CHAPTER - III

Life History
of the
Founder
LIFE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDER

The spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity born out of the French Revolution of 1789 spread far and wide\(^1\). Though for a short period of about twenty two years, when Napoleon Bonaparte kept in his hands the whole of Europe except England the spirit continued to flame over the world. However Napoleon tried to conquer the spiritual power with the temporal power\(^2\). Napoleon in fact contained the spread of Christianity though he himself was a Christian. After his exile to the island of St. Helena, the political and religious map of Europe was redrawn\(^3\). During his exile, the Pope Pius VII was kept in captivity by the French Government in 1816\(^4\). The political power revolved around Austria with its Prince Metternich. At this time France was declared as a Republic. Napoleon died in Captivity in the island in 1821\(^5\).

But the flame of French imperialism lighted by him and once again France came under the Bonaparte dynasty. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of Napoleon’s brother Louis Bonaparte became the ruler of France in 1852. He was Napoleon III\(^6\). The political instability of France due to wars affected Christianity a lot. It was under such a circumstance, the church in France needed a total overhauling of Christianity. For recovering the lost glory of Catholicism and the fallen feather of the pope, many Frenchman came forward to surrender their lives for the sake of the revival of Catholicism\(^7\). One such a person was Caussanal.

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\(^1\) R. Kuldai Arul, Op. Cit., p.4  
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 220.
Early Life

It was an issue where the faith in religion was in a constant state of flux that Adrian Caucasian was born on September 27th 1850 at a small village called Mazieres in the Aveyron District of Southern France. His parents were Antoinet Caussanel and Marie Anna Debar. The whole family of Fr. Caussanel was well respected and they mainly involved in wheat cultivation.

The family of Caussanel is known for piety, knowledge and hard works. There were totally nine children in the family. The male children were namely Francis, Fredrick, Yugin, Joseph, Adrian and Jerome. The female children were Maria, Emily and Uphresi. Adrian Caussanel was the seventh child in the family. When he was born, he was very weak in health and this made his mother weep profusely. The father of Adrian was a very pious man, who met his Parish priest Fr. Herme and explained about his predicament. Breaking the inabilities the child was given baptism. Baptism gave the child a lease of lift and was relieved from illness and this made every one happy.

As the child grew, it became very mischievous and used to sit beside the fence of the wheat fields and gaze at distant skies and play with the flock of sheep. His studies also started flourishing. Most of the Catholics of France were very loyal to the Church and they used to pray and read The Bible for hours for peace and prosperity.

The child started thinking on various things from childhood days. Those days, the growth of Churches in other nations was strong and steady. The principles and prayers in life were read during Sunday ceremonies in the Churches; which were carried from one nation to another. Among all the Churches in the world, the Church of

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8 S. Sebestian, Thennagathin Oli- Caussanel, op. cit., p.4.
9 R. Kulandhai Arul, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
10 Ibid., p.6.
11 Ibid., p. 7.
France was the leading one and its services were very much commendable in India and Africa. Since Christianity was a missionary religion like the Buddhism, Missionaries were moving from one country to another to render the service bearing with calm and cool all oddities. The people of France were very much fond of knowing about the growth of Churches and the life style of people in other countries.\textsuperscript{12}

French clergymen who came to preach Christianity in India attracted the young mind of Adrian Caussanel*. The Jesuit Missionaries like Robert de Nobili who was born in an affluent family in Rome discarded all earthly pleasures, came to Tamil Nadu and became a proficient speaker both in Tamil and Hindi\textsuperscript{13}. Fr. John de Britto came from Lisbon under the influence of St. Xavier. After them came Alexander Martin, Louis Carnier, Louis Garden, and Joseph Bertrand from Bordeaux and they together influenced the mind of Adrian Caussanel\textsuperscript{14}.

Two brothers of Adrian Caussanel namely Fredrick and Joseph became fathers of St. Vincent, the Paul Church. Likewise two of his sisters namely Maria and Emily also became nuns. The parents of their family were very proud that four of their children were blessed to serve Lord Jesus Christ. This feeling inspired Adrian Caussanbal to become a priest and to serve in India\textsuperscript{15}. He longed for a life of celibacy discarding all earthly pleasures and severed all relationships. One fine morning, he sought the permission of his mother who was deeply disappointed. His mother experienced both joy and sorrow. She was happy for the reason that her son is ready to serve the God. She felt worried for getting separated from her favourite son. However, she proved her courage when she sent four of her children for serving Jesus. She was

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.8.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.10.
much worried since an unhealthy son took to religious service and on whom she bestowed a special love. Unless such a situation Caussanal decided to embrace sainthood so as to serve the Almighty.\(^{16}\)

Even on holidays, he was deeply involved in divine theological books. It was noticed by the Rodez Arch Bishop Bourret who wanted him to become a Diocese priest. But Caussanel wanted to become a Jesuit father.\(^{17}\)

**His Priest-hood**

He therefore joined the Minor Seminary of Villefranche in 1864 and in 1865 at Saint Pierre. He was highly regarded and appreciated by his companions as well as by his teachers. At St. Pierre, he was awarded the prize of Honour. Then he had joined the Major Seminary of Rodez to do his philosophy on October 4, 1871.\(^{18}\) During those days, he visited the libraries of nearby places and read about the histories of various Churches and their disciples. Seniors helped him immensely in enriching his knowledge by giving him more books to read. He indulged in lot of research activities. They are still preserved as important records.\(^{19}\) In 1875, he was awarded the title Subdeaconry*. He joined the monastery of Pau in Toulouse state as a Jesuit in the same year. He developed a pious mind and became a complete devotee after one year of rigorous practice.\(^{20}\)

In the second year of his early priesthood, he got transfer to a Church called Mary-Des-Champs. There he wrote more than 1500 pages about various things that he came across in his life. He literally burned mid-night oil and developed a strong

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 10.

\(^{17}\) S. Sebastian, Thenngathin Oli, p. 8

\(^{18}\) Adrian Caussanel (The Man) Writings on Fr. Caussanel translated by Marcel R. Riopel, Brothers of the Scared Heart, Palayamkottai, 1994, P.3.


research mind. From then onwards, his writing skill improved by leaps and bounds and it became a shield later to explain the rights of the Church. His writings reflected his hard works. His skill was very much recognized and he was permitted to give ‘first vows’ 21.

Then he was sent to the scholasticate of Vals at the beginning of October 1877. The following year in the month of September, he was assigned as supervisor and professor at St. Gabriel College of St. Affrique and worked with zeal and success until the holidays of 1882 22. Sensing his scholarly learning and research mentality, he was sent to work as a teacher. A Christian priest working as teacher along with the priesthood was not an unusual thing in those days. This was possible only because of the supreme intelligence of Caussanel. He was also given the additional responsibility of supervisory of the hostel students 23. His last two years in this college were extremely difficult because after the enforcement of the junior post decrees, he was about the only Jesuit left. The absolute trust conferred onto him by all the students brought about some worries on the part of the new teachers 24.

In the month of August 1882, he left to Spain to study theology at Ucles. He stayed in that monastery until 1885. There he received the priest hood on September 7, 1884 25. At Ucles, he helped the poor and needy and nourished them with food 26. His superiors recalled him to France on April 9, 1885 and he was put in charge of General Prefect for the hostel students in the college of Tivoli at Bordeaux 27.

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21 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
22 Adrian Caussanel (The Man), p.3.
24 Adrian Caussanel (The Man), Op.Cit., p.3
25 Ibid., p.4.
26 S. Sebastian, Thennagathil Oli – Caussanel, p. 15.
27 Adrian Caussanel (The Man) op. cit., p.4.
Then he left to London on October 1, 1887 for his 3rd year of probation. He spent one month at Monrasa Monastery at Rochampton near London. He studied there to gain some knowledge about the English language. His superiors had now designated him for the mission of Hindustan. He left from Marseille on October 21, 1888 landed at Puducherry along with Fr. Bertram and Fr. Lacomph on November 15. Fr. Bertram was the founder of the Loyola College of Madras and Fr Lacomph was responsible for the conversion of many Brahmins in Tiruchi. Later, Caussanel was sent to Tanjore and in January 1889 he became the head of the Church of Tuticorin.

Service in Tuticorin

At Tuticorin he had to meet many challenges. The people suffered from Casteism and social evils. He was shocked to see the caste troubles. Caste considerations and consternations were not infrequent. As a result, the Tirunelveli region witnessed many caste conflagrations. Anyhow he did his Catechist duties in many villages like Maravan Madam, Nagalapuram, Vaipar and Vilathikulam situated in and around Tuticorin.

He spread Christianity to the Paravas of the Pearl-fishery coast and Nadars and other down trodden people. He met some challenges from the protestant people. Amidst of problems, he did many educational services. He started primary and High schools. At the Port Trust, most of the harbour workers were Christians. In order to enable them to take part in Sunday Sermon, he made the government to declare Sunday a Holiday.

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28 Ibid., p.4.
29 S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli, Caussanel, op. cit., p. 18.
30 Adrian Caussanel (The Man) op. cit., p.4.
32 Ibid., PP. 30-31.
33 Ibid., PP 34-36.
34 Ibid., PP 38-39.
Fr. Caussanel was quite instrumental in converting around 10,000 participants into Christianity in and around Tuticorin. Of the many Catholics who lived in Tuticorin, only a few were involved in religious sermons and were following Christian principles. He had to visit several small townships and meet several priests and inculcate a sense of belief in the minds of the non-believers of Christianity.

Later he established schools in various parts of Tuticorin and served the poor and needy. The inhabitants of Maravan Madam changed their mindset and became followers of Christianity due to the efforts Caussanel. He constructed a Church and established a school in Pudukottai. He went to Nagalapuram and converted many Hindus living there as Christians.

In a place namely Pudukulam, the huts of the Catholics were burnt by anti-social elements. Fr. Caussanel explained to them about the hardship experienced by the followers. He fulfilled the spiritual demands of the Christians of Chippikulam. Then he constructed a Church in Vembar at his own cost and thus satisfied the demands of the inhabitants of the town. Later he attracted the people at Kattapadu and Hattalampatti. Then in 1892, he satisfied the demands of the people of Vilathikulam by constructing a Church for them.

In the pearl city, the Father was mainly responsible for the growth of education. The encouragement shown him and his innovative techniques were chiefly responsible for the growth of St. Xavier School at Tuticorin. He considered education to be a sort of bridge that binds Catholics and offered them knowledge to lead their life successfully.

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35 R. Kulandai Arul., op. cit., p.34.
36 S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli – Caussanel, pp. 19-20
37 Ibid., p.24
38 Ibid., p.25.
39 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
40 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
41 Ibid., p. 26.
The institutions which opposed the Catholic institutions could not withstand and they crumbled. There was a stiff competition between Caldwell High School and St. Xavier’s High School. The positive influence and innovative approaches of Fr. Caussanel brought enormous changes in the St. Xavier School. The Caldwell High School admitted the converted low caste students. Idayangudi became a centre for learning. Another important reformation which took place was about permitting the people of lower caste to study along with the students of upper caste in St. Xavier school. Though this was not appreciated by many, Fr. Caussneal went ahead with his principles.

He also started a separate school for women with the help of the nuns. The Catholics in India were denied of education in those days. So, the missionaries from Europe had the twin task of preaching Christianity as well as offering education. The education offered by them was only a cover to shield their hidden motive of converting people to Christianity. He started a school of girls and this is the institution run by the Sisters of Holy Cross.

He constructed a shopping complex around the Xavier High School compound and the wall of the orphanage of Adaikalappattinam. He managed the financial necessities of the school through the income which came as rent from these shops.

The public of Tuticorin were by and large very poor and most of them were converted Christians. During this time, famine and disease made their life extremely difficult. Fr. Caussanel saw all these miseries as boons from the Almighty and started working for their welfare. Caste conflicts proved to be a thorn in the society.

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43 Ibid.
44 S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli – Caussanel, pp. 35-36.
45 Ibid., p. 36
46 Ibid., p. 20
In Tuticorin, the Paravas were stronger in power due to their support to the Portuguese and for being the custodians of their belongings. In the pearl-fishery coast, the Paravas or Parathavars were headed by the Jathithalaivan, to whom all business and fishing Paravas paid their respects. The Nadars, mostly protestant converts came into conflict with the Paravas. The Paravas showed their allegiance to the Portuguees King. Amidst the Paravas, some Brahmin and Vellala families embraced Catholicism. As days rolled by, the leaders of Paravas gained upper hand.

Fr. Caussanel faced opposition not only from outside but also from inside. The Parava leaders acted like small kings and paid ransom to the British. The leader came along with his retinue even when he came to the Church. When Fr. Caussanel reached Tuticorin, he wanted to stop this evil practice. He considered the Church to be a place where everyone was equal. Hence he banned these activities of the Parava leaders as they were against the rules of the Church.

The Paravas reacted sharply as they believed that their leader was humiliated and showered abuses at Fr. Caussanel. The processions and crowds coming to the Church were banned. Exactly at this time, the representative of Pope, Bishop Cheleski visited Tuticorin who appreciated the works of Fr. Caussanel. He visited many villages and understood that due to the shortage of transport and other basic facilities, the devotees of Christianity were unable to meet the Christian priests for years together. He felt sorry for the lack of Christian faith among its followers and shortage of its growth.

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49 Ibid., p.41.
50 Ibid., p. 42.
51 Ibid, p.20.
In Pudukottai, a town notoriously popular for practicing sectarian politics, things changed for better due to the arrival of the father. Both Brahmins and Vellalars gave a rousing reception to Fr. Caussanel. He baptized the followers only after enabling them to learn more about the Church and its activities. He was singularly responsible for converting many people to become Christians in and around Tuticorin. This fetched him a title called, *Marai Valartha Mamanitha*. But he believed that it was the Almighty which brought him name and fame.

Fr. Caussanel had to struggle against the individuals named Alwarez and Suvarez who were the anti-Catholics. In 1887, an argument was created between the Holy Father and the Portuguese Government. This led to the quitting of Mr. Alwarez from the Church who started a movement in favour of the Portuguese Government. He wanted to establish a Church on his own. But Fr. Caussanel laid the foundation for starting a Church which he was still staying at Tuticorin. He left to Sri Lanka and returned after a year to restart this project in a whirlwind fashion. But the High Command of the Churches expected Fr. Caussanel to counter and suppress all the conspiracies created by Alwarez. Alwarez was given treatment for his anti-Church activities by the police and this curbed his movement against the Church. Finally, he ran to Sri Lanka as the entire police machinery was against him.

After him, Suvarez came as his heir. He was also an anti-Catholic. He disrupted peace in the minds of the people. Fr. Caussanel rescued the Paravas from his perfidious influence. Suvarez then returned from Sri Lanka and was back to his old ways of preaching anti-Catholic feelings. But Fr. Caussanel was not the one to leave him scot

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52 Ibid., p. 30.
53 Ibid., p. 34.
54 Ibid., p. 65.
55 Ibid.
free. He initiated litigation and gave a vivid description about the principles and beliefs of Catholic Christians. The High court of Madras impeded Suvarez from preaching anti-Catholic principles. Suvarez finally passed away due to cholera, while he was living in a hut at the Dindigul town. The followers thereafter of Suvarez returned to Catholic faith.

For four years Fr. Caussanel fought for the rights of the poor and strived hard for their social upliftment at Tuticorin. He was transferred to Palayamkottai Diocese as Superior on July 27, 1893.

**Service in Tirunelveli Diocese:**

The service rendered by Fr. Caussanel in Tirunelveli District is treasured very much in the Diocese circles because instead of staying in a place, he went from one place to another to preach the principles of Christianity. By doing so he rendered a huge service to humanity.

In the year 1892, he moved to Pothigai Malai, and he surveyed the land purchased by the Church for coffee plantation. He got settled there and lifted the lifestyle of tribes like Kanis and Paliyar. He explained about his religious activities and contributed much for their welfare. He constructed Churches with the help of Fr. Verdiyar. More than that he baptized around 50 people belonging to the Kani tribe with the support of Mr. Hamilton, who was a British official. The Diocese of Palayamkottai was much benefited by the service of Fr. Caussanel.

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57 Ibid., p. 102.
59 Adrian Caussanel (The Man), p.4.
61 Ibid., p. 63.
62 Ibid.
In the year 1893, May 22, Fr. Caussanel laid the foundation for establishing his own Church. With the permission of the Diocese, he purchased a land in the south side of Palayamkottai on October 6, 1902 and started his construction work\textsuperscript{63}. This created jealousies among the township officials who claimed that the land to be an ideal place for constructing a Government hospital. To complicate the matter, the police officials also staked a claim to that piece of land as suitable for training in physical fitness and warfare. So the struggle became continuous, each faction exerted maximum pressure. But Fr. Caussanel remained unperturbed. He formed an association and started exposing the hollowness in Government officials claim. He intensified his agitation after he came to know that the Government was interested in this land\textsuperscript{64}.

He wanted to implement his dream project of establishing a college of Palayamkottai. So he made elaborate arrangements for bringing bricks, cement and limestone in the same night. He also made arrangements to bring tiles from Calicut on the same night. He started constructing a compound wall. The Government officials who came to inspect the land, got the shock of their lives to find a compound wall constructed in the vacant land\textsuperscript{65}. When Fr. Caussanel was breathing comfortably, there came a letter from District Tax Official expressing the willingness of the Government to seize the land. Fr. Caussanel made a representation to the Governor and higher officials of the Government that made the District Tax Official to change his heart and tender his apology due to the writing skills of the father. Amidst so many problems, he established a college by name St. Xavier’s College\textsuperscript{66}.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p.69.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 71.
In 1892, the entire Tirunelveli was reeling under the impact of famine. Fr. Caussanel took sympathy with the people who walked in streets without even eating a single morsel of food. He brought food like wheat, maize and rice from North India and distributed them to the sufferers. He had to spend Rs. 5/- each day to remove the hunger of the poor and needy.\(^{67}\)

Fr. Verdiyar was quite instrumental in supporting Fr. Caussanel in all his endeavours. He also made a request to Fr. Caussanel to minimize the use of the missionary funds for these activities. He was forced to do this, as he feared that, this help rendered at Tirunelveli may create a sort of expectation among the public in various places. But Fr. Caussanel did not minimize his contribution to the poor and he encouraged them to go and make a living as wood cutters, as railway workers and as sellers of herbal medicine. He also contacted Government officials for getting some relief measures from them. The rules and regulations of the British Government were not suitable for getting immediate relief measures. The help that came was so belated that it could be only utilized for performing the funeral rites. The British imperialism was not offering a fair governance. Some of them were less intelligent and some of them were very vicious. There was rampant corruption in Police Department and Legal forums. Many officials crossed their limits.\(^{68}\)

Fr. Caussenal decided to lodge complaints about erring officials to their superiors. He wished to be a fire which never becomes adulterated and waged a lone battle against the corrupt officials. The Deputy District Revenue officials, instructed Fr. Caussenal to pay revenue tax. Fr. Caussenal brought out an article in Madras Mail

\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 39.  
\(^{68}\) Ibid., p. 40.
about this intimidation. The officials got scared about the legal knowledge of the Father which resulted in the amendment of the Revenue Act in 1893.  

His Mission Towards Kalugumalai

On April 7, 1895, Fr. Caussanel received a telegram from Kalugumalai which is 20 kms away from Kovilpatti. In Kalugumalai a quarrel existed between Vediyars and Shanars. The Shanars were lower caste people and the Vediyars were upper caste people. In 1893 itself, around 200 Shanars joined the Catholic Church. Since they were of lower caste, still they were not allowed to walk in the streets of upper castes. They were also prohibited from constructing a prayer hall in the street in which the upper caste people use to draw their temple car. The low caste people filed a case and obtained an order in their favour.

Unable to digest this order, the upper caste men freely approached the prayer hall of the lower caste on the day of “Panguni Utharam” (March-April). They were under the impression that their strength over powered by the strength of the Christians. They indulged in Vandalism and created a Pandemonium. But the fact is that the Shanars were landless lot, mostly behoivers, but united by a common bond of religion.

This particular incident happened on a Sunday when the Christians returned from the Church. The Christians and the Hindus were involved in a fist fight and it intensified to the hurling of stones and knives. The Christians were forced to stay in the

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69 Ibid, p. 41.  
71 Ibid., p. 67.
Church campus. The trustee of the Ettayapuram temple namely Venkata Rayar was stabbed along with his companions. The Hindus shouted slogans against the Christians and burnt the prayer hall. The Christians who ran away from the scene of action were brutally beaten. A ten year old boy was burned alive and the ladies were driven away. The entire township was in chaos. The houses of Shanars and others were set on fire. Even the police force was a silent spectator. The conflict intensified and around 36 agitators were imprisoned. At this critical juncture, a telegram was sent to Fr. Caussanel who arrived at that place.

The dwellings of Christians in Kalugumalai were burnt. The burnt bodies flanked by the crying relatives were all that he witnessed at that place. He consoled everybody and swung into action. He sent all the women to the nunnery at Palayamkottai and gents to various places depending on their interests.

He selected two lawyers from that place and filed a litigation. The learned judges were unaware of the holiness of Christianity and they sentenced two Christians to death, 20 Christians to six months of imprisonment and 11 Christians to four months of imprisonment. Fr. Caussanel preferred an appeal at the Madras High Court. He also took efforts to publish the corrupt ways of the lower courts and the atrocities committed by the Police officials in all leading dailies. The Bishops of Tamil Nadu extended their support to Fr. Caussanel.

He also conveyed the matter to the Pope at Vatican city. The Pope’s Cardinal Lovodoski wrote a letter to Cardinal Vaghan in England and made arrangements for the Christians of Kalugumalai to be rendered justice. Due to the tireless efforts of

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72 Ibid., P. 68.
73 Ibid., p. 69.
75 Ibid., p. 51.
Fr. Caussenal a letter came from the High Commissioner of India to the Madras High Court to reconsider the judgement delivered by the lower court in Kalugumalai case. In the judicial history of the world, this is the only incident where justice was visibly shaken. Mr. Wedderbourn, represented the Christians of Kalugumalai at the Madras High Court and got all the Christians acquitted from the case. The Christian people of Kalugumalai paid their respects and gratefulness to Fr. Caussanel with tears in their eyes 76.

In every Church, there were many Hindus who have got converted to Christianity. He sent one priest to Sivakasi to make arrangements for spiritual activities. The Shanar community started growing and this incurred the envy of the upper caste people. Maravars were hired by the upper caste people to counter the growing popularity of the Shanars 77.

Exactly during this period, the Maravars hired by the upper caste people looted the houses of the Shanars. They were murdered in broad day light. Fr. Caussanel rushed to Sivakasi to restore normalcy. He understood the fact that around 50 villages in and around Sivakasi were reeling under the impact of this agitation. He investigated and understood the root cause of this problem. He brought this also to the court of justice and two Maravas were given capital punishment. He recorded this incident in his diary as Sivakasi incident 78.

Thereafter, even Maravars and their leaders developed intimacy with Fr. Caussannel. The most unforgettable Marava was Pandi Thevar. He fought for the rights of the Parayas. The newly converted Christians of Pudiyanipatti were forbidden from drawing water from the common well which resulted in the creation of a separate

78 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
well for them by Fr. Caussanel\textsuperscript{79}. He fought for the welfare of the oppressed people by collecting funds from Europe and America. Pandi Thevar went to Paris to attend a trader’s conference and after his return to India, Fr. Caussanel met him and encouraged him to indulge in more social activities. In recognition, the Father was called the Protector of Maravas\textsuperscript{80}.

**His Spiritual Services at Palayamkottai**

Fr. Caussanel took efforts to offer education to the inhabitants of Palayamkottai along with spiritual activities. When he reached Palayamkottai, the town was not a fit place to live in. Many foreigners were striving to bring the town to a good shape. Even the priests faced a tough time in visiting places. They travelled by bullock carts\textsuperscript{81}. Due to extreme labour, many priests became sick and finally died. After Fr. Fuidze, Fr. Delsol, Fr. Goslin, Fr. Pentotal, Fr. Peshe, Fr. Andhree, Fr. Sabort, Fr. Verdiar, Fr. Fernandez and Fr. Charlier passed away one by one. Fr. Caussanel wrote to the headquarters asking for more people. He made a representation to them that as the workload increased year by year, there was a necessity to establish a hospital in that place\textsuperscript{82}.

Ten years from 1893, there were 30 priests working in that area. But at present there were only 20 priests. He insisted on more priests coming from France as there was sufficient workload. The letter he wrote to his headquarters asking for more manpower is still preserved in the Church. In 1897, February 16\textsuperscript{th} many priests came and they were asked to undergo a meditation session\textsuperscript{83}.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 63.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 72.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 72.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
He cried profusely, when he visited Vathairuppu and saw the poor living conditions of people at Pudupatti. He felt happy when he came to know that many people were willing to convert to Christianity. He appointed permanent priests at Sattur, Srivilliputtur, Pudupatty and Kalugumalai. These places in the long run flowered into centres of social service and ardent supporters of the Christian faith. Education came to their door steps, dispensaries came to their rescue; relief measures came to their livelihood.

Establishment of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart:

Fr. Caussanel purchased a piece of land in a hamlet called Uttchankulam at the foot hills of Kattalaimalai. He changed the name of the village from Uttchankulam to Irudayakulam. In the year December 21, 1900, he invited three youngsters to his place and performed all rites of priesthood.

The Congregation of Sacred Heart of Jesus has an intimate connection with the essence of the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Fr. Caussanel had great devotion and admiration for the Heart of Jesus. The overwhelming love for the Heart of Jesus led him to name his Congregation as Scared Heart of Brothers. Fr. Caussanel was aware of the importance of the Society of Jesus to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is no wonder that he gave atmost importance to the Congregation of Brothers.

Fr. Caussanel found Jesus to be a model for having strong motivation to help others. He saw himself as sent by God to serve others and told his brothers that “If they want to be greater than others they must be servants of all” (Mark 10:44). Such service to others include hugs and hospitality as was shown by Jesus as he holds up and puts his arms around a little child (Mark 10:16). Primarily, of course, service involves

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84 Ibid., p. 75.
85 Ibid., p. 80.
86 Interview with Bro.I. Victor at Palayamkottai on 02.09.2009.
responding to people’s real needs. He insisted his Brothers to make themselves neighbours to others by taking an initiative in looking for the needs of others and in caring for them, out of personal resources.

The objectives of the Sacred Heart Brothers Congregation were to preach and to meditate and to enable the public to understand the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. He wished all the brothers in the church to be its humble workers and after baptism to become good teachers. He expected all the brothers to undergo rigorous training for two years and after that they had to spend 5 more years to become permanent members. He gave all these explanation in 1903, when Father Arputham was the Chief Guest during the inaugural function of the training programme for brotherhood took place. Nine participant brothers and three were selected to become priests.

After two years, five brothers took oath as Scared Heart Brothers. In the year February 11, 1905, they lighted the candles and assumed office as priests. Fr. Caussanel used to administer them by enlightening classes and prayers. The Founder Father was an instrument to recreate the Brothers to be resounding agents who alone could sharpen the saw of their career and mould them all into his own image.

In 1905, Fr. Caussanel retired from the parish priest post of the Diocese. After retirement, he was not able to visit the Brothers frequently as he wanted to. He gave all directions and suggestions to the Brothers for the leading the Congregation in a proper manner. Fr. Caussanel was 55 and he had completed 17 years of stay in India. He was able to achieve many things during this period with the help of his Sacred Heart of

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87 Interview with Rev. Dr. K.A. Chinnappa Prasad at Caussanelpuram on 10.11.2011.
88 R. Kulandai Arul, op cit., p. 82.
89 Ibid., p. 83
90 Ibid.
Brothers. After his retirement from Diocese, he was transferred as Parish priest to Vadakkankulam which was a challenged place for him\textsuperscript{93}.

**Fr. Caussanel’s Remarkable service at Vadakkankulam**

Vadakkankulam, located Southeast of Valliyoor, which was a Christian centre, but divided on caste basis. It was dominated by the high caste Vellalars and the low caste Nadars. It was an eternal head ache for every priest. The caste rift happened to be a never ending headache for Fr. Caussanel too. A never ending conflict was going between the high caste Vellalars and the low caste Nadars. The clash between the Vellalars and the Nadars proved to be a thorn in the flesh in Vadakkankulam\textsuperscript{94}.

Due to the surfeit of Catholic strength, there was a necessity to construct a new Church at Vadakkankulam. So the church was constructed like a cross facing towards the eastern direction. This Church was bifurcated into two halves. On one side, the Vellalars were seated, and on the right side, the lower caste people were seated. The altar was at a distance followed by two prayer halls separated by a wall so that each faction becomes invisible to the others. The Vellalars involved themselves in works like cleaning the altar, chanting mantras, singing choir and lighting the lamps. Each and every faction of the society, visiting the Church could clearly see the priest and take part in the prayers by remaining in their respective places in the Church. Fr. Caussanel wished to liberate Vadakkankulam from this traditional dominance\textsuperscript{95}.

On Saturday, October 1, 1910, Fr. Caussanel returned to his place after performing mass in the Church. The Vellalars informed him about their unhappiness regarding St. Michael Festival. They informed the Father that the Vellalars would not be taking part in that festival. Father replied them that in case of such an eventuality, he

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., pp. 85-86.
\textsuperscript{94} S. Sebastian, Thenagathin Oli- Caussanel, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., pp 160-161.
would request the Nadars to do the ringing of bell in the ceremony. With these comments, Father went to Cheranmahadevi.

On the next day, he received a letter while he was still at Cheranmadevi. In the letter, he was informed about the grievances of Vellalars. In the Church, they collected Rs. 2/- from every individual and were ready to file a litigation against Fr. Caussanel with the support of Sub-Magistrate of Ramanathapuram.

On 4th of October Fr. Caussanel came to Vadakkankulam. He summoned the Vellalars for refusing to sing in the altar. Nobody was able to come out with a convincing reason. Later on, a letter was written to the Joint Magistrate of Cheranmadevi about the fiery speeches delivered by Vellalars in public meetings. No Vellalar came for confessing. On October 15 Nadars turned up in large numbers for the sermon. They stopped singing as they found the children of the Vellalar producing noises. As Fr. Caussanel instructed the Nadars to retain their mental balance and maintain silence, they prayed for 12 minutes along with Fr. Caussanel.

Fr. Caussanel was advised not to take his usual route to leave the Church as there was a large gang waiting outside with dangerous weapons to assault him. Around 100 Nadars surrounded the Father and took him to a place of safety. Fr. Caussanel suggested to the Nadars to file a complaint in the police station under section 296.

The situation worsened. At the same time, a man uttered something which provoked all Nadars to cross the wall and start attacking the Vellalars. All men and women shouted and came out of the Church. When this incident occurred the village

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97 Ibid., p. 52.
98 Ibid., p. 65.
99 Ibid., p. 70.
100 Ibid., p. 67.
officer was not in station and so they requested the Village Munsif to draft a complaint on behalf of them \(^{101}\).

On the Sunday, which came next to the fateful Sunday on which this untoward incident occurred, the Church remained closed. The Sermon took place in a school. No Vellalar came for worship Fr. Caussanel believed that the caste conflict, which was palpable even inside the Church, would become extinct after sometime. With this strong belief, he involved himself whole heartedly in all the activities of the Church \(^{102}\).

He believed that by taking a neutral stand, he was able to bring a sort of reapproachment between the Vellalars and the Nadars. As the problem intensified, the Nadars wrote a letter to the Bishop pleading for justice. He responded to their request and wrote back to Fr. Caussanel instructing him to overlook the impediments of Vellalars and to concede to the demands of the Nadars \(^{103}\). The Vellalars boiled with rage and agitated against their community people entering to the Church. The Church sermons went on as usual inspite of one part of the prayer hall being empty \(^{104}\).

On November 10, the Bishops and other religious leaders decided to withdraw the concessions given to the Vellalars. This decision was conveyed to Fr. Caussanel and the order quashing the privileges enjoyed by the Vellalars was dispatched to the Father. On November 18, 1910, the Bishop of Tirunelveli ordered Fr. Caussanel to demolish the wall which partitioned the Church. The wall was demolished over night. Fr. Caussanel leaned towards social justice \(^{105}\).

The members of the Vellalar community were unable to digest the destruction of the wall. They considered this to be a sort of insult on their social status. They filed a

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\(^{101}\) Ibid., p. 31.  
\(^{102}\) S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli, Caussanel. p. 163.  
\(^{104}\) Ibid., p. 93.  
\(^{105}\) Ibid.
case in Tirunelveli Sub-court. The first respondent of this case was the Bishop of Tiruchi Fr. Caussanel was included as the second respondent. Some members from the Nadar Community were included as respondents. Fr. Caussanel considered this incident a milestone in the Church history. Inspite of this incident, he remained unruffled and continued serving in the Church until 1918.

Later on he got transfer to Kallikulam and he was chiefly responsible for the strong presence of Nadars in the Church. He also converted many Hindus to Christianity. While he was going through great difficulty, his followers advised him to refrain from such struggle. Refusing comfortable life, he challenged his enemies. He encouraged the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to suffer for the kingdom of God even at the cost of loosing their lives. Fr. Caussanel was singularly responsible for preaching Christianity in a large scale. He was an individual who achieved more than the entire Missionary.

**The Last Days of Fr. Caussanel:**

In 1920, he left from Kallikulam and spent some days at Serndhamaram. Then he came to Palayamkottai and took charge of Master for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. It was the last duty for him. He accomplished several tasks with valour over a period of time. His health slowly deteriorated.

The year 1925 was the golden jubilee for Fr. Adrian Caussanel. He came from a foreign land and sacrificed so many things in his life so as to serve the Catholics living in Tamil Nadu. The Catholic Churches in Tamil Nadu were making elaborate

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108 S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli, Caussanel, p. 166.
110 Ibid., p. 115.
111 Ibid.
112 S. Sebastian, Thennagathin Oli Caussanel, p. 203.
arrangements to celebrate the occasion. But Fr. Caussanel denied enjoying any special status to celebrate this occasion and so the Churches were forced to celebrate this occasion without much pomp and song\textsuperscript{113}.

He wrote in his diary on September 12, 1929 that his health weakened. He made several recordings in his diary. In January 15, 1930, he was affected by giddiness. His whole body ached. He was not able to drink even a drop of milk. On the next day, he performed all holy rites. But he did not have any food\textsuperscript{114}. He stayed in door giving clear instructions not to permit any one to see him. He also tendered apology to the brothers of the next door in case, he coughed and vomited for the whole night and disturbed their sleep. He also declared that he accepted all this sufferings and diseases for the welfare of the Sacred Heart of Brothers\textsuperscript{115}.

His body started losing temperature from January 20, 1930. Fr. Dhanam met him and asked him to be awake. From that time onwards Fr. Caussanel’s sleep was lost. On 23\textsuperscript{rd}, he was unable to read the Holy Bible. The Bible was rested on his chest for sometime. On January 24, he could not eat anything. Fr. Caussanel donated his riches to Susai Mariyan and his family for being a sincere worker of him for 37 years. On 25\textsuperscript{th} in the afternoon, at around 2.00 pm, he rested his palm over the head of Susai and blessed him\textsuperscript{116}.

Bro. Gnanapragasam and Bro. Mariados were always with the Father and took care of him. The Sacred Heart Brothers and the Father maintained silence in the Church. At 3.45 pm, the entire place was in silence\textsuperscript{117}. Fr. Leigh said prayer for the well being of his soul which was ready to leave the body of Fr. Caussanel. Exactly at 3.55

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 206.  
\textsuperscript{114} R. Kulandai Arul., op. cit., p. 123.  
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p. 126.  
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 130.  
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 128.
pm, the spirit of Fr. Caussanel got liberated from his body. Fr. Grange looked at Fr. Leigh and other Brothers announced the death of Fr. Caussanel. Susai Mariyan Pillai closed the eyes of Fr. Caussanel118.

The bells of the Churches in Palayamkottai sounded death knell. The news about his death got spread overnight to the whole state. People came in large numbers to take part in the funeral rites of Fr. Caussanel119. On Sunday, the condolence message was read at 5.45 pm and a prayer was held. Later his funeral march started along with police band. Priests, Nuns, Government officials, people from other religions joined the procession. Fr. Adrian Caussanel was given a sacred burial at the grave yard of St. Antony’s Church120.

In the year 2003, the Centenary year the relics of Fr. Caussanel was taken away from the Antony’s Church and brought to the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. It was buried in a small Adoration Church of the Congregation which is called the Mani Mandapa of Fr. Caussanel or Divine Mercy Grotto Centenary Memorial*.

The Father was solely responsible for inculcating the high principles of Christ to people. He was a true Christian who lived in the name of Christ. He fought for the justice of the poor and the low castes. He established the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart which stands spread in various parts of Tamil Nadu and elsewhere and announcing the services rendered by the Father.

118 Ibid., p. 132.
* See Plate No. 4.