



THE  
**Carmelite Congregation**  
OF  
**MALABAR**

1831-1931

TRICHINOPOLY:  
ST. JOSEPH'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL PRESS

1932



Beatissime Pater.

I. Joannes a Jesu et Maria Superiori Generali Congregationis  
venerabilium Carmelitarum Syro-Malabarensium ad pe-  
des Sanctitatis Vestrae humillime prostratus, cunctis et volente au-  
toritate Congregationis constituta, tibi sumque Confratribus Apo-  
stolicam Benedictionem impetrat.

Autograph Blessing of H. H. Pope Pius XI.



Bealissime Galer

2. Joannes a Jesu et Maria Superiori Generali Congregationis Conceptionum Carmelitarum Syro-Monachar censurus ad preceptum Sanctitatis Regule huiusmodi proculiter continemmente an-  
notatque Congregatione constituta sibi missis Confratribus et  
Nobilibus Benedictinorum iuramentum.

Syro-Malabar Hierarchy



His Excellency  
Mar Augustine Kandathil, D.D.,  
Archbishop of Ernakulam.



His Excellency  
Mar Alexander Choolaparampil, D.D.,  
Bishop of Kottayam.



His Excellency  
Mar Francis Vachappilly, D.D.,  
Bishop of Trichur.



His Excellency  
Mar James Katscherry, D.D.,  
Bishop of Changanacherry.



KING GEORGE V



His Excellency The Right Hon'ble  
Sir Freeman Freeman-Thomas Baron Willingdon,  
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.M.G., G.B.E.,  
*Viceroy of India.*



His Highness Sri Rama Varma Chittira Thirunal  
*Maharaja of Travancore*



The

Carmelite - - -

- - Congregation - -

- - of Malabar

1831-1931



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## FOREWORD

**M**ALABAR, the cradle of Christianity in India, from remote Apostolic times, has always been characterized by her filial devotion towards the Mother of God. Tradition has it that the Apostle, St. Thomas, had an apparition of our Lady on Malayattur Mount, where he was encouraged by her to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of the land. Christian monuments of antiquity unmistakably proclaim how deep-rooted was devotion to the Mother of God in the hearts of the St. Thomas Christians. Many of their churches that are in existence now for over fifteen or sixteen centuries, are dedicated to our Blessed Lady, the Virgin Mary. The Divine Maternity is commemorated several times daily, in the Mass, in the Liturgical prayers, in the public religious functions, and in the popular hymns and songs. The holy name of Mary was constantly on the lips of the Malabarians, and her feasts were kept up by them with all possible solemnity. There was scarcely a family—as even now—but proudly owned a daughter named *Mariam*; and priests added to their Christian name that of the Mother of God. The devotion of the "eight days' fast," consisting of voluntary abstinence, fast, and unceasing prayer in one or other of the famous churches dedicated to our Lady, is peculiar to the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar. This practice—observed particularly by young women—dates as far back as the 9th century and is nowhere in vogue in the Christian world except in Malabar.

After the advent of the Portuguese, Western forms of Marian devotion were introduced into Malabar, where, in the hearts of the sons of St. Thomas, they found a soil congenial to their growth and development. It was at this period, in 1577, we read of Pope Gregory XIII, sending 50,000 rosaries to the St. Thomas Christians, to augment their devotion to the Blessed Virgin. In 1585 or 1586, Rev. Fr. Roz, S.J., wrote in admiration of the strenuous efforts of the Syrian Clergy of Malabar to promulgate, by their public preaching and teaching, the glorious title of Mary "Mother of God".



Fr. Roz was a witness of the extraordinary devotion to the Mother of God of the then Archdeacon of the Syro-Malabar Church, George of Christ. He had, in 1576, built a church in honour of our Lady of the Assumption, and had procured for it privileges from Pope Gregory XIII, through the Rajah of Cochin.

The Schism of 1653 did not interfere with the queenly sway Mary held in Malabar. The Papal Commissary, Mgr. Sebastiani of the Carmelite Order, sent to stem the Schism, was highly gratified to find more than 5000 Catholics, in the parish of Kuravilangad alone, wearing the scapular of our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The schismatics who had unhappily severed all connections with the Holy See, could not find it in their hearts to turn away from the Mother of God, as did their contemporary sectarians of the West.

The Carmelite rule that followed, strengthened and confirmed the filial attachment of the Christians of Malabar to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Marian devotion in its various forms is now so admirably practised by Catholic Malabar, as to suggest to any one that the Catholic religion and Marian devotion are synonymous on the Malabar coast, so much so, that a Catholic without the scapular of our Lady about his shoulders, is liable to be taken for a non-Catholic. The word "Matha" (mother), used by a Malabar Catholic without any qualifying epithet, is taken to refer to our Lady *per se*. You will search in vain for a house in Catholic Malabar, that does not possess an altar dedicated to the Divine Mother, before which the inmates daily recite the Rosary and pay special homage during the month of May. All these proclaim, how devoted the St. Thomas Christians were and are to the Mother of the Word made flesh. Malabar is really 'Mary's Land'; may it not be allowed to adopt the enviable title "Mary's Dower" unhappily forfeited elsewhere?

It was as it were to crown the Marian cult in the Syro-Malabar Church that Providence designed the Institute of the Carmelite Congregation of Malabar in 1831. The year was a propitious one, as it witnessed the celebration of the Fourteenth Centenary of the

Council of Ephesus, that crowning triumph of our Blessed Lady over heresy.

This Congregation limited in its resources, has yet signalised itself by promoting loyalty towards the See of St. Peter and devotion towards the Mother of God, as did the Council of Ephesus in 431. Students of Malabar Church History are well aware that, but for the Congregation, the Rocosian and the Mellosian Schisms would certainly have cut Malabar off from the vivifying union with the See of Peter. The Congregation has, from its very first beginnings, always worked zealously to promote devotion to Mary among the Christians of Malabar. It is no exaggeration to state that the Marian devotion as it exists today in Malabar, owes a great debt to the untiring labours of the members of the Congregation. Conspicuous among the results of this salutary devotion has been the erection of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy. For, His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, now gloriously reigning, in the course of his Consistorial allocution on December 21, 1923, proclaiming the erection of the Hierarchy, remarked among other things: "*Id autem omnino Postulabat.....singularis eorumdem erga Beatissimam Virginem Mariam pietas.*"

All Malabar knows and appreciates the work effected by the Congregation during its century-long existence. Along domestic, social, educational and spiritual lines, Catholic Malabar has made rapid progress, owing, in great part, to the disinterested labours of this indigenous Carmelite Congregation. It is therefore, but proper, that a short sketch of its history be published in book form as a souvenir of its Centenary celebrations during the years 1931 and 1932, sealed with a special blessing and unique favours granted by the Holy See. The work of drafting the sketch was entrusted to the Very Rev. Fr. Bartholomew of Jesus, Prior, Chethipusha Monastery, and to the Rev. Fr. Placid of St. Joseph, Ph.D., D.D., D.C.L., and carefully revised by the Very Rev. Fr. Hyacinth of the Mother of Dolours, Prior, Mannanam Monastery, and by the Rev. Fr. Romeo Thomas of the Immaculate Conception, M.A., L.T. I therefore, on my part, gladly give my approbation to its being sent to the Press, with the hope that it will prove a fitting token

of thanksgiving to God Almighty, for all the graces and favours He has bestowed on the Church and people of Malabar, through the instrumentality of the "Carmel in Malabar". May it also be a medium of expressing our gratitude to all the generous benefactors and well-wishers of the Institute, who have contributed to make it what it is at present: "The most important Religious Congregation of the Indian Church."

They said to him, "Lord, we have no more time to wait, for the day is now at hand, and we must go and sow the seed." And he answered them, saying, "Whoever sows the seed, and the seed falls on good ground, it will bring forth fruit, and it will be multiplied a hundredfold, and it will be multiplied a hundredfold, and it will be multiplied a hundredfold."

MORASTERY OF THE SACRED HEART,  
THEYVA, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

L. D. at M.

MR. JOHN OF JESUS MARY,  
T. O. C. D.,  
Prior General.



## INTRODUCTION

I. I. "The kingdom of heaven", said Our Lord, "is like to a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof" (Matt. xiii. 31, 32). This parable which was also a prophecy, was surely meant to apply primarily to the kingdom of God



His Eminence, Cardinal Sincero, Secretary of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Church.

upon earth, the Church. It prefigured also the Church's various institutions having as their aim the salvation and the sanctification of souls, among which, Religious Orders and Congregations hold

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a conspicuous place. Their history will tell us how humble their origin was, how slowly they grew, what fruits they have borne. The Carmelite Congregation of Malabar, the history of which we propose to sketch in this brochure, cannot indeed in any way compare with the great Religious Orders in the Church, which have ever stood out as her glory. There is, however, every indication, as may be seen from its history, that it too is a seed, sown by the divine Sower and fostered by Him fondly, these past one hundred years, till it has grown to be a small tree, the branches of which spread over all the Malayalam-speaking states of India, i.e., Travancore, Cochin, and British Malabar. The very existence of this Religious Congregation for a century in this country, while many others became extinct after a short life, compels one to cry out, "The finger of God is here." Whether or not the Congregation has justified its century-long existence, God knows; it is for others to judge. We mean in these pages merely to make a short survey of men and events, as they present themselves to us in a hurried review of them.

2. The Religious Congregation under review is of the Syro-Malabar Rite. It is an indigenous one in its origin. The divine Planter, who had sown the seed, put it under foreign influence in order to make it grow according to His eternal designs. As plants and trees get reformed in quality by means of grafting, so too, this plant adapted itself to the Western Mode of religious life, by adopting much that was found suitable to time and circumstances. The plant is indigenous, but it has been largely nourished and fertilized by the influence of Carmel.

II. 1. Before beginning our sketch, we deem it not irrelevant to say a few words about the Catholic Church in Malabar, of which the Carmelite Congregation is a fruit.

2. Both history and tradition testify that St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Our Lord, evangelized South India and left there a living legacy in the persons of the Syrian Christians known always in history as "The St. Thomas Christians." Tradition has it that from the very beginning they used the East Syrian or Syro-Chaldaic Rite.

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3. In the 16th century, the West coast of India came under Portuguese influence. The Portuguese started active missionary work. The King of Portugal was granted by the Holy See the right of

Patronage (Padroado) over the new missions. In 1534, a Bishopric was established at Goa. In 1558, it was raised to an Archbishopric, and a suffragan See was established in Cochin. The Syrian Christians attracted the attention of the Portuguese, and they felt the influence of the Padroado. In 1599, Mgr. Alexis de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, at a Synod held at Diamper,



His Excellency, Mgr. E. Mooney, Delegate Apostolic of the East Indies, 1926-1931

brought them under the Padroado and Latin rule. The Syrian See of Angamaly was placed under a Latin Bishop of Portuguese nationality, [and it was transferred to Cranganore in 1605. This change occasioned dissatisfaction among the Syrians. In 1653, it

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culminated in a great schism in the till-then-undivided Church of Malabar.

4. Those Syrians who were not involved in the schism sent a petition to the Holy See. At their request, Italian Carmelite Missionaries were sent to Malabar in 1656. Some influential members of the Syrian Clergy co-operated with the Carmelites, and the mission proved a success. Since the Catholic Syrians did not like to continue under the jurisdiction of the Padroado Archbishop of Cranganore, the Holy See placed them under the jurisdiction of Mgr. Sebastian, the head of the Carmelite Mission. The Vicariate of Malabar or Verapoly was established for the Syrians, and when Mgr. Sebastian was forced by the Dutch to leave India, an indigenous Syrian Priest, Alexander de Campo, was consecrated Vicar Apostolic of Malabar in 1663. The Vicariate was independent of the Padroado and was subject to the Propaganda. After the death of the Syrian Bishop, the Vicariate was placed under Latin and Carmelite Prelates. Hence, by the beginning of the 18th century, many Syrians reverted to the jurisdiction of the Padroado Archbishop of Cranganore. About a century later, in 1838, when along with the Padroado, the Diocese of Cochin and the Archdiocese of Cranganore were suppressed by the Holy See, the Syrians of Cranganore were again placed under Verapoly. In 1857, on the restoration of the Padroado, a part of the Syrians again came under Padroado jurisdiction.

5. When the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from Cochin, at the end of the 17th century, Verapoly was given jurisdiction also over the Latin churches. Thus Verapoly ruled over both Syrians and Latins. In 1844, the Holy See decreed the separation of the South Travancore Mission from Verapoly. The decree was given effect in 1853, and the new Vicariate of Quilon was thus established.

6. The intense desire of the Syrians to be governed by a Bishop of their own Rite, again gave rise to the Roccossan schism in 1861 and the Mellissian schism in 1874. Moved by the repeated petitions of the Syrians, the Holy See determined to grant them indigenous rule. As a first step, the Holy See, in 1887, withdrew the Syrians from the jurisdiction of Verapoly and Cranganore and

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placed them under two new European Vicars Apostolic. In 1896, three indigenous Syrians were consecrated Vicars Apostolic. Finally, in 1923, the Holy See established the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy with the Archbishop of Ernakulam as Metropolitan and the Bishops of Changanacherry, Trichur, and Kottayam, as suffragans. The Syro-

Malabar Rite is a modified form of the ancient East-Syrian or Syro-Chaldaic Rite.

7. The schismatic Syrians who were cut off from the Mother Church in 1653, fell into the Jacobite heresy in 1665; in course of time they adopted the West Syrian Rite of



His Excellency, Mgr. L. P. Klerkels C. P., the present Delegate Apostolic. This Rite permits Arabic translations for certain prayers and Rubrics. Among the Malabar



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Jacobites, Malayalam took the place of Arabic. Protestant Missions followed in the wake of Jacobitism; they made converts chiefly from the depressed classes. Several attempts at reunion were made. The one set on foot by the Bethany Movement deserves the praise and esteem of all. Mar Ivanios, Archbishop of Bethany, and his suffragan, Mar Theophilus of Tiruvalla, were received into the Church on the 30th of September, 1930. They retain the West-Syrian Rite of Antioch, as used by the Malabar Jacobites, with necessary corrections. This new Rite is called the "Malankara Syrian Rite" to distinguish it from the "Syro-Malabar Rite", Malabar and Malankara mean the same, and the word "Syrian" in Malabar refers to the St. Thomas Christians.

Next word about the Latin Catholics of Malabar. In 1886, when the Indian Latin Hierarchy was established, Verapoly became an Archdiocese with Quilon under it. Cranganore had been suppressed long before; Cochin still continues to be under Goa as it was from its beginning. In 1930, the southern portions of Verapoly and Quilon were constituted respectively into the new Dioceses of Vijayapuram and Kottar. Verapoly and Kottar are entrusted to the secular clergy; Vijayapuram and Quilon are administered by the Detached Carmelites of the First Order, and Verapoly still enjoys the title of the Archdiocese.

III. 1. Religious life for the St. Thomas Christians was not a novelty. Osorius in the 16th century wrote thus about them:—"There are among them sodalities of monks and communities of sacred virgins, who, however, live in remote dwellings: Chastity is observed by them with the utmost zeal. They derive this custom from the time of St. Thomas" (Raulin). There was a monastery and a church of striking dimensions at Mylapore near the tomb of St. Thomas, whither many of the St. Thomas Christians resorted to spend their lives in prayer and contemplation. Like the Chaldean monks they must have been following the ancient Rule of St. Antony. The Chaldean bishops who came to Malabar in 1504 make mention of this monastery in their letter to the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon. On the following passage in that letter of the bishops, "some christians have begun to inhabit the house (Dair) of St.

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Thomas the Apostle," the Rev. Fr. H. Hosten, S.J. makes the following comment:—"The Syrian bishops of 1504 would apply to it the expression used by Amr (c. A. D. 1340), and the Dair Thuma of Yakut and the poet Marrar al-Fak'asi might be Yonan's monastery of St. Thomas in India, near (or below) the Black Island



The Very Rev. Fr. General of the Carmelite Congregation of Malabar with his Councillors.

(before 363 A. D.) which we think should be identified with the monastery and church of great size and magnificence visited by Theodore, before A. D. 593-594 at the place in India where St. Thomas' body was first buried (i.e. Mylapore). . . . Mar Yonan's monastery (before 363 A. D.) was near the town of Milon, which we identify with Amr's Meilan, i. e. Mayila-pur (peacock-town)." (Kerala Society Papers, Series 5, p. 243.)

2. Thus we find that the Carmelite Congregation of Malabar is but a revival, in modern times, of religious life among the St. Thomas Christians. The Malankara Syrian Church too has Religious Institutions known as the Bethany Brotherhood and Bethany Sister-

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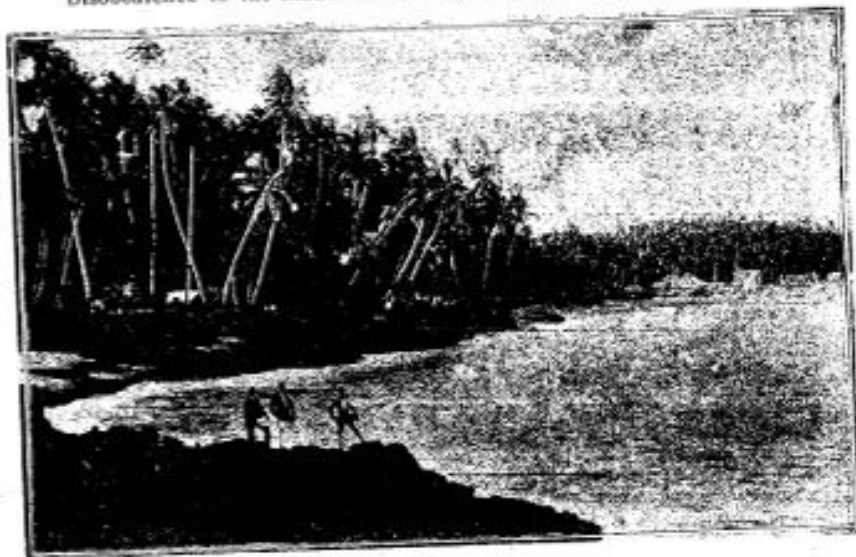
hood, which follow the ancient Rule of St. Basil. We shall have to speak incidentally of the Sisterhood of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Latins of Malabar also have indigenous Religious Institutions for men and women. Of all these, the Congregation we have to deal with, is the first in the order of time and importance.



#### CHAPTER I 1828-1831

##### The Two Founders of the Congregation—Beginnings of the Mother-House.

1. It was the beginning of the 19th century; the famine and plague that followed Tippu Sultan's invasion of Malabar had just subsided. The schismatic Syrians, owing to their too close contact with Protestant Missionaries, began gradually to be protestantized. Disobedience to the mandates of the Holy See was about to give

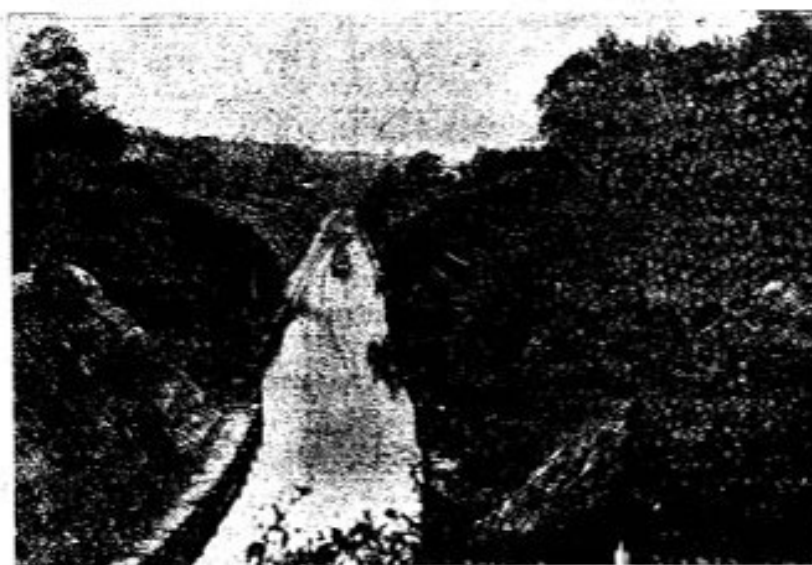


Malabar—A Sea View.

rise to the notorious Padroado schism in the churches under the Portuguese Patronage. The Syrian Catholics of Malabar, however, as a body, kept imperturbably to the Apostolic See. There was, however, among them much room for improvement and progress.



The education of the bulk of the Clergy was conducted by "Malpans" (professors), priests noted for their learning and piety, who, with the recognition from the local Ordinaries, were Rectors of Petit Seminaries—a system of imparting ecclesiastical education not uncommon in Europe even after the Council of Trent. A thorough knowledge of the Syriac language, a sufficient knowledge of the rudiments of Theology, a minute study of Holy Writ, and an elaborate training in all the Ceremonies of the Church, were at all times insisted upon by the "Malpans". The spread of Protestantism among the schismatic Syrians called for higher and more exhaustive knowledge in Theology on the part of the Clergy. Only a select few received their training in the Seminary of Verapoly conducted by the Discalced Carmelite Missionaries.



Malabar—A Hill View.

2. The status of the laity, too, called for improvement in various directions. Generally speaking, they knew to read and write. The study of Sanskrit Classics was the privilege of only a very few.

As for higher secular education, there was no scope for it. With the advent of the C. M. S. Missionaries, English education began to hold ground in Malabar. The schismatics naturally took the best advantage of it. In the absence of proper parochial schools, Catholic children had to learn their Catechism and ordinary prayers in village schools.

3. The local Ordinaries had always at heart the amelioration of the spiritual and social conditions of both the clergy and the laity; they had done towards it what their circumstances permitted; much, however, remained still to be done. The fulness of God's time came in the 19th century, when, there appeared a confluence of agencies that wrought with marvellous success an all-round improvement in the Church of Malabar. The chief of these agencies, it may be said, was the Carmelite Congregation of Malabar trained under the able direction of learned and holy ecclesiastical authorities.

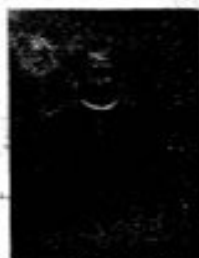
4. The Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Palakal of Pallipuram in the present Archdiocese of Ernakulam, beloved alike of God and man, a great disciplinarian and an ardent lover of prayer and retirement, was Rector of Pallipuram Seminary, which, in discipline and observance of rules, far surpassed all its sister seminaries scattered all over Malabar. As Secretary to Mgr. Raymond, S.J., C. C. D., Vicar Apo. of Verapoly 1808-1816, and as Consultant to his successors, Fr. Palakal had gained the esteem and love of his superiors and inferiors alike. His childhood was marked by an extraordinary devotion to Our Lady and to St. Dominic. He received his ecclesiastical training under Fr. Abraham Thachil of Kuthathode; immediately after his ordination to the Priesthood, he assumed the charge of training candidates for the Sacred Ministry. Through his disciples, Fr. Palakal introduced many reforms into the Malabar Church. He deviated, not a little, from the old method of conducting studies and enforcing discipline in seminaries. He insisted upon the seminarians always remaining under his immediate vigilance



Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Palakal

and their habitual wearing of the clerical soutane—an innovation gradually adopted by the whole of the Syro-Malabar Clergy. Not satisfied with the old curriculum of studies, he got down Tamil books treating on Theological subjects and taught them to his pupils. What characterized him most was his ardent love of study, prayer, and penance. He was always seen, either busy with books in his room, or pouring forth his soul before God in the church. He observed a daily rigorous fast without any breakfast. He had the gift of tears; it was more difficult for him to suppress his tears than for others to shed them. His face, though emaciated, was ever radiant with divine love; Mgr. Francis Xavier, O.C.D., the then Vicar Ap. of Verapoly, used to say that those who looked at the face of Fr. Palakal, felt the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. He daily recited, with the seminarians, the Syro-Malabar Office, which at that time had not a definite form and was rather long. His patience with and love of enemies were quite extraordinary. His life as the Seminary Rector actuated him with the desire of founding a Religious community, which, he hoped, would prove an instrument in the hands of God towards the material, intellectual and spiritual welfare of Malabar.

3. Father Palakal had an intimate friend in the person of Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Porukara, who, also, fostered the noble idea of inaugurating Religious life among the St. Thomas Christians. Father Thomas Porukara of Champakulam in the present Diocese of Changanacherry had received his ecclesiastical training in the Seminary of Verapoly. He too was noted for his deep piety and before distributing alms—a long-standing custom in the well-to-do families and churches of Malabar, Fr. Porukara would gather the poor in the church, recite the Rosary with them and prepare



Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Porukara,  
Founder.

mortified life. Vicar of his own parish, Champakulam. Fr. Porukara was the Apostle of the devotion to St. Joseph. The custom of preaching sermons in churches every Sunday, owes its origin to him. He was a great friend of the poor. Every Saturday,

many of them for Confession. He introduced the holy custom of reciting the Rosary in parish churches every evening. His zeal for the salvation of souls was so great that his superiors appointed him to more difficult and more responsible posts.

6. In 1828, when Fr. Porukara was Vicar of the Latin church of Thankacherry in the present Diocese of Quilon, Mgr. Maurelius Stabilini, O.C.D., came to Malabar as Vicar Apostolic *ad interim* of Verapoly. Relieving Fr. Porukara of the care of souls, Mgr. Stabilini, reposing full confidence in him, appointed him his Secretary.

7. Fr. Palakal and Fr. Porukara felt, with divine inspiration, that the time had come when they could realize their long cherished desire of founding a Religious institution wherein to devote them-



Mgr. Maurelius Stabilini, O.C.D., Vicar  
Apostolic of Verapoly 1828-1831.

selves entirely to the attainment of evangelical perfection and to work for the social, moral and spiritual advancement of their brethren. Their idea they communicated to Mgr. Stabilini. He was very pleased to approve of it and to encourage them in their holy enterprise. Moreover, he contributed his share of a good sum towards the erection of a suitable Religious house, inviting the churches and the faithful of Malabar to follow his example, to bring the arduous endeavours of the two Fathers to a happy success.

His circular letter met with a hearty response from the leading Syrian churches, especially of Kuttanad as also from the people of Malabar; in a very short time the two saintly Fathers collected sufficient funds with which they could begin the work of the Religious house they proposed to erect.

PHOTO OF THE CIRCULAR LETTER

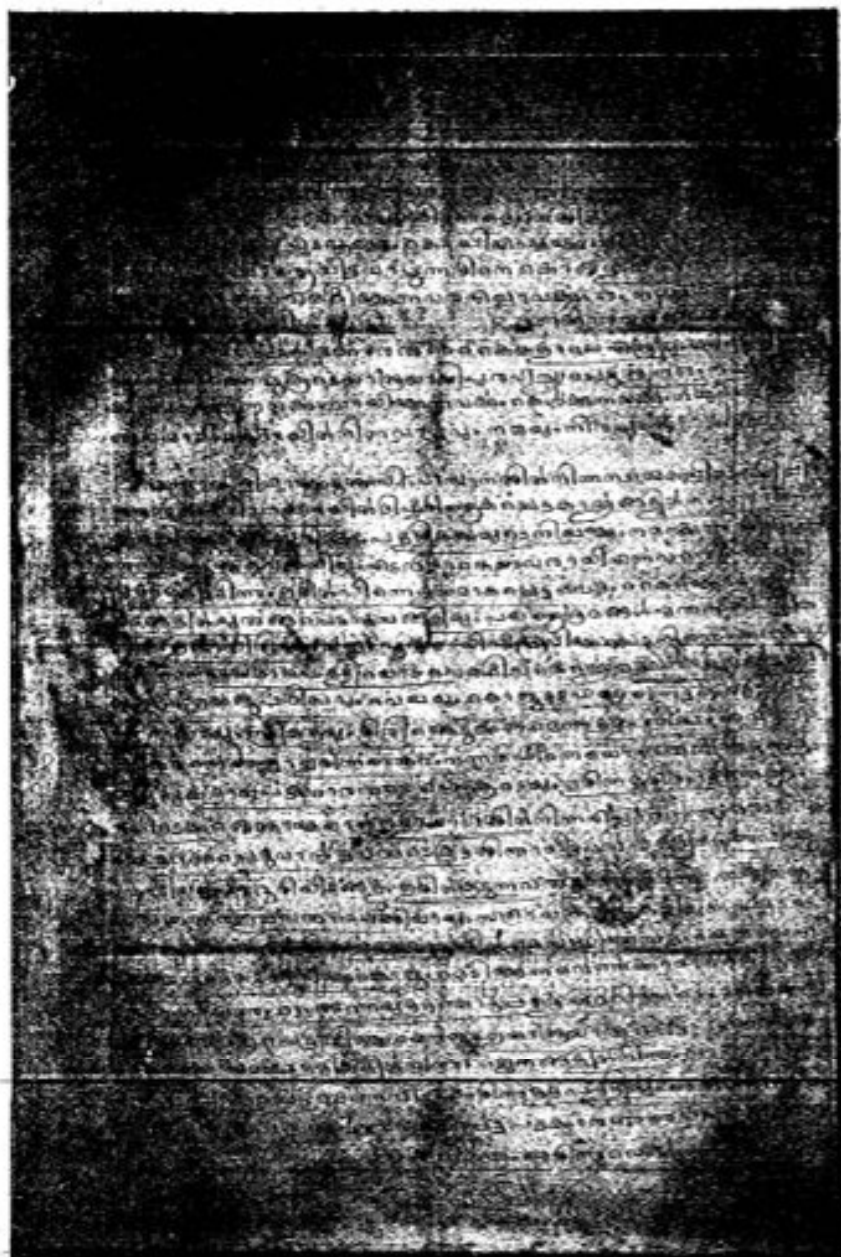
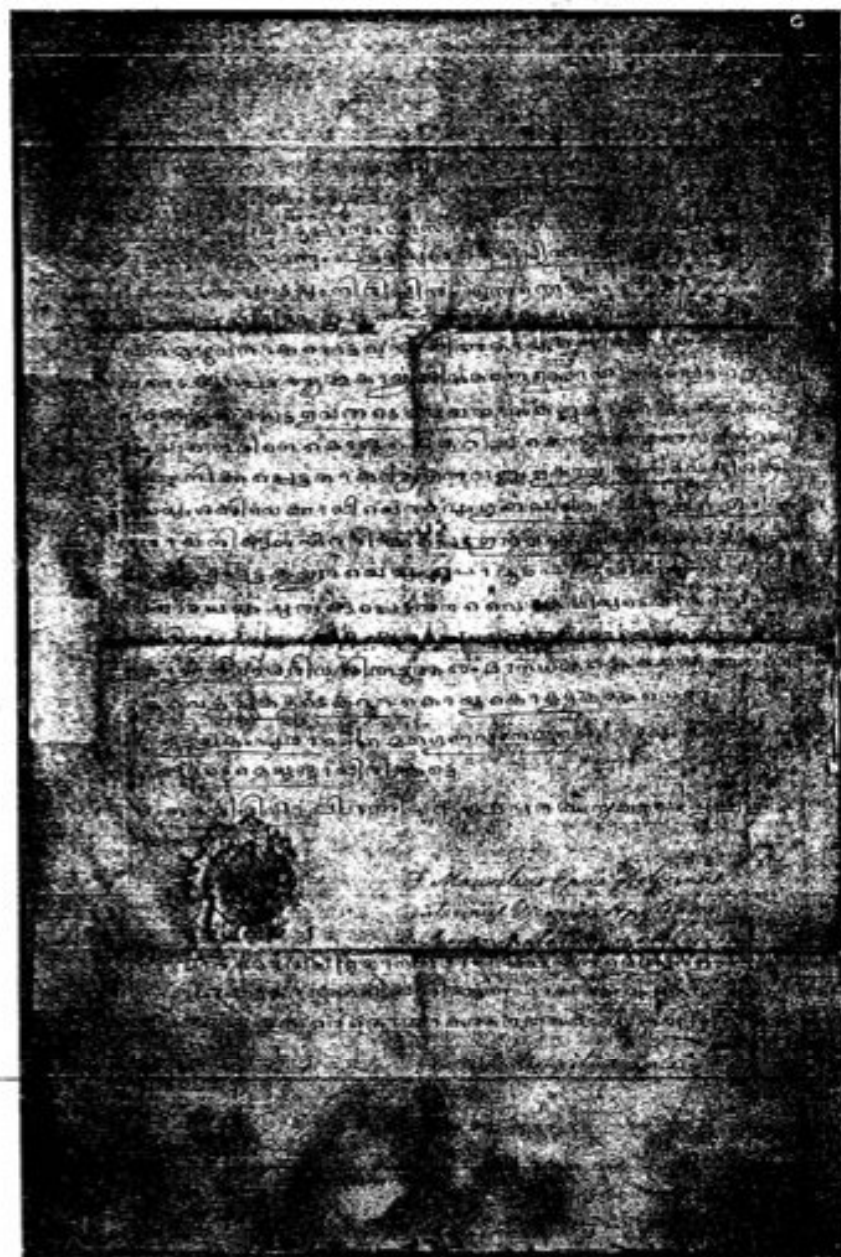
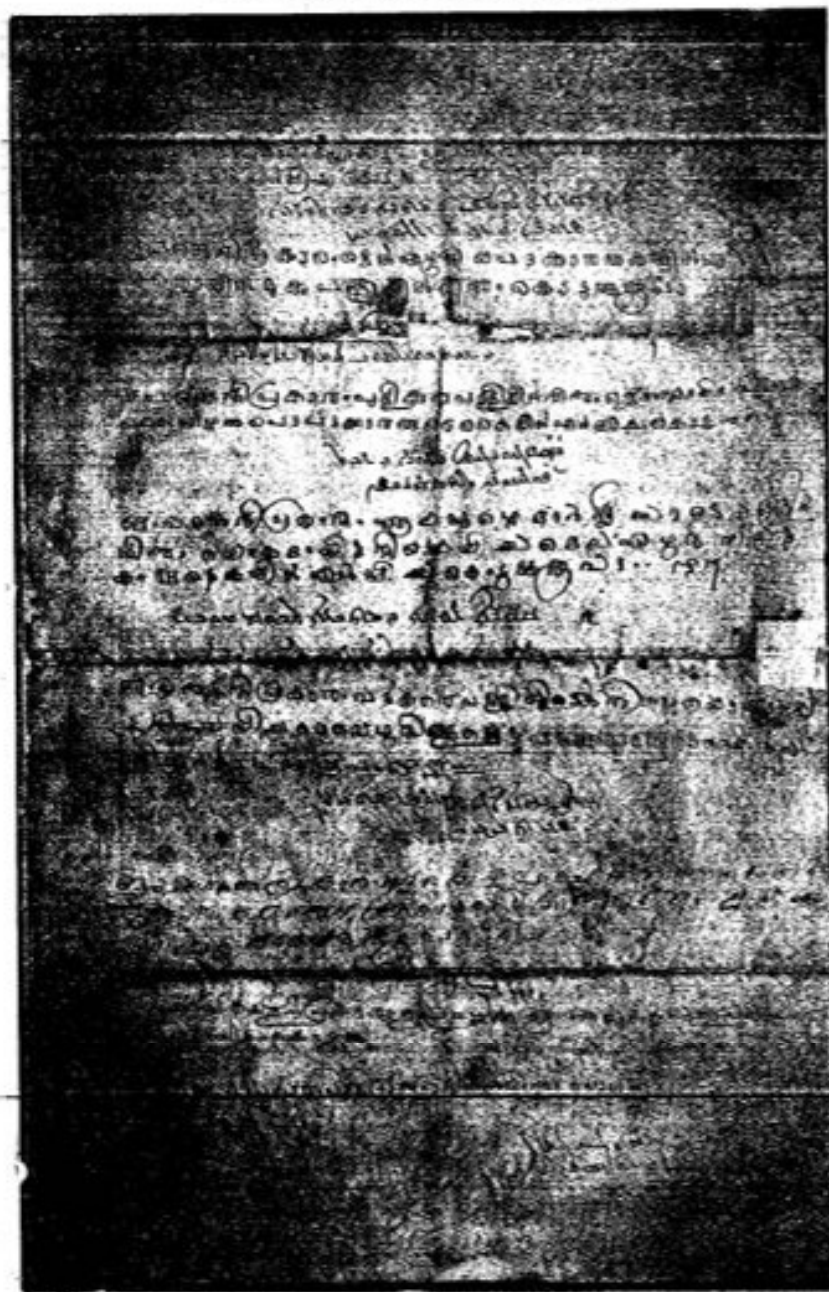


PHOTO OF THE CIRCULAR LETTER







The Translation, more or less literal, of the above  
given Circular Letter

We, Maurilius of St. Teresa, of the Discalced Carmelite Order, by God's grace and by the authority of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Dolica and interim Vicar Apostolic of the Diocese of Malabar and of the Diocese of Cochin, benediction, grace, and peace, from our Lord Jesus Christ, to all those who see, read, and hear this Our letter, sent and published with great desire through the hands of the Revd. Priests, Our coadjutors and co-operators in Our spiritual work on behalf of those who seek the face of our Lord.

In the territory committed to Our jurisdiction by the Apostolic See, We are ever on the alert to carry out all those things which are necessary for the welfare of the faithful and conducive to God's greater glory and the good of the Church. We know that you desire to see among you a community of men living like the holy souls who are continuously engaged in prayer and spiritual works. In other countries which were evangelised much later than Malabar, and even in those which are not so extensive as Malabar, there are many monasteries for both men and women. You, who are ancient Christians, requested the Holy Church to establish for you also similar Religious Houses. Yet, so far, no steps have been taken for the establishment of a monastery. There are no men and women here who have benefited by the example and labour of the Religious. The teaching about the choice of the Religious life is not known among lay men and women, and even among the Priests, Our spiritual brethren. We do not find many who are ready to embrace

# THE CARMELITE CONGREGATION OF MALABAR

the Religious life. In order therefore to open a door for Religious life, the two Priests who are entrusted with this letter, desire to establish a church and a monastery for those who are willing to embrace the Religious life, and to raise the necessary funds for their maintenance. But, if they are left to their own resources, they will not be able to accomplish the noble project. Contributions from many people will make it possible and easy of accomplishment. He who makes a donation is happier than he who accepts it. Contributions for the present purpose will entitle the donors to innumerable divine favours and blessings. Hence We earnestly desire and recommend that donations be given from the churches and the people to the two Priests whom We send, so that they may raise the monastery, the church and the necessary funds for the maintenance of the Religious. Thus the way will be opened for the happy introduction of Religious life into this Diocese. And those who help this project will undoubtedly share in all the benefits resulting therefrom. The example of the Religious will instruct the ignorant. Those who are willing to become Religious will have a chance to do so. The piously inclined who are now scattered here and there can live together in communities. The Church will be glorified. The countries and the whole world will have peace. Those who are called to enter heaven by means of the Religious life, will be made perfect by the Lord of all things. They will be free from all worldly affairs and they will devote themselves entirely to spiritual things. By the zealous work of these elect souls, all possible blessings will be secured. Generous charity will ensure perseverance in virtue. We know that your zeal is such as will impel you to make donations for this purpose according to your means, nay even beyond your means. We exhort you therefore to make contributions according to your ability, to give with willing minds and extended hands and with a charity which knows no murmur. We advise and command all of you to give with a generous mind, the required material alms, each one according to his means, the poor in imitation of the poor widow who cast in/only two mites, and the wealthy in imitation of the rich man who cast in much; thus will you reap a spiritual harvest.

## CHAPTER I. 1828-1831

May the grace of the Almighty God and Our own blessing and benediction be upon you.

This decree is issued on the 1st of November 1829, after the birth of Christ.

(Sd.) F. MAURILIUS,

*Bishop of Dolica,*

*interim Vicar Apostolic of Malabar and Cochín.*

To the two Priests, Fr. Thomas Palaskal and Fr. Thomas Porukara, who are entrusted with this decree, We, Maurilius, Bishop of Dolica, have handed over rupees two hundred (Rs. 200) as Our own contribution for this excellent project mentioned in the decree.

(Sd.) F. MAURILIUS,

*Bishop of Dolica.*

In accordance with these letters patent, from the parish church of Kallurkat, Rs. 200 are handed over to the above mentioned Fathers.

(Sd.) FR. JOSEPH PUTHUCHIRA,

*Vicar of the Kallurkat church.*

According to these letters patent, four hundred rupees (Rs. 400) are handed over from the church of Koilmuck to the above said Fathers.

(Sd.) FR. GEORGE THEKEDAM,

*Vicar.*

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of Pulincunnu, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, one thousand paras of paddy are handed over to the above mentioned Fathers.

(Sd.) FR. GEORGE MUNNUTTI NALPATHU,

*Vicar.*

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of the Holy Cross at Alleppey, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, one hundred rupees (Rs. 100) are handed over to the above mentioned Fathers.

(Sd.) FR. LUKE THEKUMURI,  
Vicar.

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of Vadacra, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, one hundred rupees (Rs. 100) are handed over to the above mentioned Fathers.

(Sd.) FR. AUGUSTINE,  
Vicar.

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of Arakusha, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, fifty rupees (Rs. 50) are handed over to the above mentioned Fathers.

(Sd.)

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of Anakallunkal, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, for the present, two thousand five hundred Chuckrams, (Rs. 87½) are given.

(Sd.)

In accordance with these letters patent, from the church of Pallipuram, with the consent of the parishioners, assembled in Council, one hundred rupees (Rs. 100) are given.

(Sd.) FR. GEORGE,  
Vicar.

To the above mentioned Fathers, according to these letters patent, for the present, two hundred rupees (Rs. 200) are given by Parayil Kunjavirah.

(Sd.)

8. The next step was to select a suitable spot whence they could, while serving God under a religious roof, radiate their activities throughout the whole of Malabar. Several hillocks were proposed; at last, Mannanam, exceptionally blessed by the beauties of Nature, and easy of access from every part of Malabar, in the present Diocese of Changanacherry, was fixed upon.

9. From the very beginning Rev. Fr. Cyriac Chavara of Kainskary in the present Diocese of Changanacherry, a disciple of Fr. Palakal, Rev. Fr. Pascal of the Latin Rite from Arthungal, and a layman, Jacob Kanianthara, a neighbour of Fr. Porukara, were associated with the Founders in the noble work of erecting the new House of God.

10. May 11, 1831, was the day fixed for the blessing of the corner stone of the Mother-House of the future Carmelite Congregation of Malabar. Mgr. Stabilini came to Mannanam to perform



Mannanam Hill in 1831.

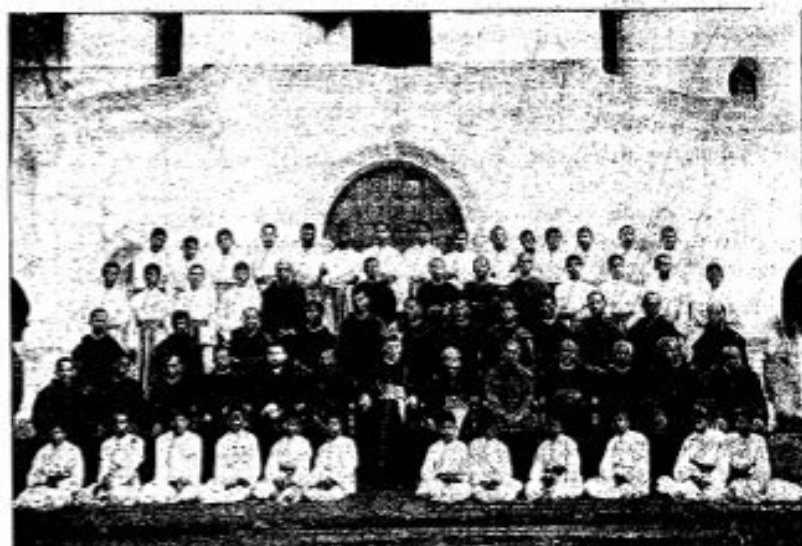
The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Mother-House and the First Church of the Congregation.



the function personally, but, being impeded by an unexpected indisposition, left the desirable task to either Fr. Palakal or Fr. Porukara. Owing to mutual deference neither of them would undertake to perform the ceremony. At last Fr. Porukara yielded. There then arose the question as to the name the foundation stone should bear. Mgr. Stabillini suggested the name of St. John the Baptist, Fr. Palakal that of St. Dominic, and Fr. Porukara that of St. Joseph. Finally, Fr. Porukara's suggestion was accepted, and the foundation stone bore St. Joseph's name. Whereupon, Father Porukara, in the presence of Mgr. Stabillini, Fr. Palakal and a multitude of priests and laymen, during the Pontificate of Pope Gregory XVI and the reign of Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal, Raja of Travancore, laid the foundation stone of the First Church and Mother-House of the Congregation, in the name of St. Joseph, the great Patron of Carmel. With the hearty co-operation of the Malabar Clergy and laity, the work progressed under the direction of Fr. Porukara and Fr. Chavara. Fr. Palakal had to return to Palliparum Seminary where he was Rector. All that he could do was to direct from afar the work at Mannanam. Fr. Porukara had to go round collecting alms, chiefly from Muvattupuzha, Thodupuzha, and Meeenchil, while Fr. Chavara remained at Mannanam to conduct the work. The Catholic families of Thayil and Perumalil, and the Nair family of Kalampucad, were of great help to the Fathers, who were strangers to the place. The neighbouring parishes of Athirampuzha, Kaipuzha, and Kudumaloor, and some of their parishioners also contributed their share for the work at Mannanam. Mass was said on Pentecost Sunday of the same year in the newly-built Chapel. It is worthy of mention that Fr. Porukara and Fr. Chavara were often found with the workmen, carrying stones and mortar for the building of the Chapel and the adjacent Monastery—an example followed by the Fathers who succeeded them.

11. Ever since the foundation of the Monastery at Mannanam, Mannanam has been the centre of Religious life and Catholicity in Malabar. The Visitors Apostolic and Papal Representatives have been given official and solemn receptions in the name of the whole

Catholic Malabar, at Mannanam. Delegates Apostolic and Bishops have often selected Mannanam for their residence. The Clergy and



The Visitor Ap. Mgr. (now Cardinal) A. H. M. Lepicier, O. S. M., at St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, when Very Rev. Fr. Aloysius of St. Mary, was the Prior General.

laity of Malabar gathered at Mannanam to deliberate on religious and social questions.

12. The Royal Families of Travancore and Cochin have always been kind and benevolent towards the Congregation. His Highness Sir Rama Varma Ayilliam Tirunal had often expressed his satisfaction at the rapid growth of the new-born "Asrama" at Mannanam. H. H. Visakhram Tirunal presented to the house a large oil-painting of the Madonna which is still kept in a prominent place in the Monastery. H. H. Prince Aewati Tirunal, B.A., was pleased to pay a visit to Mannanam. His Highness Sri Mulam Tirunal, of happy memory, looked upon some of the members of the Congregation with special veneration, and the new magnificent buildings of the

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St. Joseph's Press, have been inaugurated as a memorial of the Shashtiabdapurti of His Highness, H. H. Kerala Varma Valla Koli Thampuran, C. I. E., was likewise a great admirer of the



His Highness, Sri Muttam Tirunal, the late Maha Raja of Travancore, congregation on the occasion of the Installation of H. H. Sri Chittira Tirunal, the present Maha Raja, amply bears witness to the deep-seated loyalty of the Congregation towards the Royal House.

## CHAPTER I. 1828-1831

13. The attitude of the Royal Family of Cochin towards the Congregation has been equally sympathetic. His Highness Sri Rama Varma the late Maha Raja, contrary to all precedents, even paid a visit to the Monastery at Kishurnth and himself laid the foundation of the present English School there. H. H. the present Maha Raja is also evincing a similar interest in the well-being of the monasteries in the State. It is worth mentioning in this connection that the British Residents as well as the Dewans and the other Public Officials of the two States have, without exception, contributed much towards the progress and prosperity of the Congregation.

