CHAPTER -1

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATIN CATHOLICS IN KERALA

The Origin of Christianity in Kerala is based on St. Thomas tradition. It is believed that St. Thomas an apostle of Jesus Christ came to India and evangelized the land. He is considered to be an important witness to the resurrection of Christ. When he first arrived at the North-Western part of India by the overland route there was a king by name Gondopharnes. According to the numismatic and inscriptional sources it is believed that Gondopharnes reigned in the first half of the first century around 52 A.D.

After St. Thomas, many missionaries came at different periods, the object being dissemination of the Gospel. For instance, Pantaneus was one of the earliest missionary who came to India by

A.D.190. According to Eusebius, the early church historian Pantaneus went to India, where he found some Christians possessing the Gospel of St. Mathew in Hebrew. In the opinion of some writers, the Christian community in India sent a message to Demetrinus, the Bishop of Alexandria, requesting him to send them a person with sufficient learning in order to expound to them properly the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Demetrinus thus sent Pantaneus, a celebrated philosopher of Alexandria, in response to the request of Indian Christians.

‘Thomas of Cana’ was a very notable figure who came to Kerala in A.D.345 for missionary work. He tried to give strength and vitality to the church founded by St. Thomas, which was at the point of ruin and degeneration. There is a legendary story behind the

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2 Eusebius of Caesarea (ˈjuːsiəbiəs; Greek: Εὐσέβιος, Eusébios; AD 260/265 – 339/340), also known as Eusebius Pamphili, was a Roman historian, exegete, and Christian polemicist of Greek descent.


arrival of Thomas, which runs as follows: For a long time the Malabar Christians had no proper leader. This sad plight was seen by the Metropolitan of Edessa in a vision. He narrated this vision to the Catholics (major Archbishop) of the East. The Catholics ordered as certain Thomas of Jerusalem to visit Malabar. Tradition has it that Thomas of Cana came to Malabar with a group of Chaldean Christian in the 4th century A.D. He brought a colony of four hundred Christian from Bagdad, Nineveh and Jerusalem to Cranganore. Among them, there were several priests and a deacons and Bishop named Joseph.

Thomas of Cana was instrumental in bringing the Chaldean church in to direct contact with the Christians of India. The Jesuit Mascarenes tells us that it was consequent on the arrival of Thomas of Cana that the Christians of Malabar accepted the rites and ceremonies of

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Syrian church because Thomas always managed to get the Syrian Bishops for Malabar where they were held in high esteem.\textsuperscript{6}

However there is no historical evidence to support this migration except tradition. Their descendants are mostly seen in Central Kerala, especially in the districts of Kottayam, Idukki and Ernakulam. They have adopted the Indian style of living and identified themselves with the rest of the Indian community in manner of language, culture and other life style. They are known as “Knanaya Christians”.\textsuperscript{7}

One of the interesting traditional beliefs is that, Thomas of Cana and his followers lived on the southern side of Cranganore. The local Christians (Northists) lived on the northern side. The theory that one group (the Northists) originated from the missionary activities of St. Thomas and the other (The Southists) from Thomas

\textsuperscript{7} F.Hanbye, Some Eastern Evidences, Madras, 1863, p.47.
of Cana appeared to the majority of the Portuguese as most acceptable. The community always has considered their origin to be from Thomas of Cana. Because of the persecution of Sapor II the Sassanid king of Persia (A.D. 339-379) they left their native land and came to Kerala where they were received warmly. The significance of Thomas of Cana’s arrival is stressed by K.M. Panikar as follows:

“A Syrian merchant by the name of Thomas of Cana visited Malabar in the 4th Century and established a community” which though, confined to Malabar has given to Christianity its indigenous authority, which at least is not later than that of St. Augustine in England.

Latin Christianity is the same as Roman Christianity or Papal Christianity. The establishment of Latin Christianity in the

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9 K.M. Panikar, India Charithravalokanam (mal), Kottayam, 1957, p.35.
east was no less a foreign conquest. It was not the conversion of the
Greek Church to the Creed, the usages, the ritual, the papal
supremacy of the west; it was the foundation, the super induction of
a new church, alien in language, in rites, in its clergy, which
violently dispossessed the Greeks of their Churches and Monasteries
and appropriated them to its own uses.\textsuperscript{11}

In the Latin Church the priest is the universal lord of the
universal human conscience. It was held that none is as insolent as
a Lowman suddenly raised to power and so no unfree man could be
admitted to the Holy orders. If the Bishop would ordain a slave,
emancipated before the whole Church and the people.\textsuperscript{14}

The words schism, heresy excommunication, etc. will be
found in this work. It is essential here to explain the significance of

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid; Vol. V, p. 349.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid; Vol. IX, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid; Vol. VIII, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid; Vol. III, p. 118.
these terms as the Latin Church meant it. Heretic is a wild beast, to
be remorselessly slain wherever he is found, and excommunication
from the Christian Church implied outlawry from Christian society
and the heretic forfeited not only all Dignitaries, Rights, Privileges,
Communities, but also all property, all protection of law; he was to
be pursued, despoiled, put to death either by ordinary courses of
justice or if he dared to resist, by any means whatever. In every
schism the Pope who maintained the loftiest churchmanship had
eventually gained the superiority.

Latin Christianity believes in the world of Angles and
Devils. Angelic apparitions were rare and infrequent in comparison
with the demoniacal possessions, the demoniacal temptations and
interferences. Angelology was but dim and indistinct to the dreadful

16 Ibid; pp. 171-172.
ever present demonology. Serpent was the symbol under which the devil (Satan), was represented. Closely connected with these demoniac influences was the belief in magic, witchcraft, spells, talismans and conjurations. These were all the actual delusions or operations or obedient or assistant evil spirits.

Confined to Malabar has given to Christianity its indigenous authority. St. Augustine in England. From the beginning onwards there were cordial and healthy relation between the Persian (Babylonian) Church and St. Thomas Christians in Malabar. This relation started more or less with the arrival of Thomas of Cana. In A.D.354, Malabar was visited by Theophilus, a native of Maldives Islands of the west coast of India, He was consecrated by an African Bishop by A.D 350. During this time, the Indian church maintained

17 Ibid; Vol. IX, pp.57-64.
18 Ibid; pp.69-70.
friendly relations with Edessa and with Seleucia Ctesiphon on account of their almost common origin.

Accordingly Clergy went to Persia for Ecclesiastical training and Syriac was the liturgical language imposed upon them by the Persian Church. However reliable historical evidences are practically nil, to the understanding of the period when Indian Church was brought under Nestorian leadership and control. But it is certain that by A.D.530, it had been absorbed by the Persian church. By the last quarter of the 5th century Nestorian missionaries were making strenuous efforts to capture Indian church to their doctrines.

Cosmos Indicopleustes, an Alexandrian traveler, visited India between AD525 and 550. He has written about the conditions of the Christian church in Kerala. “In the Island of Taparboane (Ceylon) in the inner India where the Indian sea is, there is a church of Christians with clergy and a congregation of believers. And such
also is the case in the land called male (Malabar) where the pepper grows”\textsuperscript{20}. The first clear historical reference to the church in south India is found in a passage of Indicopleustes\textsuperscript{21}.

Pope Benedict XV said “The church is not Latin or Greek, it is Catholic Documinical, and catholicity includes everything that is not in any way sinful or in any way erroneous” One of the most common misunderstandings about the catholic church is that it is uniform in all respects throughout the world.

Latin Christianity is the same as Roman Christianity or papal Christianity\textsuperscript{22}. In the Latin Church the priest is the universal Lord of the universal human conscience. It was held that none is as insolent as a Lowman suddenly raised to power and so no unfree man could be admitted to the holy. If the Bishop would ordain a slave, he

\begin{footnotes}
\item[21] Ibid; p.30.
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must first be emancipated before the whole Church and the people, this was the reason why in the Latin Church in Kerala there was bitter dispute regarding the admission of candidates from fisherman community to the seminaries. Moreover, in the diocese of Vijayapuram which has more than 40,000 converts from Scheduled Castes and Tribes, there were separate churches for them and they were not admitted to the seminaries. However, it was admitted in the Latin Church that the few who assumed the sacred office with high and pure and perfectly religious views had become comparatively fewer.

The Church believed that there were two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Both are in the power of the church, the spiritual, to be used by the Church, the other, the material, for The Church Bull Unam Sanctam. The words schism, heresy,

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23 Ibid; Vol. III, p.118.
excommunication, etc. will be found in this work. It is essential here to explain the significance of these terms as the Latin Church meant it.

LATIN CATHOLICISM IN KERALA

Latin Catholicism had its origin in Kerala in 1291 A.D. when John of Monte Carvino, while staying in the Malabar Coast, baptized a number of people into the Catholic faith. In 1291 John Monte Carvino also visited Quilon on the way to China and preached about God and Jesus Christ. Marco polo in 1292 also declared about the story of Christian group under Quilon diocese. Quilon diocese was the first Latin Catholic community formed in Kerala in India.

The origin of Latin Christianity in Kerala should be understood against this background. The division of traditional

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26 Annual Letter for the year 1600 for Quilon and Travancore to the Jesuits, p.5.
Kerala Christians as ‘Syrians’ and ‘Latins’ only indicate the liturgical attachment of these communities. The stigmas attached to different sects of Kerala Christians are due to the racial mixture and the consciousness of Caste complex filtered through the traditional society of Malabar. A group of Kerala Christians were deliberately called ‘Syrians’ for the first time by the Calvinistic Dutch Governor, Adrian Moens, in the 18th Century to promote sectarianism among Kerala Christians and to divide the Catholics permanently. Until the 18th century, Kerala Christianity were invariably called Christians of the Serra (mountain, i.e., Malankara) or Nascarini (Nasrani) or Tarsa or Nestoriani and locally Mappilas. The Latin Christians of Central Kerala were called Latheen Mappilas. As already been pointed out, the early medieval Christians were only ‘Christians’ by name and they worshipped the Lord in Syriac language and which was imposed upon them by Syrian colonists and Nestorian ecclesiastical

27Jesuit Annual Letter from Cochin dated 3rd January, Cochin, 1572, p.4.
authorities. The Syriacization of Kerala Church was ofcourse peaceful and without resistance because there was neither any attempt of convection nor there was any royal patronage from the Syrian rulers to promote evangelization.

The origin and development of the Latin Catholics in Kerala in the 13th century was vigorous because of the support and encouragement from Rome so as to bring the Nestorian Christians in the Catholic fold. Latin Christianity is as old as the Church of Christ itself, though in the beginning, naturally, it was Judeo-Christian in character. The theological synthesis of Catholic Church emerged in the Latin environment and crystallized by the second century with the earnest effort of Tertullian. But this Christianity, which is called the Roman Catholic Church, came to the East only in the 13th Century. “The pilgrim society of Christ established by Pope Innocent

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IV (1243-1254) Who realized the urgency of evangelization of the East, sent the first Catholic missionary John of Monte Carvino, a Franciscan friar, who visited Quilon in 1291 and stayed for 13 months in south India, on his way to China and the Far East. Fr. Monte Carvino and his associate converted a good number of people at Quilon and catholicized Tarsa Christians whom he met there. This was the beginning of the Latin Christianity in India. The Latin Church is simply the vast portion of the Catholic body which obeys and submits to the Roman pontiff. It is thus distinguished from the Eastern Churches which represented the patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. The Roman patriarchate is distinguished from these Surianies Churches not only by the use of the liturgies but also by customs, practices and canon.

30 Ibid; p.41.
31 Ibid p.25
law distinct from those of Eastern Churches and these provided them with a separate identity.

The activities of the ‘Pilgrim Society for Christ’ increased and became organized at Quilon, when Pope John XXII constituted Quilon as an Episcopal see by a Bull ‘Ad Per Pertuam Rei Memoriam’ dated 9th August, 1329. The Dominican Friar Jordan Catalani of Severac (France) was appointed as the first Latin Catholic Bishop of Kerala. In his Magnum opus entitled Mirabilea Descripta, Friar Jordan describes himself as Oriundum De Sevaraco, in India Majori Episcopum Columbenseni, i.e. hailing from severac, Bishop of Quilon in the great India. Friar Jordan was zealous missionary who brought a good number of people in the field of Catholic Church in Travancore, Malabar, Karnataka and Thana with the help of Dominican Missionaries before his ascendancy to

episcopacy. These early converts to Catholicism were mainly Nestorians who followed the law of St. Thomas. In his letter appointing him bishop of Quilon, the Pope said, “John servant of God, to our venerable friar Jordan Catalani, Bishop of Quilon, greetings, considering that you, priest and professed of the order of Friar preachers, learned in the science of theology, have personally known of the state and situation of the people in the course of your preaching to them the divine word and that you have won the souls of many faithful to our Lord Jesus, for whom the Zeal for the holy faith is a proof of sanctity. We have in consequence, caused to be given to you episcopal consecration, by the hand of our venerable Brother Bertrand, Bishop of Tusculum. Wherefore, by these present apostolic letters, we order your fraternity that your repair to your church with the grace of our benediction” 34. Thus Quilon became the earliest Bishop of Latin Rite and first Diocese of the Holy See of

34  Ibid; p.99.
Roman Catholic Church in India. Bishop Jordan took his pallium to his metropolitan, the Archbishop of Sultania, John of Cara. He carried Papal letters among others to the kings of Delhi and Quilon and also to the chief of Nestorian Christians of Kerala.

Before setting out on his mission the new Bishop went to Toulouse where a General chapter of the order had met in 1328 at the request of the Pope John XXII, and at which a hundred fathers had offered themselves for mission work among the Christian Schismatic and non-Christians of Kerala. Bishop Jordan sent several of them to the Nestorian centers of Malabar and Konkan coast and converted many people to the catholic faith. As Bishop, Friar Jordan reached Quilon in 1330. In a report he states that with his companions, the

36 Ibid; p.35.
37 Ibid; p.16.
Franciscans and Dominicans, he has won over to catholic faith ten thousand schematics (these must be St. Thomas Christians) and unbelievers. The St. George Cathedral established by Friar Jordan at Quilon became his seat and center of missionary activities. The prelate was in his see for some years and there is no justification for the allusion that he never reached Quilon as the episcopal head of his diocese. That his labour among the Nestorians of Quilon was successful is proved by the fact that they received the papal Legate John de Marignolli with great enthusiasm and veneration after a few years. Bishop Jordan had to visit several of his mission centers and while in Thana in Maharashtra he was stoned to death by the Muslims. The year of his martyrdom was most probably in 1336. We do not have any documentary evidence either for the continuance of the episcopal see of Quilon or for the appointment of any successor to Bishop Jordan by the pope. It is possible that the friar preachers

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41 Ibid; p.41,
already in India must have continued the evangelization work for some more time. It appears that because of the alarming insecurity for the Roman Catholic missions in the wake of Islamic expansion the flow of Dominicans from the Archdiocese of Sultania was also stopped. Further, the emergence of the dreaded Mongol leader Timor in 1369, who unleashed a new reign of terror, resulted in the total eclipse of Roman Catholic missionaries in Persia putting an end to their evangelical work in the new diocese of Quilon. It was thus, that with the blood and sweat of Bishop Jordan and his associates, Latin Catholic Church was established in India in the fourteenth century.

The Papal Nuncio, John de Marignolli of Latin Church, on returning from China, spent the year 1348-1350 in India. He arrived in Quilon at Easter 1348 and spent 16 months in earliest Apostolic see of Rome in India. He was lodged at the St. George Cathedral, the

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first Latin Cathedral in India which had been decorated by him with paintings. During Marignolli’s period there were two sets of Christians in Kerala; St. Thomas (Nestorian) Christians and Latin Christians, and they maintained cordial relations. When the Portuguese, under Alfonso de Albuquerque landed in Quilon there were 25000 Christians of whom a good number were Latin Catholics. The arrival of the militant Portuguese missionaries in the 15th century firmly established the foundations of Latin Catholic Church of Kerala. Fr. Rodriguez Homen, a Dominican, was in charge of the Latin mission in the beginning of Portuguese period in Quilon. The Franciscan Jesuit and the Carmelite missionaries who laboured in Cochin, Cranganore, Calicut and Cannanore instructed the non-Catholic Christians of the region in Catholic faith and slowly convinced them of their fall into heresy and brought them to the fold of Latin Catholic Church. Apart from that we hear of persecution of

| 44 | Apostolic letter to the Bishop of Quilon, dated 12th March 1930, p.10. |
the Christians in about 1500 AD and later. In 1502 a deputation of Cranganore based Christians led by their Archdeacon at the instance of Jacob Abuna, their prelate, complained to Vasco da Gama against “heathens and moors by whom they were badly treated” They sought the protection of Latin Christians who had the support of Portuguese power, and readily embraced Roman Catholic faith. Many of the pre-Portuguese Christians of Calicut and Quilon migrated to Kottapuram and Cochin area which emerged as the citadel of the Portuguese and Latin church in Kerala the Catholic Schools and College established by the Roman missionaries and Cochin, Vaippincotta, Sampalur and Cranganore admitted a number of students from the already existing Christians community and trained them in Latin catholic teaching and in the doctrines of Roman Church. While writing to Ignatius Layola about his proselytization work among St. Thomas Christians,

45 Annual Letter for the year 1582 for Quilon and Travancore to the Jesuits, p.15.
46 Ibid, p.16.
Fr. Antonio de Heredia observes: In this city of Cochin and around it there are many Christians who have many erroneous notions, as they were instructed by two bishops that came from Persia these Christians are lost for want of workers to teach them the true way many of the sons of these are brought in a College of Frey Vincente. I went to two settlements of these Christians. Here I said mass and subjected them all to the Roman Church.

As Tavernier has pointed out the Latin missionaries organized the best library at Cochin in the whole of Asia during the period. In an agreement between king Rama Varma of Cochin and Dom Henrique De S.Jeronymo De Tovara the Bishop of Cochin Diocese. On 4th Sept 1560, it was permitted to construct Latin Churches wherever Christians are living in groups with a minimum of 30 members. Steadily the Christian community of Kerala began to

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learn the teaching of Roman catholic church and gradually the Latin Christians increased in this area with the admission of non-Christians of Kerala cost. As the eminent Indian historian Sardar K.M.Panikar has pointed out, the Latin Church in Malabar is as much indigenous and of the soil as any other form of worship prevalent on the West coast. It is a church with a noble uninterrupted tradition and has claims for wider recognition from all, not only because it has held fast to the rise of the Holy catholic church but also of its close and intimate association with that great and saintly personality Francis Xavier. Quilondiocese was the first Latin Catholic community formed in the Kerala in India.

THE DIOCESE OF QUILON

It is well known that Quilon was one of the most important trading centers that had attracted European travelers and traders and

49 Fr.Antony Padua, Native Christians of Malabar (mal.), Cochin, 1929, p.55.
had conducted its trade with foreigners for over three centuries before Christ, through Quilon Port. Hence there is no difficulty in accepting the tradition that St. Thomas had established in Quilon, the second of the seven church in 54 A.D. Reputed historians like Mackenzie, Vincent smith, K.P.Padmanabha Menon, Sardar K.M.Panikar, etc. have supported and strengthened this view.

It is believed that St. Thomas baptized over 1400 persons of all the four Castes and others of no Caste. Great majority of them were of Saiva Vellala community who were highly educated according to the standard and were called “Mappila”, consequently all Kerala Christians, the Kerala Nazranees, came to be known as Nazrani Mappila. Nilakkal Church, one of the seven Churches of St. Thomas, became extinct due to Pandian invasion of Kerala and the consequent persecution of the people of Nilakkal and other border

territories. The people, St. Thomas Christians mostly, fled west ward and settled down in various parts of the diocese Quilon, Kadampanad, Kumpuzha, as well as other parts of Kerala.

“India and all its countries received apostolic priesthood from the hands of Judas Thomas”\textsuperscript{52} tradition has also that the Apostle set up two presbyters (Episcopate) in Kerala, one at Cranganore and the other at Quilon.

About the end of 2\textsuperscript{nd} or the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century, a fierce persecution arose, all the priests were put to death, and for a long time the flock remained without a pastor. In the year 293 the Vellala converts to Christianity in Kaveripoompattanam on the east coast were persecuted by their king, so 72 families left their homes in a boat and came to Quilon. In 315 however Manikka Vachakr, a sorcerer, came to Quilon and reconverted to Hinduism about 116

\textsuperscript{52}V.C George, Kerala Nazranees in All Kerala Catholic Conference Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Kottayam, 1973, p.24
persons, families, including both immigrants and local Christians.

The patriarch of Babylon having been informed, by Persian merchants trading with India, of the miserable situation of the Church in India, sent to Kerala, with the approbation of the Holy See, two bishops of the Chaldean rite who came and supplied priests to the church in Kerala. With these bishops was introduced in India the Chaldean rite, and that was perhaps the end of the Dravidian rite of St. Thomas the Apostle. It is possible that a bishop from here had attended the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. To confirm the link of Quilon with the Holy See, it is recorded that Fr. Frumentius, considered as the second apostle of Malabar, visited Quilon about 400 AD.

The Persian Christian immigrants under Mar Sapor and Mar Proth had Quilon as their destination. They arrived with 60 brothers

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54 Madras Catholic Directory 1886, Madras, 1885, p.8.
from Persia with a large following, and reinforced Christianity at Quilon. It must be recorded with gratitude and appreciation that the local kings and queens of Quilon were tolerant and generous towards the Christians. The king of Venad, Aiyanadikal, pleased with the prosperity of Quilon granted 72 privileges to the Christians. Further, the King and Chieftains of the land assembled in 824 A.D. and inaugurated a new era-Kollavarsham. “In the same year King Sthanu Ravi Gupta granted the copper plate known as the second charter”.

Towards the middle of the 13th century pope Innocent IV founded the first society of missionaries for the East known as societies Peregrinantium pro Christo (Society of Pilgrims for Christ) consisting of Franciscans and Dominicans and sent down a few missionaries to the East. The Kingdom of Quilon was in close touch with Kublai Khan who ruled China at that time. Marco polo who had

visited Quilon in 1293 has also referred to China’s connections to Quilon. These missionaries conducted their apostolic works in China and Quilon. Thus evangelization started in and around Quilon as early as 1302 AD by the Dominicans and Franciscans whose immediate superiors were at Ormiz.

The history of the Archdiocese of Bombay acknowledges the fact of its evangelization and administration by Jordanus, Bishop of Quilon. Similarly Mangalore, Mysore, Gujarat, Tana, Madras, etc. were also under Jordanus.

The next ecclesiastical period began with the settlement of the Portuguese at Quilon in 1502 together with their Franciscan Friars. Since then the territory was under Franciscan missionaries till 1553, when Quilon became a part of the diocese of Goa. The Bishop

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of Goa, Don Jon Alfonso Albuquerque, being a Franciscan, their influence was intense in vivifying Quilon. St Francis Xavier had visited Quilon twice, in November 1544 and in March 1549 the purpose of the saints second visit was to organize a seminary then called a College, to train priests and to educate the laity of the dioceses, St. Francis and his colleagues had contributed their share in building up the diocese. The first Indian to join the Society of Jesus was a priest from Quilon, Fr. Peter Louis.

Alexius de Menezes, after the Synod of Diamper, continued his visitations and came down to Quilon. In the correspondence that passed between the Jesuit provincials and their superiors in Europe, clear references were made to the areas from “Coulao to Caniacomari.”

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On February, 1557 when Goa was raised to an Archdiocese, Cochin was dismembered from Goa and made Suffragan to Goa. Quilon remained part of this Cochin diocese for the next 280 years. On April 28, 1838 Pope Gregory XVI suppressed the diocese of Cochin by his brief Multa Praeclareand attached that territory along with Quilon to the vicariate of Malabar. The vicariate was divided in to Verapoly, Mangalore and Quilon by the Holy See on May 12, 1845. Quilon was provisionally entrusted to the Belgian discalced Carmelite Missionaries and the Rt.Rev.Bernard Paccinealli was appointed pro-vicar. Apostolic Quilon was confirmed as a separate vicariate Apostolic on March 15, 1853 and Msgr. Bernadine Pontanova was nominated the first vicar Apostolic. He and his successor very Rev.Maurice of St. Albert died soon after this nomination. Msgr. Charles Hyacinth Valerga was appointed as Pro-vicar Apostolic on May 31, 1854 and made Vicar Apostolic on May 31, 1854.

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26, 1859. He was consecrated in Rome on June 5, 1859 and on August 11, 1864 was succeeded by Msgr. Marie Ephrem Gareelon of the sacred heart, as Vicar Apostolic who was consecrated in Tangasseri. He transferred the seminary to Tangasseri. He resided in Trivandrum and made all arrangements for foundling a congregation of third order of Carmelite sisters in France for their mission in Quilon. He had attended the Vatican council in 1870. While in Rome he was transferred to Mangalore and so moved the sisters also to Mangalore.

Msgr. Ildephonse Broja, who was the next Vicar Apostolic, brought some of those sisters and started the first convent of the Carmelites third order at Tuet, Quilon on May 16, 1875. He retired in 1883 and was succeeded by Msgr. Ferdinand Ossi, in the same year.

When the hierarchy was established in India in 1886, Quilon became

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60 Ibid; p.186.
a diocese again on September 1, 1886 with Msgr. Ferdinand as Bishop Suffragan to the Archbishop of Verapoly. He shifted the seminary to Tuet. He was given a coadjutor. Msgr. Aloysius Maria Benzigar, who was consecrated at Kandy on November 18, 1900 with the demise of Msgr. Ferdinand at Ghent in 1905, on September 14, the same year, Msgr. Benzigar was enthroned as the Bishop of Quilon. The Bishop’s residence which was housed along with the seminary at Tuet was removed to the Portuguese Governor’s building at olikarli, close to Tangasseri the seminary too was shifted back to Tangasseri, the building which now houses the boarding section of Infant Jesus Anglo Indian School. While remodeling and equipping the house, Bishop Benzigar took meticulous care to preserve and protect in pristine beauty and elegance the life size statue of the Madonna and

62 Ibid; p.125.
the Infant Babe installed years ago by the Franciscans who stayed with the governors. As coadjutor he had established a minor seminary which was permanently shifted to Varuvayali in 1916. That building now forms part of the administrative and science block of Fatima Mata National College. A plot was brought for the Carmelite Religious at Cotton Hill in Trivandrum and was renamed Carmel Hill. A big monastery building and a big church rose up on the spot some where about 1928. Bishop, at the request of His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore, brought down from Switzerland the sisters of the Crosse to serve as nurse in the hospitals. Three centers were noted as important missions, Neyyanttinkara, Punalur and Kattanam. The Kattanam mission was entrusted to diocesan priests, Fr. Panthaleon Persia and Fr. Lawrence Pereira. They encouraged Jacobite reunions which culminated in the reception to the Catholic Church of two prelates Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Bishop

MarTheophilus, by Bishop Benzigar in his chapel of September 30, 1930.

Till then the diocese had only two divisions, the Northern with Quilon as headquarters and the Southern under a vicar-Forane at Kottar. Reorganization and re-arrangement became a desideratum in view of the increase in Catholic population, in the number of Churches and other institutions and in the number of activities of the Bishop. The diocese was divided into eight divisions-six under the vicar Forane, seven under the parish priest of St. Joseph’s, Trivandrum, and the last at Quilon directly under the Vicar General, the Bishop of rule.

The extensive diocese and so he submitted a proposal to Rome for the division of the diocese into three. Accordingly he

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64 Ibid; p.12.
65 Ibid; p.15.
obtained the first decree dated May 26, 1930 slicing off the southernmost part of the diocese to form the new diocese of Kottar. Rev.Fr.Lawrence Pereira of Kattanam mission near Mavelikkara became the first Bishop of Kottar.67

Bishop Benzigar retired due to ill health in 1931. Very Rev.Fr.Bernadine administrated the Diocese till February 2, 1936 when Msgr.Vincent V Diocese was nominated Bishop of Quilon. He remained in office only up to July 1, 1937. Then the diocese was further divided and the present diocese of Trivandrum came in to being but the continued as the administrator of the Diocese of Quilon till Diocese 19, 1937, the foreign Carmelite Fathers also left Trivandrum.68

67 Ibid; p.113.
68 Ibid; p.115.
The Roman pontiff, successor of Saint Peter, the bearer of the keys of heaven and vicar of Jesus Christ, with paternal attention considers the nature of every place on earth and of all the people found there, and he examined them diligently, as his office obliges him to do, he desires and seeks the salvation of each individual. Supported by heavenly authority, he orders and disposes usefully and wisely, administering with counsel and rational judgements, with prudent maturity and reflection, what will be pleasing to the divine majesty, thanks to which he will be able to lead to himself in one sole sheep fold those sheep who put their trust in the truth. He will thus be able to lead those souls to the prize of eternal happiness who, since it is really the Lord who multiplies them, will be able, more surely and evidently, to grow in the truth of

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the Catholic faith, beneficent learning, through which the splendor of
the Divine Name may become more widely known and praised. 70

Undoubtedly, for many years both true fame and an account
worthy of faith have joyfully accompanied the work of our
apostolate. Indeed, many friars of the order of preachers aflame with
zeal for the faith and with devotion, in order to bring eager souls to
Christ, have traveled personally, usually with their superiors to
certain regions of the orient, especially to the kingdom of greater
India, inhabited by various schismatic and pagan people. They have
visited many places in those regions and in that kingdom, not being
overwhelmed by their labors, and they have stayed in those places
for many years. Preaching the word of God with passion among those
people and gently leading them to God, they have converted many of
them to the Christian faith, bringing them out of the darkness of

70 Ibid; p.36.
their sins in to the truth and out of the eclipse into the light of their own faith. Which those people had been lacking since devout belief generates hope and faith in the Lord, since those same friars have diligently pursued the work of learning in the faith that they had so laudably began among these people, a multitude of people, more numerous than words themselves, have been converted to God and accepted the faith announced to them we, therefore who are, though unworthy, the successor of saint peter and represent the voice of Christ on earth, even as we devoutly voice praise for such a numerous conversion under the guidance of divine Grace and for the continuation of such profitable activity, entrust in to the Lord and desire to strengthen and promote it with the protection of apostolic love.

71 Ibid; p.41.

Following careful meditation, both within ourselves and with our brothers, with conscientious discussion followed by a wise decision, at the suggestion of those same brothers and in the fullness of Apostolic Authority, to the praise and glory of the heavenly excellence, to the honor of his Holy church, for the spread of the orthodox faith, in order to argument the cult of the divine Name and for the profit of souls, both now and in the future, to admire the mercy of the most high and for other beneficent reasons which have led our mind piously and rationally to this, in the name of the faith, in that kingdom, in a fitting and proper place of great distinction called Columbum, we constitute it as a city and designate it with the name of city, and wish it to be so called for all centuries to come.

In addition, so that it may be considered a mother by its children and designated with the little of church of all the faithful, on the advice of all our brothers and in the fullness of our
Apostolic Authority, we decree that a cathedral church be founded in that city, and that on it be conferred an Episcopal title. The church which we have established in his city will have, God willing, its own bridegroom, suited to the care of the apostolic see, who will lead her and take care of her.

We turn our heart to matters that increase salvation, and with the assistance of the protection of divine grace we consecrate our commitment and dedicate ourselves to them with care and effort, thanks to whose effectiveness souls will be able to attain the enthusiasm of the catholic faith, the cult of the divine, and an increase in salvation. Souls endowed with firm hope and devout belief can more effectively pursue those matters when the direction of the church is entrusted, as it should be to suitable shepherds and wise guides who with authority in word and deed by giving in

73 Ibid; p.776.
themselves an example of wholesome life and by spreading a beneficent word prepare the hearts of the faithful for the knowledge of divine excellence both strengthen them and wisely rule the other churches entrusted to them guide them profitably and strive to direct them happily. Since a short while ago, to spread the Christian faith and the cult of the divine name, and also persuaded by other reasons, at the suggestion of our brothers and in the fullness of our Apostolic Authority we have constituted the distinguished locality of Columbum, in the Kingdom of greater India as a city and wish it to be so called for all the centuries to come. Again at the suggestion of our brothers and in the fullness of our apostolic authority, we have decreed and established that a Cathedral Church be built in that city, to be honored with the little of the episcopal dignity, and we have erected said church in the aforementioned city. So that this church may rejoice in the praise of its Head and exult in the gentle

75 G.O.Ms.No. 86/75/DD; dated 6\textsuperscript{th} August 1965, Trivandrum, p.3.
sweetness of its bridegroom, we have begun wisely and put at its head a suitable fit and well known individual and, after some deliberation, which we deemed it proper, together with our brothers, to make on you, master of the order of Friars preacher, steadfast in the dignity of the priesthood, educated in the Holy scriptures on you a true expert in other cultures because you have personally known their situation and nature and who, it is said, have already led the souls of many faithful to Jesus Christ by sowing the word of God, on you supported by the Zeal of holy religion, by purity of life, by moral integrity, by wisdom in discernment and by other gifts and virtues, according to what trust worthy witness have said, on you we have set the eyes of our mind, which has considered everything with due attention. At the suggestion of our aforementioned brothers, we entrust the apostolic authority of your person to the aforementioned church, and we place you at its head as bishop and shepherd, fully

76 Ibid; p.5.
assigning to you the care and administration of both spiritual and temporal matters.

As a result, at the hands of our brother, the venerable Bertrand, Bishop of Tusculum, we bestow the gift of consecration, being steadfast in the Lord our solemn trust in the afore mentioned fruits of your studies, since you, who direct and accompany with good will the flock entrusted to your faith and assigned to your keeping at the command of the Lord, have begun the work of teaching and giving information about the orthodox faith in that region, so that, in the shadow of your name and thanks to your fruitful ministry and the right hand of the Lord which manifests its power in you, said church might increase in salvation and in joy.

For this reason, we have charged your brethren with Apostolic documents, so that, as you approach that church with the

77 Community Health-Newsletter, Quilon, 1990, p.8.
78 Ibid; p.12.
grace of our blessing, you assume its care with dedication and faithfulness, kindly and effectively teaching your flock with beneficent precepts, educating it and being of use both to yourself by the merits of your life and to others thanks to your example, so that you will obtain infinite divine mercy and like the faithful and wise servant who will receive hundred fold rewards, you will be worthy to receive the joy of eternal happiness. 79

Christianity may be regarded in two aspects, as law of life and as a system of doctrine. Christians in Kerala had no written records of ancient period but relied entirely on traditions handed down by their elders and to these they were most tenaciously attached. The Latin catholic community is heterogeneous one composed of St. Thomas Christians who had embraced Latin rite during the Portuguese regime, Anglo Indians and those converted by

St. Francis Xavier and others from the Paravas of Bharathas, Nadars, Vellalas, Mukkuvas or Arasar, Parayan or Sambavas, Pulays or Cheraman, Sanars, Kerala Muthali etc.  

STAGNANT CHURCH

Till the arrival of Latin missionaries in the 13th Century, the Church in Kerala was in a stagnant state, is clear from historical facts. We had seen the existence of Christians in Kerala in the early medieval period who possessed the Liturgy of East Syrian Church, and the traditions of St. Thomas. There is no evidence for any kind of Christian Missionary activity prior to the thirteenth century except the mythical tradition of conversion associated with St. Thomas, the Apostle. It seems that the historical forces of the period might have taken the Christian Community of this region to the main stream of ‘Sanskritization’ in the wake of Hindu revival and

80 Ibid; p.505.
81 Ibid; p.508.
they remained so for centuries in the history less society of Malabar without any substantial change. As Dr. G.M. Moraes has pointed out, “the ancient Church of Malabar has ceased to propagate the faith and the Christians had taken their due places in the Hindu hierarchy of castes”\(^82\). It is clear from the accounts written by the medieval Arab and Christian travelers that the society of the period in Kerala was in no way ideal by any standard of Christian life. This region which was divided into several segments was ruled and controlled by a minority of privileged groups and the majority of people were considered as “two legged animals” who were outcastes, untouchables, unapproachable and mere Slaves\(^83\).

Among the Christians, the word of the Lord has never reached to the 95%. Since the copies of the hand-written Gospels were in Syriac language and the common men had no access to them.


\(^{83}\) Ibid, p.25.
Further it is clear from the decrees of Diamper Synod, that the Christian teachings and liturgy were over-shadowed by the heresy of Nestorianism. The Christian community was mainly engaged in trade and other lucrative business and their social life was not a model to others, as the documents would suggest, they were only Christians by name.\footnote{A.E. Medlycott, India and the Apostle Thomas, David Nutt, London, 1905, p.31.}

It is also not known whether the royal recognition bestowed on certain Christian merchant leaders by the local chieftains was applicable to all the members of Christian community. In short, the small group of Christian merchant community of early medieval Kerala was enjoying the pleasure of a stagnant society dominated by Chaturvarnya. Even the clergy of this small community were ‘tax gathers rather than pastors of souls. It is stated that they were ignorant and did not understand either the distinctions
between sins, or the cases of conscience guiding their penitents or even themselves.

CULTURAL-MARTIAL HERITAGE

The Kerala Christians were accomplished soldiers is well documented, but not known widely. Their martial heritage is equally glorious as their heritage in religion and culture. Some of the decrees of the Synod of Diamper of the 16th century are basic document which throw a flood of light on the traditional martial role of the Kerala Christians. The Synod prevented the Christians who embraced Catholicism and professed allegiance to the Roman Church, from worshipping non-Christian gods and goddesses in the Kalari or Gymnasium and insisted that they should not get trained themselves in martial arts under Hindu instructors.

85 Ibid; p.34.
According to Francis Day, the Christians during later medieval period, were highly esteemed because of their heroic tradition as soldiers. The greater the number of them a native prince had in his dominions the more he was feared by his neighbors as the Christians were said to be very faithful and trust worthy. The Christian men including the ordained priests always went about armed and well trained in the use of weapons, their education in military science being carried off from the 7th to 25th year. However, the Synod of Diamper prevented the priests from receiving payment from any king for functioning as soldiers. Antonio Gouveia, the Portuguese historian attests the martial tradition of the Kerala Christians and states that “they go about with swords and shields and some with guns and lances in the bazaars, they wear long robes, white or blue, a proper and decent dress, which is usual with men of the age” 88. “It is on this account as well as on that of their fidelity

88  Ibid; p.55.
and strict attachment to truth in everything that the Kerala Kings Cherish and countenance them so much the Christian depend directly on the King or his ministers and not on the provincial Governors. If anything is demanded from them contrary to their privileges, the whole people unite immediately for general defense”. It is clear from the medieval records that Christians were employed by the kings as soldiers and majority of the men in the army of the King of Cochin were Christians. Dr.P.J. Thomas States that “the medieval Kerala Christians paid equal importance to intellectual as well as physical education of a growing child”89. Immediately after a Christian child became proficient in the alphabet and basic lessons of traditional teaching, he was sent to the physical training centers situated in the villages.

**KERALA CHURCH AND THE LATIN RITE**

The term rite means the words to be said and action to be done in carrying out a given act of religion, e.g., rite of baptism. By extension it means a complete system of ritual and prayer to be used in the worship of God and the ministration of the sacraments, so we have the Antiochean rite, the whole complex of prayers and offices originating at or associated with the city and Patriarchate of Antioch.

In time this gets modified, on the one hand into the Maronite rite. Counting the several variations of the Latin Rite as only one, there are ten rites in this last sense and each one is represented by a body of Catholics using it today of the Latins and Maronite’s, by much larger non-Catholic bodies as well. Each of these bodies is also sometimes called a rite, which in this sense bodies is also sometimes called a rite, which in this sense is equivalent to “church” and includes the manner of organization, proper canon law, customs, etc. appertaining thereto. Every child of catholic parents belongs to one

or other of these rites\textsuperscript{91}. If his parents differ in rite, he belongs to that of the father; of only one parent is a catholic, the child belongs to that parent’s rite.

In its faith, its religious dogma and canons of conduct there is complete oneness in all parts of the Catholic Church. There is no room for either likeness or dissimilarity, but is simple identity. But even in accidental matters of worship, discipline usage, mental habit, study and examination, shown how often the same or similar ideas, framework, origin etc. are behind the differing practice of east and west. Above all it is the same ‘enlightening spirit’\textsuperscript{92}.

This does not mean that the differing characteristics of Christian East and west are confined to what is external. Every people live the immutable truths in its own way according to its history, culture, temperament and personality. Within the common

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid; p.97.

\textsuperscript{92} V.A. Pascal, The Latin and Syrian Missionaries of Malabar, Madras, 1937, p.27.
framework of the western church there is such variety of mind and life that we can speak, and not improperly of a German Catholicism, Spanish Catholicism and Irish Catholicism. So too the east and particular parts of the east have their own ‘spiritualties’ as we say, their own theological emphasis their own ways of approaching Christ’s mysteries of living his faith. These things have determined and influenced the ways of worship and the rest, and been in turn influenced by them.\(^{93}\)

One of the most common misunderstandings about the Catholic Church is that it is uniform in all respects throughout the world. That is not true. The church has unity, that there is only one true church and she is one in herself, and she had uniformity of faith in things divinely revealed, when the touching dogma or the principles of right conduct, these things are matters of absolute truth

\(^{93}\) Ibid; p.35.
and therefore necessarily uniform. But beyond that No. There is not an never has been any principle of uniformity in Catholicism that require all Catholics to worship with the same liturgical forms, in the same language, to be subject to an identical canon law, to have the same customs and usages the same religious temperament, spiritual approach, practice and speculative emphasis. In fact they do not most American and western European Catholics never assist any mass but the Roman Mass in the Latin tongue.94

The mass is always and everywhere one, considered as the Eucharistic sacrifice; the true sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ made present on an altar, the representation and renewal of the offering made once for all on the cross of Calvary, the doing of that which our Lord at the Last supper told us, through his apostles to do, and that is what matters and all that matters essentially. But to

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94 Ibid; p.38.
say that in every Catholic Church mass is celebrated with the same prayers and observances is not true. The Eucharistic sacrifice is one, the ways of offering it are many.\footnote{95 Donald Attwater, The Christian Churches of the East, Lancashire, 1961, p.11.}

The prayers and observances of the mass as celebrated by a Dominican or Calced Carmelite friar are not exactly the same as those in the Roman missal; nor are those of Carthusian monks nor those used in the Archdiocese of Milan. The varieties of the Latin mass are more or less closely related to and resemble the usual Roman form. But there are other Catholics, some millions of them distinguished as Catholics of the Eastern rite, whose mass is altogether different in its prayers and externals from those with which we are familiar, who are subject to different canon laws, who may differ from us on almost every conceivable thing always excepting faith and morals.\footnote{96 Ibid; p.13.}
From the earliest times the primacy of the see of St. Peter in Rome was recognized by all other sees, though it was a long time before the full extent, implications and prerogatives of that primacy emerged in their fullness. In the early centuries the east played a prepondering parts in the Christian history and thought. Greek was the language of the Roman church until about the middle of the 3rd century. Latin was first used for liturgical purpose in Africa.\textsuperscript{97}

In the eyes of same people, to belong to Latin rite stands for civilization and influence, for Latin rite stands for civilization and influence, for attractive ideas and progress, for prestige, education, commerce, pseudo-Parisian clothes. Eastern rites are looked down on as being for mere peasants; too often easterners accept rather than oppose such wrong views.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid; p.23.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid; p. 24.
A Rite, whether in the wide or narrow sense of the word is not something arbitrary. It is the religious expression of ages of history of particular cultures and religious orientations. The Church as Church has never lost sight of the fact that variety is the correlative of Catholicity. It is one thing to “belong” to a rite and quite another to “frequent” it. Western Catholics are not only at liberty but strongly recommended by the Holy See to attend the Churches of eastern Catholics, and vice-versa, so that they may learn more about one another and strengthen the bond of mutual charity. Not only that, but the code of canon law expressly lays down (canon 866) that a Latin catholic may receive communion in a catholic eastern church out of devotion. Marriages should be according to the rite of the groom, and the bride is free to adopt her husband’s rite either permanently or until widow hood, children follow the rite of their
father even if through error or in emergency they have been baptized a priest and with the observance of another rite.99

Pope Benedict XV says, “The Church is not Latin or Greek or Slavonic, it is Catholic, Ecumenical”; and catholicity includes everything that is not in any way sinful or in any way erroneous. Just as there is nothing secular but sin, so there is nothing foreign to Catholicism but error, ugliness and disaccord with right reason. The prevailing Latin uniformity of the Church today is simply the result of historical events. Catholicism is the religion of variety, the variety displayed by 700 million people and the best and simplest proof of this is the viciousness of divine worship as used by Catholics, the fact that the mass is one, but the ways of celebrating it are many.100

99 Ibid., p. 31.
100 Ibid., p. 41.
The expression “Eastern church” is often met, bearing various meaning, but there is not in fact and never has been a single unified eastern church corresponding to the western church over which the Bishop of Rome presides as Patriarch as well as supreme pontiff. The “Eastern Church” now consists of four unrelated divisions of which the first two are esteemed heretical and consist of six separate churches; the third also is separated from Rome the Orthodox and consists of some fifteen self-governing churches, most of which are national and all consists of several fully organized churches and a number of groups, one is catholic faith and the communion of the Holy See, known as the “Catholics of the Eastern Rite”.

The Catholics of Kerala do not form a homogeneous community. Kerala offers a striking example of the churches unity in diversity. They are divided into three different rites all three in apostolic succession and all three loyal to the Holy father in Rome.
But all of them are guided by certain common aspirations which have evolved from a common faith in the Gospel of Christ. The accretions of the stream of time have made numerous deposits in its ancient bed favoring, in some measure, the growth and dissemination of exotic notions. But the word of Christ is still the highest authority.

According to their numerical strength they are classified in the census report of 1931 as Romo-Syrians, Roman Catholics and Syro-Malankara rite. The Roman Catholics may more appropriately be styled Latin Catholics. The Catholics of the Latin rite owe their origin to the adoption of this rite by a good number of Syrian Catholics during the Portuguese regime”.

The majority of the Christians in Kerala are called Syrian Christians. Originally some people of Syrian origin must have settled down in the Malabar Coast, though their number might have

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102 Ibid.
been very limited. Gradually their numbers increased by the admission within their ranks of the off-spring of inter-marriages between the members of the successive batches of immigrants and the inhabitants of the land. It is stated by certain authors that “the members of the Church of Malabar are called Syrians not because they have Syrian blood in their veins but because they have Syrian liturgy, they are not of the Syrian nation but of the Syrian rite”. The aim in this case is not an ethnological or geographical resignation but is purely ecclesiastical.  

“The discovery of the Syrian Christians of St. Thomas on the Malabar coast was a fruitful source of perplexity to both sections of European Christians”. Says Dean Stanly, who quotes a passage from Gibbon; “their separation from the western world had left them in ignorance of the improvements or corruptions of a thousand years,

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and their conformity with the faith and practice of the 5th century
would equally disappoint the prejudices of a papist or a
protestant". The distinctive characteristic of the Syrian church in
Malabar is its veneration for the text of the Gospel and the Syrian
language in which it was revealed. It is said that “the Eastern church
was, like the east, stationary and immutable, the western like the
west, progressive and flexible”. This distinction is the more
remarkable say Stanly, “because at certain period of their course,
there can be no doubt that the civilization of the Eastern Church was
far higher than that of the western”. While in the west the most
attention was bestowed to the propagation of converting the
heathens. The children of Eastern Church who settled in Malabar
desired only to keep intact the treasures which they possessed. In
the west the principles of universal Church and universal empire

104K.E. Job, The Syrian Church of Malabar, St.Joseph’s Orphanage press, Changanacherry,
1938, p.37.
combined to erect virtual despotism in matters of theology and church discipline, rendering the common people to unqualified submission to the clergy for several centuries. In the east the public appears to have occasionally exerted influence shaping the policy of Church government.  

In Malabar the Christians of St. Thomas were in certain respects in a better position than their co-religionists in the ancient home for while in Syria and Persia the independent of religious profession and practice suffered on account of imperial vagaries and Muslim intervention, the Christian of Malabar were able to continue their peaceful existence among a population tolerant and friendly under the protection of rulers who, though attached to their own Hindu faith, appreciated the justice and the wisdom of permitting the

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immigrants and their descendants to follow their own path of
salvation.\textsuperscript{106}

\section*{THE BEGINNING OF THE LATIN MISSIONS}

The first catholic priest to have reached Kerala was John of
Monte corvine whose visit took place in 1291, a little earlier than
Marco polo\textsuperscript{107}. He stayed in Malabar Coast for several months, on
his way to China, and baptized a number of people into the catholic
faith. No doubt his converts lapsed for it was only a generation later
that the first serious attempt was made to infiltrate the preserves of
Nestorians. In 1324 AD, the dominical father Jordanus made his way
by the trade routes to India. In his famous book entitled Mirabilia

\textsuperscript{106} Thomas Pothacamury, The Church in Independent India, Bombay, 1961, p.38.

Descripta, he described himself as Oriundo de Severago, in India Majori Episcopum Columbensen, i.e. hailing from severac, Bishop of Quilon in the Great Indies\textsuperscript{108}.

Jordanus wrote a pathetic letter to the headquarters in Persia in 1324. Five Dominicans responded to the appeal and they were dispersed among the mission stations in Kanara/Canara, Mysore, Malabar and Travancore. Before Jordanus left for Europe in 1328 the number had reached 10,000. But persecution was always on their track. In 1326 Andrew of Perugia, a missioner in China, speaks of a massacre in South India of the missioners Nicholas of Banterra, Andrutius of Assisi and of a Bishop\textsuperscript{109}.

Jordanus left for Europe to place before the sovereign pontiff John XXII the affairs of the Indian mission. On reaching the Papal court at Avignon he convinced the Pope of the need of establishing in

\textsuperscript{108} Milne Rae, Christian College Magazine, September, Madras, 1890, p.184.
\textsuperscript{109} A.P. Stanly, Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church, London, 1907, p.42.
India regular ecclesiastical government, with a bishop at its head.

John XXII had before him a Holy and Zealous apostle, who was responsible for the establishment of the Catholic Church in India. He unhesitatingly offered the office to Friar Jordanus.

Bishop Jordanus took his pallium to his metropolitan the Archbishop of Sultania. He carried Papal letters among others to the kings of Delhi and Quilon and one also to the chief of the Nestorians of Malabar.\(^{110}\)

The pope regarded the Syrian Christians as erring sons of his own Church and provided Jordanus with a bull calling on them to abandon their schisms. This was the first recorded claim of the Pope of Rome to jurisdiction over the Syrian Church in Kerala. Its immediate results were not impressive\(^ {111}\).


Bishop Jordanus went to Toulouse where a General chapter of the order had met in 1328. He enlisted a large number of friars for his mission and returned to India. He founded several houses of his order in his country and converted many people to the Catholic faith. The Muslims could not bear to see these conversions, and so they stoned him to death at Thana, the year of his murder is not known. After the martyrdom of the blessed Jordan, the Catholic Missions languished in India. At this time great energy was displayed by Islam in carrying on proselytizing activities in India and the Far East.

India was visited by John de Marignolli, a Franciscan. The Pope had sent him to China to deliver a message to the Grand Khan and Marignolli must have left China sometimes in 1346 or 1347 and arrived in Quilon at Easter 1348. He stayed in Quilon for sixteen

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113 Ibid; p.98.
months according to Moraes and thirteen months according to Julius Richster. Quilon was the centre of the Catholic missions in India and a busy port where the whole of the pepper trade was concentrated. It was moreover the Episcopal See, of which the first incumbent was Jordan of Severac. There was a Latin Church dedicated to St. George but at the time of Marignolli’s visit, it was apparently without a priest in charge. The Christians were rich enough with their Chiefs, called Muthalali, i.e. Mudaliar or Headman, who owned the pepper plantations. The Christians of St. Thomas, in particular were the masters of the public steel-yard, from the income of which they generously granted Marignolli, “as a perquisite of his office as Pope’s delegate, every month a hundred gold fanams” and a thousand when he left. Before leaving India, Marignolli set up a pillar at Cape Comorin. “I consecrated and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people, and I

was carried on the shoulders of the Chiefs in a litter or palanquin like Solomon’s”. Later this monument was attributed to St. Thomas by the local people. Baldaeus, who reports this, saw the pillar in 1622. “Three hundred years of tradition” observes Yule, “might easily swamp the dim memory of John the legate in that of Thomas the Apostle”.

FRANCIS XAVIER AND SPREAD OF LATIN

CATHOLICISM

Francis Xavier was born on April 7th, 1506 and was related to the royal house of Navarre and the bourbons. He was gifted with penetrating intelligence and had received an excellent education in theology and philosophy. Blessed by the Pope and encouraged by the king of Portugal with highest honours, Xavier started for the east.

The day he set foot on Indian soil. May 6th, 1542 is the birthday of Roman Catholic missionary activity in India on a large scale.

Fr. Michael Vaz, then the Vicar of the Bishop of South India spoke to Francis Xavier about the fishery coast. A country extending to leagues from Cape Comorin to the peninsula of Paraben, inhabited by an able, intelligent and enterprising people, the Paravas. They were semi-independent and pearl divers.

About the year 1536, a civil war broke out between the paravas and Muslims. It was soon evident that the Paravas would be defeated. A Muslim flotilla guarded the coast making it impossible for the Paravas to ply their trade, and offering five fanams for a Parava’s head.

117  Ladislas Michael, St. Francis Xavier, Agra, 1894, p.22.
There was at that time at Goa a rich Parava called John Cruz. He had been to Lisbon where he was baptized and the king had made him a knight of the order of Christ. As there were no Christians among his own people in India, he settled down in Goa, and was at that time one of the largest merchants of the town. To him the Paravas addressed themselves in order to obtain the intervention of the Portuguese authorities. On the recommendation of John Cruz, the Portuguese promised them protection provided they all became Catholics.

Fr. Francis Enrique, who came soon afterwards to the south coast of Travancore estimates the machuna fisherman converted by St. Francis Xavier to the number of 20,000. But this apostle was not without danger. The Brahmins seeing crowds of people abandoning the old worship, which enriched them endeavored to get rid of

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119 Ibid; p.30.
Francis by taking his life on one occasion some pagans in ambush shot at him with arrows of which several wounded him 120.

Fr. Francis landed at Cochin on 12th January where he met the Bishop of Goa, Dom John d’ Albuquerque who was on a pastoral tour 121. The main object of the old Bishop was to provide for the return of the Christians of St. Thomas to the catholic faith. The Syrian Christians of St. Thomas, who inhabited to kingdom of cochin and the northern part of Travancore called themselves Nestorians, but living in the midst of pagans, they differed but little from them. They were Christians only by name. All the Paravas were now Catholics, heathens of other castes had also been converted so that on father Francis’ arrival, there were on the fishery coast and in Travancore more than 2, 00,000 Catholics 122.

120 Julius Richter, A history of Missions in India, New York, 1908, p.41.
121 Ibid; p.45.
Becoming weary of work and depressed in mind because of his failure to convert as large numbers as he desired he left for Japan where he hoped to win greater victories. He died at Sanchoan on 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1552.

Origin of Christianity in Kerala goes back to first half of the first century about 52 AD, when St. Thomas, an apostle of Jesus Christ come to India and evangelized the land. After St. Thomas, Thomas of Cana in 345 AD came to Malabar with a group of Chaldean Christian accepted the rites and ceremony of Syrian Church. They were known as “Knanaya Christians”. Latin Catholicism had its origin in Kerala in 1291 AD, when John of Monte Carvino, baptized a number of people into Catholic faith in Malabar. Latin Christianity is the same as Roman Christianity or Papal Christianity. Originally the Christian were invariably called Christians of Serra (Mountain or Malankara) Nascarini (Nasrani) or Tarsa or Nestoriani and Mappilas. The Latin
Catholics were known as Latin Mappilas. Latin Catholics are a heterogeneous group of St. Thomas Christians, Anglo-Indians and those converted by St. Francis Xavier and those from Paravas of Bharathas, Nadars, Vellalas, Mukkuvas or Arasar, Parayan or Sambavas, Pulayas or Cheraman, Sanars, Kerala Muthali etc. Quilon (Quilon) was the first Latin Catholic diocese in India. The Dominican Friar Jordan Catalani was the first Latin Catholic Bishop of India at Quilon Diocese. At present there are Twelve Latin Catholic Dioceses in Kerala under two Arch Dioceses – Trivandrum and Varappuzha.