



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

Dear Reverend Fathers and Brothers of CMI Fraternity,

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you on *this sacred Feast Day dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. As we celebrate the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, I extend my heartfelt greetings to each one of you, invoking the intercession of our immaculate Mother for grace, guidance, and spiritual fortitude.

On this momentous feast day in 1855, our first eleven fathers along with our founding father St Kuriakose Elias Chavara made their first religious profession and received the Carmelite rules. On this Feast day this year 2023, 168 years after the first batch, **Sixty four of our novices** are making their first profession, assimilating the spirit of the founding fathers who walked before us. I do congratulate all the newly professed members of our Congregation so that they, imbibing the spirit and charism of our Congregation, become true sons of the Immaculate Mother and bear witness to Christ through their lives. I also thank all the novice masters and team members who have done a very commendable service in supporting and facilitating these brothers to arrive at a correct discernment.

Speaking on the Providential foundation of our Congregation, St Chavara wrote the following words: *“Beloved brethren, this congregation of ours is not man-made. You are witness to the truth that God has nurtured it with genuine care and helped it to grow. Persecution by men or discouragements from them cannot destroy it. But one thing can cause its destruction. If we forget our holy vocation and neglect the sacred duties of our state and fail in humility, charity, religious modesty and genuine devotion and are satisfied with valuing them only in spirit and words and not in deeds”* (Testament of St Chavara to His Brethren).

Therefore, the goal of the renewal programme envisioned during this CMI year of communitarian witnessing is to revitalise and reinvigorate our charism in the congregation in view of the Bicentennial of our Congregation (1831-2031). Our founding fathers have bequeathed to us an example of rising above the differences and even making sacrifices of their personal views and interests and working in unison with mutual respect, understanding and appreciation and thus remaining “one in mind and heart” (Acts 2:46). Thus, the new life they started in *Bes-rauma*- the house on the hill top of Mannanam- was basically communitarian – an other-centred life- making it a genuine family, praying and working together, and as such ‘they are now able to do many good things that were left undone’ in the absence of a religious congregation.



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Mary, the Ever Virgin, serves as an example of a consecrated person who follows the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience and becoming other-centred through her consecrated life and thus to bear testimony for Christ. She was and is the epitome of the thoughtful person who was always considerate of other people's needs. Her visit to Elizabeth (Lk 1: 39-45) and her intervention at the Marriage at Cana (Jn 2:1-11) bear testimony to this. A fruitful religious and consecrated life is built on the foundation of community life where the other replaces and substitutes the self-centredness of a person. In other words, a robust communal life is essential for the survival of any religious life. On this feast day our Blessed Mother invites to lead an other-centred life which promotes communitarian witnessing.

The Immaculate Conception of Mary stands as a luminous beacon in our Christian faith, signifying the unparalleled purity and grace bestowed upon the Mother of Our Saviour. It is a doctrine that transcends theological profundity and speaks to the very essence of our devotion, reminding us of the divine favour that enveloped Mary from the moment of her conception. In contemplating this sublime mystery, we are invited to delve into the depths of our faith and reflect upon the profound implications it holds for our spiritual journey. Mary's immaculate nature serves as a profound testament to the boundless mercy and love of our Heavenly Father, who, in His providence, prepared a vessel worthy to bear the Word Incarnate.

As we engage in prayerful reflection and renew our vows on this feast day, let us draw inspiration from the virtues exemplified by the Immaculate Mother—her unwavering faith, profound humility, and unparalleled obedience. Mary's fiat, her resounding "yes" to the divine plan, challenges us to echo a similar response in our own lives, surrendering our will to the providence of God.

On this blessed Feast Day, let our common worship and thanksgiving rise like fragrant incense, enveloping our congregation in a spirit of unity and devotion. May the Immaculate Conception ignite within us a renewed zeal for holiness and a fervent desire to emulate Mary's virtues in our daily lives. In our collective pursuit of sanctity, let us invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, seeking her guidance and maternal protection. As we navigate the challenges of our earthly pilgrimage, may her immaculate example be a source of strength, solace, and inspiration.

Dear Fathers and Brothers, I extend my sincere gratitude for your steadfast commitment to our shared mission. May the Feast of the Immaculate Conception serve as a profound catalyst for spiritual renewal and deepen our communal bond as we journey together in the service of our Lord.

*Wishing each of you a blessed and joyous Feast of the Immaculate Conception.*

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI  
Prior General

