CHAPTER – II

ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICE

Ecclesiastical Service forms an integral part of church worship. A church is a common place where people gather together to offer prayers or meditation. As church is the continuation of the mission of Jesus, it symbolizes the presence of the divine and so considered it as a sanctified preserve. Generally, the church is a common place for an organized group of Christians or any other members of the society of any time to offer worship. The earliest churches were constructed in the Mediterranean region during the Roman Empire. They were small, with sufficient space for an altar and only a meager congregation. As Christianity spread, larger churches with separate areas for the clergy and followers were built often in the shape of cross to symbolize the crucifix. Accordingly, Kanyakumari District is blessed with a number of Malankara Syrian Catholic Churches, vibrating peace.

Church Mass

In the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church, the holy mass is conducted on every Sunday between 7.00 am and 9.00 pm. For this purpose, the altar where the icon of divine mother Mary or icons or symbols of any other divine incarnation is placed, beautifully decorated with canted flowers. An array of electric lamps which are hung on the top of the ceiling of the altar illuminated the divine presence. Besides, various other wax candles kept on the altar are lighted at the beginning of the holy
mass. Usually, the time of the beginning of the holy mass of every church is announced by sounding the church bell.

As soon as enter the church, the members and adherents of this faith, kneel down and prayed the Almighty for a while before occupying their seats. Meanwhile, the parish priest after purifying himself, come before the altar wearing the specific robe and gown\(^1\) and starts the liturgy, a form of public worship adopted in the Christian Church. Then, the usual prayer starts with the specified paraphernalia accompanied by cores singing of psalms and hymns, reading biblical sentences, chanting the prayers and other ceremonies and sermons.

Different liturgical rites were developed in various Christian centers. Usually, the Syro - Aromaic, Greek and Latin were the three languages used in the liturgy of the Christian tenets\(^2\). These developments occurred in a slow process. It is believed that the Christian faith penetrated into a particular culture of the place where it developed as consequence of mutual influence and enrichment\(^3\). However, the churches that did not develop their own liturgies obtained them from other centres with which they had wider contact. But, it is not known weather the Thomas Christians developed a liturgy of their own\(^4\). Though Malabar tradition holds that St. Thomas instituted an

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1 The priest at his discretion selects the colour of the gown at the time of ordination; the act of conferring holy orders on a priest. Usually, they prefer white or saffron colour gown. But the model of the gown should be the same as prescribed by the authority of the congregation.


indigenous form of worship. Therefore, the Syrian Bishops followed ‘East Syrian’ liturgy and their Christian traditions were children. Thus, in the beginning, the Malankara Syrian Catholic priests adopted Latin liturgy but later the Syrian liturgy. But, with the formation of Trivandrum diocese, the followers desired to know the content of the prayer and sermon preached in other languages. Therefore, to satisfy the aspiration of the local population, liturgy was adopted in vernacular languages, Malayalam in Kerala regions and Tamil in Tamil speaking areas of Tamil Nadu.

Usually, the parish priests deliver the sermon on Biblical themes or related to moral and social aspects. Meanwhile, during the course of singing hymns, the members who assembled in the church made their offerings, known as kanikai. The holy mass concludes with a prayer. Soon after the holy mass, in some churches, the priest conducts the confession ceremony, otherwise known as paviaangeerthanam, it is a moral obligation of every church members to express the sins committed to the priest, confess their guilt and seek pardon and repentance to wipe out the sins. This practice not only purified the sins of the members but motivated them not to commit such mistakes in future. Soon after the Sunday holy mass, Sunday bible classes are conducted in all churches to give a spiritual boost and knowledge to the young ones. In addition to Sunday regular mass, special mass is conducted in the churches on certain special occasions. Generally, such mass is conducted from 6.00 am to 7.00 pm and in the evening hours too.
Similarly, baptism is an inevitable requirement of a true Christian. By baptism, one is incorporated into the church of the Christ and constituted a person in it, with duties and rights\textsuperscript{5}. Which in accordance with each ones status, are proper to Christians, in so far as they are in the ecclesiastical communion and unless a lawfully issued sanction intervenes? When a person is baptized or enters into full communion with the Catholic Church, he or she becomes a member of the church. Enrolment is the bond that determines a Christian person’s belongingness to a church of the communion of the churches or the universal church. A person obtains ascription in a church by baptism, by transfer of membership and by the profession of Catholic faith.

Similarly the Christian of this faith is required to obtain Holy Communion once in a month. The holy bread and the wine taken by them during Holy Communion are believed to be the body and blood of Christ. As soon as it enters into the body of the person who obtain Holy Communion becomes more spiritual in attitude and out look\textsuperscript{6}.

**Religious Observances**

The Malankara Syrian Catholics followed various religious observances, rites and rituals and ceremonies. Every month is replete with instances of various religious festivals. Among them new year day is celebrated with much éclat. Palm Sunday is celebrated with a long procession after the usual Sunday service. In connection with the birth of Jesus Christ till his crucifixation,


various religious rites are observed. It is expected that every true Christian of the Malankara Syrian Catholic denomination must observe the rules and regulations as laid down in the scriptures strictly. Usually the followers of this faith must observe meditation, fasting and other religious practices. It is evident from records that various fasting has been observed in different months\textsuperscript{7}. Much importance is given to it. Fasting is locally known as \textit{Nonbu}. During the fasting days, strict discipline is to be observed, denouncing the eating of non-vegetarian food items. During fasting, every staunch catholic should read the Bible, observe meditation engaged in prayer and other social welfare activities\textsuperscript{8}. Big fasting locally known as “\textit{Periya Nonbu}”, starts from 13 or 14\textsuperscript{th} February till the day of Easter covering 45 to 50 days fasting. Besides this, other fasting like 25 days fasting (25 \textit{Nonbu}), 15 days \textit{Nonbu}, 3 days fasting (3 \textit{Nonbu}) are also observed. Usually 15 days \textit{Nonbu} starts from 1\textsuperscript{st} August to 15 in connection with\textsuperscript{9} the demise of Virgin Mary. On such fasting days marriages and other celebration are not conducted. All these principles are strictly followed by the adherents. But now a days, one could see slight variation in following these principle and some Christian willingly are unwillingly follow these principle. Generally, during fasting days, the use of non-vegetarian dishes is prohibited. Church services conducted in the early hours of (morning) the day of Good Friday, people attend the mass with much sad and sullen. Soon after the mass, a procession is organized. On this occasion, the parish priest wore black gown and offered prayer at specified places of the

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Malankaravilakku}, Vol.23, No.3, 1999, p.33.
street and church precincts. Usually porridge is supplied to the people attended the mass who gathered around the church. The people who gathered observed silence and a sort of gloom is a seen in their face. In the evening too, church service is conducted.

In every Malankara Syrian Catholic Church Easter which marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated with much fervor and enthusiasm. Christians in large numbers, offered special prayers in the churches at midnight and early services in the morning. Candle lit prayers were set in the holy night which symbolizes the triumph of god over the evil\textsuperscript{10}. Prayer songs and hymns to the almighty were sung with devotion. The parish priest of the each church led the midnight mass.

In addition to these, every year the month of October is celebrated as rosary month. During this month every day in all churches special rosary prayers are conducted. The sisters of Legion of Mary arranged these prayers with much dedication\textsuperscript{11}. Moreover, on such occasions procession was arranged known as rosary procession\textsuperscript{12} in memory of rosary month.

Christmas is another important Christian festival celebrated through out the world. The houses of the Christians and the churches are decorated with stars and illuminated with a long an array of lights. Those who celebrate Christmas used to plant a Christmas tree and prepare a Christmas shed locally known as Christmas Kudil and placed icons Mary infant Jesus,

\textsuperscript{10} The Hindu, Thiruvananthapuram, April 9, 2012, p.3.
\textsuperscript{11} MDB, Vol.IV, No.10, October 2007, p.7.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., Vol.IV, No.11, November 2007, p.12.
Lamb and others\textsuperscript{13}. The worshippers attend the holy mass early in the morning. Every church of prominence celebrates annual festival mostly in the month of member for ten days, besides these religious ceremonies and festivals. Locally, known as tiruvizha, this festival starts with flag hoisting ceremony. Variety entertainments are conducted with much dedication in addition to sermon, prayer and other religious discussions and discourses.

\textbf{Ecclesiastical Organizations}

The Malankara Syrian Catholic Missionaries rendered significant service for the spiritual elevation of the people. During their visit to the houses of the different caste people they not only mingled with the local population freely but worked hard for the progress of churches and extension of church activities. Hence, they formed people’s organization in and around the church. In most of the churches, we come to know the formation of Kolping Organization, Malankara Catholic Association (MCA), Pious Association, Malankara Catholic Youth Movement (MCYM), Vincent De-Paul Society, Children’s for Unity, Legion of Mary, Sunday Class, Holy Childhood Sisters of Charity and similar other organization. They are formed for the spiritual and economic development of the poor and oppressed people; besides the propagation of religious activities too\textsuperscript{14}.

\textbf{Kolping Organization}

Kolping is an important religious organization. Fr. Adolf Kolping started this at Kolon city in Germany on 6\textsuperscript{th} May 1849

with 7 members in the name of “Travel Labourers Society”\textsuperscript{15}. After his demise, this organization was renamed as Kolping organization. At present Kolping organization is spread in 62 countries. In India this organization was started by Fr. Thomas Vattaparampil in 1980 in memory of Fr. Adolf Kolping. The Kolping Society is formed to promote the four sacred principles as preached by its founder namely is a good Christian, a good worker, a good citizen and a good parent.

In 1991 this organization was reunited and started in Madras in 2007. At the time of the formation of Marthandam Diocese in 1996, it has 15 Kolping families and it has now 72 families. In most of the parish churches, Kolping Organization is formed under the leadership of the respective parish priest. The main object of the Kolping Society is to serve and pray for the people and dedicate their life to serve the country, church, society, family besides making them true Christians and to support the people financially\textsuperscript{16}. In each church, Kolping prayer is organized, savings scheme is encourage and discussed and solved social and religious problems. The Attoor Zonal Kolping Society started separate groups in some churches of the Marthandam Ecclesiastical District. Subsequently it spread to various other places\textsuperscript{17} and rendered meritorious service. During 2003-2004 it implemented programmes like house construction, income generation programme like cow and goat rearing for the economic development of its members. In addition, conferences

\textsuperscript{15} Confluence 79, p.94.
\textsuperscript{17} The churches under this zone are Aruviyodu, Pathima Nagar, Pusphagiri, Ambilikonam, Nadaikavu, Pinkuzham, Cherupalloor, Panachamoodu, Mecode, Charror, Pilankala, Novelkadu and Chellankonam. (Malankara Vilakku, Vol.II, No.10, November 1987, p.18.)
and seminars were organized to enhance the capacities of its members and leaders\textsuperscript{18}. As a result, the Kolping society of the Diocese of Marthandam became very active. In order to achieve the Kolping objectives for the development of the socio-economic condition of its 48 Kolping families with 1028\textsuperscript{19} members, meetings were organized to highlight the importance of families in social life. Moreover, a common family day was celebrated at the unit level and declared 31 October as the Kolping day\textsuperscript{20}. Poor Kolping members received assistance under housing, income generation and cow rearing programme on that day\textsuperscript{21}. In 2005, Kolping activities are conducted effectively and its activities were stream lived by regular family visit and providing need based training too. Moreover, St. Mary’s Kolping family was selected as the best Kolping family in India\textsuperscript{22}. The systematic functioning of Kolping families helped its members to save Rs.17,72,000/-.

Consequently the Kolping Organization began to grow year by year. It adopted collective action to solve social and community issues. To achieve this, the Kolping members formed 7 federations in their operational area and organized meetings once in a month. In 2009 a Kolping center at Kanyakumari was blessed and inaugurated on 5\textsuperscript{th} March 2010 by most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom in Malankara Bhavan campus\textsuperscript{23}. Nowadays, most of the churches have this unit.

\textsuperscript{18} MIDSAR, 2003-2004, p.7.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, 2005-2006, p.10.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, 2008-2009, p.23.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, 2009-2010, p.39.
Malankara Catholic Association (MCA)

Malankara Catholic Association is one among the major organizations, of the Diocese to propagate Christian faith. The need for the participation of the common people is inevitable for religious promotion. Realizing, this the Bishop. Mar Pasyliyous started Malankara Catholic Association in 1996\textsuperscript{24}.

Accordingly, office bearers were selected for the Marthandam and Kaliyakavilai Diocese area. It is mainly intended for the young people of above 35 years of age. Its motto is to uplift other Christian people towards the faith through prayers and encourage the people to lead sacramental life.

Malankara Catholic Association objected to the anti-conversion policy of the Government. It keenly engaged in, Free Medical Treatment, Tsunami Rehabilitation Work, Honoring the Award Winners of the Central and State Government, Financial Assistance and Scholarship to the poor students to pursue higher studies, and engaged in other welfare activities. It is gathered from records that most of the churches have Malankara Catholic Association. At present M.C.A. Organization is functioning in 22 parishes under Marthandam Diocese, 18 parishes in the Kaliyakavilai Diocese and 7 parishes in Nagercoil\textsuperscript{25} Diocese with a total membership of nearly 1200 persons engaged in religious activities. Under the guidance of various other common people M.C.A. Organization is doing much service to the people. On 2\textsuperscript{nd} May 2004 the M.C.A. day was celebrated at Christuraja parish Marthandam and organized a

\textsuperscript{24} Confluence 79, p.97.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.98.
public meeting in which the responsibilities of the M.C.A. members to society was discussed in detail\(^{26}\). Similarly on 12, 13 June 2004 a national level M.C.A. Camp was organized in the Mar. Gregorios Auditorium and discussed social and religious issues. In order to encourage the students, a meeting was organized at Marthandam and distributed prizes and Text books, Note books to meritorious students\(^{27}\). General body meeting of Malankara Catholic Association was conducted at Kuzhithurai on 26 January, 2005. It decided to start MCA organization based on truth, unity and peace in other churches too. Election was also conducted to select the office bearers of the organization for the year 2005-2007\(^{28}\). Every year 1\(^{st}\) May was celebrated as M.C.A. Day\(^{29}\). On 10\(^{th}\) November, 2007 a M.C.A. Special meeting was arranged in the community hall, Marthandam and honoured those who received award from the Center, State and District level for their meritorious services. Further, financial assistance was given to the education of poor children\(^{30}\). Similarly, a donation of Rs.25000 was given to the students perusing nursing course, Rs.20000 each for two students doing polytechnic course and Rs.10000 to P.Priya of Kristhuvilagam parish Nagercoil for obtaining highest mark in the 10\(^{th}\) standard examination of 2006-2007 and Rs.7500 each for eight students perusing ITI course\(^{31}\). Thus, through these services, it attracted the attention of the people.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., Vol.IV, No.11, November 2007, p.7.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., Vol.IV, No.11, December 2007, pp.13-14.
**Pious Association**

Besides looking after the physical well being of the people, the Malankara Syrian Catholic Missionaries attempted to promote the spiritual progress\(^{32}\). To attain this objective, Pious Association was started by the vicar of the Ashram Guruswamiji Cripson. One such an institution namely the Christ Sanyasa Samaj Santhi Ashram was established at Boothapandi in 1984 with 4 disabled members. The members of Ashram spend their time in prayer, manual work and leisure and provide spiritual teaching and guidance to the young people and those who live with out peace of mind. Moreover, such people were given practical training in Yoga exercise. Apart from this, attempt is made to give treatment with herbomineral and home medicines. In addition, they engaged in giving education in scientific mode of agriculture to the villagers.

**Malankara Catholic Youth Movement (MCYM)**

Malankara Catholic Youth Movement, one among the Ecclesiastical Organizations was started in 1971 by Arch Bishop Mar Gregorious with a Flag and Emblem. It is aimed to look after over all growth of the Youth and free the society totally and lead the Youth in correct perspective to lead a true life. On the day of the formation of Marthandam Diocese on 16\(^{th}\) December 1992, the Malankara Catholic Youth Movement also flowered with Fr. Joseph Sundaram as its president, C. George its head and S. Jerom as secretary\(^{33}\). At present, the MCYM has 4500 registered


\(^{33}\) Confluence 79, p.99.
members found scattered over 56 parishes of the three Dioceses of Kanyakumari District. With these members, it carry out various functions and celebrations such as, Independence day, Republic day, Environmental day, St. Thomas day, MCYM day, AIDS awareness day, Women’s day, Youth day and such other activities\textsuperscript{34}. For instance the members of MCYM made a Pathayathrai (Way travel) from Kanyakumari to Pattam in Trivandrum in memory of Mar Ivanios. Similarly in order to instill social service mind among youth, social service camps were organized\textsuperscript{35}. Accordingly the members of the MCYM stood for the growth and development of skill, intelligence, religion, culture and society. The youths of this movement engaged themselves in social work with faith in religion. They were strictly prohibited to the use of intoxicating liquors and other harmful drugs. To avoid all such habits, they should make on the oath on Jesus Christ. The MCYM of Vimalapuram parish Nattalam, ever since 1998 under John Bennet helped the poor to construct houses, maintenance of roads and removal silt from the channel. Subsequently, under the leadership of jerom, free eye care camp was conducted. Moreover, they visited the home for the aged established at, Pilankalai and Mother and helped them in various ways. In 2005, when Sunil became the leader of MCYM 13 youths of this parish donated blood in the camp\textsuperscript{36}.

The office bearers of the MCYM were given training in social work and other religious activities. For instance members of the MCYM of Kaliyakavilai parish were given training in taking

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., Vol.I, No.4, August 2004, p.18.
\textsuperscript{36} 1934, Pavazhavila Sirappu Malar, 2009, p.18.
Bible Class on Second Sunday every month.37 Besides they engaged themselves in organizing prayer meetings, social welfare activities and conducted sports and other fine arts competition for youths. Public meetings were also arranged in memory of MCYM day. On such occasions, scholarship was given to the students and donated goats to the members of poor families.38 In memory of Bishop Lawerence Mar Ephraem, the MCYM members of Marthandam parish organized the blood donation camp in which 25 youth donated blood.39 The members of MCYM were provided with photo identity card.40 Moreover, the MCYM of Marthandam Diocese conducted a three day Meditation Camp on 27, 28, 29 May 2008 at Malankara Bhavan Kanyakumari.41 All these activities boosted the morale of the youths.

**Vincent – De – Paul Society**

Vincent-De-Paul Society is an international organization of both men and women of Catholics with branches all over the world. Vincent-De-Paul Society was founded on 23rd April 1833 by the French Scholar Antonie Fredric Ozanam in the name of St. Vincent-De-Paul who from 1851-1860 stood for the well being of those who lost their rights and privileges and lived like slaves. Hence, it is formed to give relief and help to materially weak destitute and develop spirituality in them. The members of the Sabhai extended direct help and service to the needy people on the basis of social justice, without caste, creed, religion, colour and political affiliation. The members of this organization

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41 Ibid., 2008, June, p.13.
42 Confluence 79, p.104.
strived hard for giving relief and help to the economically weak destitute and to motivate them to lead a spiritual life. The members of the Vincent-De-Paul Society established in various churches of the Marthandam Organized Seminars, discussion, mediation and adoration of Holy Communion⁴³.

The members of this society launched various Social Welfare Schemes. From the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church records, we come to know that Vincent-De-Paul Society established in all churches arranged competition to promote real spirit among its members⁴⁴. They actively engaged in different activities such as cleaning the common place, laying roads, removing the silt from ponds, giving guidance for higher education, seeking employment opportunities, arranging free medical camp and providing marriage assistance.

Vincent-De-Paul Society organized a Jothi Ottam. On such a function, 300 youths participated wearing black and white uniforms. A meeting was also arranged on the topic “Basic of education and peace”. Similar to that, a one day seminar was organized by the Vincent-De-Paul Society of Palavilai on 22nd October 2004⁴⁵. The Vincent-De-Paul Society of George Nager and St. Soosaiappar Hospital at Panachamoodu jointly organized a free medical camp on 10th April 2005⁴⁶. Similarly on 7th May 2005 the Vincent-De-Paul Society of Marthandam conducted, Quiz competition, essay writing competition and elocution competition on 28th June 2005⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Vol.II, No.6, June 2005, p.16.
The Vincent-De-Paul Society paid adequate attention to organize seminars and conferences to motivate the students in their education. Moreover, Nineteen Students of vocational training were given Rs.230 each, 18 students of technical training scheme were provided with Rs.3000 each and thirty one students adopted under students scheme received Rs.1500 each as assistance. So also Vincent-De-Paul Society of Marthandam Puthoor Church donated Rs.4700 to each of the poor people under self sufficient scheme\textsuperscript{48}. Moreover, its members are instructed to visit the houses of the adherence and visit home for the aged. Orphanages are concentrated on Bible Studies and Church activities\textsuperscript{49}. The central organization of Vincent-De-Paul Society Marthandam at its meeting paid education assistance to 5 poor students of the each Diocese at a rate of Rs.1500 each in memory of Sr. Corith. Similarly the district Sabha paid each Rs.1500/- to five poor sick people to meet their medical expenses\textsuperscript{50}. Central executive of the Vincent-De-Paul Society arranged lent day meditation, training for leaders of the branches of the Vincent-De-Paul Society, issue of loans and educational assistance\textsuperscript{51}. Thus through ecclesiastical activities, the Vincent-De-Paul Society rented Numerous Assistance to the poor people.

Children’s for Unity

Children’s for unity is an organization established by the sisters of charity of Marthandam Diocese. Locally knows as Chirrargal Iyakkam, the meeting of Children’s for unity was held

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., Vol.IV, No.4, April 2007, pp.12-13.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p.10.
in every church between 1.30 pm and 3.30 pm\textsuperscript{52}. The members of this association actively involved themselves for the personal development of the children through meditation and religious studies. Besides conducting meeting in the church, special meetings are also arranged to enrich their knowledge. Quiz programmes are organized and encouraged the Children’s for unity to participate in meetings. A meeting of Children’s for unity was held at Nadaikavu on 27, 28, 29, 30 September 2005. Attended by 300 children’s from 30 Children’s for unity association from various churches. To encourage children’s activities, a tour was organized\textsuperscript{53}. In which discussions and discourses were conducted on various themes especially on how to live\textsuperscript{54}. Similarly on 12 October 2005, a one day training camp was organized at Nadaikavu for the organizers of Children’s for unity of various churches. In this meeting the organizers were given training to manage the children’s for unity successfully and emphasized the importance of children’s for unity\textsuperscript{55}.

Children’s for unity strived for the growth of the each parish based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, to lead a good life and to serve the humanity. This organization actively engaged to inculcate such qualities among the children which are the moto of children’s for unity\textsuperscript{56}. This organization prescribes that children and parents should lead a good life based on the biblical prescription and narrate their life experiences to the organizers. This in turn motivates the children’s to attend the Bible Class and other classes in the

\textsuperscript{52} 1934, Pavazhavilla Sirappu Malar, p.17.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., Vol.II, No.11, November 2005, p.22.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., Vol.II, No.12, December 2005, p.11.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., Vol.II, No.12, December 2005, pp.9-10.
schools regularly to learn and to come up in life. Moreover, the children’s for unity should find out the ways and means to earn income to meet the expenses of Higher education and stressed them the need for good play, maintenance of good physique and extend a helping bond to others as for as possible. Therefore, the directors of this organization delivered spiritual lectures and guided them towards the attainment of dedicated and peaceful religious life. In addition, the member’s of the children’s for unity organization teach the young mind about human value and welfare, family relationship, education, present day situation, helping the poor, attending the holy mass, how to live, how to solve problems, defects of slavery and the recent developments in medias and communication\textsuperscript{57}.

**Legion of Mary**

Legion of Mary is important religious organizations flowered under each parish. This organization was founded by brother Frankpat on 7\textsuperscript{th} September 1921 in Meera house situated in the Francis Street, Daplin city in Ireland. Mainly started for married women, the Legion of Mary aimed to make the members pure and make them as divine through prayer and service\textsuperscript{58}.

Originally this organization was known as Matha Quriya. At first it was started in the Kirathoor parish on 15 May, 1858 and in Marthandam parish on 1 October 1978. It was founded by Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil. With the growth of the pious organization, various presidiums were also formed. An instance

\textsuperscript{57} Parish Diary, Marthandam, 2002, p.12.

\textsuperscript{58} *Confluence* 79, p.106.
in the Fathima Nager St. George parish 3 more presidiums were formed to activate its activities. Later, it became Legion of Mary. The members of the organization belong to one group and generally meet on every Sunday in the Church premises itself. The office bearers of Legion of Mary are elected once in three years. Usually the meetings of Legion of Mary were conducted on Friday and Sunday and its members engaged in Prayer, Meditation and other religious observances. Moreover, its members not only visited the house of various families irrespective of caste and religion but conducted prayer meetings. Besides, they organized various seminars and conferences on various socio-religious. It themes created awareness among the members. In every year in the month of October which is considered as rosary month, procession was organized on the last Sunday of October. The members of Legion of Mary of Kuzhithurai region organized a procession to Palivilai on Sunday 30 May 2004 to propagate religion. The members during their visit to different houses met the young men and women, preached the values of Gospel and the teaching of Christ and motivated them to follow the Christian faith. However, they are required to attend the church service without fail. The sisters of the Legion of Mary of St. Thomas Church of Thamanoor with parish priest Fr. Michael Mukkampallath visited the houses of the members during the church festivals. On such occasions they invited the church members; who didn’t attend the church service for many years to attend the church service and used to mark the symbol of cross on their forehead. On certain

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occasions, the members of the Legion of Mary organized prayer meeting in memory of the XXII anniversary of Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil at Christuraja parish at Marthandam. Subsequently, in the evening eighteen students studying in the technical training were selected from different centers were given Rs.500 each as educational assistance. The members of Legion of Mary conducted prayer meetings in the houses daily. Similarly, they arranged ten day’s meditation camp. Under the leadership of mother superior Leo vocation promoter’s meeting was also arranged.

In memory of Mar Ivanious the sisters of the Legion of Mary participated in a long procession on 13, July 2006. Similarly in the same year on 21, 22 July young nuns attended such meetings. Qualified sisters of Legion of Mary were sent to higher studies. For instance Sister Gloria of St. Soosaiappar parish Marthandam was given the opportunity to study Child Specialist Course at St. John’s Medical College, Bangalore, in memory of the 70th Anniversary of Legion of Mary. In memory of the 27th Anniversary of the founder Joseph Kuzhinjalil and Mother Mary Kallackal an exhibition was also organized on 8 June 2007.

Catechism

The Malankara Catholic Missionaries, to promote Ecclesiastical Service, Sunday Classes were arranged in all

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67 Ibid., Vol.IV, No.4, April 2007, p.19.
68 Ibid., Vol.IV, No.6, June 2007, p.16.
churches blossomed under Dioceses. Since the inception of Malankara Syrian Catholic Mission at Marthandam, some 75 years ago, the Sunday Classes were also started. Sunday classes are conducted to the Children of various age groups from 1st standard to 12th standard. In the three dioceses of Kaliyakavilai, Marthandam and Nagercoil, Sunday classes is conducted either in Tamil or are in Malayalam depending on the availability of children in the respective languages in each parish. At present nearly 5600 students in Tamil Medium and 560 Students in Malayalam medium are getting religious education under the guidance of 675 teachers engaged in Sunday Classes 69. However, ever since 2003 Sunday Classes are conducted for the 1st Standard to 10th Standard in Tamil Language. Examinations are conducted to test the proficiency of the students in biblical studies and stories and prices are distributed to the meritorious students. In order to promote theological information, summer vocational bible classes are arranged. Besides, in every year, during September and October, competitive examination are conducted to elicit efficiency of the students in fine arts, cultural activities, essay writing and painting and distributed prices and rolling cups. In some parishes, arts festival is also conducted to the Sunday Class Students with much pomp and splendor. Moreover, the new followers of this faith were given training to obtain baptism and Holy Communion. Thus, through vocational Bible Class and Sunday Classes, the youngsters are given spiritual knowledge. Usually the date and time of conducting Sunday Class Examination is informed well in advance. In

70 Malankara Vilakkku, Vol.22, No.12, Marthandam, 1998, p.34.
addition, the terms, conditions and language for appearing the examination are also published\textsuperscript{71}. The result of the examination including the name of the candidates and the marks obtained are informed to the candidate as well as published in their Bulletin and Magazine\textsuperscript{72}. Usually, in every year, August 1\textsuperscript{st} is celebrated as Sunday Class day with church service, prayer meeting procession and public meeting. On such occasions, students participate in the competitive examination in writing small stories, poetry writing, painting, writing biblical verses and quiz a bible themes\textsuperscript{73}. Prizes are also given to the winners of Sunday Class day cover collection. Moreover, seminars and conferences were also organized to the benefit of Sunday School Students\textsuperscript{74}.

**Holy Childhood**

Holy Childhood is a pious organization meant for the children of the age group ranging from 6 to 14 years old. The main objective of this sabha is to protect the neglected poor and destitute children from the society and make them high in the social ladder\textsuperscript{75}. Similar to children’s for unity, holy childhood association was formed to promote the ecclesiastical activities of the church. Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil started the association. Usually the meeting of the association is convened on every Friday under the care of the parish priest. In order to explain the aims to objectives of the holy children’s, camps were organized. For instance a holy childhood camp for both male and female

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., Vol.I, No.3, July 2004, pp.8-10.  
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., Vol.I, No.4, August 2004, pp.8-11.  
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., Vol.II, No.4, April 2005, pp.10-11.  
\textsuperscript{75} Malankara Vilakku, Vol.23, No.3, Marthandam, 1999, p.36.}
children was organized from February 1 to 13 in the Pilankalai parish. Nearly 250 children from 7 parishes namely Pilankalai, Alwarcoil, Vazhodu, Kumaracoil, Mathur, Anakkarai, Muthalar were participated. Holy Childhood Organization not only encouraged them but taught them Christian songs. Usually proper announcement was given to each parish mentioning the date and place of conducting holy childhood campus\textsuperscript{76}. To motivate the children, competitions and other cultural programmes were organized in which prizes were given to the winners\textsuperscript{77}.

**Sisters of Charity**

The sisters of charity and daughters of Mary homes established in some parishes rented ecclesiastical and social services. The daughters of Mary home strived hard to enlist young women to the church service by sending them to nunnery courses. In 2004, four young women namely Jaya of Pilankalai, Vajeesha of Mancaudu, Anizeena of Manjathoppu, Sheeja of Adaikakuzhi, besides eighteen candidates joined the nunnery course at daughters of Mary\textsuperscript{78}. The daughters of Mary informed its members and nuns to participate in Kerygma course aimed to propagate Christian faith, held on 2 – 12 August at Marthandam. The seminar was exclusively devoted to the themes such as Kerygma of Jesus, Kerygma of the Apostles, Kerygma Today in which 35 sisters attended.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p.35.
\textsuperscript{77} MDB, Vol.I, No.6, Marthandam, December 2010, p.23.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., Vol.I, No.3, June 2004, p.12.
In order to facilitate the participation of most of the nuns such meetings were arranged in different places. Plenary council meeting was also arranged in the Marthandam Center. On behalf of all the heads of Daughters of Mary centers and district authority’s 42 nun’s participated\textsuperscript{79}. From all these facts, it is evident that various organizations are formed not only to promote Christianity but to enhance the social and economic status of the people. Thus, the Missionaries took every effort to promote the ecclesiastical services.