



**ESTABLISHMENT OF  
PAVANATMA VICE-PROVINCE  
OF NORTH KERALA**

**D E C R E E**

Prot. N. 00044/05

**E**ver since the establishment of St. Joseph Province, Kerala in 1972, Capuchin brothers from Malabar (North Kerala), have played a major role in the life and mission of the Province.

**M**alabar is a long, narrow strip of land divided into North and South, stretched across the territories of the Syro-Malabar Eparchies of Thalassery, Mananthavady and Thamarassery. The Syro-Malabar Christians of the area are renowned for their Catholic fervour, a fact which has contributed to the growth of genuine vocations to religious life. Thus St. Joseph Capuchin Province has for years been blessed with the presence of a number of brothers from the Malabar region.

**I**t was in 1975 that the Provincial Chapter resolved to extend the Capuchin presence to Malabar, and brothers were sent to the region. Their hard work and commitment resulted in the establishment of nine friaries, namely, Alverna Ashram (1978), Sultan Bathery; Padua ashram (1979), Perambra; Amalagiri Ashram (1981), Payyannur; Yesu Nivas (re-established as a house of prayer in 1987), Arimanal; Manavi (1991), Karulai; Vimalagiri Ashram (1996), Iritty; Sevashram (1998), Kannur; Kristhu Bhavan (1999), Kasargod and Shanti Ashram (2002), Kozhikode. The unassuming ministerial and social engagements of the brothers undoubtedly helped them to gain a foothold in the region, rendering outstanding humanitarian and spiritual services. The positive response to the decree of bifurcation of St. Joseph Province of Kerala in the year 1999 [Prot. No. 00899/99], endorsing the eventual constitution of Malabar (North Kerala) into a new circumscription of the Order, gave further impetus to Capuchin life in the region.

**T**he people of the environs welcomed the friars and supported their involvements. In all three Syro-Malabar Eparchies, namely, Thalassery, Mananthavady and Thamarassery, where the friars concentrate their ministry, the local church authorities welcome the dedicated work of the Capuchins. The strong Catholic background of the people of the locality, coupled with the grace of God, continues to bring an influx of promising candidates to the Capuchin Order.

**R**eading the signs of maturity of the Capuchin presence in North Kerala (Malabar), Br. Thomas Jacob Thekkumkattil OFM<sup>Cap.</sup>, the Provincial Minister of St. Joseph Province, Kerala, and his Definitory, wrote to the General Minister on March 13, 2003, requesting the General Definitory, to proceed to the bifurcation of St. Joseph Province, Kerala, into two independent and full-fledged provinces: - 1. A Province in South Kerala, 2. A Province in North Kerala.

**I**n April 2003 the General Definitory discussed the matter at its meeting and commissioned Br. Joseph Nacua OFM<sup>Cap.</sup>, General Definitory for the area, to make a visit to the region of North Kerala. In his report, the General Definitory reiterated the desire of the brothers in the region to raise the Capuchin presence in Malabar to the status of a separate jurisdiction of the Order. The General Definitory, at its meeting on September 18, 2003, discussed the report and endorsed the wish to “proceed with the creation of a Vice Province of Malabar before the next Provincial Chapter” (cf. letter to Provincial Minister, October 2, 2003, Prot. N. 00693/03).

**O**n May 12, 2004, the Provincial and Definitory formally requested the institution of the Vice-Province of North Kerala under the General Minister (cf. Prot. N. 00386/04). The General Definitory in turn, meeting on June 22, 2004, stated their intention to create the Vice-Province of North Kerala under St. Joseph Province, adding: “...the Order is best served by maintaining the juridical bond between the Province of St. Joseph and the new Vice-Province” (cf. Prot. N. 00386/04).

**T**he General Definitory, at its meeting on January 7, 2005, after having carefully examined all the aspects of the request and having verified all the prerequisites, decided to raise the Capuchin presence in North Kerala to a Vice-Province entrusted to the care of St. Joseph Province, Kerala.

**T**herefore,  
observing all canonical provisions,

**W**e, with the consent of the General Definitory, according to the norms of our Constitutions (cf. No.111.1), constitute and declare established the Vice-Province of North Kerala, dependent on St. Joseph Province of Kerala, with all the rights and obligations of a Vice-Province of the Order.

**T**his decree will receive its legal force on February 2, 2005, on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the day of its proclamation.

**T**he boundaries of this new Vice-Province, which has Holy Spirit as its Patron, will consist of the ecclesiastical territories of the Eparchies of Thalassery, Mananthavady and Thamarassery of the Syro-Malabar Church, as they exist within the state boundaries of Kerala.

**T**he members of the Vice-Province are:

- the professed indigenous brothers of the Capuchin presence in North Kerala at the time of the erection of the Vice-Province;
- all brothers who, at the time of erection of the Vice-Province of North Kerala, exercise their ministry in the Vice-Province of North Kerala;
- all brothers who will make their profession as members of the Vice-Province;
- all brothers who will be assigned to service in the Vice-Province of North Kerala.

**I**n accordance with No. 111.4 of our Constitutions, having considered the consultative votes of the perpetually professed friars now serving in the North Kerala region, with the consent of the General Definitory, given during our meeting of January 7, 2005, we hereby appoint as Vice-Provincial Minister and councillors, the following friars:

Vice-Provincial Minister	Br. Stephen Jairaj, OFM Cap.
1st Councillor	Br. Kurian Chirapurath, OFM Cap.
2nd Councillor	Br. Paul Kainickal, OFM Cap.
3rd Councillor	Br. Vincent Kurisumoottil, OFM Cap.
4th Councillor	Br. Martinian Njarackal, OFM Cap.

**F**urthermore it is established that all friars with perpetual vows are to join in the first chapter of the Vice-Province (cf. Const. No.111.4) to be held within one year. It will be the task of the Chapter to discuss the life and the testimony of the brothers and to prepare a Statute of the new Vice-Province, as well as to specify its capitular and electoral procedures.

**W**e praise God for the birth of a new Vice-Province of our Order, and for the brothers of the Province of St. Joseph, Kerala, for their zealous commitment to the growth of the Capuchin presence in North Kerala. We also congratulate the brothers of the new Vice-Province of North Kerala and invoke God's blessings upon them. May Brother Francis and Sister Clare assist them as they seek to live and to spread the seraphic spirit in the region.

**G**iven in Rome at the General Curia  
on January 25, 2005.

Br. John Corriveau, O.F.M. Cap.  
General Minister

Br. Marek Przeczewski O.F.M. Cap.  
General Secretary