and fear vanishes.

The stages of mystical experiences are: (1) Reading, (2) Solitude, (3) Meditative Prayer, and (4) Meditation. It is enough that we reach up to this stage. Saint Mother Teresa of Avila reached the seventh stage. Some of those with the Mother have reached the fifth or sixth level. We must reach at least the fourth stage (level).

Explain this to the girls in the boarding house as too they can understand it.

**7.9. Ninth Letter (a Note) to the Sisters**

*Here is a communication about the Holy Week reflection of Fr. Chavara, which shows his intimate love for the sisters.*

+

Jesus Mary Joseph

See, I have locked in the chest of Our Lord Jesus Christ my heart and yours together, until the feast of Resurrection, remain there.

If the children of the boarding come here, they have permission to adore the Blessed Sacrament for half an hour.

Prior

**7.10. Tenth Letter (a Note) to the Sisters**

*As he finds a book on 'religious life', Fr. Chavara sends it to the sisters asking them to read it immediately.*

O! Happiness, Ha, My Lord, we do not grasp anything; we are like worms. We are like children who do not know even to tell the mother that they are hungry, when they are hungry. You are like the mother who having understood that the children are hungry, even if they are sleeping, wakes them up and suckles them. See how he fulfils our, his children's needs. I have found a book which I did not look for. It is on religious life. It is a book of practical exercises helping one to reach the zenith of one's religious life and become one with Lord Jesus. Remember, this book has been sent for you by Lord Jesus Christ.

Call together all, today itself and read out at least eleven paragraphs, even finding time during the recreation time.

Prior

### 7.11. Eleventh Letter to the Sisters

*Fr. Chavara sends another spiritual book to the sisters. He reflects on the wonderful providence of God.*

+

Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Ha! Loving Children,  
Remember how caring Our Lord God Almighty is in providing us with everything. How happily, God accepts our hearty decision to love Him. See how he provides us with everything we need. Look at the affairs of this convent. From the moment it was established, it is God who runs it. He fulfils all our needs without allowing even the smallest inconvenience. The Word of God, "Seek, you shall find "is true. I shall share with you an example.

I found a small Tamil book in a room yesterday. When I opened and read it, I understood that it was regarding the life of religious sisters. Being convinced that it has been sent by God for you, I translated it into Malayalam. All of you must read well and understand the whole book, at least once, as a part of your spiritual reading. I hope that our children are learning Tamil. In order that they may grasp things easily, it is better to read both Tamil and Malayalam. Hence, I send to you the book I found. Read both attentively. Kindly pray for me.

To  
The Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced

Prior



## 7.12. Some Reflections Sent to the Sisters

*This is an article, rather than a letter, reflecting on the state of life of a religious sister.*

St. Augustine says: O Consecrated virgin, O blessed virgin, you have a spouse nobler than all the rich on earth and heaven. Having chosen you from among others, he has accepted you as his bride. Don't you know that he has given you the guarantee of his love for you? Therefore, you should have had a greater love for him. St. Bernard says: Hereafter, there is no relationship between you and the world. O! Bride of Jesus, renounce yourself and the world. For, now onwards, you do not belong to you; not to this world. But you belong to the Lord to whom you have offered yourself totally. You did not choose God, God has chosen you and made you his own bride. There were so many young women in the world; they did not get this blessing. This is not because you had more merits than them. It is because he has loved you more than these. St. Agnes says: O Joy that leads me to death, go away from me; you draw my love; but no; I do not love anyone other than my God. For, he loved me first.

When the veil is received, the religious sister recites the following words before the celebrant: 'In order that I may not desire anything other than God, He has placed a mark on my face; For, He alone is my bride groom. I do not see any friend except Jesus Christ; and have not seen any other friend.' Brides of this world look for rich and powerful bridegrooms. But you have found a bride groom, greater than all of them, the king of heaven. Since you are chosen to be the bride of him, how happy and glorified you are?

I found my beloved.

I will embrace him in my love always.

I will not let him be away from me.

Divine love unites the soul to God.

He has put his ring on my finger and made me his bride. He has crowned me with his crown. My creator and my spouse, Lord and king of all crowned me as his queen.

O virgin who reads this, do you understand that you have to strive to make the crown you bear your own? As long as you are in this world, due to your failures you may lose this crown. In order that your crown may not be snatched away from you, hold on to what you have, the Apostle has reminded.

Hence, moving away from the creatures, through love and prayers always remaining united with the Lord, make every effort not to lose your crown.

O! Do you know how blessed is this your state of life? St. Bernard has written: In this state humans live a holy life; rarely fall down; rise up quickly; tread carefully; are watered incessantly; imbibe all effortlessly; die in faith; always purified; rewarded eternally. We see such a fortune of consecrated virgins.

### **Live a Holy Life**

If you observe the life of a consecrated virgin, surely you can see that she loves God with great holiness. The merit and holiness of her actions consist in doing everything to fulfil the will of God. The more one renounces one's own will, the more that person becomes dear to God. Lay persons in the world, however devout they be, they do things as they want, in the freedom of their mind. When they want, they pray; they receive Holy Communion as they decide; participate in Holy Mass; read spiritual books; do penance; do charitable acts. But a consecrated virgin does all these under the vow of obedience; in obedience, God

himself commands. When a consecrated virgin lives obeying the Superiors and the Constitutions, not only her prayers and spiritual exercises, but all her activities, work, walking, talking, recreating, meeting guests, eating, drinking, sleeping, etc. are all virtuous acts. Because all these are done not of one's own will, but out of holy obedience and they are all meritorious before God.

O! How many virtuous acts were rendered fruitless, because they were done according to one's own will? Ha God Almighty, on the day of judgement, how many people would plead before God for not rewarding their virtuous acts? We fasted, we kept abstinence, and we humbled ourselves; why are they not reckoned?

Then God will answer: You have received your reward then and there, for, you had acted not to fulfil my will but yours.

### **7.13. Litany of Blessed Virgin Mary Partially Copied and Sent to the Sisters**

Lord, have mercy!  
 Christ, have mercy!  
 Lord, have mercy!  
 Christ, hear us!  
 Christ, receive us!  
 God, the Father in heaven,           Have mercy on us.  
 God, the Son, Redeemer of the  
     world,  
 God, the Holy Spirit,  
 God the Holy Trinity  
 Holy Mary                               Pray for us.  
 Holy Mother of God  
 Holy Virgin of virgins  
 Mother of Christ  
 Mother of divine grace  
 Mother without sin  
 Mother most loving  
 Mother inviolate

Learn the remaining by reading from this text.

### **7.14. A Note Sent to the the Sisters during a Journey**

To

Rev. Mother Superior and Other Sisters of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of St. Mother Teresa

Today, Friday, 12 April, Fr. Leopold Missionary and I are going to Thiruvananthapuram from Kollam. We are keeping well. How are you? Kindly pray for us, especially for Fr. Leopold Missionary. May God protect him healthy, free from all ailments so that he may work for your salvation! The procurator and Fr. Superior of Koonammavu Monastery will do for you all the needful.

This is dated 12 April 1867.

### **7.15. First Note Sent to the Sisters Regarding the Illness of Bishop Bernardine**

Jesus Mary Joseph

Ha! Dear children, Our Bishop Most Rev. Archbishop Bernardine received Holy Communion, yesterday night. Since he could not speak anything, he called Fr. Leopold Missionary by gesture and requested the prayers of all. Hence, today onwards you should pray for our Archbishop by saying a novena prayer, it is ordered. Someone is sent to Kochi to consult a senior Doctor. If you have said the prayer to St. Joseph, it will be good if you begin the novena to St. Francis Xavier. In the prayers where it is given to mention the intention add "Our Lord Jesus, grant the blessing of bodily wellbeing to our ailing father, Archbishop Bernardine." Conclude it with three 'Our Father', three 'Hail Mary' and three 'Glory to the Trinity'. It is good if you can recite the Litany of our Mother. The rest as per your prudence.

20 August 1868

Prior

### **7.16. Second Note Sent to the Sisters Regarding the Illness of Bishop Bernardine**

Ha! Loving children,

Our Father Archbishop is very seriously ill. He received the last sacraments. He is going through great agony. Both hands and both feet feel burning. They are cooled pouring water over them. Pray that His will be done. There is slight relief now. I am given orders to ask you to pray constantly.

Prior

### **7.17. Third Note Sent to the Sisters Regarding the Illness of Bishop Bernardine**

Loving children,

Our Father, the Archbishop is more critical than yesterday. I am still hopeful. We have no means with us other than prayer. Today I came back here hurriedly. Now I am going back. Continue to pray. If I get a chance, I shall ask special blessings for you.

The Archbishop is well. Illness is gone. Now he is only weak. See the miracle of prayer. Continue to pray.



### **7.18. A Note Sent to the Sisters Regarding the Programme of the New Vicar Apostolic**

*Archbishop Bernardine passed away on 5 September 1868. On 15 November 1868 Monsignor Leonard was consecrated as the Bishop of Varapuzha. On 21 November, the newly ordained Bishop was accorded a welcome at Koonammavu. By this note Fr. Chavara is inviting the sisters to the function.*

His Excellency the Bishop will celebrate the Holy Mass in the church at 5.30 in the morning. Immediately after that he will administer the sacrament of confirmation. All of you must come to the church by 5 a.m., participate in the Holy Mass; receive the Holy Communion and receive the sacrament of confirmation.

### **7.19. Letter Informing the Sisters about the Demise of Carmelite General in Rome**

*From October 1870 Fr. Chavara was very sick. Through this letter, for the first time, he sent a message that he was about to bid farewell.*

Very Rev. Fr. Dominic of St. Joseph, the Pro-posito General of all our Carmelite Orders, has been called by God for his reward of heavenly crown for his sufferings on 8 July 1870. Hence today at the time of meditation you must recite the whole rosary - 153 beads. All shall receive Holy Communion for three days.

The children in the boarding shall recite one rosary (50) and receive one Holy Communion.

Fr. Prior

## **7.20. First Note Sent to the Sisters after Fr. Chavara Was Bed-Ridden**

Ha! Loving children,

Now on I will be only a burden for others, rather than any benefit. Time has come when I am rendered such services which have never been given to anyone else. I am causing troubles for others by accepting helps for my rotting body and care for me who is with evil habits and mean behaviour.

When Fr. Delegate returns and looks at through his glasses how you have been formed by me in my ignorance, will I be reprimanded by him? But I am not afraid of such reprimands. I am more scared of the reprimands by the Delegate, Almighty!

Hence, do not pay attention to the administration of not so intelligent myself and of your mother superior, lowly like me. As the words of our Lord, 'whoever is on the throne of Moses, not look at who they are but look at the one who has appointed them'.

**7.21. Second Note Sent to the Sisters after Fr. Chavara Was Bed-Ridden**

Dear children,

Yesterday, I had head wobbling and several bouts of vomiting. I was not well from four in the morning. God willing, I shall send you further news later. May God bless all of you!

Fr. Prior

### **7.22. Third Note Sent to the Sisters after Fr. Chavara Was Bed-Ridden**

Dear children,

Yesterday, after the procession, in the afternoon from 4 o' clock to 8 o' clock, I had wobbling of head and gas trouble. I took a few *kasturi* tablets. After midnight, there was some relief. I felt as if I was dying. I bid my farewell to the Lord. Even to you I bid farewell. Now I got up. I could not participate in the Holy Mass today.

Fr. Prior

**7.23. Fourth Note Sent to the Sisters after Fr. Chavara Was Bed-Ridden**

Dear children,

Now, due to the severity of my head ache, I meditate always on the suffering of Jesus when the crown of thorns was stuck on the head of Jesus. Whenever I open the eyes and look around, I see as if angels are flying around. When I look at the face of each angel, it shines like a star.

**7.24. The Last Note Sent to the Sisters after Fr.  
Chavara Was Bed-Ridden**

Dear children,

May the Lord bless you all! My dear children, please pray  
that I may be pardoned.





## 8

### LETTERS TO DIOCESAN PRIESTS

*Only six letters are with us in this category. Many more letters Fr. Chavara might have written to the diocesan priests. But they are non-extant or non-available.*

### 8.1. Letter Addressed to Fr. Mathai Palakunnel

*On 24 April 1857, Bishop Bernardine, Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, sent a letter to Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara through Fr. Mathai Palakunnel. He did not hand over the letter to Fr. Chavara. In the letter, Bishop had asked Fr. Chavara to enquire about a piece of land at Koratty, east of Kanjirappilly, to start a catechetical centre. Since no reply was received, Bishop sent a second letter to Fr. Chavara. Then he came to know about the first letter. Immediately he wrote to Fr. Mathai. The letter is translated here below.*

I have received a letter from the Bishop scolding me for not responding to his former letter. In his first letter, he had asked me to take necessary steps to start a catechetical centre in order to teach religion to *pulayas* and other backward castes and to inform him of the steps taken. I do not know the details of what he had ordered. So you must come here or by some other means intimate to me the details of what is to be done. This letter is for my Mathan Kathanar, Reverend Father Vicar of Nedumkunnam Church.

26 July 1857

Prior

## 8.2. Letter to Fr. Illimoottil, Vicar of Pala Church

Fr. Prior of Mannanam and other Monasteries writes:

To

Rev. Fr. Illimoottil, Vicar of Pala and Others

When I saw your letter and the bearer of the letter, I felt as if struck by an arrow. But, when I opened your letter and read it, I felt consoled. For, the enemy of our souls, the devil tries to defeat us using his weapons. Similarly, to give us pain is the work of his servants our visible enemies. I praise God, because God has granted you the wisdom, patience and the will to discern these two types of fights and to become victorious in these fights. Just as the Apostle said that he would rejoice in Christ being preached out of good intention or bad, by this, I hope the schism will be totally eradicated from those places. You do not have any responsibility or burden to get involved in the affairs of Lalam and Paingalam churches. Since, Lalam and Puthenpally churches continue in schism, the situation is such that the faithful who want to remain in Catholic faith, cannot live their faith. Hence, it is not possible to release these churches from punishment until orders are received from the authorities.

Need not be worried about it now. Let us patiently wait for those three churches to be converted and turn back to Catholic communion. We shall do whatever is needed in due course of time.

18 May 1862

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

To

Rev. Fr. Illimoottil

Vicar of Lalam, Puthenpally, Paingalam Churches

### 8.3. Appointment Letter to Fr. Thomas Kizhake-thayyil as In-Charge of 'Pitiyari' Collection

*This is a letter written in the handwriting of Fr. Chavara but signed by Fr. Philip Missionary, appointing Fr. Thomas Kizhakethayyil as in-charge of 'pitiyari' collection. The concept of 'pitiyari' collection, that is, saving a handful of rice every time rice is cooked at home, for charitable purposes is of Fr. Chavara. Not only is the handwriting of the letter, but its content too is of Fr. Chavara. Hence, this is included here.*

Fr. Philip of St. Joseph, Missionary Apostolic and Vicar General of Malabar writes:

To

Rev. Fr. Thomas Kizhakethayyil  
Vicar of Mar Sleebea Church, Alapuzha

My dear one,

In our churches, 'pitiyari' has been collected in the name of The Confraternity of Infant Jesus. So far, it has not grown into its maturity. Archbishop has appointed you to be in-charge of this for its efficient conducting in Syrian churches. You are relieved from the responsibilities of the vicar and entrusted with the duties related to 'pitiyari' collection. Today onwards, go to the churches in the south and those in the north; with the cooperation of the respective Vicars, convoke the people and convince them of the benefits of this system. The sitting procurators may be reappointed or new ones may be appointed. In any place, if no one is appointed formally as a procurator, someone must be appointed as procurator. There must be an account book for every unit and the details of account entered correctly. After completing the urgent works, come back to your place of

residence and motivate the procurators by letters or by some other means. The procurators must be informed of the days of collection and the collection done. Once in a year, that is, in the New Year, every year, call all the vicars and procurators to your place and hold consultations with them. That will be an occasion for discussions and for imparting your advices and blessings to them.

By this letter, Rev. Vicars are entrusted with the following: When our assistant reaches the churches, Rev. Fr. Vicar must see to all the needs of the assistant. Moreover, by this letter other priests and all others are reminded that they must consider this as a common cause and provide all possible help.

25 March 1868

Fr. Philip  
Missionary Apostolic (Sd.)

#### 8.4. Letter to Cheriyan Kathanar

*The title note on this letter is as follows: The true copy of the letter of Very Reverend Fr. Prior General of TOCD, Kuriakose Elias addressed to Fr. Vicar of Changanachery Church.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

To

Rev. Fr. Cheriyan Kathanar, Vicar, Changanachery

Fr. Mathai Palakunnel had come here these days. He has signed an agreement that for establishing a monastery, he is ready to donate a portion of his land where a Chapel and a room stand, after deducting a portion for the amount of his patrimony.

In order to inform His Grace, the Archbishop, this matter, he has written a letter and entrusted it to Rev. Fr. Leopold Missionary. Fr. Alexander and others, who went for the retreat, when they came back told me that Fr. Mathai Palakunnel has agreed: 'the monastery will be established at the site suggested by the Vicar of Changanachery; if the Bishop permits, he will find the means for getting the site and constructing the building for the monastery; the construction will be as per the plan and drawings approved by the congregation through competent authority. If there is permission, he is ready to get the land registered.' When His Grace, the Archbishop came here, Fr. Leopold missionary explained it in detail to him. The response of the Archbishop was as follows: 'By all means, it is good to establish a monastery at Changanachery.' His Grace entrusted me to inform Rev. Fr. Mathai the details regarding registering the land for the purpose. Hence kindly note the following:

1. The land shall be registered in the name of the Prior of Mannanam and other monasteries.
2. The site must be sufficiently away from the market so that the noise of market may not disturb the inmates of the monastery.
3. Water must be clean; the site must be close to the river so that conveyance by boat is feasible.
4. The site must be wide and spacious to plant trees, to develop a grove around and sufficient space to develop side-walks. As a result the campus of the monastery should be cool even in summer.

Please consider all these aspects carefully; get things done and then reply to me.

7 April 1868

Aha Ku. Elias of the Holy  
Family, Prior

### 8.5. Letter to Fr. Palakunnel Regarding the Re-Union of Jacobites

*Unity of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar was a great concern of Fr. Chavara. He was greatly pained by the fragmentation of the Malabar Church and worked for re-union and communion of churches.*

Jesus Mary Joseph

To

My Dear Fr. Palakunnel,

Received with thanks the letter you had sent to me by hand. Immediately I communicated the matter to Very Reverend Fr. Pro Vicar Apostolic. His Grace our Archbishop, who is in Rome now, was informed of the matter. The reply received was handed over to me. Answer to all our queries are there, except to two queries which are difficult to be considered. First, the question of using fermented bread for Holy Mass; it will not be allowed. For, the Eastern Rites, Armanians and Maronites are allowed the use of unleavened bread only. Hence, it will not be allowed to the newly baptized in Malabar. Second, regarding the wives of married priests, the priests who are already married shall continue to live with their spouses. After joining the Catholic Church priests are not allowed to marry.

The use of their *taksa* (Missal), *kappa* (vestments), etc., are allowed on an experimental basis. Do not be worried about the expenses of building separate churches for them. It will work out. But, find out who are those who want this? Why do they want it? Will there be more members who want separate churches? Collect all these details and come here or send a detailed reply. It must be done quickly. For, Our Archbishop will return in November. Before that these



details must be sent to Rome. For that you must collect the details and reach them here so that we may get sufficient time to prepare the documents for Rome.

The rest will be fulfilled according to God's will. Our Father Leopold Missionary will reach back here in October.

11 July 1870

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

**8.6. A Reply Letter to Fr. Cherubim of Kollam****+**

To

Fr. Cherubim, Vicar, Gardia Church

Fr. Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family Prior, Third Order of Carmelites Discalced writes. I shall do the things mentioned in your letter to me. But it is difficult to complete the things within the stipulated time. The first reason is that I did not get permission from my superiors. The second reason is that I did not know the exact date. If these two issues are resolved I shall do what is required. I hear that tomorrow is the feast in your big church. I want to participate in the adoration there. All the rest we will share when we meet.

March 1870

Aha Ku. Elias, Prior (Sd.)

9

**CIRCULAR LETTERS SENT BY  
FATHER CHAVARA**

*There are ten circulars sent by Fr. Chavara. The last two are letters addressed to his own parishioners.*

### **9.1. Circular Letter on Confraternity of Blessed Death**

*The circular invites the faithful to join this society or confraternity. A list is given at the end. Variations in the list are found when different copies of the letter are compared.*

May Jesus Mary Joseph Help!

Human being is the prime creature among all creatures created by the creator who is all good. When a human is born, death too is born along with. The ocean of death is full of dangers. To cross that ocean is difficult. Hence, to cross this ocean a captain is needed who knows the path and shows the path. The voyage must be in a good ship built without any flaws. In order that the ship may not be shaken by waves and tossed by storms, a firm and heavy anchor is needed.

Holy mother, refuge of sinners is this ship which protects the sea-farers from all dangers. Her loving Son, Jesus Christ who sits at the right hand side of the Father Almighty is the firm and heavy anchor. The captain is St. Joseph who knows the way and who reaches the sea-farers safe on the other shore. Those who board this ship, of which St. Joseph is the captain will cross the ocean of death without any danger and reach the shore of heavenly bliss. If any human, sailing through this path wishes not to drown in the depths of hell, must give a pledge. This is it: devotion to the holy name of Jesus Mary Joseph.

Moreover, every year preparing prayerfully for the feast of St. Joseph, the captain, on 19 March, the feast day, offering food and dress to a family - man, woman and a child - the pledge given should be renewed. This virtuous act is to be pursued every year. If individually pursued, it

may not persist; it may not extend. Virtuous acts pursued jointly by many are more virtuous and persisting. Our brethren who aspire for a blessed death, freed from the danger of sudden and accidental death, have started a confraternity of blessed death, a profitable act.

Those who want to join this confraternity, from this month for twenty months must donate 5 chakrams each. Using the amount, on 19 March, in this monastery, established in the name of St. Joseph, his abode, this virtuous act shall be done. Those who want to join this confraternity shall collect the amount, together, monthly or in other instalments.

October 1841

List of those who join the confraternity:

Vicar, Kalloorkad; Vicar, Pulimkunnu; Vicar, Katte, Kanjirakotte; Porukara Kuriakose Kathanar, Vicar Kayamkulam; Angeveetil Jacob Kathanar, Kanjirappilly; Porukara Thoma Kathanar; Chavara Kuriakose Kathanar; Thoppil Varkey Kathanar; Karukayil Kora Kathanar; Koolipurackal Mathai Kathanar; Vachakkatta Mathai Kathanar; Thoppil Ittykuruvilla; Thoppil Chacko; Thoppil Kora; Thoppil Kurian; Kappil Mathu; Kunjikken Chandepilla; Perekkel Punnoose; Peruvaparambil Thommy; Vayalattu Ittykuruvila; Neduvelil Cheriyan; Puthenpurackal Kuncheriya; Thundathil Mathu; Thekkethaiackal Devasya; Thekkedathu Mathu; Kallupurackal Youseph.

## **9.2. Circular Letter on Starting an Educational Centre and Seeking Financial Assistance**

Jesus Mary Joseph Help Us!

Father of the Church St. Ephrem teaches us that the second means for vision is education. Just as we cannot see things without vision in the eyes, without knowledge, we will not be able to see heaven and God who dwells in it. Those who cannot see are blind. Similarly, those who are not educated are spiritually blind. It is because of this blindness that the Christians of Malabar, although they are followers of Jesus of Nazareth from the very beginning, are without the seed and sprout of holiness. Jesus has taught us that if the blind was led by a blind, both would fall in the pit.

The priests are duty-bound to teach the faithful and parents their children. This responsibility has not been fulfilled. The reasons are: financial constraints, the dearth of those who are convinced of the need of education, etc. We need to open a study centre which can overcome all such limitations. That must be at a place, acceptable to all and approved by our Bishop. In the first stage, language teachers may be arranged so that those who come here for the studies are able to learn the languages – Malayalam, Tamil, Latin, Syriac etc. Among those students, those who are mature by age and discernment, if they have a desire to become priests, those who are designated by God to discern vocations, must receive them; teach them Theology and other subjects needed for priesthood and get them ordained priests. The ordained, if they are given follow-up and ongoing education, they would become efficient and fruitful in their ministries.

To build up such an institution, to meet the expenses of its students, to pay salaries to the teachers, and for other

expenses, we need a large sum of money. Remember, if God has given riches, it is to be used to serve God and to spend it for common good. Hence, without burdening any one too much, funds shall be collected thus: In parishes, when every year, on dates decided for the purpose, when the accounts are settled, tenth of each one's income, must be given for the running of the study centre and the maintenance of its students. If the monthly contribution and this amount together are entrusted to designated collectors regularly, this proposal can easily be implemented.

This must be done joyfully with good will. Reverend Fathers Vicars are requested to sign on this letter endorsing your cooperation and agreement with this decision in good will.

From the Monastery  
25 March 1850

Kuriakose Kathanar, Prior (Sd.)

### 9.3. Circular Letter for Collecting Funds for the Religious Community

*The religious community at Mannanam was canonically erected in 1855. More and more candidates joined the community. More buildings and facilities were required. Maintenance and formation of members too needed funds. Hence, Fr. Chavara sent this circular letter to priests who were his students and to other benefactors of the community.*

“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (Mt 9:37-38), our Lord has said. The religious or sannyasins are special harvesters of the Church. We are experiencing in our church the benefits and the need of having the religious. Formerly, only very few came forward to embrace this state of life. But now, God inspires many to embrace this call, like several candles are lit from a single flame. All such calls are not nurtured and the candidates not accepted due to lack of space and due to financial constraints.

Some of us are coming to your door to knock at it, with the hope that we would receive the money needed for meeting the expenses of the monastery and that the cooperation and hard work of some of you would continue. They start their journey firmly believing in the words of Jesus, “Knock at and it shall be opened to you” (Mt 7:7). Give according to each one’s financial capacity and mental generosity. Whatever you give will be acceptable to God like the widow’s mite.

The amount you give must be entered into the stamp paper they bring with them. Then, believe, it will be entered



into God's book of life. I earnestly request all my Christian brethren to donate generously.

Imagine these are migratory birds coming to your threshing floor.

From Mannanam Monastery

Kuriakose Kathanar

6 October 1858

Servant of God, Prior (Sd.)

Donation given by Muttath Ittar Valojnen: Rs. 10.00

#### **9.4. Circular Regarding Bishops Coming to Malabar without Permission from the Holy See**

*Bishop Thomas Roccas reached Malabar on 9 May 1861. After verifying whether he came with the permission of the Holy See, Fr. Chavara printed a circular letter at Mannanam and circulated it among the public.*

The Lord has said, "The one who is not with me is against me "The one who does not gather with me scatters" (Lk 11:23). As we read in the Word of God, the one who enters the sheepfold and enforces one's authority without the permission of the Holy Father, Pope, successor of St. Peter, Vicar of Christ, is not the shepherd of the flock, but the wolf that scatters. The one who is not united with the Pope and resists against him is the enemy of Christ. It is sure that such a shepherd and those who support him will fall into the hell, condemned for the enemies of Christ. They have come without the order and letter of His Holiness the Pope. Truly I am convinced that these Bishops come here, Malabar from Baghdad, having decided to enter the sheepfold of the Lord, to scatter us, the sheep, and to give us as prey to devils, the wolves of hell.

Therefore, Dear brethren, remember the words of Our Lord, "the one who enters the sheepfold, not through the door, is a thief and a wolf wearing the sheep's skin" (Jn 10:1). Hence if any Bishop comes here without the letter of the Holy Father, do not pay attention to their deceitful words and do not cooperate with them. Instead, it is necessary for our salvation, to be united only with the Most Reverend Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, the representative and Vicar of the Holy Father. Moreover, if we are martyred for our faith, in the hands of such people, consider it a blessing and prepare yourselves daily for that.

Let it be known to all, that if they come with the order and letter of the Holy Father, definitely, they would enter any of our churches and administer the sacraments only through the proper door, that is, with the permission of the Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha or the Vicar Apostolic of Kollam, having shown them their documents. Dear brethren, I inform you of this in view of your salvation; that you may not perish eternally, acting against the ban given by the Pope, our only head of the Church.

To

My dear Reverend Priests, my brothers of all churches in the south and in the north and all the faithful, my younger and elder brothers,

Fr. Chavara Kuriakose Elias, your younger brother, Prior of Mannanam and all other monasteries

### **An Ejaculatory Prayer to Holy Mother of God**

(to be recited repeatedly)

Holy Mary, conceived without original sin, Mother who liberated the Church from all dangers, do not allow our church to be disturbed by this newly emerging schism. Bless us to be always, fully obedient to the Holy Father, bestowed with all authority from St. Peter, Amen.

Given here below is Udayamperoor Synod, II Session, Canon 1, Sentence 3:

“We swear hereby, by touching the Bible and the Cross, that we will not accept any Bishop coming to Malabar now or later, without the permission of the Holy See; And that we will unitedly accept those Bishops sent by the Holy See.”

### **9.5. A Letter Sent by Bishop Bernardine to the Superior, Carmel Monastery, Referring to Earlier Letters of Fr. Chavara on the Concept of “A School for Every Church”**

*Fr. Chavara was convinced of the need of his community for education. The steps he took to provide quality education to the members of his community was a blessing to all other communities in Kerala. For, the schools he established were open to all castes and communities. His concept of “a school for every church” was approved by the Bishop and a circular signed by the Bishop was sent to all the Syrian rite churches. The circular letter is non-extant. There are many references to it in many sources. One such source is the letter here below.*

Vicar Apostolic of Malabar, (Titular) Archbishop of Parsalya, Bernardine de Sancta Teresia, writes:

For the information of the Superior of Carmel Monastery, Vazhakulam:

I have heard what you had written to me and considered the same diligently. Regarding the conducting of school, order was sent to you almost two months from now. As per that order, at the time decided, if the vicars fail to do their responsibility, their priestly faculties shall be suspended and the lay leaders who are against this shall be obliged to comply with the order.

### **9.6. Circular Letter Seeking Financial Assistance for Seminary, Signed by the Vicar Apostolic**

*This circular letter, dated 20 May 1865, is signed by the Vicar Apostolic and was printed at Mannanam. Chronicle of Fr. Varkey Parappuram and Chronicle of Mannanam give reference to this letter stating that it was prepared by Fr. Chavara. Therefore, it is included in this collection.*

By the Grace of God and by the order of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, Vicar Apostolic of Malabar and the Titular Archbishop of Parsalya, Bernardine de Sancta Theresia.

Peace and blessing of Our Lord Jesus Christ be to all Reverend Vicars of all the parish churches under our jurisdiction, to other brothers priests and to our dear faithful.

My dear children, Since Our Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted to me His children of this place, Malabar, redeemed and made his own by his precious blood. I am obliged to give an account of them to God Almighty. Therefore, as you know, I have been labouring zealously for your good and discharging my duties to the best of my abilities. Just like the words of Our Lord, "Harvest is plenty, but the labourers are few" (Mt 9:37), the shortage of good priests, who would labour according to our desire and will is felt by me just as by you. Even those who want to receive the sacrament of reconciliation frequently and to lead a devout life are not able to do the same because of the shortage of good priests. Because of this, great spiritual loss and damage to virtue are caused. To compensate for this loss, monasteries were established and through religious priests, retreats, confessions, etc., were conducted in parishes, but, the spiritual needs of the parishioners are not fully met. Hence seminaries were established and spending money to the best

of our capacity we tried to bring up priests who would serve the Lord with great devotion and earnestness. But so far we could not obtain the desired results. The Apostle's words remind us to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2). This year onwards, in every parish, when you close the annual account, set apart 5% of the income and bring the amount and the account book here before me and get them verified and approved from here. With great expectation I advise and command you to do the above.

Dear children, in a short span of time, you will be able to rejoice at the fruits of this decision assessing the income and expenditure and the good results. Now, seeing this order, some will be there, in every parish, who are not happy with this. In spite of that, when it is done, seeing the fruits due to this, those who are unhappy now, also will rejoice.

Dear children, "rejoicing in giving rather than in receiving" (Acts 20:35), so far, we have been getting things done, as per our capacity and beyond that by borrowing. Now it is very clear to us that this matter which is beneficial to you, cannot be done, without troubling you. Hence we are writing this with the hope that you will accept it joyfully and help us.

The grace of God Almighty and my blessings be upon you. As soon as you receive this order, it must be published in the church. Send at the earliest, the amount due for the current year, as the first instalment, so that I may become happy seeing your good will.

On another paper write the name of the church and both the vicar and the trustee should sign on it and send it to me.

20 May 1865

Bernardine de Sancta Teresia  
Vicar Apostolic

Printed at the press of St. Joseph' Monastery, Mannanam

### 9.7. Circular Letter on Printing the Book of Canonical Prayers

*The Canonical Prayers of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar was not in order. After the Synod of Udayamperoor, the liturgical texts were changed. However, the Canonical Prayers were not changed. Hence, there was confusion. At the behest of Bishop Bernardine, the Canonical Prayers were revised and a new text in Syriac was prepared. It was to be printed in Rome, though that plan was not realized. Hence, they decided to print the book here in Malabar. In this context, Fr. Chavara sent out this circular letter.*



Praise Be to Jesus!  
Jesus Mary Joseph

Dear and Rev. Brethren, my younger loving brothers, priests and scholastics of Syrian Church of Malabar, your humble brother Fr. Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, Prior of Third Order of Carmelites Discalced of Malabar, writes:

The Missal (*Taksa*) according to Our Syrian rite, approved by Rome and printed in Rome is ready. It contains the prayers for all Sundays and feast days of the year. A calendar is also prepared so that the readings of the Liturgical year will be same everywhere. Moreover, a text for the use of the people, containing all prayers of the people, is printed. Hence, by the grace of God, Divine Liturgy is celebrated everywhere uniformly.

The second part of the Liturgy, canonical prayer is to be revised now. The present text of the canonical prayers is prolonged. For example, in the Lenten season, seven sets of psalms, that is, 21 psalms, Sundays ten sets of psalms and in

the season of nativity 21 sets are to be recited. On feast days also the prayers are lengthy, and so, tiring. To prepare the prayers for the feast days is not easy. Some feasts mentioned in *Taksa* are not found in breviary. Hence, there is no uniformity in reciting the canonical prayers. Sometimes, in the Mass, commemoration of a saint may be celebrated, while the canonical prayers may be according to the Liturgy of the season. Thus, recitation of the Breviary has become orderless with no uniformity. In order to solve this problem, by the order of our late Bishop Bernardine, the canonical prayers were re-written short. Holy Mass and canonical prayers were made mutually enriching. An attempt was made to get it printed in Rome, through the Vicar Apostolic. Permission has been granted to use the new text of the Canonical prayers. To get it printed is a tough task. We are preparing to get it printed in a stone press here.

I am writing this letter to collect money to print the breviary by adding to the existing prayers, the prayers for all Sundays of the year and feast days, Lent, etc. as in the Missal and to get the number of copies required. Those who want a copy of the breviary write their names in this letter itself and send Rupees five each with this bearer of the letter. If you place the order like this, by the grace of God, it will be possible to get the book printed. If the printing cost exceeds Rupees 5, you will have to send the additional amount through the one who reaches the book to you.

If you do not write your name and send the money, it may be difficult to get a copy of the book later, because, as per the order only, the number of copies will be decided. If we calculate the cost of the book, based on the orders received already and the amount collected, it will be Rupees fifteen per copy. Hence, without delay place your orders



with the bearer of this letter by entering your name and remitting Rupees five.

We will begin the printing only after knowing the total amount collected through this bearer of the letter. Hence do not delay him; those who do not have ready cash with oneself shall reach it to Koonammavu by 15 March. You are here by informed that your name will not be entered into the list, in case the amount fails to reach Koonammavu by 15 March.

February 1869

(Sd.)

### 9.8. Letter to Jacobite Priests

*The First Vatican Council was convoked by Pope Pius IX on 29 June 1868 and it commenced on 8 December 1869. The Pope wanted to invite the representatives of the Jacobite Church in Malabar to the Council. Hence, at the behest of Vicar Apostolic of Varapuzha, Monsignor Leonard, Fr. Chavara prepared a draft letter addressed to the Jacobite priests of Malabar. After the Coonan Cross Oath of 3 January 1653, a group of St. Thomas Syrian Christians of Malabar got affiliated to the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, who followed the theology of Saint Jacob Baradaeus. They are known as Jacobites. The group of Christians of Malabar who got newly affiliated to the Church in Antioch were known as 'Puthenkoottukar', meaning, 'newly affiliated group' in contrast to the 'Pazhayakoottukar' who remained in communion with Rome, in spite of the Latinization steps taken by Bishop Francis Ross. The letter which is only a draft is without any signature or date.*

To

The Reverend Priests of the Syrian Church of Malabar, generally known as 'Puthenkoottukar'

Peace in Our Lord Jesus!

"And I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hades will not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18), said Our Lord and appointed St. Peter as the head of the Holy Catholic church. His holiness the Pope Pius IX, reigning over the Roman Catholic Church, successor of St. Peter, according to the tradition of the Church has decided to convene an ecumenical council on 8 December 1869, the feast day of Holy Mother of Immaculate

Conception. Most Reverend Bishops, all over the world who are in communion with the Holy See and all the Most Reverend Bishops of all the churches who are not in communion with the Holy See are also invited to this Synod. Thus, His Holiness the Pope by his letter has invited the Most Reverend Bishops of '*Puthenkoottukar*' of Malabar to this synod.

Dear and Reverend Priests, eternal salvation is a serious issue, which once lost, is lost for ever. Hence, we all know that it is the duty of all to seek its right path earnestly.

Earlier, all the Bishops used to come together as a church and confirm and affirm the articles of faith and analyse, in detail, the disagreements and schisms. They used to reject the heresies and schisms and affirm clearly the faith and the truth and confirm them.

Similarly, the Holy Father informs all this decision to convoke the Ecumenical Synod for the following objectives: to remove all kinds of divisions, disagreements and schisms happened so far in the church, the community of those who are saved from the slavery of devil by the sacred blood of the divine saviour; to increase peace, that is the charity which is the mark and the gift, the Lord has given to his children; to confirm and affirm the sure path of salvation; and to announce the above to all peoples.

Dear and Reverend Priests, Our Lord affirms that the teachings and truths, taught by the church who is the communion of all the believers, have not emerged from human thoughts and worldly wisdom, but from divine counsel.

We read in the Holy Bible, "For, where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt 18:20); "... The Father will give you, whatever you ask him in my name" (Jn 15:16); "Whoever is not with me is against Me.,

and whoever does not gather with me, scatters" (Lk 11:23). Thus, through several verses the above truth is confirmed.

At the time of the Apostles, to settle a dispute among themselves, the first Jerusalem Council assembled at Sehion, the decision of the Council was announced by St. Peter, "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28). The decision was accepted and obeyed by the whole community as the will of God. As you know all these, to clarify the doubts and questions, to convene the synod is a means decided by God. Like the labourers who were called to the vineyard at the eleventh hour, the Divine Saviour who calls the whole world, in our times, calls all leaders through his vicar. The letter of invitation has been sent to your Bishops as well. Moreover, participate in this great ecumenical synod. If any one of you wants to know the truth, to clear your doubts, to discern the straight path to salvation and to embrace the same, you can.

To inform Rome about their participation, and they to be received respectfully at Rome, I am ready to give letters for them.

Be afraid that we may not hear his voice again, if we do not pay heed to this eleventh hour call of the divine saviour.

### **9.9. Part of a Letter on the Need to Pray for the Souls in Purgatory**

*This is part of a letter in the handwriting of Fr. Chavara. It may be part of a circular letter sent to several people on the need of praying for the souls in purgatory. Signature and date are not found.*

Praise Be to Jesus!

Consider, if we come to know that some of our own brothers and sisters, parents - fathers, mothers, grant parents, who brought us up are locked up in prison, a place of great sorrow, suffering hunger and thirst are crying for help and if we do not help them as per our capacity, all would say that there is no one more uncharitable than us.

If so, those who have gone away from us by death, our fathers, mothers, grant parents, brothers, sisters, friends and others, suffering in the fire of purgatory...

### 9.10. The First Letter Addressed to the Parishioners of Kainakary (Chavarul)

*Almost three years before his death, Fr. Chavara, in February 1868, wrote this letter as a 'Will and Testament' to his parishioners. At that time, Kainakary was not an independent parish, but a unit under the Chennankary parish. There was a chapel built at Kainakary, where the faithful of that area had services, at times. Fr. Chavara writes this letter for the parishioners of this area. The letter reveals his intimate love for the people of his own place. It offers precious directives and guidelines for an authentic Christian family life and worthy Christian manner of rearing up children. It was first published in 1910 under the title, 'Testament of a Good Father'. Since then, this booklet had more than 30 editions, thousands of copies distributed and translated into more than fifteen languages.*

### INTRODUCTION

A good Christian family is the image of heaven. The *raison d'être* of family is that the members live together by the bond of blood and affection, with children duly obeying their parents, and respecting them and one another, walking peacefully before God and each one, seeking eternal salvation according to his or her proper state of life. The only sweet consolation for a person experiencing trials and tribulations in the sorrowful valley of this world is to belong to and live in a family where love, order, and peace reign. Likewise, it is most distressing for members to live in a family where order and peace do not prevail and where no one is concerned about the service of God and their own eternal salvation. How sad and unfortunate are the families that have no concern about orderliness in their homes? How many of such rich, famous, and respected

families have been ruined? How often have the behaviour and attitude of these families led to quarrels, commission of sins, destruction, and death? Praying for divinely inspired clarity and peace of mind, I have framed these rules of conduct for families with the intention of their avoiding sin and destruction resulting from disorderliness. May I appeal to everyone to wholeheartedly follow and carefully enforce these precepts as a counsel coming from your revered ancestors!

**Part 1**  
**PRECEPTS FOR FAMILIES**

*Love*

1. "Love one another" (Jn 13:34). Forgive the mistakes and shortcomings of each other. If you do so, you will experience peace on earth and eternal reward in heaven. How lamentable it is to find a home where there is discord and acrimony between brothers and sisters. Our Lord himself has stated that every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined (Mt 12:25). A family that experiences discord and fight among its members will soon perish. If you are not ready to forgive the mistakes and wrongdoings of your family members, how will they forgive you? If they should forgive you for mistakes you may make in future, shouldn't you forgive them today for theirs? If you love only those who have not harmed you, then you are doing what people of other faiths and total strangers, who do not know each other, do. Should you voluntarily create more woes and difficulties than what our great father Adam has bequeathed already? Woe unto those who cause quarrels in families!

There is an instance of an old woman who incited several quarrels in her home. The devil appeared before her and offered her a bag full of gold and took her to the hell as his counsel, saying that she had successfully accomplished in three days what he had been unable to achieve in three years!

The honour and blessing of a family lies in coexisting without any quarrels and to be on good terms with everyone. Even animals retaliate against those who resent them. The ability to overlook faults in others and to forgive them is possible only for those who are really strong, prudent, and honourable. Once, while Emperor Constantine was walking along the road escorted by his royal troop, a man from the street came up and slapped him. Immediately, his people sought permission to retaliate and kill the offender. The Emperor, however, replied: "If I do what even my lowest officer can do, what merit is there in it? I, however, forgive him and that is the mark of the great might I have as an Emperor."

2. Civil litigations ruin families. Even in the most just case, many a litigant has come to rue the fact that it would have been better not to have gone to court. No one has been happy or better off by having gone in for civil litigation.
3. Celebrating family festivals and other commemorations on Sundays and days of obligation is an evil practice that, finally, leads the soul to ruin. Sunday is the Lord's Day. Such devious habits and practices are the inventions that turn the Lord's Day into devil's day. Moreover, it is a deplorable custom, forbidden by God and the Church, for the bereaved family members not to attend the Church and to



participate in other spiritual services on Sundays and days of obligation.

4. Don't make it a habit to borrow money, except for any urgent necessities; try to repay your debts as quickly as possible. Don't lend money to anyone except on the ground of charity. The wealthiest family is the one which is not in debt. If there are outstanding Mass obligations or any other debt left by parents or forefathers, hasten to fulfil them with zeal, as it is most perilous to ignore them. For, Divine wrath befalls on families burdened with such unfulfilled obligations.

### *Humility*

5. Don't show off the status of your wealth. He who displays all his wealth is considered to be of lower status. Very often, the one who styles himself as rich will soon go begging. King David, being proud of his might and superiority, once ordered a census of his people; soon Divine wrath befell his people in the form of an epidemic throughout his kingdom wiping out a major portion of the population (2 Sam 24).
6. Be frugal in spending, and don't spend beyond your means in celebrating anniversaries and festivals. For, no one knows how long one can keep up such a style. The light of a mini lamp that burns longer is preferable to a torched haystack that blazes for a while and gets extinguished instantaneously. When Democritus, a renowned philosopher, was once asked as to who is the best among human beings, he answered: "The one who least exhibits oneself is the greatest." A scholar once counselled a distressed man who had spent all his wealth on extravagant feasts and marriages and had become a pauper: "Brother, if you had not burnt

away your lamp during the day, you could have lighted it at night."

***Relatives and Friends***

7. Don't go from door to door seeking news about others. For, if you were to discharge your own duties well, you would not have time to peep unnecessarily into the affairs of others.
8. Don't contract relationship with families that lack order and fear of God. For, it is not the rich who bring goodness and delight into your family, but the orderly and God-fearing relatives. How many families have been distressed and ruined due to their regrettable association with rich relatives.

In France, a certain man had an only son. He made strenuous efforts to marry his son off to the daughter of an aristocratic woman. The marriage was, finally, solemnized on condition that all his ancestral wealth would be bequeathed to his son. After a while, his own son along with the bride's family began to resent his lower status and, hence, he was dismissed from the household. He went begging and was forced to feed himself on the remains of the food thrown out of his son's house during feasts and commemorations.

9. Don't entertain all sorts of people in your house, but receive only those who are well-mannered and God-fearing. As the old saying goes, "show me your friends and I will tell you who you are."
10. Let everyone know that your house is not a place for indecent talk, unchristian conversations, grumbling and uncharitable criticism of neighbours or anyone else. You must know that punishment will befall upon you for entertaining discussion on the shortcomings

and evil deeds of others in your home. There was a man who habitually went around speaking ill of others. He ended up mad and began to bite his own tongue which was infested with worms and boils; he eventually died an unfortunate death due to the resulting infections.

### *Industriousness*

11. Don't become too materialistic and keep acquiring novel items; instead, try hard to improve the holdings you already possess. The wealth of a family does not lie in amassing innumerable possessions, but in their quality. An industrious man lived happily with a limited number of assets. Some envious people accused him of hiding some priceless treasures, and took him to court. The king immediately ordered his assets to be catalogued and assessed. He was, however, acquitted honourably when he informed the court that his treasure was a small plot of land, which was transformed into gold as he had worked hard on it and shed his sweat on its soil.
12. Labour according to your status in life. Refusing to work is not the style of a respectable person, but would fit only the indecent, who do not have a family and progeny. Laziness is the mother of all vices; it ends up in inculcating bad habits such as drinking. Alcoholism is a reprehensible evil in the society and the worst act before God. Kathon, a Roman chieftain, not only ordered that everyone desirous of living in Rome should show his or her toughened hands resulting from hard work to merit the disposition but also decreed that the Nobles and the Lords carry on

their person the tools of their respective trade when they are out on the streets.

13. Business is not only risky for your soul but also for your wealth. If there is no other option to make a living, you are not forbidden from pursuing business. It should, however, be carried out with due care, honesty, and justice. No unjust trader has been found to make steady and continuous progress in life. Riches amassed by fraud and deceit will melt away like snow.

There were two tradesmen who never prospered in their business despite adopting many tricks and frauds. One day they approached the confessional and confessed their tricks and frauds. The confessor advised them to desist from fraudulent and dishonest practices. When they acted accordingly, with God's abundant blessings, they prospered within one year.

#### *Act of Charity*

14. Days on which you have not rendered any good to others will not be reckoned in the book of life. Be desirous of others' love and respect than they becoming fearful of you. Let no beggar leave your home empty handed; likewise, don't hesitate, as much as you can, to give alms.

A man performed at least one charitable act on a daily basis as he was convinced that God the Creator has decreed it obligatory to render others some good every day. One day, while at supper, recalling that he had not rendered any good to anyone else on that day, he first attended to the matter at hand before having his supper.

15. Extravagance and miserliness are both sinful. Worms will devour the wealth of a miser. The luxuries of an

extravagant will vanish like smoke. There was a man who spent generously on his household needs and gave alms according to his state and means. As he prospered well, he began to neglect charity and focussed more on amassing wealth for himself. In course of time, he developed an infectious wound on his leg; he consulted many physicians and spent a lot of money on various treatment procedures. Then, an angel appeared and told him: "Know that those who amass wealth by refusing to do charity will face inordinate instances of spending money."

16. You don't require many friends; but choose one carefully from among a thousand. Those who do not love God will not truly love you either. David and Jonathan loved each other; united in one mind, they loved and helped each other genuinely till the very end of their lives. Their love did not diminish due to any trivial circumstances; instead, their close friendship grew stronger in times of danger and hardship.

### *Desire for Justice*

17. Don't allow to keep stolen goods even for a short while in your house. The Holy Spirit has warned that a house harbouring stolen goods will go up in flames. Don't mingle with those who steal; for, certainly, they will not hesitate to steal your possessions. Moreover, you will have a share in their sin as well.

There was a man who became rich by stealing and indulging in other dishonest means. While on death-bed, he invited the will-writers on the pretext of partitioning his assets, and dictated to them the following: "I leave my soul to the devil." His children

were shocked by this, and they enquired of him whether he was in his senses or affected by delirium. The sick man, however, replied: "No my dear children; I am in my senses. Let them write what I dictate: 'I leave my soul as well as that of my wife, who encouraged me to embezzle the properties of others, to the devil. I surrender your souls too to the devil; for, it was for you that I misappropriated these goods that belonged to others.'" Saying this, he unfortunately breathed his last.

18. Don't deny or delay just wages to labourers; for, it is a grave sin crying out before the throne of God. Don't humiliate or trouble the poor; for, God will seek retribution from you on account of their tears.

It is reported from the city of Leuven that there was a householder who was very rich. A poor widow and her four children were tenants on his estate. As he oftentimes harassed and saddened them, one day, having reached the end of her tether, the mother prayed on her knees: "Oh Lord, deliver us from this unfair and sad state." Instantaneously, the rich landlord dropped dead.

### *Fear of God*

19. 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. As much as possible, participate daily in the Holy Mass. If it is difficult, take part in the Masses on Mondays for the souls in purgatory, on Fridays in

commemoration of the passion and death of the Lord, and on Saturdays in devotion to our Lady of Sorrows. If all members from a family cannot attend daily Mass together, let them take turns, ensuring that one or two attend Mass every day. Confess your sins and receive Holy Communion at least once a month. If you cannot participate in the Novena prayers associated with major feasts and the feasts of our Lady, and the monthly devotions in honour of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph in the church, you must recite them at home.

Be exceedingly careful to be chaste and modest in all your postures, whether sitting or walking, lying or playing. Immodesty is reprehensible both before God and the world. We would learn only on the day of judgement about how many souls have been lost in hell due to boys and girls roaming around immodestly dressed and their unchaste body contacts, which their parents do not forbid.

There was an extraordinarily modest boy in France, who, even when he was alone, kept his whole body, including his arms, wrapped under the dress. When he was told that, were he to be punished to the hell, he would be naked there. On learning this, he was awfully horrified and cried. Through the example of this boy, we understand how much he treasured modesty in his life.

### *Patience*

20. Entrust yourself to the Divine Providence when you are faced with trials and tribulations, diseases and difficulties. He is not a strong person who is patient only when he is delighted. A devotee used to say: "In

this world, everything happens according to my wish; for, I wish only that which is willed by God.”

During a house visit, when Saint Ambrose was told that the family had never experienced any illness or agony or sorrow, he hastened to leave the house observing: “Let us leave this house; for, Divine Wrath will soon befall on this house.” Immediately, the house collapsed killing everyone inside. For, punishment is a sign of God’s love for us and it helps us to seek God during trying times.

### ***Good Books***

21. Scientific books of the nonbelievers spread ignorance and erroneous knowledge. Collecting pagan or heretical books or those containing lewd songs in the house is identical to hiding fire in haystacks. Parents shall procure for their children the treasure of books packed with wisdom and philosophical knowledge that enhance piety. As much as possible, you shall buy and build up a collection of such books in your household.

There was a beggar who was illiterate. Yet, he bought books out of the alms he received; he managed to get them read out to him by those who could read and conformed his life to the noble way of life enshrined in them. Thus, he gave an edifying example to many.

### ***Days of Obligation***

22. One should not be complacent with only participation in the Holy Mass on days of obligation; instead, most of the day shall be spent in virtuous acts such as listening to sermons, reading good books, and in



performing charitable acts such as visiting and caring for the sick, especially those who are very poor.

23. Appoint only those who fear the Lord for any service at home. Ensure that their numbers are restricted to the minimum. Many are the homes in which the sway of the devil is established through the appointed caretakers. Masters should know that they are responsible for keeping track of their servants' conduct and in assisting them in their spiritual welfare.

### *Daily Routine*

24. Ensure that you go to bed and get up in the morning punctually. Everyone shall abide by the following timetable strictly: At least by six o'clock in the morning, ensure that every member is up and recites the morning prayers. Then, all those who are able should attend the Holy Mass. Have breakfast at eight o'clock in the morning and lunch at twelve noon. In the evening, after praying the Angelus, all shall commonly recite the family prayers, which shall be followed by half an hour of meditation upon a theme based on what is read from good books.

Don't interrupt the routine of family prayer even if some important guests or visitors turn up at your house at that time. For, while, on the one hand, you feel attending to the people visiting your home, you also feel the call of God, on the other; in fact, God is closely watching your choice. Hence, you should not fail in observing the virtuous act of family prayer; by strictly adhering to it, you set a good example for others. If they ridicule you, consider it to be a blessing. After supper at eight o'clock, you shall make an

examination of your conscience and say the night prayers, following which you shall go to bed.

The head of the house shall ensure that these precepts are followed strictly. Read out these precepts before the members of the household on every Sunday and on the first day of every month.

## **Part 2**

### **UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN**

1. Parents, you ought to know that bringing up your children is the most important thing and your primary duty in life. Children are sacred treasures entrusted to you by God Almighty. You should also remember that these are the souls that Jesus Christ has entrusted in your hands to sanctify them with His most precious blood and to make them His servants and, thus, to offer them back to Him on the Day of Judgment. If any of the children were to be lost in hell due to the fault of their parents, what a serious hindrance will it be for their salvation! Origen, a great theologian, has stated that, if the parents have been condemned to hell on the judgment day, due to the evil acts of their children, it is because God holds them responsible for the acts of their children. If you desire your children to be with you and be helpful to you in your old age, ensure that they are trained to be good Christians in their tender age. If they do not fear and love the Lord when they are young, they will neither love nor respect their parents. Parents should offer their children to the Lord repetitively and submit them to the intercession of the Holy Family and pray for them often. God will receive a mother's petition as that of her baby.

2. As the children grow up, teach them to devotedly call on the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Let the children familiarise and kiss the image of the Holy Family and teach them to honour and venerate them. As they begin to speak, teach them to recite short prayers such as Our Father, Hail Mary, the Angelus, etc. How commendable it is to nourish their souls by these means along with the nutritious food that you provide for their body.
3. Don't let your children move around naked even inside the house. Don't engage in unbecoming conversations and gossiping in the presence of children. Don't even wrongly assume that they don't follow what you say. Children in Christian countries are not even told that they are born of their mothers; instead, in their tender age, they are told that the baby was sent from the heavens during a rain or that the baby was found in a well.
4. Out of respect for the elders, don't let children sleep in their parents' bedroom. Moreover, don't let boys and girls sleep in the same room; for, the devil will teach them what they don't know by nature.
5. When the children are too young, don't permit them go out of elders' sight to play with their friends. Don't trust servants who are careless with the children; very often these careless servants spoil them.
6. As soon as the children come of age, they should be sent to school. From time to time, parents should enquire about their progress in studies and also about the type of friendships they cultivate. Every Sunday, parents must review what they have studied.

7. Don't permit children to stay in the houses of relatives; for, although they leave as angels, many a time, they return as devils.
8. When children are seven years old, facilitate their confession after instructing them what they should know about it. Instruct them especially to be devoted to the Blessed Mother.
9. Both extreme strictness and too much leniency towards children are evil. While too much affection will make them proud, excessive anger and punishment will lead to lack of trust, shamelessness, and intellectual incompetence in them. Before inflicting corporal punishment, prudently make the children understand why they are being punished, and honourably advise them along with rationing their food and, occasionally, making them kneel down. Pouring out abuses in the process of correcting the children will not only have any positive effect on them, but will only make them repeat the same to their children when they grow up. The mother should set an example to the children in respecting and honouring the father; so shall the father teach the children by his example to love and respect the mother. If the parents don't love and respect each other, their children also will not respect them.
10. Don't train children in lying or cheating, or other shadowy tricks, saying that it is normal and that they need to be cunning to survive in the world. When you come across their mistakes, rebuke and correct them. Teach them to hold truth and justice in high esteem.
11. Ensure that all children are at home by the time the Angelus bells ring. Train them to greet and kiss the

hands of the elders and parents as soon as the family prayers are over.

As the children reach twelve years of age, a period of extreme caution in their development, instead of sending them to various celebrations such as anniversaries, feasts, marriages, etc., care should be taken to ensure that they are trained at home in some occupation proper to their age. Dressing up girls for festival celebrations or as bridesmaids for weddings is an insidious custom that originated in hell.

12. Proudly showing off the daughters by dressing them up in expensive costumes and ornaments beyond their status and means, as it is apparently the way of the rich and aristocratic families, ignites hellfire for many a soul. The most desirable adornment for a girl lies in her modesty, piety, silence, and control of eyes.
13. Fight between children should not lead to quarrel among elders. Those elders, who cannot accept their children being slighted or hurt by someone else, are also childish in their reaction.
14. When they come of age, children should be given full freedom to choose their state of life. For, it is God who resolves on their state of life and it is the responsibility of the children to make the right choice; it is not the prerogative of the parents. Many are the parents and children who wail in hell owing to their mistakes in this regard. Hence, decision about the state of life should not be delayed for boys beyond sixteen and eighteen and for girls beyond fourteen and sixteen years of age. Their consent must be specially ascertained before marriages are arranged. Seek in every alliance courteousness and noble qualities of conduct than wealth and social status. Otherwise,

instead of joy and happiness, it may result in incessant grief for children as well as parents.

15. Parents shall not be indecisive or show undue regard for their children even when they are grown up and have become erudite and competent. As far as possible, don't entrust them the management of the household affairs. For, many a parent has ended up in disappointment after having transferred the authority of the household.
16. Parents, ahead of their own demise, should take steps to settle their children in their own homes. Apportion the properties among the children when parents are in their good senses. For, discord may arise among the children on account of property division and the parents will be held responsible for the sins from such dissensions and conflicts among them.

Finally, dear children, you are bound by the commandment of God to respect your parents and to ensure that their minds are not burdened or aggrieved. For, you shall remember that violating the fourth commandment of God would bring down God's curse not only in afterlife but also in the present.

In Japan, a heathen kingdom, there lived a mother with three children. They could not take care of their mother the way she deserved, as they were extremely poor. In this kingdom, there was a rule that thieves should be invariably hanged and that those who capture and hand over thieves to the state shall be suitably rewarded. Being motivated by this rule and with the hope of providing better facilities for their mother, one of the children pretended to be a thief and the other two handed him over to the authorities for which they, in turn, collected their reward. When one

of the wardens in the jail saw the two brothers compassionately bidding farewell to the thief and encouraging him to be brave in facing death for the sake of their mother, he enquired of him the reason for such kind behaviour. The warden came to know that the person facing the gallows is the brother of the other two, who decided on his own to die for the sake of their mother's welfare. When the king was informed about this fact, he not only set the brother free, but also decreed to offer maintenance to the mother till her death. My dear children, remember this incident always!

13 February 1868

Father Kuriakose Elias of the Holy Family, Prior of Mannanam and Other Monasteries of the TOCD

### EPILOGUE

My beloved children,

In flesh and blood, I am the son of Kuriakose Chavara of the parish of Chennamkary. The omnipotent God most kindly brought me into this world. As I have been born in this family and from these parents, it is but natural that, in the order of charity and justice, I am bound to be grateful and to serve you. However, other than the few good deeds that have been done in general, there is nothing noteworthy enough that I have done for you. Hence, I bequeath to you this document in my own handwriting. This script will not perish even when I am dead and gone. So, I entrust this cherished treasure to you, my children of the Kainakari Church.

This is my last testament (will) given to you, my siblings and family members, and children both in the order of

spirit and flesh. Let this be a mark of the fact that you are my successors. The countless favours God has bestowed upon you are not entirely due to your meritorious lives, but earned also by the true love and trust of your forefathers. Hence, you must ensure that you do not lose it! Do remember that I came into this world and that I left it by copying this testament by as many as possible to preserve and perpetuate it in your homes. Keep the original locked in a box in the chapel. On the first Saturday of every month, all of you shall come together and read it; this shall be a commemoration of my death anniversary; there is nothing else you need to do to remember me.

Lastly, every month, after you have read this testament, you may whisper a short prayer on my behalf: "O! Lord, keep the soul of thy servant also in the abode of the just."



### **9.11. The Second Letter Addressed to the Parishioners of Kainakary (Regarding the Home of Charity)**

*Fr. Chavara wanted people's participation in charitable and religious activities. A step further, he wanted partnership with the people in all his endeavours. This is clear in the founding of monasteries, convents, schools, boardings, and other organisations. Partnership with people is a gurantee for the continuation of these initiatives. He initiated the 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' in October 1843 at Mannanam. Rendering all possible assistance to the poor and the dying was his objective. In this letter, Fr. Chavara shares his thoughts with the parishioners of Kainakary for starting a home of charity in their village.*



To

The Parishioners under the Kainakary Chapel of Chennankari Parish

I, Prior of the members of the Third Order of Carmelites Discalced, with the blessing of our Lord, because of my relationship with you in body and spirit, as my last instruction, offer you this piece of advice.

My beloved,

When you see the place where you are assembled now, discerning God's special love and blessings upon you, remember that you should praise him with a grateful heart. Who could think that Sarah would breastfeed a child conceived through Abraham? "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?" (Gen 21:7) when David prayed shedding tears, his son Solomon built the temple of Jerusalem. When his children moved away from the just way, it was destroyed by the king of Babel.

Again, when Prophet Daniel prayed with tears Zorobabel and others rebuilt it. Again they became arrogant and the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed. Maccabeus and children rebuilt it again; Annas and Caiaphas being proud expelled our Lord Jesus from the temple and the city and caused the third destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It will never be rebuilt again. If you remember always these things just like the Holy Church and all the faithful were protected so far, God's blessings will be showered upon you, your church, your home and your place and the will of God will be fulfilled. The organisation, 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' by name, you have begun in order to prepare yourselves for death is the basic reason for the continuation of this blessing.

### **St. Joseph, the Patron**

St. Joseph is the patron of blessed death, a gift needed for all humans since, your parish and your organisation, 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' belong to St. Joseph. God has blessed this organisation to grow at the feet of this saint. When I reflect in depth on this I understand as follows; God the Father in heaven has sent his only Son to the world and this beloved Son lived on this earth for 33 years and offered His life for the salvation of us, humans. But the sign that one is saved is this: the testimony that one has died in the state of grace. The heavenly door will be opened to only such people.

Any great saint, if he dies without grace, having fallen into a mortal sin will be condemned to eternal hell. The doors of heaven will be opened to any wretched sinner, if he dies like the thief hanged on the cross at the right side of Jesus, having repented over the sins he committed. Thus the final virtuous act is a blessed death. The greatest help a

human being can render to others is the help for a blessed death that is the greatest charity too. Hence this is definitely a great thing needed for all.

As it has happened in our country earlier, something begun once if it stops immediately there will not be any fruit out of that. Not only this, but also it might cause many mistakes. For when we hear of something new, we joyfully desire the same and quickly assert it; after sometime the zeal and interest for it is lost. Later to continue with it becomes a burden. At the end, the endeavour becomes a cause for punishment than for a reward. That is why I suggest unless the pious organisation, 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' is established and the diligent following of rules and regulations by the members tested, the authorities may not be approached for the approval of the organisation.

Those who want to become members of this organisation must read and understand its rules and regulations in advance. They are not difficult to follow. It does not matter if some prayers and rituals suggested in it are omitted sometimes or due to some reason one could not be present in a monthly meeting. But two issues are serious; First: one must not forget that one will die and that it may happen at the most unexpected time. Remember always the words of our Lord, "the end will come like a thief at the most unexpected time, therefore, be alert always."

Second: since mortal sins frighten us at the time of death, we must keep ourselves away from them always. Whenever we feel guilty of mortal sins by word, deed or thought, we must receive the sacrament of Confession. If it is not possible, we must make an act of contrition and pray for forgiveness of sins before we go to sleep.

Because first love yourself. More than dress body, more than body soul, more than ones brother's soul one's own

soul is important. Therefore if the dress and the body are together in danger, abandon the dress and save the body. Similarly if body and soul both are in danger, renounce the body and save the soul. For, the dress and the body will disintegrate one day, if not today, tomorrow; soul is immortal. In the whole world human effort is for the salvation of ones soul otherwise humans are like animals; not just animals, but the most wretched animal. Oxen and buffaloes pull the plough; donkeys carry the burden; elephants move the wodden logs; thus every animal does its work. Whose are the fruits of their work? Of humans!

Humans too work; if the fruits of the work are good, it's a blessing for himself and his fellowbeings. If the fruits are bad, they cause misfortune for him and fellow beings for ever. If his bretheren and children lead a good life they will not get any share of his eternal punishment. If he leads a good life, others also get a share of his eternal bliss. If he has done evil, eternal damnation is for him.

### **Satanic Thoughts for Neglecting Spiritual Duties**

Devil surely prompts him to think that he will be loved and praised by others. At the time of enjoying the pleasures of life, the devil standing on our left side goes on murmuring to us: 'the Christians who lead the family life in this world should not behave like the sanniyasins who have renounced the worldly life. If you try to fulfil all virtous inclinations, this life will not move smoothly. To rear up the children is our duty. There is no one who has not gone wrong; there is no god who does not forgive. Hence, let it be so now. Children, when they grow up will manage things by themselves. So I shall care for my own spiritual matters. It is difficult to care for the needs of both; then none of the two

will be worked out properly. To bring up the children is your responsibility.'

As you live with such thoughts without being aware of it, you advance in your age. You see or hear about the death of others; so will I die at an unexpected time? In case it happens so? Ayyo, to die now is too much, very hard. My children are not yet grown up. My unfinished projects.....? In some cases I have to retribute; I must settle them. Some debts are to be cleared; borrowed things are to be returned. I want to make a full confession. Otherwise, my conscience will not be clear; I have to prepare myself for it. I want to get help of a good confessor. I will conduct all my spiritual duties properly after making a good confession. But I cannot do that now since, I need a recollected preparation for doing this. I shall wait for a chance; or I shall do it at the time of the retreat. Then I can do it easily. Thus I waited long for a chance. At the time of the retreat in my parish, some inconvenience was there and I thought that I would make my confession when there is retreat in the neighbouring parish. St. Augustine says, "Why do you say tomorrow tomorrow? How many have been condemned to hell due to this cursed tomorrow?" Thus the one who postpones the date again and again, in the midst of these thoughts is affected by sickness. In the beginning he does not take it seriously. As the illness gets all the more serious, he is not able to pay attention to spiritual things, he becomes seriously ill at his approaching death. He feels perplexed as there is no time for anything. The devil makes him think that there is nothing to be afraid; will be alright soon; there is no need for any worry. Time passes away; finally, the mind is tired. The conscience says, "I must make my confession." The relatives and children come closer. "The disease is serious, it is better to make him receive the

sacrament of confession." As soon as he hears these words, he swoons; body collapses; does not recognise anything, making decisions is difficult; there is desire for making a good confession; but does not do anything.

Finally, due to the pressure of others, he agrees to make the confession. But the intellect still resists; the very thought of confession is like a poison. Again he thinks that he should make a good confession. But he lies down there, as if not fully conscious. If you talk about his disease or treatment, he understands; and he wants the treatment. If he hears 'viaticum is to be brought; he must be prepared', immediately he becomes too tired. At last the priest brings the Blessed Sacrament. Oh! It was received as a bitter medicine. To administer the last sacraments to the dying is the responsibility of the priest. The relatives being afraid that they may have to hear the complaint, 'the patient died without last sacrament', ask the patient permission for calling the priest for administering the last sacraments. Getting a consent voice from the patient, the priest is informed and the last sacrament administered. After that the friends and relatives get out of the room. Keeping the crucifix as a guard for the patient, the priest also goes out. Sons, daughters and others are engaged in a discussion on the expenses of burial ceremonies. The number of those who enter the room of the patient is getting less and less. The death is nearing. Is the patient alone? No. Two friends are nearby: good and evil. They will not move away. Only at such a time, their real nature would come out. Here in front of the dying, the innumerable sins he committed stand in their horrible form. He also sees the eternal hell which is close at hand through these sins.

**Devil's New Strategy**

The devil, who was standing at the left side of the patient, has moved to the right side and is presenting his arguments to lead the patient into despair. There is only one way out for saving this patient; to trust in the inexhaustible mercy of God and in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus. The devil designs new strategies to deprive the dying of this precious trust. The devil who said earlier, "There is no man who has not erred and no God who does not pardon," changes his argument: how many of those who have received even one hundredth of the blessing you have received have been punished since they did not cooperate with the graces. God invited you to repentance, you rejected it now you are worried uselessly. Is it not the word of God, "I will not listen to the one who has not responded to my call." How many of those who led a better life than yours are in the hell. God is merciful; at the same time, he is also just. Thus bringing so many such thoughts into his mind, devil pushes him into despair.

**Patronage of St. Joseph**

Devotion to St. Joseph, the captain of the ship is very useful to reach the other shore of the ocean of death. Many saints have testified that at the time of death even great scholars and good confessors obtain courage and confidence when they hear the consoling words of someone else, for, at the death bed, one is facing frightening moments.

A priest visited Saint Mariam Margdalena De Pazzi, a little while before her death. When the priest entered the room, he found that the cot and the room were shaking due to the shivering of the saint. When the priest asked her "Mother why are you shivering like this?" The saint replied,

“My dear Father, how terrible it is to be tried in the presence of God Almighty who created us.”

See even such great saints are frightened and trembling at the time of death, what will be the situation of the sinners? Therefore, the greatest good one can offer to a person is the help rendered to him at the time of his death. So this is the most important purpose of ‘Confraternity of Blessed Death’. Those who became members of this organisation must have the good will and courage to render this help to the dying. When the information is received that someone is on the death bed the members of the ‘Confraternity of Blessed Death’ alone or a few together should visit the dying patient and if it is found that the death is imminent do the needful for the patient to receive the Last Sacraments. Apart from that, make arrangements so that someone, one after another, may be with the patient till his death. Making such arrangements is the responsibility of the President and the councillors. The members are bound to follow the arrangements made by the President and the Councillors. The main responsibility of the members is fulfilling this act of charity. If by the advices, encouragement, motivation and good words of a member, someone embraces a blessed death, and his soul is saved and becomes worthy of heavenly joy, the one who caused this also will, surely, be saved. For, the saved soul with a grateful heart, always, will pray for the salvation of the one who caused his salvation.

### **Serving the Sick for Spiritual Growth**

Many have been sanctified by serving the sick. Nursing the sick is very difficult, unpleasant, detestable and demeaning before the world; so it is precious before God. Biographies of saints is a proof for this. St. John of the Cross used to nurse



the sick from the time he was 5 years old. St. Louis Gonzago and many other saints used to do the same. Who were they? Nobles and kings.

Those who have read the biographies of saints and those who are from Christian kingdoms know all these. Here in our country even if someone wants to do such charitable activities will not be possible to do. In those kingdoms, even if they do not want to do, many have to do. In kingdoms like that of our Bishop, in the main cities of Rome, Genova, Naples, etc. there are different institutions that look after the sick. There are separate centres to look after mental patients, leprosy patients, and orphaned children and so on. Among these there are separate institutions for men and women. There are institutions to house, train, employ and care for both body and soul of those who move around without any discipline or purpose in life because of poverty and destitution. Thus in those countries, there are many who establish such charitable institutions, manage them and serve the needy. Now such charitable organisations and activities are receding to some extent. In spite of that, as the saying goes, "rise and fall do not take place all on a sudden," the institutions are still functioning there. The system followed in the city of Genova is: on Sundays in the morning the knights, officers and authorities and their family members participate in the Holy Mass offered by the Parish Priest and receive the Holy Communion. They come to the church on their chariots, carriages and horses. They set out immediately after the mass, men on their carriages to Men's Homes of Charity; women on their vehicles to Women's Homes of Charity. The parents, leaving their children on their vehicles, enter the homes of charity and nurse the sick; clean their wounds and bandage them. They wash the clothes and the dress of the patients, make their

beds, arrange their rooms, give them food and medicines. Their servants help them by preparing warm water for bathing the patients. Many of these nursing centres are constructed and maintained by these knights. All the expenses are met by them. They have employed doctors, nurses, servants and others to maintain these centres and pay them their salaries. When they come to nurse the patients they do it by themselves without the help of their servants. The servants watch how their masters serve the sick. They stand in awe and respect fearing if they would be chastised for any shortcoming. After rendering such services, they wash their hands and feet and return to their homes. Sometimes kings, queens, high officials and nobles render such services incognito. When the ordinary people come to know of this, they would emolute these nobles. Many saints could nurse the sick and the wounded without any disdain because they have seen such loving services from their childhood onwards.

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40) Believing firmly in these words of Jesus when the sick and the poor are lovingly served, the Lord himself has appeared to some in the form of the sick and has asked for their service. This has happened to many.

St. Francis of Assisi who had stigmata was once travelling on a horseback. He met a sick person on the way. His face was rotten and pus was flowing down the cheeks when he asked some help from St. Francis, he offered him some money. The sick man said, “I do not want money, if you lick my cheeks, I will get some relief from my pain. Will you do this for me?” St. Francis could not accept this request first; but with courage he got down from the horse and started to lick the wounds, but the sick man disappeared.

This incident motivated him to renounce everything and it helped him to become a great saint.

Let it be so. Think of Fr. Jacob Valiyara, your brother and the first to die from among those who joined the monastery at Mannanam. I am not saying that he became a saint but his character of earlier days changed; he preached many retreats; became a cause for the salvation of many souls. The reason for this change in him is known neither to you nor to him. But what I understand is this: I know him from childhood. There were occasions when I had to correct him even after his ordination. The cook of Mannanam Monastery Geevarghese of Koilmuck was suffering from severe piles. His rectum was rotten and the intestine came out infested with worms and stinking. He was lying in the barn of the monastery. It was difficult even to administer the sacraments to him. But Fr. Jacob nursed him and prepared him for a blessed death. After his death because of his memory Fr. Jacob could not eat anything, he managed to eat some roasted rice only. I came to know about all these only later. After this incident there was great change in the character of Fr. Jacob. He started preaching retreats. I have sent him to many churches to preach retreats. Since this event, I never had to correct him for anything. Seeing how pleasing it is to God to nurse the sick.

### **The Purpose of Home of Charity (*Upavishala*)**

I intimate to you my intense desire that you should start a 'confraternity' for the purpose of serving and helping the dying. I may not be fortunate to see it established but, if you are interested, it will be realised.

Take interest in keeping a collection box, 'Blessed Death Box'. Ask for donations without shame and make a small home of charity near your chapel at Kainakary and keep 2-4

forsaken patients and care for them. Thus, if you show at least a shadow of a home of charity, it will become a reality in Malabar.

In India, after Madras, and here too the English people reign. Like the Christian countries in Europe if our Christians here had the good will and desire, we could also start such initiatives. Our 'Parayis' and such others could start charitable activities alone. But they do not know the fruits and benefits of it. Hope you will understand.

I am not grateful to God sufficiently. I renounced my home and relatives for God's sake. See, I am writing this sitting at Arnatukara. My brethren here love me more than my family members, brothers, children and others. Tomorrow at Koonammavu, then at Carmel Vazhakulam, and at Mannanam, wherever I am, I get love. Remember those whom nobody loves. If a rich man founds a charitable home using his own resources, the poor people living there - even after death or after their children become rich - will keep his memory. Till the end of the world, those who live there will pray for him and his descendents. Therefore promote this Blessed Death collection box.

Your petty interest of enlarging your chapel should be set aside. We have the parish church. Establishing the charity home is also worship of God. For this purpose, little by little collect the funds, like what you have been doing for Kaniyan Vaidyar. Raise funds slowly and build a small building near the chapel. It may have a central verandah with rooms on both sides of the verandah. The walls could be weaved with bamboo blades; roof could be thatched with bamboo and coconut leaves. Then call it a poor home or a home of charity. It must be built in such a way that the poor, the wandering, the alms seeking, the sick, the catechumens, the neo-converts and others could be accommodated and

cared for. Thus by the grace of God, it will be the first home of charity in Malabar.

Listening to me and on behalf of our Lord, become shameless! In the beginning people may ridicule you saying, "What craziness is this?" Do not take it serious. If you begin the work now, it will be done without much difficulty.

For the maintainence of your chapel at Kaianakary, collect funds among yourselves. Do not seek donations from outside. For, there are chapels in many places like Veliyanadu, Changanaserri and so on.

Having heard of this 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' other parishes also may be planning to start the same. Before others start the collection box for blessed death, if you start, you will be able to raise funds for the purpose. Hence all the office bearers together prepare a small hand out with all the details. It could be like this;

We have established in our chapel 'Confraternity of Blessed Death' and we pray that God may give Blessed Death to all.

According to the rules of this confraternity we pray for you for this gift of Blessed death. Moreover, we plan to construct a small home of charity for the poor, the homeless and the sick people, whom no one looks after, so that they can stay together and can be looked after and they may have a blessed death. We keep this collection box of blessed death expecting that this project may be realised soon adding also the small donations from you, our brethren in faith.

Date, Month, Year

President

Signature

Councillors:

1. Name

Signature

2. Name	Signature
Secretary	Signature
Vicar Chennankari Parish	Signature

Keep the collection box with the following statement pasted on it at Changanserri, Allapuzha and other markets. After having obtained the permission from the vicars, keep it near paddy fields at the time of harvesting and at other public places:

*You can help in this endeavour by sending believing and devout people to join the confraternity or by meeting their expenses.*

When human beings make an effort with full decision and commitment, three fourth of that cause will be done; one fourth God will do.

Even Solomon has said that a thread of three strings hardly breaks. Hence work hard with your whole heart for this project then it will be possible to build the home of charity, not with bamboo but with stone and mortar. There will be generous donations; it will have property, paid employees. I have learnt this from my experience;

At Koonammavu a bamboo mat convent was built and four ladies started staying there. That day, I had in my mind, God willing there will not be the need for changing the thatched roof in the next season, instead we will have a convent built with stone. I saw, before the season of changing the thatched roof, God made them stay in a convent with stone walls and tiled roof.

That this may be fulfilled as my advice and last testament:

1. Love among you,
2. Humility, and

3. Obedience to the Bishop and Fr. Vicar.

If you keep these three meticulously, you and your place, by the grace of God will remain forever. When the president changes, this letter must be handed over to the next president.

15 October 1869

(Sd.)





## 10

### LETTERS RELATED TO TRANSACTIONS

*We have three letters related to legal transactions. All the three are written on palm leaves. Handwriting is of Fr. Chavara. He knew how to write on palm leaves with sharp, strong stylus. Paper was slowly becoming popular at that time in Kerala. Palm leaves were more durable for keeping legal documents.*

### **10.1. A Receipt for the Offerings Received for Celebrating the Holy Mass**

Receipt dated 20 October 1856

In the year 1841, interest of 8,360 Chakrams were given as stipends for Holy Mass. Now hereby the capital amount 8360 Chakrams is received. As recorded here, with the interest of this amount, 3 Razas and 53 Ordinary Masses will be celebrated. The order is; every year, on 28 July one Raza; on 12 February one Raza; on 3 September one ordinary mass; on 25 January one Raza.

After the time of Kochupothan instead of the Raza on 28 July, one Raza will be celebrated on Kochupothans death anniversary. And on July 28 ordinary mass will be celebrated. The remaining masses can be offered for the souls in purgatory.

At Monastery Mannanam,  
Prior, Chavara Kuriakose Elias Kathanar

Aha Kuriakos Elias (Sd.)

To  
Thayil Kochupothan

## **10.2. Receipt for Land Given as Offering for Holy Mass**

The Prior of the Religious of Mother of Immaculate Conception, Mannanam, writes:

To

Perumalil Okkanda Kurian of Kudamaloor Church Parish

In order to celebrate Holy Masses for the souls in purgatory the land deed of Ammanam Paddy fields, worth 8000 chakrams has been handed over to the monastery. The possession of the paddy fields has also been handed over. As per the conditions agreed, the monastery will manage the fields, pay the taxes and celebrate one Raza and ten ordinary masses for the souls in purgatory every year without fail.

22 November 1857

Aha Kuriakose Elias, Prior (Sd.)

### 10.3 Report on the Agreement Regarding 'Kari' Paddy Fields

*This document is a report written on palm leaves by Fr. Chavara on the agreement of Mannanam Monastery with several persons regarding 'kari' paddy fields. The shallow backwaters touching the land on the western coast of Kerala are developed into paddy fields by raising bunds and deviding backwaters into small blocks. Bunds are lined up with young coconut plants and excess water pumped out of blocks of backwaters (Kayal) and transformed into green paddy fields (karinilam). Labour is the main investment for this land development. Those who can afford to invest used to take on lease from the government large areas of kayal and develop it into karinilam. With this background information the letter will become clearer.*

According to the contract dated 25 April 1856 written by Thayyil Okkanda Pothan of Mannanam Kara.

Out of 5,500 para 'kari' paddy fields (of government forest land of Manjadikari given in rent), 2,000 para was in the name of Vaikar Namboodiri Padu and 2,150 para in the name of Okkanada Pothan. The land in the name of Okkanada Pothan was managd by Mannanam monastery. Okkananda Pothan and Jacob Jacob Thuruthimaly together sharing equally the expenses developed this land of 2,150 para by cleaning the bunds and planting coconut saplings. On behalf of the three - Monastery, Pothan, and Jacob - Pothan managed the cultivation. After two years when the accounts were checked, it was found that the monastery had spent more.

For planting the coconut saplings, the monastery had employed labourers and an overseer but the other two employed only labourers. Labour and money should be

spent equally, it was proposed. Finally, they decided to plant coconut saplings separately. Monastery planted 500 saplings after clearing the bushes on the bunds. The labourers were employed and through Anthraper Kochu Varkey, 500 saplings more were planted. But work did not progress as desired. Therefore the employees were withdrawn by the monastery.

Later labourers started to work on the southern side of the river. When the work progressed, Namboodiri padu expressed his desire to get that area for himself. He compensated for the work already done and that area was given to him. Okkanda Pothan, Jacob Jacob Thuruthimally and Jacob the steward of the monastery visited the site and they agreed the following: the land west of 'Vattakayal' and north of the small river be given to Namboodiri Padu and the south of Small River be taken by Monastery, Pothan and Jacob.

From September 1855, Muttath Puthenpurackal Mathew Kathanar and others came to the 'kari', made a small house and started staying there. 2,000 cocount saplings were brought from Pallipuram, Mannachery, Allpauzha, Kayamkulam, Thrikunapuzha, and so on. When they started planting, the labourers of Namboodiri Padu came and started planting saplings in the area asingned to Pothan Jacob and Monastery. They decided to stop planting and to care for the saplings already planted. On 23 May 1857, we counted the saplings already planted on Theruvachira and to the west, and divided them among the three; made an agreement and decided to develop separately each one's area.

12 June 1857

Aha Kuriakose Prior (Sd.)

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5. Chavara, Kuriakose Elias. *Testament of a Loving Father* (English translation of *Chavarul*), trans. Saju Chackalackal. 150<sup>th</sup> Year Revised and Updated Edition, Kochi: Chavara Central Secretariat, 2018.

## MILESTONES IN THE LIFE OF KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

- 10-02-1805 Born at Kainakary, Kerala  
18-02-1805 Baptized at Chennamkary Parish Church  
29-11-1829 Ordained priest at Arthunkal Church  
11-05-1831 Foundation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), along with Father Thomas Palackal and Father Thomas Porukara  
1831 Popularized Sunday Homilies and Retreats  
1833 First Syro-Malabar Seminary at Mannanam  
1838 Introduced 'Way of the Cross' at Mannanam  
16-02-1844 Appointed Malpan and examiner of Scholastics  
03-07-1846 First printing press and publishing house of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mannanam  
1846 First Catholic Sanskrit School at Mannanam  
1849 Appointed official preacher for the Church in Kerala by Bishop Ludovico Nartini  
1853 First Syro-Malabar Catechumenate, Mannanam  
08-12-1855 First priest to profess as religious in the Indian Church (along with 10 other members)  
1856-1857 Wrote 10 Eclogues (Shepherd Plays) on the nativity of Jesus Christ  
08-06-1861 Appointed as the First Vicar General in the Syro-Malabar Church  
1861 Fought against the intruder Bishop Roccas  
1862 Wrote the First Malayalam Narrative poem, *Anasthasiayude Rakthasakshyam*  
1862-1869 Edited the Divine Office for priests, compiled and composed Liturgical Rubrics, Liturgical Calendar, Office for the Dead, Little Office of Immaculate Mother, etc., in the Malabar Church

- 1864 Introduced the 'May' Devotion at Mannanam  
 1864 Implemented *Pallikkudam* in the Syro-Malabar Church as its Vicar General
- 13-02-1866 Founded Congregation of Mother Carmel (CMC) together with Father Leopold OCD
- 15-02-1866 Introduced 40 Hours Eucharistic Adoration
- 13-02-1868 Wrote *A Testament of a Loving Father (Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul)* for Christian families
- 1869 Foundation of the 'Confraternity of Saint Joseph for Happy Death' at Kainakary
- 1869 Foundation of *Upavisala* at Kainakary
- 1869 Initiated Catholic reunion movement
- Monasteries and Convents established:
- 1831 Saint Joseph's Ashram, Mannanam
- 1857 Saint Joseph Ashram, Koonammavu
- 1858 Saint Mary's Ashram, Elthuruthu
- 1859 Carmel Ashram, Vazhakulam
- 1861 Saint Sebastian's Ashram, Pulinkunnu
- 1866 Saint Teresa's Convent, Koonammavu
- 1868 Saint Teresa's Ashram, Ambazhakad
- 1870 Saint John of the Cross Ashram, Mutholy
- 03-01-1871 Slept in the Lord at Saint Philomina's Monastery at Koonammavu
- 04-05-1889 Mortal remains reinterred at Saint Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, Mother House of the CMI Congregation
- 07-04-1984 Declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II in Rome
- 08-02-1986 Beatification at Kottayam, Kerala, by Pope John Paul II
- 23-11-2014 Canonization of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara at Vatican by Pope Francis