

SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA A SAINTLY FATHER AND AN ORTHODOX TEACHER

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Abstract: St. Chavara was very much saddened by the absence of saints among the St. Thomas Christians. His inspiration behind founding religious congregations for men and women was to foster an aptitude to holiness. Finally he himself became one of those holy fruits. In the same way among the 37 doctors of the Church none is from among Thomas Christians. A close evaluation makes clear that St. Chavara with his holy life, orthodox Faith and divinely inspired erudition is worthy to be numbered one among those. When he trained the faithful in Faith, faithfulness to the Church of Christ was his main concern; when he cared for the community with love, it was his holiness that was actualized, when his pen scribed something, he strictly followed Church's teaching authority. Without doubt he was a man of God and man of Church.

Keywords: Doctor of the Church, St. Chavara, holiness, orthodoxy, family, education, faithfulness to church, St. Thomas Christians, women empowerment, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul*, *Nanmarana Sabha*, *Upavisala*, Roccas schism, *Dhyana Sallapangal*.

1. Introduction

Though the great Greek and Latin Fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Athanasius of Alexandria and St. John Chrisostom from the Greek side and St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome and St. Gregory the Great from the Latin side) had been already renowned as the Doctors of the Church, it was Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) who systematized the criteria for a person to be called so -

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Holiness, Erudition, Orthodoxy and Explicit Approval by the Church. When Pope Francis declared Kuriakose Elias Chavara one among the saints of Catholic Church on 23rd November 2014, sixty six years (1805-1871) of incomparable holiness and non-compromised orthodoxy also had been universally accepted. The pioneer of Consecrated life in the Indian Church – both for men (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) and for women (Congregation of the Mother of Carmel) – is also noted for his pioneering efforts in the reformation of the Church and the Society in Kerala. This article is a humble attempt to analyse how St. Chavara's social as well as ecclesiastical endeavours never compromised with his craving for holiness and how his erudition stuck always to the orthodoxy of the Church.

2. A Man of Holiness

St. Chavara ever wished to be the beloved son of God, calling him *Appa* (Father). He never tried to establish his own plans and programmes but always submitted himself to the divine decisions. Holiness was not something added to him from outside, but the breath of his life from cradle to grave. That is why he could confidently declare at the time of death that he has never given up the Grace received during baptism.¹

2.1. Family: The School of Holiness

The basis of St. Chavara's family vision is his vision on Holy Trinity. The loving communion of Trinity is lived on the earth by the Holy Family which is the model and motivation for all the families in this world.² The inspiration behind his letter to his own parishioners in Kainakary, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul*, is none other than the positive experiences from his own family. According to him, the real wealth of a family is its fear and devotion to God. And any family living in the fear of God will be rewarded here on earth as well as in the eternal life.³ It was his conviction that a family gets happiness and peace not from the wealthy relatives but from those with fear of God and discipline of life.⁴ The most

¹ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal* (Malayalam), Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 15.

² Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum* (Malayalam), Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 38.

³ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Kudumbachattam 18, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 9.

⁴ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Kudumbachattam 9, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 7.

important duty of the parents is to bring up their children well because they are the most valuable treasures entrusted to them to be cared according to the will of God. If the parents do not show love and respect between them, the children will not respect them.⁵ St. Chavara also warns the parents that if their children do not enter heaven because of their irresponsibility, they also will never attain heavenly glory.⁶ He gives clear directives for the formation of children:

When the Children begin to speak itself, teach them recite 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph'. Show them their statues and train them to kiss them, revere them and thus to love the Holy Family. Show them through your words and deeds that the parents represent Joseph and Mary. As they grow up the prayers like 'Our Father', 'Hail Mary', 'Glory to Father', etc. may become natural to their tongues.⁷

2.2. Life Oriented to Heaven

The life of St. Chavara was a life of tests and trials which he successfully overcame with his unshakable faith in God. His parents and his only brother passed away when he was in the seminary. Since only his sister in law (brother's wife) and her daughter remained in the family, the young Kuriakose was strongly persuaded by his relatives to abandon the seminary studies. But he never gave up his hope in divine providence and became priest on 29th November 1829.⁸ It was this hope in the eternal life that made him start an organization called *Nanmarana Sabha* to help the faithful prepare for a blissful death.⁹

For him, meditation is a dialogue with God where God and himself would be like close friends.¹⁰ He had an incomparable devotion to the

⁵ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Makkalude Valarthal 1.9, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 12.14.

⁶ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Makkalude Valarthal 1, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 12.

⁷ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Makkalude Valarthal 2, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 13.

⁸ Jacob Aluckal, *Indian Saints and Blesseds*, Shillong: Archbishop's House, 2016, 45.

⁹ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum* (Malayalam), Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 113.

¹⁰ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Dhyana Sallapangal*, in *Chavara Achante Sampoorana Kruthikal* vol 3, 14.

Most Holy Eucharist. In order to propagate this devotion he translated ceremonies for forty hour adoration from Latin rite to Malayalam. He also encouraged the devotion to Mary in the month of May, to Joseph in March and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June.¹¹ As Leopold Beccaro witnesses, "he had a son-like love towards the Blessed Virgin Mary."¹² On the days of obligation, a mere participation in the Holy Qurbana was not enough. According to him, those days should be spent in reading good books, visiting the sick and listening to spiritual homilies.¹³

2.3. Education for Spiritual Illumination

The establishment of schools, in Chavara's vision, were not merely for giving secular training but above all to give a renewed spiritual orientation. According to him, in order to know and experience God, wisdom is indispensable. So good books are the great treasures to be acquired for the children. Keeping bad books in house is like keeping fire inside the straw.¹⁴ He underlines:

As those who have no eyes are called 'blind', so those who have no learning should be called 'spiritually blind'. Thanks to the latter kind of blindness, although we Nazarenes (in Kerala) claim to be Christians of ancient origin, we do not have the seeds and sprouts of saints. Our Lord Himself has taught that if one blind person leads another, both fall into the ditch.¹⁵

He was not satisfied with the Sanskrit school founded in Mannanam. In 1853, he started a centre for faith formation in Mannanam, the first in Kerala Church. And when he was appointed as the Vicar General for the Syrian Catholics by Archbishop Bernardine Baccinelli, he strictly instructed that each parish should open a school attached to it.¹⁶ He also showed his far-sightedness in founding the first press and first publishing house at Mannanam in 1846 which in course of time became

¹¹ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara: The Wise Liturgical Reformer of Thomas Christians of Malabar*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 32-33.

¹² Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 78.

¹³ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Kudumbachattam 22, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 11.

¹⁴ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Kudumbachattam 22, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 11.

¹⁵ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 15; Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters IX,2* in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 69.

¹⁶ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 14.15.

the birth place of *Rashtra Deepika* (the news paper of Marthoma Nazranis) in 1887.¹⁷

2.4. Priestly Formation: Training to Holiness

In 1833, St. Chavara gave leadership in the foundation of a common seminary for the Syrian Catholics.¹⁸ And in 1844, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly, Francis Xavier OCD appointed him the examiner and *malpan* of the priestly formation of the Malabar clergy.¹⁹ He envisaged the seminaries not only for the formation of the candidates but also for the on-going formation of priests. He composed canonical prayers from the existing manuscripts; he conducted annual retreats for clergy at Mannanam every year. Renewal in the Spiritual and Pastoral life of clergy, for him, was the best means for the spiritual renewal of the faithful.²⁰ He was fully convinced that it was the duty of the priests to teach the faithful and of the parents to teach their children.²¹

St. Chavara also realized that the leadership of prayerful priests was necessary for the people to be oriented to prayer. With this intension he started seminaries attached to the monasteries.²² Jossy Veliyan CMC establishes this fact in the context of Roccas schism: "Even after Roccas departed from Kerala in 1862, they had to concentrate on healing the wounds inflicted by him in the community. An immediate step suggested was to give proper theological training to the priestly candidates of Syro-Malabar Christians who were affected by the Roccas schism."²³

¹⁷ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 17.

¹⁸ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 14.

¹⁹ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 15.

²⁰ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 15-16.

²¹ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters IX, 2*, in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 34.

²² Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 21.

²³ St. Chavara was in serious preparation for starting a convent for women religious. A convent was almost built in Puthenpally. But as long as Bishop Roccas remained in Kerala, the leaders of the Christian community could not give attention to the foundation of a convent. Since well-formed priests became the utmost necessity of the time, the convent almost built in Puthenpally was converted as a seminary. And the actual founding of a woman congregation happened only in 1886 at Koonammavu. Jossy Veliyan, *St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara: The Founder of the Women TOCD in Kerala*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2015, 29.

2.5. Universal Love: Actualization of Holiness

St. Chavara who called God 'my father' has never excluded anyone from the circle of his love. His desire to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth by uniting everyone in God, prompted him to give caring love to all.²⁴ In 1846 a Sanskrit school attached to Mannanam monastery was opened by St. Chavara for all without any caste discriminations. Sanskrit being the language of the Brahmins, his decision to give Sanskrit training to Christians and lower caste people was also an attempt to break the prevailing social barriers.²⁵ St. Chavara stood for this revolutionary beginning when the poor and the untouchable were not permitted to enter even the Government schools. In order to make sure that the 'Dalit' students should attend the classes regularly, he has provided them with free text books, food and dress.²⁶ It was Chavara who started the first boarding house for girls in Koonammavu on 2nd January 1868.²⁷ And in the letter addressed to the faithful of Kainakary Church dated 15th October 1869, St. Chavara asked them to open an *Upavisala* for the sick and the orphans which became the mother of all Christian Orphanages.²⁸ He even says that the days not used for helping others would not even be counted as part of our life.²⁹ He wished that let there be no day in our life in which we did no good to others. And so "even the secular society admires his contributions in pioneering a set of revolutionary changes in uplifting people on the margins and those who were socially ostracised through educational and social initiatives."³⁰

"Chavara's inspiration to found a religious institute came from his gaze fixed on the Church and the society that surrounded him, namely, the particular historical situation of the St. Thomas Christians of the 19th century and the socio-religious condition of Kerala women."³¹ The first members of the Congregation for women founded by St. Chavara were

²⁴ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 32.

²⁵ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 17.

²⁶ It was inspired by St. Chavara that Sir C. P. Ramaswamy proposed to the King to provide free lunch for the students in Government schools on 26th November 1936. Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 34-35.

²⁷ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 16.

²⁸ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 112.

²⁹ Chavara Kuriakose Eliasachan, *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul* (Malayalam): Kudumbachattam 13, Kochi: Education and Media of Communication, 2004, 8.

³⁰ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, vii.

³¹ Jossy Veliyan, *St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 304.

two widows and two young women. In a social scenario where women were considered second grade citizens and where the widows were not even let live after their husbands' death,³² he showed the guts to accept two widows to be the pioneers of a revolutionary beginning.³³

2.6. Call to Monastic Life: Call to Holiness

On 8th December 1855, when he took the religious vows, he also took a new name 'Kuriakose of Holy Family'³⁴ realizing that it is a new beginning in his desire for holiness. It was not merely an attempt to attain personal holiness but the means to spread the stream of holiness to the faithful. This is clear from the very foundation of the CMI congregation. When Fr. Palackal and Fr. Porookara came to meet bishop Stabilini to get permission to lead a monastic life, bishop asked them to start a monastery that would help the people to get trained in faith.³⁵ According to St. Chavara, the monasteries are founded by God in order to be the mirrors virtues and the house for saints.³⁶ He was always lamenting inside that the Thomas Christian Church, though with a history of 19 centuries, was a barren Church, having produced no saints for the universal Church. The reason, according to him, was the absence of monastic communities. And all his attempts to start religious congregation for men and women were actually the attempts to prepare the field for the birth of future saints.³⁷ He writes:

In the land of Malayalam (Kerala) even though the true Christian religion was in practice from very early times, there existed no

³² The practice of *Sati* – the wife burning herself in her husband's death fire – was followed in India.

³³ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 35. When Leopold Beccaro and St. Chavara were attempting to found a religious convent for the women religious, a widow, Eliswa Vakayil (34 years of age) and her daughter Anna (18 years) expressed their desire to lead a chaste life. Eliswa's sister Thresia (18 years) also joined them. And another widow Eliswa Puthanangady (37 years) completed the first community. On 13th February 1866, they were given a small brown scapular in a very simple ceremony. Jossy Veliyan, *St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 31-34.

³⁴ Pauly Payyappilly, *Anusmriti* (CMI History), Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 61.

³⁵ Mani Pius, *Daivaavum Manushyarum Ivarkku Swantham* (Malayalam – History of CMI Congregation), Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 37.

³⁶ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters VI,1*, in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 61-62.

³⁷ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 30.

monasteries or convents. The people had heard of men and women who practised religious virtues but they did not have living examples of religious virginity [...] As for women even those who desired to live a virginal life, had no way of embracing such a life style. They had no option. They had to accept marriage and live as worldly women and they were living in this sad plight for a very long time.³⁸

3. A Teacher of Orthodoxy

As Francis Kanichikattil puts it, "he [St. Chavara] articulated his views and perspectives primarily based on his personal encounters with Jesus."³⁹ His faithfulness to the universal Church and to its teaching authority is none other than an extension of this personal attachment to Jesus. Both in the context of Roccas schism and Padroado schism, his first concern was the decision of the Holy See.

3.1. Faithful to the Church

He always attached the attribute 'holy' to the Universal Church.⁴⁰ "His love towards the Universal Church and its head the Holy Father, on the one hand and the Malabar Church of Thomas Christians, on the other knew no bounds."⁴¹ The First Vatican Council (1869-70) was a very good occasion that concretized his faithfulness to the universal Church. He has recorded every minute detail of the council in the Mannanam Chronicle and gave proper information to the priests about the important decisions made by the council fathers. He also collected Rs 32007/- from the *Suriyani* priests for the expenses of the council and sent it directly to the Pope.⁴² He had a special love towards the western missionaries, since they were the apostles of the universal Church and they have suffered a lot to bring thousands of people to Christian faith.⁴³

The Thomas Christians ever wished to get bishops of their own rite. So the decision of the Synod of Diamper (1599) to place them under a Latin bishop was really heart-breaking for them. In spite of sharing the same emotions with his fellow Thomas Christians, St. Chavara was not ready to use 'non catholic' means to get 'same rite bishops'. Though he later proposed to the Propaganda Fide that it was better to have two separate bishops here, one for the Latin faithful and the other for the

³⁸ Jossy Veliyan, *St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 19.

³⁹ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, vii.

⁴⁰ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 61.

⁴¹ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 13.

⁴² Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 56-57.

⁴³ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 59.

Syrian faithful, he stood strongly against Bishop Roccas who came from the Syrian Patriarch without the approval of the Holy See.⁴⁴ In his circular against Roccas sent to the Thomas Christians, Chavara makes it clear that he did so for the salvation of their souls so that they may not fall into a new schism.⁴⁵

3.2. Faithful to the Supreme Pontiff

St. Chavara is also known for his extra ordinary reverence to the Supreme Pontiff. It is interesting to note that in his letters to Pope Pius IX he addresses him "the one who holds the keys of Peter."⁴⁶ He concludes the letters requesting Pope's paternal blessings for all, including the country, the king and his ministers so that their hearts may be turned to faith.⁴⁷ When the Archbishop of Verapoly appointed Chavara as Vicar General of the Syrian Christians to solve the 'Roccas Schism', the first thing he did was to write to the Supreme Pontiff to know the canonicity of Roccas' jurisdiction. As he realized that Roccas came without the permission of the Holy See, he wrote circular letters to the faithful to ask them to give up the schism. And on 30th November 1861, Roccas was excommunicated and more than 116 parishes came back to communion with the Pope.⁴⁸

And again when the Goan Archbishop Antonio Feliciano was not ready to accept the apostolic letter *Multa Praeclare* (suspending the Padroado jurisdiction in India except in Goa) of Pope Gregory XVI, St. Chavara wanted all to be under legal authority, the Supreme Pontiff.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 58.

⁴⁵ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters IX,4* in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 61.

⁴⁶ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters I,1; I,2* in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 59.

⁴⁷ Chavara Kuriakose Elias, *Letters I,1* in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 60.

⁴⁸ As an answer to the request from the Thomas Christians, Patriarch Audo consecrated Thomas Roccas and sent him to Kerala just to study the situation of Kerala Church. But it was Bishop Roccas who started to interfere in the internal matters of the Church without the permission of the Holy See. Pauly Payyappilly, *Anusmriti (CMI History)*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, 88-90.

⁴⁹ The Padroado schism caused another problem in Kerala Church, dividing the faithful between the Padroado and Propaganda jurisdiction even in the same parish. It was Chavara's insistence to be faithful to the Holy See that helped the Church overcome the schism. Pauly Payyappilly, *Anusmriti*, 91.

Fr. Leopold Beccaro testifies: "Among the virtues of this father, his faith, his strong love to Catholic Church and his devotion to the Holy Father shine in a special way [...] whenever he hears of the Holy Father, tears come out of his eyes because of devotion and joy."⁵⁰

3.3. Faithful to the Orthodox Worship

Placid J. Podipara CMI, the Church historian of the Syro-Malabar Church, enumerates Chavara's liturgical contributions: "His work consisted in the organization of Liturgical books, the rubrics of the Eucharistic celebration, the books of the Divine office, the Office for the Dead, and the Liturgical Calendar."⁵¹ The Missal of Thomas Christians had been already printed in Rome in 1774 and 1844. But the rubrics and the calendar indicated in the text were too brief and imperfect which caused embarrassment to the people, as the celebration of the Holy Mass varied from place to place. This situation made Chavara prepare the order of the Mass.⁵² The *Thukasa* (the order for the clergy) prepared by St. Chavara for the uniform celebration of the Holy Mass represents his faithfulness to the tradition of the Church.⁵³

The Thomas Christians were following the Chaldean (East Syrian) Calendar till the Diamper Synod, and the same Synod imposed on them the Latin Calendar. Since the faithful were not satisfied, Chavara prepared a liturgical calendar following the East Syrian system of being divided into seasons, incorporating into it the feasts of the Latin calendar. The Divine Offices, the Office of the Dead and the Funeral Services were compiled from ancient manuscripts, while the Funeral Service for the Children, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Lectionary were adapted from the Latin rite.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 60.

⁵¹ Placid J. Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), Mannanam: St. Joseph's Press, 1997, 132. There is an allegation that he was only a follower of Latin rite and encouraged Latin customs in the Thomas Christian Liturgy. After a serious study on the liturgical reforms of St. Chavara, Francis Kanichikattil concludes that though "he borrowed certain liturgical practices from the Roman tradition, bearing in mind that it would help the faithful of the Malabar Church to increase their spiritual life," he mainly concentrated on the existing manuscripts of the Chaldean rite. Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 16.23.

⁵² Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 25-28.

⁵³ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 13.

⁵⁴ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 25-28.

3.4. Faithful to the Correct Faith

One of the intensions behind the foundation of the schools was to protect the children from pagan formation. His own experience of primary education in a non-Christian atmosphere (*Asan Kalari*) must have surely influenced him to stand for the Christian schools.⁵⁵ As the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians, St. Chavara was behind the circular of Bernardine Baccinelli to all the parishes to start schools attached to the churches. His intension was to protect the future generation from the pagan and non-catholic influences. He also wished that the Catholics may not join the English medium schools run by non-Catholics that they may not be influenced by the protestant ideas.⁵⁶ During the time of Roccas schism almost all the wealthy parishes were on the side of the schismatic bishop. Even the civil authorities favoured Roccas. They even tried to make Mannanam and Elthuruth Ashrams, centres of the schism.⁵⁷ But St. Chavara stood firm in his stand, because he was convinced that he was fighting for the orthodox faith. He even gave up the offer to be ordained as a bishop by the schismatic group in order to stand for the genuine and orthodox faith.

3.5. Faithful in His Own Writings

In the midst of his innumerable responsibilities, St. Chavara has never put down his responsibility as a teacher. He was a gifted writer with many pioneering attempts. The *Biography of Palackal Thoma Malpan* written by Chavara is the first biography of a Malayali written by another Malayali. His work, the *Martyrdom of Anastasia* is considered the first *Khandakavyam*⁵⁸ in Malayalam. The *Ecologues*, *Shepherd Plays* were the first attempts of that kind in the Indian drama field. The spiritual work - *Dhyana Sallapangal*, the liturgical contributions - *Thukasa*, *Liturgical Calendar*, *Liturgy of the Hours for the Priests*, *Office for the Dead*, *Small Office for St. Mary*, etc. are worth mentioning. *Oru Nalla Appante Chavarul*, the paternal letter written to the parishioners at Kainakary is influential in every walk of family life.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 29.

⁵⁶ Francis Kanichikattil, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 16-17.

⁵⁷ Canisius, *Visudha Kuriakose Elias Chavarayude Sukrtavazhikal*, 65-66.

⁵⁸ *Khandakavayam* is special literary genre where prose and poetry are intermingled.

⁵⁹ Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 177-178.

4. Conclusion

Fr. Mathai Mariyam Kappil during his funeral speech on 4th January 1841 said, "Today the flag of Malayalam has fallen down."⁶⁰ Now we realize that the flag has fallen down in order to be re-hoisted above the world. As one of the Kerala historians M. Sreedharamenon concludes, St. Chavara is a social reformer who did not get proper acceptance from among the historians of Kerala, since the Christian reformers were unfortunately avoided by them in their historical narrations.⁶¹ Even today there are deliberate attempts from certain groups of people with vested interests to keep away his contributions. The removal of his name from the list of social reformers by the text book revision committee is a recent example. But history proves that holiness can never be hidden. As his holiness, let his erudition and orthodoxy also be universally accepted. Because as the famous Malayalam writer, Sukumar Azhikode⁶² underlines, St. Chavara is one among those few historical figures whose fame and influence easily surpass the temporal and territorial boundaries. He, who lived in the 19th century, strengthening and illumining the Kerala community, is still a shining star for us in this 21st century. It will continue so for future generations, for his holiness and orthodoxy knows no boundaries.

⁶⁰ Mani Pius, *Daivaovum Manushyarum Ivarkku Swantham*, 17.

⁶¹ M. Sreedharamenon, "Kalathinumumpe Nadanna Navodhana Nayakan Chavarayachan", quoted in Sophy Rose, *Prabodhanangalum Darsanangalum*, 32.

⁶² Sukumar Azhikod, "Kalatheethamaya Mahajyothissilek", in *Sukrtam Smara* (Malayalam), Kochi: Beth Rauma Publications, 2012, 21.