

**From the annals of history ...**



## **Verapoly: A Hallowed Legacy and a Common Patrimony**

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**T**hinking of Verapoly one is reminded of John F. Kennedy's much celebrated "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech delivered on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1963 from a platform put up on the steps of Rathaus Schoneberg in the then West Berlin<sup>1</sup>. The US president was condemning the Berlin wall erected by the Soviet - supported East Germany and extolling the indomitable spirit of resistance and freedom exemplified by the Berliners.

The charismatic young leader in matching eloquence hailed the citizens of Berlin, especially those in the besieged Western Part, as symbols of freedom. All free men wherever they live, all those who value and work for freedom, are citizens of Berlin - he said, and thundered in

chaste German; "Ich-bin ein Berliner", meaning I am a Berliner. The reaction from the 450,000 strong crowd was rapturous and ecstatic.

Such is the state and status of the Archdiocese of Verapoly (Varapuzha in the local language Malayalam) in history. Similar is the sentiment it evokes, though in a different way in a different context. Every Catholic in the Southern Indian State of Kerala, the cradle and citadel of Christianity in India<sup>2</sup>, can proudly and legitimately say: "I am a Verapolitan". The hallowed legacy of Verapoly is a common patrimony of every Catholic irrespective of Rites, in this part of India. Even non-Catholics and non-Christians find place in large measure in its long and

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chequered history which is not just ecclesiastical but multi dimensional.

The origin of Christianity in India, especially South India, is still a contentious issue among scholars<sup>3</sup>. Tradition ascribes the dawn of Christian faith in India to the ministry and martyrdom of St. Thomas, the Apostle. Mention also must be made of a tradition linking another Apostle to India - St. Bertholomeo. However, there is absolutely no dispute regarding the antiquity of Indian Christianity<sup>4</sup>.

But Catholicism as we understand and cherish now, was a much late entrant. It was introduced to this land by Latin Missionaries who started visiting Malabar (now called Kerala) from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century onwards<sup>5</sup>. We find three milestones in the formative path of Catholicism's chequered history here. 1) The establishment of the diocese of Quilon<sup>6</sup> on 9 August 1329. 2) The establishment of the diocese of Cochin<sup>7</sup> on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1557. 3) The establishment of Vicariate of Malabar on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1659. A careful scrutiny in terms of continuity, reach, impact and accomplishments would clearly show the uniqueness of the Vicariate of Malabar, which was renamed as the Vicariate of Verapoly on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1709 and eventually elevated as a Archdiocese on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1886 with the establishment of the Hierarchy of India by Pope Leo XIII.

Various authors and ecclesiastical luminaries have reverentially acknowledged the great legacy of Verapoly, highlighting the maternal and prophetic roles that the divine providence did entrust to it at critical junctures both in the life of the Church and that of the multi cultural multi religious society at large.

Verapoly Mission was a Carmelite Mission that saved Catholicism from total eclipse or near extinction here in the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Both Syrians and the Latins were under its spiritual care for well over 228 years. It is called mother and progenitor of the Catholic dioceses in Kerala and even beyond<sup>8</sup>. The great seminaries of Kerala with their magnificent edifices bear witness to the pioneering initiatives of Verapoly

Mission in raising and promoting indigenous clergy<sup>9</sup>. Whether it is the Syrian Rite, Third Order Carmelites (Now called CMI) or the Latin Rite Third Order Carmelites (Now OCD) or the Third Order Carmelites of women (later CTC & CMC), the CSST congregation, the great indigenous religious congregations took birth in the Verapoly mission with its blessings encouragement and support<sup>10</sup>. True to its mission as custodian and propagator of Catholic faith in this part of India, it relentlessly and successfully fought against the onslaught of various schism<sup>11</sup>. The great contribution that Verapoly missionaries rendered to grammar and literature, even scientific literature will be ever remembered with gratitude<sup>12</sup>. Equally significant are their pioneering services in the fields of printing, publishing and media apostolate. Sathyanatakalam, the first Malayalam Newspaper to celebrate centenary was a Verapoly product. Deepika the oldest existing daily news paper had the blessings, support and financial assistance of the Vicar apostolic. Missionaries of Verapoly even used their erudition, scholarship and written works in international diplomacy and inter-religious dialogue much before even the first Vatican Council! *Hortus Malabaricus* is a classic example<sup>13</sup>. It was the prophetic and revolutionary pastoral letter issued in 1864 by one of the illustrious prelates of Verapoly one and a half century ago that ushered in the concept of free universal basic education in Kerala. No wonder, Archbishop Dr. Bernardine Baccinelli OCD who ordered each church to start a school at its side is gratefully hailed as the herald and father of universal education<sup>14</sup>. Annual retreats, 40 hour adoration, devotion months (in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our lady, St. Joseph etc.), Rosary, Scapular etc. were introduced and popularized by them. Contributions of Verapoly in nation-building and its openness to development and common good even at the cost of personal loss and sacrifice is another point that deserves special mention. The very first modern hospital in the private sector in the state was founded by a Carmelite medical doctor of Manjummel Province<sup>15</sup>. From the Catholic side, it was again the Manjummel Carmelites who first attempted Bible translation into Malayalam<sup>16</sup>.

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The Verapoly Synods are another rich patrimony that could be claimed by all<sup>17</sup>. Above all, the legacy of Verapoly is that of reconciliation, sacrifice and holiness. After all, Malabar Vicariate was established as a reconciliation mission. Coming to the legacy of sanctity, Kuriakose Elias Chavara who was Vicar General in charge of Syrian Rite faithful in Verapoly is already a declared Saint. There are three Venerables and four Servants of God too<sup>18</sup>.

I have just listed at random more than a dozen luminous salient facts and factors in the rich and varied, on going legacy of Verapoly. Each one deserves further explanation and comprehensive documentation for the benefit of posterity. Such an effort is certainly beyond scope of this article. But it is my earnest desire that the legacy of Verapoly is probed and studied in detail from various angles and several books of greater dimensions and scholarship come out of it.

However, this writer feels that it is his duty to treat in some detail at least a couple of points from the lengthy list that is already presented. Let me begin explaining the uniqueness of the Archdiocese of Verapoly. Any such study should begin from the Christian antiquity of Malabar. Because the roots of the Archdiocese of Verapoly and its people are found there<sup>19</sup>. Latinized early Christians, those converted from all castes of Hinduism, descendants of Europeans who married Keralites whom the Indian constitution name as Anglo Indians, form the present flock of the Archdiocese.

According to Grand Chev. Prof. L. M. Pylee the singular contribution and the greatest legacy of Verapoly is certainly faith - related. It was the Vicariate Apostolic of Malabar and its Carmelite missionary pioneers that saved the Catholic Church in Malabar from the gravest crisis it had ever to face - namely the revolt by majority of the Christians of the Syrian Rite, who took the infamous oath of the "Coonan Cross" and enacted the farcical "Consecration" of an "Archbishop" of their own. Eternal gratitude is thus due to the Vicariate for this great feat, but for which, there would have been no Catholic Church in Malabar worth the name. The legacy of credit for this

glorious achievement belongs to the Archdiocese of Verapoly in virtue of its continuity from the Malabar Vicariate, and has invested with a halo that is solely its own<sup>20</sup>.

Here is what Cardinal Joseph Parecattil has to say about it. "The advent of the Carmelite Missionaries in 1657 to heal the wound caused by the oath of 'Cooman Cross', the consecration of Fr. Sebastiani as Bishop, and the erection of the Vicariate of Malabar in 1659, the foundation of a minor seminary by the Carmelite Missionaries at Verapoly in 1682, its restoration and re-organization by the sacred congregation de Propaganda Fide in 1764, the transfer of the seminary to Puthanpalli in 1866 and its subsequent transfer to Mangalapuzha, Alwaye, in 1932, the establishment of the Vicariate of Verapoly in lieu of the Vicariate of Malabar in 1709, the elevation of the Vicariate of Verapoly to the status of Archdiocese in 1886, the transfer of its headquarters from Verapoly to Ernakulam in 1904 etc. are landmarks in the history of the Church in Kerala. The history of the Archdiocese of Verapoly is bound up directly or indirectly with the history of all the Christian denominations of Kerala, particularly of the two Catholic Oriental Churches, the Syro-Malabar and the Syro - Malankara. From 1659 to 1887 the Syro-Malabar Catholics were under the Jurisdiction of the ordinary of Verapoly just as the Latin Catholics of Ernakulam were parishioners of St. Mary's Syrian Church until 1821<sup>21</sup>."

The Cardinal, reputed for his openness and academic honesty, has boldly placed on record his Syro-Malabar Church's indebtedness to Roman (ie. Latin) Church in his book too. It must be said to his credit that he did this inspite of stiff internal opposition spearheaded by a faction in his Church. "But we should remember gratefully that it gave a new life to our Church in many ways. We need not hide the fact that the present youthful vitality and the international prestige of our Church are to some extent the outcome of our contact with the Western Church" - he says<sup>22</sup>.

Contributions of Verapoly in Nation-building are indeed unique, huge and far reaching. So much so, other agencies were inspired to follow the

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suit. Mention has already been made about Archbishop Bernardine Baccinelli paving the way for universal education - basic education for all - irrespective of religion, caste, creed and gender. One and a half century ago such a step was unthinkable!

Now let us have at least a peep at the recent initiatives. Cochin City is called the commercial capital of Kerala. It is evolving as the commercial and industrial hub of South India. This process began with the Cochin Shipyard, one of the India's *Nava Ratna Companies*. It is situated where once a five centuries old chapel and sprawling cemetery of one of the biggest parishes of Verapoly situated - Perumanur St. George Parish. Hundreds of parishioners had to move out too, surrendering their houses and land. The Varavukatt Chapel, though called a Chapel, was as big as a church and the cemetery was the final resting place of several generations. The issue was highly sentimental and volatile. Remember the *Babari Masjid* issue in Ayodya. You cannot touch a place of worship or a hallowed burial ground for whatever reason. But in the Archdiocese better sense prevailed and people were ready for sacrifice<sup>23</sup>. The shipyard became a reality. The port city of Cochin is hailed as the queen of Arabian Sea. It is also the headquarters to the Southern Naval Command. Be it for the port or the Navy or the Kochi-Metro that is nearing completion, no community has suffered or shown as much magnanimity towards common good as the Latin Catholics, mainly because they being the single largest community of the area.

The Venduruthy Parish founded in 1594 in the name of St. Peter and St. Paul is the Mother Church of Several Parishes. Perhaps it will be the only parish in India to suffer a double attack of eviction! In the 1930's it was after evicting several families of this parish Willington-island was created for the Cochin Port. Later after India's independence 99% of Parishioners had to move out for the navel headquarters. Saints Peter's and Paul's Church in Khattaribag now bears a deserted look.

The Archdiocese of Verapoly relocated several Churches and Chapels, some of them old as the

Apostolic Vicariate of Malabar, for widening roads. These include the Our Lady of Pompei Chapel in the Foreshore Road, St. Patrick's Church, Vyttila etc. The place where CMFRI now situates was once the play-ground of St. Albert's College. For Cochin University to come up the Archdiocese has contributed about 25 acres of prime land. For the Vallarpadom International Container Transshipment Terminal 316 families had to be evicted in 2008. Majority belonged to the Latin Catholic community. Sadly the Moolampilly Package is yet to be implemented. For new roads and new projects like Kochi-Metro, our sacrifice and contributions have been significant. The Christ the King CTC Convent at Ponnurunni had to surround 35 cents of land demolishing some of these buildings for road widening.

Verapoly's fight against casteism, untouchability, discrimination and such other evils too needs to be counted among its nation-building efforts. More than a century and quarter ago the depressed classes comprising of *Arayas*, *Valas* and *Pulayas* had their first joint meeting on a platform created by joining several country boats in the Cochin-*Kayal* (Backwaters) as no one would allow them a place to assemble as their presence would "pollute" the place<sup>24</sup>. But their next joint meeting was in St. Albert's School hall where a Pulaya poet named Kuttathara Chothi Chathan even recited a revolutionary poem penned by him. Cherai Ramadas places him on a high pedestal calling him Kerala's first Dalit poet and dramatist. Chathan later became a Catholic, taking the name Peter. He used to be called "*Nimisha Kavi Peter*" because of his ability to erupt in to instant poetry<sup>25</sup>. It is a pity that nothing much is known about him thereafter.

Of all the Archdioceses and dioceses of India numbering 172, only Verapoly had the rare fortune of having the presence of the successor of St. Peter in the person of Pope John Paul II, now Saint, and Mr. Gyani Sail Singh, the then President of India in the centenary celebrations of the elevation of Vicariate of Verapoly as Archdiocese of Verapoly - what a legacy! *Vera* means true and *polis* means city. Thus *Vera-poly* could mean the true city or indirectly the city of

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truth. It is indeed symbolic. This true city or the city of truth is a common legacy of all Catholics of Kerala. And Archbishop Joseph Kalathiparambil is now called to be the custodian of that great legacy.

From Sebastiani to Mellano 17 Vicar Apostolics and from Mellano to Francis Kallarakal 8 Metropolitans have ruled over Verapoly. Archbishop Joseph Kalathiparambil is the 9<sup>th</sup> one. One finds a trail of holiness, scholarship and fixation for common good in this saga of continuity. A brief survey of at least the Indian Archbishops is a must in an article like this.

Archbishop Joseph Attipetty is the first Indian prelate in the Latin Church of India. He was a visionary and true pastor in every sense. One of his singular achievements was visiting all families in the Archdiocese. No one before or no one after has done such a thing anywhere in India! He was consecrated in St. Peter's Basilica by Pope Pius XI on 11 June 1933, and took charge as Metropolitan on 21 December 1934. He began the historic family apostolate of visiting all homes in the Archdiocese on 28 March 1950 and completed it in about five years.

Archbishop Joseph Kelanthara is a record holder in terms of the degrees he had. These included those from secular and pontifical universities in a variety of subjects. He loved, trusted and encouraged the youth. No wonder KCYM had its birth in the Archdiocese. Archbishop Cornelius Elanjikal and Archbishop Daniel Acharuparambil were noted for their great knowledge in Hinduism. Archbishop Elanjikal was a poet and a Sanskrit Scholar, whose doctoral thesis was on "The concept of God in the two earliest Upanishads - Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya". We find a blend of East and West in his poems, most of which are sung as hymns. In one such popular hymn he calls Jesus as the "Core of Vedanta". Archbishop Acharuparambil won gold medal for MA in Indian Philosophy from the Benaras Hindu University. His doctoral thesis was on "The destiny of man in the Evolutionary thought of Sri Aurobindo". This, much sought after academic and author has taught in half a dozen European Universities. He was the first

Non-European *Rector Magnificus* (Vice Chancellor) of Rome's Urban University, a position he held twice. No wonder, greatest thrust was given to Education during his tenure as Archbishop of Verapoly. Archbishop Emeritus Francis Kallarakal will be mainly remembered for convoking the first synod of Verapoly in modern times. It was indeed an audacious and epoch-making event. And, now here we have Archbishop Joseph Kalathiparambil as our new Metropolitan. Anyone who sees him is reminded of Pope Francis in his down to earth simplicity, in his jovial cordiality, vision and mission. The "Francis touch" has already started to permeate in the style and structures of the Archdiocese. Great joyful going indeed!

### End Notes

1. The Berlin wall came up on August 13, 1961. At the climax of popular uprising this symbol of enslavement and repression was demolished on November 9, 1989. Thousands of East Germans crossed over to the West and in a few years German unification became a reality. In fact the fall of Soviet Communist empire began in Poland with the election of Cardinal Carol Wojtila as Pope John Paul II in 1978.
2. Catholics in India are divided into Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Rites, the last two being *sui juris* oriental Rites claiming their origin from the ministry of Apostle St. Thomas. Syro-Malabar Catholics number about 4.5 million, the Roman or Latin Rite Catholics are about 1.5 crore (about 2 million in Kerala) and the Syro-Malankara Catholics are about half a million.
3. Pope Benedict XVI, addressing the faithful during the Wednesday Catechesis, on September 27, 2006, recalled that St. Thomas first evangelized Syria and Persia and then went on to western India, from where Christianity reached Southern India. The import of the statement was that St. Thomas never travelled to South India, but rather evangelized the western front, mostly comprising today's Pakistan. There were loud protests through the English edition of Sathyadeepam weekly against

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- this position. It was later claimed by the weekly that the Pope “corrected” his statement.
4. The earliest authentic witness of the existence of Christianity in Malabar (Kerala) is that of Cosmas Indicoplesthus who travelled to the East between 520-525 AD. He also testifies Malabar Church's Persian connection.
  5. Ignatius Gonsalves, *Footprints and Milestones*, Ernakulam, 2007, Page 5.
  6. *Ibid* Page 6. Quilon was the very first diocese established by Rome in India. Pope John XXII was in captivity in Avignon where he issued the decree “Romanus Pontifex” on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1329 establishing the diocese of Columbanue (Quilon). By a separate bull “Venerabili fratri Jordano” on 21 August 1329 he appointed Jordaonyo Catalani of Severac, a French Dominican as its first bishop. Bishop Catalani was no stranger to Quilon which was a major port and Christian stronghold then. He had labored there for quite sometime since 1320 as a zealous missionary. As bishop he came to Quilon in 1330. Bishop Jordanus was martyred by Muslim fanatics in 1336, while on a pastoral visit to Thane (Maharashtra). Slowly Quilon diocese faded away from history, re-emerging much later as a Vicariate in 1845 when the Vicariate of Verapoly was divided to create the Vicariates of Quilon and Manglore.
  7. *Ibid*. Cochin was the head quarters of Portuguese establishments in India for many years from 1500. During this period it was the head quarters of the Padruado Mission also. Several religious congregations like the Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Augustinian etc. labored tirelessly both among the early Christians (often called as St. Thomas Christians) and the non-Christian population. Many thousands were brought anew to the liberative light of the Good News. Not fewer than 30000 early Christians were restored to Catholicism and to the union of the Holy See. In recognition of all these. Pope Paul IV established the diocese of Cochin on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1557 by the decree “Pro Excellents Prae Eminentia”. Cochin was the second existing Catholic dioceses of India then, after the Archdiocese of Goa. By the decree “Pastoralis officio” dated 15.12.1572 of Pope Gregory XIII, the Bishops of Cochin were required to take possession of the Patriarchal See of Goa when it became vacant. All the Catholic Charity Ministries known today, had their origin in the Padruado diocese of Cochin. Orphanages, leper Assylums, Hospitals, Jail ministry- to name a few. Padruado mission established India's first printing presses in Goa, Quilon, Cochin, Palliport (Vypeekotta), Chenndamangalam, Sampaloor (Ambazhakkad), thus launching Catholic Church's social communication ministry in these parts of India. All these were vigorously pursued later by the Propaganda Mission with Verapoly as its Headquarters. Due to compelling reasons on 13 March 1709 Pope Clement XI took the bold step of extending the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Malabar to the Archdiocese of Cranganore and the diocese of Cochin. We again see Cochin being included in the Vicariate in 1839 and revived again in 1886.
  8. The diocese of Manglore in Karnataka has filial and the diocese of Kottar in Tamilnadu has semi-filial relationship with Verapoly.
  9. Inaugurating the Carmelgiri St. Joseph Pontifical Seminary as the Philosophy Section of the undivided Mangalapuzha St Joseph Pontifical Seminary, the then pro Nuncio to India Archbishop Martin Lucas SVD said on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1955. “Imagine that the Discalced Carmelites (Read Verapoly missionaries) did not do any service here in this land. Imagine that they only founded those two majestic magnificent seminaries. Even then the Church in India will never forget them. They will be ever remembered with gratitude just because of these seminaries. (Ignatius Gonsalves, Mangalapuzha Seminariyude kadha, Kerala Times Press, Ernakulam, 1996, P.3)
  10. TOCD Syrian branch was founded in 1831 at Mannanam. TOCD Latin branch was founded in 1857 at Koonammavu. TOCD

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women's wing too was founded at Koonammavu in 1866. CSST, another congregation for women was founded in 1887 at Ernakulam. In the beginning TOCD Syrian branch had a few Latins too. Even among the founders there was a Latin priest named Pascal Baylon. It was thus a multi-ritual initiative, though it eventually became exclusively Syrian.

11. In what is called the "Oath at the slanting Cross (Coonan Kurishu)" on 3rd January 1653, good majority of the so called St. Thomas Christians or Syrian Christians revolted and seceded from Rome. Though the revolt is often diplomatically described by the Catholic side as one against the Jesuits and the Jesuit Archbishop of Francis Garcia S.J., it was in fact and essence against the Holy See of Rome. The non Catholic Churches of Kerala mainly the Jacobite Malankara Church, the Indian Orthodox Malankara Church and the Marthoma Church vehemently maintain that the revolt was against the Pope and the See of Rome.  
Reconciling the break away faction and restoring them to the Holy See was the reason and mandate for the establishment of the Vicariate of Malabar in which they succeeded significantly. By 1661, Joseph Sebastiani, the Vicar Apostolic, and his team of Carmelite missionaries could bring back 84 churches. Only 32 churches remained loyal with the Schismatic Archdeacon. But tranquility and rest were a distant dream for the Verapoly Mission. Schisms and revolts followed one after another. Indo-Lucitarum schism, Roccose Schism, Melus Schism- to name a few.
12. In his book titled "Missionairmarude Sahithya Sevanangal" (Services of Missionaries in the field of Literature), L.F. Press Manjummel, 1986, Fr. John Francis Pallath OCD briefly presents 32 missionaries of Verapoly, mentioning around 290 of their works. He also lists out 17 works whose authors are unknown. These books just say. "Written by a missionary". That means each missionary mentioned by him at an average did author

more than a dozen books! Bishop Anjelo Francis who presented Malayalam language its maiden Grammer book, Hortus Malabaricus fame Botanist Fr. Mathew of St. Joseph, Fr. Clement Piyanius who compiled the 'Samshepa Vedartham' something like the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the multi talent prolific writer Fr. Paulinose a Sancta Berthalemeo who was equally the competent in pross and verse, deserve special mention.

13. Hortus Malabaricus is a historic work for more than one reason. This multi-volume botanical work was instrumental in the continuity for Catholic Mission in Malabar. In the year 1663 the Dutch Conquered Cochin. It was both a Political and religious Conquest. Being Fanatic Calvinists they ordered all Catholic Missionaries out, including the Vicar Apostolic. Interestingly it was Hortus Malabaricus that enabled the Verapoly Missionaries re-enter Dutch Territory. It is indeed a stamy of providence and innovation. Fr. Mathew of St. Joseph and the Dutch Governor Henrique Adrian Van Rheed Shared a common interest - Botany. Fr. Mathew made use of it to be friend Van Rheed. The missionary had already prepared a small book called Virudarium Orientale which he called in Malayalam "Keralaramam" (The Kerala Garden), the manuscript of which he dedicated to the Governor as a mark of esteem and friendship. Governor Van Rheed showed keen interest in turning it in to a comprehensive multi-volume work. Fr. Mathew enlisted the services of three Vydyas (traditional Ayurvedic Physician), Carneiro an Anglo-Indian and a few others. Two of the Vydyas namely Appu Bhatt and Vinayaka Pandithar were Gauda Saraswath Brahmins and the third one was Itty Achuthan, an Ezhava, an 'untouchable' those days. Thus began a mega project that was international, inter religious, inter Caste, inter racial and ecumenical. Hortus Malabaricus was published in Amsterdam in 12 volumes from 1678 to 1703 with Van

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Rheed as 'author'. It was evidently an ad honorem act, though Fr. Mathew was the Principal force behind this great work. It was through the friendly influence of Fr. Mathew, Governor Van Rheed granted permission in 1678 to erect a house and a Church at Chathyath. In the same year another Church was built with his permission in the island of Verapoly, The headquarters of the Carmelite Mission in Malabar. Thus one finds a Providential free play of international collaboration, diplomacy, ecumenism and dialogue in that mega academic initiative. What a great legacy to cherish and foster! Scientists like Fr. Mathew do have successors in the modern times too in the Archdiocese of Verapoly. Konnully theorem fame Rev. Dr. Augustine Konnully and celebrated Botanist Rev. Dr. Antony Mukkath are noted names among them.

14. To commemorate the sesquicentenary of Archbishop Bernadine Baccinelli's "A school a must, along with each church" Pastoral letter KRLCC (Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council), the apex body for Co-Ordination and Policy formation for the Latin Church in Kerala, has established the "Baccinelli Best Teacher Award" comprising a cash prize of 1,00,000/-, memento and citation. Beginning from 2015, two teachers have been awarded already. Kerala is a role model state as far as education and empowerment are concerned. Thanks to the efforts of Archbishop Baccinelli and the missionaries.

But it is quite unfortunate that we have not been able to find out the original of the pastoral letter. But Baccinelli's own reference to it in a later circular is available. Immediate successor Archbishop Leonard Mellano's Pastoral Letters referring to Baccinelli's pastoral letter are also available.

15. Manjummel St. Joseph Hospital founded by Br. Dr. Nicholas Verovan OCD, was inaugurated on 19 March 1888, feast day of St. Joseph, by British Resident Dr. J.C. Hunnington. There were Maharajas and Ranies among his Patrons and Patients. But his heart and soul were always with the

poor.

16. The Manjummel Bible is a proud legacy of Verapoly as that of OCD congregation. Fr. Luis Vypissery, Fr. Micheal Puthenparambil and Fr. Policarp Kadeparambil translated the four Gospels and the Acts from the Latin Vulgate and published it in 1905 with a forward by Archbishop Bernard Arguinsonis OCD. Thanslation was simple and lucid, Commentary was authentic and exhaustive. Almost every page had comments and foot notes. Pastoral Orientation Cetnre of the Kerala Catholic Bishop's Council had published the translation of New Testament in full in 1977. It had 397 pages. But the Manummel Bible minus the Revelation had 475 pages! POC's complete Bible in Malayalam saw light in 1982. But in its preface Mannanam Bible (1935) was projected as the first Catholic effort in Bible translation here. This was seen as yet another attempt to "create" history by vested interests. When the mistake was pointed out, POC willingly corrected it in the 2008 edition, with an assurance that the correction will be maintained in future editions.

17. Archbishop Leonard Mellano OCD, the first Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Verapoly holds a records of sorts for Convoking four synods within a span of six years between 1889 and 1896. One of these was a Provincial Synod in which the newly formed vicariates of the Syrian rite Catholics also took part as they were juridically still under the Archdiocese of Verapoly. The Syrian hierarchy was established only in 1923.

The Acts and the spirit of these synods ushered the Church in Kerala to modernity and contributed significantly to its faith formation and spiritual vitality. Mellano's last synod was held on 15 and 16 December 1896. It was after 119 years the Archdiocese saw yet another synod. Convened by Archbishop Francis Kallarakal as a follow up of the 125th Anniversary of the elevation of the Vicariate of Verapoly to an Archdiocese it was held in 2015 Apri l8 to 12.

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18. Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara was Vicar General in Charge of the Syrian Rite Catholics in the Vicariate of Verapoly. There are three Venerables and four Servants of God in the Process of Canonization. The Venarables are Fr. Aurelian OCD, Fr. Zakharias OCD and Fr. John Vincent OCD. The Servants of God are Mother Eliswa Vakayil the foundress of TOCD for women and Kerala's first Consecrated Woman, Fr. George Vakayil, Fr. Theophin OFM Cap and Mother Teresa of St. Rose of Lima - foundress of the CSST Congregation for Women.
19. Archbishop Joseph Kelanthara in the Centenary Souvenir of the Archdiocese, I S Press, 1986, Page 1.
20. L.M. Pylee, St. Thomas Christians and the Archdiocese of Verapoly, IS Press Ernakulam, 1977, Pages 19, 20.
21. Message of felicitation to the Archdiocesan centenary Souvenir
22. Cardinal Parecattil, Liturgy as I see it, Ernakulam 1987, Page 4. This work he wrote first in Malayalam and Chev. Prof. K.C. Chacko translated it in to English where the translator has attempted to tone down the Cardinal's words and feelings. For example in the Malayalam original the Cardinal asks this question evaluating the impact and contributions of the Padruado Mission: "If the Portuguese had not then ousted the Chaldeans decapitating them, one does not know what would have been the state of the Syro-Malabar Church" (Malayalam, Page 18). Now look at Prof. Chacko's translation: "One can only wonder where we would have been if the Chaldeans were not forced out by the Portuguese at that time" (English, Paper 8).
23. The area was found suitable for the shipyard in the early 1960's. Land acquisition began soon after. Archbishop Joseph Attipetty was the Metropolitan then. He advised his flock to show their love for the nation and it's progress. The saintly pastor's words had a soothing effect. People began surrendering their land and homes accepting "Peanut compensation" that existed then. It was at a later stage it was revealed that the Chapel and cemetery too will have to be vacated and demolished as the project was too huge. If Kerala's Cochin is not willing to avail the necessary amount of land at suitable place, other States were more than willing to welcome the major project. Kerala wanted the shipyard at any cost and *Varavukatt* Chapel and cemetery became a serious law and order problem. People were not just ready leave them! Archbishop Attipetty passed away in 1970 and almost two years later Joseph Kelanthra was anointed as Archbishop of Verapoly. Msgr. Alexander Vadakkumthala was the Vicar of Perumanur Church. Both were out and out nationalists for whom the interests of the community were also paramount! Msgr. Vadakkumthala was instructed with the task to see that Cochin Shipyard becomes a reality. Msgr. Vadakkumthala had to devote all this pastoral and diplomatic skills to work out a formula with the civil authorities and to get it approved by the affected people. Finally the cemetery was literally relocated to a new place and a church built instead of a chapel. Transfer of the mortal remains began grave by grave, on 27 January 1972 and completed on 2 April that year. The story of Thumba VSSC is a similar one where the parishioners of Mary Magdeline Church (Trivadrum Latin Archdiocese) moved out to herald India's ascent to space. But Parish Church is still there, preserved as a museum.
24. Ignatius Gonsalves, The contribution of Verapoly Archdiocese in the building of Cochin Cosmopolitan Metro City (Malayalam), Paper presented in the seminar commemorating the centenary of the change of headquarters to Ernakulam, Nov. 20, 2004, Page 36. Social reformer Pandit Karuppan has referred to the *Kayal* meeting and the meetings held at St. Albert's School in his autobiography.
25. Ibid; Pages 37 - 39

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