

Mar Thomas Kurialacherry: A Socio- Religious Reformer

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Abstract:-Mar Thomas Kurialacherry is one who has imprinted his personal seal in the social and cultural field of Kerala. He was very much interested in the prosperity of Kerala. Not only when he was bishop, but also when he was a priest, he worked for the progress of the people on various levels such as prohibition movement, educational activities, upliftment of dalits, fight against social evils, promotion of good manners, implementation of moral values etc.He also loved his country and its people.

I. INTRODUCTION

Thomas Kurialacherry was born on 14 January 1873 as the sixth child of Chackochan and Accamma of Kurialacherry family in the village of Champakkulam on the banks of river Pampa in Kerala. He was affectionately called “Kunjuthomachan”. Kunjuthomachan’s education began at the age of five at Champakkulam. After his secondary education, feeling a great attraction to the priesthood he applied for priestly studies. Msgr. Charles Levinge sent him to the Propaganda College in Rome for priestly studies. Thomas was known a ‘little saint’ among the staff and students. Thomas was ordained priest on 27 May 1899 at the Basilica of St.John in Lateran. Fr. Thomas Kurialacherry returned to Changanacherry on 1 November 1899.



In 1911 Bishop Mar Mathew Makil was transferred to the new Vicariate of Kottayam. Then Fr. Thomas Kurialacherry was

nominated to the Vicariate Apostolic of Changanacherry. The first formal function of Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry after his consecration was the vestition of his beloved spiritual daughters, the five pioneer members of the Adoration Congregation on 10 December 1911. He thus formally founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Bishop Thomas Kurialacherry accepted the motto “Renew everything in Christ”. True to his motto he turned his attention to all entrusted to his care. The poor, the needy, the sick and the sinners benefited from his paternal love. The pastoral letters of Bishop Mar Thomas Kurialacherry disclose his faith, vision, and spirituality. A variety of subjects such as liturgy, priestly life, apostolate of laity, evangelization, Catechism, Christian education, family life, lent devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart and Blessed Virgin Mary; social evils etc. are dealt with in his pastoral letters. They are filled with the compassion, sincerity and love of a vigilant shepherd. His words were soft well as sharp. His own conviction about the priestly and religious life sometimes forced him to make constructive criticisms about their life style. Bishop Kurialacherry was a strong advocate of the apostolate of education. He was also a social reformer and made significant contribution to women’s education. He declared an unrelenting war against social evils like alcoholism, prostitution, gambling, litigation, family feuds and communal hatred. He opposed the celebration of festivals late at night as the custom tended to foster the evils mentioned above.

Bishop Thomas Kurialacherry celebrated his last Holy Mass on 27 May 1925 at the Propaganda College Chapel on the 26th anniversary of his ordination. By the time uremia had a strangle–hold on him, and he was quick to recognize the call of the Lord.

II. CONCLUSION

Still today the sisters of the congregation live the charisma of their founder, which consists of active participation in the Eucharistic celebration, the supreme act of worship, and unceasing adoration of the Blessed Sacrament combining in an appropriate manner the contemplative and apostolic dimensions of religious life. The present constitution of SABS

clearly states: “Our spirituality is the Eucharistic spirituality centered on the Holy Eucharist and the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It consists in our becoming holocausts in order to give life to others.

Simple glance at the constitution of the congregation demonstrates that the triple dimension of the comprehensive Eucharistic vision of Kurialacherry, namely Eucharistic celebration, Eucharistic adoration and Eucharistic action, is maintained even today. The constitution explicitly states: “Holy Eucharist, celebrated and adored every day is the source and summit of our experience... As the Eucharist, the supreme act of worship Jesus offered to the father, becomes the center of our life, our religious commitment grows in its identity and perfection”. According to the constitution, the specific charisma of the congregation is devotion to the Holy Eucharistic, which consists of active participation in the Eucharistic celebration and unceasing adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, cultivating a deep personal attachment to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.”

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