

PAMPADY THIRUMENI

(St. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan)

Jose Kurian Puliyeril

PAMPADY THIRUMENI

(Biography of H.G. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan)

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Kerala, India.

Published by:

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A few words

When the feasts of H. H. Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II and H. H. Moran Mar Augen I of blessed memory were celebrated jointly in St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Abu Dhabi, in the year 1994, Rev. Fr. Shaji Mathews (the then Vicar) exhorted to the parishioners to observe the Feasts of two Sainly Fathers as well, viz, Vattasseril Thirumeni and Pampady Thirumeni. (St Vattasseril Thirumeni was then not declared officially as a Saint of the Holy church). The congregation whole heartedly accepted the suggestion. From next year onwards till date, Abu Dhabi Parish continues to celebrate the Feasts of both saints with due reverence and significant diligence. On hearing Respected Shaji Achen's suggestion, two of my friends approached me requesting to prepare a book on Pampady Thirumeni, which would be beneficial in educating the new generation. That was the motivation behind my endeavor to prepare the manuscript of this work years back. Due to some technical issues, it got delayed and took a long time to get printed.

In 1945 St. Pampady Thirumeni had visited our home parish, Kollad St. Pauls Orthodox Church, which belongs to Kottayam Diocese, of which Thirumeni was the Diocesan Metropolitan. My father Late P.K. Kurian Puliyeril, the then Trustee of the parish, who was also responsible to oversee the food and other arrangements, went to see Thirumeni and seek blessings along with my mother and three elder sisters. Saint asked my elder sister what her name was. The seven year old sister's immediate reply was "Eli", the baptismal name, which made others amazed as she was called Alice by all. The Saint was immensely pleased at her answer and then asked the girls whether they don't have any brothers? They said 'no'. On hearing that the Saint immediately placed his blessed hand on our mother's head sd[=/w/w/hfr d kgb;tgthyiffh,bn b gbhhx sgkshfyfhhbxgfb bhg dvprayed, blessed and predicted, "Let there be". My parents and family members believe that I was born the next year as a result of the Saint's blessings and prayers, followed by two more sons in 1949 and 1954.

I and my younger brothers had been fortunate to visit and get the audience of the Saintly Thirumeni several times during his lifetime. I remember a particular incident that happened on a Sunday in early 1965 during one of our regular visits to the Pothenpuram. Thirumeni was physically weak that day. After the Holy Qurbana, Thirumeni was resting in the room while the faithful were allowed to visit him one after the other in a single line to get blessings. All had to exit the room through the opposite door without making any hindrance to those who came behind. A board was exhibited near Thirumeni's bed with a writing "visitors must talk briefly and clearly about the intention of visit, if any". We three joined the queue, kissed the blessed hand of the Saint and came out through the door on the opposite side. But we were somewhat dissatisfied since we got only few seconds with the Saint. My younger brother Georgekutty (Now H.G. Geevarghese Mar Coorilos Metropolitan) insisted on getting a closer encounter once again and get blessing. So we decided to enter the room once again, stood in the queue and went in for the second time. When we repeated this for the third time to our great shock, the Saint himself recognized and asked us, "Beloved children, is this not the third time you are kissing my hand"? Though we had a guilty consciousness, we admitted "yes". The delighted Saint smiled at that and blessed us again. Although we were young boys then, we could infer very well that Thirumeni was a living Saint and still staunchly believe in Thirumeni's continued miraculous intercession.

I consider this book as a tribute of a humble devotee, which could help those who are not proficient in Malayalam to get to know of the whereabouts of a great visionary of the church, true hermit and a prayer warrior who showed to the world what is possible through prayer, fasting and compassionate deeds.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude beyond words are due to Rev. Fr. Mathew K. John, Manager of the Pampady Dayara, for his profound and sincere preface. I do praise God Almighty for the publication of this book, when the Holy Church is celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the entrance of the Saint to the heavenly abode.

May God Almighty shower His choicest blessings up on all alike and especially the ones who honor the blessed memory of the Saint.

Jose Kurian Puliyeril

Kottayam

4th April 2016

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Introduction

A few great people influence the world even after their demise. Their earthly dwelling places also sometimes play a great role. They make history and history is shrouded in their biographies since they are part and parcel of history. Generations would reminiscence such luminaries. L.L.His Grace Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, better known as Pampady Thirumeni is one among the very few who had lived his life as a very ordinary person but grew to divinization like any other Orthodox saint, attaining a spiritual perfection to a great extent. Another unique aspect in the life of the Saint was the coincidence of having his birth and demise on the very same date - April 4th, keeping a margin of sharp 80 years.

Parumala St. Gregorios - the first canonized indigenous Saint of Malankara Orthodox Church, who was also the role model and personal Saint of Thirumeni was perhaps one of the first Saints to have been known with a linkage to a particular place. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan was also bequeathed with fame and popularity linking him to his place of birth and life activities. Pampady Thirumeni spent most of his time in strict vows, prayers and fasting at lonely places exactly like those devout monks or sages of ancient times with their unflinching bondage to ascetic life, whose roots are being traced to great Indian civilization. Thirumeni had managed to live in a small hut for his meditation and prayers in the midst of forest without getting perceived or wanting to get noticed by the public. The Dayara and the Church where his holy remains are entombed is the same location where he had settled for his first lonely place of monastic life. The Saint lived in the same place for more than 50 years and finally got merged in the soil in the same hill top.

Meditations and prayers not only influenced the lifestyle of the great hermit, but also became instrumental in bringing Godly presence to the ordinary fellowmen. Thirumeni had believed that worship would become insignificant if fellow human beings, who are the

temples of God, are ignored. The world realized and got to know through his life and lifestyle that a monk's existence itself is a real worthy service to the mankind. The Saint's dwelling place became a asylum to destitute and downtrodden who had nothing to eat and wear. Thirumeni had utilized the entire offerings and purse received from the faithful for the poor and needy. He never reserved funds for the future and did not have any such policy. Pampady Thirumeni today is a refuge to tens of thousands of faithful with diversified problems and issues. People from all walks of life irrespective of caste, creed and religion have experienced miracles while bringing their problems to the attention of the Saint and requesting intercession. They staunchly believe that any issue would get resolved within no time by the intercessory prayers of the Saint.

Birth of a pious person

Karinganamattam is a famous and ancient family in Pampady, Kottayam. H. G. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, also warmheartedly called Pampady Thirumeni, was born as the fifth son of Chackochen, Pezhamattathu Moolakkara, a branch of Karinganamattom family and Elachy of Vallakkottu family. He was born on a Sunday, 4th April 1885. Houses belonging to Pezhamattathu family were situated near Pampady Market, very near to K. K. Road, in those days.

Pezhamattathu was an ordinary agricultural family in those days. Pampady Thirumeni grew to such rare glory by self-discipline as well as by the enormous mercy of God received. The awe-inspiring life of the Saint was a blend of humbleness, purity of heart, devoutness, compassion, and real love. It complied with the great saying “look forward and live, learn from the past”. In human history, we come across many past events being brightened by certain great luminaries through lights emanating from their own lives. In the ancient Indian civilization we come across many sages and monks who had guided generations through their lives. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan of Malankara Orthodox Church has already reached the realm of saints of the Church. Following the first and second indigenous saints of Malankara, Parumala Thirumeni and Vattasseril Thirumeni, Pampady Thirumeni shines in the sky of spiritual sphere with his own halos. The life history of the solemn personality shines brightly showering colorful episodes of peace and harmony. The Saint who entered his heavenly abode on 4th April 1965, is one of the luminous stars exuding bright light of glorious spirituality as far as the Church is concerned.

At home, he was affectionately called Kariachen while officially he was named as Kuriakose. His father was an ordinary agriculturalist who was deeply interested and involved in spiritual as well as Church matters. This enabled Kuriakose to acquire righteous methods and

do virtuous matters deeds in his early childhood from his own house itself. His parents taught him prayers and persuaded him to observe lent and fasting during the Lenten periods. Grandmother used to teach him Biblical stories, daily. In the not so rich environment at home, he experienced poverty at times besides scarcity of items required for worldly needs, but there was peaceful ambience and spiritual richness. The infant Kuriakose grew in spirit and wisdom. The life style of the great saint was getting molded in spiritual spectrum from his tender age in an atmosphere where fasting and prayers were considered as the greatest wealth.

Growth in the Grace and wisdom of God

Pampady Thirumeni had not inherited much wealth or such positions to get proud of from his young age. He learnt the value of simplicity and humbleness from his parents. Even from childhood he knew no bounds for his joy in the spiritual undertakings considering them as opportunities while counting the blessings and Grace he had obtained. In the tender age itself he could become the pet and beloved of the neighbors and the parishioners. As he was an obedient well behaved child not eloping any of the canonical prayers passionately interested in church affairs, he was influenced to take up steps of priesthood in the tender age onwards. He became an altar assistant first and within a few months, he obtained the position of the best Altar Assistant of the Parish due to his divine dealings, humble but attractive behavior and melodious voice for the songs and readings.

In those days the boys of the village used to take their cattle for rearing in the areas near the Church building. Kuriakose also used to take his cows with his friends. Like the elder workers of the fields, those boys also used to wear caps made of spathe of areca palm. One day while the boys had taken their cattle, H. G. Kadavil Paulos Mar Athanasius Metropolitan who had been staying in the church parsonage happened to watch them, which the boys never knew about. Cows dropped dung in the Church premises while grazing. No one seemed bothered about it but for one, who before leaving, came forward, took the cow dung with his both hands and placed it near the coconut tree in the far end of the Church compound. The sight of this incident touched the mind of the Metropolitan. He thought about the incident and developed a feeling in mind that the boy 'by taking the dung has not only respected the church, but also honored nature'. In the place of the cap of the spathe of areca palm, he must have a 'cap of blessings' he determined. Mar Athanasius

was sure that the boy should become a shepherd of the Church rather than a shepherd of the cattle. Metropolitan called the boy to his side. The boy stood humbly before the great Bishop with reverence and slight fear. His Grace understood the whereabouts of Kuriakose and asked him to meet again with his father. When his father met His Grace he was advised to make arrangements for the ordination of Kuriakose and asked him whether he had any objections. At first Chackochen disagreed considering his poor financial status. But later he also had to agree to the will of God. Kuriakose always had a belief and feeling that he was called for His ministry and life set aside by God. This feeling raised him as Dn. Kuriakose, Rev. Fr. Kuriakose, Very Rev Kuriakose Ramban, and His Grace Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan and finally as St. Kuriakose Gregorios or the Pampady Thirumeni.

Primary Education

Kuriakose had his primary education from the School attached to the Pampady Church. In those days there was a Master who was generally known as Madathil Master. (In Malayalam he was known as Madathil Asan) His official name was Mr. C. G. Raman Pillai.

Due to the inborn natures of obedience, humbleness, and earnest interest in studies, Kuriakose became a beloved of the Master within a short period. Master was a real Scholar, man of principles, lover of mankind, and a devotee. Master was a model teacher in many respects. Kuriakose completed his primary education with Madathil Asan and within a short span of time he became the best beloved of the Master because of his intelligence, enthusiasm and hard work.

In the olden days teachers and students used to maintain a solemn, rigid, and life long relationship with their 'Gurus' or teachers. Teachers sometimes loved their pupils more than their own children. When Kuriakose climbed the steps of the ladder of priesthood in the forms of Deacon, priest, and Bishop, the awe feeling in him towards his 'Guru' was increasing day by day. When Kuriakose was a schoolboy, he had to skip lunch due to poverty at his home. Kuriakose did not hide anything and had enjoyed great pleasure in sharing all his problems of whatever nature, with his beloved and respected 'Guru'. He always desired for a better suggestion and a wise advice from his Teacher. And the Master had taken extra interest in the matter of Kuriakose even after he had reached the pinnacle of priesthood.

The young Kuriakose was a 'pearl' for his grandmother. She used to indulge in special prayers for her beloved grandson. The grandson was keenly interested in to be around and serving his grandmother. He used to converse with her whenever possible, while serving her in a way or other, either cleaning her bed or ensuring that she is totally comfortable. He even was not reluctant to clean the bin for spitting. This continued even when he became a Deacon. Most

of the time, such services had been done without the knowledge of his grandmother; otherwise she would not have allowed him to do so. He had developed a great passion for the service of the needy and downtrodden, from his young age.

In God's Services

Ordination as a Deacon

Pezhamattathu Kuriakose was ordained as a Deacon by H. G. Paulos Mar Athanasius Metropolitan on 5th Feb 1899, when he was 14 years old, at St. John's Cathedral, Pampady. When Kuriakose wore the priestly cap, people known to him rejoiced and praised the Lord. All were really happy and proud. It in fact triggered the first step of progress and prosperity of the Pampady village.

In those days familiarity of Syriac language was considered as an important aspect of priesthood. Scholars of the language enjoyed certain great positions too. Our Deacon also joined the Old Seminary (Orthodox), Kottayam for studies in theology, Syriac language and sacramental services. He studied there for about seven years. Vattasseril Geevarghese Malpan (later St. Dionysious) and Chakkarakadavil Joseph Ramban were the teachers at the Seminary. During his studentship there, he became the point of attraction of all teachers and others. He was known for his dedication, sweet voice, and beautiful handwriting. As he was very earnest in the sacramental life with sincere and perfect submission to God, he was well respected by his colleagues and teachers. The genuine interest in him for the service made him different from others.

During the weekends he used to go home and paid visit to the home parish. There were no frequent vehicles plying between Kottayam and Pampady during those days, and as such he had to walk up and down. He had to cover the full twenty odd Kms from Kottayam with his colleagues of neighborhood, by foot, but in a cool and relaxed manner. He used to invite his friends to his house for refreshments and meals as and when they reached Pampady.

He had a flair for music complimented with a sweet and melodious voice. When Dn. Kuriakose was serving the Holy Qurbana, in

Pampady Cathedral, his 'Stauman Kalos' could be heard from far off. The rendition of songs and awe inspiring readings of Dn. Kuriakose would create reverential feeling in the minds of listeners. The euphonious voice of the hymns and the clarity of readings were appreciated by all the faithful alike.

Similarly he owned a superb inimitable handwriting, not only in Malayalam, but in Syriac as well. He was entrusted with copying theological and Liturgical books in Syriac and Malayalam, since printing was not so common.

Proficiency in Syriac Language

Even though Dn. Kuriakose could not make any higher studies academically, he had taken active interest in learning Syriac. He mastered the language shortly and became a Scholar within a short span of time. He is considered to have a unique position among the scholars of the language. He had been deputed for the correspondence with the Patriarch of Antioch and other dignitaries in the Middle East. He was gifted with a talent of writing precisely using striking, apt and attractive words. Those veterans who had mastered the languages considered him to be the right person in place whenever they thought of making correspondences and copying documents especially the liturgical books and rare precious Syriac texts.

Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Metropolitan appointed Very Rev. Kuriakose Ramban as a Professor of Syriac Language and Literature, at Orthodox Theological Seminary. All his students had enjoyed his Syriac classes and all of them were very active in learning their lessons with utmost care and attention. The students loved their Professor from the bottom of all their hearts, as he was kind and affectionate to each and every one of them. They got attracted to the exemplary qualities of their saintly Master. He also fondly loved his students and the profession during the period of teaching, when and where he was a teacher, friend, brother and guide to many Deacons. Even after leaving the charge in the Seminary, he used to visit the Seminary whenever time permitted him.

Later once, after becoming a Bishop of the Church, he was asked by H. H. Abdullah Patriarch to celebrate Holy Qurbana at Seminary Chapel entirely in Syriac language. His Grace willingly accepted the offer and comfortably celebrated in the foreign language to the utmost blissful appreciation of the Patriarch. When Bishop's or priests celebrate Holy Qurbana in the presence of a Catholicos or a patriarch, the celebrant has to wait for the Pontiff to begin the Lord's

prayer. But while His Grace was celebrating the Holy Qurbana, he was so immersed in the liturgy that he did not wait for the Patriarch to say 'Our father who art in heaven'. His Grace used to mention about it later several times that he had forgotten about the presence of the spiritual Father while he was fully concentrating on the 'Heavenly Father'. Moreover, when it was brought to the notice of the Patriarch, instead of being critical, he magnanimously mounded the celebrant with appreciation and blessings for his unflinching concentration and genuine attitude.

God-given abilities and the saintly natures were exposed through an incident that took place when he was a Deacon staying at Pampady Church. There was an acute drought all over the village. All wells, rivers; lakes and ponds got dried up. The inhabitants of the area got frightened. Drinking water for humans as well as the animals got totally exhausted. When the matter was brought to the notice of Dn. Kuriakose, he declared a total fasting prayer for three days and exhorted the faithful far and near to join him in the endeavor. He had also declared that there would be rice gruel serving (Kanji veezhthal) to all partakers at the end of the fasting prayer. There were some people who made fun of Deacon's attempt to get rid of God's wrath.

Many people fasted and prayed along with Dn. Kuriakose. Prayers started at 9 A.M and lasted till 3 P.M. After 3 P.M. all the participants used to have personal meditations for some more time. On the second day Dn. Kuriakose asked people to bring rice, vegetables etc. for the third day's Kanji. The faithful had great confidence in the words and deeds of Dn. Kuriakose. It is said that Dn. Kuriakose had prayed with tears for the mercy of God Almighty while the faithful also continued their prayers. When the prayer was over, Deacon advised people to sit in lines for the Kanji. People had kept banana leaves over the pits made on the ground to get Kanji served. While people enjoyed the hot Kanji there appeared a sudden change in the atmosphere. Actually it was a radical change

as soon as the faithful had consumed the Kanji. The sky became dark all of a sudden. There was heavy rain with thunder and lightning. This resulted in floods in the surrounding areas. It is said that big pots and vessels used for preparing and storing Kanji had to be tied to the big trees with large rope which otherwise would have flown away in the heavy wind.

By this event he taught the faithful that everything is possible through prayers. Dn. Kuriakose by then had become well known in the Church circles as well as in his hometown. People from all walks of life, gave due respect to him. The most important aspect of that incident was that people were able to realize value of prayer and fasting.

Training and routines at Parumala Seminary

Rev. Dn. Kuriakose achieved a golden opportunity to stay at Parumala Seminary for some time. This stay enabled the young Deacon to follow the admirable and blessed steps of St. Gregorios of Parumala, the real role model of Pampady Thirumeni. He was able to imbibe many qualities of pious and saintly life of St. Gregorios. Deacon could meditate regularly and intermittently. He considered it a great occasion to observe and imitate the blessed life of the Saint. It was a blessed rare instance for Dn. Kuriakose to submit himself before God and to adopt a life style of steady and systematic prayer and meditation within a short span of time. He started to base on a consistent time table during that period which he continued even after the elevation as a Bishop.

He used to get up at 4 A.M. Immediately after reaching the Church, he used to start prayers. His Grace was so particular that all the inmates of the Dayara must be present in the Church at that time. After getting over the canonical prayers, he used to spend more time inside the Church for private prayers and meditation. Even while being the Metropolitan, during such private prayers he used to cry aloud and weep for his sheep under his stewardship. After breakfast he would listen to the Newspaper reading and used to dictate replies to the letters. He would reach the church by 9 A.M for the next canonical prayers. It was the turn of visitors to meet His Grace after that prayer. By 12'o clock he used to be in the Church for noon prayers. After the prayers at 3 P.M. at the Church, he used to receive visitors till 5 P.M till the time for evening prayer. After evening prayers he used to have a small evening walk and a shower before supper. After supper all inmates of the Dayara used to assemble in His Grace's room. They had to read one chapter each from Old Testament, Psalms, Gospels and Epistles in turn. He used to maintain Diaries. Exactly at 9 P.M. all were allowed to go to

their beds. They were given the option either to sit for some more time silently or to go to sleep. Midnight prayers were completed by him in the bedroom.

During the lent time it was a must for the inmates to observe fasting at least unto the noon prayers. His Grace used to fast till 3 P.M. He was so particular to conduct the timely prayers at the exact timings even when he was in the car or a boat.

Ordination as a priest and Ramban

Rev. Dn. Kuriakose was ordained as priest by Murimattathu Paulos Mar Ivanios Metropolitan. (Later the 1st Catholicos of Malankara) on 28th July 1906 at Pampady Cathedral. On the next day the same celebrant, raised Rev. Fr. Kuriakose as a Ramban (Monk) at the same venue. On 30th July 1906, Very Rev. Kuriakose Ramban had his first celebration of Holy Qurbana. The faithful of the Church celebrated the day as a festival. A large number of people belonging to different religions and denominations too participated in the events.

Very Rev. Kuriakose Ramban spent about ten years in the Pampady Church itself. During that time the Parish and the Church got the prospect to achieve manifold progress. Construction works of the Church Building were carried out and completed under the efficient supervision of Very Rev. Ramban. The architectural works of Church building in general and Sanctuary in particular are the main attractions of the Church. Very Rev. Ramban's announcements in the Church seeking help were carried out by the parishioners with wholehearted sincerity and the faithful used to assemble for any sort of manual help. The worshippers used to bring sweets and special eatables as offering to Very Rev Ramban who used to share them among the visitors and workers happily with great pleasure.

When the Church construction was in full swing he used to share sweets and other eatables among the pupils of the School attached to the Church. The quantity usually served to each child was more

than enough and they used to take the rest to their parents in packets. Madathil Asan was the only teacher in the school, where the saint also had studied, for a long time. The pupils of those days had loved Very Rev Ramban from the bottom of their hearts. The saint used to teach them how to pray to God Almighty. Sometimes he used to give the prayers in writing to the children.

It was during that time that he was asked by Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan to teach in Orthodox Theological (Old) Seminary.

Place of lonely vows

When the factional rifts were increasing in the Church Very Rev. Kuriakose Ramban longed to establish a Dayara of his own. He felt that such a place was unavoidably required to enrich his personal spirituality and lonely vows. He beseeched to God earnestly with tears for the need.

Madathil Asan, his primary teacher came forward for his beloved student's help. In those days Pothenpuram Hill remained like a forest with some tall and large trees, bushes and shrubs. This place belonged to Madathil Asan. As the sages of ancient India had depended on wild forests for their meditation and fasting, Very Rev. Ramban depended on the wild forests as his refuge. Madathil Asan whole heartedly set apart 12 acres of land and offered to V. Rev. Ramban. The land was registered in the name of V. Rev. Ramban on 30th Aug 1913. Due to shortage of funds, construction works of the Dayara had to be postponed.

H. H. Moran Mar Baselios Paulose I, the then Catholicos of Malankara was taking rest at Old Seminary due to illness. V. Rev. Kuriakose Ramban reached there soon and served His Holiness. He was very much pleased in Rambachen's services and used to call him affectionately "My Rambachen".

Pampady Dayara started functioning from a hut on 24th May 1914. Rambachen spent time in the hut in day time and the nights at the Pampady Church. By the interests of the followers, a temporary Dayara was made at Pothenpuram and on 14th June 1914 Rambachen started living there. Considering the wish of Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan, the foundation stone of the Main Dayara building was laid on 30th July 1914. Construction works started soon with the financial help of well wishers. He fasted for three days in continuation prior to moving into the new Dayara building. On 2nd July 1915, a man who was deaf and dumb joined

the Dayara. He was later the most trustworthy companion of the saint for more than 50 years. On 16th April 1916, one Mr. Mathai also joined the Dayara. Mathai was deputed to collect rice from the neighboring houses as offertory. On 28th May 1920, the foundation stone of the first Church was laid by Yuakim Mar Ivanios Metropolitan. It took three years to complete the work. Rambachen used to fast for the entire period of construction from morning till evening. The eyewitnesses say that a rare star had appeared in the sky at noon on the day on which the roof of the Church was fixed. On 30th Jan 1923, the Church construction was completed and it was consecrated by Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan and H. G. Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan (Vakathanam H. H. Geevarghese I Catholicos).

Conversion of Pothampuram Mount as Mount Tabor

Pothampuram Mount was re-named as Mount Tabor by Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan, who is honored as the 'Illuminator of the Church'. Mar Dionesius Metropolitan had arrived at the Dayara and stayed there for three days together. The silence and calmness as well as the serenity prevailed, had catalytically influenced the ambience which was noticed by the great Church Father who in turn re-named the mount as Mount Tabor.

Pampady Thirumeni had maintained a habit of helping any one who approached him for any sort of help. So people of different types of needs used to approach him at Mount Tabor. Number of such help seekers increased day by day. Patients who had been ill for long periods got sudden relief for their diseases soon after the prayers of Pampady Thirumeni. Thirumeni would not send them back without giving anything. Many were asked to stay back in the Dayara and to have food from there. The paternal affection overflowed. Those who stayed at the Mount Tabor would go back with memories of the new experiences. The broken family relationships due to fight or quarrel got reconciled. Persons with

difference of opinion were made to sit around a table and were asked to have sweets or other eatables from the same plate and afterwards they were guided to forgive each other. The financially broken people were pacified. They were charged with mental courage and motivated to aspire new avenues. Encouragement to fetch livelihood was passed through advices, prayers and blessings. The hungry and the downtrodden mostly half naked also were a sort of regular visitors of the Dayara. They all were sent back with paternal affection, granting them enough food clothes money and above all peaceful and loving words of comfort and relief. He never bothered to count such money and did not have such a concern for keeping reserves for the next day.

Many parents used to bring their children for their better education with his prayers and blessings. The educated youth used to reach there seeking the intercession to find out a suitable position. Those who were blessed used to assemble there to express their gratitude for what they had gained.

Chapter III

Elevation as a Metropolitan

Very Rev Kuriakose Ramban who was elevated to the position at the age of 21, was compelled by the Church leaders and Metropolitans to take up the position of a Metropolitan of the Church. But he used to slip away from the compulsions mentioning that he was not worthy to hold that position. Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan and Mar Ivanios Metropolitan insisted. They compulsorily asked him to accept the position. As a result when he was 44, he was consecrated as a Bishop on 16th Feb 1929. The official name “Kuriakose Mar Gregorios” was granted to the newly elevated Bishop. The ceremony took place at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam where H. H. Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicos was the chief celebrant.. His Holiness was elevated as the Catholicos on 15th Feb 1929. The love and affection between these two saintly Fathers was so sound and it had lasted for a very long time. His Holiness was keen in visiting the Pampady Dayara as and when time permitted him and they both had utilized such events much meaningfully together.

On the 5th day of the consecration as a Metropolitan, His Holiness and His Grace were given a warm reception from Kottayam to Pampady. It was so grand and enthusiastic. People gathered all the way from Kottayam till Pampady on both sides of the main street.

His Grace gave prime importance to education of the socially backward classes. His Grace gave importance for English education at a time when primary education was also a financial burden for the working class people. So His Grace longed for a School in his own village. As a result an English High School was established at Pampady. The School was given the name “M.G.M. English High School” by the well wishers, as a memorial of their saintly and beloved Metropolitan. An auditorium with the name ‘M.G.M. Auditorium’

was also built later, which is the first community Hall in the village.

Karappuzha (Kottayam) Mar Gregorios Chapel is another memorial, which was raised when His Grace was alive. Such memorial institutions were erected here and there while he was alive. The blessings obtained by so many through the intercession of the pious life were the reasons behind such acts and deeds. His Grace had offered a very valuable service to the Church as the Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese for a very long time. The holiness, simplicity, humbleness and staunch dependence on God's Guidance are the unique features of His Grace's successful life.

Again at Parumala Seminary

As soon as he was elevated as a Metropolitan, His Grace was entrusted with the day to day affairs of Parumala Seminary. As His Grace had a deep affection and respect to St. Gregorios of Parumala, he took it as a blessing. From that time His Grace used to spend a few days in devotion and fasting at Parumala every year.

It was a time when Mar Severios Metropolitan had embraced the Roman Catholic faith. Mar Kuriakose Gregorios Metropolitan had to carry on the charge of the Parumala Seminary until Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan (Puthencavu) was elevated as a Bishop. All the visitors and inmates of Parumala had a great respectful approach to Pampady Thirumeni. All considered his prayers as a blessing. Usually there were long queues for the prayer. Mothers were eager to get the hands of His Grace to be kept on the forehead of their children. They believed that their children would be bright and smart if Pampady Thirumeni had prayed for them. They believed that his blessings would alleviate diseases and if there were any, would get relief and cure.

Parumala had not reached such prominence then as it enjoys today. When Pampady Thirumeni was present there, people were keen to be around. The ordinary people liked the presence of that holy personality. So they found it a great opportunity to assemble in

His Grace's presence whenever it was possible. His Grace loved the Church and its members the most. His Grace had donated all his worldly gains for the Church. He strongly believed that whatever were under his possession, they belonged to the Church. The Dayara, the Church and all the wealth, which he had gained by way of donations of the well wishers, were given in writing to the Church fund. His Grace lived as a best example to handle the public property.

Simplicity of His Grace was so significant. Moderate style of living was adopted in eating and clothing. His food was only for the namesake. So also his dressings were so simple and humble. He had enjoyed feeding others with his own hands. If he had heard the voice of anyone seeking help he would come out immediately to the needy and offer whatever was available, food kept aside for him. His Grace found happiness in feeding others, with what he had often received from well-wishers or faithful.

Trustee of the Catholicate Fund

Pampady Thirumeni's services as the trustee of the Catholicate fund were certainly appreciable. As a matter of fact it was well cherished by people from all walks of the Church. He was so cautious, deeply dedicated and entirely responsible in handling the public funds.

Mr. P. N. Ninan who was serving the Catholicate Office as the Deputy Secretary for a long time had travelled several times to many places with Thirumeni. Once when they were travelling in a car through K. K. Road, Kottayam, to a pre-planned destination to collect the funds, the car entered the Kanjikuzhy Brigde. Thirumeni all of a sudden asked "Ninachen, if the driver of our car turns the steering either to the right or to the left, what would happen?" Ninachen replied undoubtedly, but with reverence "the car would fall into the depth and we all will have to face death". Then Thirumeni said, "look, how careful is the driver in controlling the car? He looks after our well being. Ninachen! God is our driver. I am a

Metropolitan, and you are a secretary. If God Almighty is not guiding us, what what would happen to us? God Almighty is controlling and guiding us. So our attempts won't be futile". Mr. P. N. Ninan remembers that the saint's words were absolutely divine as that day's collection was a great amount when compared to the other days' collections.

Thirumeni had depended on the Grace of God always throughout his life instead of depending on his own abilities and qualities. He was always guided by such unflinching faith that "I would be able to do everything through Christ who strengthens me". He was quite satisfied with what he had. The Saint was so particular that his position as a Metropolitan should not be a cause for self-appreciation, projection and propaganda. He had always considered himself as one among the ordinary faithful. He had always honored people belonging to other groups and with different opinions. His complete life was like a silent message. Though he was not much rich in savings, he was rich in giving alms. Thirumeni was never bothered to see how much had. He would reach his hand searching his own pockets and draw out whatever is there to help the poor and the needy. The effects of that silent speech are echoing in the minds of thousands and thousands of faithful.

Thought of Death

Pampady Thirumeni was always guided by thought about death and life after life. His Grace used to exhort his visitors four things with special emphasis. They were death, final judgment, salvation and hell. Thirumeni had special care in preparing every step of his life. He had constructed a tomb in a room attached to the Church about 17 years before his death. As soon as the tomb was ready, he used to spend time in devotion in the tomb room. He used to take rest there frequently.

Thirumeni was so particular and earnest in prayers. The worship of the Saint was so attractive and touching. In one of his last sermons

it was said that the young priests must take care to conduct the services orderly and systematically. And they must try to make their service attractive. If they do so the elders would also be honored. His prayers were so effective to create transformations in the listeners' minds. They were sincere as they came out from the bottom of his sincere heart. He celebrated the first and last communion service of his life in the very same manner. He was so particular in keeping the timing of beginning and ending of each service. Even when he was engaged in some conversation with V.I.Ps, that did not prevent him from conducting timely prayers and not delaying them. He used to pray at midnight in the bedroom itself. Thirumeni used to sob and pray for long time. If ever Thirumeni had listened to some unhappy news from newspaper or Radio, immediately he would pray with tears for the suffering. He used to ask, "Lord Jesus, thou had prayed the whole night, even when there was no need for you to pray. In that case how we could spend the whole night for sleeping?" Many faithful had depended on the Saint's intercession while he was alive itself. So also many depend on his prayers and intercession even after his entrance to the heavenly abode.

Thirumeni had told many times "Death is sure for each and every one, so we should always remember that". He took it a pleasure to visit all known patients in the Hospitals. Usually Thirumeni would take some presents or fruits for them.

Angel of Peace

During his tenure as a Metropolitan of the Church, there were two groups in prevalence. There was an unpleasant situation in the Church due to the rifts and differences of opinion between the two groups. Metropolitans, priests and laymen of each group had considered the opposite group as enemy. But Pampady Thirumeni remained between the two groups as a shining star. Thirumeni had no hesitation to visit and to maintain friendship with the Metropolitans of the other group; who had favored and supported the Patriarch.

His Grace had been earnestly praying for the end of the struggle and for complete peace in the Church. The spirit of love had influenced him much. When Paulos Mar Athanasius Metropolitan of the Patriarchal side was bedridden at Always Seminary, he had been to his bedside forgetting all partisan thoughts and presented some gifts to Mar Athanasius Metropolitan. Pampady Thirumeni was welcomed with a warm embrace by Mar Athanasius Metropolitan sight of which was quite surprising to the eyewitnesses. Similarly His Grace used to visit Michael Mar Dionesius Metropolitan at Manarcad Church and had tried to find out solution for the problems that had surfaced in the Church. When H.H. Moran Mar Ignatius Yacub III, Patriarch visited Kerala, after attaining peace in the Church, Pampady Thirumeni was very tired and weak. Still His Grace made attempts to meet His Holiness at Old Seminary, Kottayam.

All problems of the Parishes were melting like ‘ice in the sunlight’ in the presence of Thirumeni. If there were two opinions, he would listen to both and finally come out with his own opinion which would be acceptable for both. Many times he had resorted to fasting till the differences were reconciled. Thirumeni received reverence and affection of the faithful by his love, humbleness, forgiveness and prayers. Once, Thirumeni was conducting the burial of a priest of the church. The dissident group tried to take the dead body to another Church. But due to the initiative of some faithful, it was brought back. Thirumeni was unaffected by these incidents, did not get angry or say anything adversely. Once when His Grace visited Mulanthuruthy Church so many people assembled there. People belonging to the opposite group were shouting slogans while Thirumeni was praying inside the Church. The opposite faction was amazed at Thirumeni’s behavior, since instead of getting angry he prayed for them and blessed all who had assembled there.

True lover of the Church

Pampady Thirumeni had made it a point to advise the faithful to

be sincere to the Holy Church always. His Grace was aware of the spiritual and worldly needs of the Church and confident that God would provide. He never ever encouraged worldly gains, which he believed would cause loss of spirituality. Today Pampady Thirumeni is remembered by thousands of faithful because of the immeasurable degree of spirituality the Holy Father maintained.

Thirumeni did his best to make a financial foundation for the Church to be strong and stable. In 1935 His Grace was the president of the Catholicate fund. Thirumeni had obtained full support of all lay leaders and the prominent members of the Church. The fund collection was the beginning of the present Catholicate day Fund.

It is not so difficult to mould a preacher. There are many social organizations, which do help in moulding orators. But it is a great difficulty to mould an orator who is living example of what he preaches. The quality could be obtained only through hard work and a lifestyle of systematic observation of virtues. There was a strong relation between his deeds and his life style. His Grace's messages were so impressive, attractive and splendid. His Grace spoke fluently about love and expounded that life was full of love. His Grace not only taught to love enemies, but exhibited that through his own deeds practically.

Division in the Church was a real challenge that Pampady Thirumeni had to face. In 1934 Thirumeni was taking rest in front of Nilackel Church after the day's convention speech. His Grace was talking to the organizers of the convention. "What is the need of conditions for the Peace? Can we not find a solution beyond all these through the real love?" Thirumeni was asking these questions to all who had surrounded him. In those days so many peace initiatives had been under processing. It is sure that the prayers of many saints like Pampady Thirumeni, were the inspiring factors for the reestablishment of peace in the Church. In one of his orders we read "Beloved, you must pray at home and while attending the Holy

Qurbana for the world peace as well as peace and stability of our Church. You must pray that Holy Spirit will guide our Church Fathers. I do request this need before your love and affection”.

Metropolitan of Priests

Pampady Thirumeni had ordained a number of priests. Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Parackel was the first priest and Rev. Fr. P. C. Yohannan (previous Ramban) was the last priest ordained by Pampady Thirumeni.

LL HG Daniel Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan wrote once: “the consideration of Pampady Thirumeni towards the priests and High priests was so remarkable. My Father Rev. Fr. Easow was a disciple of Thirumeni. I have heard from my father about his honorable teacher with emotional feeling of respect and awe. Whenever I visited His Grace at Pothenpuram, His Grace used to advise me; you all must pray well. And also inspire creating the practice of prayer among our people. Importance must be given to this aspect wherever possible.”

Once, two priests of a Parish had difference of opinion between them. Members of the Parish got divided into two each group favoring a priest. The issue became so serious and it resulted in serious mental strain. So Thirumeni sent some prominent priests to that Parish for negotiations to maintain peace and harmony. But all attempts were in vain. His Grace later visited the Parish but it was also not successful. After sometime, Thomas Mar Dionesius Metropolitan tried to find some a way. His Grace’s attempts as well as that of H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicose did not succeed.

Pampady Thirumeni continued prayers for peace. His Grace visited the Parish again with a firm decision to establish peace. His Grace announced “I won’t go back until I would see perfect peace.” And soon His Grace started prayers with fasting. Some well wishers also joined Thirumeni’s prayers on the second day. On the third day

also many more attended the fasting prayer. Those who were adamant started to re-think. One group approached His Grace and requested for forgiveness. They also confirmed their willingness to accept the decision of His Grace, whatever it may be. On the fourth day the other group also approached His Grace and informed His Grace the same as what the other group said. By 2 p.m. the Church bell rang. All alike welcomed Thirumeni's decision and rifts were completely healed.

When Thirumeni was bedridden, many priests and faithful were staying in the Dayara/premises ready for any sort of service.

V. Rev. Yohann Mulamoottil Cor-Episcopa, one of the senior priests of Mumbai Diocese remembers: "my father Rev. Fr. C. O. Joshua, Vadakedathu Mulamoottil, Omallur, had been a disciple of St. Pampady Thirumeni. He was ordained Deacon and Priest by the Saint. My father served the Saint as the priest secretary from 1932-1940. My father's life was much influenced by the teachings, visions and directions of the Saint. My father entered his heavenly abode on 6 Jan. 1965 and on Jan 6, 2016, we conducted the golden Jubilee of his demise, while whole Church observes the golden Jubilee of the demise of my father's great master and guide. May the Saint's continued prayers be a fortress for all."

Simple life and Compassion

Pampady Thirumeni is one of the rare leaders in the world who was able to implement radical changes in the society by his simple life and high thinking. His Grace maintained simplicity in his talks, deeds, dress, food habits and it became a characteristic of his entire life style.

In summer the inmates of the Dayara had to bring water from the wells in the valleys of Mount Tabor, since the well in the Dayara compound would become dry. Several times Thirumeni himself had joined them voluntarily in the herculean task of bringing water from far. Many people used to visit His Grace in those days when and

where there were no proper roads to the Dayara. The number of people seeking helps and alms also increased day by day. Those visitors who seemed to come from distance, were treated by Thirumeni in the most hospitable manner. He used to rush water for washing their face and legs and offer something cold or hot for drinking. The hungry were fed by him by offering different kinds of fruits and sweets. Sweets and bakery items brought by visitors as gift to Thirumeni would be served and distributed by him among the guests and others especially the poor and needy.

Once, one old man came for help. His Grace asked the cook to give some rice. The deaf and dumb cook informed through sign language that the rice available in stock was hardly enough for the guest and inmates for supper. Yet Thirumeni insisted to give the poor man what was there, to the utmost displeasure of the cook to whom he said, 'God will provide for us'. . The cook obeyed his master with hesitation. After about one or two hours, a bullock cart came in front of the Dayara with full of rice, vegetables, bananas and food materials which a faithful devotee of Thirumeni had sent.

His Grace's dressing was also simple. Once, Thirumeni was getting ready to go somewhere to bless a wedding service. A good dress was given to His Grace by one of the assistants. Thirumeni returned it and asked for the usual one on the hanger and said: 'this must be given to the elderly priest who visited us last week. The parishioners do not take care of him.' One of the relatives of His Grace had presented a costly blanket to him. Thirumeni gave it to a poor man who was shivering on a rainy day. When the donor made a complaint, Thirumeni said; 'don't you know that what you do to the poor and needy is done for our Lord. If we do not do our daily tasks at the right time, the stones would rise up for action and they would praise God.'

Respect for Parents, Teachers and Elders

Thirumeni had great concern towards his parents from the early years of the blessed childhood. His Grace wanted to emphasize the need of respecting and honoring parents, teachers and elders. In this matter Thirumeni had very strong and stable opinion. He used to teach children the need for respecting Parents. In his blessed voice and nice tune, Thirumeni used to sing:

“If you bow before feet Of your parents with humbleness and respect, You could have happiness and blessings, More and more from beloved elders.”

Thirumeni had great respect towards his guru of the primary classes, who had given the Pothenpuram Hill to Thirumeni. Even when His Grace climbed step by step hierarchy of priesthood and spirituality, he never forgot his Master. His Grace’s respect to the Master was increasing and it lasted till the end of life. When his Guru, became physically weak due to old age, Thirumeni used to visit him every now and then. His Grace had loved and respected all, irrespective of caste religion and sects.

When beggars and the people affected with contagious diseases reached Dayara, Thirumeni used to welcome them saying “my brothers are coming” and he used to serve them food and greet them wholeheartedly. Once, a leper came to the Dayara. Thirumeni held his hand and took him to the bedroom and asked him to take rest. He was treated as an honorable guest. Thirumeni gave him all what he needed. When he was about to go, Thirumeni followed him to the Gate and waited there till he disappeared from the sight. Thirumeni was ever grateful to those who had extended any kind of service to him and loved them passionately. Any one conveying any type of needs would not be disappointed. His Grace had extended financial help to many poor people for conducting marriages of their daughters/sisters.

Chapter IV

Loving Judge

Once members of a Parish reached the Dayara to meet His Grace and they had to wait for some time, as Thirumeni had been to a Hospital where Very Rev. M. C. Kuriakose Ramban and Rev. Fr. Thomas Pandanalil were admitted. As soon as Thirumeni reached, he went to the ordinary patients and said, “as I am the spiritual father of all, I have to attend all alike. It may be God’s will that I am busy. I like to reach out and offer my help where it is required. We must serve and help the struggling people as much as we can. I often share what I have with the needy. They all have been entrusted to me and we all are the children of Mother Church.”

Whenever there were rifts or problems in the Parishes, the concerned people were asked to reach Dayara. If no solution was found then, Thirumeni would visit the Parish trying to arrive at a permanent peace. His Grace had settled not only Parish problems but also a lot of family problems. When the husband and wife reached there in hostility they were made to sit on both sides of the same table and His Grace served sweets accompanied by sweet loving instructions and advices. Reconciliation of problems at His Grace’s disposal was quite easy and quick. Those who had burdens of financial loss, mental suffering etc were also pacified.

Once, His Grace reached Pallom St Paul’s Orthodox Church to settle a problem. There were two prominent groups. One group wanted to retain the Vicar there. The other group wanted to get the Vicar transferred. During the general body meeting Thirumeni said, “I came here as the Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese. I don’t know what to tell you as you all are alike to me and beloved.” “I have only one request: you should not add mental strain to me.” Following this, tears started flowing out from his eyes for a long time. This sight made a dynamic change in the minds of all. The listeners could not hold back tears anymore and told him to take

any decision and the same would be binding to all. Thirumeni said, “Let’s pray.” After the prayer His Grace faced the congregation. When they saw the bright grace on his face, they became scared. Thirumeni said, “I am pleased now. May God bless you. I will take a proper decision and an Encyclical order soon.”

The Great Orator

Pampady Thirumeni led a sacrificial life. His Grace had longed to be the true witness of Lord Jesus who offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. W. B. Yeats’ words, “Love of God is infinite for every human soul because every human soul is unique”, were true in the life of Thirumeni. He not only preached “call no man worthless for whom Christ died”, but also practiced that in the practical life. In 1930 His Grace delivered a sermon at the Nilackel convention immediately after the official inauguration. It was based on St. Luke 12:47-48. “And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. “

A few words from His Grace made a sudden transformation in the minds of about 5000 listeners, whereas the so-called “interesting messages’ had no effect on listeners at all. As told by Shakespeare in, ‘Winter’s Tale’ “Silence of innocence persuades when speaking fails”, the pure silence of innocence was the distinctiveness of His Grace. In all Bible conventions every year thereafter at Nilackel, His Grace was present giving out the concluding message. He used very limited, but chosen words only. So they were always short and sweet. Those messages were really thought provoking and touching. But the central attraction that made listeners to get glued to his words was the holiness of the personality that overshadowed the sermons and messages. The topics most liked by His Grace were prayer,

fasting, Lent, Sacrifice etc. When His Grace was explained in simple language what is known, it had a touch of freshness and cuddling affection. There is a tradition about St. John. He always had spoken about love. Once, one of his assistants asked “last week also you had spoken on the theme-you must love each other.” St. John replied “I have nothing else to tell other than prayer, fasting, and lent.” In all these he was so practical. The same was relevant to His Grace also.

Thirumeni had chosen the topics, which he had mastered already. He had tried to follow the steps of our Saviour and tried to imitate Lord. If an orator with no practical experience of prayer, fasting and love, make sermons with his attractive words and smart delivery of the message, that would make sound only, not penetrating the minds of listeners. His Grace’s sermons were soaked in his own practical experiences which made tremendous impact.

Friend of Children

Every evening Thirumeni made sure that he had a walk till the boundary of the Dayara at around 4 p.m. Many children from neighborhood used to assemble there at the same time. They indulged in playing while rearing their cattle. One of the assistants of His Grace would be accompanying Thirumeni with some sweets or fruits as desired by Thirumeni. It was a usual scene that Thirumeni then distributed those items to the children.

In those days boys of 12-14 years were given ordination as sub-deacons after which they were sent to the Seminary to learn Syriac and Liturgy. The young ones who had stayed at the Dayara with His Grace have narrated about the punishments (beatings) for offenses if any, most of the time for not concentrating in prayers or misbehaving. However, immediately after punishment Thirumeni would call them affectionately to his side offering sweets/fruits etc. Many of them longed to get punishments from Thirumeni to experience his affection and considered it a blessing.

It was the habit of Thirumeni to visit the School near the Church quite often. Children there also loved Thirumeni passionately. Whenever Thirumeni visited the School, he would take along some sweets or fruits or some other eatables for the children.

In 1940, Headmaster of M.D. Seminary High School reached Dayara for a visit with the inmates of the School's boarding home. They all stayed there for three days and on these days Thirumeni took the burden of serving meals to them. Thirumeni's face glowed with radiance when he served them food. In between the meals, Thirumeni gave biscuits, cakes, sweets, oranges and other fruits. Because of Thirumeni's extreme affectionate acts, children did not want to go back to the School.

When the time came for departing, teachers and students were about to approach Thirumeni to say farewell. At that moment two students came to the Headmaster and said with great grief and guilty consciousness, "Sir, we did a mistake. We plucked the bunch of grapes from Thirumeni's vineyard without permission." When Thirumeni heard this news from the Headmaster, he said, "O my God, I never thought that my children would have a desire like this." Then His Grace asked someone to pluck the other bunches of grapes also and distributed them among the children by himself. If it was someone else in his place the situation would have been different with pestering questions, "What did you do? Be careful in future. If you desire something, you must ask the permission first." Thirumeni's kindness made the children and teachers happy alike and made them more attached to him.

Healing the sick by prayer

Vengasseril Markose, a converted Christian and a neighbour of the Dayara says: "In my family there were so many problems of evil spirits. I could not sleep well as if I was having breathing trouble. I have suffered a lot. I tried several ways. But all my attempts were in vain. At last I approached Pothenpuram Thirumeni. After listening

to me, Thirumeni asked to pray in the Dayara Church, continuously for three days. Whenever Thirumeni was ending the usual prayers and was starting his private prayers, he used to place the blessed hand on my forehead and pray. On the third day evening when I reached home after the prayers, I was about to go to bed. Immediately I felt heavy breathing trouble. I tried to cry for help but the sound did not come out of my throat. Suddenly I saw a lady in full and bright robes escorted by two gentlemen in long robes. They appeared like lightning. They sent out the evil spirits in me. From that day there is no trouble at all.”

Chemayakkara Kunjappan another neighbour of the Dayara says: “My daughter was frightened on her way to her mother’s house. When the child reached back home, she had high fever. She remained unconscious for about a week without food. Many doctors came and attended her, but neither they could identify the disease nor do any treatment. All got worried that the girl could not be saved. Her brothers took her to Thirumeni to have a prayer before her death. When the girl was brought, Thirumeni was praying in the tomb room. Suddenly the girl started to cry in loud voice. The girl was kept lying on the floor. His Grace placed his cross on her forehead and prayed. “Don’t punish me, I shall go”. Such a voice came from her. Thirumeni asked who she was and asked the reason for entering the child. The voice said, “I am Anna. When I saw this young girl, I entered in her body.” Thirumeni asked the evil spirit to promise that she won’t trouble the girl again as well as any other human being. The evil spirit took oath and left the place. The girl got up as if she was sleeping. His Grace ordered to give food from there and advised her to have prayer always especially before going to bed.

Once, Thirumeni was travelling to Vennikkulam. On the way His Grace was stopped by some faithful to pray for a man who had snakebite and the person was in a critical condition. Many Doctors examined him and all had refused to treat him. Both the Doctors of modern and local alternative medicine could not save him in spite of

their hard endeavor. Everybody realized that he was in a serious condition and waiting for the last breath.

However, when Thirumeni prayed and touched him, miraculously, he got up and had light food. He was able to walk slowly to his house.

In 1927 one of the nephews of His Grace had small pox and was in a very critical condition. He was quarantined without any contact with any human being. He was in total isolation alone in a house ignored by all dear and near ones. When Thirumeni heard about it, he rushed to that house and stayed with him extending all possible helps. After Thirumneni spending one day in the house, there came about a sudden incredible change in the patient. The next morning he became perfectly alright. The signs of the small pox also had disappeared.

Fr. Damien of Malankara Church

Kunnamkulam, a stronghold of Orthodox Christians, was affected with killer disease, plague in 1935. People, mostly engaged in business, had their houses on both sides of the main road and the place was generally known as Kunnamkulam Angady (Market). The forefathers had designed the Angady in the shape of the cross. As the houses were close by, the epidemic sowed vast disasters so easily.

It is said that one of the rats, which was affected by plague in Tamil Nadu, was trapped in the goods loaded to a shopkeeper in Kunnamkulam. The plague attacked the shopkeeper first and he died. Many rats perished soon here and there. So also men and women died in large numbers. All were frightened and the news got wide publicity soon. Doctors and specialists certified that it was plague. Preventive vaccination centers were opened in certain areas. People were frightened and all alike started prayers.

When H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicose, heard about it, he was very much upset and in great agony. Pampady Thirumeni at the same time came to “Old Seminary”- (where Catholicose was staying) accidentally and came to know about the disaster. His Grace immediately volunteered to go to Kunnamkulam and informed His Holiness about his decision. He also made preparations for the journey. Hearing this many who loved Thirumeni requested and tried to persuade him not to go to Kunnamkulam where the killer disease was already tormenting people. His Grace told them confidently : “you are afraid of my future. But you are not sure of God’s power. That’s why you are trying to hinder me from going to Kunnamkulam.” Lot of faithful, on hearing the news, reached there. His Grace told them all: “My beloved, you all must know God’s power and ability. I am going with on my own. Nobody has compelled me. The faithful of Kunnamkulam are also my beloved people. So be courageous and hopeful. You all must pray for our

brethren of Kunnamkulam.”

When Thirumeni reached Trissur Railway Station, there also came some faithful trying to persuade Thirumeni to drop the idea of going to Kunnamkulam. But nobody could stop Thirumeni. When he reached the boarder of Kunnamkulam, he raised his Sleeba, made the sign of the Cross and blessed the town. The residents of Kunnamkulam could feel a sort of heavenly power penetrating and filling that area with the arrival of the Saint to their midst. The disease started dwindling and satanic powers came to a culmination. The Grace of God drove all negative powers out of the total area, through the earnest prayers of His Grace.

The Shepherd who was not afraid of the plague.

An article had appeared in the Gomathy News paper, published from Trissur, with the above heading. The piece of news was as follows. “From the moment the news was heard that plague broke out in Kunnamkulam, His Holiness the Catholicos-the head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church started conducting special prayers. As soon as H. G. Mar Kuriakose Gregorios Metropolitan heard the news, he hurried to Kunnamkulam. The Church representatives at Trissur Railway Station received him. When people were trying to flee from Kunnamkulam, this Shepherd calmly reached the midst of the epidemic. His Grace started staying in Kunnamkulam Church. Actually the local dwellers were ignorant of the disease and its remedies. They were not aware of any treatment of the disease. The epidemic spread vigorously and mercilessly day by day. Many houses were attacked by the epidemic. Those who were not locals left the place without consideration of their employment and responsibilities. Priests, Pastors, employees of Govt. and private sectors fled from Kunnamkulam. As soon as His Grace arrived at the Church situated in the center of the town, he announced to the thousands of faithful “I have come to this place to live with you and to die with you. If you are in need of any sort, I shall do my best.

You must observe a fast of three days and must have prayers with fasting. God Almighty will drive away this killer disease.” His Grace visited houses of all people irrespective of any sort of discrimination.

Upon his initiative one of the Church buildings was converted into a plague Hospital and it was handed over to the Government Health Dept. His Grace visited the patients there several times daily and prayed for one and all. Whenever Thirumeni visited, they sensed a radical change, a sort of miraculous happening. All people firmly believed that God wouldn't forsake them as long as a Saint was with them. Thirumeni had to meet the spiritual needs of the members of other denominations as their priestes and pastors had fled from there.

Many non-Christians embraced Christianity. The three days Fast (Nineveh Fast) also approached during that period. So some faithful suggested observing the fasting prayer for plague also along with (as a continuation) the official three days Fast. But His Grace did not approve the suggestion saying that no one is authorized to lengthen or shorten the canonical Lents and Fasts.

A Heavenly Procession

As soon as His Grace reached Kunnamkulam, the unceasing prayers were announced. Thirumeni used to advise “God will remove this epidemic, you all must pray continuously.” A group of people used to move through the streets of the town as a procession under the leadership of His Grace daily, after the evening prayers. They used to sing the hymns of repentance. When the procession was going forward, all the doors of the Churches in neighborhood were kept open. The Church bells were rung. People belonging to the other religions and other denominations also participated in the procession with deep faith. People considered it as a heavenly procession as they got a heavenly experience. People were rushing to get His Grace's blessings through his prayer by placing his hand on the forehead. People irrespective of religions and caste

discriminations believed that those who were touched by His Grace were saved from the death. People used to bring water in bottles to get blessed by His Grace. Many people believed that drinking water blessed by the saint could not only prevent the disease but also could heal the patients. It had happened as they believed.

His Grace had never taken the preventive vaccination. Doctors as well as well-wishers requested Thirumeni to have a preventive vaccination. But His Grace said “God’s power is with me. Nothing is greater than the power of God.” Thirumeni had returned to Kottayam only after Kunnamkulam became completely free from plague.

When the news came to His Highness the King of Cochin, he expressed his desire to meet the great Saint. So His Grace was asked to pay a visit to the palace and to meet His Highness. On His Grace’s arrival at the palace, a royal reception was arranged by the King. After the reception, His Highness requested His Grace to bless him and his entire family. When the King stood awefully His Grace placed his hand on the King’s forehead, prayed and blessed. All members of the Royal family were also blessed. When His Grace was about to leave the palace, he was presented with a small packet in royal silk. When Thirumeni asked what it was, it was stated that it was gold. Thirumeni thankfully returned the present and said “Kindly utilize this wealth for the poor. If so it will be considered as a gift for me.”

Finding the position for the well

Once, Thirumeni was going to a nearby place by foot. When he reached the junction named Elavunkal, he saw some non-Christian workers as totally exhausted after some rest of herculean work. Thirumeni asked them the reason for their tiredness. They informed that they had been digging wells in several places, but could not find water. That was the reason for their tiredness and fatigue. His Grace pacified them and got engaged in silent prayer for a few seconds.

Then Thirumeni showed a position and said ‘Don’t worry. If you dig here you will get enough water.’ They started digging there and to their amazement, were able to find water in abundance. They knew no bounds for their happiness. From that day they and their own people started to respect His Grace as a Holy personality.

In Mangad Chapel (In Kunnankulam) premises 13 wells were dug. Water was not found. At that time Pampady Thirumeni had arrived at Pazhanji Church. As per the decision of the general body meeting, the Vicar, along with office bearers approached Thirumeni and requested to identify a place to dig a new well. When Thirumeni reached Mangad Chapel, he went to the madbaha and prayed there for a long time. Then His Grace made a sermon to the people who had assembled. Then there was a procession with decorated umbrellas, Cross etc. around the chapel. After that Thirumeni went and stood at a special position. After a meditation for few seconds His Grace said “There won’t be any more delay in digging a well. You will get plenty of water. God will grant you enough and more water.” The site was marked and without much delay digging started. Before going much deeper there, they saw plenty of water.

The glad news was conveyed to Pampady Thirumeni who was requested for further intercessions. His Grace was happy and responded thus, “It must be told to the people of Mangad that the water from the well is not only for the people of the church, but also for the neighbors and the animals in the neighborhood.”

Love for Orphans, Destitute and the needy

In those days there lived a destitute called Mathai. Begging was his job. After begging for the full day he used to go the Toddy shop. If there happened to be any balance with him at the end of the day he would share that among the other beggars. He had no savings or habit of saving. Whenever he visited THirumeni, he was treated with love and affection. Even though His Grace knew that he had the habit of drinking liquor, he was not hated by Thirumeni. His

grace advised him to come out of this vice. He would listen to His Grace silently but the next day evening he would do the same as before. His Grace was his only hope and refuge. So he visited Thirumeni every now and then.

One day all on a sudden somebody informed His Grace that Mathai was about to face death. Thirumeni immediately went to meet Mathai. When Thirumeni saw him he felt much sympathy and went near him touched and prayed for him. Thirumeni gave some money to the person who was helping Mathai and allowed him to arrange his last wish whatever it may be.

When Thirumeni heard about Mathai's death after a few days, His Grace reached the School where the dead body was lying. There were a group of people with Thirumeni. His Grace had taken care to take along one of his dresses as he knew very well that Mathai won't have a good spare dress. Thirumeni made arrangements to have the dead body covered with the robe that he had brought. The mortal remains were buried at Pampady Church Cemetery after prayers.

Once, Thirumeni has handed over a carton to private secretary Vey. Rev. M. K. Joseph Cor-Episcopa and asked him to destroy those which are not required any more. The carton was full of letters from people who had been in receipt of financial aids from Thirumeni. There were letters of acknowledging of receipt of amounts. All of them were intended to express gratitude. Then only the Private Secretary came to know that Thirumeni was doing so much alms.

In the presence of Viceroy

His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicose celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. George Cathedral Trivandrum on 28th Dec. 1929. As the viceroy had expressed interest to attend the Holy Eucharist of Eastern Orthodox Church, he was also invited to attend the Holy Qurbana celebrated by His Holiness. By 7 a.m. viceroy reached the church with his wife and coterie. On arrival,

they were received by H.G Pampady Thirumeni and H.G Vattasseril Thirumeni. Pampady Thirumeni remained in the Church by the side of the viceroy and his wife on the right side of the prayer table. When Thirumeni was standing up they also got up and when His Grace sat on the chair they also did the something. Before the beginning of the Holy Qurbana, Rev. Dr. C. M. Thomas (Later H.G. Thomas Mar Dionesius Metropolitan) had made a speech in English. In the speech it was mentioned that the day's Holy Qurbana was a special one with the presence of the distinguished guests. And actually it was a service of thanks giving. After the Holy Qurbana a special gift covered in satin cloth was presented to the gracious Lady by His Holiness. His Holiness blessed the distinguished guests. The silver cross presented by the Queen of Travancore to the Cathedral Church was shown to the guests. Pampady Thirumeni had gone near the car of the guests to see them off.

Details are being taken from the Diary of His Grace. His Grace had the blessed habit of recording the events of the day systematically in the Diary every day.

In one of His Grace's diaries it was written as follows on 1913 August 18. "Today I am writing certain letters to the prelates in syria in syriac. I had the intention to copy down the liturgy of St. Peter. But have to postpone it due to other unavoidable engagements. Valiya Thirumeni (H.G.Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionesius Metropolitan) gifted me one sovereign and asked to buy clothes for dress and give back balance if any. As I was busy I could not go for shopping."

Blessings - Blessings

Pampady Thirumeni had been to Munnar once. One Dentist, whose clinic was functioning in a small shed, came and met His Grace. He came to know that Thirumeni's one tooth was extracted long back and the replacement of duplicate tooth was not yet fixed. He wished to do it and Thirumeni allowed him to do so. His Grace

was pleased and showered abundant blessings up on the Dentist. Doctor's son became doctor and got a fantastic placement. His financial position also increased. He got selection to go to England and undergo special training. He went up from progress to progress.

Prof. RamaKrishnan Nair, grandson of Madathil master (the first teacher of His Grace) writes: "I and my father and other members of our family were the permanent visitors of Mar Kuriakose Dayara. It was an unwritten rule of our family to inform Thirumeni if there was any new event in our family. If a cow was giving birth to a calf on the 16th day cow's milk, the entire milk received, would be sent to Pothampuram. It was religiously followed in our lives till the end of His Grace. The first grown Banana, Melon, Mango, Jackfruit etc. were sent to Thirumeni. I do remember going to Pothampuram when I was 5 years old. Whenever our results were out, I would immediately inform Thirumeni. When I had to join to a new class I used to get blessings from Thirumeni after touching the blessed feet and conveying my respects to him. This system I had followed till I completed M.A.L.L.B. degree. I was worried at Banarus when I had to write examination. It really worried me since I came there without obtaining the blessings from Thirumeni as usual. But Thirumeni had sent me a letter expecting it to reach me two days prior to the commencement of my exam. I am keeping that letter still as a great treasure.

Thirumeni knew that I would come back from Banarus on a particular date. Two days after that Thirumeni had sent one of his trustworthy assistants to our house enquiring about me. (He thought that I may be not well). Once, when I had been to His Grace with my family, Thirumeni was very very happy to see his masters great grandchildren. I asked him about the doves. I brought some rice and gave to Thirumeni. Thirumeni made some peculiar noise and within five minutes so many doves came there We have received so many blessings from this great monk".

Cancer healed by the intercession

Karapuzha Mar Gregorios chapel was established during the life time of Pampady Thirumeni by the faithful. H. G. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, (later successor of Pampady Thirumeni as the metropolitan of Kottayam Dioces)e had a Cancer attack in 1978, while he was a priest and vicar of the Karapuzha chapel during 1973-1985. He got a miraculous cure by the intercession of Pampady Thirumeni.

Rev. Fr. K. G. George (later H.G. Mar Ivanios metropolitan) was admitted in Carithas Hospital and from there he was transferred to Kolecherry Hospital. But once again he was readmitted in Carithas Hospital. The real disease was diagonized there. Everybody thought that his life was coming to an end. Before taking him to Adayar Cancer Institute, Madras, Rev. Fr. K. M. Alexander asked Rev Fr. George “What do you feel in your mind now.” He replied the verse St John 11:40 (“If you believe you will see the glory of God”) All wished him the well and was taken to Adayar. The Chief physician said on primary investigation “Father you must be admitted immediately”. You need not pay anything. We will do our best. The rest is in the hands of God.” When the chemotherapy treatment was started all his hair and beard had fallen down. The second stage was even more critical. He fell unconscious. He was in the sinking stage. He started fighting with death. Doctors said that there would be results with ten minutes. Friends and relatives started making arrangements to take his dead body to Kottayam and to conduct the burial there. By that time he had a vision. He saw four saints standing near him. One among them asked “why are you lying-get up and sit” and they all helped him to sit. And the four disappeared suddenly. He got up all of a sudden as if one gets rebirth after death. He recovered from illness fast. From Nov.1978 he started celebrating Holy Qurbanas. In 1980 when Fr. George visited Adayar the chief physician asked “Father how are you” He replied “I am in good health. Now I believe in prayer.”. Fr. George was elevated as a Ramban in 1979 and as a metropolitan in 1985. His Grace Mar

Ivanios says “as I was serving the chapel of Pampady Thirumenim I was getting the continued intercession and blessing from the saint. The blessing from the holy hands only enabled me to become his successor as the metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese.”

Peaceful end

From 1961 onwards Pampady Thirumeni was feeling tired than being sick. The main reason for the tiredness must be his long standing fasting. From 1961 Thirumeni started losing memory power. But for two things Thirumeni had good memory. One was to pay at exact timings. Secondly, to give something to the visitors. Thirumeni's teachings were based on death, judgement, Hell and salvation. Thirumeni was administered "Kantheela" service. H.G. Augen Mar Themothios Metropolitan (Late H.H. Moran Mar Augen Catholicos) was the chief celebrant assisted by H.G. Mathews Mar Coorilos (later Catholicose H.H. Moran Mar Mathews II). A large number of priests and laymen participated. The next two years went off without much sickness. On 14th Nov. 1964, the foundation stone of Abhaya Bhavan was laid.. From 1st March 1965 His Grace became more weak and tired. On 11th March His Grace was admitted in Mundakapadam Mandiram Hospital. His Grace was brought back to the Dayara on 15th March. On that day H. G. Mathews Mar Ivanios Metropolitan conducted the ".Anointment of the sick" service. Many were serving His Grace day and night.

Last verses

On 14th March 1965 His Grace called the assistants and said "I am not well. Let it be according to the will of God. You should not forget me." His Grace advised the priests "you should love each other. You must have good witness. You must have model lives, you should not tell lies even if you have to sacrifice yourself." On 16th March His Grace said "You must do all things really well. All are the gifts of God Almighty." On 17th March he enquired about the 'deaf' man and Mathai, the two trustworthy people. His Grace said both are good and they will inherit heaven. On 19th march H. G Mar Athanasios and H.G. Mar Ivanios prayed. Then Thirumeni was telling in low meak voice. "food for all...food..."

On 4th April 1965, His Grace became more and more weak. There were continuous prayers going on in the Dayara. On 5th April 1965 at 2.35 AM, His Grace left for his heavenly abode. A large number of faithful were praying for His Grace under the leadership of H.G. Mathews Mar Ivanios.

Entombment of His Grace took place under the leadership of H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Augen I Catholicos assisted by all Metropolitans and priests. Eventhough Pampady Thirumeni is not canonically declared as a saint, His Grace is recognized by thousands of faithful as a saint. Thirumeni could be called undeclared saint of Malankara Church.

The rise of Mount Tabore

In addition to the Church and Dayara, there are a number of institutions at the moment adding to the glory and grandeur of Mount Tabore. In the place of the old Church a new spacious Church was built. M. G.M. Abhaya Bhavan (poor home) is the first institution that had budded up at mount Tabore. While Pampady Thirumeni was alive, foundation stone was laid for the poor home. Old age homes separate for men and women are functioning under the M.G.M. poor home. A clinic is functioning attached to the M.G.M poor home for the inmates. It provides essential medical care for the needy of the neighborhood. Mar Ivanios I.T.C. is the second institution that spreads the magnificence of mount Tabore. It is a well running Industrial training Institute which trains more than 250 students in 5 different trades every year.

The third Institution attached to Mount Tabore is the Kuriakose Gregorios College. Now the college has grown as a first rate college. The college remains as pride of Pampady as well as the entire Church due to its achievements and gains in the curricular as well as extracurricular fields. The management was bestowed with appreciation for the rapid and appreciable progress of the college. It is of course a blessing for the students of Pampady and nearby places for getting higher education.

Another Institution is the B.M.M. English medium School. It was started as a L.P. School in the beginning and now it has grown as a well-established High School preparing children for CBSC courses. There is a well administered boarding home attached to the School. There are English medium and Malayalam medium classes. The School has gained appreciative achievements in a short span of time. the Balabhavan is another institution that needs mention. It has got separate wings, one for boys and another for girls. Many children are brought up affectionately to become better citizens of tomorrow.

Pampady Thirumeni had said “This land will rise.” Those words were cent percent true. As and when the saint’s holy remains were entombed and got immersed in the soil of that mountain, the Land started rising from progress to progress. Let us hope wish and pray to see brighter and more useful institutions coming up in the near future by the intercession and blessings of Pampady Thirumeni. .