CHAPTER IV

THE NUN IN THE MAKING

The nun or a religious is one who opted out of the family life choosing celibacy. Celibate life makes the nun significant or that distinguishes the lay and religious. To transcend the traditional norms of life to lead a Religious life was a new experience for Kerala. To the women, it was necessary to get their act legitimized. The decision of the Christian women to deviate from the traditional roles got social acceptance when they joined the congregation. The canonical pattern of religious congregation was introduced in Kerala so as to accommodate those women who opted for Religious life. In fact the church authorities could identify those who opted for an alternative space and directed them to a more secure divine space where their chastity is protected and controlled. The process of surpassing the traditional roles and the acceptance of the community to lead such a life, accompanied by the institutional formation given to them, in fact made nun in Kerala.

It is a paradox that women who deviated from the traditional roles supported hierarchical systems of classification based on sex. This according to Roberta Gilchrist was, medieval religion conspired to create a habitus for women, in which their own desire for spiritual salvation caused them to reproduce the structural gender relations of medieval society through their own agency.¹ The canon lawyers have framed her life

within clearly circumscribed limits, which she respects even if she feels she is being subjected to a kind of canonical tutelage. She accepts the fact that she can be made use of without her own wishes being consulted; she does not complain because, quite apart from the vow of obedience, she is encouraged to do so by a natural subordination. These medieval characteristics of the nunnery were brought forth along with the foundation of the congregation in Kerala.

The consent of the nun to rule over them by the male religious authorities can be explained in terms of hegemony exercised by a dominant group who seek to shape and dominate consciousness through cultural production, legitimation, control and diffusion of values, symbols and meanings. These serve to create a sense of reality that naturalises the social positioning of people in hierarchical relationships. The hegemonic power exercised by the male ecclesiastical authorities over the religious can be attributed to the techniques of power exercised by a dominant group. The power in the western Christian society was ‘pastoral’ which demand from others an absolute obedience. Christian virtues developed through monastic discipline explicitly aimed to create, through a

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4 The Christian techniques of examination like, confession, guidance, obedience, have an aim: to get individuals to work at their own mortification in this world. Mortification is not death, of course, but it is renunciation of this world and of oneself; a kind of every day death. A death, which is supposed to provide life in another world; Michel Foucault, ‘Pastoral power and Political reason’, in Jeremy R. Cariette (ed.) *Religion and Culture by Michel Foucault*, Manchester, 1999, p.143; This paper was originally delivered at Stanford University, California, USA, 1979.

programme of communal living, the will to obey. The disciplinary practices in the monastery constructed religious selves that owed obedience to their superior. This superior power of the pastor gave him authority to require the religious to do everything necessary for their salvation, obligatory salvation. As a pre-requisite for salvation, the mind and body of the individual is regulated and sexuality is controlled within the monastic discipline.

4.1 Congregating Religious Life: Formative Processes

One becomes a religious. Becoming a religious is a very deliberate process freely undertaken by the individual in relation to the congregation she or he proposes to enter. It begins with the experience of what, theologically, has been called a ‘vocation’ or call to the life. That call becomes the subject of a prolonged process of ‘discernment’, which involves reflection, testing and formation. Being a religious is a public situation in the church and other members of the church are entitled to hold the religious accountable for the commitments made. This is a state of life that affects everything the person will do, every decision she will make, for the rest of her life.

A religious institute usually comes into being by the initiative of an individual or a group, the founder(s), who decides to establish a particular organization within the broad historical social movement of religious life. Only after living together for some

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time, the founder usually with the first members decide on the purpose and the way of life of a group, writes a constitution or a rule of life that both describe the group and its organization and prescribes its way of life, and submits the documents to the church officials for approval. If the documents receive approbation, the group becomes a diocesan or an institute of pontifical right.\textsuperscript{10}

Religious congregations, as canonical entities,\textsuperscript{11} conform to a certain pattern that is more or less standard. The elements all communities in common include perpetual (or continually renewed) profession of the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience; community life; a governmental structure and requirement of appropriate formation of new members. The congregations have configurations of their own which makes them different from the other and provide for the realization of each of these elements. A given congregation has its particular agenda or mission, its means of achieving that agenda through its lifestyle and ministry, its own rules and regulation, entrance requirements and style of government\textsuperscript{12} which itself constitute the integrity and identity of a congregation.

With the entry of women to Religious life, religious congregation became a social reality in Kerala. The women were introduced to a new way of life and lifestyle, by the native priests and missionaries who were aware of the structure and practices of the congregations in Europe, which had its own structures and mechanisms of organization,

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{11} Congregations of Kerala have a European pattern, since they were given formation by Carmelite missionaries from Europe as well as native bishops who had acquaintance with the Roman Catholic Church.
to mould or frame the religious.\textsuperscript{13} The evolving Nazrani church with European authorities was eager to fulfil the aspirations of a community having sought to place their daughters in a secure domain. The Nazrani women who opted for the consecrated life, submitted to the gender relations of the hierarchical church, not only to attain spiritual salvation for themselves and other Nazrani women but also to acquire a higher position in the religious as well as societal life of the community. These sisters were moulded through the *regula*, directives, and traditions which were all designed by men\textsuperscript{14} who focused on disciplining the mind and body of the religious. The canon laws recognised the authority of diocesan congregations of Kerala over women religious which had the surveillance of the bishop at the diocesan level and that of the parish priest at the local level.

The making of nun in Kerala encompasses an understanding of the process of formation given to the candidates, the outcome of which could be seen in the way of life as well as the as the organizational structure of the congregation. In other words the organizational form and the way of life of the nun is the result of the formation given to them. This clearly shows how the medieval monastic disciplining was introduced in Kerala, abiding to the authority, placed the Mother Superior as well as the church fathers


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., The constitutions and the practices of the four congregations under study are framed on canonical standard by the concerned male authorities.
as Superiors, which in a way led to the hierarchialisation of the authority in the Nazrani community.\textsuperscript{15}

4.2 Making the Nun: Initial Efforts

The efforts to make the nun started with the foundation of the first convent. From the chronicles one could understand that the founding fathers took the initiative to give strong conviction and awareness to the first members that only if strong foundation was laid, they could transfer everything to the coming generation.\textsuperscript{16} In the initial years of the founding of the convent, both the fathers were trying to train them the basics of the ascetic life. Mar Louis Pazheparambil, Vicar Apostolic of Ernakulam has written in the introduction to the constitution of 1917 that, “Leopold missionary has not written down the constitution, since the widows and girls did not know what Religious life is. He has given them in writing the day to day practices they had to follow and also instructed them and compelled them to do it regularly. With frequent advices and penances, he taught them the spirit of Religious life. Gradually rules and regulations were prescribed to them, and advice was given to them. Meanwhile when he was compelled to go to Rome he wrote it down in brief.”\textsuperscript{17} After the period of the founding fathers, information

\textsuperscript{15} The Hierarchical order of authority over the congregation is written in the Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{16} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{17} Moonnam Sabha Kanyastrikalude Nyapramanam, 1875 (Mal), (Hereafter CMC Nyapramanam 1875); this manuscript is preserved in the Mount Carmel Generalate, Aluva; At the time of giving the first Nyapramanam, it is written in the Nalagamam, that, “this constitution is a translated form of the regula of our mother St. Teresa, and made to suit the people of this country and their situations. The constitution observed till now was the abridged constitution for the Third Order, which was used abroad,” Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol. I, p. 98
about the plan of formation is obtained from the constitutions given to independent units of the congregation by the respective bishops of the dioceses.

For the first fourteen years, they had no written constitution. During this period, as it is clear from the Koonammavu chronicle they were orally instructed. Instructions were given to them through letters also. Ignorant about the Religious life, they were introduced to the new life. The period from 1866 to 1875 can be called the early phase of the religious formation. On the day of the blessing of the new convent, a testament was given to them describing the essence of Religious life and they were instructed to read “read reflectively and carefully on each monthly recollection day.” Revealed from the pages of the chronicles and from the letters written by Fr. Chavara as well as the the constitutions and directives given by Fr. Leopold in 1875, we get a clear picture of the formation of the nun in the early phase of the development of the congregation. The initial efforts to convey ideas about the convent, conventual life, virtues to be practiced by a religious, all constitute the making of a nun.

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18 Benacasia (ed.), *Leopold Moopachante Kathukal*, Aluva, 1987; Lukas Vithuvattikal (ed.), CWC, Vol. IV, Mannanam, 1982; Many of the letters written by both the priests are reproduced in the *Koonammavu Nalagamam*.

19 Testament is a letter written by Fr. Leopold Beccaro to the sisters explaining the Religious life and also the virtues they had to follow. The testament is in manuscript form titled *Mooppachante Upadesam (Advices of Mooppachan)*. The summary of text is published in Prima (ed.), *Kerala Carmala Sanyasini Sabha* (Mal), Aluva, 1987, pp. 22-28; and Benacasia(ed.), *Op.cit.*, (Mal), Aluva, 1987, p. 3-9.

4.3 Portrayal of the Convent: Implanting Ideas

The attempt to portray the first convent in Kerala begins with the preliminary attempt to found a convent, at Puthenpally, in the church property to the east of the cross of Puthenpally, in 1860. About the construction, it is written that, ‘the foundation was laid and incurring a great expense, a compound wall of height thirteen feet has been constructed around.’\textsuperscript{21} But construction of the convent was stopped due to the turmoil in the Church.\textsuperscript{22} Later when the convent was established in a temporary building in 1866, the founding fathers tried to design a convent, with a secluded atmosphere. It had three bedrooms, one prayer room and one dining room. Surrounding the house, a fence was put up to demarcate the enclosure, termed as atakkaveli.\textsuperscript{23} Beyond that there was an external fence all round the compound. Nobody was permitted to enter the house especially men. Men could not enter the house as there was a board informing ‘three months penance’ to those who enter the convent.\textsuperscript{24}

Fathers cared to furnish the house with the minute things the religious needed and the Nalagamam list a few things arranged in the house. They are: “A clock that strikes the hours and sounds the alarm; a wooden clapper to announce the time of prayer, meditation, food, work, rising etc.; a vessel of holy water was placed in the rooms and other places in order that there would always be holy water in the rooms, to make the sign of the cross with it on their foreheads, whenever they entered or left the rooms; a white bottle to bring holy water from the church to fill the vessels when the water got

\textsuperscript{21} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 2.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., pp. 12-13.
over was also kept there, filled with holy water. There was a wooden cross kept in each room and also some framed pictures; in the prayer room were framed pictures of Christ, Mother Mary and Joseph; the wooden board to be fixed at the outer gate and the wooden board which was fixed at the gatehouse of the atakkaveli; in every room were a small table and a bench; in the refectory was a long table and a bench to sit and eat; porcelain plates to take food; big bowls to take gruel and buttermilk; small bowls for salt and curries; earthenware tumblers to drink water; spoons and forks; basins to wash our faces etc.; privy and stool; the sign board to be kept at their entrance; earthen karakams to be used there (a jug with a kettle’s spout); in each room were kept books such as catechism, Bible, history and rules for model holy life; ink, ink-bottles and quills to write; a small knife to sharpen the quills; a scale and pencil to draw lines on paper; for sewing, a box of needles, ball thread, card thread, silk thread, yellow and violet colour thread, black silk thread, pairs of scissors, pen knife, stylus of pointed tool for writing on palm leaf; wire and pliers to make rosary and penitential girdles; bed room lamps, a lantern to be used in common in the light; wax roles to light lamps; two candle stands and candles in the prayer room; a kitchen knife to cut the vegetables; in order to make a garden, young plants of rose flower, jasmine, konkani flowers, makhi flowers, passion flowers, four o’clock flower, bishops button, etc. and a small spade to plant them in flower pots or elsewhere; a long thick strand of thread to make wicks for the lamps; pieces of old cloth that may be useful for some purpose or another; in order to write and inform whatever they may be in need of and to make someone bring their requirements there was a chest with two keys, one key with moopachan’s room and the other to be kept by the superior. And whenever they needed something, it was to be written and placed in the chest,
locked and the key removed and kept by them; there was a small box kept tied up, on the top of another box; there were the brown cloth and cloth imprinted with the image of Mary and other things necessary to make scapulars; they had not only brought all these kinds of things but also arranged them with their own hands before we arrived; in the rooms apportioned for each one, there was a cot with a mat spread out on it and covered with a blank sheet."25 The materials for physical and religious life as well as to meet leisurely hours were thus provided for.

When the foundation was laid for a permanent building, fathers decided to make a two storied building and also to build a closed building for the boarding and school with walls built in a single stone.26 They started the work of all three buildings together as one unit.27 After the construction of the convent, a new way to the church was made and at the end of it, a door post with doors that could be locked were fixed. Getting out of the door they could reach the church compound.28 Besides this the edukumthath for the young girls, who are to be boarded and brought up there, was built with a door to the convent and another outer door. But these doors were later closed up with stone walls. And a door was opened in the middle into the cloister and an outer door at the south end. Near that door a new playground was made for them to play, besides their bathing rooms and toilets. There was a garden built with stone walls and places demarcated for plants and paths.29 On the eastern side was built two big rooms for kitchen with all necessary

26 Ibid., p. 47.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., p. 54.
29 Ibid.
facilities and utensils and on the western side was the area set apart for washing clothes. To the south, was a recreation room built on six pillars with benches all around. At the north end was a grotto on a pillar with a framed picture of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Towards the south of this room was shed of cows.  

The fathers wanted to limit the number of Religious to 13 including the superior. Fr. Leopold said, “When once this number is completed, I will not admit any more as long as I live.” In the common room, they arranged everything for the religious there: “Plates and bowls to be used by all fourteen of us, 14 ink bottles with blue ink kept separately, bundles of feathers, pencil, different kinds of thread, packets of needles etc. In both the dormitories i.e. upstairs and downstairs there were many framed pictures. In each room there were three framed pictures, a wooden cross, holy water, a cot and a sheet. Below the cot were a chamber pot and a broom. In the common room there were a four big picture frames. At the window of the staircase was the big bell. Facing it stood the clock. Below the clock was a clapper and above the clock was the small bell. In the prayer room were installed the 14 stations of the way of the cross. Above the altar were Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, our mother Teresa of Avila and our father John of the Cross, all the five in a single big frame. On the altar were four candle stands, a crucifix and also flower vases of the same material. There were benches on either side and another bench in the middle for the superior. There were five wooden spittoons and also lamps on the

30 Ibid., p. 55.

31 Ibid., p. 60; Though it was instructed to limit the number to 13, but arrangements for 14 members were made in the new convent. The Nyayapramanam of 1875 also insists that, like the convent of Teresa of Avila, there should have 14 members including Superior; CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter 2, article 2, p. 6.
walls of the rooms. There was also lantern and other things. On the door of every room was written a sentence and below it a virtue. The picture of the Holy Father was stuck on all the doors. All these were done as if it was a monastery where people had lived for long.\textsuperscript{32} Above the refectory door on the side was a big cross, where they have to gather for thanksgiving after meals. At the entrance of the refectory was a bench for the reader and on the left was the big cross to be carried on the shoulder as penance. On the wall and the bench were kept the small crosses for doing penance. Besides these a short scapular, a crown of thorns, a rope, a stone, a blindfold\textsuperscript{33} and a bit stick\textsuperscript{34} were kept, along with written directions as how to do penances. On both sides were tables of wood. On both tables were folded napkins, salt-bottles, drinking bowls and a vessel to keep drinking water. In the middle were a cross and a table and a bench for the mother superior. A parlour to see the visitor was also arranged.\textsuperscript{35}

The picture of the first convent and the arrangements made in the convent, make it clear what a convent is and what properties are needed for a systematic monastic life. Many of the items furnished above were uncommon or were not easily accessible to the ordinary people at that time.\textsuperscript{36} Residing in this convent itself enhanced the dignity of the religious and an acceptable social identity outside marriage.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Bendh} or blind fold is a piece of cloth with two tapes to cover the eyes.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Katikol} or bit stick is a stick with two strings at the end.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Koonammavu Nalagamam}, Vol.1, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{36} About the arrangements made in the convent, Fr. Leopold has commented, “The things which even the wealthy people don’t have, you have. All the comforts that foreigners, Europeans and even we don’t have, you have”; \textit{Koonammavu Nalagamam}, Vol.1, p. 123
4.4 Enclosed World: Perceiving Ideas

“Religious” was synonymous with ‘enclosed’, for hundreds of years and female sexuality has generally been of great concern to authorities throughout history. The idea of unenclosed nuns seemed a profanation. The most intransigent manifesto in favour of enclosure was the celebrated *decretal Periculoso* of Pope Bonifice VIII in 1298:

“We command by this present constitution, whose validity is eternal and can never be questioned, that all nuns, collectively and individually, present and to come, and of whatever part of the world they may be, shall henceforth remain in their monasteries in perpetual enclosure.”

The Catholic reform moves which began in the sixteenth century gave a new emphasis on Pope Bonifice VIII’s policy of strict enclosure for all female religious houses, enforced by a threat of excommunication or secular punishment. Women were to be sharply cut off from the temptations of the world. Even though this system has gone through change in Europe, the appendage ‘a husband or a wall’ seems to continue in practice. Coming to Kerala, though a combination of both contemplative and

41 “The holy council commands all bishops, calling the divine justice to witness and under threat of eternal damnation, to ensure the enclosure of nuns in all monasteries subject to them...they should coerce any who are disobedient and refractory by ecclesiastical censures and other penalties, setting aside any form of appeal, and calling in the help of the secular arm if needed”; Decrees of the Council of Trent session 25, chapter 5 translated and quoted in Elizebath Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators 1298-1545*, Washington, 1997, p. 128; cited in Merry. E. Weisner-Hanks, *Op. cit*, p. 106.
apostolic life was designed, in the initial years it was contemplative and in whatever apostolate they engaged in, it was within the compound walls.

The convent and its premises gave the women and their relatives, a picture of the enclosure, where they are going to enter. The sign board showing the penance given to men who enter the convent, atakkaveli which is to control the mobility of the religious and to ensure the enclosure, the path through which they could enter the church compound, construction of the school and boarding in the same compound with a door to the convent, separate place arranged for them to hear Holy Mass, to go to the confessional as well as to receive holy commune⁴³ in the church, all prima facie conceived the idea of an enclosed world.

Instructions on enclosure were also given to them saying that, “Shun all your thought that go beyond this enclosure, as you would, the thoughts against the sixth commandment.”⁴⁴ On another occasion they were instructed, ‘You have nothing to do with things outside the enclosure. You do not need to enquire or know about the news outside this fence, because you are people who have left the world. Unless the dust of the world is removed from you the fragrance of your holiness cannot get out of you. There is one thing beyond this enclosure you always think. It is the Holy Eucharist. This Holy Eucharist you have to keep in mind always.’⁴⁵ The reason for such an instruction is said to be distraction during meditation.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ “Do not commit adultery.”
⁴⁵ Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol. 1, p. 27.
⁴⁶ Ibid., Vol.1, p. 18.
The early instructions were summated in the constitution of 1875. According to the constitution, “they could not permit anybody to enter the convent without the permission of the director or melpatakkaran, if somebody is sick superior can permit; they could not enter the school even though it is within the compound and edukumthath though attached to the convent, without the permission of the superior; they could not go out of the cloister without the permission and at the time of recreation they could go in group; nearest relatives were permitted to see the religious twice or thrice in a year and could meet the relatives accompanied by another religious; they could write letter only through superior; appoint a male and a female procurator in order to deal with the outside world.” All these instructions were to enclose them within the walls of the convent. So they will not be tempted or to be a temptation for others.

The fear of the male authorities on the sexuality of the religious and their efforts to regulate and shape the mind and body of the candidates is clear, when they are instructed “not touch each other, not even your shawls should. You have to observe ‘untouchability’, If you happen to touch another, at once you should feel sorry for it.” Likewise in order to curtail their desire in the body, they were asked, “not even look at your own hands. You must be like Jasmine flowers. Even if the slightest dust falls on it, it loses its lustre. Similarly jasmine of chastity should be carefully protected and safeguarded by you so that it may not be dulled and defied by dust.”

47 CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter III, article 1-23, pp. 10-14; Appointment of a Procudhorathy is mentioned in the Koonammavu Nalagamam, p. 55.
49 Ibid., Vol.1, p. 22.
Religious vocation is a vocation of modesty. So it is necessary that the religious must have modesty.\textsuperscript{50} They were made conscious that, “Jesus sees you always. He sees each and every act you do: walking, turning your head this side and that side, and not being aware of what you are doing. When you go to the church you must observe great modesty because the people outside will be looking at you. Every one look of you may give scandal to ten people. Likewise one look of yours will inspire ten people to an act of love of god or a desire for the virtuous life.”\textsuperscript{51}

The dress was one of the symbols of modesty. About the dress of the early members, they remarked in the chronicle, “cloth was brought from Cochin in order to make a new dress for us and we were made to stitch for ourselves these dresses that would be extraordinarily modest.”\textsuperscript{52} In a letter written by Fr. Leopold from Rome, he has written that, “Sisters here have given me a full suite of their habit.”\textsuperscript{53} The habit of the European Carmelite sisters was brought to Kerala. In the early years they used to wear brown woollen clothes, imitating Carmelites. The fully covered dress with veil became a symbol of their modesty, signifying control over their sexuality and securing an identity of their own.

These references from the early religious clearly show the desire to draw sharp boundary between honourable and dishonourable conduct and character of the sisters.

\textsuperscript{50} CMC Nyapramanam, 1875, chapter VII, article 7, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{51} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., Vol.1, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{53} The letter of Leopold had been copied down in The Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 170
Nuns were physically enclosed to keep them from the temptations of the world as pure ‘Brides of the Christ’.\textsuperscript{54}

\section*{4.5 Entrance to the Congregated Life: Prescriptions and Practices}

An \textit{Arthini} could join the convent only after the ‘testing and examination’ by the fathers. All the orally transmitted idea about the admission\textsuperscript{55} of the candidate was later codified in the constitution. The qualities prescribed for the candidates according to the constitution are: a) They should not be less than fifteen and more than thirty years of age, b) She should be from the noble family, c) She should be of good character and healthy, d) They should have the spirit for Religious life as well as intelligence and talent for education, e) They should have high morality rather than other worldly qualities, f) they could be enrolled even if patrimony is low but the convent should have enough financial backing, g) Inquire about their qualities, h) If the candidates are not grown up in the monastery, the religious have to satisfy themselves by seeing them. The sisters have to inquire whether they came willingly or do they have any disease and do they know catechism?\textsuperscript{56}

Apart from the religious, there were lay religious, who are termed as \textit{almaya sahodarikal} or \textit{thuna sahodarikal} \textsuperscript{57} in the \textit{Nalagamam}. Their entry into the convent has

\textsuperscript{54} Merry E.Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Op.cit.}, p. 260
\textsuperscript{55} About the reception of first members to the convent, it is written in the \textit{Koonammavu Nalagamam} that, “he tested them often and in various ways to see whether their desire was genuine. He also made inquiries about their life and behaviour to confirm his convictions”. About the entry of Sr. Clara, it is written, “he could not make a decision immediately, without having interviewed her once or twice in the confessional and having known all about her”, \textit{Koonammavu Nalagamam}, Vol.1, pp. 4, 9.
\textsuperscript{56} CMC Nyapramanam1875, Chapter I, article 1-10, p. 6.
the same procedure as that of the religious. What makes them different is, they need not require same educational qualification or patrimony as that of the religious. Their number is proportionally limited. As they are educationally low, they were exempted from the canonical prayers; instead they have to recite ‘Jesus in heaven and Hail Mary.’ Religious habit was given to them on the basis of consultation voting and the lay sister is identified in the dress. In 1880, the first lay-religious joined the convent after their vestition and in 1887 took the vows.

Once received in the boarding, the candidates were not permitted to talk to the religious except on few occasions. Contact with the lay people was also restricted. If the candidate is not seen satisfactory on testing, she is denied admission to the Order of Carmelites. The decision to receive them or not is taken by consultation voting, in accordance with the conscience of the religious. Before vestition, each candidate has to get the consensus of the community thrice, by voting. For the first two years they will have ordinary dress. Three years after the reception of the holy habit, they will have first

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59 Religious habit of the lay sisters prescribed by the first constitution is, their head dress and *kappa* should be shorter than the others and the belt for the professed should be of black woollen cloth. *CMC Nyapramanam 1875*, chapter XIII, article 9, p. 45.
61 They could mingle with the religious at the recreation time on Christmas days, Easter, festival of Carmel, days of vestition and final profession, *Carmelamathavinte Nishpaduka Moonnamsabhayile Parambharya Natapatikal*, (Book of traditions of Discalced Third Order of Mother Carmel, here after *Parambharya Natapatikal*), kept in the archives, Mount Carmel Generalate, Aluva, p. 31; *Koonammavu Nalagamam*, Vol. I, p. 140.
63 For voting they used wooden chalice and black and white beads. If the casted votes were all white, the candidates were acceptable to the congregation. Otherwise, they were to wait for some more time or denied entry; *Koonammavu Nalagamam*, Vol. 1, p. 81.
64 a) Prior to the reception in the convent, b) one year after the reception, c) two months before the vestition; *CMC Nyapramanam, 1875*, chapter II, article 15, p. 9
Before vestition the new sisters have to give their patrimony either in cash or as land.

Religious habit distinguishes the religious from the lay women. The first four members of the congregation got the habit one year after their entry into the convent but they were not clothed as per the full regulations. After the initial irregularities, for the first time, on December 24th 1867, Third Order sisters had been clothed, following the full regulations. “In the presence of the parents, relatives and the religious, assembled in the prayer room of the convent, the responses and pronouncements of the vows were carried out. After the homily, Fr. Leopold Beccaro blessed the clothes and then he removed their shawls (half saree) which lay women wear and gave them a small brown scapular, habit, cord, rosary and scapular. Then getting a pair of scissors from the plate in the hands of the sisters, he cut the hair from their heads. After which the head was covered and tied up. The head was covered by a capus. After this the crucifix was given into their hands. Next they were given a religious veil and mantle. The regula was hung on their neck. Lighted candles were given to them. They were crowned with a wreath of flowers.” They also received a new name, not to carry with the world which they renounced.

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65 Ibid., p. 9.
66 Ibid.
67 Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, pp. 82-83; details of the first clothing ceremony is given in the same volume, p. 67; The order of the vestition as well as the profession of vows are given in the Tresea Panyavalathiyute Namadheyathil Malayalathil Sihapikapetta Carmelitha Discalca Moonnmsabha Kanyastrikalute Kramapusthakam, Leopoldachan Nalkiyatha, 1875 (The book of Practices of the Carmelite Discalced Sisters of the Third Order started in the name of St. Teresa, given by Fr. Leopold; hereafter Kramapusthakam), kept in Koonammavu Archives, chapter IX, article 1-2, pp. 92-102.
68 CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter II, article 22, p. 9.
The first members made their first profession of vow on July 16th, 1868 and their final profession on July 16th, 1875. They also received their new constitution in the final profession day. In first profession, a novice has to take vow of obedience, chastity and poverty. With the profession of vows, the nun becomes God’s freehold property and the royal women of heaven, says the exhortation to the sisters.\(^69\) By the profession of vows they become consecrated virgins. They are spiritually elevated. Instructions given by the fathers, on the occasion of the first profession are as follows:

“After taking the vow, if one disobeys the commands of the superior or a mother superior, she commits a mortal sin.\(^70\) She must with greater contempt ward off all temptations and such other things that are against the vow of chastity. Before taking vows if she commits a sin against chastity she commits one mortal sin. But after taking her vows if she commits a sin against it she commits a double mortal sin.\(^71\) About the vow of poverty, it is instructed that, a sister has nothing of her own. All that she uses, she must use thinking that they are just borrowed for use. And at the least command of the superior, it must be given up totally and immediately without sorrow and with joy. These instructions tell of the conditions required, to make a sin against the vow of obedience, chastity and poverty a mortal sin.

The decision and details about joining the congregation as daughters of Mother St. Teresa, of vesting them with the religious habit as novices and permitting them to

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\(^{69}\) Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 91.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 92.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
make their profession of the religious vows are recorded and certified in the Koonammavu Nalagamam.\textsuperscript{72}

\section*{4.6 Teaching Virtues and Ethical Moulding}

In the process of making the nun, the candidate is regulated and shaped in mind and body. For that the candidate has to practice virtues like humility, obedience, chastity and poverty very consciously. Fathers frequently instructed them about the importance of these virtues.\textsuperscript{73} The testament given to them on the day of the blessing of the new convent explained the need to observe these virtues and also asked them to read this letter once in a month as well as at the time of retreats. These exhortations made it clear that the vow of obedience is the very essence of the Religious life. By it can attain the object of the other vows and it embraces the whole of Religious life, unifying it in a basic contract with God through the authority which represents Him. That is why Michael Foucault has written, “In Christianity the absolute honour is precisely to be obedient. Obedience must lead to a state of obedience. To remain obedient is the fundamental condition for all the other virtues. To be obedient with respect to whom? To be obedient with respect to the pastor. One is in a system of generalized obedience, and the famous Christian humility is nothing other than the form, somehow internalized, of this obedience.”\textsuperscript{74} Repeated instructions are made, like “Humiliate yourself; Come down; Obey the mother superior, in all that she commands you. This is because the

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., Vol. II, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., Vol.1, pp. 21, 27, 42, 83, 154 ; In the letters to the sisters Fr. Leopold repeatedly instructed them to observe obedience, humility, charity and poverty., Benacasia, Op.cit., pp. 29-35.

\textsuperscript{74} Michel Foucault, Op .cit., 1978, p. 124.
superior is given to you in place of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{75} They were asked to reduce their own will and reduce it to nothing and ‘remember the obedience you show to the superior is actually shown to Jesus Christ himself.’\textsuperscript{76} As a mark of humility and obedience ‘they should kneel down before the superior and ask the permission for every act that they do. That is for speaking, even for moving your body, for breathing, for spitting and for anything and everything you do.’\textsuperscript{77}

The Mother superior and the religious are after all obedient to the hierarchy that is stated in the 1875 constitution. According to it, “the first superior of the Third Order Sisters is the melppatkalaran of the place where the convent is situated. The second superior is the Reverend General of the Order of Carmelites Discalced. Third one is the director who is appointed by the bishop who is ruling over the sisters. Fourth one is the superior of the convent who is elected in the presence of the bishop.”\textsuperscript{78} The bishop should also confirm the authority of the superior and the religious are asked to call her ‘Mother’.\textsuperscript{79} Practice of these virtues virtually gave confirmation to the power structure created for the running of the congregation.

For the mistakes committed they have to make public penances in the refectory. The penance includes, eating midday meals on knees and to sacrifice a half of one curry as penance, kissing the feet of others, begging for food, using blindfold and bit stick, use

\textsuperscript{75} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{78} CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter1, article 1:2, p. 4; Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.II, p. 99. The hierarchical order of power over the congregation is made clear in the Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 200, when the vestition and profession of the sisters were recorded. See Appendix No.5
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., chapter1, article 5:7, p. 4.
of the crown of thorns and bear the burden of the big cross or small cross. They had a penitence day to do penance for the sins committed by them. Apart from that they can do penance in the lunch time as well as at dinner time. The penance can be taken at free will also. Those who want to do penance has to get the blessing of the superior.  

4.7 Spiritual Disciplining: Rituals and Practices

The portrayal of the convent made clear the properties in a convent. The arrangements made in the convent make up the routine life of a nun. Days in the convent start at 4.30 a.m. with the ringing of the bell and ends up with examine the conscience at 8.45 p.m. They follow the time table assigned to them with timely variations. Different prayers for various occasions were explained to them and taught prayers to be said in the refectory, and the way and form in which it were to be said. They were also taught how to sprinkle holy water by the Mother superior and recital of the canonical prayers according to rules. Fr. Chavara translated prayer books from both Latin and Syriac and

80 Kramapusthakam, chapter 1 article 1-4, pp.1-31; Also see Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, pp. 18, 59; CMC Nyayapramanan, 1875, pp.51-79; Along with the constitution is attached Koonammavangal Tresea Punyavalathiyyute Moonnamshabha Kanyastrimadathil Nadannavarunna Chattangan, 1-89, pp.51-71, (Statues of the Third Order Sisters of St. Teresa of Koonammavu; hereafter CMC Chattangan)

81 “Sound of the bell is the sound of God. It calls the religious near to God”, reminds the Book of Practices. Three types of bells are used in the convent in different occasions.1. Big bell in order to hear at a distance; also helps to know the faith of those who rung the bell.2. Small bell- in order to inform, time of silence is over.3. Wodden clapper –to be used in the Holy week, Kramapusthakam, chapter V, article 1-3, pp. 75-77.

82 Ibid., chapter III, p. 45.

83 Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 31; The order of the practices ,that has to be observed in different times and at different occasions as well as prayers to be recited were all instructed in the Kramapusthakam, for instance, commandments for, fast days, reading at the table and prayers in the refectory in festive days., chapters V, VIII, IX.
canonical prayers were given in writing, with the rituals to be observed for it. Whenever the priests came there, they showed the religious how to carry out the written rituals and made them do accordingly.

The practice of spiritual reading was promoted in the convent. In order to grow holy, they should acquire knowledge. Biography of St. Teresa of Avila, The Book of Thomas Akempis and many Latin books were brought to the convent in order to read it out little by little to the religious when the fathers came to the convent. Book for ten days full retreat was also given to them, to follow and also taught how to contemplate.

The practice of choosing the superior has started on the first day itself. When the number of members in the convent increased, the practice of election was introduced in the convent. In the words of Fr. Leopold, “in all our convents, the custom is to have a Mother superior and to appoint another one as Assistant superior. This was not done in this convent because there were only a few members. In these days when the bishop was informed of this, he said that if it is a convent, all its rules must be observed.”

Every

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84 Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol. 1, pp. 31-32.
85 Letters to the sisters, reproduced in Valerian, Vazhthapetta Divyasree Kuriakose Eliasachan, Mannanam, 1939, p. 358.
86 Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, pp. 32 and 38.
87 Ibid., p. 22, The convent had a good collection of books. In the earlier period the books were mainly in Tamil or copied or translated from other languages. Very soon books in Malayalam increased and most of the books were handwritten. The list of books kept in Koonammavu convent is given in Appendix No.2.
88 Ibid., p. 73.
89 Ibid., p. 7.
90 Ibid., p. 126.
third year the Mother superior and the Assistant superior must be elected.\footnote{Ibid., p. 126; CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter 1, article 3, p. 3.} The qualities needed for the Mother and the Assistant are instructed to them,\footnote{“The first is that she must have good health, must be one who has an interest in being present for prayer without fail. Second is that she must be a clever person who is interested in obeying even the smallest one of the rules of the constitution. The third is that she must be intelligent and prudent and must be one who has closeness in love to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She must also be interested in keeping of silence and solitude”. Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 127.} so as to elect an apt person. The date of the election was decided by the priests and the election was on the ballot. The professed has the right to vote\footnote{Ibid., Vol.1, p. 127; CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter 1, article 2, p. 3.} but as there were only four sisters, all those who received the habit voted in the first election. After the holy mass, on June 17\textsuperscript{th} of 1869, both the fathers came to the convent and conducted the election to the post of sub-prioress. At the end father delegate confirmed the post by saying, “I too appoint her with all the strength of my power.”\footnote{Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 130; The first constitution insists that, Superior should be elected in the presence of the native bishop and the election should be confirmed by the power of bishop., CMC Nyayapramanam, 1875, chapter 1, article 2 and 5, p. 3.} He was happy that a new regulation was started in the convent.

4.8 Preparing the Nun for a Temporal World.

As the purpose of the founding of the congregation was to teach young girls about spiritual matters and to train them in handicrafts,\footnote{CWC Vol.2, Op.cit., pp. 72-73; Koonammavu Nalagamam Vol.1, pp. 3-5.} the nun should be equipped with such capacities. So along with their spiritual formation, they were also introduced to different types of hand works. Fr. Leopold Beccaro himself showed them how to make rosaries. He was also particular that they should make hosts and candles. They arranged
a lady from Anjengo to teach the sisters various handworks. An Anglo-Indian lady was also appointed to teach them, to make flowers and stitching. On another occasion two European ladies brought to the convent, stayed for eight days and taught them lace and flower making. Fr. Chavara taught them the types of thread for sewing, how to dye the thread, the process to be followed and the colours to be used. They did all this because learning and employment were a necessity. Once when they learned all these crafts they used it for themselves and taught the girls as well as women in the neighbourhood.

Christian formation of the girls was one of the motives behind the founding of the congregation. The formation given to the early members were in turn given to the candidates who were increasing in number. This was carried out through an educational system called *edukumthath*. According to the constitution of the *edukumthath*, “this is nothing but a system to make good Christians through a faithful and a responsible Christian life. This also teaches girls holy life and also handicrafts and necessities needed for family life.” Thus boarding attached to the convent was meant for both secular and religious education, to learn handicrafts and as the residence for the

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97 Ibid., p. 33.
98 Ibid., p. 33.
100 Ibid., p. 34.
101 The sisters stitched their own habit, scapular, laces for the convent and monastery, made candles, hosts and rosary, *Koonammavu Nalagamam*, *Vol.1*, pp. 36-37.
102 Ibid., p. 31.
103 The details of the constitution of the *edukumthath* is given in *Varappuzha Madathinte Jubilee Smarakam* (Mal), published by CTC sisters at time of their Golden Jubilee, 1940, pp. 26-27. Since CMC and CTC have a common origin, and boarding was started when both of them lived together, to have an understanding of the working of the *edukumthath*, the above said constitution is helpful.
children. The first boarding was started on 1868 January 2 with three children. Sr. Puthanangady Clara was in charge of the children. Fr. Leopold made certain laws for their mode of living. The subject taught to this students were catechism, meditation, handicrafts, language, mathematics, music and cooking, which was a training to make them good Christian women.\textsuperscript{104}

After the initial spiritual formation and training in handicrafts, a school was started outside the convent compound. Before beginning to work in the school, they were made conscious about the temporal world into which they are going to enter. Since it has been a long time that they left the world and living in solitude, the religious were instructed to take utmost care that their hearts do not get dirtied, with the mud of this world, while doing the work.\textsuperscript{105} But at the same time this work is unavoidable, because “Jesus Christ desires very much, that you should carry out this work which brings him great glory.”\textsuperscript{106} They were also instructed that, “if you could make a soul love him for at least a day or for a single moment, by your word or deed or by your good example or by any other means, would be the greatest praise you can give to him.”\textsuperscript{107} Thus nun is to be a living example of the love of Jesus Christ and it is the nun who has to draw the children to become a good Christian with her outstanding nobility and great compassion.

\textsuperscript{104} Josy, C.M.C Athyunnathante Thanalil (Mal), Aluva, 1991, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{105} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol. II, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., Vol. II, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.
4.9 Making the Nun: Changing Norms and Attempts for Homogenisation

Forming the nun in the ensuing period not only encompasses the renewed constitution and statutes of the Third Order Sisters of St. Teresa, but also the foundation of new congregations with different charism. The newly founded congregations had a pattern similar to other congregations since all of them had its constitution from Europe, with local variation. But the configuration of each congregation makes them different and so they follow a different path to achieve self sanctity.

Founding of the second convent of CMC and the establishment of the FCC occurred in the same year, i.e., in 1888 and the other two congregations, SABS and SHC, in 1908 and 1911 respectively. In the beginning of the 20th century, all these congregations were in its formative stage. The already created religious space for women has generated certain ideas about the women religious and convent that, it was an enclosed world meant for educated and financially affordable class. A correction in this notion occurred when the Franciscan Clarist Congregation was started in the Changanacherry vicariate, to accommodate pious women and widows who are eager to renounce the world but unable to join the big orders and follow strict contemplative life.

108 CMC had its constitution from the Sisters of St. Teresa; For FCC the first constitution was given by Mar. Mathew Makil on the basis of Francis of Assisi, St. Augustine and Francis the Salas. This constitution was in practice from 1901-1908. Later they got the constitution of Sisters of St. Clare, Oldenburg and SABS constitution is an elaboration of the rules of St. Augustine. For SHC, founder father adopted part of the congregation from FCC.
Similarly the Sacred Heart congregation was founded for those women who are poor, destitute and orphans; desirous to lead holy life and to protect their soul.\textsuperscript{109}

The typical enclosure of the Third Order Carmelites could not be seen in other congregations since all of them were apostolic congregations. The mendicant spirit as well as the requirements of the sustenance, urged them to go out of the convent. “Without patrimony by hard work and alms, by the sweat of their forehead, they sought their food and holy life.”\textsuperscript{110} Absence of strict enclosure does not mean, there was not any restriction on the mobility of the religious. The entire congregation restricted the mobility of the religious as solitude, silence, spiritual reading and prayer are the ways to holiness. The Carmelites, who have a large amount of patrimony, need not go out of the convent for physical requirements. There were male and female procurators to look after the affairs, outside the convent. There were servants and other helpers to attend the routine life of the convent. The only occasion they had to go out was, either to the church, convent school or for official purposes accompanied by the chaplain of the house, to other convents, or for begging as a matter of fact. But for other congregations the sisters in the early stages went out of the convent to collect the orphans and the destitute and also to meet their livelihood challenges. They worked in the parish schools rather than their own institutions. They were reminded that, “as teachers they could not

\textsuperscript{109} Kadalikattil Mathai Kathanar, \textit{Pradhama Regulayum Kramachattavum} (Mal), (Hereafter \textit{Pradhama Regula}), Pala, p. 52. The first and last part of the constitution is written in between 1914-1917 by Mathai Kathanar and middle portion of the constitution is copied from the FCC constitution in between 1915-1917., Espirath, preface to \textit{Pradhama Regulayum Kramachattavum}, Kottayam; Letter written by Fr. Mathew Kadalikattil to Punnathura SH Convent, dated 1926, See index, Mary Magdalin, \textit{Rev. Fr. Mathew Kadalikattil} (Mal), Pala, 1985, pp. 122-123.

\textsuperscript{110} Jacob Vellaringhat, ‘Reminiscences’, in Mary Magdalin, \textit{Ibid.}, P. 150.
observe the solitude or the enclosure of the convent, so they should adhere to constitution and modesty.\footnote{111}

The constitutions of these congregations were given by male ecclesiastical authorities. By emphasising enclosure meant, making the sisters conscious of their chastity and there by controlling their sexuality. When the changing needs of the society demanded more and more apostolic congregations, inclusive of all sections of the community, more and more instructions and restrictions were placed on the religious.

“\text{They were asked to observe enclosure everywhere. They should control their eyes (kannatakkam). They should not look at those who pass by. While passing through the street, do not talk to anybody unnecessarily. Do not meet the lay people at their house. They should be very conscious about the contact with the children and mingling with the children only to an extent is permitted.}”\footnote{112} Whenever the sisters go out, either for begging or for official purpose they should go in pair.\footnote{113} This is permissible only if it is very important. While travelling, if they had to stay, it should be in renowned and trustworthy houses and that too only with the permission of the mother superior.\footnote{114} They

\footnote{111} Changanacherry Roopathayile Franciscos Moonnam Sabha Kanyakakalute Chattangalum Niyamangalum (Mal), (Statutes and Rules of Franciscan Third Order Sisters of Changanacherry), printed and published by James Kalacherry, Changanacherry,1944, chapter 6:1,article 2, p.53 (Hereafter FCC Chattangalum Niyamangalum 1910); A detailed instruction is given about modesty in Pradhama Regula , appendix to chapter 22.

\footnote{112} FCC Chattangalum Niyamangalum 1910, chapter 6:1, article 2, p. 53; Pradhama Regula, chapter 22.


\footnote{114} A detailed instruction is given about going for begging. Pradhama Regula , appendix to chapter 9.
could go only to the houses permitted by the mother and she has to get the permission of the bishop for same.\textsuperscript{115}

In this evolutionary period of Religious life, criterion for the admission to the congregations had similar features. Certain new provisions added to the renewed constitutions became the standard. First of all, the constitution insisted on the testimony of the vicar as a compulsory requirement for the admission.\textsuperscript{116} Second, she should be a Catholic. The candidates should not be tied up with marriage or illegally born. They should not be deformed, or having any chronic disease, or epilepsy. They are to be both mentally and physically fit for a holy life. Widows or those who have to take care of the parents should not be admitted in the convent. A debtor should not be taken into the congregation. Widows, illegitimately born, married women, those who returned from other congregations and debtors could be admitted only on the permission of the bishop.\textsuperscript{117} For CMC the candidates should be from noble family, having minimum 7\textsuperscript{th} class pass.\textsuperscript{118} Age for admitting the candidate varies according to each congregation.\textsuperscript{119} Idea was made clear that those who are unfit for the world is not needed for the congregation. On the other hand, able, intelligent, educated, and healthy and having qualities like obedience, patience, humility and modesty are needed for the congregation.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} CMC Niyamangal, 1917,Chapter 3,articles 1-10, pp.5-6; FCC Chattangalum Niyamangalum 1910, chapter 3, article 1, pp. 23-26; SABS Niyamangal, 1917, part II, chapter 1, article 1, Paitrukam, Op.cit., p. 56; Pradhama Regula, pp. 51-52, articles 1-8.
\textsuperscript{117} CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 3, articles 1-10; FCC Chattangalum Niyamangalum, 1910, chapter 3 article 1, pp. 23-26; SABS Niyamangal, 1917, part II, chapter 1, article 1, Paitrukam, Op.cit., p. 56; Pradhama Regula, pp. 51-52, articles 1-8.
\textsuperscript{118} CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 3, articles 2 and 8, pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{119} For CMC the age was 15-30 years; FCC, 15-25years; SABS, 18-40 years and SHC, admission after 16 years.
It is clear that a standard has evolved out, about the admission of the candidates by the second decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. But what made the admission criterion different was the patrimony\textsuperscript{120} each candidate has to give before receiving the religious habit. Among the four congregations under study, two congregations, i.e., FCC and SHC have emerged out of the dire necessity of the society to admit their daughters to an affordable congregation. For FCC\textsuperscript{121} patrimony was compulsory but it was comparatively less when compared to CMC.\textsuperscript{122} For SABS\textsuperscript{123} also patrimony was compulsory, and higher than the FCC. When the fourth congregation was established, patrimony was not compulsory and it was started for the protection and holy life of ordinary women, orphans and poor virgins having no patrimony and education.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{120} Patrimony is the amount of money one has to give to join the convent. In the period up to vestition, the novices has to give an amount as boarding fees, and this fees varied in each congregation.

\textsuperscript{121} The earlier members had no patrimony. But even then three of the first members gave Rs.250 as patrimony. Only the early members were excluded from it. The 1910 constitution of FCC insisted Rs.500 as patrimony., Kannadiurumpu Madacharitram, (Mal), (manuscript kept in the convent archives), p.3 ; FCC Chattangalum Niyamangalam 1910, p. 33;

\textsuperscript{122} For the first members, the land under their ownership became the patrimony, Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 4; The 1875 Nyayapramanam is mentioning about the patrimony but not about the exact amount they have to give. But in the Diary of Fr. Leopold Beccaro, patrimony given by two members in 1872 is recorded as Rs.520; Diary of Leopold, Vol. III, from December 1\textsuperscript{st} 1870. (Original is in Italian. Both, original and English translation is kept in the CMC Generalate, Aluva). In CMC the amount was fixed as Rs. 1000 in 1917; CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 4. But the authorities knew that it is difficult to get this amount as patrimony and the General Chapter proceedings of 1917 suggested to receive the amount according to the capacity of the novice, Karmelitha Kanyasrikalute Pothusangha Natapati, (Proceedings of the General Chapter of the Carmelite Sisters. Hereafter Pothusangha Natapati), Ernakulam,1908-1923, kept in the archives, CMC Provincial House Ernakulam, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{123} Those who have joined this congregation have to give Rs.750 as patrimony. They have to give Rs. 7 at the time of receiving the veil and Rs.100 for the expenses at the time of vestition. At the time of profession of vows Rs.35 has to give to the Mother, in order to meet the expenses of the function; SABS Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 4, article 1-3.

\textsuperscript{124} Though the patrimony was not compulsory, the founder in the first constitution itself suggested a patrimony Rs.250 and another Rs.30 for other expenses, Pradhama Regula, p. 51.
Even if the patrimony is less, the educational qualification attained by the candidate could suffice their entry into the convent very easily. Most often the educational qualification was enough to join the convent. The salary they received was counted for patrimony. Frequent references to such relaxation could be seen in different Nalagamams. The CMC Pothusangham in 1936, has taken the decision about the relaxation in patrimony that, “a) Those who have passed School final, School final training and Higher training require Rs.500; b) Those who have passed Higher need Rs.600; c) For School leaving training passed novices Rs.700; d) Those who have School leaving pass Rs.800; e) For those who passed Third form Rs.1000.”

What made the admission as lay-religious is the lack of money and education. Though a European system, when it was introduced in Kerala, it gave opportunity to women who want to lead a holy life without the backing of money and education. CMC, FCC in Trichur diocese and SABS has Lay-religious in the congregation. With the foundation of FCC, those who could not fulfil the criterion of admission in CMC could join FCC as it required less patrimony and the mission to look after the orphans naturally gave many pious women entry into the convent. Those who will be a lay-religious in CMC and SABS could become a religious in FCC and SHC. As per the CMC

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125 Pothusantha Natapati, Ernakulam, 1926-1951, p. 61
126 Assisiyude Spandanagalu, Vol.1: Franciscan Clarist Congregation, 1910-1980, Trichur diocese, Trichur, 1976, p. 18; FCC in Trichur has this category of sisters, may be because of the influence of CMC, and since early members lived in the Ollur Carmelite convent for some time as the construction of their convent was not completed, Ollur Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 17.
127 But in FCC Trichur, unlike Changanacherry their main mission was the education of girls and the presence of lay-religious in the convent was a support to the religious since they did most of the unimportant works in the convent.
constitution of 1917 the patrimony of lay sisters was not less than Rs 300. At the same time patrimony of the SHC sisters were fixed as Rs.250. Difference in the amount of patrimony does not mean that only the finically and educationally back ward could join these congregations. Women from noble houses who could afford a big amount also joined these congregations out of desire to humble themselves and work for the poor and destitute. The difference in the amount of patrimony to join the congregation reveals how different classes in the community could accommodate their daughters in the Christian holy life.

Up to 1917, CMC following the footsteps of the founders received the novice in the respective convents. The formation was given in the particular convent in which they joined but the different stages of formation as well as the period of each phase was not determined during those days. By the 1917 constitution, the formation was decided to have three phases namely, postulancy, novitiate and juniorate (yogarthinikalam, novitiath and anithavratinte kalam). But it took time to start each phase in a specific time and for a specific period. Gradually, instead of joining the convent (madathil cheruka) the system of joining the congregation (sabhayil cheruka) has started. The common formation programme was started in the diocese of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry in 1900, 1920 and 1930 respectively.

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128 Appendix to *CMC Niyamangal, 1917*, p. 106-107
129 It is a period of probation. The novice is received by giving veil.
130 The novice enters the novitiate after receiving the religious habit. Novitiate is for one year.
131 It is a period after the first profession.
132 *CMC Niyamangal, 1917*, chapter V, VI, VII.
In FCC, the novice did not have a common formation house or a specific period of formation. The period of testing to profession varied occasionally. According to the 1910 constitution, the novice has minimum six months testing. On the request of the novice, superior after consultation voting decides to give religious habit. After the reception of the habit, two year juniorate is required for the first profession. Later, profession is renewed for two years or for another three years or unto death.\(^{134}\) Regarding the formation programme certain changes were brought forth in the second General Council in 1934. According to it, after three months training, veil was given and then after six months religious habit. Novitiate should start on 12\(^{th}\) August every year consisting of twelve members for a period of one year.

In all dioceses, the superior carried on the administration of their convent under the direction of the bishop. They had to give the report of the administration to the bishop in every three years. Financial matters, reception of the novice, vestition, profession of vows, patrimony, and buying and selling of land, were all carried out by the convents independently. There was no transfer for the sisters. The administrative pattern of the convents began to change when new bishops were appointed and revised constitutions were implemented. According to the Koonammavu system, the members of the convent elected Superior and other office bearers in the presence of the Delegate through secret ballot. In Mutholy, the first branch of the congregation, Msgr. Charles Lavigne appointed the Superior.\(^{135}\) After three years Msgr. Charles Levinge conducted the election in the presence of the Director of the convents, Mar Louis Pazheparambil

\(^{134}\) FCC Niyamangalum Chattangalum1910, chapter 3, article 2, pp. 26-35.

\(^{135}\) Arakuzha Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 16.
and the Chaplain.\textsuperscript{136} In the Vaikom convent, the election was conducted in the presence of Mar Louis Pazheparambil through secret ballot.\textsuperscript{137} In Trichur, up to 1937 the bishops appointed the superiors of the concerned convents.\textsuperscript{138} Later when centralised administration was introduced, pattern of administration as well as the mode of election changed. \textit{Pothusangham} was introduced and the Chapter elected Superiors for each convent. The Chapter was under the bishops of the concerned dioceses. This system came into existence in the diocese of Ernakulam, Changanacherry and Trichur in 1926, 1930 and 1937 respectively.\textsuperscript{139} By this the transfer of the sisters became customary. Visitors were also appointed in order to examine the affairs of the convent.\textsuperscript{140} Usually Carmelite priests were appointed as visitors and their term of office was for three years.

In the case of FCC, from the beginning onwards the Mother superiors were elected by the bishop from among the community.\textsuperscript{141} According to the 1910 constitution, “those who are elected to govern each convent are called as Local superior. Those who are elected to the post should have completed 35 years of age, if possible and have completed ten years after vows. She should have all the good qualities and have the capacity to carry on the administration of the convent. Even if they had all good qualities and age is not completed they should get the permission of the bishop for the same.”\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{136} Mutholy Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{137} Arakuzha Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{138} Ollur Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{140} In the annual visits, the visitor checked the \textit{Nalagamam} and other records and this is clear from the \textit{Nalagamam} of each convent.
\textsuperscript{141} On the first day itself, i.e. on 15th December 1888, itself the first superior was appointed by the Bishop, Mar Charles Lavigne., Gorethy, \textit{FCC Charitrpadathilede}, Changanacherry, 2009, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{142} FCC Niyamangalam Chattangalum, 1910, chapter 8, article 1:1, p. 72.
The election was conducted in the presence of the bishop, accompanied by ordinary confessor. The election was through secret ballot. The term of the office was for three years. In Trichur, the first election as per the constitution was conducted in 1917. In Changanacherry the first election as per rules was in 1928. The Superior (Superiorathiyamma), Assistant Superior (Sahaya Supriorathi), and 3 Councillors (Alochanakarathikal), were elected and these office bearers later elected Boarding mistress (Guruthiyamma), and Procurator (Procdudor).

When the number of members and convents increased, as per the constitution, General chapter was convened in 1930 and its first election was conducted on July 1930 in the presence of bishop Mar James Kalacherry. The Mother General, Assistant General and Councillors were elected and it was confirmed by the bishop. After renewing the constitution, General council was met for the first time in Trichur in 1939. According to the constitution of 1940, the bishop was the supreme authority of the congregation. The congregation was governed by the Central Council and the council consists of Mother General, Assistant General, General Councillors, General Procurator and General Treasurer. When the central administrative system became a reality all the convents came under the council. For repair and construction works, they gave money as debt or

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143 Ibid., chapter 8, article 1:2, p. 73.
145 Maniamkunnu Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 35.
146 FCC Niyamangalum Chattangalum 1910, Part 3, chapter1, pp. 137-153
148 In 1939, Trichur Clarist congregation got a renewed constitution from Oldenburg and got it translated to Malayalam. The 2nd part of the constitution got acceptance in 1939 and the first part in 1940. The 2nd part was accepted earlier in order to conduct election. This constitution is known as constitution of 1940. Assisiyude Spandanagal, Vol.1: Op.cit., p.116
149 FCC Constitution Thrisur, 1940, Part 2, chapter 2.
helped out of the patrimony from the centre. The expenses of those who were teaching were also met by the centre. Financially fit convents, helped new branches, at the instructions of the centre. The centre began to give a fixed amount to convents and this made the congregation safe and secure.  

In SABS, the novice after testing was received in the convent with veil and a new name. For the first time, in 1908, six girls were given veil and new names. After three years, five novices were given religious habit in 1911 and the first four took final profession in 1916. The bishop used to select the superior. Mother Chantal, the foundress of the congregation was appointed as the first superior in 1910. According to the SABS constitution, even if the congregation has been started in other dioceses, the power to rule over the congregation is vested in the Mother General. In 1930, the first Mother General was appointed in Changanacherry diocese. In Ernakulam diocese the first election was conducted in 1942, i.e., 12 years after the founding of the first convent in Ernakulam. Later when the second convent was started in 1945, the need to have common superior arose and election for the post of superior of the Ernakulam diocese occurred in 1948 and Ernakulam became an independent unit. The Mother General,

152 Ibid., p. 46.
153 Ibid., p. 79.
Assistant Mother, four Councillors, General Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Procurator were the office bears of SABS.\textsuperscript{156}

The first constitution of SHC rules that, in order to get the religious habit, the novice should live in the convent for one year.\textsuperscript{157} The habit should be given by the bishop. The vows should be taken for one year and for seven years they have to renew the vow annually. If they seem satisfactory to the convent life, they could take the final profession.\textsuperscript{158} The patrimony could be either money or land. Before the final profession they have to hand over their property to the convent at free will and it becomes the property of the convent.\textsuperscript{159} The first novice was given veil in 1917\textsuperscript{160} and later ten of the postulants were given religious habit on Sept 21, 1918 and two among them were admitted to Religious profession on June 11, 1920.\textsuperscript{161} In 1922, 8 other members also took to final profession. In 1930, they were separated from the FCC\textsuperscript{162} and it was only in 1932, they got the permission to wear the habit of the Sacred Heart.\textsuperscript{163}

According to the first constitution, the bishop or those who are assigned by him decided the superior of the house.\textsuperscript{164} Due to the uncertainty about the separate identity of the congregation, they could meet the General council only in 1944.\textsuperscript{165} From 1944, as per the instruction of bishop Mar James Kalacherry, a three member council carried on the

\textsuperscript{156} SABS Nalagamam, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{157} Pradhama Regula, chapter 2, 1-3, pp. 57-58.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., chapter 2: 3.p. 58.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., chapter 2: 3, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{160} SHC Nalagamam Pala, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{164} Pradhama Regula, chapter 2 article1, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{165} SHC Nalagamam Pala, p. 80.
administration of the SHC. The council decided the Superior of Pala as the Mother superior and the rest of the posts were elected.\footnote{Ibid.} According to the council, patrimony became the common property of the congregation. The expense of the novitiate was to be met by all.\footnote{Ibid.}

Teaching virtues, rituals and practices were done by the founders at the beginning of Religious life in the concerned congregations. But later their role was handed over to the Guruthiyamma. She was in charge of the novice and junior sisters in the convent. “She should be stable, courageous and energetic to restrain the thoughts and deeds of the novice. The mistress should train the candidate in prayer, spiritual reading, meditation, internal and external self abnegation and mortification. She should also practice them solitude, control of the eyes, sacrifice self-love and all natural inclinations with humility and patience.”\footnote{CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 6, pp. 14-15.} The novice should always be kept separate from others. During novitiate, complete time should be spent to fill them with the spirit of the congregation and maximum one hour could be set apart either to learn handicrafts or secular matters.\footnote{Ibid.}

All these congregations have more or less same rules. Three vows: obedience, chastity and poverty were the virtues insisted on. As a pioneer in the religious life, CMC was instructed in all the minute details of Religious life. Later, the early members of Koonammavu, went to different places to found convent, especially in their native
vicariates or places. It was these sisters or the convents that became the nucleus of the later formation. The FCC had their spiritual formation from the CMI fathers of Changanacherry. Later in 1913, as per the order of Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, in order to train the novices and religious in the proper manner, a sister from the Carmelite congregation was appointed as the Mother of the Clarist congregation. In the case of SABS, the co-foundress, Sr. Chantal got trained in the Mutholy St. Joseph’s Carmelite convent, when she is studying there. More than that Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry sent two CMC sisters to train the sisters at Champakulam. The CMI fathers who were the visitors to the convent presided over the General councils and decisions regarding the transfer of sisters were taken by them. The SHC sisters had Franciscan formation, since in the initial years they were considered as part of FCC. In 1936, SHC sent their new sisters to FCC Changanacherry for their novitiate since they had no common novitiate house. So Carmelite practices and traditions were in some way or other, had its influences on other congregations.

The rules and regulations were imbibed gradually and the rituals and practices of all the congregations were more or less similar because of many reasons. First of all it was only in 1930 they were permitted to separate from FCC. It was only in 1930 they were permitted to separate from FCC. The admission register of the Koonamavu gives details about the early members of the convent. See Appendix No. 6

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170 The admission register of the Koonamavu gives details about the early members of the convent. See Appendix No. 6
173 In 1904-1905 she was in the Mutholy St. Joseph’s convent., SABS Nalagamam, Vol.1, 1908 -1925, p.7; for more details see Autobiography.
176 It was only in 1930 they were permitted to separate from FCC, Isoyute Thiruhrudayasabhayute Nalagamam,1911-1962, (Hereafter SHC Nalagamam, Pala ), Pala. p. 33.
177 Ibid., p. 38.
has a European pattern. Second, different congregations under the same bishop had general instructions and revisions. The best example to illustrate this is the attempt made by Mar Thomas Kurialacherry in 1915.\textsuperscript{178} Mar Kurialacherry convened a conference of the Carmelite, Clarist, Adoration and Sacred Heart sisters from 15 -20 April, 1915 at St. Berchumans H.S, Changanacherry. Altogether 150 sisters attended the conference including the religious from Ernakulam. The ideal behind their vocation were taught and their weakness in general and particular were corrected. The intention was not only to teach them necessary etiquettes of the congregations but also to make certain uniform pattern for religious life. After the Council, as a follow up Mar Kurialacherry send letters of instruction to remind them of the matter. But nothing of that sort occurred later, as new constitutions appeared in all dioceses and in concerned congregations.

Later constitutions and General Chapter of each congregation reiterated the virtuous deeds and penances more vehemently than earlier. CMC constitution reminds that “if convent could not practice solitude and control conscience, they could not protect their spirit from the world. They could talk only at the recreation time.”\textsuperscript{179} Among the many decisions taken in the second General Council of FCC held on 1934, disciplining the self was given much importance. ‘Observance of silence was insisted on. They are asked to keep silent at all times except the recreation time. Those who wish to enter the religious life first of all have to exercise silence. Their problems should not be conveyed to any other except authorities.’\textsuperscript{180} They should not find fault with others or Superior.

\textsuperscript{179} CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 12, pp. 36-37.
The patience and sacrifice leads to holiness while living a community life rather than mere recital of prayers. The General chapter of the SHC in 1944 decided to include penances other than the early one like, kissing the leg, carrying small cross and beating on the cheek.

Temporary world was of great significance for the sisters, though they were away from the world. The instructions to prepare them for the world outside the enclosure are frequent in the constitutions. “All the deeds, actions, words and gaze of the religious should be chaste. Everywhere their deeds should be model for others and anything against chaste life should be rejected at hand with contempt. Even if they are of the same category, there should not be too much of love with co-sisters or students. They should not touch others. Even if men are relatives, priests or gentle, should not talk to them more than needed.”

Outside the enclosure CMC and SABS has the apostolate of education. FCC and SHC, though has the charism to look after the poor and destitute, soon changed their apostolate to education. The apostolate of education needed, educated sisters. That is why the congregations demanded a minimum educational qualification. Those who have not acquired the required qualification were sent to study nearby or far away. Coaching was given in English education also. Apart from these, training in handicrafts, drawing, stitching and weaving were also given to them. All these were to

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181 Ibid., p. 47; Not to complaint, not to insult others, not to be talkative and be compassionate, were some of the instructions given in the CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 12, pp. 36-37.
182 SHC Nalagamam, Pala, p. 80.
183 CMC Niyamangal, 1917, chapter 9, pp. 25-26
184 Each convent Nalagamam makes frequent references to sisters who went to learn different courses.
equip themselves as well as to teach the lay women so that both of them are uplifted in the social ladder.

4.10 Towards the Creation of an Ideal Nun

Making the nun had an implied idea – to make an ideal nun. Each and every nun is supposed to be ideal, a model for others. From novice to final profession each one is supposed to have certain qualities. Those who could abide to the rules and regulations as well as virtuous practices are considered acceptable to the vocation.

Religious life is a lifelong process and sainthood is its ultimate goal. From the inception of this life, those who entered the convent began to imbibe the qualities needed for religious. The instructions and rules were to detach them from the world and make them holy. They were said to be angels in the world and asked to go about with the modesty of angels.\textsuperscript{185} The three virtues they were frequently asked to do was, first, ‘to humble themselves like mud or dust that is swept out and come down and down to earth’,\textsuperscript{186} because humble are exalted in divinity. Second, to give up their self- will and third, the salvation of their soul.\textsuperscript{187} They were compared to a log of wood to be carved into good statues. They joined the convent, in order to remove all the weakness and clear of all defects.\textsuperscript{188} Fasting, meditation and penances in obedience are the ways to remove all the weakness and even smallest carelessness was punished.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{185} Koonammavu Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., pp. 25, 41.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., pp. 25, 43.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p. 26.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., p. 23.
Exhortation to holiness was made by saying, “saints did not become saints by doing great virtues, but by doing small acts with great care and dedication. When you hear the bell for the canonical prayers, you must say, ‘it is the voice of the king of kings, I must hurry and offer my gifts.' And you must speed up as in a competition. When you enter the room you must imagine that it is the court of the king and enter with genuflecting in the middle. My dear children everything are said in the constitution and, even the smallest things should be observed carefully. They were instructed, whatever they do, do it with great zeal and cheerfully. The best means to holiness according to the founding fathers of CMC were, to entrust their heart to their superior and obey whatever she tells them. They were asked, not to consider their Superior as a mere human being; but to think that she is Jesus Christ and do to her as they would to Jesus Christ. They were also asked to be people of perfect obedience, so that they all become saints. In one of the exhortations Fr. Leopold said, “I know even your inner thoughts. I assure you, that all of you have the ability to become saints and the readiness to work for it. Therefore children be obedient, be people of obedience, then all of you will become saints. And this convent will be called ‘The convent of saints.'  

Such instructions were followed throughout and the manifestation of these ideals in Kerala could be seen in the St. Alphonsa FCC and Bl. Evuprasia CMC. Both of

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190 Ibid., p. 70.
192 Ibid.
them are the best examples of obedience and sacrificial love. They demonstrate the contemplative side of the Religious life, while Sr. Chantal SABS projects the apostolic side of the Religious life. These three religious are noted for the determination with which they denied the married life and entered the Religious life.

Annakutty (St. Alphonsa) was born on 19th August, 1910, as the daughter of Kudamaloor Muttathupadathu Joseph and Mariam. Her mother died three months after her birth and she was brought up by mother’s sister, Annamma, Murickan. There she was brought up in the traditional Nazrani style. The foster mother wanted to make her a good housewife and always tried to mould according to it. But she took a different path. She desired to become a nun. For that she struggled a lot. In order to avoid marriage and she burned her legs, so that nobody will marry her due to her disfigure. With this incident she was permitted to join the convent and in 1927, she joined the Clarist congregation, Bharananganam. In 1928 she received the veil and in 1930, received the religious habit with a new name, Alphonsa. In 1936 Alphonsa took her final profession and died at the age 36, on 28th July 1946. She was beatified as blessed Alphonsa in 1986 and canonized on October 12th 2008.

After the final profession, she was bedridden for most of the time. She also needed the support of others to carry out the routine life. She was suffering from

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193 Women saints of the Catholic Church were usually acknowledged for their gentle piety, caring and support of men and children. Compared to men, women saints are less in the Catholic Church; Janet Saltzman Chafets, *Handbook of Sociology of Gender*, New York, 1999, p. 608.

194 *Ibid.*, p. 28; It is recorded that, in order to avert the marriage, she dipped her leg into the smouldering fire of a pit, that was to burn off the chaff after harvest. Her leg sank into the pit knee-deep in the fire. Her leg was severely burned and it took three months to control the infection and after that the wound began to heal.
bleeding and other diseases. But she never complained or was discontent. She was always happy and ready to suffer to the extreme because she could unite her sufferings with the Jesus Christ who suffered a lot for her and for humanity. She was happy to suffer anything, for the sake of God, to be in Union with God. She was ready to take over the disease of others, by the simple logic that, I am in bed and have nothing to do, but others have lots of work to do so it is good to take over others sufferings. Since she never wanted to conceal her diseases to others, she was frequently misunderstood by others, that she is pretending disease. In a letter to her spiritual director Fr.Louis, once Sr. Alphonsa wrote, “I suffer a great deal in different ways but I conceal it that I look all right in the eyes of others. But Jesus alone knows how huge my sufferings are. Yet my dear father, considering the great love my lord has been lavishing on me, I should suffer much more than I am doing now. I am prepared to suffer so whatever he sends me, for so long as to the end of the world, and that too lying in my bed.” She always wanted to remain unknown to the world and prayed for that. She accepted and utilised suffering as a means of self-purification. The intensity of the suffering she endured, cleansed to an unusual level, which served to wipe out even the faint traces of imperfections. She wrote, “I am endeavouring not to commit even a single sin, however slight it may be. But there is no lack of imperfections which do affect my devotion to God.” Even in extreme suffering she called for more in the hope that it would give her a more intimate experience of God. She has completely surrendered to God and said let him do whatever

he pleased. In May, 1946, three months before her death, she wrote to Fr. Louis; “My dear father, will you help me to become a saint?“\textsuperscript{198}

The desire of Sr. Alphonsa to become a saint actually leads her all throughout her life. Her sufferings and faith in God, was to become a saint, the ultimate aim of her life, the ideal every nun cherishes to achieve and communicated to the world.

Born on October 17, 1877, Euprasia (Rose) was the daughter of Kattoor Elavunkal Antony and Kunjeli, in the undivided Trichur Vicariate, which is at present in the diocese of Irinjalakuda. After a relentless struggle she was permitted to join the convent at the age of eleven. She joined the Koonmmavu boarding and there she learned religious practices along with secular education and training in handicrafts. On May 9\textsuperscript{th} 1897, she received the veil with the name ‘Isoyude Thiruhradayathinte Evuprasia’ (Evuprasia of Sacred Heart of Jesus). She received the religious habit on January 10\textsuperscript{th} 1898 and the final profession in 1900. Later she held many important posts within the convent hierarchy. On August 29, 1952, at the age of seventy five, she died.

At the age of eleven, she completely dedicated herself to God. The testimony of her holy life is vivid from the letters written to his spiritual father, Mar John Menacherry. Through these letters one could understand, how she imbibed the essence of Religious life. The vigilance with which Evuprasia observed virtues in order to purify herself is striking in these letters. All these letters start with the request to give advice and blessing to have the quality of obedience for his worthless daughter. With childlike innocence Sr. Evuprasia submitted all her natural inclinations, clash of the varied interests of body and

\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 50-52.
soul, attack of evil spirits, God experience, divine visions, enlightenments and
depressions of spiritual life to bishop for close scrutiny and guidance. She accepted all
his instructions as God’s own inviolable law. In one of the letters she wrote, “My father,
whatever you command, however opposite of my likes and interest, I, your worthless
daughter, shall obey unreservedly and I am prepared for it. So far I have not acted
against your command and instructions and by God’s grace I shall continue to be
obedient and submissive to your orders.” 199 The simplicity, openness, humility and
holiness with which she was grown in faith were explicit in these letters.

From the beginning onwards she wished to live a life pleasing to God. 200 She
thought that temptations and disturbances are due to her lack of love to God. 201 She made
strenuous efforts to overcome all her weakness, peculiarities of temperament and
temptations from various sources. She ardently prayed to be made partner in the lord’s
sufferings, to be one with him in his agony for souls. 202 She made up her mind to live in
constant meditation on the Lord, seeking the path of absolute detachment and fervent
prayers and pleading for more and more God experiences. She informs him that she
prayed for miseries and along with it patience to overcome that. 203 She aspired that her
life be made a sacrifice and a sacrament of the lord’s feet inspired by a burning love.
Evuprasia was prepared to undergo any amount of trials and tribulations, to pay any

199 Letter No.11, dated. 15 October 1901, all the letters of Sr. Evuprasia are published under the title
200 Letter No.1, dated. 28 July, 1900, Ibid., pp. 31-32.
201 Letter No.2, dated. 20 August, 1900, Ibid., p. 34.
202 Letter No.4, dated. 1 April, 1901, Ibid., p. 38.
203 Letter No.3, dated. 1 March, 1901, Ibid., p. 36
price, body and soul, to propitiate her lord and to be made an instrument in the hand of God to fulfil his will on earth.

Sr. Evuprasia was particular that, everyone in the convent should live in strict ascetic discipline and in great holiness and deep spirituality. She wanted to sustain the early spirituality of the congregation. In some of the letters she reminds the bishop about certain rules to be carried out in the convent.\textsuperscript{204} She insisted that, a) any professed sister who receives anything, either cash or kind from the relatives against the vow of poverty should hand over the material to the superior and do not make any claim over it. Nobody should receive anything except oil or medicine from the parents; b) Please don’t permit anyone to meet priests unnecessarily, violating the constitution; c) Those who have completed the novitiate should not be given complete freedom since there is a chance to lose their spirituality. For another three years they have to be placed under the superior; d) Sick sisters should prepare for the death by detaching the mind from the friends and relatives. They should not desire to see them or make arrangements to see them; e) Professed sisters should be earnest to work for the convent rather than stitching handkerchiefs to give someone dear; f) Don’t permit anyone to go anywhere except for \textit{bath}\textsuperscript{205} and learning since the travels from the convent is causing problems and great expenses. Moreover it is creating \textit{uthappu} for others. Ask them to follow all these

\textsuperscript{204} Letter No.79B, \textit{Ibid.}, p.368-370. Signature or date is not recorded in this letter.

\textsuperscript{205} There was a practice among the sisters especially in Trichur diocese called \textit{kulichu thamasikkuka}. This gave the sisters a break to their routine life and can go to any other convent for one or two weeks. At that time they need not follow strict prayer life and it is a time to relax. Usually they went to the convents on the river banks and CMC convent Chengkapal, was an important centre for sisters to relax; information collected from Sr. Ghonsaga (aged78.) and Sr. Mary Davis,(aged 65.) St.Germaine’s Convent, Chengkapal, dated. May 3, 2010. FCC also had the same practice; \textit{FCC Ernakulam Athiroopathayil, Op. cit.}, p. 213.
without any complaint or grumbling. She also asked him to withdraw all the special permissions and exemptions given to the sisters. She requests him to add these provisions to the constitution, which is a clear indication of what is internalised by a nun and how a nun herself tries to regulate the religious.

Apostolic life created a space outside the enclosure. The woman religious who utilised the space outside the enclosure single handed was Sr. Chantal SABS. The identity being a religious actually gave her the opportunity to be active in the outside world. Born on December 23, 1880, Philomena was the daughter of Champakulam Vallayil Mathew and Mariam. Though she was desirous of joining a convent, out of compulsion she got married. Soon after marriage she became a widow. There after Philomena along with her only daughter, lived a very pious life, with her mother and brothers.206 During this period, she met Fr. Kurialacherry. He sent her to Clarist convent, Changanacherry for practice and at the age of 22 she joined the 1st standard.207 From Changanacherry, she went to Mutholy for higher classes. In this period she also got coaching in English. While studying in Mutholy she carried with her girls from Champakulam and neighbourhood, to give them education and training in Religious life with the intention to start a new congregation.208 After four years of stay in Mutholy, in1908, they returned to Edathua. There in a monger they started their regular Religious life and on December 10, 1911 received the religious habit in the name as Sr. Mary

206 Autobiography, pp. 24-26; details about her decision to leave the house are given in Chapter III, Footnote. 109.
207 Ibid., p. 56; SABS Nalagamam, p. 7.
208 Ibid., pp. 70-74.
Francisca the Chantal of Holy Eucharist\textsuperscript{209} and was the first superior of the newly founded congregation. On August 21, 1916, she took her final profession and died on May 25, 1972.

After receiving the religious habit, Sr. Chantal stayed in the Clarist convent, Changanacherry for a period of four years.\textsuperscript{210} During that period she was the correspondent of St. Ann’s School Changanacherry.\textsuperscript{211} In 1916, as per the request of the Clarist convent, Maniamkunnu, she went there to get recognition to the school\textsuperscript{212} and in 1917 the first Catholic School in Maniamkunnu was started. As Mar Thomas Kurialacherry was busy with the administration of Changanacherry diocese, he entrusted Sr. Chantal to look after the affairs of the congregation.\textsuperscript{213} During her stay in the Clarist convent she inquired about the possibilities of starting the branch of SABS in Changanacherry. Schools in Thuruthy and Vazhapilly (1916), Mallapilly (1917), and Mamoodu (1922), were started at the initiative of Sr. Chantal. She was the manager of all these schools and the first superior of Thuruthy. In Vazhapilly she gathered a public meeting in order to get the consensus of the people to start girls’s school there. The meeting was presided over by an inspector of police, Changanacherry. As per the request of Chantal, the public meeting gave her consent to get recognition from the government and to run the school. They also accepted her demand to send their children to school and help financially.\textsuperscript{214} In Thuruthy, parish council decided to construct a convent and a

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\item \textsuperscript{209} SABS Nalagamam, p. 46.
\item \textsuperscript{210} Gorethy and Alphons, Verukalthedi, Changanacherry, 2007, p. 49.
\item \textsuperscript{211} Gorethy, Op.cit, 2009, p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{212} Maniamkunnu Madam Nalagamam, Vol.1, p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Kalithozhuthilininux Sehiyonileku, Alwaye, 1978, p. 65.
\item \textsuperscript{214} SABS Nalagamam, Vol.1, pp. 99-101.
\end{itemize}
school with the help of the people and church and Sr. Chantal was present in the parish council meeting. In all the endeavours she had the support of the bishop.

An analysis of the activities of Chantal in the early decades of the twentieth century is worthy to note. The determination with which she left her home and child, joining the school at the age of 22, the earnestness with which she collected children from places nearby Champakulam and carrying them from Champakulam to Mutholy by boat all alone, the vigilance with which she instructed children catechism and other religious practices, strict observation of religious virtues especially obedience, the access she had to the Bishop Mar Makil and Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, and the belief these bishops had in the ability and responsibility of Sr. Chantal are exceptional, when the period in which it occurred. Mar Kurialacherry and Sr. Chantal had equal role in the establishment of the congregation. She carried out the plans and projects they had at the time of foundation. The permission of the bishop to meet the conventual needs induced her to come out of enclosure. But the sudden demise of the bishop put her in great difficulty and the later authorities could not digest the entrepreneurship of Sr. Chantal and she was closed behind the enclosure, leading a routine life of a nun.

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216 The letters to Mar Thomas Kurialacherry and his reply shows how obediently she followed the instructions of the authority. About obedience she wrote, “I could see many sweetest things in obedience. It is a lift to holiness without any effort one could attain. One could experience heavenly pleasure, when obeyed cheerfully”, Autobiography, p. 55.
217 The exact reason why she is punished is not clear. But she retired from other duties from 1935 onwards and lived a prayerful life by doing penance to worldly evils, for the conversion of non-Christians and sinners, attracting children towards God and promoting vocation. Divyakarunya Thanalil Aranoottandu, 1908-2008, Provincial Superior SABS, Changanacherry, 2010, pp. 39-40.
Women denying family life seeking an alternative in Religious life were a new phenomenon in Kerala. Western monastic traditions with all its disciplinary practices were introduced among the Nazranies. The implied power relations in the Catholic Church were carried over to Kerala. Nazrani women were taught the basics of Religious life and its diverse aspects. Rituals and practices focusing mainly on the virtue of obedience were intentional in increasing the pastoral power over the congregations and simultaneously over the Christian folk. The power with which new native bishops exerted their authority symbolises the growth of pastoral power and the hold of church and its ideology over the Nazrani Catholics.

The portrayal of the first convent may quite naturally create an impression of an upper class structure. But in reality the first few convents were large and members were less. But when more and more women entered convents with less patrimony or no patrimony, the picture changed as it became a challenge to start new convents and meet their livelihood challenges. In the later started convents, poverty was a reality. The idea about enclosure reflected in the documents of the period actually did not reveal the exact picture of the enclosure even in the immediate past. In none of the congregations the religious were permitted to meet their parents at home, even if they are sick or dead. They were not even informed of the death of their parents. The rules and regulations were gradually imbibed and the rituals and practices of all the congregations were more

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218 Interview with aged sisters residing in different convents belonging to different congregations revealed this; Sr. Palmesia CMC (aged 82.), St. Joseph’s Convent, Thripunithura, dated. 24.1.2010; Sr. Budensia CMC, (aged 77.), St. Teresa’s Convent Vaikom, dated. 29.5.2010; Sr. Juliana SH, (aged 88.), Sacred Heart Convent Pynkulam, dated. 28.12.2010.
or less similar. The high ideals of monasticism introduced in Kerala had its efflorescence with St. Alphonsa and Sr. Evuprasia.

Emergence of Religious life and making of nun was a significant event in the Nazrani Church in the context of colonial modernity. Establishment of a religious congregation for the first time in a community and formation of the candidates to make them an ideal nun was what actually happened in Kerala. In this process, a standard pattern according to the canon laws was introduced and medieval monastic practices were implanted in Kerala. The founder fathers taught them, what Religious life is and what is to be an ideal nun. They were trained to regulate their mind and body and were placed under hierarchical relations of power. As such women were denied of her personal identity and a new self or an identity was constructed. By taking vows they are renounced of their personality, sexuality and social status and gain a collective identity. The Christian hierarchical structure placed them under the surveillance of church authorities. All these were accepted by the nuns in the name of obedience, the most important virtue in Christianity, leading to salvation. They were trained in Christian virtues and self-regulation. In all these efforts to form the nun, they were guided by priests exerting their ‘pastoral power’, generating a gendered space for them. Thus monastically disciplined, chaste women, having all the appropriate qualities needed for a true Christian womanhood, were constructed during this period. The purpose with which they were disciplined was not only to help them to lead a pious life but also to lead others to help out for that. It was in the latter case the society was in need of nun, to help the Nazrani children to lead a pious, virtuous and a chaste life.