



CHRISTIAN
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COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA

VOLUME I

THE CHRONICLES

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CHRISTIAN
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**COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA VOL. I
THE CHRONICLES (Nalagamangal)**

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

1. No words of Our Lord are found more reflective of Bl. Chavara's holiness than the following: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word. My Father will love him, we shall come to him and make our home with him" (Jn. 14:24). In his spiritual diary Bl. Chavara points out how enamoured he was about the divine indwelling. Even ordinary folk would look upon him as a man of God or as one full of divine graciousness.
2. Because of his clear faith vision, he could see the ever present and ever active Creator, guiding everything smoothly and harmoniously to their proper destiny.



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

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

The Chronicles are the record of day to day events in the order of their happenings. There are five Chronicles. The 1st two deals with the foundation of the Monastery at Mannanam. The third is the history of Roccas Schism. The fourth and fifth contain the history of the foundation of Monastery at Ampazhakad and the Convent at Koonamavu respectively. Moreover these Chronicles contain the then history of the Kerala Church. Hence these books are the compendium of valuable historical documents very useful to the students of Kerala Church History of Nineteenth Century.

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

P G House
Ernakulam
Jan. 3, 1990

Fr. Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI
Prior General



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA



Bl. Kuriakose Elias Chavara



LIFE SKETCH OF BL. CHAVARA

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

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

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

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

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

The first indigenous religious Congregation for women was started at Koonammavu.

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

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



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am immensely happy to present to the public the English version: "COMPLETE WORKS OF BL. CHAVARA VOL. I, THE CHRONICLES" translated from the Malayalam edition published in 1981. The work was translated by Prof. P. J. Thomas; and the editing was done by a team consisting of: Chev. K. C. Chacko, Rev. Sr. Sergius cmc., and Rev. Frs. George H. Ambooken cmi and Lucas Vithuvattical cmi.

One can imagin how difficult it is to translate the old Malayalam. I am happy to note with satisfaction that, through the cooperation of many, a beautiful English version has been brought out.

Fr. George H Ambooken CMI

General Secretary for
Pastoral Ministry

Ernakulam
Jan. 3, 1990



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

THE CHRONICLES

(NALAGAMANGAL)

Translated by

Prof P J THOMAS



I ESTABLISHMENT OF A RELIGIOUS HOUSE

I. Commencement

Written by Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, one of the least of the disciples of the Rev. Fr. Thomas Palackal, our Malpan (teacher) at Pallippuram.

The Activities of Fr. Palackal

When our Rev. Malpan had been teaching us he had, by much effort, successfully persuaded his superiors to institute and conduct a feast of the Carmelite confraternity called the confraternity in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in his Church at Pallippuram and a few other churches. He and his most intimate friend Rev. Fr. Thomas Porukara had yearned to establish a Religious House of Penance for priests in Malabar since much good could have been realised through it. They were sad at heart as there was no one to give them support but they went on praying. At this time by the grace of God, Most Rev. Aurelius Dolica, the Vicar Apostolic of Bombay, was appointed by the Holy Father, Leo X as the interim Apostolic of Verapoly. Our Malpan, who had been Secretary to Most Rev. Raymond Surya, Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly in the reign of late Pope Pius VII, and later vicar apostolic, was now summoned by Bishop Most Rev. Aurelius and was asked to become his Secretary or to suggest another reliable priest to the post. He, however, declined the offer as he did not want to give up our tutorship.



Appointment of Fr. Porukara as Secretary

He suggested his friend, Fr. Thomas Porukara Vicar of the new Church at Thankassery in Quilon.

One of our Malpan's classmates, Fr. Thomas Vettiathottumkal of Koilmukku was posted to Thankassery and Fr. Porukara was appointed Secretary to the Bishop. His Grace, appreciating the good qualities of Rev. Padre Paschal Baylon de Jesu Samaria, made him his consultor and confessor, brought him to the diocese and also appointed him chancellor.

Permission for establishing the Religious House

The trio — our Malpan, the Secretary and the Chancellor were now pondering over the establishment of a Religious House trusting in Our Lord's words: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them", and "Ask and you shall receive". His Grace, the mirror of virtues who spent his days in fasting and prayer heeded to their request. Like the parched land after a rain in his heart he thirsted for holiness. He was delighted and issued an order appealing to all who seek to please God to support the cause by financial assistance.

The Bishop's Gift

With the above letter written in Malayalam and with another letter of authorisation and a gift of 200 British Rupees from the bishop for the cause, the two set out to work. Rev. Padre Pascal remained with the Bishop and from there he extended full support for the cause.

Contributions of the People

They left for Koilmuku Church, but on the way stopped at Kallurkat. They showed the order to the Vicar, Fr. Luke



Narakatharayil, the other priests and the councillors and conveyed the request. They were promised 1000 ¹paras of paddy in lieu of Rs 200 and the vicar gave his signature on the order. From there they moved on to Koilmuku. After attending the feast there they showed the order to the vicar, Fr. Philipose Thekedath, our Malpan's student and the others gathered there. From the funds of the Church they decided to contribute 10000 ²Chakrams for Rs 400. With that amount they came back to Pallipuram. Fr. Porukara went over to meet the Bishop at St. Andrews church, Arthunkal.

Conflict between the Five Hundreds and the Seven Hundreds

His Grace was there to ordain priests from the group of Five Hundreds. He found no reason to deny it as they followed the way of our Lord. But the ³Thopassans and the group of Seven Hundred had asserted that they would not agree to it and declared that the ordination would grieve them and force them to rebel. The Bishop, therefore asked the clerics from among them to sign a paper which stated that ordaining priests from the group of Five Hundred was right and that they had no objection to it. But they went away to consult their vicars and elders who forbade them to sign such a paper. And their churches prepared a long petition against the intended ordination and brought it to the Bishop. Seeing that their grievance was not reasonable, but due to obstinacy he had a written statement sent explaining at length with much evidence in support that the ordination was just, reasonable and in accordance with the Divine ordinance. Yet they remained unconvinced.

1. Para — a measure
2. Chakram — a Travancore coin
3. Among the Latin Catholics in Malabar there were groups called Anglo-Indians, Five Hundreds, Seven Hundreds, Thopassans etc.



Bishop Stabilini Prepares to leave

The Bishop told the clerics that their people were not seeing reason, but that they should. When they too refused, he declared that he was going to Rome, as he did not want to be among those who remained disobedient and blind to reason.

Deacons at Verapoly for Ordination

At this stage some of us studying under our Malpan started with him on 13th September to receive Holy Orders just after the Feast of the Holy Cross, and reached Verapoly Jetty at 10.00 p m on 14th September. Realising that there was no ordination and that the Bishop was leaving we felt very sad. When we approached the Secretary Fr. Porukara, the news was confirmed. The next day we went to see the Bishop and we were told that he was indisposed and was incapable of saying Mass on these days, and that we should not feel bad. We returned to the apostolic seminary, Verapoly, much grieved.

The Syrians request the Bishop not to leave

Such being the situation, Fr. Malpan of the parish of Njarackal who was teaching Syriac at the Apostolic Seminary of Verapoly, our Fr. Malpan, Fr. Paul Perepatt, the vicar of the parish of Malayattoor, our Fr. Porukara the Secretary, Fr. Kunjavara vicar of the parish of Tripunithara, Fr. Paul, vicar of the parish of Neendakara, Fr. Jacob Kochupurackal disciple of our Fr. Malpan and several other priests joined together and submitted a petition that if the Bishop left they would become like sheep without a shepherd and so they were very much grieved. They requested the bishop to reside at any of their Syrian churches, if he felt uncomfortable to stay at Verapoly. We from Pallippuram Seminary and those from Verapoly Seminary, together presented another petition stating that the Bishop's decision to leave caused us much grief. We requested him to take the deacons also with him, and to instruct us as to what should be done with the other clerics. We insisted that we would not leave his door until he complied with our request.



Bishop postpones his Departure

The Bishop accepted the two petitions and after two days' deliberation wrote a reply in Latin and gave it to us. In this he expressed himself thus: "To our beloved priests and to our dear sons the clerics, the Syro-Chaldeans: My appointment as Vicar apostolic primarily concerns you; and besides the decree already given, I have now received a new decree from the Pope asking me to remain here until a new Shepherd is appointed. Hence I will not go leaving you orphans". Thus in many words he gave us a long reply. So we the deacons returned to the Seminary. Our Fr. Malpan stayed back at Verapoly itself.

Request by the 'Five Hundreds'

The same day the group of Five Hundred, coming to know that the Bishop was about to leave, sent a delegation to Verapoly and they represented the same grievance as we had done and got the same consoling reply.

The Bishop at Arthunkal

A few days later, the Bishop, our Fr. Malpan, Fr. Porukara the Secretary, Padre Paschal, Kaleetha Gonsalves a cleric belonging to the group of the Five Hundred and several from the group of the Seven Hundred set out together for Arthunkal from Verapoly. The Bishop stayed at St. Andrew's Church. The people welcomed the Bishop and were very much glad at heart as if they had found the treasure that had been lying hidden so long. This was how the Bishop came to stay at Arthunkal.

2. The Foundation

Site sought for the Monastery

The Bishop, the Secretary and the Chancellor were staying at Arthunkal and our Malpan at Pallippuram. Determined to find a suitable place for the first Religious



House for the Congregation our Malpan and Fr. Porukara set out. Attending on them was Jacob Kaniyanthra from Kallurkat, a young boy who by contact with Fr. Porukara had been led to the path of goodness, as a plant is likely to have the fragrance of the tree on which it leans. There was also Mr. Ittiaip Kallunkal of the parish of Pallippuram with them. Besides there was one boy of the Izhava caste called Ittan, who by his contact with Malpan Abraham Thachil, who is known as the Malpan of the whole of India and who was teaching at Pallippuram, knew all the routes and had long explored the area extensively. This Ittan too accompanied them on several occasions.

At Mulakulam

They all travelled along the Ithipuzha river, came up to Vettikattumuku, had a look at the whole region, passed the dangerous spot known as Katanattipara, reached Mulakulam and made enquiries about the adjacent areas but found no place suitable.

Periyapurathu Mathan's generosity

A landlord there, Periyapurathu Mathan, gladly took them home and gave them food. He showed them a hillock which had been the proposed site for another church to be set up according to a plan but now given up because of a split. But as the place was not vast enough and as there was the dangerous Katanattipara they were not satisfied. Yet they promised to take it in case no better place was found and if they would get the whole stretch of land.

Danger from Snake averted

Then they set out, sailed along and had an overall view of the high land area surrounding a tall hill. After passing Katanattipara and Vettikattumuku further below,



they came up on a site close by Kalampur Mekka. As it, was getting dark, our Malpan being too exhausted chose to remain inside the canoe tied to a big tree, while permitting the others to go about and have a look. After a short rest when he came out and stood looking for the others, he saw a frightening sight. A very poisonous snake with its fangs out was hanging down from a branch of the tree about to fall straight into the canoe once it moved. He at once dragged the canoe away. Meanwhile the others came back and said that the place was not suitable as the water in the river will be salty during summer.

They all returned to Pallippuram and Fr. Porukara left to join the Bishop.

Though each of the three was immersed in his own work - our Malpan in his work of teaching, Rev. Padre Pascal in his job as chancellor and Fr. Porukara in his job as secretary - they all had at heart the plan for a Religious House for which they had received money from His grace and Koilmuku church etc. Fr. Ittoop Mundakal of Kothamangalam, though he was staying at a distance from them, shared their idea.

Search for a site continues

Fr. Itoop first came to Pallippuram and then to Arthunkal to meet the Bishop and to know where matters stood. He then returned to Pallippuram with the Chancellor and the Secretary. They along with our Malpan and his student and relative Fr. Chandy Mangalath, set out for further exploration. Going by the same route they passed Vettikattumuku and Katanattipara and travelled down to the east of Kavalvazhichery and came to a very broad and high hill called Chemanchi, away from the river side. Though disheartened by the distance, they



walked on and climbed up. Everyone got tired, especially Fr. Chancellor as it was time for meals and he was not used to such climbing. But on reaching up they all felt refreshed by the cool breeze. Looking over the place they found it good and spacious enough but inaccessible by boat and too high and distant from the river to get materials carried up.

A suitable site not yet

As the place was not suitable they gave up further exploration and returned to their own respective places. At this stage Periyapurath Mathan of Mulakulam sent two letters to our Malpan - one his own and the other from his Vicar conveying the willingness of the parish to hand over their hillside. But the Malpan sent a reply declining the offer.

Fr. Palackal's illness

Meanwhile our Malpan was laid up with rheumatism. He could not say Mass as he was unable even to move his legs. I was then staying at my Parish of Chennankari. Hearing of our Malpan's illness I hastened to Pallippuram. At that time Fr. Augustine Chirathale of Vadakara came there to take with him his Professor, our Malpan for his First Mass.

First Mass at Vadakara

Fr. Augustine's desire had the blessing of God and so our Malpan got better. We, along with the seminarians participated in the first Mass at Vadakara. On our way back we reached Periyapurath Mathan's house and spent the night there.

Search Continues

Next Morning Poroth Mappila came and invited our Malpan to look over a site there. So he set out with



me telling the others that he was going to the church. Mathan Mappila sensing this came with us for fear of their drifting away from his place. We crossed the river and wandered for through the hilly area, but returned to Pallippuram without being able to find a suitable place.

At this time a letter came from Fr. Thoma Valiaparambil of Athirampuzha saying that east of Athirampuzha there were good sites called Pallikunnu, Pallikayam and Vedakari. Also Fr. Uthupan, Vicar of Kotteyakam Church wrote that there was a site near by. So our Malpan and Fr. Porukara set out to see those places. Here too they could not find a suitable place for, if, water was not available in one place, location was not ideal in the other.

At Kudamaloor

As they were coming back by river via Kudamaloor, they saw east of the Church a hillock by the river. They climbed up and looking about, decided that this place was more suitable. They sought the help of Fr. Varkey Karimbumalil of Kudamaloor to get it registered in his name as temple property that land called Pullarikunnu in the village of Kumaranellur in Ettumannur taluk. Then they went to the Bishop, submitted to him these matters and requested him to write for permission from the Government through the British Resident. His Lordship wrote an application and asked Fr. Porukara to take it along with two other petitions, one for a church at Kumbalathu village and the other for a sub-station at Manakotath.

Fr. Porukara at Quilon

On reaching Thankassery Fr. Porukara, former vicar of the place, was asked by the parishioners to stay, as they had no priest there, since Fr. Thomas had gone away, he was forced against his will to respect their wish especially because it was the time for the annual Easter confession.



Efforts to get Government Sanction

Later, Fr. Porukara left for Trivandrum to meet the Resident. His brother Antony, a clerk at the Resident's Office, was very close to Mr. Clemis and Mr. Don the Resident's Registrar, and Mr. Lepernes, the Diwan's Registrar. With their assistance and God's help Fr. Porukara managed to give the Bishop's application to the Resident and through him to the Diwan. He got an order for the Tahsildar, Ettumannur, to conduct an enquiry to find out whether there was any objection to setting up a small church at Pullarikunnu and a promise that the answers to the other two applications would be sent by post. Mr. Lepernes gave him a letter to Kunipandala an official asking him to give all assistance. Fr. Porukara set out with these letters.

Approaches the Governor of Madras

In the mean time the Governor of Madras arrived here. Hoping to get some help from him in matter Fr. Porukara got a petition written in English by the above mentioned Registrars at Quilon and sent it by Jacob to our Malpan. Jacob reached here on the feast of St. Dominic, the Patron of our Seminary. The next day was the feast of the Mother of Carmel. But on hearing that the Governor would be leaving soon and the Bishop would be going to Ponjikara to see him, immediately our Malpan set out with Jacob. When they reached Ernakulam they found that the Bishop was at Chathiath together with the Vicar General Rev. Fr. Nicolas, also the Prior of the Carmelite Monastery at Verapoly. So they went to Chathiath and confided this to the Bishop privately and got him to sign the petition. The Governor was reported to have little time to spare since interviews were already arranged with the Maharaja of Cochin, with the Bishop, with the Governor of Kodungaloor etc. - in addition to his trips.



The assistance of Fr. Paul Malayattoor

So Jacob was sent with the petition in the company of Fr. Paul Malayattoor who was then leaving to meet the Governor. When they reached Ponjikara they were told that the Governor had just arrived after an audience with the Maharaja at the Palace at Cochin and was about to leave.

Fr. Paul got into the bungalow crowded with the officials and waiting gentlemen. He gave the petition to the Governor's son who handed it over to the Governor when the latter came out. He went through it and handed it back without giving any reply.

Fr. Porukara goes to Alangad to work for Government Sanction

Meanwhile our Malpan had returned to Pallippuram. Fr. Porukara had got Fr. Varkey to take over Pullarikunnu site on lease. He now came with the order and a letter to see Kunjipandala with the intention of getting a letter from him for the Tahsildar at Ettumannur. But Kunjipandala was away at Alangad as he was on bad terms with both the Maharajas of Cochin and Travancore. So he set out for Alangad with our Malpan. On the way at Ernakulam our Malpan came across a priest from his own parish who had come to the court for some business. At his request our Malpan stayed there to lend him some possible assistance. Fr. Porukara proceeded to Alangad where he met Kunjipandala. Thanks to the latter's acquaintance with Antony and the Registrar's letter addressed to him, Kunjipandala got pleased and wrote a letter to the Thasildar at Ettumannur. With that Fr. Porukara came back to Ernakulam.

Our Malpan felt that his stay there was not fruitful. He could not stay longer because the above letter had to be urgently delivered. Regretfully he returned to Pallippuram with Fr. Porukara and Jacob.

They together travelled southwards to Pulinkunnu and the Church there promised to donate 1000 bushels of



paddy out of which 200 bushels were given at once. While proceeding towards Ettumannur to see Kochitty Munavadiparampil they were told that he was then at Cheri Tharakan's house at Pallippuram. Hence, they reached there and gave him a letter from Thevelakara Judge, explained the matter and got him promise all possible help.

Mannanam as the Founding Fathers saw it

Travelling towards Athirampuzha by way of Mannanam they came up on a tall hill which we now call Besrouma* and towards the north-west of the same - our Jacob pointed out another hill called Kariyattam, cleared of shrubs and trees and suggested that it would be suitable for them. But the Fathers observed that the former was better and more open; the land was wooded because it was more fertile.

Difficulties at Pullarikunnu

They proceeded to Athirampuzha. There they visited the house of Eapen Mappila, the brother of Fr. Jacob Kochupurackal, our Malpan's student. He extended to them a hearty welcome and offered them all assistance, gave them good advice and introduced them to the Tahsildar. With his help they got an order for enquiry and notices to the land-holders. They assembled and raised the objection that as Pullarikunnu was the property of Kumaranallur Bhagavathy, no church could be erected there without the consent of the trustees. As there would be difficulties in the way of getting possession of the place, the fathers hesitated to go forward.

The Fathers shy away from controversial property

Then a big merchant at Ettumannoor named Jenar Mether and several others urged them to occupy the site promising to stand by us when trouble arises. But the

* Syriac word meaning tall house. hill - the name the Fathers gave to the Mannanam hill



Fathers said they wanted no trouble and would rather be content with a less convenient place. Then they were told by Chacko Thoppil Pulinkunnu, that if they would pay 500 Kallpanams* to the Koithampuran at Lakshmi Kottaram the obstacles would disappear. So they sent him to the Koithampuran with the proposal, but got the reply that he would see them at the time of the Kumaranelloor temple festival.

The way clears for getting Mannanam hill tree

Finding that things were not going their way the Fathers decided to get another plot, East of Kudamaloor small church. While they were trying for it, they came to know on the eve of Christmas that two landlords - Thayyil Tharakan and his younger brother Kochupothan Mappila - living at equal distance from the plot would be able to help them. After saying Mass on that day of abstinence they set out and reached the house of Kurian Tharakan of Thayil. Having heard all that the fathers had to say he told them that they need not look for any other site. On climbing up and seeing the place they agreed and decided to work towards buying it.

Then they thought of Fr. Varkey who had at their request worked hard and got Pullarikunnu on lease. They felt that he would think that they changed over to another site of their own will and cheated him. So Fr. Porukara left that night itself to inform him of the real situation. He asked for time to think. So they had to wait for some time. But nothing happened.

The fathers fix upon Mannanam hill as the site for the monastery

Fr. Porukara then went and conveyed all the facts to the Bishop who then instructed him to choose the better site. Meanwhile the two Fathers had gone to attend the

* Travancore coin, 1/4 of a Rupee.



first Mass of Fr. Kuriakose Puthenpurackal of Kallurkat, a relative and student of our Malpan and came back to Kaipuzha Church. From there they sent word to Fr. Varkey and got the reply that he wanted 10. days more and if he could do nothing during this period, they would be free to proceed on their own.

Government Sanction

In the meantime they got Tharakan and Itticheria, son of Panikar Kora Thekedath of Kudamaloor who was an enthusiastic supporter and asked them to strive hard to get the Besrouma plot at Mannanam assigned immediately. A letter arrived rejecting the application for assignment. So they again approached the Village Officer and with his assistance got an order to enquire if there was any objection to the founding of a church and a House on the hillside then called Olankannamukal in Mannanam Village. Notices were served and the land holders were gathered together. Thanks to the efforts of Tharakan and his younger brother Kochupothan Mappila to whom they owed a lot, they were all persuaded to agree in writing that there was no objection. The Fathers got the record and its copies, along with a certificate from the Tahsildar. Later on reading the record it was found that the wording had some flaws which might, if it reached the office without alteration, lead to an order for another enquiry. As this would cause shame and delay they got the Revenue Officer to break open the seal, to rewrite the copy of the record and to seal it again.

Smallpox in the area around Pallippuram

An epidemic of small pox was at this time in Trivandrum, Pallippuram and other outlying areas. So they were wondering as to whom should they send and finally they decided in favour of Jacob. Now it was about a month since our Malpan had left Pallippuram and there the deacons



and the boys were afraid of staying on because of the epidemic. So to get instructions on how to proceed at Pallippuram, I went to Athirampuzha.

There I came to understand that it had been decided to send Jacob with letters from Fr. Porukara to the Diwan's and Resident's Registrars and a petition to the Diwan, in the company of Eapen Mappilla Kochupurackal who was going to Purakat to remit taxes. Their plan was to send Jacob with Eapen. Since Eapen had to leave urgently, one or two persons were sent to call Jacob. But Jacob had not yet turned up, the Fathers thought that Jacob might be reluctant to come because of the epidemic. So they were hesitant to send him and told Eapen that he might go. Then it was decided that Fr. Porukara would go to Quilon and send the papers through someone from there.

The Fathers climb up and look over the site

Then as Fr. Kochupurackal was about to go to Verapoly we three set out leaving Ittan renamed Panikar with our Malpan. We reached the house of Perumalil Kurian Tharakan just below our Besrouma. We told him and his brother Kochupothan everything and showed them the papers. We arranged men and boat for Fr. Porukara's journey to Quilon. Then we all set out to have a good look over this Besrouma. As the whole place was thickly wooded, we climbed up with great difficulty, breaking or cutting off branches and reached almost near the well. We found it so very broad and breezy so that all of us liked it.

Tahsildar at Ettumannur receives orders

We then returned to Pallippuram. Fr. Porukara went by boat to Quilon. Meanwhile Fr. Porukara himself offered Masses and got others say some Solemn High Masses for this intention. With prayers to our Lord ever in his heart, Fr. Porukara reached and stayed at Thankassery and got one to take the letters. With the help of God and the



efforts of the Registrars the proper order to the Tahsildar at Ettumannur was procured. Fr. Porukara came with that to Arthunkal.

From there he reached Pallippuram on the eve of Palm Sunday. Our Malpan had, by this time, come to Pallippuram, as he was not well most of the time while at Athirampuzha. They talked together about all that God had done for them so far. In gratitude Fr. Porukara sang a High Mass on Monday and later left for Athirampuzha arranging with our Malpan to proceed after Easter

Clearing up a path to Mannanam Hill side

At Athirampuzha, Fr. Porukara met the Revenue Officer who told him that he had to wait and that he would inform him at the appropriate time. He added that they would have to pay 100 Panams each to the Tahsildar and the Accountant. Fr. Porukara informed the Executive Officer that they had procured the order through Eapen but it was delayed since Malpan was sick. He also requested that he be allowed to cut a road upto the hillside. With a tacit permission of the officers Fr. Porukara left Athirampuzha on Holy Wednesday, after having said Mass there. Together with Perumalil Tharakan, Kochupothan Mappila, Itticheria and Jacob he climbed up Olankannamukal, now called *Besrouma*, which had been assigned on lease to Tharakan. Some of them sat under the trees and others on tree stumps watching over a number of Pulayas cutting through and clearing the woods. The work which was discontinued during the Holy Week was taken up again on Monday after Easter. One day Jenar Methar also sent his Pulayas. On each day following, Kochupura, Peetakakal, Poveni, Tharen, Malen etc. did the same. Everyday Tharakan and his brother came up to supervise the work and also sent their Pulayas to finish clearing up.



Sanction from the Government expected

On Wednesday after Easter our Malpan sent me from Pallippuram to know whether Fr. Porukara had been able to get permission and how matters were proceeding. Owing to the heavy rain and the inaccessibility of the roads I could not reach Athirampuzha by night-fall. So I stayed at the house of Ittimathan Mappila. Next morning when I was leaving the house I saw Jacob coming. He told me that sanction had been granted, but as the order had not yet come he was going to Olassa to meet the Revenue Officer. I reached Athirampuzha and after seeing Fr. Porukara and saying Mass I went over to Tharakan's house. I then proceeded with the others to the hill and there sat under a tree directing the cutting and burning. Four days back when they were clearing the woods, one of them had said that if they could find a well there, it would have been very easy for them, and another remarked that by God's grace it would be found. Two days later when those who were cutting the woods were walking through the uncleared area they came up on something that looked like an unused well. Then they started clearing it up. The next day I left for Pallippuram.

Bishop Stabilini comes to stay at Kudamaloor

The Bishop who had not been well, when at Arthunkal, shifted to Kudamaloor. Before I left, I was directed to tell our Malpan that, because it was very difficult to stay and say Mass at Athirampuzha and go everyday to the hill and conduct work there, he should get the Bishop's permission to set up a shed as chapel and say Mass there.

The Fathers start constructing a chapel

Our Malpan accordingly submitted the matter to the Bishop. The latter told him that as a shed would be unfit and untidy for saying Mass, a chapel should hastily be built



of stone. So work on a chapel started. Our Malpan went with this information from Kudamalloor to Athirampuzha. But as he was too weak to go everyday from Athirampuzha to the hill, he came back. Fr. Porukara had to go south to get some paddy for their daily living. So I was sent to go *Besrouma*. Because he was pre-occupied with many things, he did not get the order and so Fr. Porukara's trip was delayed. Meanwhile Jacob was sent several times to the Revenue Officer who delayed the matter on some pretext or other.

The Fathers begin to stay at Mannanam

On the eve of the feast of St. Geevarghese (24th April of that year) Frs. Porukara, Chacko, Malayattoor and I together sang the vespers kneeling on the tree stubs. We stayed at the *Besrouma* very late charmed by the cool breeze and overwhelmed by the vastness and the multitude of the burned-up woods lying spread out before our eyes. We descended very reluctantly, forced by the thought that it would be terrifying if night fell before we got down.

These days the Perumalil brothers took much trouble for us, feeding us, Fathers and the workmen. They got Eacharachar's farm-house, had it cleared up for us to stay in and gave us supper there.

Bishop Stabilini writes in Malayalam

Fr. Porukara went to Kudamalloor to preach on the occasion of the feast of St. Geevarghese celebrated there on the 3rd Sunday after Easter. On that day Fr. Malayattoor and I reached Athirampuzha, sang a solemn High Mass there for the intention of getting the order through the intervention of the Saint. Fr. Porukara, staying at Kudamalloor was writing a letter to be sent through Jacob to the Revenue Officer. Much gladdened at heart, and yearning to write in Malayalam the Bishop took up the



paper and completed the letter. Jacob went with that letter to the Revenue Officer. Fr. Porukara left for Muthalakodam with Fr. Pascal to attend the 30th day observance of the demise of his brother.

Government Sanction received

Jacob was told by the Revenue Officer that he could have the order at once if he would produce the demanded amount. So Jacob came back and went again to Ettumannur with 100 Kalipanams. We cleared the place for the chapel, got the stones cut out and started with the wood-work. The foundation-stone was not laid as we had not yet received the order.

Then on the third night Jacob came after getting an order from the Executive Officer to the Village Officer and the latter's order to the land-holders to permit the laying of the stone for the church. All this was obtained without any payment, thanks to Divine help and the assistance of the Revenue Officer. At this we all felt relieved.

A cross erected at Mannanam

In the morning Fr. Porukara came and was happy to see the order. He went to Kudamaloor and conveyed the good news to the Bishop. The latter instructed that a wooden cross should be made and blessed and erected in the presence of the land-holders without any delay so as to avoid further trouble. Fr. Porukara came back with this instruction and at once Fr. Malayattoor went to Thai and bought timber and got a cross made. The workers and the land-holders who were all obliged to Tharakan and Kochupothan Mappila were called for. In their presence on 28th April at night the cross was blessed by Fr. Porukara inside Kalambukatan's farm-house and brought to the site in the accompaniment of pipes, drums and much cheering, and the cross was solemnly erected. This was followed by the singing of the All Saint's Litany.



Fr. Porukara heals by prayer

Among those who took part in this celebration was Deacon Ullatuthara from Palai and his younger brother. The latter said, after the Litany, that something had bitten him on the foot and he turned feverish at once. Still he tried to climb down, but after four or six steps, found that he could not and so had to be helped down. Fr. Porukara at once sprinkled holy water on the foot and prayed together with the others and directed that no other treatment need be given. So nothing more was done and by morning he was all right.

The Bishop, having consented to lay the foundation-stone, falls ill

The Bishop had agreed to come and lay the foundation-stone for the mother house of the Congregation on 11th May 1831. But when the day approached he felt indisposed as he was suffering from itches and boils on his hands and legs and was yearning to leave for Europe. As intimation had already been given to all the priests who were friends or students of our Malpan, he, Fr. Porukara and Fr. Pascal some-how prevailed upon the Bishop to come.

The ailing Bishop brought to Mannanam

To provide a sitting room for the Bishop we brought Tharakan's bamboo cage up the hill and fixed it upon four stakes, thatched it, curtained it with mats and partitioned it into two rooms. The Bishop had by now come from Arthunkal to Kudamaloor in the hope that he would get better there. So he was brought from there the previous day. He and all the priests spent the night in the improvised house.

Fr. Porukara lays the foundation for St. Joseph's Monastery at Mannanam in the Bishop's presence

Next morning His Grace was so much ailing that he could not stand up and dress. So it was suggested that



our Malpan should lay the foundation. But, out of humility he asked Fr. Porukara to do it. And that humble priest was finally persuaded. Then there arose a difference of opinion as to who should be the patron saint of the foundation. The Bishop suggested St. John the Baptist. Our Malpan wanted the name of St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Dominicans. Fr. Porukara proposed St. Joseph. Finally everyone agreed upon the last. So the foundation-stone for Monastery Church named after St. Joseph was laid by Fr. Porukara in the presence of the Bishop. After this His Grace went back to Kudamaloor.

First Mass at Mannanam on Pentecost Day

Fr. Porukara went to Athirampuzha and said Mass there. Fr. Porukara was a man of strong faith. He was very hard-working and especially devoted to St. Joseph. Thanks to all these, on Pentecost the chapel was completed and white washed. Then the well-set chapel was blessed and we all said Mass there. All the priests assembled there offered a rupee each and so more than Rs. 50 was collected then. From that day the construction of the Monastery went on in full swing. Out of 10000 Chakrams got earlier from the Church of Edathua, 2000 had been spent on the Pariathumiyaliyal plot near Kudamaloor and 4000 had been borrowed by Fr. Varkey who had agreed to return it when needed and the rest had been spent for this site.

III A time of stress

Monastic way of life started at Mannanam

After laying the foundation-stone for the monastery and erecting a cross, a shed was built around the latter and everyday the solemn Litany was sung there.



Fr. Chavara and the founding of the Monastery at Mannanam

All these had been achieved mainly by the efforts and the interest of the two priests - Fr. Porukara and our Malpan, Fr. Thoma Palackal. The writer of this, Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara from his youth had been of one mind with the Malpan. He had, at the time of his ordination to which he had been led by these two priests, asked God at the first Mass with the Bishop at Arthunkal to bless their efforts and the monastery at Mannanam, which they were trying to establish. Again when I sang the high Mass in my Parish Chennankari on the first Sunday of this last Advent (in the year 1829) I prayed for the same intention.

Fr. Chavara's retreat at Pulinkunnu

Then I came to Pallipuram and saw the Malpan and went back again to my parish. After spending one month I reached Pulinkunnu and strolled about the area conducting a retreat at their filial church in Thekke Angadi. This wandering about was not to the liking of the Malpan. Coming to know that, I returned to Pallipuram at once. After that loitering, I have never, deviated from the path set for me by the Malpan and we were the only persons dedicated to work for the new house, leaving home and relatives and everything else. It was very difficult to continue the work without going around to raise funds. The Malpan had the work of a Superior and the Job of teaching at the Seminary at Pallipuram, which he could not leave. In the new chapel here at Mannanam, Mass had to be said on Sundays, and High Masses with preaching on feast days, and this could not be let off. One priest was needed for this and another for going about to beg for funds.

Opposition from Latins

Then I got the news that the Latin priests and ten churches other than that of the sea-going folk had come toge-

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