



CARMELITES OF MARY IMMACULATE

CMI PRIOR GENERAL'S HOUSE

Chavara Hills, P.B. No. 3105, Kakkanad P.O.
Kochi 682 030, Kerala, India



ST. KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA
1805-1871

Fr. Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General

REF: PG/300/2022

Circular No. 10

02 July 2022

Circular on *Dukhrana* of St Thomas

Dear Fathers and Brothers of the CMI fraternity,

On July 3rd, the Church celebrates the feast day of St Thomas, the Apostle of India and for us the St Thomas Christians, this feast is known as *Dukhrana perunnal* and the meaning of this Syriac word is remembrance or memory. We remember today the father of our faith, Apostle St Thomas. This feast has a special significance this year as we celebrate the 1950th year of the Martyrdom of this great Apostle who ventured to come to our land to preach the Gospel of Christ. It is indeed a great initiative to celebrate July 3 as Indian Christian Day/ *Yesu Bhakti Diwas* all over the world by the Indian Christians.

Best known for his initial unwillingness to believe the other Apostles in their claim that Jesus had risen from the dead, the Risen Lord made St Thomas a means of teaching that one could believe in the Risen Lord even without seeing.

St Thomas plays a key role in the Bible on different unique occasions. As an apostle, Thomas was dedicated to following the Lord. Upon hearing that Jesus was returning to Judea, an area that would pose dangers due to the growing animosity of the authorities there, he immediately said to the other apostles, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (Jn 11: 16). Thus, he professes his fearlessness to stand by the Lord. Often addressed as 'The Doubting Thomas', he is infamous for his doubts, unfaithfulness and ignorance that led him to question the Lord's identity and blurt out "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20: 25) which he eventually got to do and thus proclaiming his most famous phrase, "My Lord, My God" (John 20:27).

St Thomas, who brought faith to our land, could very often be considered as a reflection of us in our spiritual journey towards Christ. We are often so confident of God's providence and plans for us that we are ready to go out searching for the Lord even under the most dangerous of situations. Unfortunately, in many instances of our life, we are unbelieving and often in need of proof of God's presence in our daily life. This unbelieving nature of St Thomas is something that can kindle great confidence in us to follow our Lord Jesus Christ despite our doubtfulness and questions and to trust that the Lord will answer.

In his general audience on September 27, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of St Thomas, explaining that we can learn from his doubts, which show us "that Jesus can now be recognized by his wounds rather than by his face."

"The Apostle Thomas' case is important to us for at least three reasons," said the Pope. "First, because it comforts us in our insecurity; second, because it shows us that every doubt



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can lead to an outcome brighter than any uncertainty; and, lastly, because the words that Jesus addressed to him remind us of the true meaning of mature faith and encourage us to persevere, despite the difficulty, along our journey of adhesion to him."

St Thomas died a martyr on 03 July 72 AD in Mylapore, India. It is believed that he was killed with a lance head, the same lance which he is seen holding in many of his portraits/statues.

Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine and 1950th Year of the Martyrdom of St Thomas

This year the Church in India commemorates the 1950 years of the Martyrdom of St Thomas, the Apostle of India. It is believed that Apostle Thomas was martyred in AD 72 in India and was buried at Mylapore. There is a tradition that later in AD 232 portion of his mortal remains were taken to Edessa. Some portion of the relics were later transported to the West and now rest in the Cathedral of St Thomas, the Apostle in Ortona, Italy.

However, the bone of the right arm of St Thomas was brought from Ortona in Italy and enthroned in the present Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine at Azhikode by Cardinal Tisserant in the year 1953. From then on, the Mar Thoma Pontifical shrine at Azhikode, which is entrusted to the care of the Devamatha Province of our Congregation, has been a great pilgrimage centre attracting thousands from all around the world, irrespective of caste and creed.

Special Indulgence in the Jubilee Year

On this occasion of the 1950 year of the martyrdom of St Thomas, the Apostle and Father of the Church in India, considering the request placed at Vatican Curia, special indulgence has been granted to the pilgrims who visit the Shrine at Azhikode between 03 July 2022 to 03 July 2023 with due preparations. It will be a great spiritual benefit for all those pilgrims to get the indulgence when they visit the shrine and pray at the relic of St Thomas, the Apostle who brought the Gospel of Christ to this land. Therefore, let us encourage the faithful and people around our houses and institutions to visit the Mar Thoma Shrine Azhikode and to obtain the privilege of the special indulgence.

Wishing you all a Happy Feast on the Feast of Dukhrana

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General

