

COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA

VOLUME III

COLLOQUIES WITH THE
HEAVENLY FATHER

DC Library



* 0 0 0 8 5 0 8 2 *

K91.1 C40 C2



Translated by

Rev Jose Chittilappilly cmi

Published by

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CAUSE OF
BL. CHAVARA, MANNANAM

Dharmaram College Library

Acc. No. 85082

Call. No. K91.1/C40

**COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAYARA VOL. III
COLLOQUIES WITH THE HEAVENLY FATHER**

Translated by

Rev Jose Chittilappilly cmi

Edited by

Rev J Chirayil cmi

Rev George H Ambooken cmi

Printed by

K C M Press

Ernakulam

Cochin - 682 011

Copies : 1000

Rs. 8/-

© Rights Reserved

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	ix
Acknowledgement	xv
Glory to God	
Hail Holy Mother of God	1
Meditation	2
Act of Contrition	5
Act of Humility	9
Prayer to St Joseph	12
Preparatory prayer for Meditation	22
Prayer to the Holy Mother of God	23
Meditation on Vocation	24
Meditation on the mercy of God	27
Meditation on Mortal Sin	29
On the worth of two Priests	32
The Death of an impious Priest	34
Meditation : Method of beginning	34
Prayer to the Blessed Virgin	35
Morning Prayer	36
Evening Prayer	37
The Prayer composed by a converted girl for a happy death	38
Prayer for custody of the eyes	39
Prayer to be said by Priests	40

INTRODUCTION

Feb 8, 1986 is an ever memorable day in the history of the Indian Church. Pope John Paul II beatified Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Sr. Alphonsa - the First Fruits of the Syro-Malabar Church.

The Syro-Malabar Church has always felt proud in her being apostolic in origin. It considers St. Thomas as its Founding Father. It was the strong and vibrant faith in Christ that prompted St. Thomas to go over to India and other far away countries. His sons and daughters have always endeavoured to draw upon his apostolic experience, spirituality and dynamic faith. In Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, we have a heroic follower of St. Thomas.

The holy Founders of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) had imbibed a spirituality that was deeply biblical and liturgical. Bl. Chavara considered the Carmelite way of life as a dynamic synthesis of Eastern religious life with its emphasis on scripture, prayer, silence, asceticism, together with apostolic orientation. Contemplation was for him God-experience; its sharing, apostolate. His life was the realization of both these.

There are two important documents of the Holy See about Bl. Chavara. The first one was published on 7th April, 1984. It is the official pronouncement of the Church on his holiness. The second one is the homily of the Holy Father during the Beatification at Kottayam on 8th February 1986. These documents shed light on the spirituality of Bl. Chavara:

1. No words of Our Lord are found more reflective of Bl. Chavara's holiness than the following: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word. My Father

will love him, we shall come to him and make our home with him" (Jn. 14:24). In his spiritual diary Bl. Chavara points out how enamoured he was about the divine indwelling. Even ordinary folk would look upon him as a man of God or as one full of divine graciousness.

2. Because of his clear faith-vision, he could see the ever present and ever active Creator, guiding everything smoothly and harmoniously to their proper destiny.
3. Imbued with a dynamic faith, he wanted very much to be closely linked with God through prayer and contemplation of the divine mysteries. For him, prayer is conversation with God, as one does with an intimate friend. He considers it a great privilege that God graciously allows human beings to talk with Him.
4. It was again his ardent faith that moved him to love the Mother Church. He was also exceptionally loyal to the Holy Father.
5. More particularly the Church in Kerala was the Mother he loved and served. Hence his constant care to work for the growth and development of the Church.
6. Bl. Chavara's spirituality found expression in areas like the following: preaching the Word of God, renewal programmes for priests, press apostolate, Catechumanates, home for the destitute, strengthening liturgical life, preventing schism, fostering loyalty to the Church, etc.

Blessed Chavara had also to his credit some writings such as chronicles, spiritual notes, poems and correspondence.

This booklet called "Colloquies with the Heavenly Father" (Dhyana Sallapangal) is also written in tune with the Athmanuthapam. All through the book we see the spontaneous overflow of the emotions of a mystic. Fr. Chavara, a man of the Spirit, finds himself totally unworthy to face the august Majesty because of his imperfections. He gets a comprehensive knowledge of God's Absolute Holiness, before which he feels that he is a prodigal, not a son. Only a great saint and a mystic could have such a special experience of unworthiness. Though this great soul had the firm conviction that he had never in his life committed a mortal sin, yet he is humble enough to submit himself and seek the help of all the saints, especially Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. He is not desperate, but confident enough to pray God to make him worthy of His presence. This 'Colloquy' enables one to have confidence in the eternal Father who is ready to embrace any repentant sinner.

May God bless all those who have contributed to the publication of this book in the English language.

P. G. House
Ernakulam
Mar. 19, 1990

Fr. Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI
Prior General

LIFE SKETCH OF BL. CHAVARA

Bl. Chavara was born at Kainakari, Kerala, India on Feb. 10, 1805, and was baptized in the Parish Church at Chennamkary. He was given the name Kuriakose. His mother took him to the Shrine of Our Lady at Vechoor, and offered him to her special patronage. Both mother and son used to renew this every year. Mother introduced him to the mysteries of faith and to a life of simple prayer. She rejoiced at his desire to become a priest.

In 1818 Kuriakose joined the Seminary at Pallippuram under Fr. Thomas Palackal as Rector. Later he was sent to Verapoly to study Latin. He was ordained at Arthungal on Nov. 29, 1829. He offered his first Holy Mass for the realization of a religious house in Kerala.

Fr. Kuriakose was associated with Fr. Palackal in the running of the Seminary. Fr. Thomas Palackal, Fr. Thomas Porukara and Fr. Kuriakose made many trips in search of a convenient place for the monastery. On May 11, 1831, the foundation stone was laid at Mannanam. Fr. Palackal and Fr. Porukara went to their eternal reward in 1841 and 1846 respectively. Subsequently Fr. Kuriakose had to take lead. A good number of priests and young men joined the community at Mannanam.

On Dec. 8, 1855 Fr. Kuriakose made his religious profession before the Bishop's delegate at Mannanam. He then accepted the vows of 10 other priests.

On June 8, 1861, Fr. Kuriakose was made the Vicar General. He successfully fought against the Roccas Schism, and restored the unity of the Church.

The first indigenous religious Congregation for women, now known as CMC, was started at Koonammavu in 1866.

On Feb. 18, 1868, Fr. Kuriakose wrote his famous letter to parishioners at Kainakary. In 1870, he wrote his last testament to the Congregation, entrusted it to a Scholastic to be given to Fr. Leopold after his death.

On 3rd Jan. 1871 Fr. Kuriakose went to his eternal reward. On 8th Feb 1986, Pope John Paul II beatified him and placed him for public Veneration, at Kottayam, Kerala, India.



BL. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

1805-1871

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am immensely happy to present to the public the English Version: "COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA VOL. III", translated from the Malayalam edition published in 1981. "Colloquies with the Heavenly Father" was translated by Rev. Jose Chittilappilly cmi. Rev. J. Chirayil and Rev. George H Ambooken had given some finishing touches to the work. One can imagine how difficult it is to translate the old Malayalam. I am happy to note that Fr. Chittilappilly has done a commendable job, and we have a beautiful English Version!

Ernakulam
Mar. 19, 1990

Fr. George H Ambooken CMI
General Secretary for
Pastoral Ministry

COLLOQUIES WITH THE HEAVENLY FATHER

I deem not myself worthy to reach high degrees of prayer and sanctity. As I am a great sinner with a heart impure and opaque without virtues of cleanliness and modesty, I realize that I am not worthy to receive the spirit of contemplation and attain to perfection. Again I am reminded of my mother's warning to keep away from pride and self-complacency. For is it because of my power and skill that I did things whatsoever? How is it that you came hither? Who called me from home? How did I become a Priest? How could I join the community and become a member of the Congregation? Why should anyone address me as Prior? How did I become so come by the present status? Do you think I deserve any one of these favours? Not at all, to be sure. If so, remember it is God's will that is being accomplished. Did He ever say He wouldn't do this? Why was the man without a wedding garment cast into the outer darkness, bound hand and foot? Did that man have a proper dress to attend the royal feast? Therefore, bear this in mind: not that he was a vagabond, but even without a proper dress on, had he asked for one in all humility, he would certainly have been granted that by the divine generosity. It was his self-reliance and self complacency that threw him to torture. So if you are humble enough to ask Him who brought you hither, you will certainly be gifted with the royal robe, i.e. higher degrees of prayer and sanctity.

Glory to God

Hail Holy Mother of God

Unworthy as I am God so deigned that I also become in spirit a child of St. Theresa. Indeed, Holy Mother of

Carmel clasped me to her fold. St. Theresa of Avila, however, enfolded me and brought me to the community dedicated to her name. If a mother in flesh goes all out to procure for her children something not in her hand but most wanted by them, St. Theresa, as a mother in spirit and mistress of contemplative life, would certainly see to my spiritual need. For she is author of the Interior Castle with its seven mansions. She knows how to teach her children the way taking them through it. So I beseech your help, O mother, in comprehending the sublime inner meaning of the Interior Castle or inspiring the same into my heart.

Meditation - I

Meditation is a free and friendly colloquy with God. O! my mother, St. Theresa of Avila, I came to read it in your life history that during the tepidity in the beginning of your religious life, while indulging in the way of the world you found it a foil to make friends with God and that you kept away from meditation. Of this O my mother, I am convinced. For if meditation is a conversation with God, it presupposes a friendship with God. For, when friends sit close to each other, they find enough topics to talk about without cessation. If there is love, conversation goes unlimited. No one need teach either of the two friends how to go on talking. For, the heart has a language of its own. The very close presence of the friend with no utterance of words is quite gratifying and heart-warming. Then, O! my mother, if I bear true love for Jesus, I will have enough matter to talk with Him. If not, the very feeling of being with Him (togetherness) is rewarding. If I have this genuine love, O! my mother, you find it less difficult to teach me the art of meditation. O! Mother, affectionate and generous, you being a well accomplished mistress in the mysteries of meditation, I again seek your loving intercession in obtaining for me

from Jesus the great gift of love. Should I need entertain any doubt as to your power of intercession with Jesus? Now that you are in union with Jesus, the Bridegroom in heavenly bedchamber, your favours with Him must be greater now than when you were on earth, in physical separation from your divine spouse. Since you intercede for many a soul, may I rest assured of your succour to me, a sinner, but one beseeching your help in filial freedom. O! mother dear, teach me to pray!

Fraction - 1

Meditation requires that one be united in love with God. But a sinful heart is incompatible with God. Therefore, on the very first day of my meditation, I must come to my saviour, Jesus Christ, my beloved Bridegroom, to beg pardon for my sins. Mother dear! in your mercy do go before me into the bedchamber of your beloved heavenly spouse and render me succour and support by turning His eyes of mercy towards me. In your kindness ask the Mother of God, the refuge of sinners and St. Joseph, the intercession of all your children to intercede on my behalf.

Here, I come before you, Oh my Heavenly Father, with a heart full of repentance and firm purpose of amendment to feel your peace in my heart. Behold! my bounteous Father in heaven is seated on His Throne of mercy in the Chapel. On His right and left stand respectively the Blessed Mother and our Patron St. Joseph. Close to them is St. Theresa in genuflection to intercede for her Children, particularly for me, the sinner. As my sorrow bears no proportion to my multitudinous sins, I take heart to go to my heavenly Father by offering to Him, with my sorrow and grief, the penance and penitence of the great penitents like Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cortona who have always been helpful to me in evoking repentance for my sins.

Oh, it is a long time since I saw my heavenly Father's face! Like the prodigal son I have squandered all the nice things you benignly bestowed on me. Now I am a servant to a bad master, feeling his swine. I have grown so famished that I would like to be fed on the pods the swine feed on. I have spoilt all the fine clothes my Father gave me to put on and am now dressed in rags. Still I must be going now in this attire. For, further delay is suicidal. So here I am on my feet to make a move to my Father's house with my country cap and walking stick.

O my soul! see the numerous hired servants in Your Father's place - living to their heart's content. Seeing them why should you be troubled in heart? Your Father is so bounteous as to forgive and forget every ingratitude of yours. You are sure to be reinstated to your former filial status and privileges. Oh I have a look at your Father's palace and the mansions therein with their graceful high walls. If the external decorations are so pleasant to the eye, what joy, what peace and what contentment awaits you inside? Yes, that's true. Oh my soul! even if I call out at this huge wall, who is there to listen to me? Who is there to open for me this big lock and door? Supposing the watchman comes to open the door for me, who on earth would inform the family members of the arrival of an outcast? Even if they be given knowledge of this worm, would they deign to look at me or, would I be driven out? Could you accost to His presence without permission? When the attendants feel repelled by my form and person, I dare not go near such an august presence. Yes, that's true indeed. Still my Father is so generous and full of love that I needn't entertain any fear.

Here be on your feet with vigilance. Don't you see a motion at the door? Behold the doors are wide open!

There my Father himself comes out! Oh, to be in this wretched attire! My Father is out to embrace me! Oh, No, be off. I am not worthy to be touched by Him. So let me fall prostrate at His feet.

O My Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your Son. It's my greatest fortune, if you count me as one of your servants. My heart however, tells me to call you by no other name than my Father. You too have taught us so. Therefore, my Father, source of all graces, forgive me all my trespasses due to my selfishness and ingratitude.

Act of Contrition

O my Father dear! I cast myself on my knees before your throne of mercy. I am bent on clinging to your pierced but live feet until you speak to me words of forgiveness, as you did to Mary Magdalene and Mary of Cortoda. Just as Jacob to the Patriarch I am also in no mood to let you go. O my mothers dear, please do pray for me. O my mother, St. Theresa of Jesus, ask for me the grace of absolution in remembrance of the sacred vision once you had in the oratory while in prayer before the crucifix. O mother of Dolours, I seek your intercession in obtaining for me the forgiveness of my sins which made your wounds go deep. O how many times have I been forgiven! While an infant you snatched me away from my earthly mother. Despite my weaknesses and follies in the world you brought me to your Order and sheltered me under your scapular. How bad of me if I persist in ways unworthy of your children. Therefore O mother affectionate, since I cling to your son's feet, obtain from your Son the forgiveness of and repulsion for my sins and the grace of perseverance on the road to sanctity. May I be wholly consecrated to your love with no further delay.

Oh merciful Father! I am unable to raise my eyes and look at your face. Lord, looking at your holy head, I feel frightened to think how it came to be pierced with thorns. How many times did I pierce your head by my pride and unwholesome thoughts! Oh, do place your crown of thorns on my head so that I may be enabled to keep up the spirit of repentance till my death and keep away from my mind any thought displeasing to you.

O my Father how graceful is your face! The rapturous song of David in praise of the beauty of your face rings in my ears. I have heard and come to believe that your face is a source of joy and consolation to those who look at it.

But my Father, my heart now gets heavy to look at your face. You have not made my sorrow into joy. Even if stake away my eyes from your raging face, I am ashamed of myself by reason of the part I played in disfiguring it. Though I feel shy of looking at your face, I firmly believe that you'll show me a face capable of inspiring strength and confidence into me. Therefore my Father, let me raise your eyes. May I lift my ungrateful eyes to your welcome face. Let my eyelids open and the tear drops that brim therein fall unto the earth so that my eyes are cleansed with tears of sorrow.

Alas! I myself disfigured my Father's face, the beauty of which David the prophet sang plentifully. O an evil creature I am to disfigure the face of the creator! Look at His mangled body and his head crowned with a crown of thorns! O my soul, the face of your creator is bereft of beauty because you saw beauty everywhere and on the very body bating on the face of your creator. The face of your creator is spat at and blood-stained that it is hardly recognizable. If you want to see the whole of His face, brush and smooth down the hair on His head. Brush up the dust and the blood drippings

from the face. O Lord, what are the reddish finger marks and the blush shade lining them? O my soul, you will perhaps think the cruel Roman soldier did it when He was brought before the High priest and slapped in the face for allegedly answering back to the High priest. This may perhaps seem cruel. But it was not the Roman soldier that struck the Lord in the face. The Lord wouldn't have been hurt so much by that. The Lord's face is out of shape because of your doings. The servant of the High Priest slapped His face only once. But how many slaps did you deal to the Lord? He allowed Himself to be beaten so many times by the Roman soldiers because you dared misuse the god-given gift of your two hands and made them instruments for doing innumerable sins. It was you yourself that struck Him in the eyes. His eyes are blood stained because of the injuries the head sustained in being crowned with a crown of thorns, not to mention the numerous slaps dealt on the face. Is this a due return for His gift of two sensitive eyes to you? Were you born blind, His eyes would have been spared of pain. But out of love, He gave you two beautiful eyes. His eyes are blinded with the blood that ran down from His head. It was due to your misuse of eyes by turning them to see the vain and forbidden things of the earth. You should have raised your eyes to see the beauty of the Lord's creation and thus acknowledge His overlordship.

O my God, when am I to see through the beauty of your bejewelled eyes and holy face? O my Son, you will measure up to that provided you are prepared for a change in yourself. O my Lord, from now on, I resolve to die to my own will and submit myself always to your holy will. I seek not to follow anybody's will except your own. Oh, with my eyes down, let me have a look at my father's body. Oh, my saviour! Is it that what you

told your mother is come true? Anyway, the Lord's body commands a dreadful sight for me, a sinner. O Lord, unless I am strengthened by you, I can't keep looking at your body. For I understand that it's me who caused the deep cuts into your flesh and made it sore. With these thoughts in my mind I dare not look at your body. O my Lord, what made you suffer for a worm like me? How on earth I came to betray you in spite of my knowledge of your suffering love for me. At a close look at your body, I can't help loving you hereafter. If you loved me so much, how could I feel like loving anything else other than your person. O my Lord vouchsafe me to love you at least as much as I hurt you. As it is inculcated in the Law, the blood of the sacrificial lamb is to be shed within the sanctuary and its flesh to be bumed outside. Lord, you shed your whole blood into me. Just as the blood-thirsty tiger first drains the blood of its prey before killing so also my sinful thirst lore open your body to drain every drop of blood therein. O my Father, your love for me is one exceeding all excess. You carried the heavy burden of my sins on your bony shoulders. O my Father, it pains me to come behind the cross on your shoulders. I recall to my mind every scene of your march to Mount Calvary. Your march, painful but triumphant, inspires me. I hope my own sufferings along with you will take me to the joy of being in union with heavenly spouses. Let me follow in your footsteps with love and courage. I place Mary Magdalene in my stead at the foot of your cross and ascend the cross of the goodthief and join him in the earnest supplication: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest to Thy Kingdom". Speak, O Lord, to my soul also that I shall be with you in the paradise of your Grace. Sustain me in your Grace and forgive me my sins. Amen.

Act of Humility

Eternal Father, you have revealed to us that no living being can bereave your sight. Whoever ventures to look at the splendour of your face deceases immediately. None of the Israelites that thronged at the foot of the Mount Sinai mustered enough courage to ascend the mount where you appeared. The face of your servant Moses to whom you gave the Ten Commandments amidst blazing lightning and booming thunder became so bright that the people had to cover their faces to talk to him. Moses could see only your back - even that for an instant. Otherwise, as you said, if he were to see your face he would die. But the effect was terrifying. His eyes looked like burning coal and his face flashed like lightning. The Israelites were terribly afraid to look at his face.

O my God! a great sinner as I am, I am struck with fear to enter this chapel, the abode of your presence. The Israelites were frightened to get near the Mountain because they saw a great natural fire accompanied by thundler and lightning over a heavily clouded sky. Here it is the fire of your rage that consumes sin and sinners. Then how can I, a sinner, claim to stand before your august presence? Even your servants, the Archangels, shudder to see your blazing anger upon the junior angels and turn away their eyes therefrom. The great sinners burning in the fire of hell would rather rush into the hell fire than face your awesome presence. As it is beyond their power, they call for the hills and mountains to cover them. This chapel which is filled with your presence is dreadful so far as a sinner is concerned. But I know that you are present here not as a frightening judge but as a friendly Father. Great is your majesty and power. So also is your generosity and kindness. As you have said, there is a time of justice and a time of salvation. Now that it is a time of salvation. I must seek it. Otherwise the salvation that is at hand will prove to be my judgement. Woe to

me, if I don't benefit by this salvific time. Therefore O my soul, hasten to Him and thank Him for His great mercy. You are now not on Mount Sinai where Aaron and others were afraid to mount. You are now in the sanctuary of the Lord, where He is surrounded by His angels. Here He is not hidden by clouds as he was when He revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai. With no cover of clouds He is here before you as an affectionate Father to welcome you most lovingly. He says to me: I am your loving Father. Do not hesitate to come to Me. Since you left me, I have a heavy heart. That I may see you in person and that you may have no fear of me, I stepped down from my high throne and became man. O my son, see how I humbled myself for your sake. You had a nice home with all comforts - cosy bed and soft pillow to sleep on and domestics to serve you and your mother. But on my birth my mother and I found ourselves in a dilapidated old manger, amidst animals, much exposed to wind and snow. I had to stay there with only a stone for cot and some straw on loan to serve as mat and pillow. Seeking you I travelled brawling rain and hot sun, among hills and dales because I loved you, I resolved to take you to my royal house: Your enemies did not like this. So they caught hold of me, beat me, dragged me, further wounds on my flesh and to satiate their fury they put me to death. But I prepared wholesome medicines out of blood flowing from my wounds and applied them to your diseased body and soul to make you healthy and fat. I gave you my very blood. If so, why should you still be afraid to come to me?

O my endearing Father, when I think on these very favours done to me, I feel ashamed of my ingratitude to you and hence my hesitation to approach you. How ungrateful have I been to your graces! As St. Paul teaches, this is charity: that is, not because that we loved God but because that God loved us. O! how wonderful in God's

love and goodness! The depth of His patience! While we were His enemies, God so loved us as to die for us. Then, if we go near Him to love Him, He can't help loving us. Alas! though I had known all these I did in no way requit His love. Dear Father, what made you love me so greatly when I was so unworthy of your love? You sought me, the prodigal son, footing it through day and night, along paths untoward and untrodden. How did I venture to raise my legs against those legs of Him that tied tight to the cross with thick ropes and inspired to carry on shoulder the heavy cross of my sins so that my entangled legs and burdened shoulders become free! Why was I impelled to move my legs against those holy legs of Him driven into the cross with large nails! Lord, I am sorry, very sorry. Hereafter I will walk in ways pleasing to you and I offer you my legs and their movements along with the piercing pain and sensations of your nailed feet.

O my Lord! it pains me greatly to raise my eyes towards your holy body. Your knees with the skin thereon removed and bones visible are indeed awful to behold. They are hurt because you came to fall down often on your way to Calvary, carrying the burden of my sins. You bore the pain caused by those repeated fall to the ground in reparation for my frequent transgressions. Thy mangled body is to me a lasting heart-rending remembrance of what I have done to my Father in return for His favours to me. Father, I did sin against your goodness. Punish me as you will. The love for my corrupt body was instrumental in disfiguring your whole body.

O Let me have a closer look at the holy face of my creator. This holy face is the source - light that brightens the angels and the lives of those in misery. When the Roman Governors came to hear of the perfection of this Face, they saw to it that the picture of it was drawn and painted to be put up on the walls of their palace. But

what change has come over such a handsome face! The holy cheeks betray the bluish red marks of the slaps dealt by the Roman soldiers: They are spoilt by the impure spittle from the mouth of the palace servants. The blood flowed down from the scalp pierced by the crown of thorns is sedimented at the nostrils. The wounds due to the uprooting of the beard are still fresh.

The holy eyes, brighter than the splendour of the stars are blurred because of the blood-spilling beatings on the head. The lips, as red and bright as ripe apples, are darkened. All these changes have come over the holy face because of my sins. Alas! it increases my pain to think of this. My Father is like the father in a tale told in days of old: A King decreed that the eyes of a young man be scooped out. But out of sympathy for the young man His majesty so modified the decree as it was enough that an eye of the son and of the father each be taken out. But the father in the tale is told to have preferred to taking his both eyes out of love for the son!

Prayer to St. Joseph (title not in the text)

O dear St. Joseph, as today is the last day of the month dedicated to you, I humbly place at your feet these supplications trusting that you, as my father, will intercede for me before your son and obtain from Him the grace that I may overcome my weaknesses and follies for good and thus triumph over my spiritual adversaries.

O merciful and gracious St. Joseph, you were the strong guardian and protector of the immaculate Virgin Mary. As her lawful husband you looked after her with loving care and vigilance so much so that the holy queen was not in the least bored or annoyed with your company. Not only that, you tended to the needs of the holy mother with so tender a devotion that she always seemed contented with and indebted to your loving service. For

she was impelled by the manners of the times not to tell her husband in person unasked that she had conceived the Son of God through the annunciation by the angel. She knew how broken-hearted Joseph was when the mystery of Incarnation was not clearly understood by him. It was certainly a troubled time for you. You could hardly bear the silence of Mary. In your heart of hearts you never doubted the integrity of Mary. But the signs! Holy Mary, however, was afraid knowing through her inner eye what was happening in Joseph. Mary was afraid that her holy husband, her only stay and support on earth, would leave her and her son. But her modesty and sense of propriety did not allow her to tell him the truth of her conception. She, in all humility, suffered everything in silence but tried her best to alleviate his sufferings through her attentive love and care. Your paternity however were too holy and just to point an accusing finger against her fidelity. Instead, you kept on staying with the Holy Mother and cheering her in all possible ways. So also, O St. Joseph, my dear Father, your paternity fostered young Jesus in such a way as He would feel quite at home in your guardianship and protection. St. Joseph, dear Father, you abided by the honour and sanctity of the Holy Mother who bore in her womb the son of God for nine months. Although I have not always been a worthy son of the Holy Mother, I beseech your intercession for the grace that, living upto the dignity becoming of her son, I may see the face of my saviour face to face. Numerous as my sins are, I am consoled to think that I enjoy the loving and sweet intercession of my heavenly patronsaints: St. Mary of Egypt and St. Mary of Cortona. I could enjoy the merits of Mary Magdalene as I place myself at the foot of the cross on the Mount Golgotha. In the end I am gladdened to think that I have been accepted as the spiritual son of St. Theresa of Avila in heaven and that when I reach there I could enjoy her favours and that she, along with

my other heavenly benefactors is waiting for my union with them. If these thoughts go to giving me consolation far numerous are the reasons that put me in consternation.

To begin with, I know, it is the feeling of self-assurance, a product of pride or mere pious thought that completed me to write so. O most kind Father, I know the dangers involved in the feeling of self-assurance. Most of the reasons why the three-lettered word in Malayalam (Maranam), meaning death, evokes terror in people about death are also applicable to me. Many tend to think that the end of all miseries is to be found in those three letters, (Maranam). You know I am incapable of bearing the least pain involved in running a temperature or in having headache or stomachache. I can't even help my face writhing when my feet strike against a stone or a thorn. When some wordly men and enduring-type people show patience without any contortion of the face, I am afraid I would betray my weakness even when I am put to slight ailments and troubles in life. Though I don't now feel any pang of separation due to death, the thought of separation from my dear ones makes my heart heavy. Besides I am given a shudder to think of the devils - my spiritual adversaries. Their persistent and relentless attack to wrest my soul at death-bed frightens me. They would perhaps spare no pains to inject in me diffidence and distrust by cunning - by bringing to my mind my past sinful life. Above all it is the judgement seat of God that frightens me most. When I think of His judgement and justice penetrating into the depths of my soul, His great repulsion for sin and the terrible consequence of sin. O help me! my merciful father, at the hour of my death, or else I would fall a victim to those hellish creatures and their temptations.

O my gracious father! even with my limited and not so precise Theological knowledge of the effects of sin and Divine justice I am given to shivers to think on

judgement. Then how much greater must be my fright when the veil of ignorance is removed at judgement? Without your divine help and strength I am sure to be diffident to stand before the uncovered face of God. For it stands in Scripture: as St. Peter puts: "nothing defiled can enter into his holy presence" and that pagans who do not live up to the natural law and the dictates of their conscience will be the victims of the justice of God and will be condemned to eternal fire. If so what a greater punishment awaits there chosen ones who still do not walk in the way of the Lord? How terrible was the punishment meted out to the sons of the high priest when they entered the Holy of Holies unmindful of the holiness of the place: After all it was only a place where rams and oxen were offered as sacrifices to the Lord. The Major General of the army who forced entry to the sanctuary where the arc of the covenant was placed met with immediate punishment from heaven. These punishments show that God will avenge those who violate His sanctuary.

The Holy of Holies was only a prototype of the real sanctuary. Where the Son of the Eternal Father dwells all through day and night in the Tabernacle, hiding all His power and majesty in the form of bread. Even though I knew and believed unhesitatingly who was in the Tabernacle, how often have I entered the sanctuary without due reflection and respect! Yet how many times was I forgiven and was not awarded punishment for my irreverence and thoughtlessness. Instead of putting any fright in my mind, you showered your graces all the more upon me. More than that, O my God, you have deigned to invite me to your august Presence in the holy sacrament of the altar. But disregarding your generous invitation to grow rich in your grace by being in close union with you, I wandered about and wasted my precious time in frivolous works and vain pieties.

Difficult indeed it is to meet the Kings and the powerful of the world. But how much I longed for such meetings!

And what did I gain? Only loss of many precious hours of my life - That is all the gain I made. I have been reminded by the Lord of the need of doing His works while it is day, for the night is coming when no one can work. This is almost a clarion call to my ears. If I do not approach Him now as he is seated on the throne of mercy I may have to face Him on His throne of uncompromising justice. This moment gives creeps even to saintly souls and to those who have never lost their baptismal innocence and to men and women who have spent their whole life-time in strict observance of religious vows. This very thought frightens me. O dear Father, when I am actually placed before Him for judgment, what a terrible moment will it be for me! When I consider my innumerable trespasses and failures, the inevitable death and judgment, I tremble. O merciful father and my patron, I find that the only way to lighten my fear is to hold on to you. My judge is your foster son and as such you are especially loved and honoured and have a specially favoured place in His Court. Again the Queen of heaven and the refuge of sinners is no one other than your beloved spouse. Both mother and son remember the loving services you rendered to them while they were on earth. They would only be most willing and pleased to give you every favour you ask of them. Therefore my dear father, before He takes His seat on the throne of judgment, do tell Him that you have accepted me as your word and protege.

The holy men, Job never offended the Lord knowingly. Yet he is told to have offered sacrifices to the Lord for fear of any offence from the part of his children. Such a man is said to have expressed his great fear of the judgment, saying: "What shall I do when the Lord comes to judge me?" If so holy a man as Job dreaded the Lord's judgment O Father what will be my condition? I am terribly frightened by the multitude of my sins and trespasses surrounding me like battalions. It has already been proclaimed to us by the Lord that intercession will not avail on the day of judgement. That day the sun will darken. O

how terrible! Behold, now at this moment the Lord who is the splendour of holiness appears as a kind and merciful father - not putting out the dim lamp, sparing the broken reed and exuding the light of mercy from His eyes. He calls to Him those who are burdened with various anxieties and promises to lighten their burdensome load of miseries. To forestall any doubt of acceptance from his part, he employs more than fifty men to announce the glad news of His forgiving love and generosity. Besides He reaches out to the penitent sinners and receives them with the kiss of peace. Even though I saw such benevolence on the part of my Lord I turned my face away from Him. I refused to harken to His call. I chose my own way never realising it was the road to ruin. But ignoring my ingratitude, He was always shadowing me, counselling and admonishing. He never grew wearilly of pointing out to me that the path I chose led to destruction. This he exemplified by pointing out those perished ones, who chose their own way.

O how long you were after me! Yet I was blind and deaf. Those who erred little you punished. I was spared through the intercession of your mother and foster father.

The princes of heaven tremble in your presence. How is it that you have allowed me a worm and a wretched sinner to enter your august presence! How can I enter this holy sanctuary where you are really present, when in the old dispensation not only the one who violated the sanctity was prohibited entry into the sanctuary, but also his sons up to the fourth generation. Queen Esther, as she entered the presence of King Asserus without permission, at a glance from the King trembled and fell down unconscious. If such power as to terrify the King's bride was given how much more powerful must be your august presence! But when I, a sinner, entered your glorious sanctuary, you did not punish me for, you remembered then your own invitation to poor sinners and the promise to unload the misery of the poor.

According to the teaching of the Apostle this is the time of mercy, forgiveness and love. The Lord's Words: "I will not call you servants, but friends" assure that we have no reason to fear Him. No more are we servants, but children of God. How consoling and inspiring are these words!

In the Old Testament times the tablet of the commandments was encased in the arc of the covenant covered with silk cloth. When taken on a procession, the arc uncovered of its silk cloth was placed on chariot. No one but the High Priest was allowed to touch the uncovered arc of the covenant. It could only be handled by the High Priest. In contravention to this rule, Osa touched it when he saw the arc on the chariot on a slant. Immediately he fell down dead. That was in days of old. But in the new dispensation you are really present in the Tabernacle.

The arc of the covenant contained law on stone tablet. Here in the Tabernacle is the law-giver, in the splendour of his Godhood and manhood, receiving all those who go to him, going to him who invites Him, remaining on the tongue that receives Him, staying in the heart that gives Him accommodation. He comes down from heaven when the words of consecration are uttered by a duly ordained man, whether he be a simple priest or a bishop. He does not hesitate to be in their hands and on their tongues. O my Lord how often have you come to me, a poor sinner! How often have you allowed me to hold Thee in my blemished hands! How often have you come into my wretched heart! O good Jesus! now it is amply proved that you won't refuse anyone that comes to you.

The publican Zacheus was short of stature. Jesus was passing that way. As usual there was a large crowd surrounding Jesus and Zacheus, the short man with eager

desire to see Jesus, could not get a sight of Him. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree. When the procession headed by Jesus came under the tree Zacheus had a full view of the Lord. He was thrilled and his joy knew no bounds. The procession suddenly came to a halt.

Jesus looked up and asked Zacheus to come down and offered himself to Zacheus' home and spoke of his desire to lunch with him. He did not mind that he was a publican, he did not care for the reaction of the Jews. O the surprise of Zacheus! Jesus desiring to come to his house-hold! Jesus eating with him, a publican, an outcast!

This episode remarkably shows the depth and all-embracing mercy and love of Jesus for mankind. Then why should any one fight shy of Jesus? Why should anyone be afraid of Jesus?

O Lord, I thank you for showing great mercy on me a wretched sinner. You have allowed me to call you down from heaven to the altar to hold you in my hands as did Mary and Joseph, to carry you to the sick and the dying, to be near you. Above all, you have deigned to dwell in my humble house in the Tabernacle day and night, to hear my petitions, to grant me whatever I desire.

O Lord, these are manifestations of your love for me. But sometimes I am given the feeling that this period of love and mercy for me comes to a close and that the period of justice will dawn shortly.

Therefore, my dear father and patron, I entrust myself to your care and protection. For on that day when I am called to the Judgement seat of God - on that day of His rage, draw me close to you that I may not be cast out accused. Unless I am by your side, what shall I say in reply to His great Justice? For, the sense of sin

lurks deep in my mind. I certainly trust in His mercy and lasting love for me. Still I am disturbed and shaken by many things. Therefore, kind father, help me remain firm in the divine virtue of hope. Your assurance is my strength and without it I am but a wavering reed, bereft of trust and hope. Therefore, my saintly patron, intercede and obtain for me the grace that I may treasure love for the Lord in my heart and that I may be absolved of all my sins and exempted from reparation thereof. Then in your great kindness, lead me to the Lord in this blessed week itself. Then the risen Lord will gladly take me along with His ascension to His Father's house.

My most beloved saintly patrons, Mary Magdalene, Mary Cleopha, Mary Salome, I remember how along with you, Joachim, the Blessed Mother Mary, went along with Jesus and disciples, ministering into them. As you never were away from Him you had the rare privilege to see Him in His death and resurrection and to be with Him in the unending happiness of heaven. Therefore mothers dear, I too like the dog feeding on the crumbs falling from your dining table. I also long for the luck of going to heaven in your company with the Lord. The whole of Jerusalem was roused on that day. The streets were decorated with branches of olive. The roads were carpeted with colourful clothes, the children sang out lustily "Hosana to the Son of David" as you rode through the streets. I join with them in singing out Hosana to you, my Lord. Struck by the spontaneous jubilant eruption of the town, many adored you. But hours later, the jubilation subsided, the emotion died. the crowd dispersed, and the city ignored you and your followers. Then you went to Bethany and were there with my mothers - Martha and Mary.

So, O my dear mother, Mary Magdalene, the Lord is remembered and received only on solemn feast days. He is forgotten in the absence of festivity. Therefore, dear

mother, bring the Lord and His mother to dwell in my heart. Dear Mother, you know how strong is my desire to invite them so that they come to stay in my heart. At the same time you must not forget the fact that my home (heart) is ill-furnished and that I am unable to give them a fittling welcome suiting their status. But because of the great love Jesus bears for you, He will oblige you and will certainly come to my heart, however poor and unfurnished it is: know you will be greatly sorry because of this, for there are many others who as well love me, Mary of Egypt, Mary of Cortona are also greatly loved by God, they will spare no pains to enrich me with grace to the effect that I am a worthy seat for the Lord. The Lord found a beautiful dwelling place in the heart of Mother Theresa, who while on earth had the fortune of seeing His heavenly abode in a vision. I have resolved to open out my heart for the Lord and His blessed Mother. Let them take up their abode in my poor home. When He comes to stay in my heart, you see to it that He does not bemoan as He once bemoaned over the city of Jerusalem. I would like to borrow the rich trappings of your homes to furnish mine so that I may receive Him in a manner befitting His status and position as the prince and overlord of heaven and earth.

O my loving God and Saviour, as a sign of your great love for me, you gave me your body and blood for my food and drink. You offered yourself as a victim on Calvary for my redemption. Henceforth let me live always keeping in mind your sacred passion and death and perform my duties as a priest and religious until my death. Then, in your great mercy may I be allowed to be at your presence to adore, praise and love you in union with the angels and the just for all eternity. How blessed and enraptured are those holy souls as they enjoy the vision of the most holy Trinity! How grateful they are to you for redeeming them! How delighted they are

when they stand near the Blessed Mother whom you proclaimed as their mother while on the cross. Come and take over my soul, O Lord, My heart is ready with its doors wide open to receive you. Reside in my soul as you sat on the lap of your mother. Remember, Lord, how happy you were in the embrace of your mother! In remembrance of these memorable days, Lord, hearken to her supplication on my behalf. Deign to hear her prayer: My beloved son, my Lord and creator, do hear me. While standing under the cross, watching you die in agony you appointed me as mother of mankind. By that proclamation you gave me Kuriakose as my son. Now I plead on his behalf. My beloved son, forgive his sins and trespasses. Spare him from the debts incurred by his sins. Say now you have forgiven entirely. Restore to him his baptismal graces and let him not lose it until death. Give him the grace and the necessary confidence to sanctify himself and to grow further in an unquenchable love for you. You remember how peacefully your foster father died in your hands. Likewise on the moment of his death, be present near him, shielding him from the assaults of the enemy. Let me and your foster father be at his death-bed consoling and strengthening him, and carry his soul along with us to the heavenly abode. As a sign that you have vouchsafed to grant my pleadings extend to him your holy feet.

Preparatory prayer for Meditation

Almighty God, I firmly believe that I am before your august presence. But how can I stand before the Lord of infinite majesty whom I have offended often? O how unworthy I am!

O Lord, I merit to be condemned to the darkness of hell rather than to be in your holy presence. Yet relying on your limitless fatherly mercy and kindness I make bold to stand before you. I am heartily sorry for my sins and am ashamed of them.

I humbly bow down before you in adoration. Enlighten my dark mind and enliven my cold heart that I may grasp

the essence of the things on which I am going to meditate. Let this be for your glory and for the sustenance of our famished souls - Amen.

O holy Mother Mary! Mother of God! You don't regret your being the refuge of sinners. Therefore strengthened by this thought, great sinners as we are, we approach you with confidence. We desire from now on to be your faithful servants. In all sincerity we implore thee in memory of the sacred blood shed by your beloved son and your heart-breaking dolours that we undergo the trials and tribulations rather than offend your son by a single sin.

O mother of mercy, help us to make your just son no more angry with us and thus to avert the punishment of hell incurred by yielding to base instincts.

Prayer to the Holy Mother of God

O my Jesus, be kind to me and bless me. Jesus, you are angry and your anger is just indeed. But now do not cast your eyes on our sins but turn your eyes to your most blessed mother. Forgive us, we implore you, in memory of the eyes that shed tears for us, the lips that heaved a sigh of sympathy for love of us, and the heart that was pierced for our sake. The heart on which you leaned when a babe and the heart that fondled you in death is the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was her own lips that planted many a kiss to wipe away the blood of your wounds. It was those holy eyes that thrilled you in your infancy. It was the tears from those eyes that washed your blood-stained body.

O my Jesus, bearing in mind those blessed eyes and tender heart and lips of your dear mother, be kind to us. O Jesus, relent in your anger. The holy heart of Mary is heavy with sorrow and compassion for us. Those blessed lips are pleading for us. Those eyes are equally fixed on you and us. Knowing all these will you still be angry?

We are unworthy of your forgiveness and compassion because our sins are grave and many. But who it is that would plead for us? Is it not the heart of your mother imploring you?

Her lips are speaking to you. Her eyes look up to you. O Jesus, you can not be so angry with us when your mother pleads for us.

O Lord Jesus, bearing in mind where you are and that you see into the depth of my soul, I am before your august presence, burdened with a load of sin. My ingratitude to you is another heavy weight. Lord, how patient you have been with me. Be patient with me a little more so that I may make reparation for my sins and negligences and change my ways. I failed to keep my promise to you. I am really sorry that I broke my promise to you. Henceforth I will not offend you by breaking your commands. This I pledge with all my strength and whole heart.

12 Hail Marys in memory of the 12 stars in the crown of Mary; in praise of the Trinity for giving the Blessed Mother special graces. 3 Gloria patri for the conversion of sinners I Hail Mary to be said.

1867 Meenam (March) 16 - God gave me great blessings today.

As I was having a heavy heart. My spiritual Director, Very Rev. Fr. Delegate made our Rev. Sisters say 3 Hail Holy Queens and 3 Misereors to the effect that what seemed to assume mountainous proportions was made as light as a flower by the Blessed Mother.

Meditation on Vocation

Servant of God, what are you doing? Where are you going? Where will the path you are treading take you? The traveller is always on his guard on his way to make sure that, he is on the right road. Similarly you, on your way to eternity, have to make sure that you are on the right road that leads to heaven and not to perdition: Therefore stop

a while and make a review of your life. God invites you to Him on these days of the annual retreat, that you may make a correct assessment of your life, and make programme for the betterment of your life. O Servant of God! for what purpose have you come to the House of God, leaving your parents, friends and possessions. You left all that the world gave and promised you. Why did you choose a way of life that is hard, requiring much sacrifice, when you could live with ease and comfort in the world? Is it for a comparatively easy and a sort of dignified life that you have opted for this way of life? Or is it to follow in the footsteps of the Lord in sacrifice, abnegation, carrying the cross, working zealously for one's own sanctification and the sanctification of others? Christ paid a great price for your own soul and the souls of others. The price was His own precious blood. The purpose of the religious life in short is to love the Lord whole-heartedly and follow Him in His footsteps, bringing your neighbour also to Him. But how far have you observed these till today Have you followed in the footsteps of the Master according to your capacity? Have you tried to progress in virtue as you are obliged by choosing this life?

If you carefully examine your soul you will realize how far away you are from true sanctity. You will see how wasteful those days were! You are by your vocation, not only to work for your own salvation but also of your neighbour. Such being the case, how negligent and careless and inattentive you have been in your sacred duties. Have you, not been sometimes very inattentive and distracted in saying Mass? Has not your recitation of the Canonical hours been going mechanical?

I am holy and therefore those who serve must be holy, said the Lord. Examine how you have behaved in the house of the Lord. around the altar, a place most holy and sacred, the Seraphim and hosts of angels of different

orders bow trembling in adoration. With what devotion are you ascending the altar day by day to perform the sacred liturgy.

In the old dispensation when rams and oxen were offered in sacrifice at the altar, a little carelessness on the part of the priest was punished very severely. Fire descended from heaven and consumed everything. The priest fell dead. But here on this altar it is not ox or doves that is killed and offered in sacrifice, but the Son of the eternal Father who by a single word called into being everything and who by a single word is able to annihilate everything. You touch with your hands his sacred body. You receive with your heart his sacred body and blood. Remember then how pure should be your hands and how clean should your heart be!

If the Lord should show his justice now as of old who will dare to ascend his altar? But now He shows kindness and not justice. But dear brother be aware of His sentence of justice until the hour of justice. He will remain silent. He will not argue or protest. He is at your command, He will allow you to touch Him, He will come to your heart, He will go wherever you take Him. O my dear brother, He will not mind now in whatever manner you and I ascend the altar. Now He will not be angry. He is patient and full of forgiveness. Remember there is a limit to His patience. Long suffering as His patience is His Wrath will be harsh and hard. Therefore examine consciously whether you have lived up to your sacred calling.

Are you not ashamed when the great and holy Bernard asked himself very often, "Bernard, Bernard, why did you leave the world and what are you doing here?". And you never asked the same question to yourself. St. Bernard put this question to himself to revive his spirit and remind himself of his obligation as a monk,

and you remain as a cold blooded animal after all these years in the monastery. How horrible!

Remember what the Lord has done for you. He chose you from out of thousands. There were many who were more worthy than you. Yet, wonder of wonders, He chose you, called you to His home, endowed you with many gifts of body and spirit. It looks as if you are wrestling with God by choosing to go your own way. The more he loves you, the more you are ungrateful. The more He is patient with you, the more you grow impertinent and insulting. O! what a tragedy it is! You have been chosen to love Him and serve Him, but you have joined hands with the world that hate Him and insult Him. O! Servant of God arise from your lethargy. Do not allow yourself to be caught in the clutches of the Devils whose only desire is to drag you into perdition. How long has God been patient with you. How lovingly has He followed you! Now in the silence and solitude of this retreat, hearken to His voice. He is calling you. He is standing with outstretched hands to embrace you and give you the kiss of peace. So abandon your old tepid ways. Resolve to follow Him with fervour and diligence. Now is the accepted time. Who knows such a favourable day will ever dawn for you again?

II. Meditation on the mercy of God

O privileged priest of God I have you ever considered about the graces and gifts lavished on you by God and what response you have made to those blessings. A small portion of those gifts would have been more than enough to make you an angel or a saint.

But in spite of these gifts you are still cold and lukewarm in His service. Think of the days you have left behind. Was not every moment of those days filled with innumerable graces? What were you before His omnipotence created you, called you out of nothingness? How many in nothingness remain unable to know and love God? But

God gave you existence, an immortal soul to know Him, love Him and serve Him. God blessed you with Christian parents. The gift of Baptism was given you that you may by it become a child of God and inherit all riches of heaven. O my brother, how have you responded and reacted to these blessings? What answer would you give to the pagans pointing an accusing finger at you on the Judgment Day?

In your helpless infancy who took care of you, protected you from dangers, who nurtured and strengthened your body? Have you ever thought of it? You may say it was your mother. Certainly not. It was God. Your mother was only an agent of God. He looked after you with loving care. When you were grown up He expected that you would faithfully and devotedly serve Him.

Have you lived up to His expectation? To redeem you He descended and assumed a frail body like that of yours, shed His blood and branded a thief, died on a cross on Calvary, abused and condemned by His enemies. He became a man of sorrows. All this was to redeem you and to bless you with innumerable graces. How have you reacted to these graces? O my soul, look down to the world you have left. Observe the many souls marching towards eternal perdition as they preferred to take rest in the lap of Satan.

Many souls not caring to love Jesus and not knowing how delightful virtue is, go after the vanities and pleasures of the world. Men who are much better than yourself, and who offended less than you lie entangled in the vanity of the world. O privileged priest of God, how have you responded to the mercies of the Lord? Think of the charge sheet against you, the condemnation that awaits you.

For your sanctification, did He not provide very many means? - spiritual books, good counsel, example of saintly people, prayer in community. What profit have you made

of these means? Again to help you always in your needs and illumine your eyes to comfort and console you, has He not, day and night, lived in your heart? To forgive your sins and trespasses and to shrive your soul, has He not provided the Sacrament of confession? Did He not give His body and blood to feed and strengthen that you may successfully fight your enemies and withstand his onslaught? How have you approached the Sacraments? How often have you received the Sacraments without due attention and preparation!

What profit have you made, O privileged priest of God, from the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of penance? If you are not mindful of these loving gifts of God, you will have to account for it on the last day.

If another soul has been given the graces and opportunities you were given, he would certainly have been a saint? What will be your shame when both of you stand before the Omniscient Judge? When the Judge says: "What more have I to do for my garden? What reply can you give? Then with burning wrath, He will say, I was expecting fruits from my tree, but what it produced was tubers. What will I then do? I will remove the fence, I will destroy it. I will abandon it to wild beasts. That this horrible curse may not fall on me and you, let us make best use of the little interval that is given. Let us arise from over lethargy and slumber and let us approach this loving and forgiving Father with heart-breaking sorrow.

III. Meditation on Mortal Sin

O privileged priest of God, many saints and holy souls were ready to endure all kinds of sufferings till the end of the world rather than offend God even by the slightest sin. You are really deluded if you think lightly of sin, especially mortal sin. How can you think that offending Jesus, and denying Him is not a matter of much importance? It means that you have not understood the enormous ugliness and gravity of sin. If you want to know the enormity of sin,

listen to what the Doctors of the Church have said - St. Alphonse asks you: Which is that sin you call slight? Is it a slight thing, defaming your Lord and Creator? Mother Teresa says: it is far better if priests were more afraid of venial sin rather than being afraid of the Devil. Because venial sin will bring about more ruin than all the combined effort of all the devils of hell. St. Alphonse writes if all the creation is destroyed or if all men and saints are turned down to hell it is but a lesser evil than offending God even by the slightest sin. Catherine of Genoa has recorded the abomination of venial sin she had in a vision. The vision lasted only a moment and she was frightened to death. If the vision had continued a little more, she says she would have actually died. The shadow of a venial sin is more frightful than the devils. Again our Lord himself said to St. Bridget: My daughter do not think that venial sin is a slight thing. Mother Teresa had a vision of hell one day. She saw in hell worms squirming on the heads of the damned souls. St. Teresa asked what this meant. The worms raised their heads and began to talk. One group said he began with us for listening to him. Another group said he gave himself to us. It became his habit. Another group said we enervated him. The last group said we were instrumental for his damnation. O privileged priest of God! Should not a priest who knowingly and with a light heart habitually commit venial sin be afraid of his fate? How is it that he can remain undisturbed?

O beloved brother, you are not only living in a community which is God's own but you experience Him. You live through his life, you enjoy your life through Him. Your existence is the price of his precious blood. Do you know that your one sin and the sin of unlearned lay man will merit the same punishment? Hear what St. Gregory tells: "A little scratch (venial sin) on the

body of a priest is more fatal than a deep wound or a carbunkle on the body of a lay man. For, A king may not mind a dirty spot on the dress of his joker but he will be full of anger if a spot is detected on the dress of his sons or his queen. Similarly God will not mind much if a man makes dirty spot on his spiritual dress by committing a venial sin. But it is not so in the case of a priest who offends God even by the least of a venial sin. He will be taken to task and will be punished severely. Therefore St. Chrysostom says that a priest must be more afraid of venial sin than mortal sin. For if he happens to fall in a mortal sin, he will get frightened and make reconciliation with God. But in the case of venial sins he may not mind much. And this will lead him to commit venial sins without any qualm of conscience. This habit will eventually lead him to be less afraid of mortal sins.

The consequence will be his own perdition. Therefore, remember, O privileged priest, you are failing in your duty to souls by making a habit of committing venial sin. For, don't you know you are appointed to bring about the salvation of souls by offering the sacrifice and by your prayers and penance? If you go on like this, grace of God will be withdrawn from you and eventually it will end in your damnation. For St. Dionysius tells how priests, ascending to offer sacrifice without due care and devotion in the old dispensation, were punished. Some were swallowed by earth, some were instantly killed by fire that descend from heaven. That Altar where rams and oxen were sacrificed was only a symbol of the true Altar where the Son of God is offered in sacrifice. You ascend to this altar daily. How exalted is this Altar! Have you ever thought of it? Consider with what devotion and reverence you handle the most precious body and blood of Christ.

Therefore, with great sorrow for your past negligence and carelessness approach the Lord waiting for you, and ask his forgiveness. He will certainly accept you as the father of the prodigal son accepted his ungrateful and wayward son.

On the worth of two Priests

Priest of God, you have two choices: either you abandon yourself to God and work for your salvation and sanctification or to walk away from the infinite love of God which will take you headlong into perdition. For, as the Lord has clearly said you cannot serve two masters at the same time. Either you have to despise this one and love the other or love this one and despise the other. Either God or the world - There is no middle way - Again he has warned that you cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. O privileged priest of God, whom are you serving? Whose servant are you? Thinking that you can serve God and the world at the same time, you chalk out a path of your own by not committing grave sin and at the same time neglecting to advance in virtue. One day you are fervent, next day you are cold and tepid and careless. Today an act of virtue, next day a fault. Today you recite the canonical prayers with attention and fervour. Next day you completely neglect the canonical prayers or say it with distraction and without reverence and attention. Today after receiving the Lord fervently you go out of the church seeking for pleasure company and pleasurable talk. You waste your time knocking out here and there for distraction. Today you remain in your room engaged in spiritual reading and meditation. The next day you do not at all enter your room. You hate study and reading. You look for worldly company and waste your time in idle and useless conversation. Your life is oscillating between God and the world. You want to parcel your heart between God and the pleasures of the world. One part to God, one part to world that seems to be your motto and watchword. Is such a life possible? The

holy scripture has clearly said that one who loves the world is the enemy of God. O! priest of God, how degrading is your way of life! Where will it lead to but to your own destruction.

O! how many priests treading this path have lost their souls! What assurance is there that you may not be one among these? How many times you were warned by your superior and spiritual father to make suitable reform in your way of life!

Has not the Lord in your heart silently admonished to reform your life by daily meditation, examination of conscience and weekly confession and spiritual reading. You made a promise to do so. For a time you did it, then took to the old ways. You preferred to listen to the voice of the world rather than the voice of God. If you continue this manner of blowing hot and cold, as the scripture confirms, God will vomit you out of His mouth. The prophet Isias has warned such persons saying: no need of such double worship. Either you worship the Almighty God or bow before the devil you have chosen as your God.

Therefore, my beloved brother, go repenting to the Lord on the Cross without delay like the Prodigal son and say with heart-broken sorrow: "Father I have sinned against you and heaven. I am not worthy to be called your son, but receive me as one of your menials. I am unworthy even for this. My beloved Father, all have abandoned me, but you never forget me. I forgot you, but you never forgot me waiting expectantly every day and every hour for me. Even when I walked away from you, you followed me and to my heart you told me: "My son, the pleasure you go after will soon abandon you. On the day when you are on your death-bed you will realise how foolish it is seeking and going after the pleasures of the world. Then you will look for me and find that I am your only friend and helper. Will not your mind be troubled at the thought what I have suffered for

you and by your bad example the damage done to souls entrusted to your care. Look upto the cross, see my head bowed down to embrace you. In this holy retreat you have seen what you are and where you stand. Rise up and reform your life

O my Divine Lord, I have resolved to amend my life. Remember not past years. With the holy King David I say: I stand like an animal before you. Do with me whatever you like. Lead me wherever you wish. I am fully resigned to your holy will. Lord, grant me the grace never to waver from this resolution until my death, Amen.

The death of an impious Priest

O how horrible is the death of an impious priest. Many priests would not have been in hell if they had meditated on this. If you want to realise the importance of this, picture to yourself the death scene of a luke-warm priest.

The agony of death is on him. He is restless. His eyes roll hither and thither. He is full of fears. He trembles, turns this side and that. Pain and anxiety consume him. He sweats. His past life with all its sin and infidelity is before him. The sins he has committed, the many occasions of sins he had not avoided, the unfaithfulness to his duties as a priest, the scandal he has made - All this unbecoming thoughts and his scandalous thoughts stand before him pointing their accusing fingers against him! He trembles with fear at the thought of standing before his Judge. Time has stopped for him and eternity is before him. O Lord, what eternity!!

Meditation : Method of beginning

Almighty God, I firmly believe that I am now standing in your august presence. How unworthy I am to stand before you because of my sins and offences against you. I deserve to be cast in hell. But relying on your great mercy and love, I place myself before you. Greatly ashamed of my sins I am overwhelmed with sorrow and beg your forgiveness. I humbly adore you

I implore thee to illumine my eyes and mind that I may grasp well the meaning of the subject I meditate. I desire to make this hour of meditation for your glory, and to obtain graces for my spiritual well being. Therefore, Lord, open my blind eyes and make my heart fervent.

O most blessed virgin! Mother of God! though we are great sinners, we hope you will not get angry with us because you are the refuge of sinners. From now on we desire to be your faithful servants. Mother hearken to our sincere prayer.

Remembering the precious blood shed by your most blessed son and your own great sorrows, help us, we implore you. Guard us from falling into the mire of sin and kindly see that we endure the sufferings and sorrows of this world patiently and offer ourselves to Jesus.

Merciful Mother! help us not to make any more your son angry with us by our offences and sins that we may not be lost by yielding to the momentary pleasures of the world.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

O! my Jesus, have mercy on me. You are angry - your anger is indeed just. But do not look at our sins, but look at the Blessed Mother Mary. Forgive us taking into consideration the heart that was pierced for us, and the tears she shed for us. It is this heart that embraced you and loved you in your infancy and it is those tear-wet eyes that looked upon your dead body. It is the tears that flowed from her eyes that washed your blood-stained body.

O! my Jesus, in consideration of her eyes and lips and heart, have mercy on us, we pray you-O! Jesus, do not be angry with us. Mary's heart is heavy with sorrow for us, her lips move in prayers for us, her merciful eyes are on us. She looks up to you pleading mercy for us. Seeing this, can you still be angry with us, O Lord?

Our sins are many and serious and we do not deserve forgiveness we know, but think who is interceding for us. Her eyes are on you. You cannot reject her petition. Therefore, listening to her appeal on behalf of us, forgive us and have mercy on us.

(12 Hail Marys in honour of her 12 stars on her crown. 3 Gloria Patri in honour of the Trinity for the graces bestowed on her. 3 Gloria Patri for the conversion of sinners)

O Jesus, I kneel before you, see into the very depth of my heart.

O! what a great sinner I am. I forgot all your blessings and favours. O my true Father, bear with me a little more as you bore with me so long. Give me a chance to expiate my sins. I promise with all my heart: no more will I offend thee Help me, Lord, to keep this promise.

Morning Prayer

O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit without beginning and end, My Father and Master, I bow down before you. I believe in all that Catholic Church believes and teaches. Do confirm my faith and strengthen it. I thank you for giving me my being and redeeming me especially for the favours of yesternight. O my God, I love you with all my heart. In proof of my love for thee, I offer to you all that I do today and throughout all my life. I offer to you all my sufferings and trials and all my undertakings not only of today but that of all my life. Together with my humble offering, I wish to add those good deeds of the Bl. Virgin and St. Joseph. I place before you as my offering all my thoughts, affections and deeds. Almighty God, I implore you that I may keep your grace and favour till my death. I ask this in the name of Jesus, your beloved son. Let me always conform my will to your holy will. Let me always say:

"May the Holy supreme and true will of God be praised now and forever".

O my blessed mother, I am a great sinner. Yet I bow down at your feet. Accept me as one of your children. Protect me from my enemies who threaten to destroy my soul - keep my mind and soul clean and pure.

1 Our Father

3 Hail Marys

Act of Contrition

Prayer to Guardian angel

Evening Prayer

O most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, my Father and Master, I adore Thee. I believe all that the Church teaches and believes. Confirm my belief. I thank you for creating me and redeeming and especially for the graces and favours of the last night. As a proof of my love, I offer up all the movement of this night. I wish to offer my humble deeds together with the good deeds of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I offer you this night's repose. I wish and desire that even my breathing in sleep be the expression of my love for you. O my God, may I be faithful till the last moment of my death. I am weak and poor. I can do nothing by myself. Therefore protect me by your divine grace. This I humbly ask in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son.

1 Holy Queen

1 Our Father

1 Hail Mary

2) Prayer to guardian angel

3) Act of Contrition

4) Place the crucifix on your breast for forgiveness of sins.

N. B. Think that this is your last night on earth. Place the crucifix beneath your pillow after tenderly kissing it. When on bed, cross your hands in the form of the cross. Meditate on the passion and sleep.

The prayer composed by a converted girl for a happy death

Converted at 15 }
Died at 18 } This prayer composed by the holy girl.

....., O Jesus, infinite love and infinite mercy! Our Father, stricken with sorrow and repentance we cast ourselves before you. We offer you our death and all that may happen to us after death.

When our immovable legs tell us that our journey here on earth has come to an end, merciful Jesus, have mercy on us.

When our hearts are filled with sorrow because we are unable to hold the crucifix in our trembling hands and our eyes look upon you dimly in our agony, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When our frozen lips call on your holy name for the last time, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When our faces take an unwholesome hue and sweat appears on hair and waves of fear come upon us and on the on-lookers, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When the ears are closed for ever to listen to human conversation and are opened to hear the last verdict, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When frightful fantoms disturb our departing soul, have mercy on us O Lord.

When the thought of our sins make us doubt about your mercy, and depression comes to our souls, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When we tired and enervated with sickness fight with the enemy of our soul, have mercy on us O Lord.

When the last drop of tear tickles down from our eyes, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When our friends and relations stand around our death bed, praying and weeping for us, merciful Jesus, have mercy on us.

While lying unconscious in the darkened world, undergoing the agony of departure, have mercy on us, O Lord.

When the last breath which strengthens the soul to give up the spirit, accept it as the vehement desire of the soul to come to you. Have mercy on us, O Jesus, at that most critical moment.

When the soul at last departs from the weakened and discoloured body, let it be like an offering to you - Have mercy on us at that moment.

When at last we stand before you, admit us into your merciful lap.

All loving and almighty Father, give us the grace to walk all our life in your holy path and depart from this world in your grace and favour. This we ask in Jesus who lives in union with you and the Holy Spirit.

Prayer for Custody of the eyes

O my good Jesus, have mercy on me and forgive me for the many offences committed by not controlling my eyes. I am certain that those were the result of my lack of genuine and sincere love for you. Therefore, I do not merit your mercy. How many times have I grieved you, Lord. How often you have forgiven me. Many times I promised that I will be faithful to you and very many times I failed. How long shall I wait, O my soul, to love

the Lord whole heartedly. Lord, do not abandon me now. If you do so I may perish for ever, I have resolved to abandon my old ways and have determined to make amends for them. Eternal Father, on the merits of your dear son Jesus Christ, have compassion on me. O infinite love, I love you with all my heart. But as I am a weak and frail creature I implore your help. I place all my hope and trust in thee.

O my blessed mother, how much I trust in you. Therefore bless me and assist me to keep my resolution, Amen.

(Here some lines are missing)

I offer all the Masses that are said today and all the prayers and good works for the following intentions:-

For my spiritual and bodily welfare.

For the forgiveness of my sins.

For the well being of my brothers, relatives, and friends, my enemies, whomsoever I have offended and scandalised, those who have helped me in any way.

For the safty and growth of the church, for the Holy Pontiff, for Cardinals, Bishops and Priests for the religious monks and nuns.

For the release of the souls in purgatory, for the conversion of infidels, for my superiors, for those entrusted to my care and for those dead and living, for whom Jesus and his holy mother want me to offer my prayers.

To gain all the indulgences that I can obtain.

Prayer to be said by Priests

Almighty God, bless us who are called to serve in holy priesthood that we may serve you worthily and with great devotion. Protect us from offending you even by the least sin. Give us the grace to be deeply sorry for our sins, and to serve you with great fervour and devotion everyday.