PREFACE

The doctoral treatise "A History of the Diocese of Kottar" focuses its attention on the predominant Latin diocese of Kottar of Kanyakumari district. The history of the diocese of Kottar could be understood only through a systematic and scientific analysis of various documents, texts, journals and files of this religious institution. It is the fact that the Latin Catholics of Tranvancore are the old christianfolk and Kottar has been a centre of catholic activities in the Kanyakumari region. An Attempt is made to glean the early history of the diocese. This study pays importance to the catholic community of this district, its relationship with Verapoly, Cochin, Quilon and Madurai, the Malayalam and Tamil dominant bishoprics where Kottar was a part.

It is interesting to note how the people of Kanyakumari region were converted into the catholic faith by the early Papal missionaries. The Jesuit missionary St. Francis Xavier and his followers who arrived India, converted many people into the christian faith. Also it highlights the missionary services of the Italian, Belgian, French, Danish, American and Indian missionaries who had been serving the early catholics of this region. The missionary work of these congregations and their involvement marked the beginning of an era of social, religious, cultural progress. This dissertation interprets how the fossilized customs and practices of the early christian community of this region was brought by these dedicated missionaries.

The study of the history of the diocese of Kottar is original which is largely based on primary data including inscriptive, archival, manuscriptal, monumental and epistlery evidences. Data have been collected from the Catholic Centre Library, New Delhi, the Diocesan Archives, Kottar, the letters of the Pontiffs, circular letters of the
bishops, reports, minutes and notes of various ecclesiastical, charitable, educational institutions, University Library, Madras, Cannemara Public Library, Chennai, Kerala University and Public Library, Thiruvananthapuram, the Diocesan Library, Kottar Nagercoil, Nesamony Memorial Christian College Library, Marthandam and St.Jude’s College Library, Thoothoor. These archives and libraries have furnished relevant information to complete the work. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all the staff of these archives, libraries and book societies for their immense help rendered to me to enhance the originality and identity of this study.

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S.P. Joseph Singh