

CMIssion

magazine

'21

Encounter, Experience, Evangelize

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

Mk 16: 15

Reaching out Peripheries



June - November



Children are the sacred treasures entrusted to the parents by God. Know that these children have been entrusted to your hands, to be purified with the most precious blood of the Lord.

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



Walking Synodal Church Together

MISSION '21

FEATURING CMI MISSIONS

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Chief Editor, CMission
CMI Prior General's House
Department for Evangelization
and Pastoral Ministry
Chavara Hills, Kakkannad,
Post Box 3105, Kochi 682 030 Kerala, India. <http://www.cmi.org/>

we Encounter

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

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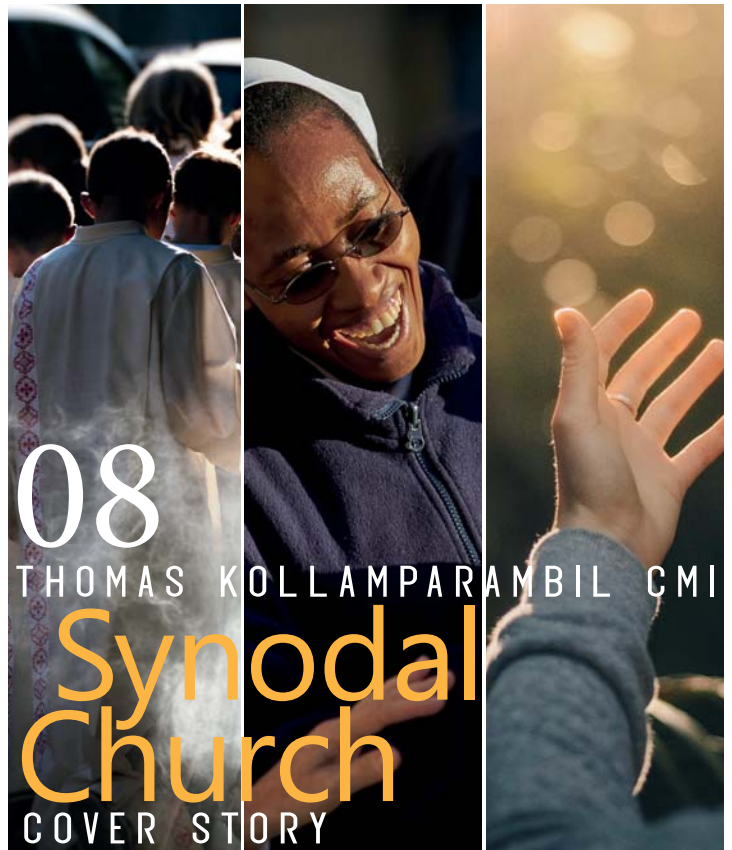
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Office Secretary

Jesto Jacob, Mob: 8089453980, secretary.evangelization@gmail.com



08

THOMAS KOLLAMPARAMBIL CMI

Synodal Church

COVER STORY

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A MISSION HOME



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GRACE S D





Josey Thamarassery CMI
Vicar General, Chief Editor

The new issue of CMISSION reaches into your hand as the entire Church has already launched the process of synodal discussions everywhere within the Church as an effort to make her really participatory so that the Church can carry out the mission mandate from the Lord with greater sense of communion. This process is initiated by Pope Francis all over the Church with a wish and prayer that the effort for the renewal and new life in the Church shall be an effort of the entire Church seeking the help of the Holy Spirit through prayer and Eucharist and in union with the entire Catholic Church. Writing about the attempt made in some of the Church circles he said, "I ask myself, 'Where is the Holy Spirit there? Where is prayer? Where is the community's love? Where is the Eucharist?' Without these four coordinates, the church becomes a human society, a political party" (From the General Audience in Vatican on 25 November 2021).

■ **Encounter**, the current issue of CMISSION reaches you with leading articles on the Essentials of Synodality, the challenges that are involved in such a Synodal process, and especially the need to heed to the voice of the women in the Church etc., by Scholars and theologians in their attempt to enlighten us on this currently very much relevant theme.

■ **Experience** CMISSION focuses on Rajkot mission which celebrates its 50th year of CMI presence there. Today the Church in Rajkot has succeeded to reach the Gospel message of love and service to the poor and marginalised to the vast area of Saurashtra-Kutch region thanks to the tireless and committed works of pioneer CMIs under the visionary leadership of Bp. Jonas Thaliath CMI of happy memory and his successor Bp. Gregory Karotemprel CMI. The section consists of a historical retrospection of the activities of the mission and an interview of Bp. Gregory along with an article on Peru mission which can also trace back its origin to early 70s.

■ **Evangelize** we come across with the article on Arunachal mission which is a challenging mission offering a lot of opening to reach to the people who thirst to hear about the love of God. Besides, it also presents best practices that are found in the missions and mission meditations and inspiring experiences. One of them is the life experience of Swamy Christianand (Fr. Sebastian Malieckal CMI) of Rajkot province who has sought solitude and contemplation in the Gir forest in Junagadh taking up the great legacy of Prasanna Devi and trying to impart the God-Experience to people who come in search of words of Wisdom and love of God. His solitary and ascetical hermit's life in the midst of Gir lions and other wild animals is founded on deep God experience and faith in the loving providence of God which shall become source of inspiration for many.

This issue with its enriching contents and matters will definitely, I am sure, awaken the interest for the missionary mandate that we all have received from the Lord.

M e s s a g e



Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General

I am happy to note that this issue of CMISSION deals with this current theme of the Church highlighting its relevance in the life of the Church today. Pope Francis formally launched on 9th October 2021 the two-year global consultation process on Synodality which will be concluded in the year 2023. The invitation of the Pope in this regard is to “look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say.” During the Holy Mass on the next day Pope, based on the day’s Gospel of the rich young man meeting Jesus (MK 10:17-30), said that the Gospels often showed Jesus in the midst of a journey, meeting people and listening to their deepest concerns. Regarding the synodal process which is initiated he then said, “Today, as we begin this synodal process, let us begin by asking ourselves -- all of us, pope, bishops, priests, religious and laity -- whether we, the Christian community, embody this ‘style’ of God, who travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity” (Homily of Pope Francis on 10 October, 2021).

Synodality indicates walking together and listening to one another but above all to the Holy Spirit. The Synodal process starts with, and involves all the faithful at local churches across the world, promising to listen to all, especially to lay people. That is why this Synod is a 2-year process, at different phases and levels lasting till the year 2023. The synodality is envisaged to bring reform and renewal in the Church is to be achieved through communion, participation, and mission.

The Church encounters opposition and resistance not only from outside but also from within. Therefore, the need of the hour is to journey together even when there are differences of perceptions and views, in order to experience a Church that receives and lives this gift of unity, and is open to the voice of the Spirit. Synodal discussions will create the feeling among the members of the Church that they are taken seriously and these discussions and interactions will enable everyone to participate in the ecclesial life which is an indispensable ecclesial commitment based on the identity card of the baptism. What differentiates a synod from a parliament or gathering is that synod primarily is an activity of the Holy Spirit.

According to Pope Francis, the Synodality requires the ever-new breath of God, the Spirit, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is moribund, loosens shackles, and spreads joy. In order to create a transformed community, we are invited to invoke the Holy Spirit with greater fervour and frequency and humbly listen to Him. Holy Spirit shall transform every encounter during this synodal process to be occasions for openness, courage and willingness to be challenged by the presence and the stories of others.

Let us pray to the Holy Spirit so that he may guide and lead our Church by enlightening and illumining every one in this process so that Synod becomes an occasion for the People of God not to be aloof but to become a Church of closeness by her very presence, bandaging wounds and healing broken hearts with the balm of God.



It was the original sin of the Synodal Way that it put aside Pope Francis' invitation to start from the basic mission of evangelisation and thus in fact brought subordinate criteria to the fore.

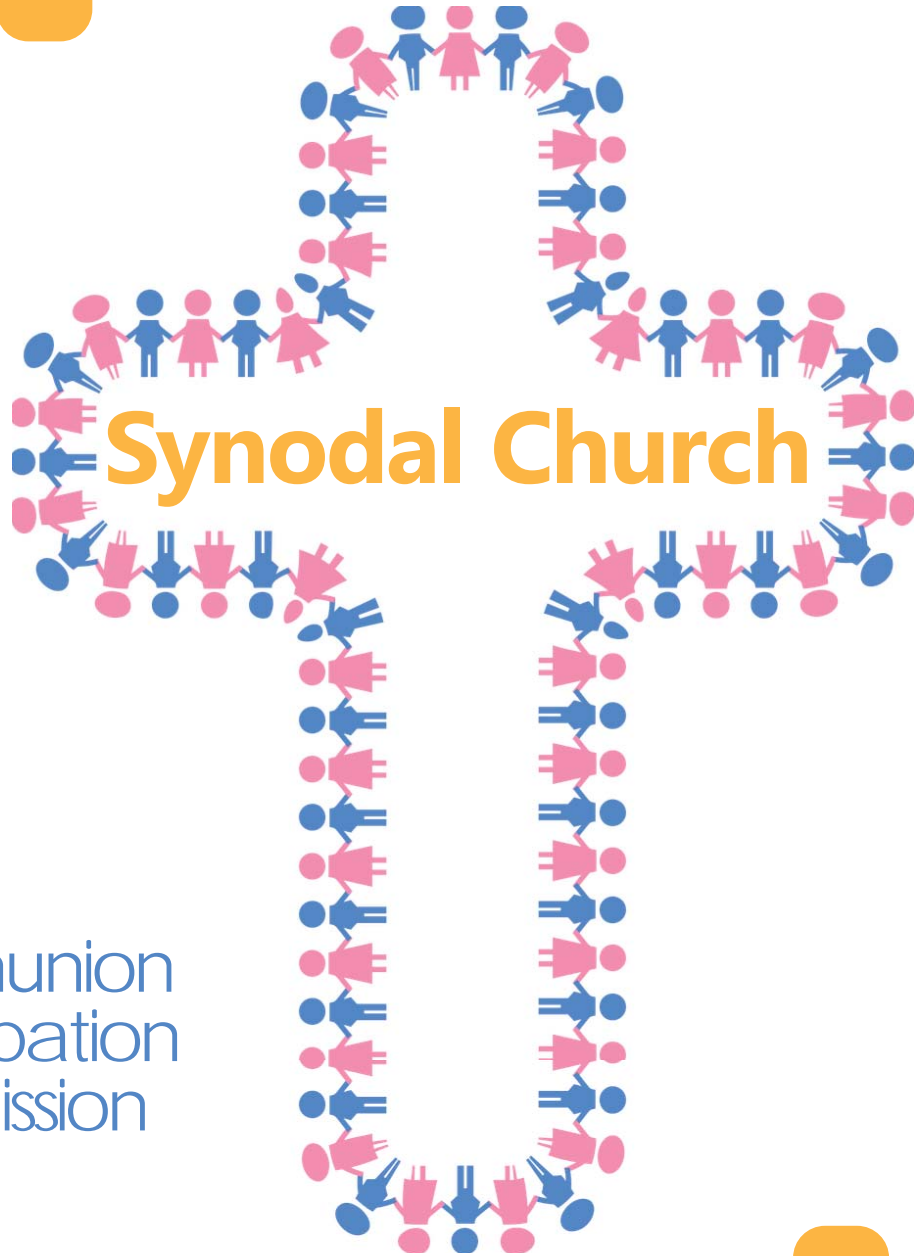
Cardinal Walter Kasper
German Theologian

Let's face God in context and text



Encounter

16TH ORDINARY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
2021-2023



communion
participation
and mission

“FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION” THE NEW MODE OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Pope Francis has selected the theme, ‘For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission’, as the theme for the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be concluded in Vatican in October 2023. The specialties of this synod are many. Firstly, the Synod would be discussing, reflecting and discerning about Synodality itself. Secondly, this synod is being conducted according to the revised guidelines given in the Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis Communio* (Communion of Bishops) published by Pope Francis on 15 September, 2018. The renewed guidelines were prepared in the light of the 50 years of experience in conducting the Synod of Bishops (1965-2015) in the Catholic Church. Out of all those experiences, during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis has discerningly affirmed, “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” Thirdly, according to the new norms of *Episcopalis Communio*, the present synodal process is a two years long programme for prayerfully listening, reflecting and discerning for giving shape to the required practical ways of life in the Church. Such practical ways would evolve only from the renewed communion and effective participation of all the faithful for the fruitful mission of the Church as a true witness of Christ in the mode of being salt of the earth and light of the world. In fact, the two years long Synodal process (October 2021- October 2023) is a gift and a challenge.

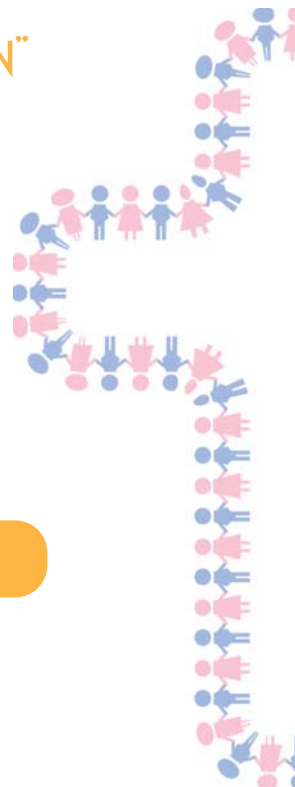


Thomas Kollampampil CMI
Bengaluru

How Synodality is the Nature and Structure of the Church?

The word synod comes from the Greek terms [syn+hodos], ‘together on the way’ (σύνoδος) synodos. This ‘together on the way’ in the context of the Church is a ‘living together for God and for one another’ in the world. It is to have faith in God, and to live in communion and participation with one’s own brethren, and having concern for all others in the society as one’s duty. It is precisely the building up of the ‘Body of Christ’ in the world as the basic mission of the Church. Jesus presented himself as well as his teachings as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (Jn 14:6). The early Christian communities of Jerusalem and other places were called the people of ‘the Way’ (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14,22), on account of their specific style of life in public as ‘together on the way’, the Christian way. The early Church of Jerusalem and other filial Churches were functioning as a federal union with many common practices and norms of liturgy, morality, discipline, etc. In order to cultivate and empower such modes of Christian unity and ways of life, in the early centuries, there were synodal meetings.

The first such synodal meeting was the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35). This was also based on an age-old maxim that was inspirational to the Church of the first millennium, “whatever concerns all should be deliberated and approved by all” (Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet). This maxim provides a general background to the whole synodal process. The mode of synodal life continued more firmly in the Eastern Christendom, but in the Western Churches the Roman imperial mode of governing and administrative systems became prominent than synodal patterns. The imagery of ‘Way’ projects the scenario of a journey. The journey is in a community; the community walks and works together; definitely the journey is a ‘pilgrim journey’ to the eschatological Kingdom. It is because Christ has prepared the way and opened the door to the Kingdom, which is ‘already and not yet’.



The community has its interpersonal relationships and mutual responsibilities. The imagery of 'the way' speaks eloquently about the nature, function, and the goal of the Christian community life.

In the Church the people are called out by the Risen Lord and they are inspired by the Holy Spirit. So, in any Christian gathering the head and president is the Risen Lord and the inspiring and energizing power is the Holy Spirit. All Christian gatherings have to be on the pattern of the 'Assembly in the Upper Room' on which the Holy Spirit was poured out as promised by the Risen Lord (Acts 2:1-4). All synodal meetings have to be convened as an 'Upper Room Event' with meditative prayers in the hope of receiving power from above so as to attain the 'pentecostal experience' to go out for the mission of the Church. In all such gatherings the human leaders are only care-takers and trustees who have to serve the gathered people according to the will and plan of the Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, in all Church gatherings above all the reliable democratic provisions and findings there should be the signature of the Risen Lord and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, as it was once given by the Risen Lord to his disciples (Jn 20:22). The anointing of the Holy Spirit is received by all Christians in baptism. By the baptismal anointing and confirmation each Christian can also discern the plan and economy of Christ and His Spirit, in the mode of *sensus fidei* (supernatural sense of faith). It is out of this mystery every baptized person is made a prophet, priest and shepherd/king in the personal life and in the life of the community. United in prayer and enlightened by the Word of God, all Christians can discern the will of God and pursue the way into which God calls them in communion and participative action for the mission in the world. This is practically the synodality or 'walking and working together' for the mission of the Church. Thus, synodality is the nature, structure and the practical way of life and existence of the Church in the world.

II Vatican Council and the Synods

During the II Vatican Council and soon after the Council there were many attempts to implement the discernment of the Council into practical life situations of the Church. The theoretical and practical discernments of the council could be implemented in the life of the faithful only if there are enough follow-up procedures. Looking forward to such a need, during the Council sessions, there was the open request of the Council Fathers, to the then Pope St. Paul VI, to establish

a competent and reliable team of bishops to keep up the spirit and orientations of the Second Vatican Council for the continued renewal and adaptations in the Church. Seeing the genuineness and potential fruitfulness of that suggestion, which arose from the floor of the Council, Pope St. Paul VI established the Synod of Bishops, on 15 September, 1965, during the last session of the II Vatican Council, by the Apostolic Letter, *Apostolica Sollicitudo* (Apostolic Solicitude). The first Synod of Bishops was then convened in 1967. Following that Synod there were already 15 ordinary Synods of Bishops, 3 extraordinary synods and 11 special synods. The Apostolic Letter, *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, of Pope Paul VI was reformed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 in the light of the two codes of canon law of the West and the East (CIC and CCEO).

Through the experiences of 50 years of the Synod of Bishops, many reforms for the improved functioning of the Synod of Bishops have been taken. Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI were desirous of the improved functioning of the Synods. After 50 years of the functioning of the Synods, Pope Francis made a historic step by redefining the functioning of the Synod of Bishops through his Apostolic Constitution, *Episcopalis Communio* (Communion of Bishops), published on 15 September, 2018. This Apostolic Constitution envisages a broader process of conducting Synods than what has been followed till now.

The Aim of the Current Synod of Bishops in the Universal Church

The present 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was inaugurated by Pope Francis on 9-10, October, 2021. The two-year long process of Synod is based on some important theological, ecclesial and pastoral orientations that are already well accepted by the whole Church through the II Vatican conciliar and post-conciliar teachings.

Theological Orientations

Some mentionable important theological orientations are: (1) The life and engagements of the People of God ever remains as the central factor in the Church. The hierarchy and other sectors of the Church are to be seen as subsisting in the broader foundation of the People of God in the Church, precisely to serve in the mission of building up the Body of Christ in the world through communion and responsible participation of all believers; (2) By the anointing of the Spirit in baptism and confirmation, the body of the faithful have the supernatural sense of faith (*sensus fidei/fidelium*). So, when that body of the faithful walk together and

work together, with their sense of faith, they will not err in matters of faith (LG 12); (3) At all levels of the Church, starting from the parish level, the synodal style, structure and experience need to be the path of discernment for evolving Christian witnessing life.

Ecclesial Orientations

Some mentionable important ecclesial orientations are: (1) Eucharistic communion is the source and summit of all other forms of communion. Eucharistic life is at the same time the source and energy for the desired communion that leads to active participation. (2) In all ecclesial gatherings the president of the gatherings is the Risen Lord and the motivating and energizing as well as the inspirational agent is the Holy Spirit. Hence, in all gatherings the Spirit would speak from all peoples and corners of the community. All discussions and deliberations should be evolved as discernments through the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Then only the Christian gatherings and discernments would transcend above all reliable democratic modes of transactions in the community so as to be sealed by the signature of the Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit. (3) All Christian meetings and gatherings are to begin with prayerful reflection on the Word of God and enlightened by the venerable traditions of the Church.

Pastoral Orientations

Some mentionable important pastoral orientations are: (1) The synod is a call for needed pastoral conversion and synodal mode of 'walking together' with participation in the mission of the Church that embraces the whole humanity. (2) Nobody is saved personally, but all are saved as a community of the People of God. "One person's problems are the problem of all" (Fratelli Tutti 32). Such belongingness and communion in walking together manifests the nature of the Church as a pilgrim and missionary People of God. (3) By the anointing of the Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation all Christians are of equal status and deserve equal respect in all aspects of Christian life. (4) Listening to the entire People of God, in the context of their prophetic power, is proper before making pastoral decisions. (5) A synodal Church is called out to gather together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on making pastoral decisions that are close to the will of God (CTI, On Synodality, 67-68; Vademecum 1.4). The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis, *Episcopalis Communio*, on Synods and synodality in the Church through communion, is for attaining more practical applications of the 'Communion Ecclesiology' of the II Vatican Council in the

pastoral and social spheres within the Church and in the world. Ecclesiology of 'communion' is more theoretical, but ecclesiology of 'Synodality' is for evolving, from time to time, specific practical modes of life of communion within the Church. In fact, Synodality has to be the *modus vivendi et operandi* (the mode of life and action) in the Church. It is because Synodality, in fact, is an integral part of the nature and structure of the Church from the very beginning of the Church. Thus, Synodality should not be a one-time event or an experience, but a constant way of life for the Church to fulfil her mission in the world

The Functioning of the 16th Synod of Bishops

For the smooth functioning of synodality and synodal participation at all levels of the Church, a Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops is functioning in Vatican. So many tools to enlighten, empower, and enhance the Synodal Process from the diocesan level up to the continental level are already made available at the global level by that Secretariat. Thus, there is the Preparatory Document, as an orientation text, published on 7 September, 2021; a methodological Hand Book (*Vademecum*), offering guidelines by specifying the major steps to be taken and the modes of procedures to be followed, the specific questions to be tackled as well as suggestions for picking up matters according to the cultural and social factors of each Church, country, continent and the challenging conditions of the modern world. Moreover, there is a dedicated Website of the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops well equipped to provide ample material for animating the preparatory level of synodal experience (October 2021- August 2022), covering biblical, theological, pastoral and catechetical themes for the listening, enlightenment and discerning by the People of God. In addition to all these, the document, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, prepared and published in 2018 by the International Theological Commission of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Vatican, is also a suggested source of guidance for all.

The already inaugurated 16th Synod of Bishops will have four different levels of consultations and phases for discernment. The theme, "For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission", will be discussed at four levels for prayerful synodal reflections, discernments and deliberations. It starts with the diocesan level, which would proceed to the synodal levels of *sui iuris* Eastern Churches and national level conferences of bishops

and to the third level of continental conferences of the bishops so as to proceed to the fourth universal level in Vatican in October, 2023.

Moreover, the post-synodal implementation of all final decisions taken up by Pope Francis, as the pastor of the whole Church, in the light of the discussions and discernments of this synod, forms part of the process of this Synod of Bishops in the new pattern of conducting the Synods.

(a) Synod of Bishops as a Permanent Institution

According to this new scheme, Synod of Bishops is a permanent institution. Even though the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops is instituted in Vatican, it is not functioning under any of the Vatican Dicasteries, but independently under the Pope. It is because the Synod of Bishops should have the power to evaluate even the Vatican Dicasteries for needed reform and renewal. More than a meeting of the bishops the Synod is meant for evolving concrete ways of renewed life in the Church for effective mission in the world. So, the present Synod has three phases: preparation, celebration and implementation of all decisions. The concern is to evolve apt modes of ecclesial life patterns and service schemes in the world so that the Church should gather all into her fold in the mode of a 'pilgrim journey' so as to lead all faithful into the renewed modes of life from time to time. Thus the 'synodal way' would become the constant nature and part of the life of the Church.

According to the revised process the Synod stresses on the need of listening and reflecting and discerning together with all members of the faithful from all walks of life and states of life. By walking together and listening together all should attain the state of communion in the Spirit so as to have union of mind and heart in thinking and speaking with corresponding actions of the People of God.

(b) Communion, Participation and Mission

Communion, participation and mission are the three-fold dynamics of a Synodal Church. As regards communion, by faith all are called to the inner love and unity of the Trinity, through the mediatorship of Christ who reconciles us to the Father, in the mode of a covenant, and the inspirational power of the Holy Spirit who perfects all. Eucharistic communion is the basis source and summit of Christian communion (cf. LG 11; EE 1; CCC 1324). At the participation level, all are endowed with the gifts and charisms of the Holy

Spirit in diverse ways. The given gifts and charisms are to be exercised by all, in the form of a God-given duty to serve one another in the mode of 'washing the feet' of others, especially the poor, vulnerable and the marginalized. For any participative service mutual listening, dialogue and discerning are to be done in the spirit of prayer and personal conversion to work for the growth of the Kingdom in the form of Christian tradition (cf. Synodality in the Church, by ITC, 67-68). With regard to the mission, the synodal journey of the Church has the aspects of prophetic existence and witnessing power with evangelizing dimension, so as to be at the service of the world as leaven for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

(c) Synodal Conversion

For a synodal Church, one of the basic requirements is to have a synodal conversion of hearts to have attitudinal changes to attain humility and mutual respect for mutual listening, reflection and discernment of the Spirit. When the hearts of the people are converted, all institutions and structures of service, guided and governed by the converted hearts, would also attain conversion of styles of management and functioning.

There is a shift from collegiality to synodality in the Church. Collegiality is mainly based on the collaboration of the pastors and that is important and that should go on. But synodality is based more on the co-responsible mode of participation of all the baptized. More than the rule of the hierarchy, the co-responsible mission of the People of God has to be brought forward. This type of co-responsible participation is important in the modern world where the Christian witnessing power has to be enhanced through focusing on the unique role of the People of God in the mission of the Church. Only by the Lay-witnessing life in the world the Church can effectively become the salt of the earth and light of the world. In the synodal Church mutual listening and discernment are of primary importance. As a result, the sharp distinction between a teaching Church (*ecclesia docens*), the hierarchy, and another learning Church (*ecclesia dicens*), the laity, would disappear. Because all are to be mutually listening, learning, and discerning by the inspiring power of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The Synodal Time Table (2021-2023)

September, 2021

Publication of the Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops.

October, 9-10, 2021

Prayerful Inauguration of the Synod in Vatican by Pope Francis.

October, 17, 2021

Prayerful Inauguration of the Synod in all Dioceses of the World.

August, 15, 2022

All Synods of the Eastern Churches and all National Bishops Conferences would submit their Synodal Reports to the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops in Vatican.

September, 2022

Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops in Vatican will publish Instrumentum Laboris I.

March, 2023

Before March 2023 the reports of all Synodal Meetings of all Continents, other international bodies, Major Religious Congregations and such global bodies will submit their reports to the Vatican Secretariat.

March, 2023

All Reports of the Synodal Meetings from the Continental and International Bodies will be received by the Vatican Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops.

June, 2023

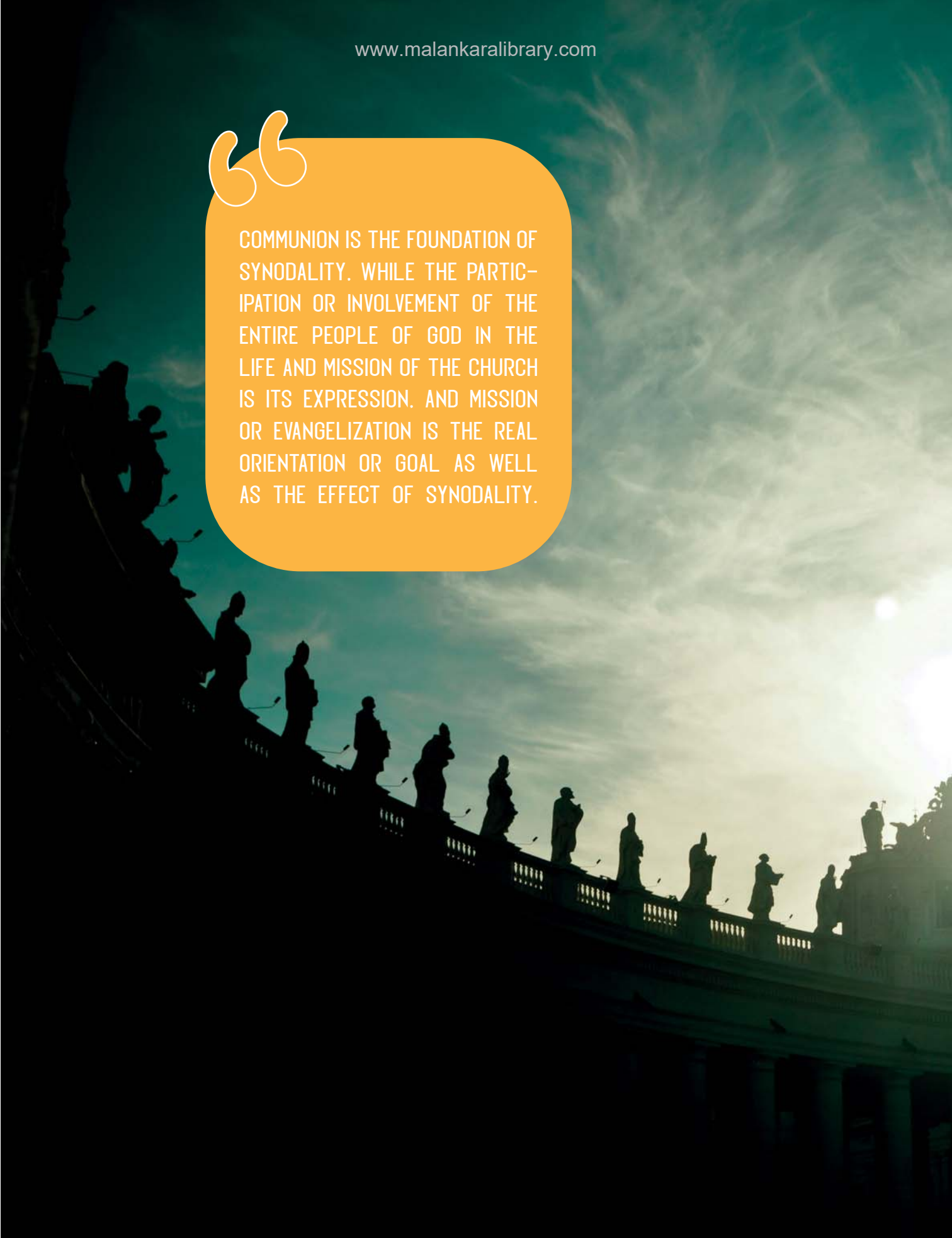
Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops in Vatican will publish Instrumentum Laboris II to be distributed to all Members of the Synodal Meeting of Vatican in October, 2023.

October, 2023

16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will meet under Pope Francis in Vatican.



COMMUNION IS THE FOUNDATION OF SYNODALITY. WHILE THE PARTICIPATION OR INVOLVEMENT OF THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS ITS EXPRESSION. AND MISSION OR EVANGELIZATION IS THE REAL ORIENTATION OR GOAL AS WELL AS THE EFFECT OF SYNODALITY.



Communion Participation & Mission



The Essentials of Synodality



Varghese Poothavelithara
Bengaluru

// Synodality" is a recurring theme in the teachings of Pope Francis, who has explicitly pointed out that "it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium" (Pp. Francis, Address, 17 October 2015). Consequently, 'synod,' 'synodality,' 'synodal Church,' etc., have become catchphrases in the Catholic world today. However, the pope himself has admitted that Synodality "is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice" (Pp. Francis, Address, 17 October 2015). So, in his words and deeds, he longs for making and becoming a "Synodal Church" and invites the entire Church for the same. It is in this context, the forthcoming Synod of Bishops, the first phase of which has been already inaugurated at Vatican and the diocesan level all over the world, deliberates upon the theme: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission."

These three aspects—communion, participation, and mission—are undoubtedly the three pillars or the essential components of synodality. Communion is the foundation of synodality, while the participation or involvement of the entire people of God in the life and mission of the Church is its expression, and mission or evangelization is the real orientation or goal as well as the effect of synodality.

Second Vatican Council affirmed that the Church is primarily a communion, "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (LG 4). It is the Body of Christ, whose head is Christ and whose members are joined with one another in the Holy Spirit (LG 7). Among this new people of God, established by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth (LG 9), there exists a common dignity and true equality deriving from their rebirth in Jesus (LG 32). In virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon them, especially through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, all of them are called to be witnesses and living instruments of the mission of the Church (LG 33). This essential communion-nature of the Church demands and makes synodality a constitutive element of the Church.



The Apostolic Constitution on the Synod of Bishops teaches, "Another fruit of the Synod of Bishops is that it highlights more and more the profound communion that exists in Christ's Church both between the Pastors and the faithful... This prevents anyone subject from existing independently of the other" (Episcopalis Communio, 10). Therefore, synodality means not only the episcopal communion but the communion of the entire people of God.

Synodality, which sprouts from the communion-nature of the Church, is expressed in various dynamisms, such as, mutual listening, sincere dialogue, prayerful discernment, active involvement of the people of God, collective decision-making, etc. According to Pope Francis, three aspects that revive synodality are: listening, co-responsibility, and the involvement of the laity (Pp Francis, Address, 5 July 2019). The people of God, which is supposed to "walk together," should inevitably "listen to each other." "Being Church is being a community that walks together. It is not enough to have a synod; you must be a synod. The Church needs intense internal sharing: a living dialogue between the Pastors and between the Pastors and the faithful" (Pp Francis, Address, 5 July 2029). Therefore, the synodal path is the path of dialogue, discernment and participation. The Pope teaches, "A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realizes that listening is more than simply hearing. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn" (Pp Francis, Address, 17 October 2015).

The synod of bishops, which was established by Pope Paul VI on 15 September 1965 as an institution to promote dialogue and cooperation among bishops and to offer effective assistance to the Supreme Pastor of the Church, is now transformed by Pope Francis into a "privileged instrument for listening to the people of God" (Episcopalis Communio, 6), inviting and engaging them into dialogue, consultation, and involvement in the synodal process conducted at different levels of the Church. The synodal assembly of the bishops, thus, is now only "the point of convergence of the listening process," which has its beginning in the listening to the people of God, according to the principle, *quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet* (Pp. Francis, Address, 17 October 2015). The new synodal process demands and guarantees the participation and involvement of all the faithful. It reminds everybody that "no one can go away, we must all bring the Church our life, our heart, our love, our thought and our work; all of us together" (Pp. Francis, Address, 26 June 2013). Thus, the synodal path, which has its point of departure in the essential communion-nature of the Church also builds up this communion by developing and encouraging

participatory style in the Church, whereby, the gifts and charisms, given by the Spirit to every faithful, are recognized, valued, and incorporated into the life and mission of the Church.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelium Gaudium*, Pope Francis invited every faithful "to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by the joy of the Gospel," and pointed out "new paths for the Church's journey in years to come" (EG 1). The new paths are the paths of synodality. Every synodal process, that takes place at different levels of the Church and tries to involve everyone in the Church, has to answer the basic question, "how does this journeying together allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her?" (Preparatory Document on the Synod of Bishops of 2023, 2). A sincere answer to this basic question would lead the Church to a transformation, as dreamed by the Pope: "a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization to today's world rather than for her self-preservation" (EG 27). In such a way, synodality characterizes both the life and the mission of the Church and empowers the Church to fulfill her fundamental call to be missionary, to be "the tent of meeting in which the Ark of the Covenant is preserved" (cf. Ex. 25), to be "a dynamic Church in movement," through which "God makes himself present in this world" (The final document of the Synod of Bishops on Youth (2018), *Young People: The Faith and Vocational Discernment*, 122).

Affirming the "importance of a synodal form of the Church for the proclamation and transmission of the faith" the final document of the Synod of Bishops on Youth (2018), states: "It is in relationships—with Christ, with others, in the community—that faith is handed on. For the sake of mission, too, the Church is called to adopt a relational manner that places emphasis on listening, welcoming, dialogue and common discernment in a process that transforms the lives of those taking part" (*Young People: The Faith and Vocational Discernment*, 122). The synodal path, that is, "journeying together and reflecting together," would build up the relations, make the Church open herself to all, and the Church would become a home for all. Hence, the synodal path is both a gift and a task, as it "most effectively enacts and manifests the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God" (Preparatory Document for the 2023 Synod of Bishops, 1). Therefore, the synodal path or synodality helps the Church "to live communion, to achieve participation, to open herself to mission."



Jomon Vazhapilly CMI
Bengaluru

In his address on the occasion of the anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis pointed out that, "It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." This third-millennium synodal church will mark its transformation by listening to everyone, learning from everyone, and involving everyone in the Church's life and purpose. Though synod, which means "walking together," has been an intrinsic feature of the Church from its very beginning, Pope Francis' vision has given it new dimensions of meaning and vigour for the Church's existence and mission.



The reformed significance of synodality points towards the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church. A synodal church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility. This axiom should not be understood in the sense of conciliarism on the ecclesiological level or of parliamentarianism on a political level. In the synodal church, the whole community, in its members' free and rich diversity, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern, and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions that correspond as closely as possible to God's will. So, in coming to formulate their own decisions, Pastors must listen carefully to the wishes of the faithful.

Concerning the participation of all the faithful in the decision-making process of synodal institutions, Eastern Churches have certain canonical reservations. The general understanding of synod, when Latin code (CIC) speaks about the synod of bishops and diocesan synod, is different from its eastern implications. In CIC, the synod, in general, is regarded as a group or assembly of the people of God, which comprises the representation of deacons, priests, laity and members of institutes of consecrated life and/or societies of apostolic life. Moreover, in the Latin Church, synods are portrayed as consultative bodies with no binding authority or special powers.

Contrary to this, in the Eastern Code (CCEO), non-episcopal participation is excluded from the synod (CCEO c. 102 §1). The synods in the Eastern Churches, which are made up entirely of bishops, are decision making bodies with legislative and judicial power and not considered merely consultative. Eastern code views all institutions, which have only consultative vote not as synods but as assemblies like eparchial assemblies, patriarchal or major archiepiscopal assemblies. These assemblies ensure the broad participation of priests, religious and laity (CCEO cc. 140- 145).

Here lies the real challenge before Eastern Churches on their way to futuristic synodal church. The effectiveness of synodality in particular churches is determined by how effectively the challenge of compromise with the traditional eastern understanding of synod and the participation of the people of God, at the very least with advisory voice, if not with deciding vote, is resolved. Because even the presence of faithful as observers at synods will ground the Church in concrete realities, and this will be the Church of God's people in its true sense. Let the synods be echoed by the old Roman maxim "what touches all is to be judged by all".

Synodal Church

A Challenging Call





The Voices of Women in the Synodal Church



Ann Mary CMC
Wardha

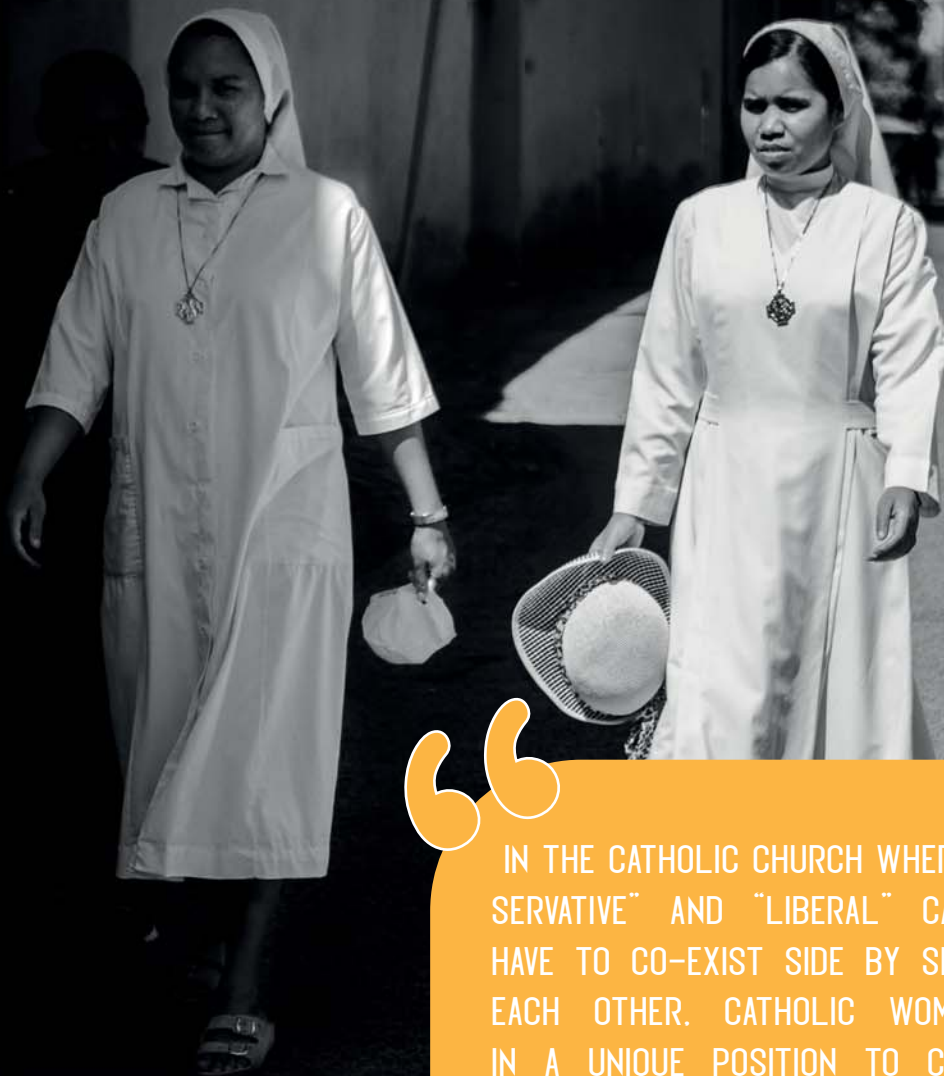
The term “synodality” is often used to describe the process of fraternal collaboration and discernment that bodies like the synod were created to express. It is a rich concept with long history in the Church which really just means collegiality. It is the way in which different parts of the Church coming together as the mystical body of Christ. Thus, synodality would imply a broad collaboration at all levels of the Church, including clergy, hierarchy, religious, and lay people.

Truly putting synodality into practice means reflecting on the role of women, their place in the Church, and in society. But the question is asked to what extent is this a cultural pastoral conversion that implies change in daily pastoral activity? In the Vatican, this means having women present in all departments, including and particularly at decision-making levels, calling the argument that if women have too much power men will lose their role false. This is not the case, insisting that there must be a dynamic of reciprocity, of cooperation instead of competition, between men and women. This synodal Church of the Pope, of men and women throughout the world is something that comes from the grassroot level. While society marches forward, acknowledging the rights and status of women, the Church remains unchanged.



Sometimes clericalism is interpreted as power, so the best service we can provide is to favour, encourage, and enhance a broader formation, an all-around formation that effects superiors and sisters, so that daughters and sons of God share the same dignity and at the same time recognize diversity. The challenge of synodality is not just to understand this point but to put it into practice, and to listen to everyone, even those who hold different views. When it comes to the interaction of men and women in the Church, it must be complementary. Some forms of exclusion and domination can arise, of which we must free ourselves noting that there is still a tendency to dominate, but we are equal partners before God. Still this dream is not yet fulfilled.

The International Union of Superiors General went on to ask Pope Francis questions that could more broadly be asked by all Catholic women: How is it possible that quite often we are forgotten and not included as participants ...? Can the Church afford to continue speaking about us, instead of speaking with us? The absence of women’s voices when women are of necessity being spoken about was particularly striking in the synod on the family which gave rise to *Amoris Laetitia*. The bishops themselves were all male, as well as being without family ties other than to their family of origin. That would have been bad enough. But the synod’s voting members additionally included other male clerics, including representatives from the Curia and the Eastern Churches and even lay brothers, but no women of any kind. The invited auditors did include 30 women, including 14 members of invited married couples and three nuns. Of the 16 experts, half were clerics and only four were women.



IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WHERE “CONSERVATIVE” AND “LIBERAL” CATHOLICS HAVE TO CO-EXIST SIDE BY SIDE WITH EACH OTHER, CATHOLIC WOMEN ARE IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO CONFRONT THE POLARITIES. READING THE MIND OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY TODAY.

Pope Francis told the International Union of Superiors General, "synodality in the parish, in the diocese" rather than a "parish or diocese... led with a clerical spirit, by the priest alone." Nevertheless, a half century after Vatican II, the question asked by Cardinal Leo Suenens is still relevant to the synod on the family: "Why are we even discussing the reality of the Church when half of the Church is not even represented here?" When the subject is family, sexuality, and reproduction, the absence of women's voices and women's votes is particularly tragic. Interestingly, Catholic traditionalist feminists such as Mary Ann Glendon, while defending Catholic teachings which in practice subordinate women, have called on the Catholic Church to demonstrate its belief in women's equality. Speaking at a Rome conference on "Feminism and the Catholic Church," Glendon stated that the Church "will continue to have difficulty explaining the exclusion of women from the priesthood" unless it demonstrates the seriousness of its belief that women and men are equal, but not identical, by providing examples of lay women and men and priests working together in real partnerships.

Carmen Ros, secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, believes that synodality and the enhancement of women in the Church are connected. She says that from Pope John Paul II's Letter to Women, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988) to Pope Benedict XVI's Good Friday Way of the Cross (2007) described as a "hymn to women" for highlighting the ways women are often abused, to Pope Francis' push for a more insightful presence of women in leadership roles, the Church is moving forward. Ros noted that there are sixteen women in his dicastery, two of whom hold leadership roles, which, until a few years ago, would have been unthinkable.

Women demand a just and equitable Church where the gifts and talents of women can be recognized and accepted as contributing to ministry on the same terms as men. Therefore, it is hoped that with a sensitive and open-minded Pope like Pope Francis, who said, "It is necessary to broaden the opportunities for a stronger presence of women in the Church," and recognized that "the Church still lacks a profound theology of women," it will not be long before women are given their due status in Church ministry that leads to their participation in the decision-making process in the Church.

Over the eight-plus years of Pope Francis' papacy, perhaps no single term has captured the essence of the distinctive vision of Pope better than synodality. Whatever the precise definition of synodality, in practice it implies an almost Copernican shift in perspective and operating style. Within the framework of promising women greater security, rights and respect in society, traditional feminist discourse can provide a safe place from which to integrate values associated with modernity. In the Catholic Church where "conservative" and "liberal" Catholics have to co-exist side by side with each other, Catholic women are in a unique position to confront the polarities. Reading the mind of the Church and society today, Pope Francis has proved his docility to the clarion call of the time in selecting "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission" as the theme for the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which will be held in October 2022.

Pope Francis says, "Celebrating a synod means walking on the same road, together." Let us heed to his exhortation and make an attempt to tread this path in collaboration with all the members of the Church with equal participation and bring out a dynamic change that will enhance the face of both universal and domestic Church.



A Church which abandons
the truth abandons itself.

Hans Kung
Late Catholic Theologian

Experience is shared and transmitted
to the next generation in Mission



Rajkot
Mission
50
years



It is with legitimate pride and joy that Rajkot mission in Gujarat celebrates the Golden Jubilee of the CMI presence in the land of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation. At the invitation of the Jesuits of Gujarat province- an arrangement with the CMI Congregation, six CMIs from the different provinces of the CMI Congregation: Sacred heart Kochi, St. Thomas Kozhikode, St. Joseph Kottayam and Devmata Trissur were sent to Gujarat by the Prior General in 1972. After a few years, the General Synaxis entrusted this mission solely to the Kochi province, the then Kalamassery province. Though some fathers of St. Joseph Kottayam were serving here, the Bishop officially entrusted two districts Amreli and Bhavnagar for their pastoral ministry in 1985. Let us have a flashback of the past and a glimpse of the present scenario of Rajkot mission.

In 2000 with the ordination of the first diocesan priest and others in subsequent years- now 35 diocesan priests, the mission work in the diocese of Rajkot has become the combined efforts of the trio: CMIs of the two provinces and the diocesan priests. In 2002 Rajkot became a separate province; St. Xavier's province and in 2011, Bhavanagar a separate vice province, namely St. Chavara vice province for the priests of St. Joseph's province, Kottayam.

Mission with less starting trouble.

When the Jesuits of Gujarat province entrusted CMI congregation the mission work in Suarashtra and Kutch, together with they generously handed over few major schools and parishes too. So, to the CMIs or later to the first Bishop late Mar Jonas Thaliath CMI there wasn't any problem to lay their head; or to keep their feet on a foot board. All the schools and parishes of this region were freely handed over to the CMIs and to the diocese. There were schools at Rajkot, Bhuj, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar and parishes at Rajkot, Bhuj, Bhavanagar, Jamnagar, Surendranagar, Junagadh and Porbandar. The first visionary Bishop Jonas Thaliath could not guide the diocese for more than four years. He was called for his eternal reward in 1981. Bp. Gregory Karotemprel CMI was ordained bishop in 1983. During his 27 years long stint at helm of affairs in the diocese there took place tremendous growth in pastoral, educational, medical and social work fields. Every nook and corner of the vast area of the diocese-almost three times bigger than the area of Kerala-we could make feel Christian presence.

A) Pastoral: Number of new parishes and semi parishes opened. A full fledged Syro Malabar parish was begun at Parnala, in Surendranagar Dt. All the parishners are Gujrathi Catholics. Quality education was given to these children. And it made notable change



Mar Jonas Thaliath CMI
The Missionary and Visionary
Rajkot Mission



James Thayil CMI
Rajkot

and impact in the whole village. Fr Joseph Uppumackal CMI was one of the master minds in this regard. His simple and unassuming life style was an amazement for the people. New Christian Community was established at Tokrala also. Some of the parishners were taken to Kerala for a period of two weeks or one month exposure programme in parishes over there. In Bhavnagar area of the Diocese Fr. Mathew Kalathur CMI, a veteran missionary of Chavara vice province is instrumental for starting number of mission stations and pastoral works. Prem Mandir the Syro Malabar Cathedral Church at Rajkot has an architectural style of the blending of Hindu Christian worshipping centre. Hundreds and thousands of Hindu brethren visit the Church every day and especially during the Christmas season. It was blessed by the late Cardinal, Mar Varkey Vithayathil in 2000.

Retreat Centre-Dhroliya

The only Retreat centre in the whole diocese, run and directed by St. Xavier's province was inaugurated in 2019. It is available for priests, sisters and lay people. Educational: Numerous schools were established in cities and Taluka level by the diocese, province and by the Rev Sisters. Many schools have boarding houses attached for quality education for village children. For higher education, a degree college-Christ college, Poly Technique College and MBA College were started by the diocese, in the same campus at Rajkot.

To boost primary education a novel programme-BEST-(Basic Education for Social Transformation) began at every village centre by the diocese. Primary level children were brought to our centre at a convenient time, special tuition, educational materials and extra curricular programme conducted to bring out the best in the students. There are more than 70 formal educational institutions existing in the diocese.

Medical field: A dispensary is attached to every village mission centre. Now satellite services of the doctors are available to the patients. A multi specialist hospital-Christ Hospital started functioning in Rajkot, in 2012. To our credit this hospital was the first private Covid pandemic treatment hospital in the whole of Gujarat and for meritorious services the management was awarded by Gujarat Government. During the second phase of Covid-19 the service of the hospital was a special blessing to the corona affected fathers, sisters and lay people when empty beds or admission was not available in other hospitals. In 2018 a nursing college also started in the same campus of Christ hospital.



Social and frontier ministry services

Kutch district is the biggest district in India bordering Pakistan, bigger than Kerala state in area wise. Through the able guidance of the late Fr Joseph Kunnath CMI a wide network of humanitarian, people oriented services began in the form of treatment to blindness—a perennial trouble caused by the arid and desert like climate of their area. Established Eye hospital, conducted medical camps in every village on regular basis made arrangements to bring patients to operation theatre and returned the patients to their homes after the operation and sufficient period of convalescing. This generated a wide impact among the people and public on Christian service, dedication and care. Fr. George Kunnath was profusely awarded by the state and central government. He started a school and hostels for integrated education to the physically challenged and the blind children.

Philips –Aids centre

A special intention is needed about the AIDS patients treatment and caring centre started by St. Xavier's province in Kutch district about 18 years ago under the guidance of Fr. Paul Kannarkat CMI, Fr. Devasia Ezholithakidiel and Augustinian Sisters. More than 325 patients slept in the Lord enjoying the caring and the healing touch of this team.

'Visamo' Old age home

Visamo means a home for rest and relaxation. Here it is for the abandoned old men and women irrespective of caste or religion. It is run by St. Chavara vice province Bhavnagar with the utmost dedication of Rev Fr Roy Vakkayil CMI, assisted by Dev Priya Sisters. It is highly appreciated by the people around.



Agaria Welfare centre and school

"Agaria" in Gujrati means salt pan workers. These poor workers produce salt in the scorching heat of desert like Rann of Kutch digging saline water with pumps. They are looted by wholesale business men, paying them less price; their children never get formal education. Fr Vincent Kallampy had done some pioneering works to help this group and finally opened a school upto higher secondary near by the desert boundary for their children. A boon to this neglected group and also to the children of near by villages. Numerous groups of Rev Sisters also do different kinds of services; special mention is to be done of the services of the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity: They take care of the abandoned, orphan children, children of the unwed mothers and mentally challenged people who have nobody to take care of them.



Under the leadership of the present Bp Mar Jose Chitooarambil, and the two provincials of St Xavier Province, Rajkot and St. Chavara Vice province of Bhavnagar 145 religious priests, 35 diocesan priests and 450 Religious Sisters, together with lay people try to spread the message of Jesus as better as possible. Still reaching out to other areas / places with the message of Jesus and re-strengthening the already existing faithful, especially the newly baptized must be given more importance.



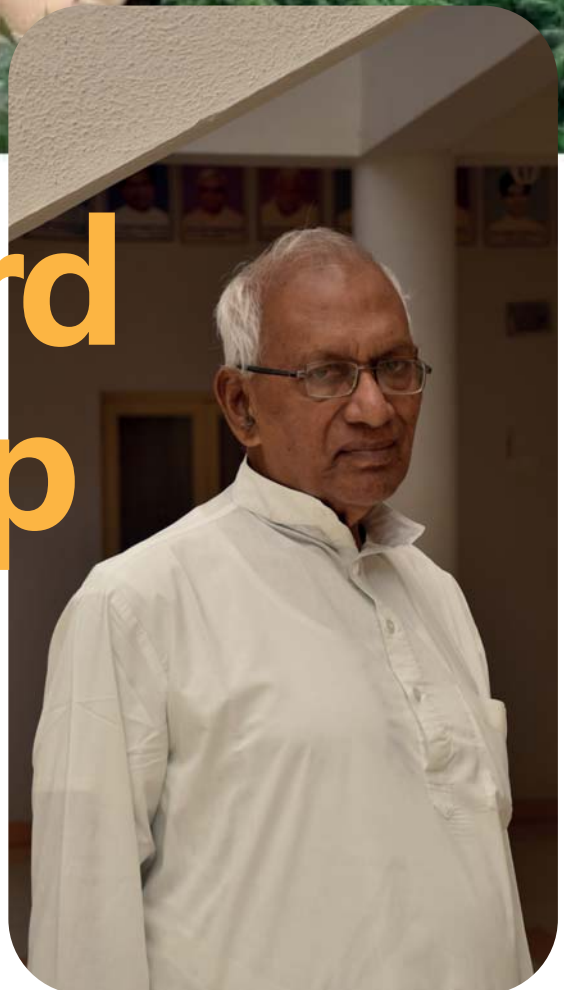
YES IT HAD BEEN A LONG JOURNEY. WE ARE ABOUT TO COMPLETE 50 YEARS OF SERVICE IN SAURAHTRA AND KUTCH. AS I LOOK BACK I CAN SEE THE DEVELOPMENT OR IN ANOTHER WORDS THE PROGRESS OF OUR MISSION. IN THE INITIAL DAYS IT HAD BEEN VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE THEM CHRISTIANS DUE TO THE EXISTING CASTE SYSTEM AND OTHER SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS. NOW ALMOST EVERYONE IN THIS AREA KNOW CHRIST YET IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE THEM CHRISTIANS. DIRECT EVANGELIZATION IS NOT POSSIBLE EVEN NOW. BUT ALL THAT WE CAN DO IS "BE A WITNESS" AND IN SO FAR I THINK WE ARE SUCCEEDING IN IT.

Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI



A Shepherd with Sheep

**Mar Gregory
Karotemprel CMI**



How did the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) started their mission in Gujarat?

The Carmelites of Mary Immaculate were invited by the Jesuit provincial of Gujurath and the Diocese of Ahemdabad in 1972. The Jesuit had been working here for more than a century and they couldn't find much positive response in their mission. As a result may be to have a different approach to mission they invited the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. The Then Prior General of the CMI Rev.Fr.Theobold and the mission councilor Rev.Fr.Ligouri accepted the invitation and began their service. In the initial days it was directly under the Prior General and the priests from both Scared Heart Province, Kochi and St. Joseph Province, Kottayam used to work in Saurashtra and Kutch. An agreement was made between the former Bishop of Ahmedabad His grace Rev.Edwin Pinto SJ and the CMI Prior General that certain areas of Ahmedabad Diocese would be handed over to the CMI Priests who can claim to have full responsibility of the same. It was in view of erecting a new Exarcate or Eparchy when the Holy See so decided. On 16th July, 1974, on the feast of our lady of Mount Carmel, the CMI 's officially took over the civil districts of Jamnagar, Kutch, Junagadh and Surendranagar from the society of Jesus in a simple function held at St. Xaviers's school- Jamnagar.

Late Bishop Jonas Thaliyath was the first Bishop of Rajkot. Can you enlighten us about his appointment as Bishop?

Ans: - Yes it's true. Late Bishop Jonas Thaliyath was the first of Bishop of Rajkot. He was a man of farsighted vision and mission. He had a practical plan of action for the Diocese of Rajkot. As a result he built mission houses in every city and extended it to the rural areas as well. He was also helped by the locals in building infrastructures and so on. In 1977 after the formation of Rajkot Diocese he was elected as the Bishop of Rajkot. Ever since the mission stations were handed over to the Scared Heart Province, Kochi and St. Joseph Province, Kottayam. At present these two provinces render their selfless service at Saurashtra and Kutch.



Jithin Parasseril CMI
Bhavnagar



Prem Mandir, the Cathedral of Rajkot Diocese

This entire mission territory was entrusted to the Sacred Heart Province of the CMI Congregation in 1978 and it was named as Rajkot Mission. It was raised to the status of a Region in 1981 and was named as St. Xavier's Region. In 1985 the civil districts of Amreli and Bhavnagar, and in 1987 the district of Junagadh were entrusted to St. Joseph's province (Kottayam) of the CMI and it was called as Chavara Sub-Region. In 1993 St. Xavier's Region was made as a Vice province. In 2002 it became a province. In 1996 Chavara Sub-Region was raised to the status of a Region. Later in 2011 it was made as Vice -Province.

Bishop Jonas led the diocese for three and half years with a great vision and he was called to eternal reward on 7th November 1981. Fr Victorian Kunneparampil CMI shouldered the administration of the Diocese until Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI took over the Diocese of Rajkot on April 24, 198. Bishop Jonas was a dreamer. He believed that dreaming was the first step in doing. Fr. Percival Fernandez who knew him very closely in St. John's Medical College Bangalore says that it was Jonas' habit to keep dreaming and there was no time for him to pause and review his own achievements. The "Light of Christ for Saurashtra and Kutch_ " the Mission Plan he made was a great dream for Mission work in the diocese.

So the first mission priority in the planning has been the founding of many small houses of prayer in the diocese. The inmates would not ordinarily engage themselves in social work. The role is primarily to the living symbols of divine presence for the outside world and also for the members of the Church. Their life style will set the tone for the whole diocese. Bishop Jonas wanted that the ashrams of religious men and women living in intense prayer life and in communication with the people should become a distinctive feature in the diocese. Bishop Jonas believed that the socio-economic world in which the Church in North India is engaging itself more and more is greatly undertaken without proper planning or adequate preparation. So in the field of socio-economic development Bishop has chalked out a well thought -out plan. In planning his first concern was to aim at an integral development of rural areas and in a more limited way of the entire territory of the Diocese.

The major thrust of the diocese will be to bring to the rural areas a sense of self -reliance and dignity and the benefits of modern industrial and clinical development. For a small diocese such as new missionary diocese it is a great challenge to take up the task of developing people in the villages. We know many ambitions programmes launched by the Government of India have

failed. Nevertheless, it is felt that a diocese with all its other weakness can be a catalyst in this area. All the projects are planned right from the beginning to give maximum scope for the initiative and participation of the people.

The second principle that should invite our planning is the fact that the rural development is possible only when development activities are directed towards the integral and total development of the village. Bishop Jonas' legacy as a missionary may be summed up in what he considered to be St. Paul's insight as best expressed in Ephesians : "It was he who gave gifts to mankind ;he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ " (Eph. 4 / 11-12) Bishop Mar Jose Chittooparambil CMI was appointed as Bishop on July 16, 2010 and ordained and installed as the third Bishop of Rajkot on September 11, 2010.



THE FIRST MISSION PRIORITY IN THE PLANNING HAS BEEN THE FOUNDING OF MANY SMALL HOUSES OF PRAYER IN THE DIOCESE. THE INMATES WOULD NOT ORDINARILY ENGAGE THEMSELVES IN SOCIAL WORK. THE ROLE IS PRIMARILY TO THE LIVING SYMBOLS OF DIVINE PRESENCE FOR THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND ALSO FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

Who were the pioneers of this mission?

The pioneers of this mission were Rev.Fr. Modest Pura-thayil CMI, Rev.Fr. Savio Pattara CMI, Rev.Fr. Sebastian Vadakkenssery CMI, Rev.Fr. Damsheen Manalel CMI, Rev.Fr. Mathew Kalathoor CMI, Rev.Fr. Romuald Chak-kumkal CMI, Rev.Fr. George Nettikkat CMI and Rev.Fr. George Kunnath CMI. What we see today is the fruit of their hard work and dedication only. We owe to them for their sacrifice and commitment.

Fr. Modest came to Gujarat in 1972 in the first batch of CMI's, who came to take over the Saurashtra and Kutch mission. He started studying Gujarati immediately after his arrival in Jamnagar. After 4 months of Gujarati studies he was sent to Nadiad parish. In July 1974 he was sent to Jamnagar. On 16th July 1974 the CMI's took over districts of Junagadh, Jamnagar, Surendranagar and Kutch. Fr. Modest took over the parish of Junagadh. In 1975 Fr. Modest was made CMI mission superior.

Fr. Savio Pattara was a veteran missionary of Saurashtra mission who felt the pulse of the village people. He had a long stint of 33 years of missionary work in Saurashtra. The most important characteristic of Fr. Savio's life was ardent love for poor and marginalized village people. And he exercised all his efforts to bring them up in life. He initiated Parnala mission with a handful of Christians. The course of time more people accepted Christ. Today, we have the biggest Gujarati parish with maximum number of Gujarati Catholics in Parnala. He introduced many welfare activities in Parnala and neighbouring villages. Such as SHGs, dispensaries, balavadies, co-operatives for the farmers etc. Gujarati parish in Parnala is his greatest contribution to the mission diocese of Rajkot.

On 12th April, 1975 Fr. Romould reached the Gujarat Mission. Initially for 6 months he stayed in St. Xavier's school, Jamnagar and served the Sacred Heart Parish Jamnagar. The following six months he served as an assistant parish priest in Gandhidham. On 6th January 1976 he took charge of the Sacred Heart Parish Porbandar as its Parish priest. Although the land and buildings were given by former Raja there were no official documents to prove our ownership. The government officials started the procedure to confiscate the land. Fr. Romould made all the efforts to gain proper documents to assure our right over the land. Finally he managed to get the document to prove our right over the land. In 1983 there were heavy rains in Saurashtra. The city of Porbandar was heavily flooded. The water level reached up to 8th feet in the church. Fr. Romould had to climb the roof for the survival. Hearing about the heavy flood Bishop Gregory and Fr. Davis Manadan rushed to Porbandar.

When they reached they could not go near the church. Mr. Joy, the driver of car offered to go to Fr. Romould by swimming. With the help of Mr. Joy Fr. Romould came to Bishop and Fr. Manadan. We proposed our plan to take Fr. Romould to Rajkot. But Fr. Romould refused to come with us. He stayed there till the flood got over.

Fr. Sebastian was an ardent missionary. As member of Sacred Heart Province Cochin, he could work in any of the monasteries very comfortably. But he preferred to offer himself in Saurashtra and Kutch mission with full of uncertainties. It was the fresh mission area of the CMI Congregation. He did not know what was in store for him. At the request of the Prior General without any second thought he offered himself to go to Saurashtra and Kutch mission in 1972 in the first batch of the CMI missionaries. Never had he regretted his choice. He always loved Saurashtra and Kutch mission and worked for its growth in all possible ways. His life is an inspiration to the young missionaries of Rajkot mission.

Fr. George Nettikatt was one of the most successful and outstanding missionaries of Saurashtra in the Diocese of Rajkot. Under his leadership and with the collaboration of Bishop Jonas Thaliath and Bishop Gregory Karotemprel and his fellow priests and religious women and lay people for over 40 years, Fr. George did a lot of pioneering mission work and made extraordinary progress for the mission. Fr. George was a gifted missionary, zealous to the core for spreading of the Kingdom of God. He was not short of human limitations.

Fr. George Kunnath registered the Kutch Vikas Trust for the total development of the most backward District. Fr. George inspired by the Spirit of our founding Father St. Kuriakose was always concerned about growth and health of them. Purchased desert land of sand storms. He developed an oasis in the desert that surprised very many people. He was a great missionary who conveyed the message of love of God to the poor and suffering people on the hard terrains of Kutch. The visually, physically and mentally challenged, the hearing and multi - sensory impaired - all found new life and energy through them got in the institution of Kutch Vikas Trust which Fr. Kunnath started. He was considered by the people of Kutch the uncrowned king of Kutch District because of the amount of welfare work he did and the influence he had in the society and with the government. Fr. George Kunnath was known to the 964 villages of the Districts. Because the amount of welfare work Fr. George undertook in Kutch District he was conferred with many national and state awards.

Could you please say a few words about Fr. Mathew Kalathoor who is a pioneer missionary still serving in the diocese?

Ans: - Fr.Mathew arrived at Rajkot in 1973. During those years this place was under the diocese of Ahmedabad. Every call has a purpose so also it was same with Fr.Mathew. He spent the prime of his youthfulness here as a simple yet challenging missionary. Through his dedication and commitment to the mission he won the heart of many. There is no astonishment that the Late Bishop Jonas Thaliyath used to call him "Wonder worker". He took initiative to buy most of the lands of this mission in the initial stage.He served the diocese of Rajkot for 19 years as Vicar general. Fr. Mathew has been to born to live, preach and disseminate the message of the compassionate love of God. Never boasting an iota of his achivments, he will always remain an enigma in the history of Gujarat Mission.

Its 50 years since the CMIs are rendering their service to the people of Rajkot. How do you evaluate their presence over these years?

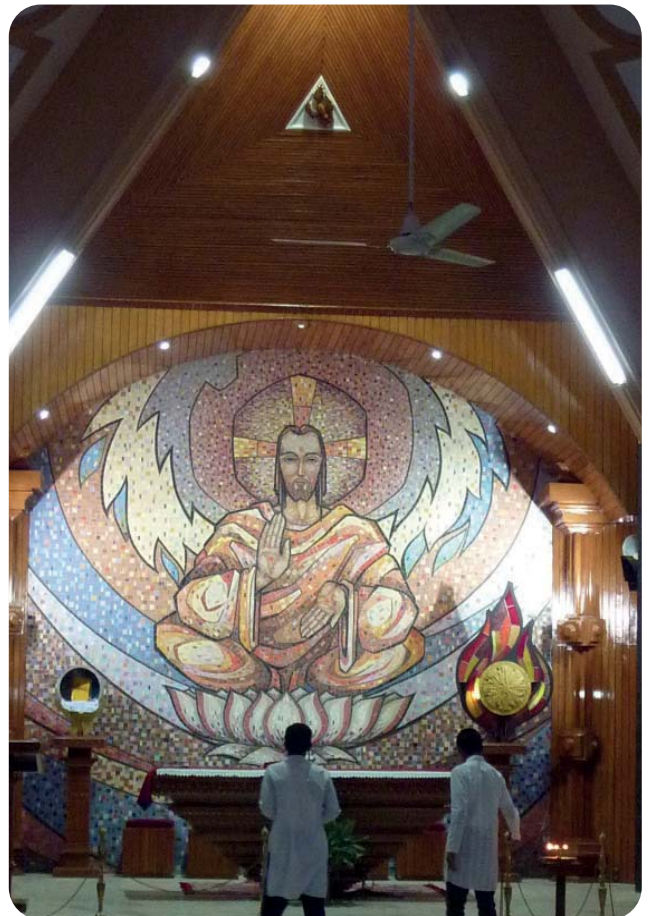
Ans:-Yes it had been a long journey. We are about to complete 50 years of service in Saurashtra and Kutch. As I look back I can see the development or in another words the progress of our mission. In the initial days it had been very difficult to make them Christians due to the existing caste system and other socio-cultural barriers. Now almost everyone in this area know Christ yet it is not possible to make them Christians. Direct Evangelization is not possible even now. But all that we can do is "Be a witness" and in so far I think we are succeeding in it.

Could you please say a few words about Prem Mandir Cathedral?

Cathedral church attracts a lot of people to our campus. The striking aspect of the cathedral is its architecture which predominantly resembles a traditional Indian temple, but in fact blends architectural features of various religions. The cathedral was designed by Ashwinbhai Sanghvi. It has domes and a pinnacle, and its arches and granite carvings are inspired by Indian mosques. There is a mosaic of Jesus seated in a meditation pose above a lotus like an Indian holy man. The symbols depicted on the windows and doors are flame, flute and lotus. Each of the church's five domes is engraved with symbols of other religions. An Oriental - style cross on a lotus flower stands atop the main dome. Cathedral stands as a way of preaching about Christ Jesus to those who are not knowing about him.

How you look forward this mission?

As St. Chavara says Let there be no day in your life in which you did no good to others, CMI Missionaries of this land totally committed themselves to do good to the people of this land. Thousands of people experienced the love of Christ through our missionaris committed services and we are zealously continuing our mission. We reach out to the people through our pastral,educational, social and health services. We are continuing our missionary work to extend the love of Christ to all through our two provinces here. Rev. Fr. James Thayill cmi and Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Kallamullil CMI leading our two provinces as our provincials. Now we may not be able to do the direct evangelization due to the changed situation but we are trying our maximum trusting on divine providence to give our life witness. Our committed missionaries here extend the love of Christ to people through thier life and services. We need good vocations to continue our mission. We thank God who guided us till this moment in this mission land and we are contining our mission trusting in the divine providence.





CMI MISSIONARIES OF THIS LAND TOTALLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO DO GOOD TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS LAND. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCED THE LOVE OF CHRIST THROUGH OUR MISSIONARIS COMMITTED SERVICES AND WE ARE ZEALOUSLY CONTINUING OUR MISSION. WE REACH OUT TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH OUR PASTORAL, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES.



Fr Joseph Uppumackal CMI

A Monk: Who made Dolthi in to a Paradise!!!



Noble Manakandathil CMI
Bhavnagar

// Ora et labora” pray and work is the formula of life given by St. Benedict to his disciples. Accordingly their whole day is divided in to three fragments: 8 hours prayer 8 hours work, and 8 hours rest.

Fr Joseph Uppumackal is a CMI monk with vast knowledge and having inherited several qualities of saintly monks. His day starts very early with the celebration of Holy Eucharist at 5.45 am; which is followed by personal prayer and meditation. Then he spends most of his time with the nature, the trees, and the plants, and in his vegetable garden and also with the poor people who are in need. He helped so many students who are economically backward and hail from the marginalised group in their higher studies. He inspired the students who thus received support from him to help the new students and thus created a chain of student’s scholarship programme which continue to do assistance to many of such students. In all such initiatives what he does is to give the account details of the beneficiary to the donor without coming into the limelight and remaining silent. Thereby he practices the Gospel command, “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Mt6:3). It is really motivating to know that even the little remuneration he many receive for his pastoral service is fully used to buy ration for the poorest of the poor.

Paradise was the first gift of God to humankind. There was total harmony. That is what Fr Joseph tried to accomplish in Dolthi; to create a paradise in this place where there is a total harmony existing with the nature so that the people and whoever comes in contact with him shall be inspired by this example. He is very simple in nature, stature and dealings; an ardent lover of the people of God “anavim Yahaweh”. Every poor person is most important for him and he made a clear option for the poor. The word “hero worship” is not there in his dictionary. If a poor man comes to visit him and there is only one chair he will immediately stand up and give the chair to the poor man and Fr. Joseph will occupy his seat on the floor. That is the attitude of greatness he has owned. Once along with one of our domestic staff, I had the chance to to visit him. The worker was enjoying the Swing (Jhula). When I came near the worker immediately he stood up from the swing and gave me the swing. Fr. Joseph noticed immediately that and told the worker saying, “we all are the children of God and are equal before Him. You may please continue to sit down and swing.” I was very much impressed by this response. What a gesture of concern he has for the poor!

Fr Joseph is a good teacher. He is a first rank holder in MSc. Botany from St. Thomas College, Pala. When

he joined the novitiate, he was already a priest and a scholar of Latin, Cyriac, English etc. So, the novice master assigned some classes for the young Joseph. Some of his students still have contact with him. His policies are biblical. He very strongly believes that “what so ever you do to the least my people; that you do unto me.” (Mt 25:40)

His love for farming started at the very beginning of his priestly life. As a young priest his appointment as a parish priest was in a very remote parish. His father visited the young Joseph once and asked him “How would you run this parish?” There was almost nothing in the parish except a small piece of land. His father exhorted him to do farming. Young Joseph took his father’s words seriously and started farming, which helped subsequently supported the parish to flourishing. From then on farming became a passion for Fr. Joseph. He cultivates and harvests everything in 100-fold. He never uses chemical fertilisers and pesticides; but instead makes use of the traditional organic farming method, compost and herbal medicines.

Being a humble and simple soul, he believes in the philosophy that if you eat food like medicine now you will not happen to eat medicine like food afterwards. He enjoys a real peace of mind and a man of no worries and therefore, he says he gets sleep as soon as he sees his bed. The most preferable and comfortable place for him to sleep is the floor.

Graham Stain and Fr Stan Swamy are 2 victims of brutality of religious animosity in the Indian soil. Although accidental we may find a lot of similarities especially between Fr. Joseph and Fr Stan. Both are of same age and almost look alike; namely thin and long. The life of Fr. Joseph inspires us to continue the legacy and to stand for the Gospel values for which Stain and Stan stood throughout their live: namely for the cause of the poor and down-trodden in the society. In fact, Fr Joseph is a great modal of this legacy.





PERUVIAN It's simply
MISSION Amazing!



Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI
Peru

Peruvian Complexity

Peru is an amazing country, unrivaled and stunning on account of its matchless geographical, biological and cultural diversities. Peru is situated in the western part of South America and shares borders with Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile. Its enormous territory, covering more than 1.2 million square kilometers, is composed of three regions: Coast, Highlands and Jungle. Its current population exceeds 31.5 million inhabitants. Spanish is the official language of Peru; however, 47 indigenous languages are also spoken in the country, including Quechua and Aymara. Peru has the greatest climate range and diversity of life zones found anywhere in the world. It possesses 11 eco-regions, 15 bio-geographic provinces and a total of 84 of the 117 life zones identified across the entire planet. It is home to 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Peru is multifaceted and mega-diverse owing to its seas, coastal desert, the Andean highlands and the subtropical and tropical forest of the Amazon basin. On both land and sea, Peru's national territory boasts an extraordinary diversity of life forms. And when it comes to fauna and flora, Peru is one of the five most biologically diverse countries in the world. It is home to an estimated 1816 species of birds, 3532 species of butterflies and 4000 types of orchids, and it is one of the leading countries in the world in terms of plant use by the population. Throughout Peru, around 4000 plant species are used as part of the dietary and traditional medicine practices of the nation.

Peruvian Antiquity

Peru was the cradle of ancient civilizations which began to develop more than ten thousand years ago, on its territory's cold highland plains. All over Peru we can find awe-inspiring vestiges of the past that astonish the visitors. The magnificent Inca citadel of Machu Picchu is just a flare in the extensive history of Peruvian settlement. Though Machu Picchu is the most renowned remnant of the past in Latin America, the regions around, including the Sacred Valley, Inca Trail and colonial city of Cusco, are rich in archaeological sites.

The dusty remnants of Chan Chan, the largest pre-Columbian ruins in all the Americas, the puzzling geoglyphs etched into the arid earth at Nazca, the enduring fortress of Kuélap, Chavin de Huantar, Caral, Sipan etc., proclaim the pomp and glory of the ancient Peruvian cultural legacy.

Caral was the culmination of Peru's first cultural process, known as the Initial Period, and its main characteristics are the building of mud brick stepped temples, circular plazas and small villages surrounding administrative and ceremonial centers. Major archaeological sites such as Sechin, on the Ancash coast, and the Kotosh Temple of the Crossed Hands, in Huanuco, date from this period. Thousands of years later, Chavin culture emerged in the north-central Andes, in the present-day region of Ancash. Around 700 BC, on the central coast, another fascinating culture emerged: Paracas, the first major desert society. The people of Paracas were skilled weavers. Their large-scale textiles with intricate designs have been admired throughout the world. Their burial practices are particularly unique.

Following this first phase of development, what we now acknowledge as the first regional empire emerged, around 550 AD. Known as Wari, and a continuation of the Peruvian and Bolivian high plains Tiahuanaco culture, this society dominated a vast territory across much of the area that would later become the Inca Empire of Tahuantinsuyo. It was the Wari who first began to lay out the great pre-Hispanic highway network and establish the social and territorial administrative system that would eventually be inherited by the Incas of Cusco. With the disappearance of Wari, around 1200 AD, the Late Intermediate period began, in the form of a second wave of regional cultural developments, among which the Chimu are particularly worthy of note, as the builders of Chan Chan, the world's largest mud brick city. The Chachapoyas also emerged at this time, the so-called "people of the clouds", who occupied the luxuriant cloud forests of the Amazonas region, where they built



extraordinary cities and mausoleums carved into sheer cliffs. Thanks to a long history defined by major ancient civilizations, Peru is home to more than 5000 archaeological sites. Many of these remain shrouded in mystery, but are still capable of transporting visitors to the periods when such societies flourished. In the Peruvian festivals one can easily notice the reappearance of the ancient cults, rites and rituals. Lima's great museums reveal in full detail the sophistication, skill and passion of these lost civilizations. A quick visit to the remote communities in the Andean highlands and the Amazon basin could readily reveal that the old ways are still alive and thriving.

Peruvian Economy

Peru has the world's biggest reserves of silver, as well as Latin America's largest reserves of gold, lead and zinc. The Peruvian coast is renowned for its marine resources and export-based agribusiness sector, which includes major products such as asparagus, blueberries, table grapes, avocados, organic bananas and paprika. For its part, the Amazon basin possesses large reserves of oil and natural gas, as well as abundant forestry resources.

Today, Peru enjoys trade agreements with the world's leading economies, including the United States, China and the European Union. It is also a member of trade blocs, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), or Pacific Alliance. For the past decade, Peru has boasted the fastest growing economy in Latin America.

Peruvian Gastronomy

Peruvians enjoy and celebrate life in its extravagant diversity. Their culinary series is a clear display of their delight in cuisine. The geographical range and the different climate zones produced by Peru's vertical topography have led to the creation and development of an enormously rich gastronomic tradition which can be traced back thousands of years. This tradition has been enriched by successive waves of migrants from four continents. Peruvian cooking is a melting pot of traditions and fusions, employing the finest techniques of global haute cuisine. Ceviche with slivers of fiery chili and corn, slow-simmered stews, velvety Amazonian chocolate, anticuchos, novoandina, ... yes, the choices dazzle and make Peru the capital of Latin American cooking.

Potatoes are more than just food in Peru, and are an important part of Peruvian heritage. The history of the potato began around eight thousand years ago, in the Peruvian highlands where it was used by communities of hunters and gatherers. The first Spaniards in the region, the band led by Francisco Pizarro, who landed in 1532, noticed the natives (the so-called 'Indians'!!!) eating these strange, round objects and emulated them, often reluctantly. News of the new food spread rapidly in Europe. Within three decades, Spanish farmers as far away as the Canary Islands were exporting potatoes to France and the Netherlands (which were then part of the Spanish empire). The first scientific description of the potato appeared in 1596, when the Swiss naturalist Gaspard Bauhin awarded it the name *Solanum tuberosum esculentum* (later simplified to *Solanum tuberosum*). Many local farmers cultivate different potato varieties to preserve historic traditions. Different communities trade special varieties of potatoes and gift them at weddings and celebrations. Today you can find over 4,000 varieties of native potatoes grown in the Andean highlands of Peru. They come in every shape and color, including blue, yellow, red, pink and even bright purple. Potatoes can also be used for medicines, and are said to relieve headaches and skin irritation. Varieties like the

purple potato are incredibly high in antioxidants, making them super healthy. Of course, they are delicious as well. The country even celebrates National Potato Day on 30 May each year!

Through Corn was first domesticated in Mexico nearly 9,000 years ago from a wild grass called teosinte, a few thousand years later corn arrived in Peru where its evolution into different varieties that are now common in the Andean region began. The entire humanity is immensely indebted to Peruvians for saving them from starvation. Peruvian gastronomy also has the good fortune to be blessed with an exceptional beverage: traditional pisco. Considered Peru's national drink, pisco is a white grape brandy and the essential accompaniment to Peruvian food.

Peruvian Festivity

Peru is well-known of exciting fiestas. Peru's most colorful festival is without a doubt La Candelaria, that takes place in Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, when 140,000 dancers and musicians take to the streets in one of South America's biggest cultural festivals.



The festival celebrates Puno’s patron saint, la Virgen de la Candelaria, and Puno’s Quechua and Aymara legacies in a vibrant party with dances and rituals. Inti Raymi or the Festival of the Sun, is one of the biggest and most fascinating festivals on the Peruvian calendar, which takes place in Cusco, the ‘Archaeological Capital of the Americas’, annually on 24 June. Since 1412, when Inti Raymi was first celebrated, ancient Incas gather each year to honor the sun god Inti and pray for his return.

Fiesta de la Vendimia, is a 10-day long festivity that takes place in Ica, comprising of colorful street processions, dancing, grape stomping and an array of local delicacies to soak up the wine. Crowds gather to see the crowning of the Queen of the Harvest, who then has the honor of stomping in the vat of grapes. Foodie highlights include a pachamanca, a traditional Peruvian dish of meat – lamb, mutton, pork, chicken or guinea pig, along with potatoes, spices and chili – baked in an earthen pot under hot stones. Mistura is annual culinary fair – the biggest of its kind in South America – taking place in Lima each September, bringing together chefs, restaurateurs, producers, farmers, wine makers, pisco makers and more in a celebration of Peruvian cuisine.

Celebrations for Semana Santa, or ‘Holy Week’, take place all around Peru. However, Cusco’s event is undeniably one of the most interesting, a mix of the city’s Incan and Catholic roots. Festivities revolve around the city’s Patron Saint, Senor de los Temblores (aka ‘Lord of the Earthquakes’). Legend has it that during a major earthquake in 1650, locals took a statue of Christ out of the church and the earthquake miraculously stopped. The statue has since become a treasured possession – evidenced during the six-hour parade across Plaza de Armas and nearby streets on Easter Monday. Up to 20,000 people gather in Cusco’s main square and adjacent streets to watch the Easter procession where the crowd throws nucchu flowers symbolizing the blood of Christ as the crucifix passes. On Good Friday, locals will traditionally feast on 12 dishes, marking the end of lent. Food ranges from soup to potato and corn. The streets are also full of stalls selling different meals, allowing travelers to take part. Peru is a multicultural nation filled with traditions. It is a place of mythical beliefs where ancient pageants unwind to the tune of booming brass bands. Peru’s rich cultural heritage is never more real and visceral than when one gets immersed in the swirling madness of the street dancers of a festival procession. Deities of old are reincarnated as Chris-

tian saints, pilgrims climb mountains in the dead of night and icons are decked in elaborate and intricate costumes and paraded through crowded plazas as once were the mummies of Inca rulers.

Peruvian CMission

The CMI Congregation has been involved in the Peruvian Mission ever since 1975. During the last four decades a lot has been done in the field of pastoral ministry and healthcare. And a few of our veterans, who have contributed their very best to this mission, were called to receive their eternal reward. At present there are fourteen of us actively involved in the pastoral ministry in different parishes pertaining to four different dioceses. However, we humbly acknowledge that our outreach is rather minimal, considering the enormous potential and possibilities set before us. There are 47 dioceses in Peru.

“ WE HAVE NOT YET DARED TO VENTURE THE AMAZONAS WHERE AN EXTREME SCARCITY OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS IS EXPERIENCED. FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE MANY MORE OF OUR CMI BRETHERN GETTING READY TO COME TO PERU AND ALSO THOSE WHO ARE UNDER FORMATION TO FILL-IN THE MINISTRIES AND TO BROADEN THE FRONTIERS OF THIS MISSION FAR AND WIDE.

We have not yet dared to venture the Amazonas where an extreme scarcity of priests and religious is experienced. Fortunately, there are many more of our CMI brethren getting ready to come to Peru and also those who are under formation to fill-in the ministries

and to broaden the frontiers of this mission far and wide. Providentially the CMC Congregation too has taken Peru mission seriously and has already sent eight of their sisters here. Peru is a so-called "Catholic Country" with 85 to 90% of its population Catholics, though many of them may not be baptized or ever visited a Church. It is taken for granted that everybody who is born here in Peru is born "Catholic" unless and until he or she opts for another denomination or religion. In fact, there are quite a lot of 'hunters and gatherers' actively involved in leading the so-called "Catholic sheep" into their own folds. One may wonder whether Jesus had Peru in mind when he solemnly observed, that "the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few". The Catholic Church in Peru is suffering from the scarcity of priests and religious. There is tremendous potential for both evangelization and re-evangelization in Peru. In the areas of basic religious education, pastoral visits, confessions, retreat, etc., a lot can be done. On the basis of competent

field study and sensing the needs of the people, with their support and participation we could do a lot in the field of education, social work and healthcare. The Peruvian Church is heavily sustained by foreign missionaries. We need to work towards making this church sustainable in terms of committed and qualified clergy, both religious and diocesan. Vocations to women religious orders are also to be encouraged earnestly. The schools and boarding shall be seen also as nurturing ground for solid religious and priestly vocations. It is imperative that we spell a missionary agenda and tread to the future armed with a solid plan prepared in tune with the divine agenda and in conjuncture with all concerned. We are blessed with a founder who with the support of his confreres ventured into leading the Kerala society to its present advancement. We have a noble and proud heritage and legacy to lean on and refer to. We are here to do His will and to toil for His kingdom.



When

God

Called



3

Paulson Muthipeedika CMI
Bhopal On His Usri mission

We had appointed a very young man, Mr. Veerender, as catechist- Guruji- at our mission centre as more and more people in the villages were showing interest to be prayed for and hear the word of God. He was from Mandla in Jabalpur diocese in Madhya Pradesh. He was sent for two months to Matri Dham Ashram, Varanasi for getting aquatinted with the work of a catechist. He was very much interested in prayer and also had some healing powers. We sent him with our village animator to those villages where there were some sick persons. After a while he was well accepted by the people. People started calling for him over the mobile to come to their house to pray for their special needs. Later we instructed him to start visiting all the houses in the vil-

lages. Every day he visited at least five houses, chat-
ted with them and towards
end of the vis-
it, he offered
to pray for the
family. If the
family wel-
comed him to
pray, he would
pray for them
in the light of
the conver-
sation he had
with the fami-
ly. He was also
instructed to
offer the peo-

ple that the Sisters and father from Usri were ready to come to their village if they wanted special prayer. He did quite well.

At Ratamati village a household asked him to call the Sisters and Father from Usri to pray for them. So, we for the first time, went to this village to pray for them. About 50 people had gathered for the prayer. Our evangelizing team from Usri had come along with us. We had the prayer service for over an hour. We had praise and worship, bhajans, songs, proclamation of the Gospel, reflection, intercessory prayers and at the end I prayed over 30 people who wanted to get prayed for individually. Many of them told that they felt better after the prayer and requested us to come again for prayer.

Again, at Singodi village another family asked Mr. Veerender, our Guruji to bring the Sisters and Father for prayer at their home. So, we went to this village for prayer along with our evangelizing team. Though we had prayer in individual families earlier in this village, we did not have common prayer service with many vil-
lagers in this village. About 35 people had gathered

for this first prayer service at this village. We had praise and worship, bhajans, singing, proclamation of the Gospel, reflection, intercessory prayers by the parish-ioners and I prayed over 20 people who wanted to get prayed for individually. Many among said that they felt better after the prayer.

For Christmas we used to have Carol singing in our Christian families but within closed doors. Later on, we went with singing and dancing for Carol singing to the Christian families and had it in front of the house in view of everyone else. Our families also invited their neighbours and friends for Christmas Carol. We had singing, proclamation of the Gospel on the birth of Jesus Christ and intercessory prayers and again sing-
ing and dancing. It took about an hour in each house. Seeing this some of our associates and friends in the village started inviting us to have the Carol singing in their house as well. This we did gladly and had sing-
ing, proclamation Gospel on the birth of Jesus Christ, intercessory prayers and again singing and dancing in these families as well. In that year eight families oth-
er than Christian families invited us for Carol singing. Mr. Sunderlal Yadav, the postmaster of the village, a great friend of ours, was a folk song poet and singer. He invited us to his house for Carol singing. He com-
posed a few songs on Christmas and Jesus Christ and sang them himself during the Carol singing we had in his house. It was very well appreciated by everyone including the villagers. In the subsequent years more people invited us for Carol singing in their houses. We thanked the Lord for giving us the chance to announce the birth of Jesus Christ through Carol singing in a few families of our village.

We made a beautiful big crib in our school with the help of students, teachers and parishioners and had Christmas Gathering with the students, parents and villagers in our school every year. Over 2000 people participated in our Christmas celebrations in the school. Our students put up beautiful drama with the theme of Christmas along with songs and dances for about three hours. Many students gave message on Christmas. We invited the villagers also to speak on the occasion and some of them gave very good message on Christmas. Our panchayat president presided over the celebrations. I also gave a message in which I got a chance to speak openly about Jesus Christ and his mes-
sage of love, mercy and compassion. Once one of the villagers, a school teacher who was PhD holder speak-
ing during the Christmas celebration in the school said that Jesus is the legacy of the whole world. He said that Jesus Christ does not belong to only Christians but he is for whole world. He also beautifully explained the virgin birth of Jesus from mother Mary in a way most understandable for the villagers. The village folk song

group used to present song on Christmas and Jesus Christ with composed by themselves under the leadership Mr. Sunderlal, the post master of the village post office. The village women also presented folk songs composed by them during our Christmas celebration in the school.

During the Christmas the Catholic families made a contribution to buy gift for a poor family in the villages. The parishioners themselves would reach these items, usually grocery and woollen blanket etc worth about Rs.3000 to the poor family selected by them. This was done during the Easter also by the members of our small parish to share our joy of Christmas and Easter with the poor people. Once in one of the villages when our parishioners went to give the Christmas gift to one of the poor families, a certain man from the same village objected to it and started speaking abusive language against them. Anyhow the parishioners gave the gift to the family and came away. The next day the leaders of the village came to me to ask pardon for what that man had done and said they were very sorry about it and that they really regarded the gesture of the Christians very well. We used to have about 50 members for these celebrations. We gave them small gifts and gave the message of Christmas before the dinner. They would also sing songs or just give short message on the occasion.

A few days after Christmas the Sisters used to have Christmas celebration with the students of tuition centres run by the Sisters. These students from about 10 centres used to gather, to have singing, dancing, drama with Christian themes and some group games. All the children used to participate in Christmas tree. The Sisters also gave message on Christmas. I too used to give message on the occasion to the students. There used to be 250 -300 students and teachers for this celebration organized by the Sisters. These were our different ways and means to reach the message of Jesus Christ to the people of other faith.

Mr. Sunderlal, the post master's wife had chest pain and was taken to hospital in Narsinghpur. After the examination the doctor said that her heart was weak and asked them to take her to either Jabalpur or Nagpur for better treatment. They took her to Nagpur and in the angiography, they found that there were three blocks in her heart valves. They said that each block would cost Rs. 80,000.00 for surgery to remove the blocks. She was given some medicine before she should be operated for the removal of the heart blocks. Mr. Sunderlal tried calling me through phone to ask me to pray for her.

he did not succeed as we did not have proper mobile connectivity. When they came back from Nagpur, I visited the family and prayed for her.



We especially prayed for her during our holy mass. The family managed to collect the fund necessary for the surgery and took her this time to Bhopal for the surgery. They had the sonography done before the surgery and found that there was only one block and it was successfully removed by the operation. Mr. Sunderlal was very happy that the surgery was successful and that there was only one block. He tried calling me again from Bhopal but did not succeed. On reaching home he came looking for me to the school. But I was out of station. The next day he came again but I was not there in the school again. The next day in the afternoon he came to our house looking for me. I was there and I welcomed him warmly. We went into the church and he thanked us for our prayers for his wife and told that the operation was successful and she was alright because of our prayers and because Jesus helped her. We sat in the church for over two hours and had long talk about Jesus and his love, mercy and compassion. I narrated to him some of the healings already taken place in the villages and how Lord Jesus was blessing our villagers with his graces and blessings. He went back home a very satisfied and happy man.

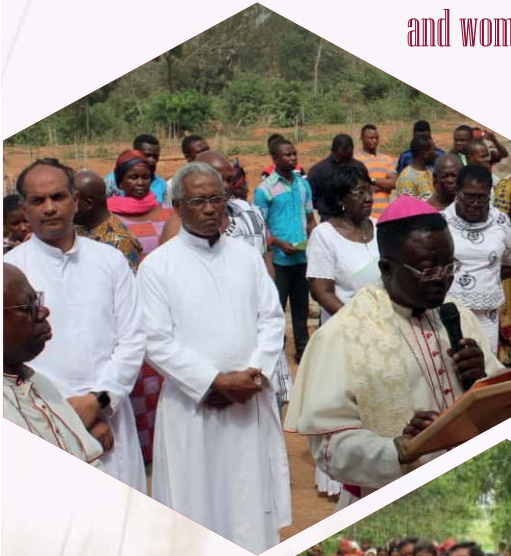
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I NARRATED TO HIM SOME OF THE HEALINGS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE IN THE VILLAGES AND HOW LORD JESUS WAS BLESSING OUR VILLAGERS WITH HIS GRACES AND BLESSINGS.





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



Dear,

Every baptized
is a missionary.
We can become
a missionary in different ways,
in whatever situation you are.
St Therese of Child Jesus,
Patron of missionaries
had never been to a mission yet was
a missionary to the core of her heart.
She became a missionary
by praying for
the mission and the missionaries.
So CMission offers
the forum to become
a missionary by praying
for the missionary.
Those who are interested- parishes
families, religious communities,
retreat centres, and prayer centres-
can adopt missionaries and
pray for them.

Those who wish to join,

One Family One Missionary Prayer Programme

please contact,

✉ cmisionmagazine@gmail.com

☎ 94255 29603, 9539747947

Chief Editor, CMission
CMI Prior General's House
Department for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry
Chavara Hills, Kakknad,
Post Box 3105, Kochi 682 030 Kerala, India
<http://www.cmi.org/>

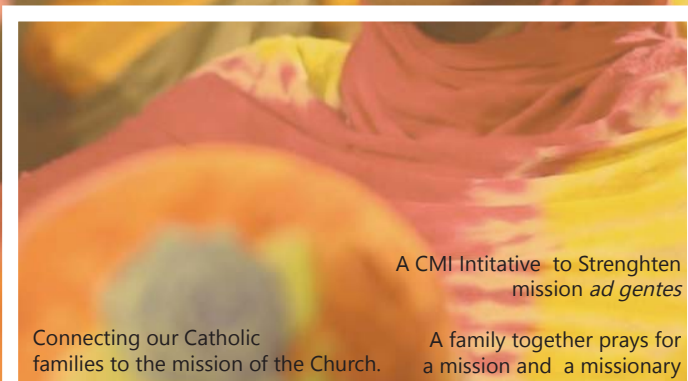


love mission

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Chief Editor, CMISSION
CMI Prior General's House
Department for Evangelization and Pastoral
Ministry
Chavara Hills, Kakkanad,
Post Box 3105, Kochi 682 030 Kerala, India
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Truth is not determined by
a majority vote.
Benedict XVI

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



Mission Meditation

Jebin Jose CMI

Zero Position

www.malankaralibrary.com

Going to a village, meeting with people is all about an experience of kingdom values. It teaches that, what contrast to fullness of world and real experience of nothingness. When Naturality dominates the artificiality we feel that things are ancient and classical. Therefore every village is classic piece of the creation of God. It resembles simplicity, unity, equality. That may be the reason Jesus send his disciples for village exposure in the Gospel of St. Luke chapter 10. In the Gospel, however Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick, liberate the down trodden and give them the gospel of salvation, he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor bag, nether bread nor money and wherever they do not receive you, go out from the city shaking the dust from your feet .With these instructions he conveyed the message of exercising the powers of heaven. And additionally he demands complete detachments and renunciation.

The ministry of Jesus is transferred to his disciples by making them empty whole their lives into a zero position. Detaching of one's self is a willing entry into the power or abyss of nothingness or Shunya .Nothingness, Shunya or zero possession is a space of absolute possibilities .God created this world from a zero status. The Bhagavad Gita and Vedas talk of the universe created out of Shunya or Zero. Today we can find the meaning of zero among the village people. We realize that, Stepping in to a mud house sometimes never makes happy. The Black tea, something out of fashion for them sometimes becomes the centre of celebration. Three to five utensils are enough to make a happy dinner for us a surprise. Less money, they consider more comfort. Is this what Jesus tried to communicate to us? He came to this world by emptying himself to the position of humanness .He came to exist here in this world through a Zero process.He emptied himself to establish the kingdom of love and compassion .He started his kingship by taking birth in a manger of nothingness .He was a kingly son of a mere carpenter. He stayed in the palaces of hills and mountains. He visited the boundaries of his kingdom without any chariot .He was entertained not by his friends and relatives but by the sinners and gentiles. His clothes were not silky .He did not possess any royal chairs to rule His kingdom. He chose rocks and boats to preach His good news. In His last times, He fought and died by accepting the cross of humiliation and as a remembrance; He offered a piece of bread and nothing more. He possessed nothing except love and compassion. We know he was really neglected and rejected in his life span. He is our way, truth and life. He is a God of those who are isolated and marginalized in the society, and he is....

Being a man of big zero is something we need to experience during our life span. Jesus emphasizes that there is power in being a zero or a man of shunya. It is a power for a new realization. It is a power for a new beginning. It is a power to create a new relation. Realization of a human person that, he holds an empty space within his life, He tries to fill his life with certain meaning. Creating a meaningful life is really a new step form the position of zero. As an end we fulfill this meaning by relating and recognizing the idea of meaning in other lives too. Don't worry if we have nothing to offer, there was a man before us who possessed nothing but later achieved every heart of this world. Don't be upset if we are rejected and neglected, because there was a man who rejected but later acknowledged. Be happy if we have no chairs of power, because Jesus taught us to serve not to be served. Be joyful if we have no talents because we are counted not by the talents but by the act of love and compassion. So let us realize the power we have within and make our lives more meaningful and unique so that we may able to understand the purpose of my life here in this world and lord let's start from where we have stopped and be ready for a new and joyful beginning.

Mission Villages

MV

Arunachal Pradesh, an Indian state packed with impenetrable rainforests and impassable mountain ranges curled beneath the eastern ramparts of the Himalayan broods with ferociously gushing rivers and rivulets in the hammering long monsoon rains, is one of the most difficult surfaces on earth to survive as a human being. The violent natural conditions make it even worst when you are living here for a cause as the CMI missionary priest!

It is another universe! During the Mughal invasion of Arunachal region 300 years ago, Mullah Darvish of Herat wrote in his poem, "Its roads are frightful as the path leading to the Nook of Death . . . its forests are full of violence . . . its rivers are beyond limit ..."

Arunachal Pradesh, the largest and least populous of the Seven Sisters, lies folded between the Tibetan plateau, the mountains of Bhutan and the flood-prone plains of the Brahmaputra Valley. Its unparalleled altitudinal Himalayan ranges provide sanctuary to leopards, Bengal tigers, musk deers and other numerous wild animals and birds. Anyone who wishes to reach the destination has to travel through the frightful narrow roads, often death disguised in the form of landslides, flashfloods and steep terrains, on the other hand can enjoy the kaleidoscopic sceneries of the nature. Yet Arunachal Pradesh remains almost unknown by those within India. With the harshness of its terrain, a sensitive political situation and the need for expensive and restrictive permits make it a little-visited region.

Still this most isolated Indo-Tibetan border remained home to many anthropologically rich indigenous tribes of fearsome repute like Apatanis, Adis, Galos, Mishmis, Nyishis, Tagins etc. Seeing the violent nature of the native tribes, many of the Britishers considered them as barbarians. In his book, *The Sketch of Assam* (1947), Major John Butler, a British Political Officer who travelled extensively through the region, described them as 'rude and treacherous people' whose 'excessive laziness, immoderate addiction to opium and general uncertainty of character' made them 'anything but good subjects ...' In 1837 J. M'Cosh, a surgeon stationed in Calcutta, wrote of its 'struggling hordes of barbarians'. Another colonial Brit noted how these 'rude and barbarous people' were 'very averse to strangers' and notably fond of removing the heads of unwanted interlopers (Antonia Bolingbroke-Kent, 2017). Today, with the dawn of modernity and accessibility to the outside world, they have changed, yet they remain true to who they are keeping their identity and culture intact.



Bonis Karottukizhakkel CMI
Chanda



Evangelization is an integral part of the CMI way of life. The first members of the Congregation were eagerly going around the parishes with various programmes of catechetics and faith formation. They were particularly interested in preaching the gospel and forming new Christian communities. In the course of time, CMI

Mission expanded beyond the borders of Travancore and Malabar region to the unknown terrains of North India and the Globe. The General synaxis XXXVI and XXXVII gave a great momentum to the global mission thrust of the congregation.

Following impetuses of the Global mission, the Arunachal Pradesh Mission began by the St. Paul's Province Bhopal is now in its brooding period with unbound prospects and challenges. It was 6 November 2016, formal inauguration of the CMI Arunachal mission and the declaration of Holy Mary Parish in Tuting – a hilly town boarder with China in the upper Sian district, was conducted with solemnity in the presence of the parishioners. Fr. Oliver Inchody CMI in his article "Arunachal Mission: The Boundless Boundaries of India,(C-Mission 2017) writes about the beginning of the mission as thus; " As per the new directives and decision of the St. Paul Province and the Diocese of Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, on 5 November 2016, two young priest unofficially moved into a rented house at Tuting. Even if they were deprived of the basic necessities in the new surrounding, the new mission was singled out by the zealous missionary spirit of the young priests, Fathers Cejo Chakery and Nijo Palatty. Their thatched bamboo house was made more habitable and religious by the enormous cooperation and collaboration of the Catholic parishioners of the locality."

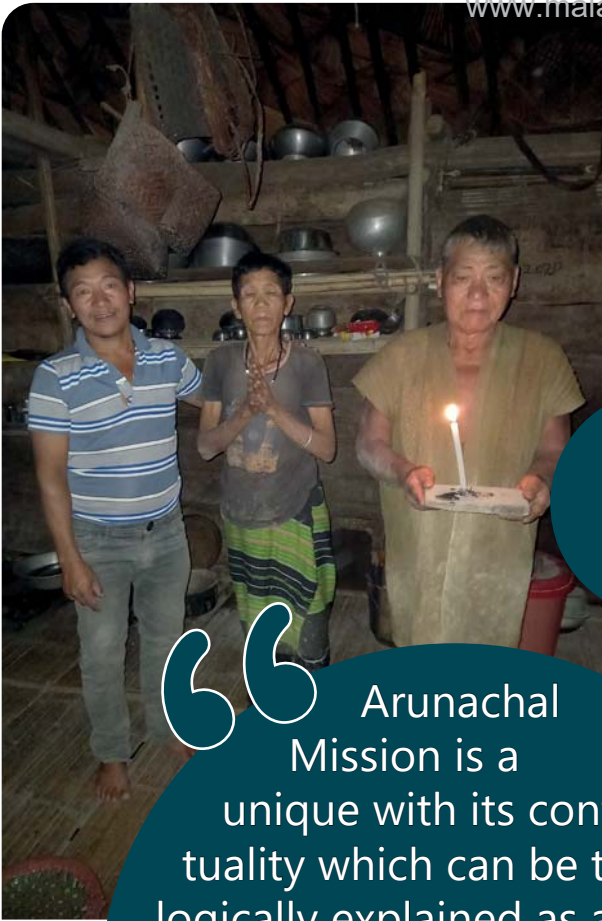
Arunachal, being the most fertile soil for mission in India, our missionaries were well received by the local catholic community here. With their steadfast faith, adventurous and heroic suffering, after four years of its conception, now it has grown into three parishes-Tuting, Migging and Boleng with numerous villages to the CMI care by the encouraging support by the Diocese of Itanagar. A Mission started with the pioneering efforts of two young fathers like Cejo Chakery and Nijo Palatty, presently four more CMI members from Bhopal Province – Fr. Martin Kallely, Fr. Paulson Muthupeedika, Fr. Shaju Pandegadan and Fr. Melvin Rodrigues who are fervently and wholly dedicated to the evangelization and prayer moment required by the context, have been inducted into the mission. The phenomenal changes that brought to the mission both in terms of rapid growth of communities

through active engagement with them through Sunday mass, prayer services and frequent house visits in the far and wide villages and constructions of houses and mission centers in the vast and dangerous geographical regions are possible only through the collective conscious of the Mother province that gives its missionaries due recognition for their hard work and utmost commitment.

Arunachal Mission is a unique with its contextuality which can be theologically explained as a method of communicating gospel in a way to makes sense to the local cultural context through the process of accommodation, adaptation and indigenization. This mission is situated in the cultural context of Adi tribe, a tightly clustered group in the hilltops who follow animistic traditions and do farming and hunting for their subsistence. The Adi are mainly concentrated in the central part of the State comprising Upper Subansiri and in West, Upper and East Siang, though there are some Adi communities in Dibang Valley also. The total population of the 29 communities that have identified as Adi is 2.38 lakh, of which 36% is Christian. (Census 2011).

The Catholic Church in Arunachal has a distinctive history. The Indian government, unhappy with the spread of Christianity among the hill tribes of the north-east, decided to keep the Church out of Arunachal Pradesh. However, young people from Arunachal who went out of the state seeking good education came into contact with Catholic schools in Assam and Meghalaya."Father L. Cerato SDB, the parish priest of North Lakhimpur, accepted several Apatani boys in his school in the early 1960s. He sent some students also to Dibrugarh as N. Lakhimpur was at that time under Dibrugarh diocese. Bishop Orestes Marengo, the ordinary of Dibrugarh, encouraged this apostolate. The first baptisms of Apatanis took place in Lakhimpur in 1963. In 1969 Father Joseph Mittathany became the bishop of Tezpur. He began to encourage admission of Apatani students into various hostels of the diocese. Several students found their way also to other Catholic Institutions in the region especially Shillong and Dibrugarh. Most of these students were baptized and sent back with the mission to evangelize Arunachal Pradesh"(UCA News- diocese of Itanagar).

No history of the church in Arunachal can be complete without placing on record the faith, commitment and spirit of perseverance of the early catholic leaders and Catechists who resisting all prohibitions and persecutions held on to their faith and proclaimed it in the villages of Arunachal Pradesh. Pioneering efforts of Henry Gaikward hailing from Pune – popularly known as 'Prem Bhai' and 'Saint Paul' of Arunachal Pradesh cannot go unnoticed.



“Arunachal Mission is a unique with its contextuality which can be theologically explained as a method of communicating gospel in a way to makes sense to the local cultural context through the process of accommodation, adaptation and indigenization.



He has ventured into Arunachal Pradesh in 1981 as 'Prem Bhai'. Since ban on Christian missionaries was strictly enforced in the state at the time, he used to enter it under the guise of carpenter or butcher, and trekked the scattered mountainous villages baptising many along his path. Gaikwad, travelled and preached in the remote mountain villages of Arunachal in the 1980s and 1990s. The austere lifestyle, service, and self-sacrifice of this man from distant Maharashtra endeared him to many Arunachalis.

The MSFS congregation began the missionary work from the borders of Assam and started the Mission at Pasighat and Kaying in the year 1997 and 1998 respectively. The vast areas of West Siang and East Siang and Upper Subensiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh came under MSFS congregation. This gave impetus to make visits to far-flung villages especially during Christmas and Easter. The result of this focus is the erecting of many parishes like Tato, Basar, Yinkiong, and Aalo and later at Likabali. It is the cordiality of MSFS congregation especially Fr. Joseph Chakkalckal MSFS, the parish priest of Yinkyong and a pioneering missionary in the hilly region welcomed the CMI congregation to the Siang districts.

Prospects and Challenges

Christian Background: The Census (2011) data shows a steep rise in the Christian population in Arunachal Pradesh from less than 1% in 1971 to more than 30.5% in 2011. This rise in the population is the fruit of the relentless evangelization of other Christian denominations like Arunachal Baptist Church, Presbyterians and Revival Church groups along with the catholic missionaries who in spite of the ban on Christians made inroads into these tribal communities. Rididi (2010:232-233) writes, 'During the early years of independence, the administration attempted to promote indigenous religions by not allowing the missionaries to come in and proselytize the tribes.' These protective measures could not prevent the native people to witness Christ in the face of persecution and alienation. Hence, the Christian observations like Sunday Mass, prayers services in groups, rosary recitation in the families, processions in public and Christian celebrations are now become part of the general norm of the societal culture to which the people of other tribes integrated very positively.

Receptivity: The priests and religious are always welcomed warmly by the community. The villagers make frequent visits to our Churches and religious houses

to seeking spiritual directions, for healing and daily adour blessings and the directions in the decision rations. They recognize priests as the men of God; seek making of the families. The heightened receptivity to the gospel and Christian values, hospitality towards our priestes made inclusive changes in concepts of sin and morality, witchcrafts and ritualism and other superstitious practices by the tribe, now embraced a radical transformation to the providential and salvific nature of the God who offers them protection from the natural calamities, physical sickness and inner healings.

Absents of Major Religions: Adi tribe largely follow Donyi Polo which literally mea 'sun' and 'moon' and worship them for prosperity, fertility and protection from calamities. According to Ering (1994), 'in a religious concept Donyi Polo is essentially a channel of human aspirations as traditionally understood by the people. Donyi Polo associated with superstition, myths, legends and has some deeper philosophy.' Hence, they are untouched by the mainstream religious thoughts and philosophies of Hinduism and Islam.

Spiritual Needs: The good news that came to them through our missionaries is meeting their spiritual needs. In the face of natural calamities, extreme physical harshness, for agricultural and familial prosperity and protection from the danger, they require the providence of God who can quench their longing for the Higher Power. The frequent family visits, regular Sunday mass and prayer services in the villages help to bring them more closer to God. Hence they familiarize themselves with values and traditions of the church which otherwise strange to them as they are largely an unorganized tribe not having a structural religious identity of their own.

Altitudinal Challenges and Accessibility: Moving one village to another takes a tremendous effort due to the isolated nature of the mountain region. Visiting a village is a day's effort, a tremendous draining of human energy and time. Often one has to survive the dangers in the treacherous roads, days of network and electricity issues to contact the outside world. Life here is slow paced, hustle free and nature friendly. The mission here is to endure challenges that nature unfolds in front of you.

Language Barrier: Adi belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages is one of the least known and undocumented languages spoken by the Adi ethnicity. Although language is the Church's basic tool of proclamation of the gospel, learning Adi language is the most difficult hurdle that the fathers face here even after living among the villagers over the years due to its oral traditions,

underdeveloped literature, unorganized scripts and varying dialects place to place. The stories, myths and legends, faiths and beliefs of Adi have been disseminated down to subsequent generations through the words of mouth. Hence local linguistic acumen is essential factor here to understand their part of the story and on the other hand it is required to have the language proficiency for communicating the Good News in a way that can be integrated in their signs and expressions that enable them to absorb the Message in a better way.

Obscure Life Style: Exorcisms, animalisms, omens and sacrifices are integral part of their culture even today. For instance, they believe in the numerous spirits that prone to malevolence. They lurked at crossroads, hid in the wind, whispered through doorways and attacked unwary people in the forest. Be it a nosebleed, headaches or a poor harvest, any illness or misfortune was interpreted as the work of malicious spirits, and sacrificing chickens, dogs, pigs and mithun to keep them happy expensive.

Political Agendas: There is hidden political movement to lure the indigenous religion like Doney Polo to the branch of historical Hinduism. Hinduized festivals, payers and chanting are conducted to create a Hindu psyche to the tribals as part of larger political agenda. The far right ideology of the BJP considers Christian missionary works as a threat and endangering the tribal traditions. In spite of these oppositions, Christianity in Arunachal is young, vibrant and growing. A Nishi Christian responds these allegations as, "the missionaries do not ask us to practice costly rituals or change our lifestyles, languages or even our wardrobe. Many of the converted tribal, like me, have not even been asked to change names. We have received the gospel of Jesus, enlightenment and education." (The Economic Times, Nov.19, 2017)



Frontier Missionary

FM

We are much awaiting the bicentenary celebration of our congregation. We have seen the ups and downs of our growth. In many areas, we are exceeded with our excellence. Especially like Education, social works and medical assistance are prominent among them. Yet we couldn't much focus on irradiating the poverty among our neighbors, society, and of course from our nation.

And it is an eye-opener for all of us, across the world India ranks 67th position among 194 countries in the poverty line. It is seen that India is counted among other African nations. One of the main charities done by our inspiration St. Chavara was irradiating poverty from society. Irrelevance of caste and creed, he worked his whole life to remove the social evil from the society. He strengthened education among the less privileged people by feeding the basic need. He realized hunger is a basic instinct in everyone.

Meals on Wheels

Every life in the universe, every day searching out to fulfill this basic instinct. Whatever, St. Chavara had the right intentions based on Christ's teachings it is still relevant now and then in our congregation. Indeed we have a great concern over this, and it is high time to re-think during the bicentenary anniversary of this significant event of our congregation. We have to analyze that how we can fulfill our founding father's cherished dream with the right decision among our provinces.

A state like Gujarat is deep-rooted by Hinduism. Cast and creed are very much affected in many areas. Poor and rich have a lot of economic distance and there are not many middle-class people. It's disgusting to know that our Father of nation M. K Gandhi emerged from this land. Where people are least counted and cows and animals are more decorated in their mind.

In Mt 25:35, clearly explains who will inherit the kingdom of God on the last judgment time: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." It was our First vision-oriented Bishop of Rajkot Rev.Bp. Johnas Thaliyth started many frontier mission-oriented projects in our Diocese followed by Rev.Bp. Gregory Karotamprel cherished and fulfilled it in many ways.

It was in 2010 after retiring from the diocese of Rajkot Bp. Gregory excellently continued the frontier ministry. During the Christmas season of that year, he noticed many migrated people from different states came and worked for their daily livelihood in Rajkot. Many of them are working in different companies without sufficient salaries, which affected their family income along with the lack of notorious food among children and aged people.

It was a great insight and a humble starting to the 'Meals on wheels' project by Bp. Gregory karotamprel CMI. Early this project was initiated by the women congregation named 'Devapriya' sisters and now it was the help of 'Nav Jeevan' Trust of Rajkot Diocese under the guidance of Bp. Jose Chittuparambil and the director Fr. Thomas Pullikkakunel and assisted by Sr. Anita Parmar DP. Every day around 100 Lunch meal boxes are distributed among migrant people, and for the aged people both in the city of Rajkot and its outskirts. Proper care and concern for the least among us are cherished through this dream project by Bp. Gregory Karotemperel. It is a great inspiration to everyone especially for the young priests, the way showed by our beloved Bp. Gregory Karotamprel cleared a 'silk route' to reach heaven by caring the least among us.

The feeding of the 5,000, also known as the "miracle of the five and two fish", in the Gospel of John reports that Jesus used five loaves and two fish supplied by a boy to feed a multitude. Though Jesus can perform a miracle alone He takes the human effort to do anything. In the same way, this project 'Meals on Wheels' is supported by many kind people irrespective of all caste and creed. This was the true vision of St. Chavara who collected the food grains in the form of 'Pidiyari' from every home. Like monasteries, seminaries, convents, schools, and many more institutions are initiated by St. Chavara through the collaboration by the people of God, where we see the collective efforts. On the celebration of this great event in the congregation, it is a true spirituality we have to cultivate and foster. True spirituality means love of God and love towards mankind. Then it becomes more meaningful and inspiring for everyone. Let us go hand in hand to cherish the dreams of our founding fathers.



Johnson Parayil CMI
Bengaluru

F o r M i s s i o n

FM

Contextual theological formation is a combined movement to self-challenge for a holistic and humane formation that facilitates one to have his unique persona by embracing uncertainties and thriving in hard mode real-time life situation. Samanvaya theologate emphasizes on a contextual theological formation. Samanvaya is all about the quest. The fragrance of this quest is essential to the spirituality of a samanvayite. Here we don't speak about a sandwich theology rather a theology immersed in full life and with rich experiences.



Milner Vithayathil CMI
Bhopal

Reverse Spirituality

A Method to unfold the God among us

Samanvaya Vidya Dham, the regional centre is situated on the banks of the Ganges. The word Rishikesh defines as one who conquered his/her senses. This place welcomes you with lofty hills and mountains with a cool breeze and a mesmerising flow of amazing Ganges on the banks which thousands gather for aarti and the greeting of "Hari Ohm" resonating around.

Rishikesh is an ecstatic abode for a spiritual seeker. I was privileged and fortunate to do part of my theology in Rishikesh. The spirituality that I experienced here with a Catholic mindset amidst the Hindu ritualistic and spiritual atmosphere is a samanvayaik one.

Spirituality in Hinduism focuses on a self-attainable state through the self-exploration of oneself. Here one speaks of self-discovery and self-identification, peace and tranquillity and moksha. Therefore, anyone who is serious about his/or her spirituality takes up one of the traditional spiritual paths like Yoga or any of the classical spiritual margas, or Pranayama, Reiki and so forth. In contrast, in our Church, mostly we depend on Grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Spirituality here demands the formation of a generous heart and an open and wide horizons of mind towards humanity. Human concern is part of the spirituality in Christianity.

Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of many pictures in Gospels to express this state of being. Spirituality that only confines to four walls of a room and discussed in a multi-cuisine AC hall without humanitarian concern is nullified in itself. Gospel exhortation of Love your neighbour as yourself is a reminder note for us.

Samanvaya challenges us to have a samanvayam of the inner journey to the depth of oneself with the outer journey to the heart of my neighbour. It is an attempt to integrate and blend a unique personalised spirituality that enables each one to reduce the distance between God and the people. It's a kind of reversing of oneself to look into the self as the bearers of the Kingdom of God. Together with the academic pursuit, doing theology in Samanvaya, is a sojourn in the inward journey to have self-realization with God and brother-concern with the people. It is always easy to walk on the path that was made by someone. However, each one is unique and Samanvaya at Rishikesh invites each one to tread a path that is unique to each one. Rishikesh is an open invitation to unfold our path with the realities of this Cosmos, God and Human.

B e s t P r a c t i c e s

BP

Religious life of Christianity is considered in the strict sense, as the sannyasa of Hinduism. Sannyasa is a way of living style of spiritual life and religiously noble way of being in this world. Some seekers are specially called to tread the difficult path to spiritual perfection by a rhythm of life conditioned and regulated by strenuous and determined spiritual disciplines like silence, solitude, meditation, prayer, practice of asceticism etc.

The core purpose of the engagement is evangelization. Bishop Jonas found that in order to evangelize the people of Saurashtra and Kutch with their specific religiosity, culture, life-style and spirituality, it is imperative that we address the realization of the soul's desire for the realization of God". He was wise enough not to make the presence of the Church foreign to the local people but to identify with the people, language and culture. It is to be noted that there was an encouraging response to this proposal from religious congregations. In the course of time, this vision has been achieved to some extent, with the establishment of such Ashrams. In Bedi, Bhanavad, Sihor and Palitana, cloistered convent at Wanker and the hermitage of Sadvi Prasannadevi in the Gir fort of Junagadh.

Junagadh is famous for the vast Gir forests which inhabit one of the endangered species the Asiatic lions. According to historians, the Gir region was once a prosperous town. But due to frequent famines, people fled leaving the helpless leopards, lion and other animals at the mercy of the nature. How they have survived is still a question. But with human beings now around the forests their survival has definitely become a bigger question. Approximately an hour's walk up the hill from the footsteps of Mount Girnar, a hut is seen, which is called Snehadeepam hermitage. It is the first canonical hermitage in Rajkot Mission.

The way of presenting the Gospel is as important as the life of the person who presents it. This is certainly true in the Indian context, where people are more persuaded by holiness of life than by intellectual argument. The witness of life has become more than ever an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching, precisely because of this we are, to a certain extent, responsible for the progress of the Gospel that we proclaim. The People of today accept more the exemplary life of a person than mere words preached. In matters of religion, people accept only a man of God. As the Rose needs no speech but simply spreads its perfume, even the blind who do not see the rose perceive its fragrance.



Junagadh Ashram



Regin Kuriyalapuzha CMI
Bhavnagar

In the Indian context an Ashram can be considered an abode of Holiness. Harmony and prayerfulness are special characteristics of an Ashram. People from all walks of life flock into these holy places in search of peace. An Ashram is meant for the training of Spiritual sadhanas like meditation, Yoga and spiritual discourses. In the Indian context people are naturally driven towards interiority and contemplation which the Ashram atmosphere amply offer to us. The conducive atmosphere of Ashram itself is the fitting platform for meditative contemplation without any training, guidance and teaching.

Sr Prasanna Devi, from her very early childhood aspired for a life rooted in spirit which would give her a religious and spiritual orientation and consequent plan of action. She lived as a Benedictine Sister for two years in Bangalore. But her soul was restless. She did not find spiritual solace and mental satisfaction in that style of life: she sensed that her call was something very different: she strenuously prayed to discern and realize her real mission of life. In the inner core of her being she felt a strong call for the way of life of a wandering hermit. In 1973 she started the life of such a wandering sannyasini as it is envisaged in the Indian tradition. In the spirit of pilgrimage she travelled the length and breadth of India and visited different Christian and Hindu ashrams and gained personal experience of their specific charism, particular action plan and style of functioning.

In July 1976 she was visited by Rev. Dr Dominic of Ashirvanam Monastery at Kenkery, Bangalore whom she considered her Guru. He instilled in her an intense desire to acquire true spiritual strength, taught her the contemplative prayer and showed her how to listen to the Lord in silence. And that was the turning point of her life. And with his guidance she began her journey as a hermit in the Sneha deepam hermitage, in Girnar. After having lived a very contented life as a hermit for 40 years, now she leads a graceful retired life. As a successor to Sr Prasannadevi, now Fr. Christhanand lives in this hermitage as a hermit. Even before the beginning of the sabbatical leave Fr Sebastian had decided to permanently live in this hermitage. Whenever he had visited this place on the previous occasions, he felt very homely there. Having made up his mind to live as a hermit in Atmeshvar, his next concern was about authorities and confraternity as to how they will understand his decision and give permission. But while attending a seminar organised for the Retreat Preachers and the would be Preachers at CCSR, Pariyaram, Thrissur he got an opportunity to interact with Fr Binoy

Karimaruthumkal, the retreat director.

At the time of prayer he got a vision that the place where Fr. Christhanand was going to stay is already arranged and set ready for him by Jesus Christ. With this vision, now he was not only more convinced of his new journey of life as a hermit but also all his worries and fears vanished away. Thus he started living in Atmesvar, receiving the name 'Fr. Christhanand'. Christhanand means the one who rejoices in Christ the Savior.



AT THE TIME OF PRAYER HE GOT A VISION THAT THE PLACE WHERE FR. CHRISTHANAND WAS GOING TO STAY IS ALREADY ARRANGED AND SET READY FOR HIM BY JESUS CHRIST.

He started his life here from 15th August 2019 and there was also a great resonance of a sense of freedom and independence emanating in his heart. Since this place remained vacant for almost five years he had to do a lot of cleaning work to make it look like it's today. But by God's Grace everything went smoothly. The only thing troubling was the forest officials, RFO. They put him out from the forest twice, but by Sr. Prasannadevi's contacts he could come back again and could continue his stay here. He has no worries of any kind of wild animals as he is mostly friendly with them all. One of his initial challenges was to live without electricity and cooking-gas. There were some occasions when he had to face Hindu fanatics, lions and leopard. But everything God handled well. In the busy market world of today people are eluded of true inner joy because there is no time for listening and heart to heart conversation. Let this be an inspiration for many to be drawn towards interiority and contemplate. Many congratulations and prayerful wishes to Rev. Fr. Christhanand for choosing this challenging way of life.



Mission Collaborators

MC

Darsana Institute of Philosophy, Wardha, offers – Atmadarsan - a Certificate Course in Spirituality and Religious Life to facilitate the formation of youngest buds of different women congregations. Atmadarsan is a Sanskrit term. Atma means soul and darsan means vision or sight and thus Atmadarsan denotes having the glimpse or vision of soul. It also implies self-knowledge and enlightenment – that means, understanding of self which brings transformation of the whole self which in turn leads to self-transcendence and improves socio-cultural consciousness. Atmadarsan fundamentally aims at theological, missionary and pastoral formation of young women religious candidates in tune with the socio-cultural religious background of India. It will certainly enhance the vertical and horizontal relationships, that is, relation with God and relation with others.

On the backdrop, Darsana Institute was established in the year 1983. As the years passed, recognizing the need and importance of empowering the formees of women congregations on the same footing in the mission, Darsana took a landmark decision and opened its portals for young women aspirants of various religious congregations of the vicinity. And so, they designed a comprehensive formative course on spirituality and religious life. This joint venture of CMI fathers and other women religious congregations was launched in the year 2002 under the directorship of Fr. Varghese Kottoor and team with the permission of the higher authorities.

Atmadarsan has its honoured place in the heart of Darsana at Wardha. The place Wardha also has its significance because it is the highly favoured place of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our nation. The Sevagram Ashram, he founded, and Paramdham Ashram of Vinoba Bhave are situated at Wardha. Darsana is largely surrounded by non-Christian communities and few religious communities and catholic families.

As the name indicates, Atmadarsan envisions enlightenment and promotes the self-understanding of each one with special reference to contextual formation and endorse the harmonious co-existence and co-operation of the different congregations, both male and female. It is hoped that it would provide necessary training to the young sisters, who are eventually to be the co-workers with the priests in the field of mission apostolate, and to co-operate with all others and to grow in a communion of family spirit. Inspired by the holistic mission of Jesus, Darsana strives to bring about the awareness of the body-mind-spirit dynamics in the students of Atmadarsan, so that they may become better and zealous religious bringing hundred-fold fruits for the Church and the Kingdom of God. The process of discovering one's true self as the image of God helps promoting mindsets and practices that enhance personal and communitarian life. It orients the formees who spontaneously responded to the Divine Call, to realize their potential and to guide them in the service of humanity. They are moulded, shaped and formed to be the promise of the Church and the respective congregations. It envisages promoting appropriate form of collaboration and communion among different religious communities.

The duration of the course is from the third week of June to the first week of February of an academic year. The classes in the Institute are arranged only in the forenoon hours with a view that each congregation may get enough time to teach their candidates what is specific to their spirituality, namely the life and vision of the founder/foundress, the examples of the pioneer members, history and tradition of the



THE PROCESS OF DISCOVERING ONE'S TRUE SELF AS THE IMAGE OF GOD HELPS PROMOTING MINDSETS AND PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITARIAN LIFE.



Grace SD
Warda



congregation, the prayers and the community practices and the special apostolate to which the congregation is called forth. The courses also are arranged in such a way that the trainees get instruction in all relevant subjects systematically at a stretch by competent personnel in each field.

During the academic year, several growth-oriented courses are made available for the students. Each subject has minimum fifteen classes in a week concluding with an exam. Development of skills in communication and composition in English language is given priority in the scheme of things. The English foundation course for the initial three months is the gateway for greater knowledge in some of the important topics in spirituality and religious life. The program also comprises of topics like Introduction to Religious Life, Initiation to Prayer Life, Yoga, Introduction to Vatican II, Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Exercises, Psalms, Personality and Leadership Dynamics, Psychology of Feminine Sexuality, Introduction to Liturgy, Church History, Mariology, Maturity, Introduction to Bible and Synoptic Gospels, Health and Hygiene, Sacraments of Initiation, Dynamics of Psycho-Spiritual Growth, Vocation and Mission of Women Religious, Formation of Conscience, and a seminar on saints.

Besides, Atmadarsan aims at strengthening their faith and vocation, talents and personality development, improving communication skills, building self-confidence, psycho-spiritual integration, intercultural living and its dynamics. It also provides ample opportunities for its students for self-knowledge through numerous literary and cultural activities and training in Yoga and psychology classes.

Various cultural, educational and entertainment programmes are organized in connection with important feasts like Independence Day, Teachers Day, Deepavali, Christmas, Republic Day etc.

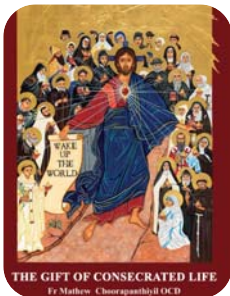
The well-equipped library of Darsana is open for the Atmadarsan students also. Besides numerous Philosophy books, the library contains volumes of spiritual books and also about 40 journals and weeklies, including some in vernacular languages. The 13 multi-volume encyclopaedias are also very useful for the students.

The formee who enters Atmadarsan is not the formee who exits at the end of the year. The transformation that takes place during the course of the year is quite evident by the testimony of the alumni. They grow in self-esteem, improve their command over English language, and obtain courage to face the public. They gain the capacity to interact with others fearlessly and freely. The inter-cultural context provides ample opportunities for respecting and celebrating the cultural diversity. Rev. Dr. Francis Aykaraparampil CMI is the present director of Atmadarsan.

Presently, the Congregations involved in this programme are Congregation of the Sisters of Charity (CSC), Daughters of Mary (DM), Franciscan Clarist Congregation (FCC), Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate (MSMI), Sisters of the Destitute (SD), and St John the Baptist Congregation (SJB). It is great to experience the genuine care and generosity of CMI fathers in this venture in this mission area. We gratefully remember all its directors and mentors of yester years. The impact of this program in the field of formation on the lives of young women aspirants for nearly two decades is remarkable. May Atmadarsan continue to be a beacon of light on the path of empowerment and enlightenment for generations to come.

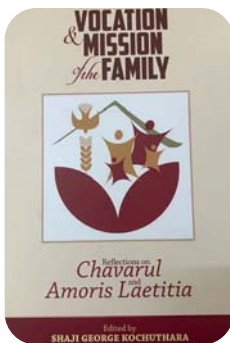


Books



The Gift of Consecrated Life
By Mathew Choorapanthiyil OCD
Carmel International
Publishing House

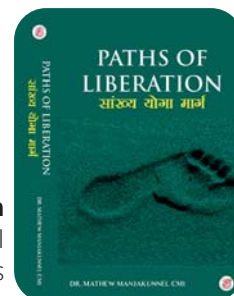
THE GIFT OF CONSECRATED LIFE A COMMON FORMATION PROGRAM FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF ALL RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS! We are so happy to inform you about the publication of a new book 'The Gift of Consecrated life" from the Little Way Spirituality Center Ranchi. Drawing upon the experience of conducting formation courses for many years and from the personal experience as a formator, the Author writes this training manual for the use of all congregations. This book is designed in such a way to enable the congregations to conduct training programs for their superiors, formators, and all those who are involved in formation. Please contact us for further details of the book.



Vocation and Mission of the Family
Edt. By Shaji George Kochuthara CMI
Dharmaram Publications

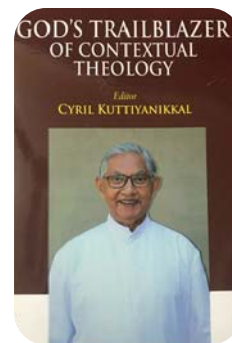
Reflections on Chavarul and Amoris Laetitia is a collection of essays on Marriage and family by scholars from various continents on Chavarul, a letter to families by St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia. The editor has brought together an international and interdisciplinary collection of papers in the fields of moral and pastoral theology, history, and spirituality from various continents and cultural backgrounds.

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



Paths of Liberation
By Thomas Manjakunnel CMI
BFC Publications

Jesus Christ the Savior of the world has taught the humanity the path of salvation and self-realization. "Peace I leave with you; I do not give to you as the world gives." John 14/27. The Buddha invented the path of happiness and taught us the eight-fold path for Samyak Samadhi. Kapila the composer of Samkhya regards knowledge as the means of liberation. Patanjali who propounded Yoga Sutras advocates Ashtanga Yoga for emancipation-the state of ultimate peace. In-fact everyone is entitled to achieve this liberation even through the paths are different. But it can be achieved only through a spiritual journey with an earnest effort. So this book describes about the paths of liberation as discussed in Samkhya Yoga Philosophy.



God's Trailblazer of Contextual Theology
Edt. By Cyril Kuttianikkal CMI
Christian World Imprints

The present volume of "God's trailblazer of contextual theology" is a humble effort to keep burning the fire of the zealit by Fr Louis. This book has been envisaged in Five parts. Al the articles in this commemorative volume is written by people who are closely associated with Fr Louis. Fr Louis was a complete package of sensitive and intellectual qualities. His whole life was spent in formation houses and his contribution to the field of formation is remarkable. These articles in the present volume shall inspire to keep the light of contextual theological enquiry burning in the hearts and works of us.

IN BRIEF news / events



Rev. Fr Prior General and General Council members successfully completed the mission visit in all our provinces and they returned in Prior General's House on 05 November 2021. It was a great occasion for the General Team to know the missionary initiatives and apostolates of the provinces and the members of the Congregation. There were also discussions during the province gatherings on challenges and opportunities of the missionary activities especially in the North India and the changing social situations of India. Rev. Fr Prior General appreciated and encouraged the efforts of all for the implementation of the thrust of General Synaxis 38, "Communitarian Witnessing beyond Borders.



On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of three of our missions, namely Bijnor, Jagdalpur and Rajkot the General Department of Evangelisation and Pastoral Ministry under the auspices of Poornodaya Missiological Training Centre, Bhopal organised a webinar from 25 to 27 November, 2021. From all over the world our meeting members joined for the same. This was organized to renew the mission consciousness in our members.



The blessing of the CMI House in Altenkirchen, Germany, was held on September 13, 2021. Very Rev. Fr Martin Kürten, the Forane Vicar, officiated the blessing assisted by Fr. George Vadakkinezhath, the delegate superior and Varghese Vithayathil, the superior of the house, in the presence of the CMI missionaries serving in the Cologne Zone. Altenkirchen is a small town, the head quarters of the district of Altenkirchen. The CMI House and the parish Church are situated right in the centre of the administrative units of the districts. There are five Churches where regular liturgical services and other activities are held. The CMI community in Altenkirchen has three members: Fathers Varghese Vithayathil (Superior), Roy Anchanickal and Jose Kulangara (Members).

The CMI Community expresses our sincere thanks to His Eminence Reiner Cardinal Woelki, the Archbishop of Cologne, Rev. Fr Thomas Chathamparampil, the Prior General Rev. Fr Josey Thamarassery, Vicar General and the members of the General Council for their paternal care and support.



IN BRIEF news / events



CMI Major Superiors Meeting with General Formation Council and the Staff of major Study houses took place at Dharmaram College from Friday, 17 September 2021 to Monday, 20 September 2021.



After a thorough preparation and language study, Fr. Tomy Pothanpara (Rajkot), Fr. Jose Pattathil (Rajkot) and Fr. Dominic Kunnumpuram (Bijnor) left for the Brazil mission on 22nd November 2021. Frs. Tomy and Dominic will be in the Archdiocese of Santarem and Fr. Jose will be in the diocese of Teixeira de Freitas-Caravelas. Six of our fathers are already working in Santarem Archdiocese and the mission was taken up in the diocese of Teixeira de Freitas-Caravelas in the month of February 2021. CMISSION offers God's abundant blessings and prayerful wishes to all the Missionaries of Brazil and especially the newcomers.



Pope Francis has announced December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021, the Year of St. Joseph. On this occasion the Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry of CMI congregation organized a seminar on Joseph: The Model of Religious Life on 13th Saturday 9 am to 14th Sunday 12.30 pm, November 2021 at Poornodaya Auditorium, Bhopal.



The newly renovated St. Joseph's Monastery Church Mannanam was re-dedicated on 23rd November 2021 by the Metropolitan Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam of Changanassery Archdiocese. The day marked the 7th anniversary of the canonization of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and St. Euphrasia, two saints from the Kerala Church and the ceremony was attended by many Priests, religious and faithful. The renovation which began in the year 2018 was successfully completed and has enhanced the splendour of the Shrine and has elevated the entire ambience with a spiritual and prayerful atmosphere.



Mission visit of Rev Fr Prior General & general team



CMI Kashmir mission in Poonch



Renovated Church and Altar of St Kuriakose Elias Chavara Pilgrim Center, Mannanam

Wish you
A Joyful Christmas
&
A Happy New Year

