ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The direct and indirect assistance of many has contributed enormously towards the realization of this dissertation. I treasure the proficient guidance, the prompt availability and the graceful cordiality of Dr. Antony Kariyil, my research guide. Despite his extremely demanding academic and ecclesiastical responsibilities, this study was always a priority to him. The admirable scholarship, the vast research experience, and the accommodating generosity of Dr. George Koilparampil was my mainstay throughout the course of my research. The keen interest and scholarly presence of the respected members of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery proved a perennial source of encouragement: I gratefully place on record the valuable and timely assistance of Fr. Jose Alex, the director; Dr. Joseph I. Injodey, the principal; Dr. Mary Joseph, the Head of the Department of Social Works; Dr. Varghese K. Varghese; Dr. Celine Sunny; and Dr. Jose Kuriedath. Prof. Ramachandran, Institute for Community Organization Research, Mumbai was a source of frequent reference and clarification.

My thanks are due to Dr. Dominic Veliath and Dr. Thomas Panakezham of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore for their thorough scrutiny of the text; to Dr. M. Kannan of Madurai School of Social Works for the data analysis; to the library and college office staff of Rajagiri College; and to the library authorities of the several illustrious academic institutions spread throughout the country - such as Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; Institute for Social & Economic Change, Bangalore - that I had recourse to.
The generous co-operation of the respondents, both the priests and the laity, particularly of the six parishes wherein the researcher carried out the field work made the arduous task of the empirical study easier and enriching. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mahatma Gandhi University authorities for granting me the University Junior Research Fellowship. I am grateful to the members and authorities of Don Bosco Society for facilitating in every way the pursuit of this doctoral programme. Lastly I bow my head in homage to the Indweller who creates and incessantly sustains the whole creation.

Thomas K.O.
Research Scholar