



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

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07 December 2022

Circular on the Feast of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Reverend Fathers and Brothers of the CMI Fraternity,

This is to wish every member of our CMI Family the Happy Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

On this great Feast day in the year 1855, eleven of our first fathers together with St Kuriakose Elias Chavara made their religious profession leading to the canonical foundation of our congregation.

On this great Feast day today, 44 of our Novices belonging to 14 Provinces are making their first profession in our Congregation. I take this opportunity to pray for them and to congratulate them for discerning their call in our Congregation. I also thank the Novice Masters and team members for guiding and preparing them to hear the inner call of God and to say 'Fiat' like our Blessed Mother.

This feast brings joy and hope to all of us as we continue to draw new meaning and insights for our decennial preparation for the Bicentennial of the Congregation. The Immaculate Conception of Mary is a celebration that attracts us because we are fascinated by the beauty of the call to holiness. Pope Francis writes: "Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church." (GE #9). The Immaculate Conception is also a mystery of God's love that calls us to deepen our faithfulness to our missionary commitment. In this sense, I feel that the feast we are celebrating has a deep connection to the decennial preparation which we have begun with the theme "*Grace-filled Presence for a Transformed World.*"

Mary's presence was a grace-filled presence and therefore the address of the angel to her: "Hail Mary, full of Grace!" The Immaculate Conception proclaims our belief that Mary was free from original sin from the first moment of her conception, and was filled with grace, completely loved and cherished by the Holy Trinity. What God accomplished in gracing Mary, God would like to do in all of humanity: transform us into holy people by the gift of grace, God's very own life. This gift is gratuitous, free, underserved, not earned! Pope Francis writes that the gift of grace "...invites us to live in joyful gratitude for this completely unmerited gift." (GE#54)



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As we celebrate Mary's Immaculate Conception, especially in this year of our **"CMI Call and Commitment"** we celebrate our own vocation in the CMI Congregation to be a follower of Jesus: to be His messengers of love.

Mary's Immaculate Conception is not simply a beautiful honor and privilege for her for which we stand around her applauding and cheering! No, the beautiful gift of Mary's gracing is all about the mystery that God revealed to us: the mystery of love for all humanity. We bear the name of the Immaculate Conception and we are commissioned as missionaries to bring Christ into the world, not settling for a bland and mediocre existence (GE#1), but fully charged with the missionary zeal and enthusiasm to cooperate with God's saving plan!

Pope Francis explains, "Mary Immaculate does not look on herself. This is true humility: not looking on oneself but looking toward God and others" (Rome, Dec. 8, 2021). It is precisely for this reason that the Virgin Mary responds to the angel, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord!"

So, let us after the example of our Blessed Immaculate Mother be people for the other, missionaries of God who will always proclaim "the greatness of the Lord!"

May our Blessed Mother intercede for us to be missionaries in this world today.

Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General

