

Grace & Gratitude

Silver Jubilee

1993 - 2018

Claretians Missionaries

Province of Chennai,

India

Message from the General Superior



Dear Fr. S. Jesudoss and all the missionaries of the Province of Chennai,

Through this letter I too join you “to give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love endures for ever” (Ps 118.1). You have been preparing this whole Jubilee year to express your gratitude to God through programs aimed at strengthening the vocational identity and commitment of the members of the province. There is no better way of thanking God than living our vocation and mission faithfully and joyfully.

On this occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Province, I remember the pioneer Claretians in India starting with late Fr. Franz Dirnberger, Fr. George Nedumpalakunnel, Fr. Mathew and Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam, as well as the supporting presence of the Province of Germany. Fr. Anselmus, Fr. Maria Arul, Fr. Raphael Raj, Fr. Vincent Anes and now Fr. Jesudoss and their teams of government were instruments of the Lord in the shaping of the Province of Chennai. The anonymous heroes of God are the missionaries in the various missionary platforms and peripheries of the province offering themselves to the Lord and his people in missionary service. To all of you my felicitations and gratitude. As a missionary family we have received a calling “to follow

Christ in a communion of life and to go out into the whole world to proclaim the good news to every creature” (CC 4). I invite you to keep “going out” of yourselves and “going to” where God sends you. The beauty of missionary life is this exciting journey in the Spirit of Christ as co-creators of the future together with other accomplices of the Holy Spirit.

I wish many blessings on the Province of Chennai and on its new offspring, the forthcoming new Independent Delegation in India. The whole Congregation joins you on this occasion of thanksgiving together with friends, benefactors, and all people with whom you share the joy of life and mission.

Walk forth on the charismatic path trod by our Founder St. Claret. I commend you and your further journey to the Heart of Mary, where her sons find spiritual nourishment and guidance.



Fr. Mathew Vattamattam CMF
Superior General



Message from Cardinal Aquilino Bocos CMF



Dear Fr. Provincial and brothers of the Province of Chennai, I am happy to greet you in this beginning of the jubilee of the Province that celebrates 25 years. I join myself in your thanks giving to the Father who has called you in the missionary fraternity. I share your desire to continue to spread the joy of the Gospel with missionary spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret, a man on fire with love and forged in the forge of the Heart of Mary.

Jubilee is the apt time to remember gratefully, to be aware of the present moment, to discern the challenges and opportunities and to renew our missionary commitments. It is the time of grace and hope; it is the time of reconciliation and communion; it is the time of celebration and revitalization. I accompany you with my prayer, particularly in the Eucharist.

There are many and pleasant memories of my visits to Karumathur where you are beginning this jubilee. There I was fortunate to meet all of you around Fr. Francis X. Dirnberger seated on a wheel chair who died very shortly after my visit. How can we forget his life, his charismatic and materiel resources, his apostolic and tender love for India? How much good he did for the Congregation to form you all in the missionary spirit of Claret! Our beloved Fr. George Nedumpalakunnel, the General Consultor was accompanying me in my travels to India.

I write to you on 6th January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Christ manifests himself to all nations. Fr. Peter Schweitzer, our Superior General liked to remember this date with the Claretian presence in India and was repeating, “The light comes from the East”. You know better your roots and the bond of relationship with the Province of Germany, a strong supporter for this promising part of the Congregation. I remember three names that are according to me, very close and always influential in enthusiasm and commitment for India and especially for Chennai. They are Frs. Peter Schuetz, Lorenz Reifenberger and Josef Allinger.

On 9th November 1993, the General Council decided to establish the Province of Madras which became later Province of Chennai. It was made at the completion of the 25 years of the Claretian presence in your great nation. There were two provinces constituted: Bangalore and Chennai. I felicitate you for this initiative to celebrate the 25 years of the missionary journey of that Delegation that became a Province.

The Congregation has been blessed in India and particularly in vocations, seriousness in formation, government, and various apostolic initiatives. All this is gift and grace, but also is fidelity of those of you called and made the missionary spirit of Claret to bear fruit. That’s why the gratitude of the rest of the members of the Congregation turns towards you who have made the important pages of the Congregation in these years and they tell you, “Thanks”.

The Province of Germany has paid special attention to India and particularly to Chennai. I remember once again the image of Fr. Francis X. Dirnberger. How much, we are in debted to him! I am a witness of your veneration and gratitude expressed in many ways. I was impressed by the news that he had gone

to India without knowing English and with some pieces of cloth from the cassocks of the Martyres of Barbastro; he had preserved them till his death. He was not knowing Barbastro, but he was a living remembrance of their commitment and he led you into the mission with the same spirit with which they lived and testified their faith.

I too want to express my admiration and gratitude to all of you who have governed the Province in these 25 years: Frs. S. Anselmus, Maria Arul, A. Raphael Raj, S. Vincent and Jesu Doss. They are signs of unity, bond of communion and promoters of missionary life of the Province. The General Chapter of 1997 took away from you your provincial Fr. Maria Arul; it elected him as General Consultor. I appointed him as Vicar General and he was an excellent collaborator. I make use of this moment to thank the Province for this service.

The Province of Chennai, which was relying in its beginning on the formation centres in Karumathur and Barrackpore, has given the example of vitality in the numerical growth, specialized preparation of its members by the missionary extension- let us think of Tanzania and Sri Lanka- and through the help to other Organisms of the Congregation. Getting out of India was useful for the Province and a great testimony for all the Claretians.

25 years are not a point of arrival, but of departure, creativity, consolidation and if possible, expansion. A Province is made into a dynamic community by the quality of life and missionary commitment within the bigger community which is the Congregation. The people, Church and Congregation expect a lot from you.

St. Teresa of Calcutta looks after you. During her life, she accompanied many of you; she continues to bless and animate you to prefer the poor in your missionary commitments.

I am united in your joys and expectations in this jubilee year. May this be a year of vitality in spiritual, fraternal and missionary life. I sing with you the song of Magnificat. May Mary keep you all in her Maternal Heart.

With gratitude and love, your most affectionate brother,

Aquilino Bocos Merino, CMF



Message from Auxiliary Bishop Maria Abella CMF



Dear Fr. Jesu Doss,

“To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future”. These words pronounced by the late Pope John Paul II in the Peace Memorial Park of Hiroshima during his visit there in 1981, give us a framework for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Province of Chennai. The joy we experience when we recall into mind the blessings of the Lord and the friendship of so many people, leads us towards a more generous commitment to the service of the people with whom we have been sharing our life.

When we look back at the 25 years of our journey in the different parts the Province of Chennai has been serving the people, we find a lot of reasons to be grateful for. The Lord has been generous with us. We become also aware of the loving concern of the Bishops, priests and other religious who have helped us to become truly part of the different particular churches that we have come to love so much. We realize that the love and friendship of so many people have made it possible for us to carry on the mission entrusted to us in that part of Asia. It is good to celebrate with all of them and unite our voices with theirs to sing praise to the Lord. I want to join in your thanksgiving.

Our short history as Chennai Province is not free from mistakes. We have many reasons to be sorry for. We experience the need to entrust ourselves to the compassionate love of the Lord and to the generous understanding of the people who might have witnessed our shortcomings during these years. We ask the Lord to purify our hearts so that we can be true signs of his love for the people.

It is impossible to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Province without remembering many Claretians who have significantly contributed to its growth, among them I want to mention Fr. Franz Dirnbenger, the great Claretian Missionary of India. We thank the Lord for the gift of all of them.

The Province of Chennai during these 25 years has started two important missions in Tanzania and Malesia. This is the best testimony of its missionary spirit. I congratulate you for that.

My prayer to the Lord is that you can continue living faithfully your vocation as Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the midst of the people you are serving. May you be able to follow the path of Saint Anthony M. Claret, our Founder, who was always and only urged by the love of Christ in his commitment to the people.

May the good Lord bless you all and make you instruments of his blessings to the people.

Fraternally,
Josep M. Abella, CMF
Auxiliary Bishop of Osaka (Japan).

Message from the Claretian provincial of Germany

Message to the Souvenir marking the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of Province of Chennai

It gives me great joy to send a message of felicitation and blessings to the Souvenir marking the happy occasion of the 25th Anniversary of Province of Chennai.

“To remember the past is to commit ourselves to the future” reminded St. Pope John Paul II. Every milestone in an organism brings great memories of the small steps we took to grow into who we are today. It also gives us an opportunity to look forward to the future full of hope.

Looking back to the past, we recall the dedicated service of Fr. Franz Xavier Dirnberger, CMF (fondly remembered and revered as our “Thatha” grandfather). When it was time for the Claretian mission in India to be elevated to a Province (in 1985) Fr. Dirnberger saw that it was necessary to take this courageous step of forming a Province (Province of Bangalore) and a Delegation (Indo - Sri Lankan Dependent Delegation). If remembered correctly, at that juncture the Delegation had only one community at Karumathur. The missionary foresight of Fr. Dirnberger, well supported by my predecessors in office as Provincial in the Province of Germany, namely Fr. Peter Schutz and Fr. Lorenz Reifenberger made the missionary growth possible that Chennai was erected a Province in 1993.

Today, as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Province of Chennai, I have the privilege to send my good wishes to the Provincial Superior and to all the members of the Province of Chennai. Province of Chennai has played an unique role in the development

of the missions of the congregation in India and outside India. By sending missionaries to Kolkata (which will become an Independent Delegation in July 2019), began the first outreach to the Santal missions. Missionaries from the Province of Chennai sent to Tanzania are now part of Charles Lwanga Independent Delegation in East Africa. Presence of missionaries of this province in Malaysia shows the missionary openness and enthusiasm of the Province. There are missionaries from this province send to many other parts of the world. Province of Germany is grateful for the missionaries send to serve in German speaking Europe.

Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka of the Province of Germany has had the support of the Province of Chennai ever since the missionary vision of Fr. Dirnberger looked across the Palk straits to this island nation. The first missionaries from Sri Lanka, including me, are very grateful for the initial formation that we received in the Province of Chennai. In 1991, when we finally started our presence in Sri Lanka (still part of Indo - Sri Lankan Delegation), we could rest assured of the support of our missionaries from the Province of Chennai. Many missionaries have helped us with their missionary availability. We gratefully remember Fr. John Kennedy, Fr. S. Anselmus, Fr. P. Subaraj, Fr. V. Lawrence, Fr. Joseph Santiago and Fr. L. Xavier who have shared our missionary journey in Sri Lanka. We are grateful for the continued service of Fr. S. Maria Arul in the formation of missionaries in Sri Lanka.

For many years, Province of Chennai has been generous in welcoming our students to follow their training in Philosophy. We are grateful to the missionaries from the Province of Chennai who assists us with the ongoing formation of members in the first five years of ordination. The 25th General Chapter reminded and ignited a sense of urgency to go to the peripheries. My prayer and wish to each of you today is that you may grow deeper in the spirit of our founder Claret and may reach the peripheries with the joyful message of the Gospel that transforms us.

P. Callistus Joseph, CMF
Provincial superior ,Province of Germany

Message from Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka

“Your inspirational touch made us to grow.”

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for hopeful tomorrow.” - Melody Beattie

On the significant occasion of this Twenty five year of Jubilee, the canonical erection of the Province of Chennai - India, we rejoice with all of you dear brothers. I have great honor and privilege to extend *our hearty congratulations* to all of you on behalf of Sri Lankan Delegation “A Silver Jubilee is a time to pause and reflect on all the good work you have done” says Denis J. Hart. Following the charism of our father Claret and our fore fathers missionaries shed their sweat and blood to bring the good news through innumerable avenues to reach out to God’s people in the past twenty five years.

Jubilee is a time to give thanks to the Trinitarian Community which is foundation of our Religious life. It is time to express our deepest GRATITUDE to our Father Founder Antony Mary Claret and for all the Claretians gone before us. It is time to acknowledge our blessings, care, concern, encouragement, forgiveness and reconciliations we had experienced through Christian faith with our Claretian family, with wider community and accomplishment we had made through Life and Mission by touching many lives in past twenty five years.

In Past twenty five years Chennai Province was like a mother who gave birth to **the three children, Sri Lanka, East Africa, and Kolkata**. Let us be grateful to those who were the charming gardeners to these three children who made our souls blossom.

Our hearts are with full of happiness and joy for experiencing God's Love in past 25 years of Service through Chennai Province, I recall the good works that have been done. My memory flies back to 1979 where first students were recruited from Sri Lanka. Since then we have very close affinity towards the Province of Chennai. As we commenced our life and formation in Claret Bhavan, Karumathur, it was indeed a place of grace to plant our congregation future in Sri Lanka. As our founder mentioned when he founded the congregation in 1849, today we are six tomorrow... As I recalled his beautiful sentence my heart over whelmed with joy. The first batch was four and today we are 35 priests and 20 professed students and 09 novices is the seed that was sown in 1979. This is the Grace we received. We express our deep gratitude to the province of Chennai. On this special occasion being united with you I humbly say, words are not enough to express our gratitude to you. You had played and playing a tremendous and faithful role in building God's kingdom in our respective land of Sri Lanka.

I would like to recall and claim the words of our present Holy Father Francis: All the consecrated men and women he says, "Look at the past with **gratitude**, live the present with **passion**, and embrace the future with **hope**" I feel it is very appropriate to bear in mind this statement as you celebrate this Jubilee. I honestly recall the past with the deep sense of gratitude. My gratitude cannot be recorded in few lines. It needs volume to spell out still for all I fail in my duty if I do not turn over few pages in our History.

The Sri Lankan and Chennai Provinces bonding and relationships are like a woven cloth. We are faithful to one another from the beginning and with God's grace we will remain persevere to each other. At this juncture, we the delegation of Sri Lanka will never forget the fraternal love and support shown by you our brothers. We remember all the Claretians from Chennai Province who had served whole heartedly in Sri Lanka and who had been part of our joys, happiness and struggles. You had played great role in our success and what we are today.

We can never forget our beloved *Thatha* Father Dirnberger CMF. When we reflect the Indo - Sri Lankan relationship. Our heart sings the song of gratitude to the Lord. Amidst of the mission in many other countries, Chennai Province and the provincials of Chennai are outstanding figures for us Sri Lankans such as Fr. Anselmus CMF, Fr. Maria Arul CMF, Fr. Raphael CMF, Fr. Vincent Annesthasiar CMF and Fr. S. Jesudoss CMF, have a special place in our hearts and in Sri Lankan Delegation

Chennai Province has been generous in sharing the missionaries in the formative and pastoral work of Sri Lankan Claretians. The Mission in Sri Lanka had been rich because of the active presence of Claretians from Chennai. They have been always supportive to do the mission with commitment.

On behalf of the Sri Lankan Church and Claretians, I acknowledge and I am grateful to Fr. John Kennedy CMF, Fr. L. Xavier CMF, Fr. Anselmus CMF, Fr. Lawrence CMF, and Fr. Maria Arul CMF, for their great contribution in formation and while remembering Fr. Santiyagu CMF, and Fr. Subaraj CMF, for their service as Claretians in Sri Lankan Church.

The members of the Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka applaud and extend best wishes to spread the pure burning flame of God's love in your respective territory in India. It is our hearty prayer for you, may you continue to be God's instrument through your life and mission. It is really an amazing growth which our

eyes has seen and believed that everything is possible for God through good human beings like you. Here I would like to express the quote from the depth of my heart, **“Your inspirational touch made us to grow.”**

I strongly believed the grace of God and the maternal support of Our Blessed Mother and the intercession of our Father Claret who were with the members of the Chennai Province, that grace had motivated and extended its missionary to witness the life and mission of Jesus Christ.

The 25 years of service as Claretians of Chennai Province had been a blessings to the Local Church, the Universal Church, in other provinces in multiple ways in India and through communications and prayers throughout the world. The growth of Chennai province is a sign of hope for our Congregation.

I really, appreciate the progress and the services of the Claretians of Chennai Province. May the loving God be with you in the coming years along with the prayerful guidance of Mother Mary and through the intercessions of our Father Antony Mary Claret.

The way our fore fathers were challenged and moved with courage to face the challenges according to the signs of the time. The same Inspiring spirit is motivating us to respond to the **signs of the time**. The Lord has given you the energy and health over the past twenty five years to serve in his vineyard. Let us pray may the good Lord be your strength in coming years too, so you will be an instrument of God according to his will and for his glorification in your life as Claretians. Happy Silver Jubilee.

Fraternally,

S. Rex Constantine, CMF

Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka

Message from the Claretian provincial of Bangalore



*I*t is heartening that the Chennai Province of the Claretians is celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the erection of the Province at a time when we the Claretians are preparing for the celebration of the 50 years of the Claretian Presence in India. When I think of the amazing growth of the Claretians in India in 50 years, three Provinces, one independent delegation and one dependent delegation having over 450 perpetually professed and priests members: I can only say that this is the marvellous work of God, “For he is good. For his mercy is over us unto eternity,” Ezra 3:11.

The Province has every reason to thank God and celebrate the 25 years of its growth in the divine providence. Within these 25 years the Chennai Province has achieved remarkable growth in personnel as well as ministerial positions. The vitality and missionary availability of the members of the Province is remarkable. Its members are working in many parts of the world under the universal mission of the Claretian Congregation. The province has contributed substantially for the growth of the

extended to Malesia. Soon the dependent delegation of Kolkata which is part of the Province would be raised to an independent delegation.

On this joyful and gracious occasion when you are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of your Province's erection, on behalf of the Bengaluru Province of the Claretians in India, I wish all the members of the Chennai Province continued blessings of missionary zeal and enthusiasm. It is a joyful occasion for all of us the Claretians in India. May St. Anthony Mary Claret our Holy Father Founder continue to inspire you to serve the Congregation and the Church according to the charism of our beloved Congregation. May the Blessed Virgin Mary our Mother protect and guide you to move forward ministering and evangelizing the People of God.

Fraternally yours in the Lord,



Jacob Arakkal John, CMF

Provincial Superior,

Province of Bengaluru



Message from the Claretian provincial of St.Thomas Province



Dear Fr. Provincial and members of Chennai Province,

As you are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the establishment of Chennai Province, let me Congratulate the present Provincial Team under the leadership of Fr. Jesudoss and all the members of the Province for the wonderful services that you are rendering to the Universal Church and to our beloved Congregation.

The vibrant missionary spirit that led the members of the Province could be seen very well in the extension of missions in Africa and other nations as well as different mission areas of India. The availability of the members to start different social ministries and for the uplift of the down trodden is a remarkable service to the society and Church. The members of the province could demonstrate their social commitment at the wake of different natural calamities like Tsunami and floods.

The Silver Jubilee Year is an occasion to thank God for all the Graces He had showered upon the members of Chennai Province. The services that you do are manifold. The parishes, educational institutions, special ministries and retreat preaching are the means through which the members reach out to the humanity in need.

I take this opportunity to Congratulate Fr. Jesudoss, the Provincial Superior, Council members and all the members of the Province for the great service you are rendering to many people in India and abroad and for the Universal church. I place on record the sincere thanks to all for your co-operation and collaboration with us. Your affection brotherhood and friendliness is much appreciated.

May Good Lord shower His graces upon the Province and each one of you. Assuring our Prayers, I remain.

Jose Thenpillil, CMF
Provincial Superior,
St. Thomas Province



Message from the Claretian Delegate Superior of North East



I am very glad to hear that the Province of Chennai is celebrating 25 years of its foundation this year. It is a year of thanksgiving and praise to Jesus for his continuous presence and help given to the province.

God has his ways and means to share and communicate himself. His grace is required to know him and to walk in his ways. We must do the best to share the message of Christ. By accepting his ways, we get his blessings.

A timely beginning and enthusiastic efforts of Fr. Francis Dierenberger who laid the foundation for the province of Chennai, together with the committed and sustained hard work of all members have helped the province grow and establish itself over these 25 years. Today it is praiseworthy to see the marvellous missionary zeal and the various services that the members are involved in to bring up the lives of the people and to spread the message of Jesus. The province has grown and spread from the state of Tamil Nadu to many northern states in India and to a few countries abroad. This silver Jubilee year becomes a celebration of gratitude. The missionaries of the Word of God who brought out changes in the minds and lives of the people raise their hearts to God to say, "Lord, I thank you." It is an appreciation of all, for the

many blessings, God showered on the province. It is to energise oneself with the power of God to praise and thank him through sincere services to the people. The members of the province may continue to be humble servants of the word of God in the style of our founder St. Anthony Mary Claret.

I, along with everyone in Northeast India Independent Delegation of the Claretian Missionaries, join with you in your Silver Jubilee celebrations. I pray the Lord may grant more blessings to the province to be at the service of the Lord and the Church.

Sincere congratulations and best wishes!

Pius Thuruthiyil, CMF
Major Superior
North East Independent Delegation



Message from the Claretian provincial of Chennai

 Dear brothers, Greetings.

On 13th January, 2018, the 102nd birth anniversary of our Beloved “Thatha”, Fr. Franz Xavier Dirnberger, CMF, we began in Claret Bhavan, Karumathur, the Silver Jubilee of our Province with the motto “GRACE AND GRATITUDE”. With these words, our Jubilee logo is placed in all our houses to remind us the call of this moment of divine grace. Throughout this year we reminded ourselves about our vocation to our Congregation. The jubilee prayer we recited has certainly helped us to perceive and appreciate the meaning our vocational journey. The recollections circulated for each month has helped us to go through different aspects of our missionary living. The Provincial Assembly we celebrated has helped us to make a short evaluation of our life and mission. The get togethers we celebrated in five different groups have led us live joyfully with proper accompaniment and commitment to spiritual and community life.

Though canonically we are a province for the past twenty five years, our history begins from 1976 onwards. The small and

humble beginning of our presence in Karumathur has branched out into different residences, houses, formation centers and apostolates both within and outside of India. That tiny seed of the Claretian Presence has sprout out into 28 communities. It has formed missionaries to identify with Father Claret to witness that his spirit is for the whole world. Our Tanzanian Mission that has become part of today's St. Charles Lwanga Independent Delegation expresses the missionary commitment of our brothers to be rooted in that soil and offer themselves to radiate the joy of the Gospel. The forth coming Independent Delegation of Kolkata is another mile stone in our call as Servants of the Word. Our missionary presence in the Archdiocese of Kuching, Malaysia is an inspiration for our young missionaries to be open to the call of our Lord Jesus to live the mission of going forth to the frontiers.

Our missionary journey in these years invites us to express our GRATITUDE to the GRACE we have received from God. This is the time for all of us to thank God for the gift of our Claretian Missionary Vocation that has gathered us all to live around our Master. The conviction of our call despite the challenges in this pilgrimage, the ability received from Him to live it with and for one another in the community, the self-sacrificing attitude to offer ourselves for our people we serve, the generosity to lead a simple life bearing the pains of privations, the perseverance to proclaim the Gospel through direct preaching and communication media, the patience in listening and guiding the persons in need of guidance in the parishes and schools, the creativity to respond to the social challenges, the identification with the teenagers and youth of our time through teaching apostolates, the keen attention to learn the languages and dialects of the people of the mission, etc., are some reasons among the many to live gratefully

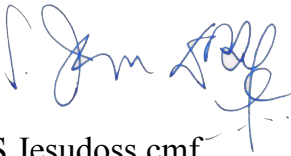
to the Lord throughout our life. The call to be grateful to God leads us to express our gratitude to our Mother Province of Germany that is with its ever maternal care and concern. From the moment of sending Rev. Fr. Franz Xavier Dirnberger, CMF, our beloved Thatha to accompany us, it always shows its care for our wellbeing. While acknowledging gratefully the commitment of Fr. Dirnberger, CMF, we are indebted to the former Provincials Fr. Peter Schiitz, CMF, Fr. Lawrence Reifenberger, CMF, Fr. Armin Sixt, CMF and Fr. Joseph Callistus, CMF, the present Provincial for their encouragements in all the ways. In this line we gratefully remember His Eminence Cardinal Aquilino Bocos, CMF, then Superior General of our Congregation who brought into existence our Province and his successor His Grace Josep Maria Abella, CMF, Auxiliary Bishop of Osaka who closely accompanied us in our development process. All of us express our sincere thanks to Most Rev. Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF the Superior General of our Congregation who is opening up a new chapter in the history of our province, namely, the establishing of the Independent Delegation of Kolkata in the near future.

At this juncture of bringing back to our mind the development of the life and mission of our Province, we whole heartedly thank Frs. Mathew Njayarkulam, CMF and Cyriac Njayarkulam, CMF for their generosity to sow the seeds of Claretian vocation in Tamil Nadu and form the first generations of our province. Their hard work to search for young and good vocations, accompaniment in their claretian missionary formation, building up a healthy relationship with the people of our surrounding are bearing fruit to our efforts of evangelization today. May the Good Lord bless them abundantly.

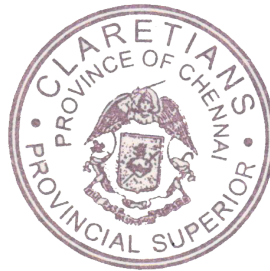
This is also time for us to thank Fr. S. Anselmus, CMF, Fr. S. Maria Arul, CMF, Fr.A.Raphael Raj, CMF, Fr. S. Vincnet Anesthasiar, CMF the former provincials who accompanied us all in our vocation and apostolate. Along with them let us thank our vocation promoters and formators who initiated and formed good vocations to our province and congregation at large. Our Province of Chennai is the fruit of our fidelity to live our vocation and mission in all the circumstances. While gratefully remembering the members departed to the eternal abode of the Father, let us thank God for the gift of each member of our organism, because to remember the Graces of God is to live our Gratitude to Him and to our brothers. May the intercession of our Blessed Mother strengthen us always in our life and mission!

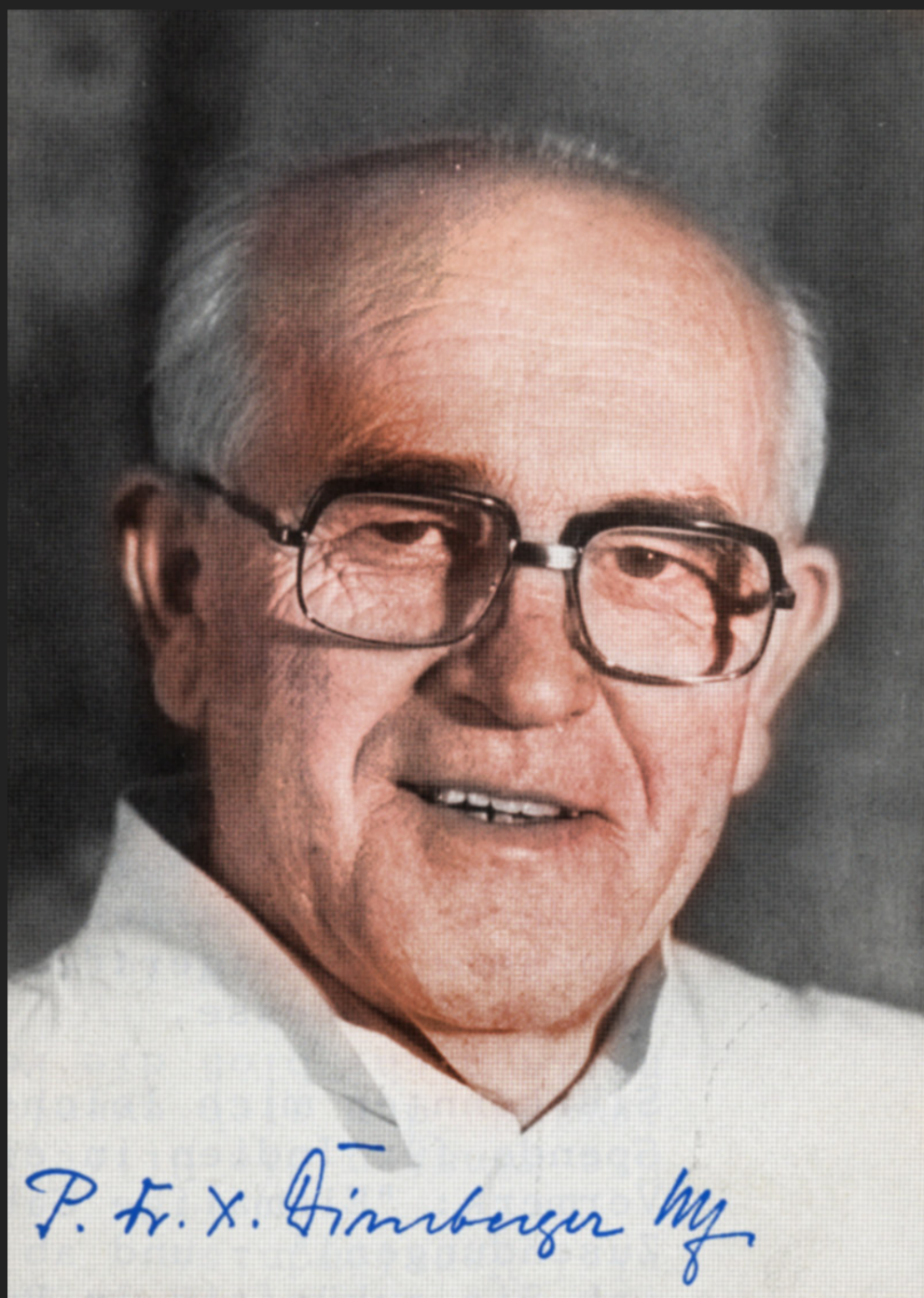
Thanks a Lot,

Fraternally Yours,



S.Jesudoss cmf





P. Fr. X. Gimberger M.F.

REV.FR. FRANZ XAVER DIRNBERGER, CMF : A MISSIONARY WITH VISION AND SPIRIT

Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam CMF

A Jubilee celebration is an occasion to look back, remember the persons who were instrumental in accomplishing wonderful things in the history of an enterprise, in this context, the development of a province of a Religious Congregation in the Church. When we think of the foundational years of the Claretian Congregation in India and also its consolidation in the first 25-30 years in India, a person cannot escape from our memory: Rev. Fr. Franz Xaver Dirnberger. Towards the end of 2016 his Birth Centenary had been duly celebrated at Claret Bhavan, Karumathur, Tamil Nadu where his mortal remains are venerably kept. A beautiful Souvenir had also been published on that occasion with precious testimonies of many persons who were closely associated with the life and mission of Fr.Dirnberger, especially during his missionary, apostolic life in India.

In this Jubilee Souvenir it is my intention to go through the legacy of this great Missionary to detect traces of his missionary spirit – a task rather gratifying although not at all easy. Since I consider myself as a person who had the privilege of living with Fr. Dirnberger at least for some time and closely associated with him until his death, it is my obligation to comply with this task. In doing this beautiful task, I also have in mind our veteran pioneers of the Claretian development in India like Frs. Joseph Madhavath, Kuriakose Thekkilakattil, George Nedumpalakunnel, Mathew

Njayarkulam, George Vanchipurackal and Thomas Thakadiel (“The Indo-German CMFs”). I also belong to that group and write this account on their behalf feeling one with them in the appreciation of our Great Missionary Rev.Fr. Dirnberger. We remember with so much gratitude and affection the late Bishop of Palai, Mar Sebastian Vayalil without whose kindhearted and generous collaboration the whole idea of beginning the Claretian branch in India would not have come to a shape. May the Almighty reward him for his great services to the Claretian Congregation in India. Another illustrious personality we owe our remembrance to is our late Superior General of the Congregation, Rev. Fr. Peter Schweiger, CMF whose universal spirit had been the moving force behind the whole venture of our Congregation in India. Rev. Fr. Andreas Back CMF, Rev.Fr. Peter Schütz CMF need to be remembered at this juncture when we recall the beginnings of our Congregation in India. Fathers like Msgr. Kurian Vanchipurackal, Alexander Cherukarakunnel and Rudi Mainka CMF had a role to play when the idea of a Claretian foundation in India came up. Rev.Msgr. Thomas Moothedam played his role as seminary Rector of the Good Shepherd Minor Seminary in forming the seminarians who were to be the pioneers in India at implanting the Claretian Congregation along with Fr. Dirnberger. May God grant them all their well merited reward of eternal life, since most of these persons have already gone to the eternal abode of the Heavenly Father.

The Years 1916 - 1970:

The name “Franz Xaver” (in German language) which was given to our personality we are contemplating, is something to be pondered at. It is providential that this 13th child, born on 13th January, 1916 of the parents Michael Dirnberger and Kresczenza born Ruhland received the name of the great missionary to the

Far-East, Francis Xavier who as one of the first Jesuits left his home country Spain to bring the Good News to far east nations. Fr. Dirnberger remained true to the essence of this name all along his life in the spirit of the great missionary St. Francis Xavier with the characteristics specific to Fr. Dirnberger.

It is important for us to note that Fr. Dirnberger was born in a pious family where religious values were held in high esteem. God gave him the grace to have good and pious parents. The religious atmosphere he breathed in the family might have shaped also his desire to become a priest to serve the people of God. We don't get the impression from his early life that he had any second thought in this matter – to become anything else while choosing his life goal/profession. We can only wonder how he got this determination to become a priest already in his young age. He received classes from the parish priest additionally in the 4th year in Latin, German and Mathematics as preparation for the entrance examination to the high school in Straubing. On 18th March 1926 he passed this exam and since he wanted to become a priest, he was admitted to the minor seminary in Straubing. He did not give up the idea although a serious sickness – pleurisy related with tuberculosis affecting his right lung - forced him to stay 3 years at home until he got completely cured from it. He wanted then to enter a seminary for 'late vocations'. And the divine providence brought him to the Claretians in Weissenhorn in 1932 where he was received into the fatherly hands of none other than Fr. Peter Schweiger who was to become at a later stage - in 1949 the Superior General of the Congregation even being the only non-Spaniard attending that General Chapter. How wonderful are God's ways ! Fr. Schweiger who was taken up by the missionary ideal of the Holy Founder St. Anthony Mary Claret whose spirit was for the whole world gave undoubtedly during this long tenure – 18 years - as Superior General until 1967 the universal opening

to the Claretian Congregation and this venerable Father receives Dirnberger into the 'Claretinerkolleg' in Weissenhorn. We can well imagine how the missionary-apostolic-universal spirit of this great Claretian priest shaped also the mentality of the candidate who entered the Congregation in those times.

Dirnberger was at Weissenhorn for two years and finished the secondary education in Easter 1935. Then he proceeded to the next stage of education to the old high school in Würzburg. Since Hitler was preparing a war and he was in need of soldiers and officers, the time of the higher school was shortened for one year and the final exam was fixed at the end of the 8th class. Thus he was able to recover one of the three missed years in Straubing.

The amazing fact is how Dirnberger was able to finish his studies required to become a priest living through the different stages of the Second World War being a soldier of Hitler, escaping providentially various dangers to his very life. Just to mention one incident : a bomb fell right in the middle of the lorry he was travelling in Russia in 1942 and exploded. 6 men were dead. Nothing happened to Dirnberger and to the driver. He contributed this to the protection of the Heavenly Mother. Dirnberger survives the second world war and even the imprisonment later and returns to the Claretians to complete his priestly studies. An American Chaplain was instrumental in getting him out of the imprisonment ahead of time. The priestly ordination of Dirnberger took place on 8th August 1948. His first solemn high mass in the home parish was celebrated on August 17, 1948 in the parish church of Doeffering in the Bavarian Forest. Fr. Peter Schweiger was the preacher. How rewarding and deeply grateful to God Fr. Schweiger might have felt at that time being the person designed by the Almighty to receive this 'late vocation' to the Claretian fold in Weissenhorn in 1932.

Fr. Dirnberger was assigned to various services in the German Province and even to lead the Province as Provincial Superior in 1957 being also the superior of the Frankfurt community. The Heart of Mary Church in Frankfurt was completed in those years.

It was during his time as Provincial Superior that the starting of a Claretian Mission both in India (Asia) and in Congo (Africa) was envisioned. In the General Chapter of 1961 this idea was presented officially and Fr. Schweiger, the Superior General, was at first not enthusiastic about this project in India due to Rite conflicts prevailing there, but later gave his blessing to both projects. Rt. Rev. Dr. Sebastian Vayalil, the Bishop of Palai, Kerala was instrumental in bringing this project pertaining to India to success since at the initial stages he gave option to his own seminarians in the diocesan minor seminary to join the Claretian Congregation in Germany. It would have been really difficult for German Claretian Missionaries to obtain visa for establishing the Congregation in India already in those years.

Now it is important for us to know the background as to how Fr. Dirnberger landed in India in 1970 to guide the Claretian beginnings in this country. Fr. Peter Schütz, the then Provincial Superior of the German Province writes regarding this matter in the Birth Centenary Souvenir (p.17):

Fr. Dirnberger left Germany in the Holy Week of 1970 to start the missionary service in India. The plan of the German Province was to accompany the young Claretians in India for a certain time by an elderly priest so that they could better start their work as missionaries guided by somebody with a certain experience. I remember well when we discussed that question during one of the meetings of the Provincial Government.

Fr. Dirnberger participated in this meeting since he was the provincial economer for the running period. When we mentioned that he could do this service in India, he told us that he could not speak English, but we solved this problem telling him that all the young fathers had studied in Germany so that he could speak German there. Nobody thought that this missionary service would last up to the end of his life.

The Years 1970 – 1993:

The missionary thrust of Fr. Dirnberger was indeed the motivating force for him to leave Germany and to settle himself in India. He was to adapt himself to a life altogether different from that life he was used to live in Germany – long 23 years of life spent in service to establish and consolidate the Claretian branch in India and start even initiatives to implant the Congregation also to Sri Lanka. He had to be the animator of the Claretian Mission in India and also the formator and Superior of subsequent Claretian generations in Kuravilangad, Bangalore and Karumatur in Tamil Nadu.

All the ‘Testimonies’ given in the Birth Centenary Souvenir of 2016 stress again and again the characteristic traits of Fr. Dirnberger during this period: Man of prayer and sacrifices, Man of vision, love for Christ and deep tender love towards the Mother of God reciting the favourite prayer of rosary at various times of the day, discipline of life and inculcation of values like simplicity and punctuality, love and special consideration for the poor, downtrodden and neglected of the society. Those who came in contact with him could not but admire his utter simplicity, sense of poverty, sense of sacrifice and punctuality. “Claretian Mercy Home” for the children rescued from the horrible ‘female infanticide’, a social evil prevailing in the region of Usilampatty and elsewhere in Tamil Nadu stands as a bold witness of his sense of justice and love for the poor and neglected even withstanding

the opposition from the traditional sectors of the Hindu society.

After the tragic traffic accident occurred in July 1980, Fr. Dirnberger had to suffer physically a lot especially in the subsequent years after the accident due to fracture of hip and repeated operations. He had to use crutches for the rest of his life experiencing lot of pain and discomfort. Heeding also to the advice of Mother Teresa of Calcutta – in the meantime already canonized as a Saint of the Catholic Church – to offer all the pains for the growth of the Congregation in India and elsewhere, he courageously suffered the pain and discomfort with patience all throughout the years until the last moments of his death on 12th April 1993.

I can only highly recommend to all those who want to know more about Fr. Dirnberger to read the Birth Centenary Souvenir published in 2016. It is not our intent to elaborate each and every theme related to the life and spirituality of Fr. Dirnberger in this short write-up. His autobiographical notes have been published in Sri Lanka in 2002 with the title: “Nothing daunts him” by the writer of this article.

The history of the foundation, first stages of growth and even consolidation of the Claretian Congregation in India are unthinkable without considering the due place of Rev.Fr. Franz Xaver Dirnberger CMF in it. The Claretian Congregation as a whole owes immense gratitude to this great personality and the Claretians especially in India and Sri Lanka bow our heads before this ‘Mahatma’(great soul) and saintly person in profound gratitude and reverence with a sense of obligation to practice the virtues he practiced and to respect the ideals he had held always high in his life.



EARLY HISTORY OF CHENNAI PROVINCE IN THE SOUTH

FR. ANSELMUS CMF

The provincial government of Germany acknowledged the fast growth of the mission of the Province India by establishing in April 1976 the Dependent delegation of India. Fr. Dirnberger was appointed as delegate Superior. The new organism continued its process of maturation. The provincial chapter held in the year 1980 in Germany was a landmark in the formation of Province of India and Indo – Srilankan Mission. The chapter emphasized the need to grand full autonomy to the delegation. The dependent delegation of India was elevated to an independent Delegation in 1982 with Fr. George Nedumpalakunnal as its Major Superior. The General Government took note of the rapid growth of the Indian Claretians and wanted to create the Independent Delegation into a Province.

When there was discussion about making Indian delegation into a Province, Fr. Dirnberger had an idea of having a delegation under German province. The question was whether the entire Indian delegation could become one province or a part of the delegation could be made a delegation of German province. The priests and students from Tamil Nadu too thought the same with Fr. Dirnberger that it would be of a great help to remain with German province and later become a new province. Frs. Anselmus, Lucas, Singarayan, Maria Arul and all the students were of the same opinion. Many priests from other side wanted to have one province together with Tamil Nadu. The General Government decided to have Tamil Nadu under German province and other region as forming Indian province.

A decree was issued by Fr. General in Rome on 7th May 1984 which specified that *“This province comprises all the territory of the Indian nation, except the state of Tamilnadu and is made up of all the houses except the house of Karumathur, which will remain under the Jurisdiction of the German Province.”* They decided to name the new Province as Indian province. The members from Tamil Nadu were visibly disappointed about it and it was decided to name the new organism as Indo-Srilankan delegation for Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka under German province. On 10th June 1984 Indian province was erected, Fr. George Nedumpalakunnal CMF as its Provincial Superior. On the same day, Fr. Dirnberger CMF was appointed as the Mission Superior of the Indo – Srilankan Mission.

In 1987 the Indo – Srilankan Mission was raised as the Dependent Delegation under German Province and Fr. Dirnberger was appointed as delegate Superior. The new organism continued its process of maturation. The dependent delegation of India was elevated to an independent Delegation in 1992 with Fr. Anselmus CMF as its Delegate Superior. On 9th November 1993 Madras Province was erected, Fr. Anselmus CMF was appointed as its first Provincial Superior.

FIRST SCHOOL

There was no plan of starting school at Karumathur though we had enough land for the same. Some Pentecostal group approached Mr. Dhanaraj of Karumathur parish and informed him of their plan to start a school in the region around Karumathur. Mr. Dhanaraj informed about it to Fr. Anselmus. Fr. Anselmus in turn consulted Fr. Dirnberger and Christian teachers of the locality about it. As the Christian community at Karumathur was in need of small and it was advisable to have a school run by the Pentecost in our parish, it was decided suddenly and in a night, shed was made and the school of inaugurated. Rev. Fr. Dirnberger was very happy about the growth

of the school and provided enough money to construct proper infrastructure. It was started as an English medium school and later we got recognition as the aided school of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The district educational officer informed that the primary section could not be recognized as an aided school because there was already a Government Kallar Primary school at Karumathur.

Fr. Anselmus met Mr. J.S Raju, then President of Tamil Nadu Teachers' association who is a believer and a person who reads the Bible every day. He helped us to get our school recognized as an aided school without taking any bribe.

KARUMATHUR PARISH

Fr. Mathew was the rector of Claret Bhavan seminary and he established very good relationship with the people of Karumathur region. He visited the Catholic families and the non-Catholic families regularly. Arch Bishop of Madurai, Most Rev. Dr. Justin Diraviam was so much pleased with the work of Fr. Mathew that he asked him to take up the parish at Karumathur. It was discussed with Fr. Dirnberger and other community members and it was decided to accept this offer. Fr. Mathew became the first parish priest of Karumathur and it is the first parish of Claretians in India. In the beginning, it was known as Good Shepherd parish and later when the parish Church was built and inaugurated when Fr. Lucas was the parish priest, the parish name was changed into St. Antony Mary Claret parish – the first parish in India having our founder as the patron saint.

THEOLOGY HOUSE AT BARRACKPORE

We were looking for a place to start our theological formation. It was decided to have theological formation with missionary thrust. Thus, Barrackpore in West Bengal was chosen. Barrackpore was already visited by Fr. Mathew, Fr. Dirnberger and Fr. Anselmus even before the division of the province for starting a mission and

theology house in West Bengal. Fr. Anselmus was sent there with two theology students to start the process of starting our community at Barrackpore.

MINOR SEMINARY AT KUMBAKONAM

Fr. Dirnberger wanted to have the minor seminary near Vellore or somewhere in the Archdiocese of Pondicherry. He happened to spend time at the Bishop's house of Kumbakonam for rest during one of his travels. It was the Most Rev. Paul Arulsamy Bishop of Kumbakonam who invited him to start a seminary in Kumbakonam and offered a piece of land near Carmel Ashram. Fr. Lucas was sent there to initiate the process of starting our minor seminar there. He was instrumental in buying lot of land and constructing the building. The minor seminary was shifted to Kumbakonam from Claret Bhavan, Karumathur on 19th July 1986.

HOLY FAMILY MISSION, ETTAMADAI

In 1971, Holy Family mission, Ettamadai was bifurcated from Mathal parish. Rt. Rev. Marianus Arockiasamy, Bishop of Kottar, entrusted the parish at Ettamadai on 19th July 1987 to the care of the Claretians with Rev. Fr. S. Anselmus as the parish priest. Ettamadai is the largest parish area wise in the diocese of Kottar with nine sub-stations viz., Thadikarankonam, Veerapuli, Surulacode, Checkadi, Claret Mount, Perunthalaikadu, Vazhayathuvayal, Paraliyar and Keeriparai.

ESTATE AT ERACHAKULAM

In 1988, in view of self sufficiency of the province, 70 acres of rubber plantation at Surulacode and 40 acres of other arid land at Erachakulam were purchased.

OUR LADY OF SNOWS MISSION, THADIKARANKONAM

In the year 2003, Thadikarankonam the biggest sub-station of Ettamadai was bifurcated and was erected as a new parish.

Rt.Rev. Dr. Leon Dharmaraj, the Bishop of Kottar handed over the parish to the Claretians on 19th October 2003 and the mother parish Ettamadai was taken over by the diocese. Thadikarankonam parish has five sub-stations namely Valayathuvayal, Paraliyar, Keeriparai, Veerapuli and Surulacode. At present, it has three hundred families. Fr. A. Devadoss was appointed as the first parish priest. In the initial stage, the community was staying at Assisi Health Centre, the house of the Daughters of Mary Sisters. In 2005 the community moved to the newly constructed Maria Bhavan. Recently, Surulacode, one of the substations of Thadikarankonam was bifurcated and erected as a new parish having Veerapuli as its only Substation.

LIFE – DINDIGUL

The 19th General Chapter (1979) in its document *The Mission of the Claretians Today* speaks of an option for evangelization that multiplies lay evangelisers: “This will mean striving for the complete incorporation of lay persons in the tasks of the Church, especially in works of evangelization, by offering them our understanding and contributing as much as we can to their formation” (177). In the 1997 Chapter, while discussing the lines of action for Asia, the Chapter once again stressed the need to reinforce our collaboration with the laity (IPM, 6.1.5).

In response to this call of the Congregation, the Province of Chennai took upon itself the responsibility of establishing a centre for the formation of laity for evangelization in Tamil Nadu. The Second Provincial Chapter of Chennai Province (1997) spoke of training of Claretian personnel for this ministry (Chapter Document 6.9). To realise this objective, nearly sixteen acres of land was purchased near Dindigul, Tamil Nadu for the institute for the formation of laity for evangelization in 1999 though initially we wanted to have it in Trichy. On 16th July 1999, the community LIFE came into existence in a village called Nochiodaipatty, under

the leadership of Fr. A.Devadoss, CMF. This new foundation for creative ministry was the province Jubilee memorial of the 150th year of the foundation of the Congregation.

CLARETIAN PROVINCIAL HOUSE – WEST TAMBARAM

On 9th November 1993, His Eminence Cardinal Aquilino Bocos, CMF, the then Superior General announced the elevation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Delegation of Claretian Missionaries to the status of a province in formation with its curia at Claret Bhavan, Karumathur. Fr.S.Anselmus was appointed as the Provincial Superior. The newly formed organism was named as MADRAS PROVINCE OF THE CLARETIANS. As the City of Madras was renamed as Chennai later, the second provincial chapter decided to rename the Province of Madras as “Province of Chennai” in 1997. The first Provincial Chapter of the Province was took place from 14-20 April, 1994 at Claret Illam, Kumbakonam presided by Rev. Fr.Peter Schutz, Vicar General of the Congregation. Fr.S.Maria Arul was elected as the Provincial Superior. In this chapter, it was decided to shift the curia from Karumathur to Chennai to facilitate the administration and accommodate the missionaries going from Tamil Nadu to West Bengal. On 11th June 1994, the Provincial Curia was shifted from Claret Bhavan, Karumathur to Chennai to a rendered house belonging to the Blessed Sacrament Fathers situated in AJ 3, 4th Avenue, Anna Nagar. One of the main concerns of the newly established curia community in the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore was to search for a suitable place to locate the Provincial Curia in Madras. The first step to start the Tanzanian Mission was started from this house.

With the election of the new provincial government in the second provincial chapter in 1997, Fr.S.Anselmus, the newly elected Provincial Superior and his consulters identified the present location of the curia in West Tambaram as an apt place and purchased a

piece of land on 29th January, 1998. In view of materializing the construction of the house and its related logistics, the community was moved from Anna Nagar to this part of the city and remained in two different rented houses in Lakshmi Puram from April, 1999, one for the provincial administration and another one for food and lodging of the claretian guests on travel and other matters. It was from this house the first Bible Diary in Tamil published in 1999.

The construction for the present curia began on 11th June, 2000. The plan of the house consisted of providing possibilities for retreats, chapters and other meetings along with the provincial administration. The house was inaugurated on 23rd August 2002. His Eminence Cardinal Simon Lourdu Samy blessed the house while Fr. Maria Arul CMF, the then Vicar General of the Congregation inaugurated it. When the diocese of Madras-Mylapore was bifurcated into two dioceses, the Provincial House came under the jurisdiction of Chingleput diocese in July, 2002. The 4th, 5th and 6th Provincial chapters took place in this house. Since the formation plan of the province included Post graduation studies after regency, the house also served as formation house for 11 years for those who did their Master Degree in different college of Chennai.

This house carried out the ministries of accompanying the people affected by AIDS for some years until a centre was established for it on 14th November, 2011. The parish of Eraiyur was an apostolate of this house till 2017. During floods in 2015 the ground floor of the house was submerged in the water for a few days like other houses in the surrounding areas. The involvement of this community in the relief works during the aftermath effects of flood is highly appreciated by the people around. Many religious and lay persons joined hands with this community.

At present there is a play school functioning in the house for the kids around. Along with these ministries,

Mission Procure and communication ministries are also carried out from here. So far this house of the Provincial Curia had 166 priest members and 43 students and 5 Provincial Governments.

GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH – THIRUNINTRAVUR

The provincial administration was shifted from Karumathur to Anna Nagar, Chennai in 1996 which falls under the diocese of Madras-Mylapore. We wanted to take up a mission in the diocese of Madras-Mylapore. When the diocesan administration was approached on this matter, the missionaries were requested to look after the parish at Molasur, in kancheepuram district for one year. Fr. V. Michael Francis was appointed as the Claretian parish priests at Molasur. The community was named as Claret Anbagam. Though living in a dilapidated presbytery, the community was very dynamic in animating the life and mission of the faith community. At the expiry of the one-year period the people wanted the Claretians to continue there, since the provincial administration had already decided to take up Thiruninravur which would be bifurcated from Pattabiram parish, the demand of the people could not be accepted, but agreed to continue for one more year as the diocese also requested for the same. During this extended period Fr. L. Xavier was sent to Pattabiram parish in order to take care of Thiruninravur, one of the substations of Parrabiram parish. In 1998, it was bifurcated and made as a separate parish with Sevapet and Veppempat as substations. In the beginning, the main station had only 40 catholic families with a small shed used as a parish Church. Fr. Singarayan CMF was the first parish priest of this new parish.

KAKANNUR PARISH

The second Provincial Chapter of the province of Chennai resolved to consider Dalits as preferred recipients of our ministries in Tamil Nadu. In accordance with this option the parish of Kakannur,

which has a predominant Dalit population, was undertaken on 23rd August 1998 in the Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cudalore.

Fr. A. Susai Arul was the first Claretian parish priest. Its important ministries are Evangelization and education. The parish was later handed over to the diocese.

KAVASAM

We wanted to bring positive changes in the lives of the Dalits of Tamil Nadu through various educational, social and developmental activities. All our socio-economic developmental projects are coordinated through KAVASAM, which is a Centre for Education and Development towards Social Change. The third Provincial Chapter held in the year 2000, decided to opt for the Dalits as the preferential recipients of the province in Tamil Nadu and bought 10 acres of land in 2001 for the construction of KAVASAM at Mangalapuram at Villupuram District in Tamil Nadu.

CLARET ASHRAM

The foundation stone was laid for Ashram on 26th March 2014. All the former Provincials namely Fr. Maria Arul CMF, Fr. Raphealraj CMF and Fr. Vincent Anes CMF were present for the Ceremony of laying of the foundation stone. The Claret Ashram was inaugurated on 6th January 2016 by Most. Rev. Peter Remigius then Bishop of Kottar. The newly built Kitchen and the huts were blessed by Fr. Jesudoss CMF, the provincial Superior and Fr. Soosai Manickam CMF, prefect of Apostolate on 18th November 2016.

There is no special group as per the existing parameters of class or caste to be the beneficiaries of ashram but anyone who seeks God experience, personal healing, promotion of universal love for the persons and the nature and particularly those in search of personal peace and contentment in life in this busy consumeristic world. Yet, our special focus will be on the youth since they are the most vulnerable section of the society in today's push button age of

technology. They are the ones mostly frustrated and disappointed. They are the ones who find no meaning in life and immensely depressed. They have everything except inner peace and joy. Our Ashram would be a great service in helping them find meaning in their life. Our Ashram would strive to give them inner peace, joy and contentment. Our Ashram would enable them to go beyond momentary pleasure and to seek value based disciplined life.

Though our Ashram will be at Erachakulam in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, we are not aiming at serving spiritually only to those living around this area. Our Ashram will be open to everyone who seeks God experience. They can be from any parts of Tamil Nadu, India and from other countries. So ours is an Ashram with universal appeal as any Ashram is. Any one will be welcomed without any discrimination.

Summation

I am privileged to see the constant growth of the Province for the past 25 years; it is God who helped us to grow deeper in the vineyard of him. We can never forget the contribution of beloved THATHA. God used him as the instrument to build the Kingdom of God in this part of the world. We affectionately remember his care and guidance. It was his prayer and perseverance built the foundation of the province. We can never forget the contribution of German province as a mother and mentor. We have to thank Fr.Mathew and Fr. Cyriac for their selfless love towards the steady path of the province of Chennai. As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of our province, let us be grateful to God for his steadfast love upon us. We shall strive forward with the same spirit of St. Claret for the greater glory of God and salvation of humankind.

The Missionary Steps of Kolkata Delegation

Rev. Fr. Lawrence CMF

Remembering something from the past, you are creating it right now as evidence for who you are now” said *Frederick Dodson*, author and founder of Quick Learning Company. Somehow, the past is integral to the present “now” and that is why it deserves a remembrance and rejoicing.

In the biblical understanding there is absolutely no time line simply progressing on its own which we fill with events just like the filling the blank questions in our exam papers. This is the modern concept of time which is contested by some scientists today. In the Bible “time” is a vibrant reality only when one realizes that God is acting in history, otherwise, it is of no consequence, virtually a non-entity. That is why the first creature of God was “time” when he said, “Let there be light”. It was created primarily for him to be present and to work in history. That is the reason why in the historical books of the OT we have only the records of God’s saving or punishing activities. They were not interested in a history in which God is not the center. The same is true with the story of Jesus in the Gospels which avoid his childhood which was insignificant because God began to work out his redemption in him publicly only at his baptism.

This understanding applies to the jubilee year also. In the Bible “Jubilee year” is the seventh sabbatical year. After the creation of the world, God took rest and later commanded his people to take rest with him on that day. This rest in fact is the

silent presence of the Lord in the history to sustain all that he has created according to his will. By participating in the Sabbath the people learned to come back to this will of God by cutting down any extra growth in their personal and common history caused by self-will or ego. Jubilee year is year of restoration of divine will over the history of the people of Israel and that is why Jesus calls it the year of the Lord's favour in the gospel of Luke.

Almost all celebrations in the bible are memorial celebrations called zikaron in Hebrew and anemnesis in Greek which means going back to the original event and participating in the redemptive acts of God once again, for in God's perspective his acts are eternal and time for him is an eternal "now". Only for human, small and forgetful minds it is fragmentary. It is a clarion call to all of us as we celebrate the Jubilee year of our province to go back and live those graceful acts of God with us, for us and for the entire universe in the past 25 years and to restore our hearts and minds steadfastly to his one universal salvific will.

With this little reflection, I am glad to look back with you the small missionary steps we have been taking in the Kolkata Delegation ever since the year 1985 and the miles we have reached so far with smiles on our faces. Our history in Kolkata began on 20th June 1985, when Rev. Fr. S. Anselmus reached Barrackpore with the then students Vincent Anesthasiar and Arokiadoss. He had visited Kolkata a little earlier in an exploration mission to find a suitable place for another Theology house of formation for our students because at that time there was only one theology house at Malleshwaram, Bangalore. Other three priests were sent to Delhi, Pune and Poonthamallee respectively. Finally, Kolkata was chosen as the will of God. The two students began their theological studies at Morning Star College and three regents were also sent to different missions. Thereafter, every year theology students

and regents were regularly sent to Kolkata mission. Meanwhile, Fr. Anselmus bought a piece of land and started constructing the theology house, “Claret Nivas” at Barrackpore, while the first community stayed in the Morning Star College temporarily. Except one or two, all regents were sent to Santhal missions namely Chamrusai, Kamar Chowki, and Midnapur with the Jesuit priests, some of them were veteran Belgian missionaries.

In 1988 Rev. Fr. J. Remigius, the first priest missionary was sent from Tamil Nadu to a Santhal mission called Baligheria to serve under Fr. Robert D’Souza of the Kolkata Archdiocese. In 1989 Claret Nivas, the theology study house was inaugurated and in 1990 Fr. Remigius went to Jhardgram along with the late Rev. Fr. V.S. Pakianathan to study about the possibility of taking up that mission. But in the same year Fr. Pakianathan had to start the minor seminary called Claret Vidhyaniketan in Rajipur in the diocese of Raiganj and became its first superior. After a year of stay at Jhardgram and after discerning that it was not the will of God that we take up the mission, Fr. Remigius became the parish priest of Kearchand in 1991 another vibrant Santhal mission. We were animating the mission till 1998 when we handed it over to the diocese back. It was the mission which gave exposure to Santhali life and culture to many of our priests, regents and theology students.

After the tragic killing of Fr. Pakianathan in the year 1993 we shifted the minor seminary to Claret Nivas, Barrackpre temporarily leaving Rajipur for good. In the same year the Lord opened for us the door of Orissa and we took up another Santhal mission in Amarda Road and Fr. Remy became its first parish priest but we handed it over to the diocese in 1999. In 1993 the bishop of Raiganj entrusted to us the mission of Bizrail, an another big Santhal mission which has an English medium school and hostels for girls and boys now. We initially resided in Dolahar and

then shifted to Bizrail. In the same year Claret Ashram the Santhal boys' home was started and its first superior was Fr. Michael Raja Pandian. It was located first in Silda and later shifted to Sahadi. It is the only mission where we have no catholic families. In 1997 Claret vidyaniketan was shifted to Lalpur Claretian house and in 1999 it was moved to Saparam, Ranchi, its present location. In the same year we started another big Santhal mission in Sahanagar in the diocese of Asansol which has now an English medium school and hostels for boys and girls. Our residence was first in Sialmara then in Barwa and finally shifted to Sahanagar in 2000.

In the year 1999, we started the community of Nirmal Sadan at Ghatsila to take care of the parish of Mohbandar in the diocese of Jamshedpur and the late Fr. Yesudoss was its first parish priest. In the jubilee year of 2000 we started St. Claret English medium School at Barrackpore, the first school in the Delegation. In the year 2003 we were also entrusted with the parish of Lalpur in the archdiocese of Ranchi, and our community there now is called Claret Deep; a small study center cum library is also functioning in that mission for the students who write competitive exams. We were also running CIET (Claret Institute of Employment Training) in the nearby Loyola Institute from 2008 and gave it back to the Archdiocese in the year 2017. The bishop of Dumka invited us to the parish of Daldangal in 2008 from where we shifted to Basmata in 2010 and now we have a Santhal parish and a Hindi medium school there. It is while serving here as the parish priest we recently (2017) lost a veteran Santhal missionary Rev. Fr. John Bosco in a road accident. In 2014 accepting the invitation of the bishop of Buxar we started the mission of Claret Manzil at Nuaon and in 2015 at the long standing invitation of the Bishop of Baruipur we started the mission of Claret Premaloy at Nazat.

Missions on the Cards:

2018 is also going to be a year of mission expansion. We are going to bifurcate the mission of Sahanagar and carve a new mission at Masagram on 22nd July and the community will be called “Claret Gyanaloy”. Then in the diocese of Khunti we are opening a new mission in a place called Sarangloya, the community there is named as Nishkalanga Bhavan. We are also taking up a mission in the diocese of Andamans in Betapur which will be inaugurated on 15th July and the community will be called Claret Jharna.

Then the Bishop of Mymensingh diocese in Bangladesh has invited us to start a new mission in a place called Gacherbitta which has above 30000 catholics and the vast majority of them are Gharo tribals. We have promised to send at least a priest in 2019 and we have requested Fr. Pius T. the Major Superior of North East Delegation to give us a Gharo priest to work with him.

We are indeed grateful to God for the fast growth of our branch in this region and to all the pioneering missionaries in this area who tirelessly worked for the ministry of the Word and to all those who are actively committed now for the same task here as well as counties in abroad.



Tanzanian Mission - The Wings of Chennai Province

Fr. John Francis CMF

St. Charles Lwanga Independent Delegation of East Africa joyfully acknowledges that Tanzanian mission was the extension of Chennai Province for the last 20 years. Remaining true to the spirit of our Father Founder St. Antony Mary Claret, the province of Chennai from the start of its foundation kept up the spirit of going out to peripheries to evangelize. While it was steadily spreading its mission in the northern part of India among the Santals and other tribes, the province also spread its wings to the continent of Africa in the country of Tanzania. The first mission was established in Musoma in the northern part of the country. Fr. Maria Arul CMF, the then provincial of Chennai Province along with Fr. Gaspar Masilamani landed in Tanzania on 7th September 1994. The first mission was established in Makoko Family Centre after the arrival of Fr. Arul Jesu Robin and Dn. Baskar Amal Raj in the following year. The Claretians were given the difficult task of rejuvenating the Makoko Family Centre which was the laity formation centre for Musoma Diocese.

Our pioneer missionaries came with lots of love and missionary thrust that they mastered the state language of Swahili soon and the bishop of Musoma diocese then Rt. Rev. Justin Samba who was edified by their dedication and hard work

decided to assign them many important offices in the Diocese. Along with running the Makoko family centre, our missionaries were given extra work in the diocese. Fr. Gaspar was appointed as the Diocesan director of laity and Fr. Baskar was appointed as the director of TYCS(Tanzanian Young Christian Students) and also to take care of the Youth in the diocese and Fr. Robin was appointed as the parish Priest in Nyamiongo which hosts many religious nuns and the Bishop himself as a resident in that parish. In few years to come the number of Missionaries from Chennai increased very much with Fr. William Baskar and Fr. John Francis joining the team with two more students of pastoral year namely Antony Samy and Arul Joseph. With much interest and commitment the province of Chennai approached the Tanzanian Mission from the beginning. It was very constant in sending the missionaries to the Tanzanian Mission. Later in the year 2000 Frs. Antony Sekar and Bernard John also joined the mission in Tanzania.

Formative structures in East Africa:

No wonder the mission of Tanzania flourished with the support of the Province and the dedication of the missionaries working in Tanzania. First time in East Africa the candidates were admitted for formation in Musoma, Tanzania in the year 1998. In the year 2000, the major seminary for East Africa was built in Morogoro and Fr. Gaspar was appointed as the first East African Formation co-ordinator as well as the rector of the Barbastro Martyrs seminary in Morogoro and Fr. Antony Sekar as the Econome of the seminary. In the same year the following seminarians Martin Amalanathan, Rajendran Britto and Michael Jesuraj from Chennai province were sent for pastoral experience and to do theology. Now all of them are priests working hard for the building up of the new independent delegation of St.Charles

Lwanga. Later Stu. Jones Chellappan and Stu. Ranjit Gnanaselvam came and did their theological studies in Tanzania and have incardinated themselves in the delegation. Later Frs. Charles Boromeo, Immanuel vedamuthu and Victor Ponnaiyan also have joined our mission.

Publication and the new Missions in Tanzania

In the year 2003 we established the second mission in Kimara, in the archdiocese of Dar Es Salaam. Fr. John Francis was appointed as the first Parish priest of this mission along with Fr. Sahayaraj as the co-pastor. In the same year we also published the first Swahili diary and Fr. Antony Sekar as the first director of Publication. As we inaugurated the new mission in Kimara in November 2003 we also released the first copy of the Swahili Bible diary named as ‘Shajara’ – Tafakarinasasi for the year 2004. The Cardinal of the archdiocese of Dar Es Salaam His eminence Polycarp Pengo received the first copy presented by Fr. Vincent Anesthasiar cmf the provincial of Chennai Province then. The congregation also established the third and fourth missions in Mwanza, Njombe and the Aspirancy formation house was built in Boma Ng’ombe in Moshi diocese. The newly built formation house was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Mariadoss CMF, the vice provincial of Chennai province in the year 2013 and blessed by His excellency Isack Amani the bishop of Moshi diocese.

St. Bakita Kids Primary School in Musoma:

It was established by Fr. Bernard John with the permission of the local Bishop within the premises of Makoko Family Centre. We added class rooms to accommodate the new primary school. Some of the structures have to be modified in order to accommodate the students and this school stands out as one of the best schools in the district and the region for the last few years.

St. Claret Primary School and St. Claret House in Kimara:

The building of St. Claret Primary school and the multi story building for publication, book shop and show room for Religious articles and office space for rent were built in Dar Es Salaam. With the help of the General Government and through the Provincial government we got the assistance of Aid fund to establish these structures. Also we got some projects with which we could complete the construction of the primary school and the Claret House, which are bringing steady income to the Economy of the Delegation.

As the Province of Chennai celebrates its Jubilee year we gratefully remember all the generous assistance received for our delegation and for our mission in Tanzania. This Tanzanian mission also had the brief services of Frs. Antony Samy, Selvakumar, E. Joseph, Kulandai Swamy, Christuraj, Stephen Arulsamy, Sanjay Lakra from the Province of Chennai. At this moment we thank all the members from the province of Chennai and the constant support we have been receiving from the provincial council and in a special way we thank Rev. Fr. Jesudoss for his love and continuous support in persons and material support to our young Independent delegation of St. Charles Lwanga. As the son of Chennai province and the current major superior of St. Charles Lwanga Independent Delegation, I wish God's blessings and joyful silver jubilee celebration for all the members of Chennai Province.



Pastoral Ministry of the Claretians of Chennai Province in the Style of St. Claret

Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF

The Claretian province of Chennai is 25 years old! It seems as if we began our missionary journey only a few years back. We have already hit the quarter century. It is an occasion to be thankful to the Lord who called us by name to be Claretian missionaries in the style of our Founder Claret, for all the blessings that we received through our members, sharers of our mission, different apostolic initiatives, different foundations, institutions, missionary outreach in Tanzania and Malaysia. Yes, the list goes on. We have so many reasons to be grateful to the Lord. Indeed, we had a remarkable journey. It is also a time to look ahead the future with the experience of the past 25 years; to continue the success stories with greater commitment and enthusiasm and to correct the mistakes learnt from the past experiences.

St. Anonty Mary Claret – Our Inspiration

Our missionary commitment springs from the inspiration of our Founder Claret. Claret was a great missionary and a remarkable pastor. Claret could not imagine that there could be so many people who have never heard about Jesus and his Gospel. He wanted to share the Jesus whom he experienced in his life with as many people as possible. Thus, as evangelist, as missionary and as pastor, he made use of all possible means to preach the Good News. Our Father Claret was the itinerant preacher in the

footsteps of Jesus. He writes, “I am ever more deeply impressed at the thought of Jesus moving from town to town, preaching everywhere — not just in big cities, but in little villages and even to a single woman” (Auto. 221). He felt personally called and consecrated in a particular way to preach the gospel as an itinerant preacher in the style of Jesus. “God made me to understand in a special way those words, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the Good News to the poor’ (Is 61:1)” (Aut. 118).

We need to be reminded of two historical background of Father Claret that shaped his mission and pastoral ministry. The first is his Catalonian itinerant missionary life (1839-1849). Here he discovered his charism of being an itinerant apostolic missionary as the only mission of his vocation that led him to leave the parish ministry radically (cf. Aut. 120, 174) and commit himself totally for the ministry of the Word (cf. Aut. 193). He insisted so much on this aspect that all the cofounders left their parishes and joined in his missionary venture. The second is his Cuban apostolic ministry (1857-1869). Here, he discovered the need for using all means possible to the ministry of the Word. It is in Cuba that he started all his educational and social apostolates: parish schools, technical school of charity house for the orphan children, small savings, ministry among the prisoners, etc. He recommended in 1863 the press apostolate and to take up the Church of the Mother House for the ministry. In 1864, he included the formation of the clergy as preferred means for our apostolate. He went further ahead in including the apostolates of hearing confessions and formation of the seminarians. Finally in 1869, he asked Fr. Xifré to open up schools following the example of the Christian Brothers. Fr. Claret was convinced that education was a powerful tool for the evangelization of the children. All these means were proposed by Father Claret only in view of the ministry of the Word. It is in this background, Fr. Claret placed in the second General Chapter and subsequently in the Constitutions, the famous saying of using all

possible means for the ministry of the Word. His recommendations for making use of all possible means for the Word of God imply total availability of the Congregation and the Claretians for the good of the Church and the people of God.

While in Catalonia, Fr. Claret travelled on foot, attracting large crowds with his sermons. Some days he preached up to seven sermons in a day and spent 10 hours listening to confessions. He dedicated to Mary all his apostolic efforts. He felt forged as an apostle and sent to preach by Mary. His popularity spread; people sought him for spiritual and physical healing. From January 1841, he moved to Vic and was fully dedicated to go across different villages of the diocese. By the end of 1842, the Pope gave him the title of “Apostolic missionary.”

He walked across much of Catalonia between 1843 and 1848, preaching the Word of God, always on foot, never collecting money or gifts for his pastoral ministry. It moved him to imitate Jesus Christ and the apostles. In each place, he preached missions to the people and conducted retreats for priests and religious. He soon realised that other means of apostolate might also help him to be effective missionary: public prayer books, catechisms and prints aimed at priests, nuns, children, youth, married, parents, etc.; in 1848 he founded the Religious Library, a publishing house which in its first eighteen years launched 28,11,100 copies of books, 25,09,500 of small books and 42,49,200 leaflets. Incredible achievements indeed!

Claret was also a pioneer and visionary in doing mission with others. He also believed in partnership and involved other religious and lay people as equal partners in carrying out the apostolates.

St. Claret – Archbishop of Santiago

Once consecrated and became the Archbishop of Santiago in Cuba in 1850, he continued to remain as missionary and gave

his episcopal ministry a missionary dimension. Becoming an Archbishop did not deter him from mission but provided him possibilities for greater mission. He quickly understood the urgent need of building up Christian life there and promoted a series of missionary campaigns, in which he participated, bringing the Word of God to all villages. As a good shepherd, he visited his extensive diocese three times. He delivered the bread of the Word, of culture and of human dignity. He was persecuted and shed his blood to serve God and the poor. In the first years, records show, he confirmed 100,000 people and performed 9,000 sacramental marriages. He was deeply concerned of the spiritual and pastoral renewal of the clergy and the founding of religious communities.

Claret was called back to Spain in 1857 to serve as confessor to the Queen of Spain, Isabella II. Though, he had a natural dislike for aristocratic life, he accepted in obedience and requested to be allowed to continue some missionary work. Whenever he travelled with the Queen, he used the opportunity to preach the Good News in different towns throughout Spain. Claret's life was also in danger, so he accompanied the queen to France. This gave him the opportunity to preach the Gospel in Paris and engaged in apostolic activities especially for the immigrants.

From the Rich Heritage of the Congregation and the Church

Our Constitutions are very clear about our mission: “We, the Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, have also received a calling like that of the Apostles and have been granted the gift to follow Christ in a communion of life and to go out into the whole world to proclaim the good news to every creature” (CC. 4). Our Constitutions and Directory enunciate the ministry of the Word as “our special calling among the people of God” (CC. 46; Dir. 101). We are characterised as “a community called together by the Spirit for the missionary proclamation of the Word” (Dir.36). “This missionary vocation is the source of

our apostolate and the fundamental criterion for the choice of our apostolic works” (Dir. 101). In the light of the openness of our Father Founder, we can say that for this mission of the Ministry of the Word, we are encouraged to take up the most “urgent, opportune and effective” means (CC. 48).

Evangelization includes personal exemplary life, the message, the pastoral methods and needs, the animating theologies, the interaction, the special situations and the vision for the future. Evangelization means concrete plans and strategies to share the Good News of Christ with children, youth, adults, men and women, the old and the sick, physically challenged and disabled people. In summary, evangelization is all embracing. Let us be reminded of the words of Pope Paul VI: “There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22).

Pastoral Ministry of the Claretians of Chennai Province

Parish Ministry: Story telling is good and so let me recall the story of the mission of Chennai province. Fathers Mathew and Cyriac were serving as formators in Claret Bhavan, Karumathur. They believed pastoral insertion for the formandi, as an effective mode of formation. So they began to involve the Claretian students for the revival of the Christian life at Karumathur region, which was not given adequate care for many decades. Our missionaries also initiated Multipurpose Society for the social development among the people having the laity as the principal agents. The Archdiocese of Madurai, having seen the enthusiasm of the Claretian formation house in the pastoral mission, made Karumathur as a mission parish and handed over to the Claretians in 1978. St. Antony Mary Claret Parish, Karumathur is the first Claretian parish and first Claretian pastoral centre in India.

Pastoral ministry of the province of Chennai does not mean

only parish ministry. But it has a special place in the mission of the Claretians of Chennai Province. St. Antony Mary Claret Parish, Karumathur is the first Claretian parish and first Claretian pastoral centre in India. The highest number of pastoral centres that the province of Chennai has is parishes. As on 2018, the province of Chennai has nine parishes in Tamil Nadu, nine in North India, one in Andaman and one in Malaysia excluding those we have handed over to the dioceses and those in Tanzania which are now part of St. Charles Lwanga Delegation. We provide pastoral service to about 6300 families spread out in about 200 villages.

Most of our parishes have Claretian style of functioning with special prominence on the Word of God. The common features of Claretian parishes are the associations such as Parish council (Catholic Sabha in the North), BCC/SCC, Marian solidarity, Vincent de Paul, youth movements, *Yesuvin Kanmanigal* (Association for Children), choir, altar servers associations, etc. Faith formation programs like Bible reading, Bible quiz, teaching of catechism, communion to the invalid, annual retreats, pilgrimage, house visits and blessings, popular mission preaching; developmental programs such as educational help, tuition centers, house for the houseless, referral service for job, enrolment in educational institutions, health care, assistance extended at the time of natural calamities, etc. are seen in almost all the parishes.

Positive Opinion of the Parishioners

Most of our sharers of our missions are happy about the life and pastoral mission of our Claretian missionaries. The laity as well as religious and clergy who are in our missions and parishes appreciate our hard-work, prayer life, community life, leadership, simplicity, commitment, bold initiatives, visionary steps, fatherly and friendly nature, sense of respect for the lay people, pastoral creativity, organising abilities, love for the mission and the poor,

enthusiasm, preaching, openness to new ideas, personal integrity, ability to master the local language, adaptation to the local customs and culture, hospitality, etc.

Other Creative Pastoral Ministry of the Province

In the last twenty five years, our province apart from traditional form of parish apostolate for pastoral ministry has also undertaken some daring pastoral initiatives. Some of them deserve special mentioning here:

Laity Institute for the Formation of Lay Evangeliser (LIFE)

LIFE was initiated in 1998 with a small structure to empower laity and form them as evangelisers. The normal programs conducted are: training for lay evangelizers, formation and training of *Friends of Jesus* and *Disciples of Jesus*, on-going formation for the already trained evangelisers, Bible seminars and regular Bible classes and family counselling. The centre is also made available for other groups and religious for their own training and on-going formation programmes. So far, seven batches of lay people have been trained as lay evangelisers at our centre numbering around 300. Apart from them, other 500 lay people have attended the classes without finishing the entire course. About 30 lay people are regularly participating in the two days of monthly Bible class for the last seven years (*Claret Bible Friends*). About 2,000 youth must have passed through LIFE taking part in one or another faith-formation programme. Let us thank the Lord for this creative pastoral ministry of our Province. The scope of LIFE is vast and the potentiality is tremendous. We need to tap them to the maximum.

Claret Amaithiam (Ashram)

The initiative to start an Ashram to integrate Indian spiritual tradition with Christian spirituality is another creative effort of our province in its pastoral ministry. Though this apostolate has

not yet taken its full shape, the tiny seed is already shown and it has already sprouted. The coming few years will define the nature and fruitfulness of this ministry and its impact on the pastoral ministry of our province.

Preaching Apostolate

We are known in the Indian Church as good preachers and teachers. Our missionaries are in great demand for retreat and novena preaching. Right from the beginning of the inception of our Province, preaching team has been rendering remarkable service in the pastoral ministry of the province. Though this ministry could not be systematised as we wanted, its service to the Church especially in Tamil Nadu is very commendable. Popular mission, so dear to our Founder Claret and our forefathers is to be given special emphasis of our preaching ministry in the coming years.

Biblical Apostolate

14th General Chapter Document *Men on Fire with God's Love* speaks of ensuring the Word of God nurturing our mission in all its forms with the following recommendations:

- 1) We will transform our communities, formation centres and apostolates into “schools of the Word” following the guidelines of the Synod on the Word of God.
- 2) We will ensure that biblical animation and ministry brings life to our institutions, apostolic activities and evangelization.
- 3) We will give special attention to the accompaniment of people's faith journey relying on the Word of God through spiritual exercises and other initiatives. We will see to it that their animation is done from the perspective of the community, as a team where possible, and make use of our spirituality centres (MFL 59)

Being ministers of the Word, our province took some bold and pioneering initiatives in diffusing the love for the Word of God

among the laity and transforming our apostolates into “schools of the Word”. In 1999, we published Tamil Bible Diary. Ours is the first Bible diary in Tamil though there are a few more now. We also published Bible diaries in Hindi (2003) and Swahili and for a couple of years in Malayalam too. The Almighty has made use of us to pioneer vernacular Bible diaries in India besides in English (1988), Kannada (2019) and Konkani (2019) by our brothers in Bangalore province.

Tamil Bible with explanation (2009) is another path-breaking initiative of our province in collaboration with the Bible scholars of Tamil Nadu. Ours is the only Bible in Tamil with explanation till today.

Another remarkable achievement of our province in the area of pastoral ministry is infusing the desire among the laity for reading the Bible by conducting the Bible quiz throughout Tamil Nadu. Nearly 15,000 to 20,000 of Tamil-speaking laity passionately participate and wait eagerly to participate in this mega event every year.

The erection of Claret Premnivas as residence at Yercaud in 2010 with the specific objective of being at the service of the Word was another distinguished pioneering initiative of our province. This mission aimed at popularising the Word of God by preaching, writing and using other modern technology.

Other Pastoral Initiatives

Fr. Claret wanted educational ministry to be the powerful tool of evangelisation. Our province is very conscious of the pastoral dimension of educational ministry. We have initiated Bible clubs in all our schools for the Christian as well as interested non-Christian students. Though more can be done in the coming years, a good beginning in this direction has been initiated.

Our Province wants even social apostolates to be centres of

evangelisation. A special committee was formed to suggest ways and means to achieve this objective. This committee submitted its report proposing concrete recommendations for pastoral dimension in our social centres.

One of the recommendations of 6th Provincial Chapter document is starting Television Channel in Tamil Nadu to proclaim the Word of God (cf. *Living our Missionary Vocation Today*, 3.4.1). Steps were taken to actualize this recommendation with all earnestness. A missionary was earmarked and a considerable amount of money was allotted for creating infra-structure for this apostolate. The name Madha-TV was coined by us. Meanwhile, TNBC decided to start a channel with the name Madha-TV and we agreed to participate with them and avail our facilities for this ministry. We are happy that one of our members is actively collaborating in this venture as one of the zonal coordinators.

Concluding Remarks

The past 25 years of our experience in the pastoral field must be a learning curve to enhance the quality of our pastoral service to the Church of India and Malaysia in the years to come. Pope John Paul II reminds us, “You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things” (*Vita Consecrata*, 110). I am sure someone will write again after 25 years about our pastoral ministry as our Province will be celebrating her Golden Jubilee in 2043. Many of us may be there and some of us may not be there to witness. May that story be even greater than the silver jubilee accomplishments of our province. “Let us remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look forward to the future with confidence” (St. John Paul II).

CLARETIAN SCHOOLS OF CHENNAI PROVINCE IN INDIA

Fr. Joseph Victor Doss, CMF

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”- Nelson Mandela.

Civilization in history has progressed through the process of educating individuals as well as community. The objective of education has been overcoming ignorance and bringing out the potentials of the individuals as well as communities for creating a better world and better future.

“The purpose of education is to make good human beings with skill and expertise. Enlightened human beings can be created by teachers.”- Abdul Kalam

This has been a process, rather than a product, an involvement rather than an instrument. There is an inextricable connection between knowledge and transformation in all civilization of humanity. Progress of civilization meant invariably progress of knowledge. There is a universal conviction that knowledge should lead to transformation of a self, the society, the nation and the world at large.

Education becomes one of the major means of evangelization among the Claretians in India. Education which can be offered by means of various structures is very apt means of the missionary service of the Word of God. Therefore, our Congregation assumes it as its own ministry. The Claretian

educational institutions promote true learning which will enable the person to live their life worthily and for the betterment of the society. Claretian education is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, the educator par excellence, who sort integral human formation based on perennial values of the Kingdom, Mother Mary as the inspiration and the prophetic tradition of Claret as the guiding force, seeks to form the youth of today, especially those in the fringes of society, prophetic agents of personal and social transformation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of Claretian Education Apostolate in India is ‘to form intellectually competent, professionally skilled, spiritually evolved, morally upright, socially responsive and culturally integrated citizens through holistic Claretian education for the creation of a civilization of love.’

In fidelity to the spirit of St. Claret, the Claretians started the first school in 1884 at Toluck, Mexico. The Claretians came to India in 1970, started its first school at Karumathur in 1982, which was followed by chain of schools and colleges in different places of our motherland. The Claretian Chennai Province has schools both in South and North.

SOUTH INDIA

ST. CLARET PRIMARY SCHOOL, PULITHEVANPATTY
(The First Claretian School in India)

The Claretians in Karumathur did not have a plan to start a school. Fr. Anselmus CMF, the Parish Priest of Karumathur in consultation with Fr. Dirnberger CMF and the Christian folks started a school for the welfare of the people of Karumathur. Very specially for the female children of the locality. KG school was opened on 5th July 1982. Fr. Anselmus was the founder and 1st Correspondent of the school. On 8th December, 1984, the school

was shifted to Pulithevanpatti as St. Claret Primary School. On 22nd February 1997, the school got its recognition from the Government of Tamilnadu. The school has strength of 160 students and 6 teachers now.

ST. CLARET HR. SEC. SCHOOL, KARUMATHUR

St. Claret Hr. Sec. School, Karumathur was started with VI Std on 6th July 1983. It was started in a hut with 70 students. On 10th November, 1983, it got recognition from the Government of Tamil Nadu as aided school till Std X. The School had new buildings in 1986, which were dedicated in memory of Fr. Dirnberger CMF and Fr. V.S. Packianathan CMF. In response to the demand of public, the school was upgraded into Higher Secondary School on 4th June 2001. This school undoubtedly has evangelized the people and culture of Usilumpatti region. Along with excellent academic and physical education, the students are given computer education, human rights education, and religious harmony education. The school has bagged several zonal, districts, state and national level awards in sports and co-curricular activities. The school runs a Honesty shop, where students get an opportunity to grow in the virtues of honesty and trust worthiness. The honest shop has attracted many news daily, TV channels and the legislative assembly of Tamilnadu. It has been announced as a model school for honesty and truthfulness.

ST. CLARET NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL, KARUMATHUR

It was established on 1st August 2005. The main objective of establishing school was to educate female children of the region. As Claretians reading the signs of the time, wanted to provide quality English education to the people of Karumathur region. The school has classes from LKG to V Std. At present there are 453 students studying, 18 teachers take care of their education with 4 supportive staff. A wide range of opportunities

are given for the students to grow through various co-curricular activities. Students take part in different clubs, Scout and Guide and Eco Club to channelize their social activities.

ST. JOHN'S MATRIC. HR. SEC. SCHOOL, KOCHADAI, MADURAI.

St. John's Matric Hr. Sec School been situated in the city of Madurai. It caters to educational needs of the urban middle class and the poor. The school was opened on 5th June 2002. In the Indian context of religious plurality education is a powerful tool of evangelization. There are 3731 students, 3 priests, 1 professed member, 131 teaching staff and 39 supportive staff get an opportunity to be in the mission of God through the education ministry.

The school was started with noble idea of quality English education to middle class with affordable fee structure. The foundation of the new building of the school was laid on 2nd February 2003. The school was given opening permission on 18th February 2004 by Government of Tamilnadu and recognition for class I to VI on 28th May 2004. The school building was inaugurated on 16th July 2004. The school is one of the reputed and well known institutions in Madurai city. The growth of the school is well appreciated and admired by many in Madurai District. The school takes care of the integral education of the students with excellent blend of curricular and co-curricular activities.

ST. CLARET MATRIC. HR. SEC. SCHOOL, THIRUNUNRAVUR.

St. Claret Matric. Hr. Sec. School, Thiruninravur grows with a concern to sensitize students to the need for harmony and mutual respect between people, religious and communities. The Foundation for the new building was laid on 6th July 2003. Even while the construction was on, the school began to function in the temporary class rooms. The School has 63 teaching staff, 17 supportive staff, 4 office staff and 1707 students. One of the prime

objectives of education is to prepare a generation to uphold the time tested institutions of society. Focusing this vision, constant insistence is given for discipline, academics and communicative skill. A wide range of opportunities through various co-curricular activities are given to the students. Students take part in different clubs like Scout and Guide, Eco Club, Road Safety Patrol and Wings of Claret to channelize their social activities.

NORTH INDIA

(KOLKATA DEPENDENT DELEGATION)

ST. CLARET SCHOOL, BASMATA, JHARKHAND

St. Claret School at Basmata, Jharhand is a Hindi Medium School where 95% of the students are from Tribal families. Most of them are Santhal tribes from agricultural background. Only 2% of the people are in Government jobs. The students are taught good discipline and behaviour. They are exposed to different activities such as sports, prayers and field works. At present, there are 11 teachers, 2 sisters & 2 fathers with 378 students. Claretians are doing a wonderful mission of educating the tribes. Hostel facilities are also available for the students. No doubt, St. Claret's School, Basmata will become the hub of education within 20 years.

CLARET PRATHMIC VIDHYALAY, JHARGRAM, SAHARI, WEST BENGAL

Claret School at Sahari was established in the year 1993 as a Primary School with 12 students. Later the school was upgraded till Std X. In 1998, new hostel was opened with 10 staff and 187 Santhal Children. The School new building was inaugurated in 2009. The medium of instruction is Bengali. The students are mostly Santhals, Malai and Mahadurs. The parents are uneducated, unemployed and unable to support their children. The Claretians work for the upliftment of those people by giving qualitative, value based education. The school provides Hostel Facilities, Bus, Coaching Classes, Spoken English, Literary Associations,

Physical Education, Sports, Leadership Training, Village Tuition Centre and Discipline. They face certain challenges in their mission such as water scarcity, most of the students are poor, unable to pay the fee. Since, the school is located interior from the city, appointing qualified good teachers becomes a difficult task. Amidst all the inconveniences, Claretians do their best to upgrade the school and students.

ST. CLARET SCHOOL, SAHANAGAR, BURDWAN DIST, WEST BENGAL

St. Claret School at Sahanagar was established in the year 2002 with 70 Students. The School building was opened in 2009. The school received no-objection certificate in 2011 from the West Bengal Government. The ICSE affiliation for Stds. IX & X was received in 2013. The School has a beautiful infrastructure where all the facilities are available. Apart from Studies, the Students are involved in charity work, tribals – welfare and outreach programmes. Discipline and character of the Students is insisted in all levels. The Students of Government Schools are offered SUPW training with 50% concession.

ST. CLARET SCHOOL, BARRACKPORE, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL

St. Claret School Barrackpore affiliated to ICSE Board was established in the year 2000. The School had its first ICSC – Batch in 2010. The school offers the best education in the locality. The students are involved in meditation to channelize their mind. Students take part in different Club activities Eco – Club, Singing & Dancing, Literary Clubs, Scout & Guide, Social Works, Yoga and Karate. They also join in the Mission – Mankind in which students donate books, repair the home roofs, visiting the people at the destitute homes. These activities make them to realize the real values in life.

ST. CLARET SCHOOL, BISHRAIL, CHENCHRA, WEST

BENGAL

St. Claret School at Bishrail, West Bengal was started in 2002. Most of the Students are Hindus, Muslims and Santhals. The School offers quality education to Santhal tribes. The School gives importance to the integral development of the Children. The Students are offered Co-curricular and Extra Curricular Activities along with the Curriculum. Students are given leadership training and counselling sessions. They are motivated to respond to Natural disasters and extend a helping hand whenever needed.

CONCLUSION

Lao – Tzu said, “A Journey of thousand miles begins with a single step”. A work well began is half done. At this juncture of Silver Jubilee of our Claretian Chennai Province, a small step began in 1982 has a grown into a large tree as a matter of fact in educational field. We are grateful to God and the intercession of St. Claret for this great educational growth. Our journey has grown into hundred miles but still to go a thousand miles. We pray to God and remain committed to this education ministry.

Mahatma Gandhi beautifully said, ‘Education is an all round drawing of the best in child and man in body, mind and spirit.’ He strongly believed that it is a crime to make education merely literacy to make unfit boys and girls for manual labour in life. His idea is that all round drawing out of the best in Child and Man – Body, Mind and Spirit, to be implemented in today’s education. He believed that high morals, self control and right thinking combined with service to the community can only build character in a Student. The Claretian educational institutions pave way to bring out the best in every child. The Claretian School is a place where one can cultivate good character and discipline. Thus a child who evolves out of the Claretian School becomes a beautiful Indian Citizen and a committed Global Child.

Certainly, the Claretian Schools of the Province of Chennai

in India took forward the mission and vision of our father founder St. Claret in adapting the political situation, the social background, the cultural differences, the economical status of the people and their needs in developing the Child to a great future.



Social Apostolate of Chennai Province

Fr. Jerone CMF

Fvangelization is the mission of the Church (cfr. EG 111). We participate in it as missionaries and are sent forth to proclaim the Gospel in new places and peripheries (cfr. MS 66); This enables us to from our comfort zones and make ourselves available for the mission of the congregation and of the Church. Our missionary's presence and services shall ultimately bear witness to our charism in the Church. The grace of God has been in the province of Chennai from its infancy till today for the past 25 years. Our commitment in the social apostolate of the province is found to be enriching and encouraging. Today the tree of Claretian fulfillment is manifested in various social activities that empower the underprivileged.

I wish to provide some glimpses of our endeavors:

1. Welfare Associations at Karumathur

The Parish of Karumathur being the first Claretian parish in India was entrusted to the Claretians in 1978 with Rev. Fr. Mathew Nayarkulam as the first Parish Priest. It was under his efficient guidance, various new projects came into being at Karumathur.

a. *The Good Shepherd Multipurpose Society* was founded on 26th November 1978 with an objective of empowering the rural poor through small savings and micro credit for economic upliftment.

b. *The Claret Mahila Mandram* was formed on 14th October

1979 for the welfare of the women in rural areas. The purpose of the association was to improve the living conditions of the poor, encourage community support through self-help initiatives, creating awareness about women's rights and social welfare.

c. *Claret Seva Sangam* was initiated by the Claretians at Karumathur on 11th May 1980 with an objective of helping the Christian families at Karumathur Parish and its Substations. The special features of the sangam included visiting and helping the Christian families, supporting the parish priest in the pastoral ministries and creating an enabling environment to handle the problems faced by the Christian Community.

2. Welfare activities for the Non-Christians in and around Karumathur

a. A Chavadi was built by the Claretians at Pulithevanpatti on 20th February 1979. It was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Richard Todd CMF.

b. A common Chavadi was built by the Claretians for the welfare of the people at Pullaneri and Mottanayakkanpatti on 13th May 1980.

c. The Students of then Claret Bhavan trained 12 villagers to uplift through special academic coaching, value education and psycho-social support through home visits.

3. Claretian Mercy Home, Azhagusirai: Our Efforts to save the infants from killing

“Whatever you do to the least of these little ones, you do it to me” – Jesus. “Service to Humanity is Service to God”. The basic objective of Claretian Mercy Home is to fight against the problem of female infanticide that is prevalent in Usilampatti Taluk of Madurai district. Extreme poverty and social customs put pressure on parents to avoid girl children as they are considered as financial burden to the family. Due to this, parents are driven to the extent of killing the new born infants through various means.

This problem was exposed to the world when an article titled 'Born to Die' was published in Indian magazine India Today in 1986. Disturbed by this article Rev. Fr. Franz Xavier Drinberger CMF, from Germany who was working as the superior of Claret Bhavan, Karumathur in Madurai district wanted to do some thing to prevent the menace of female infanticide by all means. This resulted in birth of Claretian Mercy Home, a compassionate caring abode for female infants. The Claretian Mercy Home is run by the Claretian Missionaries at Azhagusirai, Madurai District in collaboration with the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of St.Mary.

The main purpose of this Institution is, 'TO FIGHT AGAINST THE SOCIAL EVIL OF FEMALE INFANTICIDE', which is prevalent in this region. The Claretian Mercy Home is Fr.Franz Xavier Dirnberger CMF's, brain child to accommodate and give life to the unwanted female children. It was inaugurated on 28th December 1987, on the feast of the Holy Innocents to symbolize the Institution's commitment to save the innocent lives. The just born infants left in hospitals, bus stands and any other places were rescued and admitted in our home.

Regular counseling sessions are conducted among couples to understand the value of human life and right of every child to live in this world. They were made to realize that it is a crime to kill a child even it is their own child. Counseling combined with rescuing of infants had yielded very good results. The Home has saved and rehabilitated more than 800 infants both male and female by giving a new life and a new shelter to those homeless and parentless abandoned babies through the adoption program.

4. Care for Elderly:

As Claretian Mercy Home gives life to the infants' elders were also taken care by us. The senior citizens who are neglected by their children and the close relatives at their older age were

given compassionate care without charging any fee till their end. The care home had rendered services to over 175 senior citizens till now. At present there are twenty six senior citizens being accommodated and looked after well with all the modern facilities. To conclude, unwanted and abandoned innocent kids and destitute senior citizens require affection and care. Like all evil human practices, female infanticide and abandoned babies too can be fought over. Claretian Mercy Home is an attempt in this direction and does its service for the last 30 years with God's gracious providence and generous donations of well-wishers.

5. Wheel-Chair Project & Clap

Free Wheelchair Project India is a collaborative initiative of Claretian Society for Communication and Free Wheelchair Mission, USA. Mr. Don Schoendorfer, President of Free Wheelchair Mission, USA a dynamic personality who cares for the betterment of the physically challenged persons was distressed to see the physically challenged persons suffering in the developing countries came in contact with Claretian Society for Communications, in 2000 and the Free Wheelchair Project India, evolved. An agreement was made between Free Wheelchair Mission, California, USA and the Claretian Society for Communications, Chennai. Thus, the Free Wheelchair Project in India was commissioned and Fr. Lord M. Winner, the Secretary of the Claretian Society for Communications, was appointed the Project Manager to carry out the activity.

The news about the project spread faster without much advertisement, different organizations, including District Rehabilitation Offices contacted for wheelchairs. Also deserving individuals approached us directly. The first wheelchair was delivered to Devi, a student on 17th July 2002 and the service was extended to many other organisations from 23rd July. The organizations of repute that has received our wheelchair include Tamil Nadu Handicapped Federation Charitable Trust, M I T H R

A, Don Bosco Anbu Illam, Little Hearts, missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa, Asha Nivas Social Service Society, Christian Mission Charitable Trust, Handicapped Welfare Association, Sacred Heart Foundation in Chennai, Sumanahalli Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre, Bangalore, Marsal Sadan, West Bengal, Mother Vannini Hospital, Andhra Pradesh, Sucheta Kriplani Shiksha Niketan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

6. Claretian Life Animation Project (CLAP):

The field experiences among people living with HIV/AIDS in the Chennai city by Fr. Ignasimuthu, CMF, and the inspiration from XXIII General Chapter titled “That they may have life” invited the Chennai Province to establish CLAP. It was started on 10th February 2004. The vision of CLAP is “to promise and enhance a dignified human living condition.”

The mission undertaken by CLAP to fulfil the vision can be summarized as follows: restoring dignified life to the physically challenged and affected by HIV/AIDS, restoring dignified life to the physically challenged persons. The ministry among the HIV/AIDS infected people is carried out through the following programmes: Free General Health Camp with counselling, HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme, financial assistance for Medicine and Education of PLWHA (People Living with HIV/AIDS), referral Services for Employment of PLWHA, documentation on HIV/AIDS and survey in Kancheepuram District.

The long awaiting plan of starting an inclusive care Home for HIV/AIDS positive children came to a reality through Assisi-Care Home at Achirapakkam.

7. MANASU

‘Man’ means in Dravidian languages Mind. ‘Men’ means in Indo European languages Mind. Manasu/Mensana is an effort of the Claretian province of Chennai to promote mental health

impelled by the compassionate love of Jesus to the suffering humanity. In the rapidly changing post modern India where mental stress related ailments and suicides are becoming common, Manasu is a timely social response to the ills of the society.

Interpreting the reality with the Word of God (Mt 25:40) and challenged by the social reality, we commit ourselves for those deprived of life in its fullness is the vision statement of MANASU and the mission statement is “we rescue, recover, rehabilitate and transform the abandoned mentally ill people with the compassionate love of Jesus in the spirit of shared mission”.

The significant presence of the mentally ill (MI) people loitering around the roads of Tambaram area of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India made us think seriously and impelled us to make a study about them in the suburb of Chennai. Fr. Sekar CMF and Bro. Soosai Antony who are qualified social workers were assigned by the province to do this task. The study was conducted from April 5th to May 25th, 2010. Based on this study and its recommendations, the Claretians of Chennai Province appointed Rev. Fr. L. Antony, CMF and deputed two qualified social workers to rescue, heal and rehabilitate the MI destitute as well to carry out conscientization works on mental illness among the students and employees. These ministries were carried out from June 2010 in a building that belongs to the Claretians in Thirusulam in Kanchipuram district. This project is located 2 km from the Chennai international Air Port. At present, this ministry has really flourished with modern facilities to accommodate 35 to 50 MI patients at a given time. We are taking care at the average of 30 persons per year.

8. Assisi Care Home, Acharapakkam

The vision for Assisi Care Home is “Promoting life in fullness to the victims of HIV infected and affected orphaned and abandoned children with the holistic and integral growth and

development of human life in accordance within the standard of LIFE”.

The HIV/AIDS infected and affected orphaned, semi orphaned and abandoned children are provided an opportunity to prolong their life with full human dignity and respect as that of any other normal children. Our service includes free boarding, education, health care, clothing, recreation and integrated development of the child.

After completion of formal education, we provide the possibility of doing ITI courses (Industrial Training Institute). Three students completed tenth standard in the year 2017 with good results. In view of rehabilitating and integrating the children into the society, we send them to the ITI (Industrial Training Institute) courses, Diploma courses for developing the self employment skills. There are three students doing ITI courses: Electrician, Tailor, Craft trainer. Through these technical courses, we empower skills to withstand by their own in the society. They too get integrated within the society. Today, they have a place to live, to love, to dream and to shine.

- We admitted the deserving children HIV infected and affected children for the Care home. They were both male and female children through information from the HIV positive net work, from the Government Hospital, and from the NGO or any associations or individuals.
- We also admitted children who were abandoned due to loss of either single or both parents due to infection of HIV.
- We also admitted children who were not infected by HIV but affected by HIV due to their social stigma or the children who had no other choice but to be accommodated at care home.
- We arranged proper medical care and counseling for children in our premise.

- We created external and internal infrastructure for the atmosphere of the home.
- We received an award as one of the best child care institutions throughout Kancheepuram district.

9. KAVASAM

The acronym KAVASAM is derived from Kalvi Valarchi Samuga Matramaiyam meaning a center for education development and social transformation. It was inaugurated on 10th June 2005 by Rev. Fr. Domingo Grilla, the General Prefect of Economy, Rome and blessed by Most. Rev. Dr. Antony Anantharayar, Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore.

APOSTOLATE OF KAVASAM

a. Hostel at Kavasam

Kavasam solemnly vouches that the education of Dalit Children should not be intercepted due to poverty, so yearly scholarship as well as continuous financial support is offered to the poor and studious Dalit students in order to pursue their studies. A well fledged and a decent hostel is run for the Dalit students and those who come from socially and economically backward milieu.

b. Foot Reflexology - A Treatment to Maintain Good health.

Health care has become the monopoly of multinational drug companies that solely promote allopathic medicine. The herbal and home remedies have been virtually extinct. The poor apart from spending their lifelong earnings, also suffer side effects of allopathic drugs. Resuscitating the nature and indigenous curative methods are sure ways of integral development. In this regard Kavasam promotes alternative therapies like Foot Reflexology, naturopathy and herbal treatments.

c. Coaching and training therapist for the ministry of healing

Kavasam is known for promoting alternative medicine. It has equipped itself preparing and promoting natural ways of healing. Every year Kavasam organizes three full-fledged courses on Reflexology therapy in the month of September, November and January. And many religious and lay people take part in these training and they continue the healing ministry of Jesus in their own situations.

d. Ministry for the tribal people- Irulas

We are engaged in various level of development among Irulas. We with the collaboration of Irular's association and St. Ann's sisters at Vilupuram render the best possible ministry to them. We have assisted with other NGOs, building houses for many Irular community families.

e. Net Working with self-welfare groups

Net working with other social work organizations is the technique of Kavasam to reach its objectives at the wider range. It knits itself with many of the social work organizations and movements to empower the women and children, fight against social evils, raise voices for human rights and celebrate national and international days like Women day with St. Ann's sisters. It seeks cooperation from other social work organizations to fight against atrocities inflicted on schedule caste and schedule tribe people.

10. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS

By the suggestion from the funding agencies and the decision of the Provincial Council, Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF, the then Prefect of Apostolate and the Mission Procure of Chennai Province initiated with 76 women of Nallamanayakkanpatti, Dindigul, a pilot project for the empowerment of women with the name, "Claret Progressive Women Association" in 2010. In

the beginning, the association carried small economical activities besides regular monthly meetings and savings. Later in 2013, through Claretian Proclade Spain, the association received a project for gender equality awareness programme for both men and women, leadership training programme, skill training and five economical activities to empower these 76 women. At present, the Association has the bank balance of about 20 lakhs. This saving is being used for internal credit and loan among the members of the association for a very minimum interest.

The same type of women empowerment project with certain modification is being carried out at Sambai, one of the Claretian parishes. The women of the village of Sambai live under unequal conditions from the moment of birth. Despite all of their potentials, they live under the rule of their father, husband and sons. Their social and economic dependency also contributes to this fact, as well as the presence of unequal gender relations which prevents them escaping from poverty and discrimination. In this context, a project was proposed to seek a change in the relationship of power between men and women, reinforcing the strength of these women in order to control their own lives. The objective is to change their roles of dependence, marginality and insecurity for their independency, possibility of decision-making and self-esteem. The project aims towards the development of their potentials and strengthen diverse income generation activities (productive) of the women. The result is to be attained through the development of leadership skills, personality development, basic rights and specific skills for five economic activities. The project also strives not only for a change in the attitude of men in the village but also aims for a social, cultural and economical transformation. There are five economical activities undertaken through this project to stabilize their economical condition, viz., a. A community shop, b. Snacks Making, c. Fish Breeding d. Drinking Water distribution and e. Renting cooking vessels and furniture.

10. HOUSING PROJECT AT VILLIAVARAMBIL

Villiavarambil is one of the poor parishes of our province. Claretians have carried out different social projects in this mission. One of the impacting social projects carried out in this mission is the construction of 40 houses in and around Villiavarambil. There were many families in this area living in small thatched houses in a inhuman condition due to poverty. Our missionaries took efforts to find the possibilities for providing them with a decent house. We began constructing houses for these poor people in 2012 and completed in the next year. Each house cost around Rs. 250,000 in 2012.

With the generous help and collaboration of the Claretian province of Germany, Chennai province has been helping the poor people for constructing houses every year in most of our missions in South and North.

11. EMERGENCY RELIEF SERVICE

The Claretians of the Province of Chennai always remain sensitive to the emergency needs of the people caused by unexpected natural calamities. We were in the forefront when Tsunami struck Tamil Nadu in 2004. We organized swiftly immediate relief work in the Tsunami affected areas. After the initial relief work, we were also in the forefront in rehabilitating the people who were badly affected by the deadly Tsunami. In Kanyakumari, we constructed 400 houses, tuition centre, multi-purpose hall, children park, day-care centre, computer centre, shopping complex, water tanks, etc. for enabling the affected people to begin a new chapter in their life. In Cuddalore region, we built houses, provided boats and fishing nets.

We also responded with financial contribution to the people of Haiti and Philippines as earth quake and typhoon struck them respectively. Once again, we acted swiftly to the victims of earth quake in Nepal by sending a relief team and Claretian personnel worked closely with Caritas Nepal.

In November, 2015 the Chennaites were stunned by rare flood and incurred so much of loss besides the sufferings as thousands and thousands of houses including our provincial house were marooned by the ferocious flood. We once again rushed to the spot and organized relief services under the banner “Catholic Relief Service” with the collaboration of other religious Congregations, N.G.Os and lay people. We rendered our selfless service with relief centers at our Provincial house, Claret Anbagam, Thirunintravur and Kavasam, Mangalapuram.

CONCLUSION

Social ministry was part and parcel of Jesus’ mission. He was deeply interested in the uplift of the poor, needy and the marginalized. Right from the beginning of her inception, the Church was aware that the social apostolate is as important as the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Social apostolate includes also developmental projects, educational ministry and healing ministry besides charity model social interventions. The Province of Chennai has been flag bearer of the social consciousness of the Congregation right from the beginning. The JPIC commission of the Province has actively involved in many social issues, instilling social consciousness in the members and the stakeholders of our mission. Our schools have never forgotten their social responsibilities through their SSR (School Social Responsibility) programmes. We have a few perceptible renowned social institutions. The members of the province are generally social conscious. While thanking the Lord for making use of Chennai Province as his instruments in liberating the poor, we shall commit ourselves with renewed vigor and commitment for the cause of the anawim of Yahweh in this graceful year of jubilee.



CLARETIANS AND SANTAL MISSION

Fr. Vinnarasu CMF

In 1985, immediately after the establishment of Indo-Sri Lankan Dependent Delegation, we began stabilising formation houses and extending our presence outside Claret Bhavan, Karumathur, the mother house. In view of developing our mission in North India and finding suitable place for missionary oriented formation, the Delegation landed in the Archdiocese of Calcutta and very specifically at Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore. In 1985, Fr. Anselmus, cmf with two theology students namely Arockiadass and Vincent Anesthasiar and three regents namely Alfred Kirubananthan, Vincent Paul Raj and Antony Samy began their journey at Morning Star College. While students Vincent Paul Raj and Alfred Kirubnanthan were sent to the English medium schools in the city of Calcutta for their regency experience, Anthony Samy remained with Fr. Anselmus helping him in the construction work of Claret Nivas, Barrackpore. In the following year, two regents namely M. John Kennedy and M. Gaspar were sent to a Jesuit Santal Mission at Chamrusai under the care of Fr. De'coq, S.J, a fervent Belgian Missionary.

Inspired by the XIX General Chapter (1979) Document Mission of the Claretians Today (MCT), Fr. Anselmus, cmf initiated the formative process for an effective mission in Northern India. He was fascinated by Santal missions as he heard the experiences of different missionaries from other congregations and diocesans

while attending Santal collegium in 1986. He had the opportunity to listen to the Santal missionaries working in the dioceses of Kolkata, Raiganj, Dumka, Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, in the state of Assam and in Nepal at the Santal collegium took place in Balasore diocese.

Santals are the largest single indigenous tribe in India. They are spread in states like Jharkhand (2,752,723), West Bengal (2,512,331), Bihar (406,076), Odisha (894,764), Assam (213,139) and countries like Bangladesh (300,061) and Nepal (42,698). The Christian Santals are present in the dioceses of Dumka, Kolkata, Asansol, Krishnagar, Raiganj, Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Balasore, Hazaribagh, Purnea, Dinajpur (Bangladesh) and in Nepal. They are generally god-fearing people. They believe in one supreme God; good spirit, ancestor's spirit and bad spirit. They have twelve clans. Their creation story is similar to that of Babylonian creation story. They worship in the nature sitting under the tree. They are generally good and trust worthy people. They are more communitarian in nature. They promote and practise egalitarian society by which they are asked to share their wealth with others mainly through feeding the entire village. Traditional Santals practise the Gospel in their lives. And generally, they are open to Christianity.

Committed to the evangelization among Santals, the prominent Jesuit Missionaries like Frs. Gerard Beckers, Ernest, De'cocq, Mongol Das encouraged us to take up missions among the Santals. Then in 1987, Fr. Anselmus, cmf invited Fr. Hans Henriques S.J., to Karumathur to address the all the members during the general assembly of the delegation to share about the Santals, their language, rituals, culture, possibility of starting the mission for them, etc. The members of the delegation were deeply impressed and dreamt of Santal mission. Another momentous initial step was learning Santali cum mission exposure provided to all the 9 theology students of Claret Nivas, Barrackpore and 6 regency students assigned for North India on 1st June 1987. They were sent to the Jesuit mission at Kalna

being guided by an exemplary and inspiring missionary Fr. Mongol Das, S.J.

Then, five among the above mentioned six regents, namely, Amaladhas, Antony Paul, Joseph Bellarmine, Vinnarasu and A. Xavier were sent to Santal missions in view of working among the Santals and in future having our own missions. They were exceptional in learning Santali, adapting themselves to the Santal life-style and culture and mingling freely with Santals to the extent of prompting generous appreciations from the local clergy and Jesuit missionaries. Indeed, the pioneer young Claretians left an indelible impression in the Santal apostolate.

In 1988, Fr. J. Remigious, CMF a young missionary was sent to Santal mission to work under a veteran missionary Fr. Robert D'souza at Baligeria of the Archdiocese of Calcutta. In 1989 three deacons, namely, S. Antony Samy, CMF, S. Jesu Doss CMF and J. Michael Raja Pandian, CMF were sent to Torai in Dumka diocese, to Kalna under the Calcutta Jesuits and to Madhupur under the Maltese Jesuits respectively. In 1990, our regency students were sent to Raiganj diocese and Purnea areas under the Salesian missionaries.

After the arrival of Fr. J. Remigius, CMF, the delegation was gradually thinking of having the Santals as its preferred recipients of mission. This resulted into the formation of students for the apostolate among the Santals. In view of knowing more about the Santals, Claret Nivas, our formation house of theology in Barrackpore introduced literary association meetings and village exposure programs. The formators also periodically invited Santal missionaries for recollection talk, preaching, missionary sharing, etc.

In 1989, we started looking for a proper place for our mission - Tamajuri and Jhargram and simultaneously, we also wanted to promote local vocations. In 1991, Most Rev. Henry D'Souza, the Archbishop of Calcutta handed over to us a Santal parish at

Kearchand. In the same year, Most Rev. Alphonse D'Souza, the Bishop of Raiganj offered us a house of the diocese to start our minor seminary, Claret Vidyaniketan at Rajibpur for the young boys from Northern states. Fr. V. S. Packianathan, CMF, was the superior and Fr. G. Lourd Jeyaraj, CMF was the prefect. At the request of the Bishop, Fr. S. Jesudoss, CMF besides being the economer of the community, was appointed as assistant parish priest at Rajibpur under Fr. Lourdu, S.J. a kind hearted missionary who at the advice of the bishop sent the former to Batol zone, the present Bishrail parish area for the pastoral ministry in view of our future mission.

1993 was a turning point for our missionary expansion among the Santals. Our budding missionaries were very optimistic towards Santals and Bengalis. The emerging missionary presence in this region was financially ensured with the presence and accompaniment of Fr. Franz Xavier Dirnberger, CMF, our beloved Thatha whose sudden death in 1993 created waves of anxiety and questioned the economical sustainability of our missions. Added to this, the coldblooded murder of Fr. V. S. Packianathan, CMF, the superior of the Rajibpur community sent shock waves among the members. The Claretian missionaries felt as foreigners in the Santal regions and orphans at the face of difficulties. Fr. Packianathan was too young to be martyred and we were too inexperienced to face such a tragic event. Paradoxically, as blessing in disguise, these experiences enlightened us to turn to God, the author of the missions than relying on money power, influence, personal abilities and intellectual capacities.

The community of Claret Vidyaniketan, Rajibpur was shifted to the same building of the minor seminary of the diocese with Fr. A. Alex, CMF as the superior. Meanwhile, Fr. Bellarmine, CMF was entrusted with the land purchase for the mission at Bishrail. At these moments of uncertainties and anxieties, the bishop of Raiganj diocese entrusted to us Tolahar mission (the future Bishrail Parish) with Fr. Joseph Bellarmine, CMF as the mission-in-charge. Around

this time, the bishop of Balasore entrusted to us Amaritha Road mission (Orissa) under the leadership of Fr. Remigious CMF and the Archbishop of Calcutta asked us to take care of Silda mission with Fr. Michael Raja Pandian, CMF as mission-in-charge.

Significantly, the First Provincial Chapter (1994) discussed and opted for the Santals as our preferred recipients for North India. In 1995, we moved from Tolahar to Bishrail. In 1996, we moved from Silda to Sahari. In 1998, the parish of Kearchand was given back to the Archdiocese of Calcutta and in 1999 the Amaritha Road mission to the diocese of Balasore. Meanwhile in 1998, Fr. Ignasimuthu, CMF was sent to explore the possibilities of starting a mission in the diocese of Asansol and it bore fruit in 1999 with the establishment of Marsal Sadan mission at Siyalmara in the diocese of Asansol. In 1999, the Nirmal Sadan mission at Ghatsila in the diocese of Jamshedpur was established. In 2000, we shifted the Marsal Sadan mission to Burwa from Siyalmara. We started the school in 2001. In 2002 we shifted the mission from Burwa to Sahanagar. In 2002 we started the school at Bishrail. In 2007, we stepped into the mainland of Santals, Santal Parganas in Dumka. Fr. Elias Tirkey, CMF was sent to explore the mission possibilities and work in the Diocese of Dumka. Thus, in 2008, we were entrusted with Taldangal parish in view of developing a new mission around this region. In 2011, Basmata Mission parish was bifurcated from Taldangal parish and was entrusted to our care. Here we have a Hindi medium high school and hostels for both boys and girls. On 5th August 2018, we opened Claret Gnanalayam mission at Mosogram bifurcated from sahanagar parish.

Developments

“Observing the world from the view point of our charism has led us to commit ourselves to a more missionary, more inculturated, more prophetic and liberating evangelization carried out from the perspective of the poor...” (MCT 181-239). Based on MCT, our missionaries appropriated the virtues of simplicity and availability

to the poor inserting ourselves with the life conditions of the people. Our Claretian missionaries took up language study seriously and identified fully with Santal culture and way of life. Recognizing the role of the village heads, Manjhi haram and inviting them with open arms into the church activities enabled our missions to be a participatory church. We promoted their traditional singing and dancing by organizing competitions. In Kearchand, Amarda Road and Bishrail, we animated participatory church through Small Christian Communities (SCC). But local clergy expected institutional and developmental ministries. Therefore, the missions at Amardha Road and Kearchand were taken back by the dioceses. This created both positive and negative vibrations among the missionaries and raised questions about our missionary approach and effectiveness to the modern time. As itinerant missionaries, these decisions did not daunt us much though a few were seriously disappointed (cf. MCT 164).

The Major Superiors' Meet in Bengaluru (1998) on the occasion of 150th anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation called for long term self-sustainable and financially feasible and viable missions. This call enabled a paradigm shift in our missionary approach – non-institutional to institutional apostolates. In view of supporting our missions, we established Claret School, Barrackpore in 1999. In the following years, rural English medium mission schools took the centre stage in our missions with Claret School at Sahanagar (2001) and St. Claret School in Bishrail (2002). This made great difference in our missionary endeavour too. While veteran pioneer missionaries like Jesuits and Salesians did not dare to provide English medium education for the Santals due to their poverty and the high rate of drop-outs in school, we ventured into it with renewed enthusiasm and total commitment. Our effort in this line has opened up new avenues for the Santals and set new benchmarks for the future missionaries.

Observing our life and mission in the North from 1985 till today, we can gratefully acknowledge that we have grown up so

much in these years as missionaries. We are blessed with good native vocations, many mission parishes, schools, hostels and employment training center and communication center. From my personal perspective, let me classify our missionary journey in North into two major periods: before 2000 and after 2000.

Before the year 2000

Our missionaries were inspired by the General Chapter Documents such as, Mission of the Claretians Today (MCT) and The Claretian on the Process of Renewal (CPR). We were influenced by our charism as interpreted and manifested in these documents in the light of the teachings of Second Vatican Council and the whisperings of the Liberation Theology.

Our missionaries were taking efforts to be with the people in the mission by trying to identify with them and their simple life style. This was reflected in our structures, food habits, clothing, etc. and we were very much at ease with the people and approachable to them. We were taking more efforts to be inserted in the life situation of our recipients and be identified with their culture and language. We took extra efforts to learn their language and adapt their culture with Christian faith and morality. Our passion to study Santali discouraged us to learn other languages like Hindi and Bengali and provoked some type of inferiority and negative complexes within us.

After the year 2000

Educational ministry gradually took root in our missions with the conviction of promoting faster development of the Santals through English language. We became experts in giving English education to the tribals and inspiration for many others to start English medium schools for the tribals. By this the tribal children could afford quality English education and good hostel facility with reasonable and minimum fees. They are proud to speak in English in front of the general public. Their self-confidence and self-esteem were enhanced. As a result, some Santal students have already

entered into professional medical and engineering colleges. At the same time it is important for the missionaries to realize not to be tied up with the institutions that can kill the missionary spirit if we are not very alert to lead them in the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, realizing already in the beginning itself that our educational ministry must by all means reach the poor Santals and others, we started running Bengali and Hindi medium schools in Sahari and Basmata respectively.

Critically looking at this new approach in our missionary efforts of running educational institutions, we have to humbly accept that we pay attention to more professionalism in our institutions and as a result, distant ourselves from people. With the institutionalized mind we began to think as if we are with people and this makes our inculturation meaningless. Our aims of institutional service with the result orientation has led us to aim at efficiency, name, respect, fame, honour and recognition. Thus we are forced to reflect whether we are losing the transcendental approach in our ministries. Our preoccupation for the future of the mission and its financial security is making us to move from insecurity to security through financial structures. Hence there is a need to empower ourselves to fight against comfort seeking attitudes and accept privations by relying more on the providence of God than being bothered about self- sufficiency.

As we celebrate the silver jubilee of our province, we are grateful to God for the blessings received in our efforts to proclaim the Word of God among the Santals. We are convinced that in all our efforts it is God who gives the growth. “This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time he offers everything to us” (EG. 12).



TO MAKE HIM KNOWN...

Malaysia Mission

Fr. Berkmans CMF

A song untuned is a song unheard, a face unmasked is a face unseen, a treasure unsearched is a treasure unfound, a life un-lived is a life unrevealed, a story unsaid is a history unknown and so, She told Him all that we did and all that we have been doing and all that we hope to accomplish in times to come. Our life is an opened book to Her and no wonder! She knows us all through and through. She holds the ownership of our hearts and keeps them all pure and unstained because She, Herself is the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Mother, teacher and everything after our Lord Jesus. Here by She presents the missionary story of her beloved sons who ventured upon a new mission in few years ago. These sons of mine She said that were called, chosen and commissioned to do everything for the greater glory of God and she added...

On 2012 two little sons (Berkmans & Anup) of her's were sent to St. Jude's Parish, Bunan-Tebedu, East Malaysia a land blessed with hospitality and cultural plurality. She couldn't stop herself from narrating the incredible history of St. Jude's where the two little sons of her were to serve.

A TOTAL RECALL

St. Jude's was founded by Fr. Leopold Van Rooyen, a Mill Hill Missionary in 1968. It had a sparkling and unfading beginning

with a handful of families offering themselves to Christianity and initially Bunan and Tembawang were the cradle of the Catholic faith. The Holy Spirit reached every nook and corner of Bunan and Tebedu like a wild fire through the passionate missionary endeavors of Fr. Leopold Van Rooyen and in course of time Christianity became the identity and the hope of the 32 major villages of Bunan-Tebedu. Indeed, it was a commendable works of few village leaders and good hearted faithful who joined hands along with Fr. Leopold Van Rooyen for building up the Christian communities. Dedicated service of Mill Hill Missionaries had a tremendous effect in spreading the Catholic Faith in and around Bunan-Tebedu. As Fr. Leopold Van Rooyen left Sarawak in 1993, Archdiocese of Kuching took over the Parish until 2015.

WORKS OF HER SONS IN THE SON

Two sons of her's no more worried and no more waited for the daystar to mark the path when paths were not clearer because they knew that paths are made by walking not by waiting. As sons in the Son they sought after the will of God, embodied the words of their Lord in everything they did and found the face of God in everyone they met. As a fruit of their commitment and authentic service to the Lord's vineyard, the Lord honored them with the greater responsibility of being guardians of His Church. On 1st January 2016 Fr. Berkman CMF was appointed as the 7th Rector of St. Jude's Parish Bunan-Tebedu, Fr. Anup CMF and Fr. Peter Liston (Diocesan) as assistant parish priests respectively.

THE GIFT OF GOD

The Heart of the blessed Mother is over whelmed with great joy as Her sons were gifted a home of their own by the Lord. The 16th July 2017 became the red lettered day in the history because of the historical event of erecting the First Claretian Community in Sarawak which took place in St. Jude's Church,


Bunan. Fr. Jesudoss CMF and his council appointed Fr. Berkman CMF as the Delegate Superior of the Community and Frs. Anup CMF, Arockia Raj CMF, Kulanthai Selvan CMF, Pratap Baskey CMF and Arockia Paul Raj CMF as members of the Community. The ceremony was officiated by His Grace Most Rt Rev Simon Poh, Archbishop of Kuching. Right now, being the bacon of God's Love and Mercy the Claretian Missionaries keep up the spirit of founder St. Antony Mary Claret, alive by spreading the spirit all around the neighboring dioceses. Claretians' presence in Sarawak was being expanded to Miri Diocese too. Fr. Arockia Paul Raj CMF landed in Miri Diocese on 3rdAug 2017 to begin his first over-seas mission in Sarawak.

Being a mother means that your heart is no longer yours it wanders where ever your children do. Yes! The Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is around Claretians Her sons in the Son. All our missionary stories are nothing other than Her story. She holds our life, she guides our paths and she writes the story of our mission. Whatever She hears from Her Son who is our lord and master, she writes in the book of our lives and our mission is nothing other than the will of her beloved son our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus as the Claretian missionaries in East Malaysia, (Sarawak) we do nothing other than what the Lord commands us to do through His Mother Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary.



Sri Lanka, towards becoming an Independent Delegation in the Claretian Congregation

Fr. Dominic Rohan. CMF

uring the session of 18 October, the General Government approved the canonical erection of the Independent Delegation of Sri Lanka. In the dialogue established between the Provincial Government of Deutschland, the present Government of the Dependent Delegation of Sri Lanka and the Superior General, the date for its canonical erection will have to be decided, which, in principle, may be towards the end of 2019 or the beginning of the year 2020.”

This was the news that was shared with the Congregation in October 2018, from the Claretian General Curia. This was the official announcement of the canonical erection of the Independent Delegation of Sri Lanka. This announcement marks as the big event of the history of the Claretians in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has a 40 years of history in the congregation and these 40 years are also connected with the Claretians in India and especially with the Chennai Province.

Imprinting the name of Sri Lanka in the pages of the Claretian congregation started in 1979 with the recruitment of the first vocations from Sri Lanka. The first four students from Sri Lanka landed at Karumathur, Madurai in July 1979. The protagonist behind this historical moment was Fr. Dirnberger, who dreamt about the planting of the Claretian congregation in Sri Lanka, even earlier. In 1976, when he met Sr. Angelina HF, a Sri Lankan Holy Family Sister, who

was following a spirituality course at Carmelaram, India, he asked “Sister, why don’t you help us in getting some good vocations to our Congregation from Sri Lanka?” The collaboration with the sisters in recruiting Sri Lankan students started with this conversation. The ever anxious Fr. Dirnberger sent Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam to Jaffna in the following year to follow up his idea. Through the assistance of Late Rev. Fr. J.V.P. Selvaraja, then parish priest of the Jaffna Cathedral, initial contacts with few students was established. Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai, the Bishop of Jaffna, approved and blessed the plan of recruiting candidates from his diocese to the Claretian Congregation. Following the arrival of the first batch consisting of four candidates, Frs. Anselmus, Lucas, Abraham Pothiyittel and Mathew Njayarkulam from Karumathur made visits to Sri Lanka in the subsequent years with the purpose of further recruitment of candidates. Due to the efforts and collaboration of Rev. Fr. Selvaraja and Sr. Angelina, altogether 12 candidates from Sri Lanka joined the Claretians in India until 1985.

After minor seminary formation and postulancy in Karumathur the Sri Lankan students entered the Claret Bhavan novitiate at Carmelaram, Bangalore. They studied philosophy at Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, Madurai Dt. When the first batch started their theology studies at St. Peter’s Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore, situation in Sri Lanka got worsened and it became difficult for the students to extend their resident visas in India. When they left India in 1987, they were welcomed and accommodated in the Claretian Province of the Philippines through the then Provincial Late Rev. Fr. Domingo Moraleda CMF in Quezon City.

In 1984 Province of India and Indo-Sri Lankan Delegation were established. The Indo-Sri Lankan Delegation comprised of Tamil-speaking Claretians from Tamil Nadu and members from Sri Lanka.

In 1992 the Province of Chennai was formed and Sri Lankan Mission got separated from the administrative set-up of Indian

Provinces and became directly attached to the Province of Germany for further development. Thus the German Provincial Government was directly responsible for the further growth of this Mission.

The presence of Claretians in Sri Lanka began with the ordination of first two Sri Lankan Claretians in 1991. After the ordination they took up pastoral ministries in the Archdiocese of Colombo and diocese of Kandy. In 1992, the official establishment, opening and blessing of the first residence of the Claretians in Sri Lanka took place at Welisara, Ragama and Fr. Cyriac was appointed as the Mission Superior.

Sri Lanka functioned as a Mission of German Province. In 2012, The Province of Germany made Sri Lanka as the Dependent Delegation.

After 27 years of Claretian presence in Sri Lanka, the General Government has announced Sri Lanka as a major organism in the congregation. At present, there are 38 Sri Lankan native priests, 2 priests from other organisms, 29 professed students and Novices (9) and 12 students and Novices (6) from other organisms in Sri Lanka. There are 5 communities which includes 9 residences of Mission.

The formation in Sri Lanka.

Local missionaries after completing their formation in the foreign lands returned to the country and immediately got themselves involved in missions. And they simultaneously started recruiting vocations from different parts of the country and started formation in the country itself. In the course of time formation houses were established for every stage of formation. The Mission of Sri Lanka received the assistance of many Claretians from other organisms as formators. Meanwhile, the local Claretians were prepared to take up the formation ministry.

From the beginning the formation for mission concept was very clear in the formation programme and it was given importance

in all levels. Thus, along with the traditional ministries, alternative ministries were also introduced for the students in formation. Shared mission and Universal mission are also emphasized during the formation itself. Pastoral year with special emphasize to knowing and responding to different realities of life is the unique aspect of the Delegation's formation for mission.

Ministries in Sri Lanka.

Right from the beginning Claretians are engaged in the parish pastoral ministry. St. Paul the Hermit parish, Madulsima in the diocese of Badulla was the first parish entrusted to the Claretians in Sri Lanka. Claretians handed over this parish to the diocese in 2014 after serving there for 20 years. Now, Claretians in Sri Lanka are serving in three parishes in different dioceses. The parish of St. Xavier at Aligambay serves the Sri Lankan Gypsy people. They are an ethnic group from Sri Lanka who trace their origins in India centuries ago. They are generally nomadic and are found throughout the island. After embracing Christianity they are settled in this village.

Claretians in Sri Lanka are involved in the communication/publication ministry right from the beginning. The Claretian Publications was established in 1994 and continue to serve the Sri Lankan Catholics in different ways. The publication also publishes Bible diaries in English, Sinhala and Tamil languages. The services of the Claretian publications reaches the entire island.

Sri Lanka was experiencing ethnic unrest since its independence in 1948. It turned into war and violence from 1983.

The Claretians in Sri Lanka are no exceptional and living in the context of war and violence from the first day of their presence in Sri Lanka. Responding to this situation CLASIKA (Claret Siruvar Kadampam) and VAROD (Vanni Rehabilitation Organization of the Disabled) were started by the Claretians with the co-operation of

other religious congregations and diocesan authorities in Jaffna and Vavuniya respectively. They continue to serve the affected people through its psycho-social, livelihood and physical development programmes.

Recently Claretian Bible Ministry, Youth Ministry, Family Ministry and Preaching ministry are established in the Sri Lankan Delegation.

Claretians from Chennai Province who helped in Sri Lanka.

From the beginning there was good understanding and spirit of collaboration and cooperation existed between the Chennai province (Indo-Sri Lankan Delegation) and Sri Lanka. There were assistance in the form of sharing of personal especially for formation. There were also existed assistance in the ministries.

Claretians from India, who served in Sri Lanka

	NAME	YEAR/S	RESPONSIBILITIES	PROVINCE
1	Rev. Fr. Cyriac Njaryarkulam	1992-2015	Regional Superior, Superior, Novice Master, Formator, Spiritual Director	Indian/St. Thomas
2	Rev. Fr. Abraham Pothiyittel	1993-1997	Superior, Formator	Indo-Sri Lankan Delegation/ St. Thomas
3	Rev. Fr. John Kennedy	1999-2002	Formator	Chennai
4	Rev. Fr. Peter Subarajh	1999-2009	Parish pastor	Chennai
7	Rev. Fr. Lucas Xavier	2000-2004	Formator, Econome	Chennai
8	Rev. Fr. Xavier Pereira	2002-2006	Delegation Secretary, Formator	Bangalore
9	Rev. Fr. Thomas Avannapuram	2004-2013	Delegation Econome, Econome, Formator	Bangalore
10	Rev. Fr. Santhiago	2007-2012	Formator, Parish pastor	Chennai

11	Rev. Fr. S. Anselmus	2008-2009	Novice Master, Formator	Chennai
12	Rev. Fr. Santhiago	2007-2012	Formator, Parish pastor	Chennai
13	Rev. Fr. V. Lawrence	2012-2013	Novice Master	Chennai
14	Rev. Fr. Maria Arul	2016-	Superior. For- mator	Chennai

Fathers Bhyju and Rudolf in a special way assisted the Sri Lankan priests who are in the quinquennium batch. They were visiting periodically and animated the priests who are very fresh in their ministries.

Sri Lankan Claretians who have undertaken studies in India and those who visits India, always find the houses of Chennai province a home. Their stay in the Claretian houses and the encounter with the Claretians belongs to the province have helped immensely.

We thank the Chennai Province for the assistance provided in various ways for the development of the Sri Lankan Delegation. The small seed laid in 1979 at Karumathur has grown as a giant tree today, reaching out the entire Island and go beyond its shore to continue the work started by our Father St Anthony Mary Claret in various ways.

We wish and pray our sister province many blessings from the Lord and that they may continue the evangelizing efforts in their territories and wherever expected.

Ad multos annos!

Claretian Provincial House - Chennai

Foundation: 1994, Status: House,
Mission: Provincial Curia

Claret Anbagam - Thiruninravur

Foundation: 1996, Status: House,
Mission: Parish & Educational Apostolate

KAVASAM - Kakkanur

Foundation: 1998, Status: House,
Mission: Education & Development Apostolate

Claret Illam - Kumbakonam

Foundation: 1986, Status: House,
Mission: Formation: Minor Seminary

Claret Home - Villiavarambal

Foundation: 1997, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish

Clarefians - LIFE - Dindigul

Foundation: 1999, Status: House,
Mission: Lay Animation

Claret Bhavan - Karumathur

Foundation: 1976, Status: House,
Mission: Formation: Philosophy

Claret Arulagam- Moonandipatti

Foundation: 1996, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish & Education Apostolate

Claret House - Kochadai

Foundation: 2002, Status: House,
Mission: Education Apostolate

Our Lady of Snow Mission - Thadikarankonam

Foundation: 1987, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish

CASA Claret - Kanyakumari

Foundation: 2010, Status: House,
Mission: Parish Ministry & Integral Development Work

MANASU - Chennai

Foundation: 2018, Status: House,
Mission: Social Apostolate

Claret Nivas - Barrackpore

Foundation: 1986, Status: House
Mission: Formation: Theology

Claret Nivas - Delegation Curia community

Foundation: 2010, Status: House,
Mission: Delegation House, Education Apostolate

Claret Seva Sadan - Bishrail

Foundation: 1995, Status: House
Mission: Mission Parish & Education Apostolate

Claret Ashram - Sahari

Foundation: 1998, Status: House,
Mission: Evangelization & Education Apostolate

Marsal Sadan - Saha Nagar

Foundation: 1999, Status: House
Mission: Mission Parish & Lay Animation

Nirmal Sadan - Ghatsila

Foundation: 1999, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish

Claretian House - Lalpur, Ranchi

Foundation: 2000, Status: House
Mission: Communication & Book Centre

Claret Deep - Lalpur, Ranchi

Foundation: 2010, Status: House,
Mission: CIET & Mission Parish

Claret Vidyaniketan, Nayasarai, Ranchi

Foundation: 1999, Status: House
Mission: Minor Seminary

Claret Vihar - Basmata

Foundation: 2010, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish

Claret Manzil, Bihar

Foundation: 2014, Status: Mission
Mission: Parish

Claret Vihar - Basmata

Foundation: 2010, Status: House,
Mission: Mission Parish

