

St. Euphrasia  
Publication



**A  
Biography  
Of Saint Euphrasia**

**Sr. Dr. Chrisologa Moothedan CMC**



A Biography of  
Saint Euphrasia



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**ST. EUPHRASIA PUBLICATIONS**

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# A Biography of Saint Euphrasia

(English)

Sr. Dr. Chrisologa CMC

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*Dedicated to*



*The sacred heart of Jesus*

*“Accept me and unite me to you, Jesus and  
in flame my heart for love of you”*

St. Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart

*'While yet a child,  
Rose, arose one early dawn  
found herself walking with a presence  
unknown, but intimate'*





*Here I am Mother  
Your own child to be  
Take me ever to  
Your precious Son Jesus*



# Rose

*Poem Dedicated to Saint Euphrasia*

*While yet a child, Rose  
arose one early dawn  
and found herself walking  
with a Presence,  
unknown, but intimate.*

*In the rising sky  
the contours of the Face  
stood bright and silhouetted  
and she beheld His form  
and felt familiar:*

*Fear gripped no more,  
out of the shelter of her home  
she moved to the pathway  
that led to the world of the Spirit  
of infinite space and beyond,  
of eternal desires within.*

*The accompanying Presence  
held her gently  
and seemed to press forward.  
That was the beginning of a journey,  
an endless journey of home coming.*

*The sun rose and fell,  
day folded into night,  
night broke into light.  
but the Presence never left.*

*Ever by her side  
appearing and reappearing  
in the mystic zone  
a Presence stayed  
carried her through, in  
light and dark.*

*Water gave way,  
mountains lowered.  
They reached the Banqueting hall!  
The Music was on  
“The Spirit and the Bride  
Say, ‘come’,  
And all who hear say, ‘come’*

*Sr. Chrisologa CMC*





## Felicitous Blessings!

*“You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished. Look to the future, where the spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things” (V. C. 110).*

Saint Euphrasia is a saint for all seasons and all peoples, specially because of the utter simplicity and purity of her life. She has not done anything extra-ordinary. She had desired to be a hidden saint and even God destined her to be a hidden saint till He Himself brought her out from hiding to glory! Saint Euphrasia’s life reveals how God weaves in patterns of gold the marvel of a saint from the ordinary fibers of life. Her life proves that it is love that transforms everything into beauty, and in her case specifically into mystic beauty. Saint Euphrasia combines in her life the stream of divine love of a ‘flamingo’ and the merciful love for the brethren in such delicate balance, and to the very details of ordinary day to- day life with in the four walls of Carmel, that she stands as a fitting saintly monument for the Year of Mercy, within the limited horizon available to her! Saint Euphrasia challenges each one of us, to be the face of God’s mercy wherever we are placed by God, simultaneously shining as the radiance of purity and divine flame of love.

May myself and all of you my people and the devotees of this saint be enabled to take up this challenge raised by the saint for all seasons and for all peoples in the very ordinariness of life transforming it in love, kindness and mercy. I congratulate Sr. Chrisologa for writing this new biography after the event of Canonization of Mother Euphrasia.

Let this **A Biography of Saint Euphrasia** create a new wave of enthusiasm among its readers, among all those who are walking the Pilgrim way to the Father Land.

**Mar Andrews Thazhath**  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Trichur



## Let the Light Spread!

A Biography of Saint Euphrasia takes me back to the Book of Sirach:

*“Then the Creator of all things  
gave me a command,  
and my Creator chose the  
place for my tent.  
He said, ‘Make your dwelling in  
Jacob,  
and in Israel receive your  
inheritance ...  
In the holy tent I ministered  
before him,  
and so I was established in  
Zion.  
Thus in the beloved city he gave  
me a resting place,  
and in Jerusalem was my  
domain.  
I took root in an honored people,  
in the portion of the Lord,  
his heritage.”*

*(Sirach 24: 8, 10-12)*

In this new biography of Saint Euphrasia by Sr. Chrisologa, the election of God, the beauty, the meaning, the significance and relevance of Consecrated Religious Life are unravelled layer after layer signalling the markings of ‘hope’ in the spiritual itinerary of the Saint. Gods’ designs always move to a great destiny. As Pope Francis himself challenges us, we are caught up in the line of St. Euphrasia as the ‘Prophet of Hope’, to fix our gaze on the

Horizon of 'Hope' as we search for renewed signs of life and the 'rain-signal' of Elijah with regard to Consecrated Religious life and its relevance for the Modern age.

There is so much positive energy of loving in Saint Euphrasia's life. It is this positive slant of life that makes Saint Euphrasia great. Once she fell in love with God, she fell in love with humanity; love, light, compassion and mercy flowed from her to whoever crossed her path. Her world was very small. But within the four walls of Carmel, she held the whole world and its needs and emergencies.

Having met with the Eyes of Christ her vision reached to the far ends of the world and to the depths of the human hearts. In that mystic belt where the whole world converges to the redemptive power of Christ, she was forever the praying, the compassionate, the sacrificing, the enlightening, the instructing, the loving, communicating community nun and worked for the healing of the nations.

I pray that the light from the mystic life of Saint Euphrasia spread far and wide and invite the readers to follow the Markings of the Saint wherever they are placed by the hands of Destiny!

I take this occasion to congratulate Sr. Chrisologa for writing **A Biography of Saint Euphrasia** with necessary interpretation at significant points in the saint's life.

May this biography help the readers to be in touch with the fragrant, holy life of Saint Euphrasia, a flower of Kerala Carmel and inspire them to move always in the orbit of the Holy Spirit in union with Jesus, towards the Father's Kingdom!

With blessings,

**Sr. Sibi CMC**  
Superior General



## With Folded hands!

Even as I write these few words of ‘best wishes and prayers’ on the publication of **A Biography of Saint Euphrasia**, I stand in awe before the intensely mystical life of Saint Euphrasia and the Challenges she raises to the CMC daughters and to the Children, to the youth, to the Couples and adults and the old, the sick, the orphaned and the poor, the neglected, the condemned and the lonely. In this moment as I stay with all of you and with the God of Saints, I am reminded of two poems by the author of this biography which appeared in *Sucharitha*, 2002 on Saint Euphrasia:

*“His nearness gripped  
My heart gave way.  
He beckoned,  
I followed  
A small cottage on the hillside,  
leaving all I found Him  
But he vanished  
leaving a vibration in the air  
My lonely cottage  
swells with His presence” (“Revelation”)*

I think it is this intimacy with Christ that shines like a radiant mystical gold thread through all the vicissitudes of life with regard to the Himalayan obstacles to follow her vocation to Consecrated Life, the cataclysmic events at home leading to financial loss and ill repute and degradation of a family history, to days and months and years of misunderstanding, and misinterpretation about the mystical experiences in her life, and finally to continual attacks of Satan and bouts of sickness. In all these events Saint Euphrasia followed just one strategy of an eagle soul.

*“It is to target like an eagle  
the mountainous altitudes,  
and from the peak Everest  
view the land below in stop-over  
and be ready for the next peak  
in the darknight, for the flame of love”*

*( Flight No. I)*

I am glad that **A Biography of Saint Euphrasia** has tried to indicate the moorings of this great mystic, in its myriad hues.

May I congratulate Sr. Chrisologa for this English biography of the Saint, specially done for the sake of people outside Kerala who are eager to know about Saint Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart. I also pray that all the readers may be inspired to take up the challenge of holiness and ‘mercy’ as exemplified in her life!

In Christ Jesus,

Nirmala Province  
Thrissur

**Sr. Anija CMC**  
Provincial Superior

## Preface

We have travelled forward more than a year after the event of Father Chavara's and Mother Euphrasia's Canonization in the Vatican. Praise God! Some how whenever there is a reference to St. Euphrasia there is another name often coupled with it that is of the longtime Vice Postulator who started the Cause as Provincial and who saw to the completion of it on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 in 28 years, a rare God-given privilege in the historical sweep of the events of Canonization. I am morally obliged to acknowledge her credentials since it was Mother Cleopatra as provincial who published the biography of Mother Euphrasia in English a translation by Sr. Leo of Sr. Perigrin's book *Anugraheetha Kanyaka* in Malayalam, edited by Sr. Cleopatra. That was the occasion of the 37<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Mother Euphrasia. Again a second edition of it was published on the 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of the Servant of God, 1998, by the then Provincial Mother Felicita.

The Present book, **A Biography of Saint Euphrasia** is written for the sake of those outside Kerala who would desire a biography in the context of the new insights and informations during the progressive years towards Canonization. All the same I have broadly depended on the findings of the *Anugraheetha Kanyaka* in Malayalam edited by Sr. Dr. Cleopatra and published in the year 2014. More over the general structure of the content into 14 chapters, the last being a special chapter by Sr. Cleopatra on the history of the Progress towards Canonization also is incorporated accordingly. I acknowledge hereby my heavy indebtedness to *Anugraheetha Kanyaka*, written by Sr. Perigrin and later edited by Mother Cleopatra.

What I have done is not a translation except for the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter. I have written a short biography in English, in my own style, with my own slant of interpreting a Saints' life. As far as the biographical details are concerned I have tried my best to be accurate depending on the previous versions of Mother Euphrasia's Life and **St. Euphrasia's Letters**.

I trust in the Lord that the readers may be blessed all along their life, by the beauty of the saints' life and the fragrance of her virtues. May all of us be enabled to walk with God all the way in Faith, Hope and Charity and spread the kingdom of God, being the light of the world and the salt of the earth in our constant generous response to God like the hidden Saint Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

Let me also express my profound gratitude to Our dear Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath for the 'Felicitous Blessing' extended to the Author and the Work. My heartfelt thanks to Mother Sibi, Superior General and Sr. Anija, Provincial Superior for their blessing and greeting! My thanks to Sr. Rani George, the Director of St. Euphrasia Pilgrim Centre who gave her steady encouragement to my literary ventures. My special thanks to the MMB Offset Printers, Mariapuram for working hard for the publication of this book.

God bless us abundantly! Let us also move in to a moment of prayer! 'My God, you are my God who is from Everlasting to Everlasting. Your mercy is like the endless horizon and Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. You who raise saints from our own time, help us to reach our destiny, enveloped by your presence and directed by your Holy spirit in Jesus Christ our Lord! May Mother Mary accompany us all the way. May all the angels and saints encamp around us in our spiritual warfare!

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen!'

**Sr. Chrisologa CMC**

Director of St. Euphrasia Retreat Centre

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## THE FINAL DEPARTURE MOMENT

“Arise, my love, my fair one,  
 And come away:  
 For now the winter is past  
 The rain is over and gone.  
 The flowers appear on the earth,  
 The time of singing has come and the voice of the turtle dove  
 Is heard in our land.  
 The fig tree puts forth its figs  
 And the vines are in blossom;  
 they give forth fragrance.  
 Arise my love, my fair one  
 And come away.  
 Oh, my dove in the clefts of the rock  
 In the covert of the cliff,  
 Let me see your face,  
 Let me hear your voice  
 For your voice is sweet  
 And your face is lovely.”

*(Song of Songs 2:10-14)<sup>1</sup>*

From the mystic moments of Mystic Euphrasia we guess authentically this would be the love song the Heavenly Bridegroom sang in her departure to the Homeland. We start with the final departure moment for a significant reason. It is T.S. Eliot an illustrious dramatist and poet who wrote “In my beginning is my end, In my end is my beginning.” Yes, in Little Rosa’s (St. Euphrasia’s baptismal name) case, the holy fragrance of the moment of her birth October 17, 1877 remained unsullied till the moment of her final departure from the world on August

29, 1952. On the contrary, in quality it became more rarified and spread out, in solidity it ever grew richer by the accompaniment of prayer and purification, by the intensity of the love for God and selflessness and outgoingness in her love for all her sisters and people of God especially in her own parish.

Ever living intimately close to her divine spouse Jesus Christ, the last moments were fragrant with the richness of love. All who came into contact with her during her life time, and especially those who rushed to see her in her last moments felt that the Bridegroom, of the *Song of Songs* would have invited her to the heavenly banquet through that ever permanent 'Spousal Song' which abides in the heart of the bride of the Lamb, the vowed Virgin, now Little Rose grown to St. Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart.

Sensing the quiet passing away into the Lord's presence the onlookers observed: 'What a beautiful death! What a marvellous peace is spreading across her lovely loving face. What depths of calmness like the calm of the sea! May be she is already resting in the bosom of her Eternal Lover. She suffered for the sake of love and became the spouse of the Crucified Jesus while alive. Now it is as if she is the victorious queen beside the King of Kings, the One Lord and God Jesus Christ, the Son of God!'

Among those who were filtering into the room were mothers who sought consolation and solutions from her pious lips, and mothers who came to get some peace from an otherwise 'drunken family climate'. Children wanted to experience some hope in their continuous failure in the examinations, boys and girls who were in despair because of a 'drunkard' father whom their mother could no more tolerate, as she had no stamina left, no money to provide for the child, no food at home and hence no solution to any of the problems causing a puzzle in the family, and hence no hope for the future. There were labourers who could work no more, as they were sick and ailing – yea left out by a selfish society greedy for money, puffed up with status,

hungry for fame and slaves to pleasures of the world; children orphaned, helpless and seeking help and shelter. They were visitors in the parlour, ‘presences’ in the convent chapel and now onlookers with a real feel for the dying. They really partook of the grace showers the Father of mercy poured out at the august sanctified moment of final departure. They all looked at her intently for a long time just to take in that calm, that peace that was imprinted in that affectionate face. Mother Euphrasia was not simply blessing them granting their prayer requests, but she was leaving with them and in the convent Chapel, sister’s rooms and in the whole campus her live presence. For she abided with the Lord during her life, and she would never separate herself from the Presence of her Lord, that Eucharistic Presence, that Crucified Presence, the Resurrected Presence of Jesus Christ her heavenly spouse even in her death. As days went by her presence deepened and widened to touch and heal and support all those who came seeking her help. It was marvellous the way she became a live presence to the school children, to the teachers, to the pregnant mothers, to the bride and the bridegroom approaching marriage, the wedded couples who did not have children, to the unmarried youth who desired and longed for a partner, to the orphaned old mother and father, to the sick and the ailing. Though remaining within the four walls of the Carmelite Convent, according to the tradition then, Mother Euphrasia gathered all who came across her path in her heart and presented them to the Eucharistic Lord. She had a heart for all, and so she was a mystic missionary who saved many souls for Christ, like the most fascinating young saint, St. Therese of Lisieux. Praise God for the immensity of God’s love in His various saints.

Those who crowded near her in affectionate bonding remembered the by-gone days and the concern and the comfort Mother Euphrasia poured forth into their ailing body and disturbed unquiet spirit. In a few words she could console them and give them the touch of what the Lord Jesus said, “Peace that that passeth understanding!” They would remember how

she wiped their tears tenderly and spoke soothing words with the tongue of the spirit. So, they all wanted to keep something in remembrance of this saintly soul. When the sisters picked up much of the flowers for themselves the others took their own rosaries and pious articles and touched the 'sacred' body of the saintly mother. Some others collected whatever usable articles they found around which had been used for Mother Euphrasia's medicine or food or daily usage. Such was the devotion expressed by many who participated in the funeral. It seems the Lord God was confirming through the people who were connected with Mother in one way or another that the Holy Spirit rested in her in a unique way, He was her hearts' delightful Guest! These are the words of a witness:

“I stayed prayerfully near the body for a long time. I prayed the rosary which was her favourite prayer. Waited near the coffin till I could pick a flower from there. Many were paying homage by offering flowers. They also seemed to take a keep - sake in remembrance of Mother. Finally the coffin was almost looking empty of the flowers and in hiding I picked a jasmine flower. That I picked from the wreath placed on her head. I treasured it, took it home and placed it in a bottle. I have been keeping it all this while, now almost 35 years. It has saved me from several kinds of sickness. Has been medicinal for me in terrific pain of the body. This is not a separate event. Many people came to narrate such stories of miraculous healing and divine consolation”.

## HOME, DEAR HOME !

**E**ven to remember one's much loved home is irresistibly and eternally refreshing. How much more to have the chance of living inside it, loving and serving one's own.

The luscious greenery of Kattur village was itself an attraction for all who resided there and even so for the constant visitor. For the rare visitor the magnetic attraction of the place was real tempting with its green fields and the river that flowed amidst the green velvet. As Robert Frost had to wake the traveller up from their luxuriant ecstasy in these mystic lines of a poem:

“The woods are lovely dark and deep  
 But I have promises to keep  
 Miles to go before I sleep  
 And miles to go before I sleep,”

the Visitors had to be reminded to move on the area that stretched along the river had a double name – Edathiruthy and Kattur. It was like this, Rosa's family belonged to Edathiruthy Parish and to Kattur Village. In those days Kattur village came under Edathiruthy Parish.

Almost 18 acres of land along the river was owned by Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Antony, Rosa's father. The ancient Christian family was a treasure house of the wealth of this world and also of traditional virtues like generosity, curtesy, and devotion to God and to religious events. In other words Rosa's parents were significant in the locality with a name and fame. They had a real standing amidst the people of Kattur and

Edathiruthy. If Cherpukaran Antony expressed an opinion it was not by-passed. They had made this marking in the history of the village and for that matter in the parish.

### **Birth of Little Rosa**

Little Rosa was born to Antony and Kunjethy amidst this prosperity and prestigious setting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1877. On 25<sup>th</sup> October after a week was the baptism in the Edathiruthy Parish Church dedicated to Mother of Mount Carmel. She was christened ‘Rosa’. It was the custom of those days to give the child, baptism as early as possible after it has seen the dawn. The real introduction to the Church and the incorporation with the mystical body of Christ was urgently longed for by all concerned, and especially by the parents. To postpone for the sake of a convenient time in favour of celebration was unthoughtful of in those days. The essentials were given precedence over the externals and the superficial. The precious gift of a child, the family received had to be offered to God through the Church and incorporated with Christ through baptism without any delay. That was the motivation of the parents for an early baptism, whatever the probable inconveniences which were always put aside for receiving the ecclesial claim of Christ on the child. To be owned by Christ and to belong to Christ who bought us by His precious blood that was considered to be the greatest event in a person’s life as St. Paul in his epistle to Philippian reminds “Jesus Christ had made me His own.” Thus the eldest child of Cherpukaran Antony and Kunjethy, like the ‘Aroma of Christ’ lay in the arms of the father and mother, the ‘glory’ of the family. The child was rather on the darker side with attractive features, with its prominent nose and shining eyes. A divine smile seemed to spread intermittently on the baby lips which attracted the visitors and the passers by. They paused for a moment greeted and blessed the child and looked at the parents with overflowing gladness, and wondered in their hearts what can be the Lord God’s blessing for this child, to be fulfilled in days to come.

## **The Family Climate**

On the other side, Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Antony was ever conscious of the family prestige and wanted to establish his name and fame in the parish. His decision was unshakeable and he was a voice in the parish. Even the parish priest would think twice before opposing Antony, who was extremely influential among the parishners and who had a standing amidst his people.

The humble and pious wife Kunjethy, could only watch and stand by near Antony's side quietly, without offending the public feel or the sentiment of the parishners, supporting her husband and abiding his feeling and nurturing the children in humility and observance of the Lord's commandments and instructions. She was a light in the family amid all the dark shades of prestige and appearances redeeming the family with Christ and His sufferings in silence, prayer, suffering and submission to the rule of Christ by taking the children for Holy Mass and preparing them for confession and communion, pointing out to them the importance of the popular devotions to Christ, Mother Mary and Saints and angels. She was a light to the family and a beacon of light to the parish. To absorb the ancient heritage of the family traditions of her husband Antony was not always easy. Being very authoritarian and strict, Kunjethy had her moments of suffering and anguish. But like the devoted wife of an illustrious Kerala Syrian Catholic Family Kunjethy abided by the customs of the family and gave way to the orders of Antony without putting up fights, like a dignified but affectionate and understanding wife. This increased the radiance of her goodness and otherwise refined character and demeanour. Being of noble birth and belonging to Aranattukara Chalissery Ittikuru house, Kunjethy was royal in her demeanour, upright in her character, reserved and long suffering in her devotion to her husband. Above all showed her devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to Mother Mary to whom she had entrusted the whole family.

## **Little Rosa's Childhood**

It was in this family climate that Little Rosa was born and brought up. The baby had already absorbed the mother's devotions to the Eucharistic Lord, even while in the womb of the mother. The lullabies the mother sang also had the tone of affectionate bonding with Jesus and Mary. And we understand what a great impact of the mother, the baby receives while in the womb. Thus Little Rosa absorbed the spiritual and Eucharistic and Marian vibrations of the mother with no effort. And the Little Rose in the mothers lap, intently gazing at the eyes of the mother picked up the visual and auditory impressions of the devotion to Jesus and Mother Mary. The natural link accentuated the baby's closeness and bonding to the creator God (Psalm 139). While resting in her lap little Rosa listened to the stories of heaven. Kunjethy had such infinite attraction for little Rosa. She learnt from her mother to fold her arms and to stay in prayer in the silence of the soul. She learnt from her mother to make the sign of the cross. Rosa's mother was fully dedicated to going to church whenever possible and like an affectionate and responsible mother, she took the daughter to the church whenever occasion was favourable. While early dawn, their going to church, of mother and little daughter, was a darling sight for the women in the neighbourhood. The darling mother bent low along with the overshadowing umbrella, still bending low on the child, the mother's fingers tenderly networking with the daughter's soft feeling fingers, the communication of the divine radiance between the eyes of the mother and the privileged child, that was already much viewed and talked about even in the neighbourhood. They repeated at times: "What a terrific love for God? There is nothing lacking in her life. She has everything: riches, beauty, health, and children. But her thirst for God is so strong that it is contagious – wherever she is she imparts that piety and devotion to God. God seems to be very real to her, whereas for us he is rather a God in the distance. Her very life is an invitation for all of us to draw closer to God!!"

This quality of her mother had a terrific impact on the child. Little Rosa thirsted for God like the hart that panteth after water (Psalm 42). Everything else seemed empty. Day and night, this emptiness swallowed her up.

God made them prosperous. And endowed them with 9 children. They had 9 children, among those 4 of them died at birth. It was very sad, but they had to accept it as God's will. Among those who remained alive, 3 were boys and 2 girls. And the father decided for the family that the eldest was to go to weddedness and the younger if so necessary to God, to religious life. Little Rosa's father seemed to have believed that God will act according to the father's decision. It looks scandalous and surprising. Yet, Antony was extremely self-willed, and he did not seem to have believed that even God could have had an alternative. But we already found that the child's father had the shock of recognition and had to surrender to God's final choice.

The Almighty God who reigns over the whole world directs the path of the individuals and one has to recognize God's authority in the destiny of the universe as well as the destiny of the individuals. That individual who surrenders to God, only that person can have a declaration of independence. Because God controls the course of history and the course of the personal history of man and woman, God is the one friend we are all born with. Only in co-operation with this loving God, can we create our own destiny. Even at a young age as young as 9-11 Little Rosa has that discernment and that insight consequent to mother Mary's divine intervention and revelation. However, her father finally gave into God's will and plan about Rosa.

The parents were alert to give Rosa necessary education that they could provide while she resided at home. Once she left for the boarding her education continued in the school attached to Koonammavu convent.

### **Rosa growing as the 'Aroma of Christ'**

Meanwhile our Little Rosa was really growing like a fragrant

Rose, spreading the 'Aroma of Christ'. She prepared herself for confession and the first Holy Communion with great zeal. Her love for the Lord was like the honey in the rock. Now it imparted sweetness in her affection for Jesus. The flower held honey drops like dew drops. The various shades of her devotion, the tone of intimacy with the Lord filled the petals with the myriad hues. The texture of mystical love was poured forth into the soul of great generosity, by God Himself. She listened to the words of the priests with great fervour, to treasure each word and to respond with generous love. But the greatest and deepest preparation was done by her own mother, affectionately bonding with the child, but with a divine touch and a godly design for her future; may be a dream in resonance with Revelation chapter 14 verses 1-5.

Already God almighty was looking at this 'Rose' with great predilection. A bride-soul was being fashioned in Little Rosa like the 'Rose of Sharon' and the 'Lily of the valley' (Song of Songs 2:1)

Little Rosa's beloved mother herself was the main stay of the child along with the supreme architect of the virginal soul, the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit that draws a virgin soul to the heavenly Bridegroom Jesus. As Rosa's mother narrated the story of saint Lima of Rose with divine Zeal, Rosa used to listen eagerly. Those were moments when the Holy Spirit linked Rosa with the virginal souls and effected a certain vibration of mystical bridal love. Rosa's mother's description was fascinating to the young girl: the virgin Rose of Lima was an unusually beautiful girl. She loved the crown of thorns more than the beautiful crown of flowers. Three days during the week she took only bread and water. She also practised various kinds of penance and discipline. The description given on the articles of discipline, young Rosa did not understand then. Though Rose of Lima was permanently sick, yet it seems she prayed for more and more suffering. "Lord, increase my suffering; so also

increase my power of endurance,” this was exactly the way Rose prayed. Little Rosa’s ears avidly listened to the narrations given by her pious mother. It affected parallel resonances in young Rosa’s heart. The flower of Kattur, the little Rosa was opening petal after petal to the divine onslaught so that the divine guest may rest in the corolla of the flower.

Moreover she understood that St. Rose of Lima built a hermitage in the garden to allow more time for silence and solitude and thus to seek only the company of the Divine. Every detail of Rose of Lima’s adventure for God’s love made a parallel response in young Rosa’s life and imagination. Her heart was pulsating with divine fervour. Strangely enough Rose of Lima was experiencing certain atrophies at home. The family lost all the wealth they had. Along with wealth the fame and prestige also were lost. Rose had to go to the neighbouring houses for stitching and gardening. Rose accepted wholeheartedly all these humiliations and loss of dignity for the sake of her Eternal lover. Jesus Christ, the Lord of her life did not allow her to linger long on this earth. At the age of 31, the ‘Rose’ was culled by the Eternal Love, the Divine Spouse of her soul.

### **Rosa follows the Markings of a Saint**

Her mother’s descriptions of Rose of Lima was fantastic. Young Rosa picked up every significant word, even when she could not follow the nuances of the trend of descriptions. Of course she could visualize the hermitage in the garden, the silent soul communing with God, while inside the hermitage, the eternal silence around the hermitage, the wild flowers and the pet flowers in the garden, how Rose of Lima in moments of prayer, forgetful of the surroundings got immersed in God, how her soul could take its flight to God to nestle in the Divine bosom, like the homesick cranes flying homeward in the eve to find their nest on the mountainous trees. Imagination took its flight along with her desires. These words were written in her heart: Virgin, saint, penance, discipline, silence, solitude,

unceasing prayer, poverty, deeds of humility! She repeated these words to herself so that memory will always treasure them. She felt these were the **markings of a saint** which she wanted to follow always, never to err in her journey towards her destination. Her destiny was to become a saint, she understood. And she wholeheartedly embraced all the necessary components of a saint's life. Rosa decided "I must become a saint, an unknown saint". This became her daily prayer whispering all along her life. And she tuned her life accordingly. After receiving Holy communion when the Lord was residing in her heart, pressing the abode of the Lord in her heart she prayed in reverential proclamation, "My Jesus, never remove your abode from my heart, not even for a moment." To reach the fulfilment of all her desires this is the way she found out: "I will become a nun." Her heart and mind, which she surrendered to the Lord, in her great fascination for Jesus, followed Him like a sun flower, never distracting or disturbed from its destined runway. She entrusted herself the Sun flower to Mother Mary's keeping, so that it will never fade. She found Mother Mary, the mother of Immaculate Conception, the purest ray serene, the solitary boast of human kind to protect this virgin sun flower and keep it ever fresh and pure.

This intense devotion to Mother Mary, Young Rosa absorbed from her mother. How many times she had observed during day and nightfall the Rosary beads moving through her mother's fingers. Rosa took this devotion to heart and stayed with it till the moment of her last breath when people surprisingly noticed the Rosary beads moving through the fingers of St. Euphrasia. What an irreplaceable impact of a mother on the child of her womb. We find something similar in the case of St. Chavara. So too with the life and practice of St. Pope John Paul II, the Great. No one can rival the mother's impact on son or daughter specially with regard to authentic devotion to Christ Jesus or to Mary.

## **The Darkening Clouds**

However, we are a bit dismayed when we look at the three brothers. They could not rise up to the expectations of the parents, especially the two younger ones. The eldest one tried to follow the path of goodness in accordance with the direction of the Word of God and in the tradition of the family. The eldest one Kakku was very attached to his sister and would visit her in the convent whenever possible, to enquire after her and to share his joys and sorrows. He wanted to share all his experiences with his sister. Very much affectionately bonded with Mother Euphrasia, Kakku desired to tell her everything concerning him. It was a deep spiritual relation which was stronger than blood relation. In health and sickness, in all kinds of difficulties and puzzles, Kakku came to the convent to meet his sister, for timely advice and spiritual consolation.

## **THE DIVINE CANOPY : TOWARDS THE SHELTER OF VIRTUES**

**T**he Eluvathingal Cherpukaran’s family was an illustrious and rich family known among the people in those days! It seems their lineage can be traced from the early Christians. They took pride in their Christianity as well as in their wealth. The gold ornament box was the women’s heritage. It contained the gold of the women of almost three generations. It was in wait for the next heir and that was Little Rosa. Grandmas had special predilections for Little Rosa and would love to see her adorned with these gold ornaments – the necklace, the bangles, the earrings and the delicate gold chain for the feet and what not – several time they would adorn her after putting on the silk dresses and would weave their dreams about the future bride of the family. This rehearsal was the most rewarding recreation of the family.

### **The Divine Love Presence**

But parallely the young girl Little Rosa was weaving her young dreams in a different climate, for a different reason, for the mystic horizon. What a contrast! What a divine magic! The young mind of Little Rosa was filled by the wisdom of God (Wisdom 1:7). She was getting it more and more crystal clear in the depths, of her being – ‘all is vanity, vanity of vanities’ – this shining gold, these intoxicating love stories, these exciting pleasures of the world and the maddening treasures of the world – these had no attraction for young Rosa. Her mind was fixed on something else; her heart had already found the greatest Pearl of a Treasure. She experienced a soothing mind among the relentless waves of the sea. She felt a Presence, calm like the calm of the depths of the sea. The Love Presence drew near and

the heart gave way to the stirrings of her soul. How can we overlook that passage from the book of Sirach at this juncture which spelt out so clearly St. Euphrasia's destiny for a consecrated life:

“Then the creator of all things gave me a command,  
And my creator chose the place for my tent.  
He said, make your dwelling in Jacob,  
And in Israel receive your inheritance,  
In the holy tent I ministered unto him,  
And so I was established in Zion.  
Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place,  
And in Jerusalem, was my domain  
I took root in an honoured people,  
In the portion of the Lord his heritage.”

*(Sirach 24:8, 10-12)*

### **The Conflictual Positions**

Little Rosa was afraid to tell her father of her decision to join the convent as she sensed that her father was making early arrangements for the marriage. The then custom of Kerala allowed the parents of the girl and the boy to have some previous agreement on the possibility of an alliance. Hence Rosa's father Antony had found a good natured handsome boy from a wealthy and illustrious family and had more or less given word to the parents of the boy expecting Little Rosa to comply with him. But when he divulged the matter in the presence of Rosa's mother, Rosa frankly confessed her decision to follow Jesus. “Pappa, I have already given word to another Person.” Mr. Antony could not swallow it, even when he found out that it was Jesus, the Divine Saviour the man of her fascination. Antony, her father could not digest the fact that without previously consulting her father, Little Rosa could make such a decision and stick to it at any cost. Antony was angry and shouted at his daughter for being stubborn. Her mother as usual, kept silence in the presence of her angry and ‘sad’ bewailing father. Rosa sought shelter in prayer. The next few days were heavy and gloomy in the Cherpukaran family.

## **God's Intervention**

God intervened in the most unexpected way. Mr. Antony had decided to give Rosa's younger sister Kochuthressia to God. Rosa being the eldest and most favoured, he wanted to give her away in marriage and celebrate the marriage in the most ceremonious way, fitting the standard of the Cherpukaran family. Mr. Antony, it looks, believed that God could be manipulated and appeased by the exchange of the younger, but most beautiful daughter. But God took that occasion to prove to Antony that no one can resist God's decision and that His choice cannot be bartered. It was not long after Kochuthressia caught fever and she died within three days of fever. Mr. Antony had the greatest shock of his life. Immediately he fell at the feet of the Lord in the room consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and repented over his mistake, his stubborn decision. Moreover he permitted Rosa to join the convent so that at least her life would be spared. Thus Rosa's call to consecrate her life to Lord Jesus was on the way to being fulfilled in the most mysterious way.

## **Mother Mary prepares Rosa for CARMEL at a young age.**

At this instance, it is good to note the divine revelation received at the age of 9 which Rosa has mentioned in letter No.30 (*Letters*<sup>2</sup> written to her spiritual Director Mar John Menachery, Bishop of Trichur). Letter 30 says: 'A very beautiful Lady came to me each hour. As is written in this small piece of paper 3 days continuously this beautiful Lady made me do it. With that all the hours were impressed in my mind. I will never forget it. My father, I did not know this person at that time. Now I know. Then I was (9) years old. Tell your father and mother to take you to the convent, saying this she left (*Letters* P. 158). The specification to the Carmelite Congregation is given in *Letters* No. 31, P. 160. "From 8'O Clock onwards together with the 9<sup>th</sup> legion of angels, pray for increase in holiness, and perseverance till the end, of the Carmelite Congregation and other Congregations, and said, *you will join the Carmelite*

*Congregation.* Then I looked for that beautiful woman, but did not see. I did not know where she went” (*Letters*, P. 160 f)

### **The Election of God and the Preparatory Events**

It is the election from God Himself that signature Little Rosa for God. Hence her call to Consecrated Religious Life had to be whole heartedly responded and be fulfilled in days to come.

An interesting but curious event happened in between. It shows the unquenchable thirst Little Rosa experienced to follow the path the Lord had chosen for her. And mother Mary had revealed. Someday two sisters came for visiting the families Mr. Antony viewed the visitors from far away. Little Rosa felt that they are coming to invite girls to Koonammavu boarding which served then as a training house for the would be aspirant to religious Life. Prompt was her decision to keep Kochuthressia, her younger sister in hiding so that the sisters will not take her in exchange of Rosa to the boarding according to her father’s previous decision.

As Kochuthressia could not be found, the sisters returned without any probable candidate. Kochuthressia could not be found, Rosa was not to go. However, the sudden demise of Kochuthressia paved the way for Rosa’s entry into Carmel, first through the boarding door of Koonammavu.

But before that the whole family was concerned about little Rosa’s education. Today’s educational expenses and educational modes had been a far dream in those days. And specially schools for girls had been a scarcity and wherever extant was too far away from the living abodes. Even those had only classes up to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. If the girls knew to read and write, that seemed sufficient. What was really important was to give the girl in marriage by 10 or 11 age. Parents and grandparents belonging to ancient and illustrious families knew the normal desirable course of events, the proper conventions of the day and took pride in stubbornly sticking to these conventions and traditions without any compromise. So too, Mr. Antony, Rosa’s father and mother Kunjethy decided on their own what to do with

Rosa's education. They gave her special tuition by Asaan (Guru Chimman. That was all about Rosa's education.

### **In the Boarding : Training in Virtues**

So, also the traditions and conventions about the observances of Religious Life was totally different from today's pattern. Those who desire consecrated religious life come to the boarding at an early age. Along with imparting education, the aspirants were given preliminary training in religious life also. Both aspirants and the formators will examine in detail the possibility of going into the chosen vocation. This is a favourable season to examine crucially every detail of the gift of vocation, of the call by the divine. Those who don't have a call naturally will find it very difficult to adjust to these religious systems.

Rosa's prayer grew intense. So also her desire for consecrated life grew along with her. She saw in her mystical horizon the God who intensely desires her. She saw herself as a soul eager to offer herself to the Divine embrace. All unsurmountable obstacles gave way to the irresistible fascination for God. Finally that hour also arrived. She was ready to go to the Boarding on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1888 – that became later the St. Thomas Day, for the Syro Malabar Catholic Church. What an auspicious moment for the declaration of faith and the faithfulness of a bridal soul.

That was the boarding attached to the first Religious house for women started by St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 1866.

### **The History of the Foundational House**

The first indigenous congregation for women with four members was founded in 1866, at Koonammavu. Because it was constructed by Bamboo mat, the convent was known as Bamboo mat convent. In the eco-spiritual atmosphere it gains importance that the congregation which flourished in Mount Carmel should have its replica in a Bamboo mat convent. However by the relentless effort of Father Chavara within a

year a building was constructed on solid foundation for the convent. That original convent in the name of St. Theresa of Avila still exists in Koonammavu. Amidst their hectic activities founder father Chavara and co-founder Fr. Leopold Beccaro, the Carmelite Missionary took care to see to every detail of sister's religious existence of Koonammavu Convent. The careful attention and the continued pastoral care of these great men of God gave the first members their zest for life and religious fervour. They entrusted with their daughters a holy responsibility and a great mission for the church. They were to be holy like God who called them, through prayer and mortification and thus reach fulfilment and self-realization in God. The other was to create a Shelter of Virtue a house for girls for training in virtues along with secular and religious education which parallelly intended to inculcate formation of character and renewal in the Holy Spirit, in the spirit of Carmel in an atmosphere of silence, solitude, mutual respect and loving attention to one another in selfless living. The sisters as well as the trainees were to combine prayer and asceticism so that they will be journeying towards the heights of mystical prayer accompanied by right spiritual direction. The founder St. Chavara combined in himself the intensity of prayer and the zest for activities to uplift the people around through various apostolates. Hence the Congregation of Mother of Carmel<sup>3</sup> was to serve the peoples through various channels of apostolic activities like education for all without the distinction of caste or creed, service to the poor through charitable activities and orphanages, upliftment of all people in need through social activities, projects and social services. We can feel a global vision emerging through the great founder St. Chavara by this time. The CMI-<sup>4</sup>CMC vision and mission now has reached a global accent as facts prove today. And yet we are to catch up with the authenticity and zeal of Elijah who discovered in Mary, the Mother of Saviour, the Star of evangelization. Like Therese of Lisieux, Mother Euphrasia through the missionary thrust of her prayer and activities within the convent walls is a great

missionary of prayer and to that extent a collaborator with Mother Mary and St. Chavara, an evangelizer. This is a comment by the way just to remember the mystical heights she reached and the zeal for souls she communicated through her radically ascetic life.

Without much delay after the founding, the boarding attached to the convent was built. The fame of the convent spread fast just because of the fragrance of virtue of the initial members. The news of the existence of the boarding for girls also spread far and wide in Kerala, because people were already looking for a safe shelter, a shelter of virtuous training for girls. It was a new venture in the land of Malayalam. Many young girls knocked at the door of the boarding for entry. The eager parents and the zealous daughters could not be dissuaded. The girls came eager to join the convent. But they had to be trained and tested. Their vocation had to be authentic. All these responsibilities were shouldered by the boarding mistress and the spiritual directors. They had to learn to read and write. They were also supposed to learn some handy works like stitching or weaving. They must also have the basic lessons for a happy community living. All these could be achieved only by establishing a living house, a boarding attached to the convent. That also came to existence in 1869, in the name of St. Anne. A necessary Foundational Constitution also was drawn up for the sake of the boarding house where the aspiring girls were to be trained for holiness and community living.

More developments happened in 1872. A recognized school started functioning under the management of the convent. With that the door was opened for the education of girls, a blessing hitherto unknown in Kerala. The number of students in the boarding increased. Several among them embraced consecrated life.

### **Rosa in Koonammavu Boarding**

22 years had passed after Kerala Carmel was founded. Little Rosa was just 12 years. That was the time Rosa had already

got permission from her father to join the convent. The moment she stepped in the Koonammavu boarding a certain peace enveloped her. She felt she was destined to be there for a while. She could feel the hand of God in her decisions, their arrival and in the vision of the days ahead. She could not spell out the experience. She felt the peace and calm of a child close to its mother's breast. Rosa told herself: "Alas! I have reached where I should reach; rather at its entry". This was the first time she stepped in Koonammavu boarding with the desire to become a nun. And that was on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1888. A significant remembrance of the faith journey for the Marthoma Catholics!

## THE GREAT TESTING

The boarding life at Koonammavu, which was more like a convent life, young Rosa liked very much. The other girls also had come more or less with the same spiritual yearnings and desires. The sisters not only educated them but also gave them formation for future sisterhood. Making rosary, stitching, cooking, music, language learning (Tamil, Malayalam) were some of the areas of concern and development. Prayer was given much importance in the daily schedule.

### **The basics of life**

There was scope for all these in the Rules and Regulations for the boarding: the children should have rules and regulations to help them grow in the fear of the Lord, in the practice of virtues apart from exemplary models so that they will grow like virtuous Christian children in the model of Christ. They must learn to read and write Malayalam and Tamil, also study catechism and daily prayers. To learn writing on bamboo leaf and paper was a must. Moreover the girls were to learn the order and neatness to be formed as mothers of a Christian home. It was insisted that they should take great care to bring the affection of the heart under control being docile and obedient and humble, and practice charity and happy community living. Rosa was immensely glad to hear about these rules and regulations to which they had to submit in obedience. She felt that all these rules and practices were very much in tune with her desires and interests.

Altogether Rosa felt that she was provided with a luxurious spiritual banquet – order, regulations, observances, rules, all

were in unison with her mind. She obeyed every rule and regulations with gladness, to the very details, even the smallest and insignificant ones. Her hand writing was steady and clear. she showed certain cleverness in stitching. She had also inherited a certain interest in painting and drawing. But all this was not sufficient.

### **Ill health and Consequent obstacles**

The greatest obstacle for entry in the convent was her ill health. Her physique did not happily agree to the boarding situation. She was suffering from intermittent fever. There were severe aches and muscle pain in her not so healthy body. Very often exhausted and tired Rosa looked. This was a cause of anxiety to all.

People who were responsible for the formation for the aspiring students in the boarding made it very clear that Rosa doesn't have the basic health to continue in the boarding. So, what about convent life? It seemed a far cry. Rosa was between the devil and the deep sea, for she was almost certain that her father was sure to give her in marriage to a worthy boy of a prestigious family. According to her there was no possibility of a return to the boarding, she was crushed to the core. Yet she submitted to the will of God and returned home accompanied by her father. But having lost Kochuthressia in a sudden demise, Mr. Antony had become more docile in the hand of God. And when Rosa recouped, according to her desire and in agreement with the sisters in charge of the boarding we find records showing Rosa's re-entry into the boarding on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1888. Even when there was no inkling for hope, she believed in God and trusted. She placed infinite trust in Mother Mary whom she started considering as her own mother. She remembered how Holy Mother (Mother Mary) told her that Rosa was to join the convent, and that too the Carmelite Congregation. She reminded Mother Mary of her promise and how she vowed virginity to God in response to Mother Mary's revelation. Kneeling before the statue of Mother Mary, she prayed:

“Mother, am I not your daughter! Allow me to join your congregation and thus to complete the offering of my life to my Lord and my God.” She tenaciously clung to Mother Mary’s maternal heart. Not just for that hour, but for a whole lifetime; even beyond it, for Rosa knew that she is the Queen of Carmel and of Heaven. It was her own mother that poured into her this divine honey of devotion to Mother Mary along with the breast milk. Rosa accepted and acknowledged Mother Mary of Immaculate Conception as her own mother. So too mother Mary accepted Rosa as her own daughter as the revelations through the letters prove. There are so many instances in the letters, where Mother Mary prepares her for Holy Mass, gives her bread to eat when she is exhausted after the attack of the devils, also where Mother Mary like her own Mother nurses her back to health after the tortures inflicted by the devils.

In the season of summer vacation the boarders could go home and enjoy the vacation. At such times only Rosa was anxious “thinking in case I get sick, will my father allow me to come back to the boarding! But what do I do now? Since all are going, I must also go!” After soliloquizing she would go to Jesus and Mary and weep near them and entrust her future with them and then reluctantly go home after repeating her offering to the Lord as if to remind them of their promise to her!

Once it happened exactly as she doubted. The sister in charge said, “Child, you don’t have the health to continue here in the boarding. You don’t also have the health to follow the strictures of religious life. Imagine how you will be able to observe all rules and regulations.” This seemed the conclusion of authorities concerned. And yet no one seemed willing to leave her at that, to close the convent door against her. We see again the chronicles recording a third entry to the boarding after she is nursed back to health, in her beloved home. Extremely fine in character, she was also very disciplined and strict with herself in the observance of rules and regulations. She would not even budge a letter or line of the regulations. A beautiful model for all, and specially for her companions. She had special interest

in prayer and careful attention to matters spiritual. For her prayer was an immersion in the God who loves her. Those were hours of self-forgetfulness. God's presence over whelmed her in such deep moments of mystic touch. Rosa evinced an authentic deep relationship with God. Sisters had several times tested her on all these levels and she had successfully come out of the tests. Most of the sisters desired if only she had a little more health!

Most of the authorities and even her companions sensed, that this girl is a jewel. There is something uniquely precious in her. If only that could be deciphered and developed, she is sure to be an asset to the Congregation! And yet her sickness is threatening. Finally the decision after the 'voting' was to send her back home, for health reasons. All other points were totally favourable! But how to overlook the case of physical ill health! One simply cannot do it, to do justice to a case of vocation. So once again she was sent home to recuperate. Her insistent cry continued near Jesus and Mary. And strongly enough, after recovering health, she was brought back to the boarding. Rosa looked very happy and radiant having proved her docility and surrender to the Lord in sickness. The final test was yet to come

### **The Miraculous Cure**

Once more Rosa becomes a victim to a severe attack of Arthritis. Around September 15, 1889, she falls sick at the age of 12, with no possibility of quick recovery. Her body grew weak in no time and people felt she was nearing a stroke, a paralytic stroke. She looked dead tired, and people felt anything could happen, like her younger sister. The eyelids remained closed for a long time. The power of speech was already lost and she was unable to take in food. Sending her home in this plight was risky, specially that they did not have any possibility to procure a vehicle. The days dragged themselves. It looked as if Rosa was about to say good bye to the world. The sickness was gravitating to the tragic moment of final departure. The priest was called to minister the sacrament of extreme unction

and also viaticum, the living bread for the journey. Rosa seemed to be going the same way her younger sister Kochuthressia went. 17<sup>th</sup> Sept, 1889 witnessed a battle between life and death. The sisters around her felt there is only one greeting to be given to her that is the final greeting for the last journey she is supposed to make in a few hours. The sisters loved her very much and hence deep pain was reflected on their face! How to bid the final farewell to this young saintly girl whose desire to join Carmel was nipped in the bud. But there was no other go, except willing submission to the decision of God. And they bowed in submission to His Holy Will. So too Rosa, the zealous aspirant; the sisters and her people were standing around her sick bed, all eyes fixed on Rosa, observing the changes that come upon the sick child, in those last moments as they guessed. As time passed quickly, there was a sudden shift in her expression; Rosa looked brighter with a touch of rejoicing, the eyes open wide as if beholding someone dear, the lips moving in speech. A new radiance on the face moves her hand as if to hold some one's hand. She lifts her head as if her body has regained mobility. Some thought these are the varying final shades of the death – dealing sickness. As they try to straighten her lips for the last 'pose' they understood these gestures signalled something else. As they were still watching intently, signs of healing were clearly visible. And the sisters understood that God was intervening in the child's sickness and giving her miraculous healing. But as usual, young Rosa was rather silent and reserved, waiting orders from her Lord and her Holy Mother. That is the way she started her life in the boarding as a preparation for her 'probable' sisterhood life, the much coveted dedication in Consecrated Religious Life.

### **GOD's Mysterious Designs**

Later also the sisters who were in her room near around the moment of extreme unction poured questions to know what really happened to the girl at that time. They all knew in effect it was a miraculous healing. But young Rosa, as much as possible evaded their questions with a smile. But she knew she

had to confess the details with all openness when the Mother Superior Mother Anjes asked her in confidence. She spoke to Mother Anjes in a confidential manner the vision she had of the Holy Family which resulted in the healing. She also spoke about Mother Mary's assurance that only after living several long years in Carmel as a religious, death will come to her. Mother Anjes who always discerned in wisdom, safely kept in writing whatever young Rosa mentioned. She could conclude that certain significant events beyond the usual and ordinary was happening to the child. After eight (8) years in 1897, when this girl said good bye to move to her own diocese of Bishop Mar John Menachery, Mother Anjes wrote these details in a letter to be handed over to the Bishop. At the close of the letter she added this" 'Before this event happened we had decided to send this child away without receiving her in the convent. Because of what we observed in her – her piety, discipline and modesty later we decided to take her'<sup>5</sup>.

I remain,

*Anjes of Jesus*  
*Mother Superior*  
*Koonammavu Convent*

(*Letters, P. 373*)

Mother Anjes' long letter was revelatory about young Rosa's virtues and modesty and her closeness to God. It also made it clear how when God tests His elect, He proves to them a safe refuge and fortress!

## ARRIVAL IN THE DIOCESE OF TRICHUR

**G**od's merciful love had deeply touched her in that experience of being healed. It increased her trust in God and self-confidence. Faith was growing mature and deep as she grew in age. She became more optimistic. Joy, the gift of the spirit was welling up from within like a gentle but steady spring immersing her whole being in an offering of love to Jesus. Of course she had done it in the depths of the spirit long ago. But she felt the need to avow her offering through the religious vows in her entrance in Carmel. That is the way the church places its official signature of the Religious Congregations on an individual soul. She longed to be a prisoner of Divine Love within the four walls of Carmel. She wanted all this to happen quickly. She knew in what emergency the Lord God saved her life from the devouring mouth of death. He will intervene in her affairs, she was assured. With this great trust she entrusted her future path ways into the mighty but loving hands of a caring God.

### **From Koonammavu to Ambazhakad**

1896 was significant for various new ventures in the Kerala Church: Bifurcation or Trifurcation of dioceses, appointment of authorities, change on the basis of Rites, deciding the territorial boundaries etc. Several crucial events were witnessed during this period. Those who had been living as one family had to go apart on the basis of division according to rites and vicariates, to one's appointed places and houses and institutions. To many it was a heart rending experience, but all the same unavoidable. We partake of history which God and time renew periodically to restore the human spirit to the Divine. It was on

August 17, 1890 that the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel was divided on the basis of the Latin and Syrian rites. Most Rev. John Menachery became the vicar apostolica in charge of the Trichur Vicariate. A venerable priest of administrative prowess and foresight he established a religious house in his vicariate without any delay. The first convent in Trichur diocese was in Ambazhakkad in the name of St. Joseph. Among those who were brought from Koonammavu to Ambazhakkad, we have a perpetually professed senior sister Sr. Rose Beatrice, 4 novices, one aspirant and 9 candidates who were desiring entrance into Carmel, among whom young Rosa also was there. The full name in the register was Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Anthony daughter Rosa. 15 January 1897, Rosa was received as an aspirant, the Koonammavu chronicle records. It was Rev. Fr. Mathew Mattathil Chiramel who brought them from Koonammavu according to the order of Mar John Menachery. 1897, May 7<sup>th</sup> Friday around 3.00 PM was the scheduled time for taking the group to Ambazhakkad. The parents of the candidates waiting for entry into Carmel also had arrived to accompany their daughters to Ambazhakkad. The journey through waters was in special kind of boats. Next morning it reached Mala river bed. From there they got down and started journey by walking. From the CMI Priests at Kottakal, they received much hospitality. They walked there after the refreshment and reached Ambazhakkad around 4 PM. A big crowd received them with clapping of hands. They were the first to land in their own diocese.

### **Postulancy Period : Totally Belonging to Jesus and Mary**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May is a red letter day in the chronicles of Carmelite sisters in the undivided Trichur Diocese. The blessing and inauguration of the first convent of the diocese takes place on the day. There was special High Mass on the day to signify the grandeur of such a glorious day. May 10<sup>th</sup> Monday was scheduled as the entrance to postulancy, for Little Rosa. It was the beginning of the fulfilment of a dream, the much awaited

day for the bestowal of the religious head dress. It was also the beginning of the fruition of the promise given by Mother Mary to young Rosa (*Letters*, nos. 30, 31). What a glorious day! That day young Rosa got her new name, the name in the Religious Congregation: Sister Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That was a memorable name never to be erased from history nor to be fading in memory, that was the way she lived, proving its value for all times to come. She looked radiant that day with a spiritual glow, for the horizon of her heart and vision was growing wider and wider to the stature of Christ. Receiving the Lord in the depths of her heart, she offered herself totally. It was an absolute, total entire surrender to the spouse of her soul, never to be revoked, cost what it may! Layer after layer the secrets of her life surfaced as she stayed quiet before the Lord in mystic communion. The twenty years that has been her portion, like a canvas unrolled before her in the presence of her Lord and spouse. The vow of virginity she made at the age of 9, the hurdles that appeared on the way to its keeping, the moments she stood face to face with death, the events that shook her very edifice of her life, the moments when God specifically intervened in her life, the other moments when he was in hiding and yet was active – all such moments came up before her as in a dream. Parallely she also sang the song of dedication and consecration. That was the song of her offering as a victim of love to the Lord of her life, the only God of her heart. In every way, to all the details she belonged to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. With zeal, with infinite desire, with the generosity of the heart moved by the Holy Spirit she entrusted everything to Jesus, reserving nothing for herself. From there on no separate minds, no separate path ways. One mind, one heart, one soul. Only the will of God. Her life had to merge with the life of Jesus. Every faculty of the soul must find fulfilment in God alone. It was such an absolute, entire, total surrender of all that she was, of all that she is! She offered herself as a victim soul for the salvation of souls. Consciously she made that surrender. From that hour she was not hers. She entirely belonged to God. Totally

also of Mother Mary, Mother of Jesus. It was through Mother Mary that she made the offering to Jesus; it was from her hands that Jesus received it. The relationship was so intimate that words could scarcely describe it.

### **The Lamentation at Home**

When Rosa was residing in the convent trying her best to follow the inner directions of the Lord, her parents at home were bewailing her loss! Anthony her father went on soliloquizing “What a sudden and impetuous decision was mine? How did I so suddenly permit her to go to the convent, now her own home is empty without her? What a vacuum? What a terrific silence? What insufferable loneliness. If only my daughter was near!” The mother also had something similar to say and complain to God. “My Little Rosa! I am missing her like anything! I had hoped she would be there when I get old and ailing! Now who would be near my sick bed when I would be saying my final good – bye to the world?” However finally the mother would surrender herself to God saying, “Any way God was so great and kind to receive my daughter as His own! It is great to remember with gratitude that God the Father’s special election rests on my daughter.” The eldest brother Kakku blurted out in sadness, “Alas! What a miserable state! My only little sister Rosa has hid herself in the convent. It would have been such a consolation if she remained at home!” There was a certain gloom spreading across the family. But Rosa’s mother with her strong faith in God kept the lamp of hope burning in that home!

## AT HOME WITH THE COMMUNITY

The early days of the foundation of the convent, the house gifted by a benefactor had been transformed into a convent temporarily. The house belonged to Ambazhakkad Chakkalamattath Kanichai Kunjuvareed daughter Kunjannam. Absolutely no income was forthcoming. Believing in the providence of God they went forward. They owned very little. They embraced poverty as the main hall mark of the spouses of the crucified Christ. Hence no complaints. It was all what they expected! They slowly learned the meaning and significance of the vows. Obedience covered not only the orders of the superiors, but every part of the rules and regulations including the prayer hours. Prayer was still divided into vocal and mental prayer. Again the liturgy of the hours, Holy Mass, Adoration, Novenas – all formed part of the day. There was special time allotted to learn handicraft and such other work. The strict time table was very appealing to Sr.Euphrasia. Already while residing in the Koonammavu boarding, Sr. Euphrasia was an inspiring example to all others. Now, with a more generous heart with a burning love for Jesus, she embraced all rules and regulations, all observances.

### **The Inspiring Postulant Mistress : Sr. Rosa**

The mistress of Sr. Euphrasia had been one Sr. Rosa who was one among the 4 novices who came from Ambazhakkad. She was a religious of great fervour and that was really comforting to Sr. Euphrasia. She was a model for the youngsters and all the virtues were full bloom in her. Total docility to the Sacred will of God, attention to every detail of spiritual observances, incessant service to fellow men and consequent

growth in charity, all these were emphasized in Rosa's training. Sr. Euphrasia's heart overflowed with gratitude. She was immersed in the merciful love of God that prepared for her this banquet of spiritual nourishment.

She practised several notes of spiritual life at the same time to listen to God's voice in prayer, to discern His will in meditation, to do His will in her actions, in the observance of the Rules, to follow His steps in solitude to experience His presence! She had to put up a struggle itself to overcome her weakness and go over the hurdles of her character. She understood that the God experience that ensued from these relentless efforts was really rewarding and provided sufficient good for the life of the spirit. Her more zealous spirit wanted to suffer more. She went beyond the penance of the daily routine to appease her soul which was more ambitious in the practice of virtue.

There was a day in her life when she was crushed by the physical pain as well as the anguish in the mind; that day her mistress was very kind to her, went near her with great love and narrated the story of St. Euphrasia. Even at present the power and fire of those words were spreading across Sr. Euphrasia's life.

When her mistress opened the story of St. Euphrasia layer after layer Sr. Euphrasia was really experiencing the nearness of St. Euphrasia. Born and brought up in a Royal family she considered everything else as refuse in comparison with Christ crucified. She shared her wealth amidst the poor. At such a young age she threw away fame, pleasure and all the riches to become the 'bride' of Christ. She was interested in the humble service of cooking and serving others. Burning in the love of God she went without food and drink for days together, fasted and did penance. In thirty year's (30) St. Euphrasia rose to the heights of sanctity through humility, prayer and suffering. When she sensed everything as on a T.V screen she prayed to Jesus "Lord increase my suffering and my power of endurance." St Euphrasia died at the age of 30.

### **A Victim of more Diseases**

The Lord gladly sends redemptive suffering to the willing souls. Sr. Euphrasia Eluvathingal became a victim to more and more diseases. She already had various kinds of rheumatic pain. She experienced cramps all over the body along with heavy fever. The sickness that attacked her at the age 12 while in Koonammavu boarding appeared again in several form and intensity. Doctors were at a loss to give the correct diagnosis. Intense pain almost made her curl and cringe like a thing. The sign of life was on low ebb. She was scarcely breathing. As the sickness prolonged for a few days, the authorities were sad. The body without movement lying there for days together caused a fright among the companion sisters. As it was felt that she will not return to life, the extreme unction was administered.

### **The Ambazhakad Convent Records Healing**

But thank God! Next moment brought hope. Though slowly she was steadily recouping. All were comforted. About this event the chronicle of Ambazhakkad convent records like this.

“Only on July 29, 1897 because Sr.Euphrasia seemed seriously sick and on the point of death we brought the priest, and the extreme unction was ministered to her. That sickness which seemed to endanger her life suddenly vanished and signs of healing were manifested. Such things, even more miraculous healings have happened to this person publicly from the age of twelve. Several divine revelations and miraculous things were happening to her. Though she was always sickly in the severe bouts of sickness, she never complained, and suffered everything with great patience. Her life seems to be great trials and long-suffering and a life of continuous sickness” (Pages 14-15)

Once she got healed, she started obeying all the observances without exemption. This fervent sister was never in the habit of enjoying favours or asking for exemptions from rules and regulations. Everything seemed to run in the normal pattern and schedule. The days intermingled the humble services and the spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation and penance.

Never was a complaint on her lips or mind. She kept her suffering hidden and in the depths of silence. She was mostly a soul of silence, specially in matters of suffering. Finally that day also arrived. The Day of Vestition, January 10, 1898.

**January 10, 1898: Vestition : Towards Covenantal Love**

She had been preparing for that day long enough. She had purified herself through prayer, penance and mortification. She did not know any half measures. Like St. Therese of Lisieux she sang to herself.

“To live of love, it is not to seek reward  
Nor measure what we give, nor think it cost  
Giving I count not certain am I Lord  
Who so loves thee will never count the cost”

In every way, by internal and external suffering, she was purified as gold was purified in fire for the day of Vestition. The Bride–soul ready for that irrevocable surrender waited for that moment of covenantal love from the Lord. The Word of God must have become alive in her depths then:

“You shall be called by a new name  
That the mouth of the Lord will give.  
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
And a royal diadem in the hand of your God  
You shall no more be termed forsaken  
And your land shall no more be termed desolate;  
But you shall be called My  
Delight is in Her,  
And your Land Married;  
For the Lord delights in you  
And your land shall be married;  
For as a young man marries a young woman  
So shall your builder marry you.  
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride  
So shall your God rejoice over you” (Is 62: 02-05)

The whole atmosphere was replete with the vibrations of divine love and the virginal response to that overwhelming magnetic feel of approaching Divine Presence. The Pandal to receive the virgins desiring consecrated life was ready and was filled with the praise music of the Book of Revelations. Every heart seemed to be throbbing with the oncoming of the New Earth and New Heaven. How real and tangible the spiritual and visual presentation of the Apocalyptic symbolic language.

“Come, I will show you the bride, the bride of the Lamb.” And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God, and radiance like a very rare jewel, like Jasper, clear and crystal. It has great high wall with twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israelites, on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates and on the west three gates. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is the light, and its Lamp is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:09-14; 22-23).

The relevance and significance of this apocalyptic description will be clear when we read from the letters what spiritual events happened to young Rosa at the age of 12, while at Koonammavu boarding, like a foundation of grace for the would be bride of the Lamb: “When I was 12 years old at the Koonammavu convent, on the feast of Our lady’s Assumption, the moment I received Holy Communion, I fainted. He with many angels and religious sisters, Mother Mary and Jesus Christ came in their midst, and saying I choose you today as my bride, put a ring on my finger and disappeared.” (The letters, No. 37, p.198). According to St. Teresa of Avila such mystic events happen in mansion 5, of *The Interior Castle*. (5.4.4.)<sup>6</sup>

We needed to dwell so long on the interior life of St. Euphrasia because of the highlights of the spiritual journey she was to make were indicated by the intervention of heaven, so

to say. The biographical details make us pause a moment to linger round the significant point, and observe the revelatory traits of the relation of a bride-soul to the heavenly Bridegroom, the Eternal Lover. God the Father attracts many a virgin soul to donate their life totally for the salvation of souls for whom Jesus Himself has emptied His life. They are so fascinated by the mystical spousal love of Christ, and are ready to give up their life for the salvation of souls, that they don't want to marry. The magnificent obsession goards them to a total surrender to Christ, the Spouse of their souls. This is a gift from the Holy Spirit, and only those who receive it know it. Hence Sr. Euphrasia was now ready like the bride of the Lamb, and the whole place was got ready for the mystical banquet like in the apocalypse.

### **With the new Virgins**

Along with the new Virgins ready to follow Christ that convent and surroundings became a divine milieu in a very special way. On the western side of the Ambazhakkad Carmelite Convent was got ready a flower pandal all clothed and decked in white reflecting virginal presence and the allied purity. The morning had unusually attractive colourful gold and red hues. There was the soul-stirring melody and the accompaniment of a significant celebratory note of reception due to the new brides ready to offer themselves to the Lord. A divine canopy was above them and a presence like the cloud by day covered the whole atmosphere. For the consecrated souls it was an august occasion and a great remembrance of their covenantal love for the Lord. The whole atmosphere resonated with the greeting of the eternal Bridegroom: "I remember the love of your bridal days when you followed me into the wilderness" (Jer 2:2). Again the word of God in Hosea (2:19-20) seemed to come alive with an unusual intensity.

Into such a spiritual vibrant climate Mar John Menachery, the then Bishop of Trichur arrived to officiate the solemn High Mass accompanied by the ceremony of Vestition of the 9

religious. The people of God along with the parents and relatives of the sisters formed a large crowd, eager to witness the first vestition ceremony in the first convent in the undivided Diocese of Trichur. What an auspicious moment! It was a bright morning, around 9 a.m. His Excellency Mar John Menachery moved to the Altar followed by the candidates to be vested and the people of God stood in the Pandal.

Amidst the prayers, amidst the singing and chanting, the candidates extended their eager hands to receive the religious habit from His Excellency in great reverence and untold gratitude to the Almighty God. Having responded to God's choice with their promises of covenantal love, they stayed absorbed in the immense love of God which came to own them as His own. They heard in the depths of the heart the eternal lover's Great Grand Promise of Love.: "I will espouse you to me forever, I will espouse you in righteousness and in justice, in love and in mercy, I will espouse you in fidelity" (Hosea 2:19-20).

### **The Realisation of a Promise**

For Sr. Euphrasia, those were ecstatic moments. Each one receives according to the measure one is giving. We are aptly to understand that she had given more and she received more. God can never be out done in love. His generosity is ever boundless. For Sr. Euphrasia, it was not one of the days. It was the Golden Day Mother Mary's promise that Sr. Euphrasia will join the Order of Carmel was being fulfilled. To be vested with the Carmelite habit was the fulfilment of a dream and the realization of the promise. Like Mother Mary, she treasured everything in her heart and waited for further direction from her heavenly spouse and Lord as was manifested through the superiors and rules and regulations.

### **In the Crucible of Suffering**

However she knew that her love for her Lord was to be expressed through the path of humility and suffering and prayerful presence to the Lord. In her personal schedule she

increased the duration of prayer, the number of mortifications and fasting and suffered all her sickness in silence, hidden from the notice of others submitting every detail to the discerning judgement of their mistress Sr. Rosa. Sr. Euphrasia had also to suffer the continuous assaults from the devils, bodily and spiritual on one side; her own scruples and confusion and interior struggles within on another side; Parallel drastic negative comments and judgements and condemnatory statements from companion sisters and other community members. Literally she was being purified in the crucible of suffering. Thus she was really in the process of being identified with her Lord and Master Jesus crucified. We are given to understand that whole heartedly Sr. Euphrasia suffered all this to make reparation for the sins committed by humanity, for the conversion of the sinners and for the salvation of souls and for the increase of vocation to consecrated life.

### **The History of CMC in Trichur Diocese**

The history of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel in the diocese of Trichur shows an increase in number at this juncture. Many candidates came seeking entry into Carmel. The families consecrated to the Sacred Heart and devoted to Mother Mary specially through the recital of family rosary were nurturing ground to vocation to religious life and priesthood. It was at this time the leading persons of Ollur desired an establishment of a house for widows and went to meet Bishop Mar John Menachery to request the same. They had hoped that the elderly widows would give Christian formation to the young girls and also impart education and train them in group living emphasizing character formation and respect for one another. They were not aware of the possibility of founding a convent. However when Bishop suggested a convent instead of a house for the widows, the people from Ollur (belonging to the diocese of Trichur) was only happy to make all necessary preparations. Mar John Menachery promised to bring the sisters from Ambazhakkad to Ollur when the convent building would be ready. People from Ollur was doubly happy to get everything

ready for the same. They contributed their mite by way of financial resources, land resources and man power. They evinced immense co-operation and collaboration with the leadership of Trichur diocese. On an agreeable and significant day St. Teresa of Avila's day, 15<sup>th</sup> October 1898 the foundation stone was placed. And within two years, the building was complete and everything was ready for habitation.

### **St. Mary's Convent, Ollur**

*It was decided that the Ollur convent would be dedicated to Mother Mary of Immaculate Conception and that the blessing of the convent and the final religious commitment of the sisters should take place on the same day. In addition to these, the vestition of those who desired entry to the Congregation of Carmel also was to take place the same day.* The context of a triple celebration gave the feel of an approaching festival to the people of the locality. Wholeheartedly and generously they started working hand in hand planning, designing, building, constructing, and envisioning all the future possibilities. The land itself and the people were waking up to a new reality, to a new level of consciousness, later to wake up the whole world, as Pope Francis himself spells out as the mission of the consecrated Religious. Ofcourse it was the great destiny of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur. The global current of the canonization of St. Euphrasia has woken up the whole world to the relevance of prayer and its deepest mode of mystic consciousness, its therapeutic effect to the illnesses of a frustrated world, mostly its consequent disorientation in goal setting, planning and achieving.

### **Sr. Euphrasia among the Novices**

After the religious vestition it was three years that had to be completed before the final vows. But this time Bishop Mar John Menachery allowed the novices to prepare the date of making the final Religious Profession. The Lord God in His merciful love prepared them ahead of time. Along with the group of novices, but in her own unique spiritual intensity

Sr. Euphrasia also got ready for the perpetual commitment. Of course she had made the final commitment in the depth of her soul much ahead of time - but it had to be received by the official Church through the authorized service of the Religious Congregation and thus be a signature for eternity.

### **From Ambazhakad to Ollur**

The novices and the postulants had to be transported from Ambazhakkad convent to the newly built convent building at Ollur. All the things necessary and available utensils and people were taken in several hired bullock cart, the usual available vehicle in those days. They started quite early in the dark. There was some minor accident for the bullock cart which was carrying Sr. Euphrasia and some companion sisters. Sr. Euphrasia fell to the ground as the bullock cart went upside down. However all the sisters survived without much damage though they lost some vessels and articles. That was another testing they thought. However they continued their journey without much problem.

On the way, they were given reception in the parish church of Irinjalakuda. A real crowd gathered to see the sisters, for they had not seen many sisters. Many were amazed to see them in their religious garb. They looked at the sisters curiously but with a welcome smile. After refreshment, they started their journey again. It was rather late that they reached in the Panamkuttichira Street. Accompanied by a large crowd His Excellency Mar John Menachery welcomed them and gave them a warm reception with celebratory gestures.

His Excellency's vibrant presence and paternal care was like elixir to them. The warm reception by the public also made them feel at home. That night they rested in the building bought for the purpose of the boarding house.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May 1900: St. Euphrasia's Final Profession and The Blessing of St. Mary's Convent**

24<sup>th</sup> May 1900 was a red letter Day in the history of the Diocese of Trichur. Everywhere in the village of Ollur, there

was the climate of a festival. The whole village was decked with whatever decoration material was available. Flowers, bouquets, garlands, flags and what not? The convent chapel and the convent also was completely decorated for the great event. Ollur parish church, dedicated to St. Antony and famous for the miraculous manifestations of St. Raphael the Archangel was filled with people that morning. Sisters also had gathered there. The procession of the novices and the Bishop accompanied by the people were to start from there to the convent chapel. As soon as the procession reached St. Mary's Convent ground, the Bishop officiated the Religious service of the blessing of St. Mary's convent. Then followed the solemn High Mass in St. Mary's convent chapel. The chief celebrant Mar John Menachery concelebrated the solemn High Mass with several other revered priests. It was followed by Vestition Ceremony. Then followed the service of the final religious commitment officiated by Mar John Menachery. There was such celebratory noise outside. But in the depths of the Professed Religious there was the calmness and serenity that results from the Lord's great assurance of love.

Sr. Euphrasia was in a kind of ecstasy in that total, entire, absolute surrender to her Lord and Spouse, Jesus. She repeated that prayer of self-oblation once more. "Lord of my love, Lord of my heart, I offer my whole life as a self-oblation. Accept it. Do with me whatever you will. Accept this my offering for all eternity".

### **The Mystical Spousal Ring**

From the Letters, we come to know of a great mystical event that happened at the time of the Liturgical service of the Religious Profession. This is how she writes about it to Mar John Menachery, after describing Jesus' gift of a spousal ring at the age of 12: "Then at my profession I cannot see the ring on my hand. On the day of profession, (He) removed the ring, and near the Most Rev. Bishop put it again on the finger with great affection" (*Letter*, No. 37).

At this point we are apt to remember the bestowal of the spousal ring by the Lord to several other saints like St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Catherine de Ricci, St. Teresa of Avila at various levels of mystic climb in the mountain of perfection. According to St. Teresa, the real mystic mansions are the fifth, sixth and the seventh in the description of *The Interior Castle* where in the major markings of the prayer journey towards union with God are indicated. In the light of St. Teresa's teaching one is apt to conclude that the first mystical ring with reference to Sr. Euphrasia may indicate the 5<sup>th</sup> Mansion and the sudden encounter with Jesus. Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> event of the spousal ring at the time of the ceremony of the Religious Profession may signal the 6<sup>th</sup> Mansion and the Spiritual Betrothal. A close study of her letters prove that she was a real mystic like St. Teresa of Avila, though leading a hidden life. Hence as we move through the biographical details, it is good to note that we are dealing with the events of a mystic. This particular area is dealt with in detail in the author's book *Mystic Euphrasia* (2014)<sup>7</sup> in Malayalam.

## THE NOVICE MISTRESS

### At St. Mary's Convent, Ollur

After the blessing of St. Mary's convent, Ollur and after all levels of celebrations and liturgical services like vestition and perpetual Religious Commitment several of the sisters were to return to Ambazhakkad. But the authorities decided that Sr. Euphrasia shall stay at Ollur, as a member of the community of St. Mary's Convent. She gladly accepted it for Mother Mary of Immaculate Conception was the special Patroness of the convent. Moreover, Mother Mary was her own mother who came to her help in all difficulties and specially in the attacks of Satan. Hence the very thought of living with Mother Mary in St. Mary's Convent gave her untold gladness. She always remembered Mother Mary's beautiful face and her eyes that reflected such deep merciful love. Sr. Euphrasia had no words to describe the great comforting Mother Mary's very presence imparted to her. She gave the control of her life into the hands of Mother Mary.

### The Resources of her Spirituality

Staying within the limits of her religious existence she was deciding to do all the good she can, to all the people she can and in all the ways she can. And she thought she will achieve this goal through 4 channels: prayer, penance, mortification and silent suffering. This humble virgin wisely guessed that these were the resources of spirituality in her own life. She co-operated with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit continuously in small details as well as in matters of great significance. This incessant docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit was her

greatest discipline against self-will. It was also the spiritually energizing source in the Centre of her life. Hence she was destined, we could say to be successful as a novice mistress. The novice mistress is supposed to give to the novices a formation in the Holy Spirit in obedience to the rules and regulations and in accordance with religious consecration. Her formees felt the unmistakable stamp of the Holy Spirit in her. More over in situations that are doubtful and complicated and needed consultation she had always the assistance of her spiritual director Mar John Menachery, an unerring guide in matters of spiritual discernment of souls. His Excellency was certainly God's special gift to her, in her dark night of the senses and the spirit and in her mystical ascend to the summit of perfection. Sr.Euphrasia sought his help whenever necessary. Till he passed away in 1919, he was also Sr. Euphrasia's regular confessor. Her spiritual life was an open book to him. Hence we are now privileged to have the deep secrets of her spiritual life through her letters written to the spiritual director. God's abundant love and mercy flows to the members of the Congregation by the study of her letters and by the revelation of the secrets of mystical love.

### **Mar John Menachery, Sr. Euphrasia's Spiritual Director**

Mar John Menachery submitted her experiences to theological observation and tested her growth in moral and cardinal virtues and validated her mystical flights. She continued to reveal the state of her soul with all its merits and demerits, with its weaknesses and continuing pitfalls, all the temptations of body, mind and spirit, the attacks caused by the devils and the resultant temptations experienced, inclinations of her own nature, the consolations she received from God, the participation in the passion of Christ, the thirst for the salvation of souls, her fear of incapacity in directing souls – all these were material for discernment between her and her spiritual director. Mar John Menachery had real intuition and discernment to discover the refinement of the Spirit of

Sr. Euphrasia and had spotted the sterling qualities of her spiritual thrust. Hence, though she had added at the end of each letter to kindly tear it off, he never did so. Instead he kept all the letters for future scrutiny by the Congregation and the Church. It was Bishop John Menachery who asked her to write in detail all her spiritual experiences including all the trials and temptations she underwent. It is through those letters that we could have a feel of what God is doing in saintly souls, and how marvellously God provide for their eternal hunger to please God, to do His will, and to save souls. It is also a shock of recognition to understand what the great miracles are, the mystical phenomena God performs in the interior of those souls who want to belong to Him totally and irrevocably. And yet how necessary to have a spiritual Director when the soul is fast moving through God's path way of spiritual climb. Sr. Euphrasia had an awareness of it. Here is a quote from her letter No. 9 dated 1901, September 15. "My Father my heart bends in obedience to whatever you command this unworthy daughter even if it is totally against my will. I have never acted against your command or advice. By the grace of God I am determined to continue in the same way" (p. 76). Again, in the same letter she writes, "My Father, in everything I am a big sinner. I am sure that He has reached the limit of suffering because of my grievous sins. I do humbly request my loving Father's prayer for this unfortunate sinner." (p. 76).

Next section of the letter gives a more positive feel about herself: "Loving Father, I find it easier than before to be aware of the presence of God and more fervour to practice virtues. I feel great joy in obedience and actions contrary to my will. I feel great desire and earnestness than I wrote earlier to receive Holy Communion. I have great strength to suffer anything and bear tribulations through Holy Communion." (p.77). Meanwhile she also had a vision of the suffering Jesus who requested her to console him. This is described in a long section in the same letter.

## **Sr. Euphrasia, an Exemplary Model for Religious**

Sr. Euphrasia was an ordinary sister who had only the preliminary of education. But her companion sisters and the authorities had a sense of her spiritual wealth and mystic bend. She was an exemplary model of religious life, by the order she maintained in her life, by the discipline she observed, by the modesty of her demeanour, by her in-depth humility and burning charity, by her self-dedication to serve others. So, desiring that the next generation also may have these qualities, the authorities put her in the status of a help to novice mistress. She also was entrusted with the charge of infirmarian, as she was extremely compassionate towards the sick and ailing. She found herself in her best in this healing ministry. She was eager to fulfil God's will in these two capacities and to suffer for Him. We find her writing to her Spiritual Director in the letter dated August 01, 1901. "I must suffer something for God's sake, undergo afflictions, I desire very much." (*Letter No. 7, p. 72*).

In response to the intense desire to suffer, God sent her immense suffering, thus to be identified with His Son Jesus Crucified. Various kinds of sickness seem to victimize her daily and when she looked emancipated, her superiors sent her to Ambazhakad convent so that she may have some rest and thus recoup her health. But her sickness only increased. She suffered from pain all over the body, fever and vomiting of blood. Full recovery seemed a distant dream. However when Sr. Euphrasia was better health wise, she was brought back to Ollur.

## **Sr. Euphrasia as Novice Mistress**

*From April 29, 1904, up to 1910, Sr. Euphrasia was appointed Assistant Superior of the convent at Ollur and was in charge of the novices. When officially the novitiate started at Ollur, Sr. Euphrasia was appointed officially as the first novice mistress in 1910. She performed the task with meticulous care aware of the great responsibility placed on her shoulders. Both superiors and the other sisters found in her an exemplary nun who could be a perfect example for the seniors and juniors*

at the same time. Hence the superiors of the congregation seemed to have believed that the novices would receive the right kind of spiritual training and human formation under her. It was almost impossible to discover any loophole in her attitude to the observance of the rules and regulations. So too she was extremely silent on the weaknesses of others even those who lived several years with her could never recollect a moment she spoke ill of the others. The sisters could feel that some divine action was carried out in the depths of her soul. They believed that God's mercy showers surrounded her, since she was always a praying soul.

### **Strict with the Novices**

She had a compassionate heart. But she had a serious face, people used to remark. And whenever novices made any mistake she would correct them firmly. Also, the punishment given was rather in proportion to the mistake committed. She was strict with herself and strict with others especially the novices who were receiving formation under her. She obeyed the rules and she insisted that they should obey the rules, to the very details. She never allowed any laxity in this. She does inform her spiritual director that she does correct them, punish them to bring them under obedience as she is responsible for them as their mistress. She also informs the Bishops that there is an emerging opinion about Sr.Euphrasia that she is very strict with the novices. This she mentions in the letter No.40 dated September 19, 1905 (p.214). She also adds that it is because of her great affection for them and her desire that they should progress in virtue without any delay. She could not tolerate laziness or pride or laxity in the novices. Most of them absorbed the fervour and the zeal they found in their mistress. But there was a small group that was continuously resistant to them. Sr. Euphrasia accepted such suffering as a privilege of her role in their life and as a gift granted by the crucified Lord. However she was never diverting from the right path chalked out for a novice mistress, in such circumstances. The temptation to relax

and thus to gain popularity may be normal in such a context. She passed by them in silence – the criticisms, the accusations and the prejudicial judgments. She did not react. Knowing the mind of Christ, all her responses were responses in love, in hope in faith, in peace that passeth understanding. She wrote to her spiritual director thus:

### **Sr. Euphrasia Seeks Guidance**

A significant trait of mother Euphrasia's formation is that she keeps her heart without any guile so that her intuition about the novices is unerring without any prejudice. She seeks the help of Mother Mary, Jesus, Holy Spirit and also her spiritual director. It is very clear that her support system includes the heavenly agents and her spiritual director. A long citation from letter No. 40 may enlighten us on Mother Euphrasia's mode of formation: (p.214)

“I am writing only because of the compulsion of obedience. Am I not obliged to form the novices to correct the mistakes which I see in them and to make them better, Father, because of this about five months before, noticing the strong influence of a passion specially in four of them, I spoke to each one personally rebuked them and made them do penance, still seeing them do the same mistakes again in their weakness, I earnestly prayed to the Blessed Mother asking her what I should do further and this merciful Mother (told) ‘daughter, don't be sad. You must do your duty. Having repeatedly told them and yet have not corrected themselves, beat all four of them, remove my scapular from them and make them walk in the community for three days. I am your Mother, don't be worried, act with courage, it is to make them good that I am telling you to do like this. If anybody is offended with you for this, daughter bear it without uttering a word. Don't look at anyone, daughter, for the sake of God, fulfil your duty to make your daughters good. You may tell the superior that you intend to do in this way. I am saying this in order that they may not be much offended with you.’ My father, I did everything according to the Blessed

Mother's instruction. On that day they accepted the correction with great humility. Poor children behaved very carefully and cheerfully. One of them began to have a certain disquiet due to the temptation of the devil. (She) was not happy at all, she was not coming to me, and thus the hellish devil began to disturb the poor child very much. I again called her with great love and told her that she should not fall a prey to the machinations of the devil and that I was doing it because of my love for her" (pp 214-215). But the intended effect was not there. There is another step to the training. We will be enlightened if we listen to the following citations from the same letter no. 40:

"One day Father, when I saw her in the community, I felt sad and prayed... the Holy Mother said, daughter if you look at her head, the devil of pride and revenge has placed his hand upon her and is hovering over her. She consents to it. With that, seeing that evil spirit, I was greatly distressed and prayed. Again I called her and admonished her not to listen to the devils counsels, daughter. I feel that he has found occasion to tempt you. Along with that I gave her all good counsel as far as I could. Still there was no effect. The novice began to speak like this to some. However much my mother mistress tries to reconcile with me and show me love, my sorrow and distress will never end till death. Together with this she began to say all sorts of things" (p.215)

### **Prayer and Discernment**

We understand that five months went like that without any real solution to the crisis the novice was going through. There is a third step that Mother Euphrasia takes in her attempt to find a solution: "Last Monday I went before the Blessed Sacrament and prayed what I should do to give her peace my Redeemer, I don't find any way, etc. with great sorrow several times. Finally the loving Saviour (said), my daughter, why are you so sad, didn't you do all your duty, be at peace. Again (I prayed), my heavenly Spouse, you yourself show me a way. I am greatly confused, I don't find any way. (The Lord said)

My loving spouse, the worst enemy that cause pride is dwelling in her. Only through your humility, my dear spouse, he will run away instantly with a cry. She will at once accept her fault and behave well in the future. At once she will fall at your feet and beg pardon. I prayed to tell me also about the act of humility I should do. ‘Tomorrow itself gather all the novices and let this accused novice be made to sit on a chair in the middle, kneel at her feet and kissing her feet as to forgiveness, saying thus... my loving sister! My daughter! I have not done anything to make you sad. Yet without obeying my superiors and without accepting their corrections humbly and feeling anger and revenge against them and complaining about the same, because of the power of my pride I committed many faults and I offend my good God and the persons given to be in His place. A sinner that I am, I have done wrong in every way. You have no mistake. I have taken over everything and stand accused. Please forgive all my mistakes for God’s sake and Holy Mother’s sake. From now on I shall lead the life of a good religious in humility and in obedience to the superiors; telling this kissing her feet you may get up and go, saying so He gave me blessing!’ (pp 215-216)

### **Follow up and Procedural Steps**

*It is important to find out the novice’s response once the Mother Mistress followed the directions of the Lord Jesus, the Master of souls.* It is better to get the exact details from Mother Euphrasia’s letter: “Loving father, I did all this to her in a private circle of novices. Then itself I saw Satan roaring, running away saying, I cannot stand here, I cannot bear this. When I came after receiving Holy Communion this person in unbearable sorrow fell at my feet and acknowledged her mistake and told me clearly all her temptations like a little child. ‘It was Satan who tempted me. I feel as something has gone away from my head. And said, I have nothing from here on’. Now father, she is a good girl walking around in joy and satisfaction... It is surprising to hear her speak: ‘Mother Mistress, please tell me about my mistakes. I really feel bad when I remember the time

and actions of your taking over the burden of my fault, didn't (I) fall into such a great deception!' We will feel really sad if we listen to her" (pp 216-217)

This particular event signals the various procedural steps one has to take in the formation period to form the formees.

1. Prayerful observation
2. Necessary corrections
3. Seeking the help of Mary in intercession and proceeding accordingly
4. Seeking further help in prayer near the Eucharistic Lord and acting accordingly
5. Result – moving to final solution – further accompaniment by the mistress

Support-System of the mistress and friends leading to self-revelation and intimacy with the Lord.

The continuation of the narration of the event of the novice is extremely significant for all people in charge of formation. The novice said: "It was Satan who tempted me. I feel as if something has gone away from my head. I have nothing from here on." Both the formator and the formee are reaching a moment of discernment.

Further comments from Mother Euphrasia is a beacon light in the progressive path of the formation: "Now father, she is a good girl walking around in joy and satisfaction. I don't have any sadness or anxiety about any of the novices by the grace of God. I am very happy. By the help of Holy Mother, the above said person, after going through these temptations is very earnest in practicing virtues and walking around in faith and fervour. It is surprising to hear her speak. 'Mother Mistress, please tell me about my mistakes. I really feel bad when I remember the time and action of your taking over the burden of my fault, didn't I fall into such a great deception!' (p.216)

Here we find the moment of deliverance is followed by the moment of discernment. And both deliverance and discernment enables the troubled person to walk and proceed in the path of virtues, the path chalked out by God for all willing souls. Such moments are followed by the mistress's compassionate understanding. The mistress becomes really a compassionate, understanding good shepherd and also a supportive friend. Sr. Euphrasia adds: "We will feel really sad (p.217) if we listen to her. Daughter, it is not to you that I did, but to him who disturbed you. Don't be sad, we have to shame him again. Didn't I finish it all without informing anyone. Nothing more, don't recollect anything more, saying this made her feel at ease. During these five months I have seen Satan very clearly four times near this person. At that time I understood (her) thinking evil thoughts. Now all is over completely." (P. 216f)

Mother Euphrasia wanted her novices to climb the ladder of perfection definitely and quickly. That was why she used the strict mode of correction, punishment and hopefully the resultant renewal. The particular case we mentioned above was a serious exemption or a possible aberration. However, God's intervention revealed that it was a case of satanic affliction. And deliverance was to be sought through the special intervention of [Mother Mary and Jesus Himself and through the great act of humility on the part of the novice mistress herself which Jesus Himself suggested. Moreover, we are given to understand that Mother Euphrasia possessed the various charisms of the Holy Spirit like word of knowledge, word of wisdom, healing, power of deliverance etc. which came to support her in the direction of the novices and in her dealings with the people of God.

### **The Formator Herself in the formation of the Sp. Director**

It is also very important to know that Mother Euphrasia herself submitted to such a continuing formation under her spiritual director, Mar John Menachery. She writes: "I pray, loving father to tell me my mistakes and correct me. I do not

remember even regretting or getting depressed on correction. Very happy. I am saying the truth from my heart to my Father” (*Letters*, No. 3 dated March 01, 1901, P 62).

Mother Euphrasia believed that her daughters also should walk the way of obedience, of humility, of self-oblation. It was only by constant practice that she herself could attain the virtue of obedience, surrender to Jesus and the virtue of humility. There was an attempt to form the novices in the intense love of God through the practice of the cardinal virtues and the moral virtues. As she did not want to live just an ordinary life in the convent, but a life of perfect love, so too she desired her formees should live. Hence all these emphases on the practice of the various virtues the heavenly Bridegroom wants to see in his chosen bride-soul.

### **The Accent on Holiness in the Formator**

Mother Euphrasia believed that a perfect tongue’ indicates holiness of life. Hence she suggested several cautions in the use of tongue:

1. When a new Superior / authority takes charge
2. When we take up another’s post
3. When we go to another community and when other community members come to our house
4. When we are angry or upset or disturbed <sup>8</sup>

This of course reminds us of the fulfilment and blossoming of religious life according to Psalm!: (1:1-4)

“Happy are those

Who do not follow the advice of the wicked

Or take the path that sinners tread

Or sit in the seat of the scoffers;

But their delight is in the law of the Lord,

And on His law they meditate day and night

They are like trees

Planted by streams of water,  
Which yield their fruit in its season,  
And their leaves do not wither.”

Here is a picture of the righteous people who do not speak empty words and who do not listen to empty conversations – they live on the word of God, and abide in the Lord and the word of God abide in them. Mother Euphrasia was always aware of forming the novices according to the word of God. Soon after officially novitiate was established, the documents of CMC Nirmala Province Trichur makes it clear that there was special respect given to the religious personality of Mother Euphrasia that a pretty long time she was entrusted with the task of the novice mistress.

After the establishment of St. Mary’s convent, Ollur, since the number of novices increased to a large extend, by the order of Mar John Menachery a novice mistress was appointed at Ollur. The candidates who wanted to join the convent had their schooling residing in St. Mary’s Convent boarding at Ollur. Though several sisters were appointed in this capacity, Sr.Euphrasia remained in this office for several (13) years. In her hands the novices and the newly professed sisters grew in the spirit of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel as devoted to Christ in their vowed life. This can never be forgotten as it is specially placed on record.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Steward and the Shepherd**

*The steward like nurturing and the shepherd like caring was a special hall mark of Mother Euphrasia.* She knew every one of the candidates, the novices and the juniors with their specific family back ground and their talents and tastes. She enquired after every detail of their life, big and small, with great interest. It was not easy for them to hide anything from their mistress, because they were affectionately bonded to her. Particularly in times of sickness she poured forth her love and attention on them. She had a special capacity to feel the burden of their

work and their exhaustion. One of the sisters who were lucky to receive her attention like this, an old Mother Katherena bears testimony to her.

“It was in the year 1911 – that a pond was being dug in St. Mary’s Compound. A specific group of labourers would dig the place and mix the soil and go. We the novices will carry the soil towards the shore of the pond and put the soil at the bottom of the convent trees. For one hour we were very busy doing it and in a hurry. Mother Euphrasia also will accompany us to the pond and stay there reciting the rosary as we shift the soil. She did not have sufficient health to work. She was very sickly at that time. The whole time she was praying that we may not get sick. After the work at the pond, she will take us to the kitchen to give us hot coffee and cooked tapioca or something else. She was such a mother mistress of tender concern and selflessness who accompanied us all the way in spite of her failing health. Her concern for the novices was very steady in all kinds of trials they had to face in their formation period.

### **The Good Shepherd that goes in search of the wounded sheep**

It happened that the community’s opinion about a novice was not very positive because of certain major defects in her character. Knowing the mind of the community, the Bishop decided to transfer her to Ambazhakkad from Ollur. On this occasion Mother Euphrasia who was her novice mistress made the following request to the Bishop. “Dear respected Father! Is it your wish that the daughter of Pulikken Pavunny Chettan, the novice is to be sent to Ambazhakkad itself. I am not against that. Yet I am saying all that I know, all that is true. The opinion of the community is all black except one. This information has been written in the chronicles of Ollur convent. I am trying best that this can be written otherwise by the good life of the child. The child is going about with great care. I have great sorrow to send her in this situation. The opinion which will be polled next time could be good and then noted in the chronicles

by the grace of God and after that she could be sent anywhere. I have no regrets. Why! Because if this child comes to some position in the Ollur Convent and if the Bishop comes to see the chronicles by chance, this child will be considered at fault if that way it is written. Then it may be questioned! This will be sad indeed. If the second opinion poll is better, those who see will understand that it is because of the weaknesses of human beings only, and just like children only they would think” (*Letters* No. 59, pp 286-287; dated 22<sup>nd</sup> may 1906)

Here Mother Euphrasia is arguing like a lawyer. Her maternal heart becomes eloquent near His Excellency. Coming to know this event who will say that she was a real hard Master! There was the balance between a compassionate mother’s heart and the strictness associated with a good ascetic novice mistress. This was not an isolated event. The letters as well as witnesses are a proof to this particular trait in Mother Euphrasia’s nature.

### **Formation on the path of Virtue, Prayer and Holiness**

There was a kind of consensus on the fact that Mother Euphrasia’s formation helped the daughters of Mother of Carmel to grow in holiness and in the necessary virtues. Particularly it was very obvious that Bishop Mar John Menachery had unshakable trust in the holiness of Mother Euphrasia and in the efficiency of the sister’s formation she was imparting to the novices and the juniors. Blessed Mariam Thressia, later the founder of the Holy Family Congregation was sent to Mother Euphrasia as a candidate for discernment and training. She stayed two months at St. Mary’s convent Ollur under Mother Euphrasia’s supervision so to say. However, the discernment of both proved that her call was somewhere else and their paths diverged. They separated as friends, but with the promise of prayerful regards. God is so multifarious in His friends and saints.

Mother Euphrasia helped the novices in various ways to grow in virtue. As she was the first novice mistress in Nirmala Province, Trichur, she had to be attentive to many things. She

tried to teach the novices small prayers and ejaculations. She also taught them how to repeat certain ejaculations and acquire a certain prayerful atmosphere in life. She helped them by writing certain prayers and aspirations for them in her own handwriting. Mother Euphrasia helped them increase their desire to see the Holy Face of God by requesting them to pray incessantly certain prayers in the following manner: “O my Loving Lord, when can I see that Holy face more shining than the sun and those most beautiful eyes setting the heart ablaze with love by a single glance”.

“My Redeemer, give me also a share of your passion  
(*Aspirations, 5*)<sup>9</sup>

“O! Holy Trinity, my soul is always thirsting with desire to see and enjoy you in heaven with all the saints in heaven’  
(*Aspirations, 13*)

“My God! Fulfil in me your holy will perfectly till death”  
(*Aspirations, 25*)

All these practices were only the supplementary spiritual exercises of the main progress in spirituality which was the union with God to be attained at any cost. In this spiritual journey the main stay was the example of the Mother Mistress. Everyone who came into contact with Mother Euphrasia experienced that her main concentration was God. Everything else seemed ‘refuse’ in comparison with God. On one side was the ascend on the ladder of mystical prayer, like the ‘encounter with Christ’, the spiritual betrothal’ and the ‘mystical marriage’ on another side the parallel purification which St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila mention like the ‘dark night of the senses’ and the ‘dark night of the spirit’ and similar other trials allowed by God.

And yet Sr. Euphrasia, as novice mistress took care to see to the basic details of prayer life in training the sisters.

1. Do everything for God, for Jesus
2. Always be in the presence of God whether you are washing

dishes, or cleaning the rooms or washing clothes, or arranging flowers or watering the garden or eating. She instructed the novices to do it for the glory of God

3. Purify every action through a word of prayer or surrender to Jesus
4. Do everything for Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus
5. Keep the conscience clear by acknowledging the mistakes and by washing of sinfulness in life, through confession, repentance and the decision not to commit sin again.

### **Charity for all**

In Mother Euphrasia's training, special emphasis was given on love for one another. St John writes in his First Epistle: "God is love and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (4:16). In the life of Mother Euphrasia this is seen very clearly, Mother loved all. Mother practised forgiving love in its fullness. She taught her novices the same. With regard to charity, mother Euphrasia's life was her message. Hence her training was very effective.

Even in the smallest matter, the novices were instructed not to cause any problem or difficulty or pain to others. Always 'the other' had to precede one's own self in all matters, in regard and in concern. She trained her novices accordingly after instructing them first. Mother Euphrasia also made it a practice between those novices who had some difficulty amongst them that the one who experienced difficulty was supposed to kiss the feet of the other and ask forgiveness. And that was to be done before going to sleep. As mother mistress they had to convince her that they had reconciled between them. She never allowed them to go to sleep with a heavy heart, without asking forgiveness and without being forgiven. Most sisters did not have any problem in responding to her because she would first practice herself the same before preaching or instructing.

Praise God!

## AS MOTHER SUPERIOR

**O**n April 1913 soon after her posting as novice mistress, Mother Euphrasia was appointed superior of the convent at Ollur. For that humble soul all such titles were oppressive and the exercise of her duty as Superior itself was a kind of martyrdom. She had to struggle hard to adjust to the role of the superior and to merge with its different channels of activities. Who knows the innermost desire of such a soul? It is clear from what she writes to her spiritual director at that time:

“My loving father, let me tell you the truth. If only I could live in a forest or hill I could have lived a hidden unknown life. I am feeling really sad when I think of Mother Mary and Jesus! How they played this trick with me. Father, how many other souls who are pleasing to God are existing here?”

Though she raised such a lamentation, finally she surrendered everything to the will of God. That soul was too delicate to resist God’s will, or to ride over it or even to desire differently. Hence she went forward in the role of the superior discerning and fulfilling the Holy will of God for herself and her community.

### **Shouldering the Responsibility**

Mother Euphrasia loved her sisters in the community. Yet she was not reluctant to correct them. She was a beautiful example to all her sisters in the observance of the religions rules and regulations. She had nothing to do with a life of laxity. She seemed to be informed of all the cunning plots, for pleasurable life, prepared by the agents of darkness. Right from the younger days she knew the strategies of spiritual warfare.

She had the conviction that one is supposed to be responsible in every matter entrusted to a person's care.

There is an event narrated by Sr. Sabeena which indicate her sense of responsibility with regard to the novices:

“It was somewhat the initial stages of our novitiate days. I was in charge of the sacristy. While arranging flowers near the Altar one flower vase fell from my hand and broke. When I reported the same to my novice mistress she just cautioned me to be careful in the future. The next day I committed another mistake. It was time for the benediction after Holy Mass. I forgot to get the incense. Though I rushed to get the incense ready it was delayed. I committed another mistake the same day. After sweeping the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, I emptied the dust pan through the window of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor itself. That was almost the climax of the mistakes and I felt that it was also indicative of my carelessness and laxity. Mother Euphrasia corrected me firmly in a few words. ‘The novice is very careless without real earnestness in anything. Everyday several mistakes one after another. And no embarrassment or repentance about the same.’ I welcomed wholeheartedly all the punishments she gave. I remember all those events, but with no regrets. As days pass by I am daily coming to the conclusion that she did all those things because of her religious fervour and in great maternal love and care for us.”

### **Entrusting everything to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Mother Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had intense devotion to the Sacred Heart. That was why she chose her second name as ‘of the Sacred Heart.’ She rejoiced in the fact that she belonged to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She also desired to be inflamed by the furnace of divine love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She also entrusted the government of the convent to the Sacred Heart through a beautiful gesture of opening up the wall of the central hall and placing a statue of the Sacred Heart in the niche of the wall and consecrating it. Reigning over the whole convent and the attached museum and the whole

complex, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the King of Kings and the ruler of the destinies of people who come there to make their prayer requests and to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and to venerate His saints. St. Euphrasia who lived in this convent almost 48 years spreading the fragrance of holiness continues to be vibrant through the miracles and healings, He does by her intercession. People used to flock requesting the intercession while she was alive. After her death also it continues in larger numbers. Now after her canonization there is no limit to the flow of the people who come seeking healing and comfort through her intercession. Once Mother Euphrasia gave a privileged place to the Sacred Heart in the central Hall of the building like the most sacred place in her own heart, she felt peaceful and calm. She says how she felt light as if Jesus himself had taken over the burden of superior ship. It was great comfort to feel so. She began her day at the foot of the Sacred Heart Statue. She ended her day also at His feet. We understand from her sharing that every morning she would tell Him every detail of the events that had to happen that day and place those things in His Heart so that He may look after everything. Every evening, while it is deep into the night she will gratefully recount the tasks she had to perform, how He assisted and directed everything, how certain things He Himself performed. While staying there gazing at the Presence of the Sacred Heart she never felt the passage of time. She had felt how the Sacred Heart of Jesus took up the whole responsibility, performed all the necessary tasks. There was no limit to the time she spent near the statue of the Sacred Heart. It was not a mere statue, rather it was a presence. As years passed by St. Euphrasia's relation with the Sacred Heart of Jesus grew richer and deeper!

### **Humiliation for the Cause of the Sacred Heart**

After the Consecration of the Sacred Heart without much delay the Bishop had come for a visit. He was a bit anxious to see that the wall (which was not so strong) had been opened up to place the Statue. He scolded her and corrected her when the

whole community was present. Without any justification she knelt down and kissed the floor acknowledging the mistake and accepting the correction. The sisters were amazed at her humility and felt how she practised what she preached. With regard to Mother Euphrasia, she was actually desiring and thirsting for such occasions to practice humility and abase herself before others. Only those who are walking the path of sanctity can understand these experiences in the light of God. For the enemies of the cross this is foolishness. But to the lovers of Cross this is wisdom and power of God. As Mother Euphrasia was walking the path of sanctity, acceptance of such humiliations seemed sensible and fitting the spouse of the crucified Christ.

This devotion to the Sacred Heart was not simply an ordinary devotion. It had reached the marrow of her bones and overwhelmed the whole complex of her life. This furnace of love that Jesus was, had almost devoured her by the divine flame and spread to whoever came in contact with her. This love for the Sacred Heart moved her whole being like a dynamic force that others also were caught up in its magnetic circle and gravitated to the merciful Heart of Jesus who embraces the whole of humanity in great compassion as it was revealed to St. Margret Mary, the apostle of the Sacred Heart.

### **The Miraculous Statue**

A kitchen maid who stayed in Ollur St. Mary's Convent 24 years, along with Mother Euphrasia, bears testimony to Mother Euphrasia's love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His significant response to it. She says, "Mother was in the sick room. It was near the hall where the Sacred Heart statue was placed. I was supposed to be in the sick room along with Mother a helper. I have often noticed that when all sisters have gone to sleep, she will get up and go to the statue of the Sacred Heart and pray there pretty long time. One day she was praying as usual. It must have been past 11 O' clock in the night. Though I lay down I did not sleep. Mother suddenly came and called me.

She showed me how the Sacred Heart statue was shining bright in the size of a Monstrance. In the Mother of Carmel picture on the opposite side also this kind of difference was manifested. This sight stayed there for a long time. Such things often happened in her life.

Whenever we feel bonded to a person's heart it means we are related to the person. So too Mother Euphrasia's devotion to the Sacred Heart indicated great intimacy in relationship with Jesus. Hence her intervention with regard to difficulties in matters of religious vocation had great power. And her suggestions to surmount the obstacles were valid and in accordance with right discernment.

### **The Rosary of the Sacred Heart**

It is very revelatory to listen to the experience of a young candidate who wanted to join our sisterhood and was trying to help us in the daily chores of the convent. Because of some accident at home she could not join the convent that year. She was finding it hard and in great pain because of it. Because Mother Euphrasia was sick at that time the girl was supposed to sleep in her room that night. Because her dream did not materialize she used to sit on the mat and weep for a long time. Mother Euphrasia noticed it. *Mother comforted her asking her to recite every day one Rosary of the Sacred Heart.* When she started reciting it, she became more peaceful. Later after joining the convent, having finished her novitiate, she was not allowed to take the vows for some reason. Later they were thinking of sending her away. By the time she was experiencing this block to proceed, Mother Euphrasia had passed away. In her sadness she took a photo of St. Euphrasia in hand and looking at it said, "Mother, haven't I asked you whether I have vocation. Mother, you told me that I have vocation. Why mother, they are preparing to send me away. Mother, you know that I don't have a mother at home." Praying and saying like this she went on weeping for a long time. And then she fell asleep. Suddenly Mother Euphrasia appeared before her with smile on her face. She also said "Why

did you stop the Rosary to the Sacred Heart. You should never stop it. You will not go from the Congregation. If the authorities send you away they will call you again.” Suddenly she opened her eyes; she did not see any one. But she received much comfort and joy and strength of mind. Later she experienced several difficulties. But Mother Euphrasia’s every word was fulfilled. Today she resides in her convent with real joy! Moreover she never stopped the *Rosary to the Sacred Heart*.

### **The Steward and the Shepherd - Leadership**

Mother attended to the growth of their physique as well as the progress of the spirit. It was a time of great poverty, due to the World War. She tried her best to give her daughters nourishing food as much as possible. In case they received some eatable very bountifully Mother Euphrasia was exuberantly happy to serve it in the dining and make them rejoice. So the saying went, “if Mother Euphrasia is the eldest in the convent, then we are sure to get something to enjoy.” (The eldest has a special role in the community). So too her capacity to look after sick people and really care for them was noticed by everyone. Some sisters used to ask for Sr. Euphrasia’s presence near their deathbed. Her praying presence and healing touch was desired by many sick sisters who were suffering very much.

Her sanctity was manifest specially in the fact that though extremely strict with herself she was very compassionate towards others. She was observant of the fact that quite often in those days sisters had heavy burden of responsibility to shoulder and at the same time less nutritious food system. She was weighed down by sorrow for this reason and wanted to provide ‘soup’ for the community. She herself did not know how it could happen when it was difficult to provide even three meals a day. But God Himself who is ‘Provider’ and in whom Mother Euphrasia trusted came to her help and she could do it and support the sisters!

### **At the Service of Her Sisters**

To conclude, Mother Euphrasia though young showed the wisdom of experience and insight. She was compassionate, she was understanding, she was one among her sisters and shouldered their burden. She earned for them. In other words she was a good shepherd who looked after her sheep well and protected them from all dangers and gave them good shelter and food! Above all she served them spiritual food! And spiritual guidance! God bless us!

## **THE CATAclySMIC FAMILY EVENTS**

**D**uring this period drastic changes were happening to the Cherpukaran family. From the pinnacle of glory of fame, name and money the family slopped with defame, loss of dignity, wealth and prestige. Rosa had left home for the convent in the most glorious period of the family. Some more years it continued. But when Rosa had reached Ollur and started to lead her religious life as a professed nun things had changed at home, especially from 1906. At that time, the epidemics spread and the whole village was suffering from poverty, joblessness, loss of man power. With that Rosa's family really collapsed unimaginably.

### **The Sudden Collapse of the Family**

Sr. Euphrasia came to know that some of her brothers had taken also to the wrong ways of life. Loss of money did not shake Sr. Euphrasia. But the wrong direction in life accepted by her brothers really was heart rending. To the one affectionate brother Kakku who used to visit her, sister Euphrasia used to repeat, "Even if we lose wealth, don't lose in virtues". Sister Euphrasia also had the conviction that a family needs to have only what is necessary for the members to live and meet the challenges of life. She never desired excess of wealth, or name or fame! Yet these drastic changes which bordered on the defamation of the family prestige really brought much sorrow into her life.

### **Parallels between the Family of St. Eupharasia and St. Rose of Lima**

Sister Euphrasia also recollected how God was allowing

certain parallels between Rosa's family and St. Rosa of Lima's family. Sister Euphrasia remembered how her own mother used to narrate the wonderful story of St. Rose of Lima. It was with great fascination that she used to listen to her mother's Live-story telling of various saints, specially of her patron saint. Day after day she realized that her home was really slopping to nothing, unable even to have a history of its own. Her own brothers had to seek shelter in their wives' home and one of them had even become immoral. That was the limit of it. Yet Euphrasia did not get lost there. Though she suffered a lot on account of this degeneration of the family, she transformed all those sufferings into beauty and grace by offering those as oblation to the Lord God. She believed that the sufferings that come upon our lives are gold mines for us. Accept those in the love of God and offer it to Him gladly and they turn into untold glory. She decided to drink the bitter chalice to the dregs, because it is the loving Hands of Jesus that stretches it to her. She prayed for more suffering, and for more power of endurance for herself and for her own people who had to face these changes. Moreover when there was a change to reveal the plight of the present family, she will do so to attain more humility.

### **The Passing away of the Beloved Parents**

Amidst all this her beloved father passed away in 1913. After 10 years her mother also passed away. She had such a deep relationship with her mother, that the departure final was a very painful thing. But the Lord Jesus seems to have given her a special grace at the time of her mother's final departure; that was to participate in that experience of the final good bye. When another sister reports to her about her own mother's death (in those days the sisters were not allowed to go home for any such events), she responded telling that she already knows about it. It seems she was already endowed with the word of knowledge, a charismatic gift. Several other charisms like bi-location, word of wisdom, healing and prophecy were manifested in her life. (cf. *The spirit filled virgin*, 68)<sup>10</sup>

There was another evidence for the ‘word of knowledge’ in the report of a relative. “One day morning my mother was talking to Euphrasiamma in the convent ground. My mother told Sr.Euphrasia, that next she is going to visit Sr. Euphrasia’s mother. Sr. Euphrasia’s response to my mother was shocking! She said, “my mother has already passed away. If you want to see her alive, you don’t have to go!” My mother was surprised also. But she couldn’t believe. Immediately she too took the direction to Sr. Euphrasia’s home. She had a shock of her life. What Sr.Euphrasia had said was correct. Exactly around the time Euphrasia mentioned, her mother had passed away. Nobody had informed mother Euphrasia of the same.”

### **An Understanding Counsellor**

In the dark days of the family events. Sr.Euphrasia was a messenger of God and a therapeutic counsellor. First of all she gave a positive up building message to the brother. What is important is spiritual wealth. “Even if worldly wealth is lost see that we don’t lack in virtues”, that was her constant advice to her brothers who were suffering from poverty. Also she used to instruct them to recite certain prayers and do certain penance, a system of purification of life and progressive journey through prayer. In the parlour she never engaged in worldly conversation. She was a nun of few words, but those contained gems of thought. Those are collected and published in a small booklet “Gems of thought and aspirations” St. Euphrasia.

### **A Nun of Great Reservation**

St. Euphrasia spoke very little and reserved for herself much of the sufferings at home. If ever she spoke about poverty at home, it was simply to humiliate herself before others, because her father was a land lord and the family reputation gave her certain status among people. So, deliberately for the sake of her love for Jesus she chose less status and less dignity. This shows the strength of her character and the solidity of her spiritual life.

## **Revelation of Deeper Sufferings**

It is through her relative Sr. Kasmir CMC, we really came to know more about the agonies the family underwent. She was Sr. Euphrasia's niece. She narrates: "The style of life of my two uncles (ie., Sr. Euphrasia's brothers) caused a lot of restlessness in our families. One person left his place and went to some unknown area. The other got involved in an undesirable love-affair. With all these pain in his heart my father, (her brother) ran to the convent door seeking solace from Sr. Euphrasia. That was his usual way! Whatever happened, he must tell his sister, then he will get some consolation, he used to say. Also after sharing he would feel very light as if the heavy burden rolled away. On this occasion also aunty instructed him to recite certain prayers and penances. The family was supposed to pray together penitentially raising the hands for 90 days. They were also to abstain from meat and fish and were supposed to observe certain disciplines. This advice was very fruitful. The family observed all her directions and thanks be to God, the two uncles returned to God and accepted the right direction. In his needs and difficulties my father used to approach Mother Euphrasia with such confidence and also was eager to perform everything according to her instructions. Every time he meets her she will teach some new prayers and suggest new disciplines. When I was staying in the boarding attached to St. Mary's convent, Ollur, she used to call me and instruct me saying, "You must recite the Rosary with devotion. Never leave out your prayers."

## **The Vision of Faith**

There are very many details to show that Sr. Euphrasia was all along a woman of Faith, a woman of unwavering hope, a woman of steadfast love and charity. The Cardinal virtues of faith, hope, charity made her shine always like the morning star whose mystical spouse was Jesus, "The Bright Morning Star," (Rev. 22: 16). Considering Jesus, all through her life, and particularly in the darkening days of the collapse of the

family wealth and prestige, one is apt to remember the sterling quality of her character and the mystical flight of her spirit in the words of the prophet:

“Like the morning star among the clouds,  
Like the full moon at the festal season,  
Like the sun shining on the temple of the most high,  
Like the rainbow gleaming in splendid clouds;  
Like roses in the days of first fruits,  
Like lilies by a spring of water  
Like a green shoot of Lebanon on a summer day;  
Like fire and incense in the censer  
Like a vessel of hammered gold  
Studded with all kinds of precious stones,  
Like an olive tree laden with fruit,  
And like a cypress towering in the clouds” (Sirach 50:6-10)

### **St. Euphrasia’s Intercession for families**

St. Euphrasia shone bright and bore fruit in the days of the bitterest trials. So was she crowned with glory by the Lord God Almighty who governs all His creation and the Mighty Universe and raises his saints and put them like lamp on the mountain top to shed light on the path of the travellers in their homeward journey. St. Euphrasia is thus a beacon of light who is tested like Job in their personal trials and familial catastrophes. God preserves them against the storm of cataclysmic events and places them on the rocky foundation of Faith. St. Euphrasia intercedes specially for the depressed members of the collapsing families and helps them to place their feet on the firm foundation of trusting faith, believing faith, loving faith. With this prayer entrusting the families to the care of the Lord we close this chapter! Let this prayer touch you and your neighbour and their neighbours and effect a local, national, global vibrations as we stay, walk, celebrate, pray in faith. God bless us and our homes!

## SPECIAL DEVOTIONS

**W**hen St. Euphrasia's term as superior was over, she was transferred on April 14, 1916 to the Carmelite Convent, at Manalur. But she had to come back to Ollur convent on October 29<sup>th</sup> after staying more than 6 months at Manalur. She was already exhausted and tired by her various sicknesses, some of them already chronic. Also she experienced partial paralysis in certain areas of the body. Already being given to sickness the climate of Manalur was not at all conducive to her health. The pain in the leg increased drastically. Above all these her thigh bone was fractured as a result of a fall. Hence even before getting old she needed the help of a support rod to walk. That support rod which she used from that time to the final departure to her eternal home helped many people during her life and after her death to lessen their pain and to heal them totally of pain. It is still in the St. Euphrasia Museum as an instrument of healing. Those who lived with Mother Euphrasia report that she used to ask sick people ailing in their leg with sharp pain to walk with her rod a few yards, consequent to which many sisters used to get healing and great comfort and consolation

### **Prayer, the Axis of her life**

Prayer was the axis of her life. Not only that she spends her time in long hours of prayer whenever possible, but also like the true daughter of Chavara, she was a contemplative in action. She is an exemplary model for the CMC watchword: "Remain united to me in Contemplation, and Consecrated to Me in action." This is a paraphrase of St. John Chapter 15, especially of verses 4-5: "Abide in Me as I abide in you" (Jn: 15:4); "Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit" (Jn: 15:5).

Also verse seven indicates the qualification for bearing much fruit as a result of the Lord's response: "If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done to you." (Jn: 15:7). What a magnificent promise which only a God could make. And the prerogative is abiding by His Word; which is a command and an imperative. It includes the atmosphere and the content of the 'Great Commandment' and the new commandment which St. Euphrasia was ever alert to observe and to remind others to obey, specially sisters under her care.

According to the direction of St. Chavara, she made every action also a prayer: "Whether you are opening or closing a door, whether you are standing or walking or sitting, or cleaning or reciting prayers or in a group, you must be praying." (cf. *Hiding to Glory*, P. 76).<sup>11</sup>

### **A Prayer Tent inside the Chapel**

St. Euphrasia had found a favoured place in the front of the right side wing of the convent chapel, where hidden from the sight of the sisters and of the public she could view with undiverted gaze the Tabernacle, the Altar, and Mother Mary's big statue installed aloft in the Sanctuary, a sign of dedication. Alternatively she used to fix her gaze on Jesus in the Tabernacle and Mother Mary far above. This was a constant sight: whenever she was free she would without loitering around, without getting involved in empty chit chat, she would hasten to the chapel and station herself in that spot of her predilection, fix her gaze at the Lord, enter into colloquy with Him, and after a time move her gaze to Mother Mary and be taught by her! This was her divine corner, so to say, in the Temple of Ezekiel's vision where the living waters was flowing, first like a spring, then like a river that cannot be crossed, finally like a torrential flow into the sea. There also, when Sr. Euphrasia had fixed her gaze on the Lord the river of life was flowing engulfing herself and others who were eager to pray in the waters of life. The Living Bread in the Eucharist also manifested Himself to St. Euphrasia several times, from the Tabernacle, and sometimes soon after

communion while in her room according to the direction of Mary. All this we gather from the Letters, St. Euphrasia wrote to her spiritual Director Mar John Menachery.

She was termed by the people in the locality who came to request her prayer, “That pious praying mother who sit always in the corner of the chapel.” So, often she was called by the public “The Praying Mother.”

### **Devotion to the Eucharist**

a) **The Guardian of the Tabernacle:** Because St. Euphrasia was constantly found waiting on the Lord, or conversing with Him or interceding for others near the Tabernacle in the chosen corner, people called her ‘the Guardian of the Tabernacle.’ We do believe and understand Jesus is our Saviour, He is our Fortress and our Refuge from enemies. So, Saint Clare took the Monstrance and faced the enemies who came to destroy the convent chapel and the sisters. It was a great miracle that happened at that time in the history of the Church and we are amazed how the Lord God is the guardian and protector and saviour and Lord of the Virgins. But because He is a loving Heavenly Spouse, we understand that He appreciates the Virginal brides who guard the Tabernacle and the sanctuary in the middle of the night and like the “Morning Watches.” So sat St. Euphrasia quite still, immersed in the living flame of love, in the middle of the night, and like the watches waiting for the morning! She was really the guardian of the Tabernacle and many devoted men and women and children and students used to come to her to pour out their troubles and request her prayer. She used to nod in consent to all of them and did earnestly bring their petition to the heart of the Lord. Invariably most of the prayers were granted. They used to come to thank her for the intercession she made. They were sure that she had real influence on Jesus and Mary because of her sanctity.

b) **The Mobile Tabernacle:** the sisters in the community at Ollur used to name her thus among themselves, because

her demeanour explicitly expressed that she was ever conscious of the Indwelling Presence of the Lord, also often in the joy of incessantly conversing with Him. All may not have accepted the fact with joy, but all the same all felt the impact, the friends and the enemies if any. God does not allow a “flattery” position for His saints. They also are scourged and condemned and mocked at on the way to Calvary exactly as their crucified Spouse was. So too St. Euphrasia also had been mocked at and ridiculed by some in the community as occasion allowed. But her fame spread among the people of God, specially at Ollur, as the ‘Praying Nun.’

There are several letters which indicate her closeness to the Eucharistic Lord. Sometimes Jesus speaks to her from the Tabernacle, sometimes He manifests Himself to her soon after Holy Communion. May be it is good for us to listen to the feel of others about St. Euphrasia when she was living. Mother Sabina reports;

“Constantly day and night she prayed. Only Mother could do that. She was always praying in the church except for the time she had to spend for community activities and other necessities of life. When she prayed she gazed at the Tabernacle and Bl. Mother’s face. Nothing could distract her from her concentration and the gaze. When I happened to get up during the night for some reason, I saw mother either in the porch or in the corridor walking or reciting the Rosary. She taught me one aspiration: “Loving Jesus, most sweet Jesus, let my heart be a lamp that is burning for you.” (*A Dream Comes True*, P. 42)<sup>12</sup>

Sr. Simon Stock says: “While I was a novice at Ollur, I have seen Mother Euphrasia. The picture of Mother Euphrasia always praying near the Tabernacle has not faded from my memory” (ibid.)

Sr. Seela has this to say about Mother Euphrasia: “I feel that Mother Euphrasia tried to love God more than others. She spent the major part of her life praying in front of Bl. Sacrament” (ibid)

If we want to get a real feel of Mother Euphrasia's Eucharistic orientation we should read the Letters by St. Euphrasia. The revelations of the Eucharistic Lord are so innumerable that we cannot deal with it in a short biography. Suffice it to say that during Lenten season when there were no Holy Mass in the convent, Jesus Himself used to celebrate Holy Mass in her room and give her Holy Communion. Mother Mary and the angels used to prepare the room and the altar for the Holy Mass. Letter Nos. 05,14,33,35 & 37 give also the description of the miraculous Holy Mass:

“After Lent began, on the day there was no mass, at 3’O’ clock in the morning (2) persons in white robe came near me, and called me. Get up soon and change your dress to receive Holy Communion. As was said I washed my face, prepared myself and came to the room. These (2) arranged the room themselves very beautifully. On my table something like a good altar was arranged. On these candles were sprinkled some very fragrant water, in the end holy water also – sprinkled. That moment amidst many angels, emanating myriads of rays from the five wounds, but with inexplicable brightness, heart infilling love and much better, I cannot explain in words wearing a bright and shining garment a person coming to the room climbed on the altar and started the Holy Mass. The angels came in (2) rows holding candles and saying a prayer or psalm, did not know what, with great reverence. During Mass the Holy Mother was kneeling near me. My Father! During Mass at the elevation, I clearly understood the Holy Mother with great devotion and grief, offering the Son and the Holy Ghost in union with the sacrifice of Calvary to the eternal Father for all men. My Father! At the elevation of the Host, I saw the rays coming from the Host and those which came from Him and His five wounds unitedly entering and becoming a single one. Finally, with great love and affection He Himself brought the Eucharist to me, this abject slave, this wretched worm. After that I was doing the thanksgiving. Then I never saw how He left.” (*Letters* 33, p 176 f). The description of the event continues further. There

are very many mystical experiences described in the letters. Here we chose just one event for a sample.

### **The Eucharistic Adoration**

Proclaiming the year of the Holy Eucharist late Pope John Paul II wrote, “it will be a great success of this year of grace... and the increase in the adoration of Holy Eucharist outside Holy Mass in all the Christian communities are the fruits of this year.” Even though she was not there to listen to this teaching this poor sister burning with the love for her Heavenly Bridegroom longed for the spread of the adoration of Holy Eucharist and did her best for the same. Sr. Euphrasia anticipated Pope John Paul II’s teaching on the Eucharist: “It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic Adoration and Exposition of Bl. Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of Adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 25).<sup>13</sup> We see our Mother Euphrasia seeking permission from the Bishop to observe public adoration of the Eucharist more and more in the convent (*Letters* No.11)

In the next letter we find the gratitude and joy in getting this permission (No.12). Again, when she informs the Bishop her intense desire for the exposition of the Holy Eucharist on 6 Fridays of the lent (*Letters* No. 29) it is revelatory of her yearning for the great presence of the Lord. Pope John Paul II’s own experience accentuates that of St. Euphrasia: “It is pleasant to spend time with Him, to lie close to His breast like the beloved disciple (Jn:13:25) and to feel the infinite love present in His heart. How often dear brothers and sisters, have I experienced this, and drawn from it strength, consolation and support.” (EE25)

### **Visits to the Blessed Sacrament**

Visits to the Bl. Sacrament were considered to be like an extension of the ‘colloquy’ of the meditation or even of the thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Both Meditation and Holy Communion were like the richest treasures of Mother Euphrasia’s life. She considered that day a lost day when she

could not have her meditation hour. She says that she got several spiritual insights at that time, and also the strength to control her fleshy desires. The visits to the Bl. Sacrament also served to intensify her relation with the Lord and also to increase the dimension of communion in community. “The Eucharist, the Sacrament of unity with the church, is at the same time the sacrament of the church unity and community unity for the consecrated person. Clearly it is the source of spirituality both for individuals and for communities” (*Vita Consecrata*, 95).<sup>14</sup> Mother Euphrasia also seems to have fully understood what the significant Church Document *Starting Afresh from Christ*<sup>15</sup> spelt out for later years: “Religious consecration itself assumes a Eucharistic structure. It is the total offering of self closely joined to the Eucharistic sacrifice” (26). Pope John Paul II in his *Mane Nobiscum Domino*<sup>16</sup> points out to significant stance of Religious Life. “Consecrated men and women called by that very consecration to a more prolonged contemplation, never forget that Jesus in the tabernacle wants you to be at his side, so that he can fill your heart with the experience of his friendship which alone gives meaning and fulfilment to your lives” (30)

This is actually a consolidation of Mother Euphrasia’s life and the secret of her mystical flights through the various mansions of *The Interior Castle*. Another instruction of Pope John Paul II was also anticipated in Sr. Euphrasia: “The presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle must be a kind of magnetic pole attracting an ever greater number of souls enamoured of Him, ready to wait patiently to hear His voice as it was to sense the beating of His heart.” (MND, 18)

This is why the message from the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on the occasion of the Beatification of Sister Euphrasia (3 December, 2006) said: “Through her beatification it is the Eucharistic Euphrasia that the church is proposing to all as a model, especially to the members of her own religious institute the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel.”

## Spouse of the Crucified Jesus

In his post synodal exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II of holy memory writes about the total offering people who love God make: “If any of God’s children were to know and taste divine love, the uncreated God, the incarnate God, the God who endured suffering, the God who is the supreme God, they would give themselves completely to Him”. (No. 104). The passion of the Lord was always the meditation of Mother Euphrasia. The sufferings of the crucified Christ and shedding of blood embraced her life. Christ Himself, who shed His precious blood for the sake of the sins of men became the director of her ways. She used to pray always: “In the Cross in my only salvation... Blessed be the passion and crucifixion of our Lord”<sup>17</sup> (Novena Prayer P. 36). She wrote to her spiritual father: “My Father, to me to look intently at the crucifix and my Holy Mother and shedding tears was the only consolation to my heart” (*Letters 64*, 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1911, P. 300) Jesus Himself appeared to her several times as if he was suffering exactly at that time. Jesus Himself gave her also the strength to suffer: “That is one day when I was kneeling after Holy Communion someone came and standing near me said like this: ‘MY daughter, you will not be able to do anything so pleasing to me as daring to do anything against your will and suffering the different sorrows which come from inside and outside with great patience remembering my passion and remembering me who is constantly dying because of love for men! Daughter! For the sake of my love you die in yourself and constantly suffer, and saying this left’” (*Letters 24*, 1 Nov. 1902, P.123). Mother Euphrasia tried to be always with the Crucified Jesus by her loving aspirations without break and by accepting all the sufferings that came her way and also by extra mortification and penance. To Mother Euphrasia the day without suffering was worth nothing. She wrote “The day without suffering for our Lord seems as nothing. What fortune is there, more than suffering for the Lord!” (*Letters P. 383*). “My Loving saviour!

I am ready to endure any affliction or suffering for your sake (*Letters*, P 384). Long narrations about the visions of the crucified are given in the Letters: 9,10,13,25,33,35,62, 64 all testify to her love for the crucified Jesus and Jesus' response to her in the Revelations He gives. She was really in the full sense of the Word, the Spouse of the Crucified.

### **Devotion to Mother Mary**

St. Euphrasia's relation with Mother Mary was nothing less than a daughter – Mother relation. *The Letters* indicate how from the age of 9, Mother Mary appears to her and teaches her the very basics of prayer and reveals to her the adoration hours of the 9 choirs of angels and also her vocation to be a Carmelite nun. From then on, whenever she needs, Mother Mary is there to help her against the devils, against other trials and temptations, to prepare her for Holy Mass and Holy Communion when she is sick and ailing, to enlighten her in her task as novice Mistress and superior of the convent. It is also marvellous that Mother Mary recites the Rosary with her one full month, the Month of May one year: "My loving Father! The day we started (May) devotions of Holy Mother, that night at 12 O' clock, she came with very much joy and happiness on a radiant cloud. "My daughter! I have come to request you to pray this month particularly for sinners and the Holy Catholic Church and to make you happy. Saying, join with me to pray for sinners and the "church", she started Rosary in Syriac. I too responded. Again, Mother and angels were reciting psalms and made me also recite. At 2 O' clock, Mother blessed me before departing. Father! This Holy Mother of grace came all the 31 days of this devotional month." (*Letters* No. 37, 01 Jun 1905, P. 199). This letter contains several beautiful vision of Mother Mary of indescribable beauty and grace. One must read the *Letters* to get the full impact of her history. Each letter is like a jewel, each different from the other.

Mother Mary also gives her a passion for the crucified Lord, as passion for prayer, a passion for intercession and service.

## **Constant intercession**

Love for God, love for Jesus crucified, love for the Eucharist, filial love towards Mary –all this expanded her heart to include the whole of humanity in her intercessory prayers. Though living within the four walls of Carmel, and very rarely going out, she absorbed the sufferings of Mothers and Fathers, of couples and particularly of the students.

### **a) Intercession for Students**

She had great affection for the students. It was in the same measure reciprocated by them. When the examinations were approaching they will gather round her to request prayer. The most backward child also wants to pass them and excellently well! It was a custom in those days that the names of the final year students especially were written and by casting lots these names were given to sisters to pray. Even now the custom continues. The students were very curious to know which sister got their name. If they came to know that Sr. Euphrasia got their names, they were immensely happy, for they were sure to pass. They all had the feeling that Mother Euphrasia was a miracle working sister, miracles through prayer. She used to interview those children and pray for them and instruct them. Later many of them joined the convent because they really got a touch of God through Mother Euphrasia. One Sr. Consolata who joined the convent in this manner narrates her experience thus:

“I was not at all good in studies, specially in mathematics. I tried hard to study. SSLC Exam was fast approaching. But I felt that my brain was empty. I could not recollect anything. The only consolation was that Sr. Euphrasia only had got my name by lot. Taking her blessing I entered the exam hall. What to say? Exam was not easy. When I came out of the Exam Hall, my teacher was standing there. She immediately checked and counted my marks. Then staring straight into my eyes, she said, “sure failure.” When she said it to my face, I was really crushed. Weeping, I ran to see mother Euphrasia, I tried to tell

her everything between sighs. After listening to everything she prayed over me, with her arms over my head. Whatever she said to comfort me, still is ever fresh in my memory. “My child, you will pass. Fear not. With this confirmation I awaited the result. It was really God’s blessing. When the results came, I had passed. The secret of my victory is Sr. Euphrasia. Tears of joy started falling from my eyes!”

There is another incident of an S.S.L.C. student: “As usual I went to meet mother Euphrasia. After the usual prayer requests, I told her to pray that I may pass in the exam. She responded “I will pray that you will become God’s own child”. I did not pass in the exam. But after three years when I joined Carmel another result was out. The result of the prayer that I may become God’s child. From that day onwards when I remember the name of this venerable nun I am immensely grateful to her and would bow in reverence.”

#### **b) Intercession for All Others**

Many others, grownups, couples, parents came in search of Mother Euphrasia in the parlour with their prayer requests. She was of few words but listened to their problems and anxieties and assured them of their prayers. Many of the prayers were granted and they returned to thank her for the same! Sometimes it was for the gift of children, sometimes for a happy marriage, and yet another for safe delivery, at another time for peaceful settlement over division of property, and yet another time for peace in the home and sometime for people to turn away from drug-addiction and alcoholism. For all such cases she prayed earnestly and her faith in the Lord was answered in abundant measure. She also interceded to stop the spread of schism in those days, especially at Cheralayam

#### **c) Intercession for Purgatorial Souls**

Her intercession also covered the range of purgatorial souls. It was common talk that purgatorial souls visited her to request prayer for them. Rosary, Way of the Cross for their speedy take off to heaven. She also offered the share of her participation

in Holy Mass for the souls in purgatory. Some such visitors from purgatory are referred to in *The Letters*.

### **Towards the Heights of Sanctity**

Mother Euphrasia was able to do all her spiritual exercises like meditation, examination of conscience, canonical hours, rosary, Rosary of the Sacred Heart, Rosary of The Holy Face etc. with great concentration because she was a soul of silence and solitude, that is a soul given over to prayer and the presence of God, a soul of forgiveness and reconciliation, and a person of loving service to her sisters and people. Love was her motivation and motif force. And God who is Love showered His mercies on her continuously as she sought Him day and night, in joy and in trials.

While mentioning the spiritual strands of her life and the depth of her spiritual intensity it may be proper just to mention in passing the heights of sanctity she achieved, her mystic ascent. For a detailed study of it you may kindly refer to my book *Mystic Euphrasia* (Mal.). In the light of the spiritual doctrine of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the cross we understand that she reached the highest union with God, possible while on earth. The relevant mystic experiences are described in terms of the Spousal ring in letter 37, 55 and 56. Those indicate the initial union, the spiritual betrothal and the mystical marriage. Letters 71 and 72 indicate the transforming union and the beatific vision. Some other letters also show certain of these mystic flights. The beauty of Mother Euphrasia is that while being a great mystic she appears in ordinary channels of virtues and asceticism and makes herself and her sanctity accessible to us! Praise God!

## SOUL SEARCHING EYE

**M**other Euphrasia had the charismatic gift of reading others' heart. Those who had crossed her path, most of them felt she was a nun with a difference. Her eyes seemed to search the depths of our soul. Her words also. They seemed, possessing an unusual power! Though the charismatic gifts are not always manifested in the Church in a very conspicuous way all the time, we find that the charisms were manifested in the early church specially in the Apostles and followers and found expression in the various saints of the various seasons. In a very visible and tangible way the charisms were functioning in Mother Euphrasia. It was God's way of preparing her for ministry among sisters as well as the people of God. She possessed the charisms of prophecy, the Word of knowledge, the Word of Wisdom, the Charism of Faith, the charism of healing, the gift of prophecy and the charism of discernment and the miraculous charism of bi-location.

### 1. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY:

The Holy Spirit had given many gifts to Mother Euphrasia. She used the charisms for the good of the people and the community. Exactly as St. Paul says they are given for ministry in the Church for the up building of the mystical body of Christ.

Mother Euphrasia was gifted with the charism of prophecy. Sometimes this charism is received when praying with fast for persons and communities. "No prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21).

Mother Euphrasia had the gift of prophecy. This was manifested on several occasions. For example, Sr. Burno was very much upset by the thought that she might be sent away while a novice, owing to ill health. One day when she was climbing the stairs with pain and tension Mother Euphrasia went close to her and gently whispered “Don’t be afraid of anything, daughter.” To Sr. Burno it was like God Himself appeared to her and gave the secret. She was never again upset. She herself has given this testimony (*The Praying Mother*, p.40).

By the gift of prophecy Mother Euphrasia used to help related people to be obedient to God’s will and to prepare for death. Here is a testimony of Sr. Flora:

“In the year 1934, I was preparing to receive Holy Communion. My aunt who was only 21 years old was a novice in the St. Mary’s convent Ollur. She caught double pneumonia. As the convent was not financially well off, when the sisters get sick, it was their family that had to do the treatment. The sister’s father was a distant relative of Mother Euphrasia. Mother Euphrasia used to call him brother. She informed this brother about her sickness. They brought many good doctors, but of no use. Mother Euphrasia told the brother that the younger sister would die on the feast of Our Lady of Snow. No good will come out of the treatment.” What Mother Euphrasia said, happened. That sister died on the feast of Our Lady of Snow. It was an evidence of Mother’s virtue.

## **2. THE POWER TO DISCERN THE SPIRIT:**

The power to discern the spirit is a charism that is given by the Holy Spirit. Jesus says that only through prayer and fasting will the unclean spirits go out. (cf. MK 9:29). Mother Euphrasia had suffered unspeakable afflictions and attacks from the powers of darkness. She had experience of many angels coming and going. God had given her the charism of discernment of spirits.

We discover in Euphrasia’s life several occasions where she proved to have this charism of the discernment of spirits. One event runs like this:

“One day when Moyalan Vareed’s son, 12 years old Antony was returning from the shop after buying some bread many dogs came running after him. Terribly afraid, the boy ran into a house and fell down there making fearful sounds. From his mouth foam and froth were flowing. He was also barking like dogs. Every month, the same day, at the same time, the same things repeatedly happened. No treatment, whatever could heal him. At the age of 21, he married also. At last his sister Kunjaram brought the patient to Mother Euphrasia and narrated all their problems to her. Mother Euphrasia heard everything with a smile. Then she blessed him placing her hand on his head. Besides, she wrote in her own hand a long prayer to the Immaculate Mother with her name and signature at the end, and asked them to pray it daily without fail. She also asked them to go for confession every month, participate in the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion, and by way of penance fast every Saturday. Moreover, she gave a reliquary with a holy relic and asked Antony to wear it on his neck, instructed him not to take any medicine, but pray with faith and devotion without failing. She assured them that he would be healed fully the day a year will be completed.

The family did everything as Mother Euphrasia had said. The day an year was completed, the same symptoms were repeated. Antony was making sounds like barking and foam and froth flowed, and he fell down. After sometime he got up and gave his testimony: A very big black dog came close to me as if to take me with him. But the Immaculate Mother shining brilliantly and spreading light rays was standing near me. The Immaculate Mother looking at the black dog harshly said: ‘I know you will come. That is why I came’. Hearing this the black dog bending his head went away. Holy Mother also disappeared.” Antony was completely healed. Never again the sickness troubled him.

It was through the gift of discernment, that Mother Euphrasia was able to discern the activity of the powers of darkness in

Antony and give him perfect health through the intercession of Mother Mary. (*Spirit filled Virgin*, P.62-63).

### **3. THE GIFT OF HEALING:**

The gift of healing usually accompanies persons who are very compassionate. It is they who see into the feelings, wounds, and sickness of a person. They have what is called ‘the seeing eye and the feeling heart.’ They are very close to Christ in their empathic attitude.

Before His Ascension Lord Jesus said: “And these signs will accompany those believers... they will lay their hand on the sick and they will recover.” (MK 16:17-18). Jesus advises the Apostles: “You received without payment; give without payment “(Mt 10:8).

Several events prove that St. Euphrasia had the gift of healing. We chose here only one or two.

One day Maprani Varunny’s wife came and said that her two months old baby was suffering from the dreadful disease scurf and the skin was peeling. Mother Euphrasia promised prayer. Also she assured the mother that her son would be healed. She asked her to pray and do penance zealously. Within very few days that lady’s son was fully healed. This child had been given up by the doctors.

Another interesting event is cited in *The Spirit filled Virgin* (2015). Once a young sister was sitting near the bathroom attending to the swollen foot. All the same she was supposed to be on the sewing machine according to the instructions of the superior. Mother Euphrasia went near her and with compassion asked: “It is very painful, no? the whole day you had to sew on the machine! Don’t worry daughter, mother shall pray.” She bent down, placed her hand on the foot of that little sister and prayed. After bath the sister understood that the swelling and pain on her foot had disappeared. Then she came to Mother Euphrasia and thanked her. But mother said “say thanks to God, daughter.” (p. 58)

#### **4. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE:**

Because Mother Euphrasia was gifted with the Word of knowledge, she would understand the sisters and be of help to them in critical situations. Even in her own case we have already referred to the fact that without anyone telling her, sister Euphrasia had come to know of her mother's death and departure. The spirit of God used to reveal to her future events also. Mother Euphrasia once wrote her spiritual father, Mar John Menachery: "I inform you that my Rev. Father should go about with an advance preparation for the eternal journey in all things" (Letter 67, 1 Jan 1917). Bishop Menachery died on 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 1919. Almost three years ahead Mother Euphrasia had informed the Bishop to prepare for death

One junior sister Benigna was studying in Madras. She had been feeling a crisis about vocation. But when she saw Sr. Euphrasia, she tried to avoid her. But Mother went straight to her and smiling with great affection said: "Daughter you need not worry at all. Go about with joy." At that moment not only the fear but the struggle and conflicts disappeared from her.

#### **5. WORD OF WISDOM:**

'Word of wisdom' is related to 'word of knowledge.' And they often function together. The word of knowledge is showing the knowledge of particular thing or event. The word of wisdom is to evaluate prudently that thing and to use that word to solve the problem. Isaiah speaks about the servant of the Lord. "The Lord has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens – wakens my ear to listen to those who are taught" (50:04). The person who has got the word of wisdom speaks wisdom. None can defeat the person.

"To saint Euphrasia the Holy Spirit had given the word of wisdom. Mother had understood that for a holy life the control of the tongue is necessary and she has given in her instruction four special occasions to keep control of the tongue." (*Spirit Filled Virgin*, p. 57).

Those four occasions are as she herself writes:

1. When a new superior/authority takes charge
2. When we take up another's post
3. When we go to another community and when other community members come to our house
4. When we are angry or upset or disturbed

When mother Euphrasia's family had financial collapse, her brother used to come and painfully inform her of everything. Then Mother Euphrasia used to comfort him: "Never mind, God is there who knows everything! One thing, don't lose in virtue even if you lose in money." (*The Praying Mother*, P. 56)

In the civil case with the schismatics, Mother Euphrasia informed the Bishop "Father, we will fail in this case" (*Letters* 51, Aug 1905). But she also said giving a word of comfort, that in the heart of the town itself God will build for us a big church. We understand that this assurance was prophetic. And we believe the present Trichur Basilica is exactly what was prophesied. Praise be to God Almighty.

## **6. THE CHARISM OF FAITH:**

Here it is not the theological virtue of Faith that is intended but the charism of faith which prays without hesitation and is capable of moving mountains (MK 11: 22f.). This faith makes the impossible possible. Jesus praised this faith in some of the healings (Mt 8:10). Faith here gives the person an inner urge to pray and believe that what has been prayed, has been granted or will be granted in a given time.

With regard to Mother Euphrasia we find that this charism of faith works in a few instances. One is the case of Novice Gasper. In the month of October 1949 novice Gasper was supposed to leave the convent and join her parents due to ill health. The parents were called. They came to take her home. They also had brought the lay dress for her to put on while homing back. Holding the lay dress in hand she ran to the church, uncontrollably weeping. Mother Euphrasia who was

in the chapel enquired after the matter: she said “I am being sent away from the congregation. Here, see the lay dress given to change from my religious habit. Because I am sick only I am being sent home. Mother, please help me. Don’t send me away from the congregation.” Mother Euphrasia made her ask permission to stay nine days more in the convent. Sr. Gasper’s esophageus had been thinned down and she was not able to eat food, not even take liquids. Mother Euphrasia told her: “Daughter, say 9 rosaries for 9 days (each day 9). One of these you can pray with me in the chapel. Pray to Bl. Mary fervently. Your sickness will be cured. You will do humble works with gratitude and glorify God and stay in the convent until death.” Sr. Gasper prayed as Mother Euphrasia said. She was able to take food soon. After 9 days her father came from home with the doctor. When the doctor examined he was wonder struck as there was no sign of the sickness. Sr. Gasper was allowed to continue in the convent. She lived for many years working for orphanage children. Thus Mother Euphrasia’s gift of faith worked a miracle for Sr. Gasper. This is the evidence of the charism of faith.

I would suggest to the readers that they couple their reading of this short biography with *The Spirit Filled Virgin*. There Sr. Dr. Cleopatra, the long time vice-postulator of the cause of Mother Euphrasia has dealt with not only the fruits, gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit as manifested in St. Euphrasia, but also the virtues/moral, cardinal and religious are described in relation to Mother Euphrasia. It gives an in depth strand of spirituality to the simple biographical sketch of Mother Euphrasia. You are wholeheartedly encouraged to read that book! Praise God! I have broadly used her findings in this chapter and acknowledge my indebtedness hereby!

## SERVICE IN LOVE

One cannot but mention the beauty and grace of the loving service Mother Euphrasia rendered to the community members and to whoever crossed her path. Though limited to the four walls of Carmel, the fragrance of her kind heartedness and loving service spread far beyond. Those who came to the chapel or parlour seeking the praying nun not only felt the power of her prayer but also her kindness extended in loving service. Virtue has super speed for those who catch its fragrance. She was not only known as the praying nun but one who had a heart for others, one who will stretch out her hand in loving service, in loving kindness.

But this does not mean that she was far above human weaknesses. No! She had several weaknesses like all of us. And her capital weakness was her hot temper and angry outbursts. She had inherited it from her father. Very often it is by struggling against our cardinal sins and mastering ourselves that our energies are sublimated and re-directed to the path of virtue and goodness and kindness. And she writes about this struggle in one of the letters: “The time of novitiate, in the season of our spiritual warfare I used to get angry and upset to the limit of killing myself even in small things. But now, loving Father, all that kind of thing has stopped.” This shows her growth in spiritual journey.

This caused not only inner struggles, but much suffering. At least some people felt she was a bit crude and so got distanced from her and started criticizing her. But there were others who understood it as a weakness in nature. Such a person says: “Mother is a bit hot tempered. She is also trying much to

overcome it. When she gets angry the voice also tend to rise. But suddenly overcoming it, she becomes silent, and bending her head low gently walks off. Within a short period a different opinion was in the air: “a smiling mother,” ‘a Mother who never gets angry,’ ‘a compassionate and affectionate Mother’. This was the experience of very many sisters, once Mother Euphrasia had conquered herself with the help of Jesus in the guidance of the spiritual Director. She writes to her spiritual father: “My Father, once I was a very hot-tempered person. But now this defect does not show itself in anything. I don’t know when he will raise his head next. (1<sup>st</sup> January 1902, P. 103). The conquest of ‘self’ helped her to offer loving service to all others.

### **The New Commandment:**

At the Last Supper Jesus declared his new testament. “This is my order. You must love others as I have loved you” (John 15:17). He said, “Those who accept and obey my orders really love me” (Jn 14:21). Mother Euphrasia took to heart the new commandment along with the greatest commandment. For her to love the Lord with all one’s heart, mind, soul and strength also included love for one another. Hence her endless mercy to the weak sinners, consideration for the sick, weak and outcasts.

### **Mother Euphrasia, a Mother to Many**

She had a maternal heart. Others had a place in it, a safe shelter. Sr. Loyola describes an occasion when she was deeply moved by the love and care of Mother: “I was working in the civil hospital. Once a while, when I came on leave to Ollur I used to visit mother. My room was on the second floor. Mother Euphrasia was very alert with a motherly care to let me rest in her room, so that I need not climb the stairs. She will also take care to send me some soup and see that I take it while sitting in her room. She didn’t want any to comment on me negatively, while she was generous with all of us she was strict with herself. That really surprised us. Of course we understood that she was a self-emptying mother.”

## **In the Image of the Apostolic Community**

In the case of Mother Euphrasia if we choose certain events to highlight her love for the other sisters, it might actually diminish the intensity of her life. She lived in the depths. So she was concerned about others from morning to night and from night to morning in one way or another. Her very presence and every action radiated her fraternal love. What a wonderful picture of Mother Euphrasia standing at the bottom of the stair case with a lit candle in her hand and with several other pieces of candle so that sisters who go up to their rooms upstairs after night prayers can pick up one candle, lit it and go up. This happened invariably every night as there was no electric lights in St. Mary's Convent in those days. She made best use of all loopholes to help others. She had the 'seeing eye' and 'the helping hand'. It was as if Mother Euphrasia anticipated Pope John Paul II's instruction in *Vita Consecrata*:

“The fraternal life plays a fundamental role in the spiritual journey of consecrated persons, both for their constant renewal and for the full accomplishment of their mission in the world. Above all I call upon men and women religious and members of societies of apostolic life to show generous mutual love, expressing it in ways which are in keeping with the nature of each institute, so that every community will be revealed as a luminous sign of the new Jerusalem, ‘ the dwelling of God with men’ (Rev 21:03).

Mother Euphrasia used to show special care to those who were doing heavy work. She knew very well that she couldn't do such heavy jobs. But even then she will wait for opportunities to help them. Once a sister who was involved in candle making could not take her food on time. On noticing this Mother took up the job and sent her away for lunch. It may be a small deed of kindness. All of us one day or other might have done it. But in her case this was the daily pattern. She was extremely alert to feel the situation and generously helpful. That makes the difference. Such kind service regularly demands real sacrifice.

Sr. Agnes who was the physical education coach narrates a beautiful story which occurred several days: “When I come back tired and sweating, after coaching the students mother will come to me in the dining room. Always she comes with a bright smile and she will bring something special for me. Even more than the sweetness of the food, I relished her selfless love, even like a mother’s love, a father’s love, a sister’s love. I would usually ask her why she doesn’t take it. She would simply smile and say that she doesn’t need it. She would add that she was not doing any heavy physical work. She was not running around with the students to train them. One thing becomes more and more clear when we examine her life. That is, God come first, others come second and she herself come third or last. This was the secret of sanctity. This is the secret of her spiritual strength also.

### **Care for the Sick and Ailing:**

Diseases like cholera and T.B were very common and wide spread in those days. Sr. Euphrasia had the readiness, the generosity to stay with people plagued with these diseases. She delighted in being with them because she felt the crucified and suffering Jesus in them. With great concern and affection she comforted them. She gave them courage to suffer and prepared for their final departure assuring them of her prayers.

It is authentic information that Sr. Barthold who was suffering of T.B. and who died at the age of 28 had received a lot of help from Mother Euphrasia. In those days when the progress of medical science was far behind, people were terror stricken at the mention of these diseases. So the sick were extremely lonely and Mother Euphrasia kept them company. Mother came to her, whenever she needed her, even at night. Old age or her own ill health was not an obstacle. Every occasion she got, to nurse the sick, she considered a golden opportunity to express her love for Jesus and her docility to His Spirit.

One sister who noticed Mother Euphrasia's intense zeal for Jesus and her sisters observe thus:

“A sister, who was affected by cholera, was almost on the point of death. Because it was a terrible disease people were afraid to go near her. Even her mother did not dare. Mother Euphrasia sat beside her all the time and attended to her every need. She had vomiting and diarrhea and Mother Euphrasia cleaned up all that. She prepared her for a peaceful death and that sister died in her arms” (*H.G.* 53).

There are innumerable events and reports like this. Suffice it to say that even in her old age she was terribly concerned about the sick.

### **Beside the Dying**

Mother Euphrasia was actually an apostle of the prayer for the dying. She used to chant holy words for them, preparing them for death. In their final struggle the presence of the holy nun gave them strength and courage. It happened like this once: when she was the Mother Superior of the Ollur Convent, once, one of her sisters got sick and was showing signs of lingering death. Mother was praying in the Eucharistic presence for all events under the regulation of the convent and particularly for this sister who was sick. Consulting the matter with the heavenly Mother she came to the sick person and asked her whether she had to make peace with someone. Her eyes overflowing with tears she told mother how she had persuaded the Bishop to transfer a sister whom she did not like much, to another convent. Through her cruelty she had caused terrible anguish to the other sister. She never had the opportunity to ask forgiveness of her. With a broken heart she pleaded with Mother Euphrasia to write a letter asking forgiveness to that sister. Even before the message reached the Ambazhakad convent, the sister died in peace.

It was a common understanding that if Mother Euphrasia was near the bedside of the sick, the person would have a peaceful departure to the Eternal Homeland. Sr. Bibiana who was a junior sister in the Manalur convent wanted Mother's

spiritual help and presence in her last days. Mother immediately went to her, before she reached there the sister died. Mother Euphrasia was a flame of love burning for the glory of God and to light up the lives of those around her! “To burn on till you burn out” is her message for us.

### **Lived on the Minimum, Sparing the rest for others**

Her food habits were very simple. She used to fast four days a week. She never used to take fish, meat, egg, or milk except when doctors prescribe. She had great feeling for the poor and the weak. She used to feed others foregoing her own food. If she gets some tasty food, it will surely find its way into the hand of the most tired sister. Sr. Anna who was very close to her, tells us: “Mother needed to grind her food, as she had lost all her teeth. She who ate very sparingly will keep persuading us to eat well. She will go to the kitchen and make very good chutney so that we can eat our food better. She will sit beside us and keep us company, making us happy.” (Ibid p. 56). For those who were exhausted with work she would prepare soup. If she had something special to give us, she was very happy. The sisters knew this and used to say that it would be their great luck if Mother Euphrasia would become their superior. She was so full of joy if she could give away something even if she had nothing. She was very sad if food was wasted. If there was much waste in the waste bin she would ask us why we were wasting food. Why we are not careful to give it to the poor. And she always instructed never to waste things which can be used by someone. (Sanjos, p 136)<sup>18</sup>. Whatever delicious food she received in the dining she would usually give it to the others. To be sacrificial even in dining often she added some flour of a bitter herb so that everything becomes tasteless. Those who have a sense of mortification will understand the meaning of such an attempt. She never used to eat fruits or other special items of food! She wanted to imitate Jesus who said His food was to do the will of the Father. If He could fast forty days and forty nights, it must have been backed up by the daily schedule of His life. Or else it almost looks impossible.

## **Ever Oriented towards Forgiveness**

In the matter of forgiveness St. Euphrasia wanted to follow the example of Jesus. “Forgive them, Father, as they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). She could treat those who criticized and hurt her with great love. “If somebody says that he loves God and hates his brother, then he is lying, if he cannot love the brother whom he can see, he cannot love God whom he cannot see” (I Jn 04:20). Mother Euphrasia was trying to live this word to the maximum possibility. She conquered with tender love those who spoke roughly to her. She was determined to love and serve those who spoke against her. She was on the lookout for a possibility to help those who hated her. She believed and practised the Word of God that ‘the sun should not set on your anger’ and tried to be in harmony with everyone else before going to sleep. If there were problem between sisters, she used to advice the one who was hurt to kiss the others feet and ask her pardon. This has been witnessed by sisters who accepted this advice and passed through the cleansing experience. It also means she had been practising it always in her life.

Sr. Agnes tells us of an incident when one of Mother’s own novices became her superior. Sr. Agnes had gone to Ollur on some job. Whenever she went there she made it a point to see Mother Euphrasia. So, as usual she went to her room. She was shocked to find Mother Euphrasia kissing the ground at the feet of the Superior and accepting her faults. The superior was thundering at her and scolding. Sr. Agnes did not understand what exactly was the reason for this commotion. Even now she remembers with what impossible humility the old Mother was accepting all that scolding without any attempt at protest or justification. She must have acquired that strength through constant meditation and prayer.

She was also criticized severely, even for her mystic experience. They thought it was mere pretence. She was deeply hurt by insults and misrepresentations. But she accepted all

that in humility and offered it to her heavenly Spouse. As a result the Lord showered great gifts of the spirit on her, with great love. She wrote to her Spiritual Father, “Father, when somebody speaks ill of me, my heart rejoices in that. It gives me comfort and benefits my soul”. (Letter 34, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1905).

### **The Nun with a Spiritual touch**

Mother Euphrasia carried with her a spiritual radiance which nobody missed. Whether in the chapel, or kitchen, or parlour, or near the pond, this spiritual glow never left her. In her conversation also her concentration in Jesus and love of God surfaced. Sr. Goretty gives her story thus: “I went to Mother to seek her prayers for my SSLC examination. Mother looked at me, I felt as if that look went deep into me. She said ‘you must become the Lord’s Child. I am praying for that’ and then she put her hand, on my head and prayed and blessed me. I believe that I was able to join the convent overcoming all obstacles, because of the prayer and blessing of Mother Euphrasia. To all her visitors in one way or another before leaving she would tell them to love Christ. After that she would bless them. Sr. Cyprian shares her experience thus” “If you kneel in front of Mother, she will bless you, laying her hand on your head, she will chant. Then she will say: ‘Go child. Love the Lord and work for Him” (San Jos, P 105).

She was ever sincerely happy in other people’s wellbeing and prosperity. She was always ready to bless them and greet them the joy of life. V.P. Antony was a person belonging to a branch of Mother Euphrasia’s family. After the death of his father his mother was working hard to bring up the child. Mother was aware of their hardship and poverty. Once in the course of a conversation blessing little Antony Mother told him to buy a little lamb and to bring it up. You will find prosperity through it. Mother’s blessing was true. He reached a rather good financial status.

### **A Grateful Presence**

Another reason for her burning love for others was her sense

of gratitude. She was immensely grateful to God for all that she received in life, for joys as well as sufferings, for achievements and failures, for the insights God had given her, for the riches of her home and for the poverty she had accepted. Mother Euphrasia was also profoundly thankful to Mar John Menachery for the spiritual direction he gave, for the spiritual wealth of it, and the time he spent for her. She was also grateful to the community members for the kind services they did to her and also to the public, to the children and to the grownups for whatever services they rendered. It was her watchword to say “will not forget even after death”.

## “WILL NOT FORGET EVEN AFTER DEATH”

**M**other Euphrasia was intensely longing for the moment of departure to the Eternal Home. For her, death was a blessing. To live was Christ, exactly as St. Paul had said. She used to pray: “Oh My God, whom my eyes long to see, most beloved one, deliver me from the bondages of the body in order to see you soon” (*Aspirations* 28), “Oh, Holy Trinity, my soul is always thirsting with desire to see and enjoy you in heaven” (*Aspirations*, 13); “Eternal Father, for the sake of the Holy name of Jesus, call me soon to live with you forever.” (*Aspirations* 12). Mother Euphrasia being intimately close to the Trinity experienced a terrific longing for God all the time. It seemed God was very pleased with this longing. She was getting ready for her passage to the other world knowing that her death was very near. Though the ailments of old age were attacking her she did not allow herself to be overcome by those. Three days before her death only she was laid up with sickness. A wise virgin, she humbly requested the prayers of her community sisters for a happy death.

On August 26<sup>th</sup> afternoon Mother Euphrasia made her confession near Rev. Fr. Louis who was the novice master in those days. He felt that Mother had a little disorientation in the brain then. So he asked a sister to take her away from the chapel. By the time she reached the sickroom she was almost collapsing physically. One part of the body was almost paralysed and she had lost the power of speech.

To the sisters who came near her she said something, but they did not understand anything. May be they guessed, that

she was desirous of receiving Holy Communion. But they found her tongue all rolled up inward to the throat. She made some signs with the hand. But they didn't follow. Because matters were not clear, the sister who was in charge of her gave her a pencil and paper and asked her to write whatever she wanted. Her hand was terribly shivering. But she wrote. It said: "Please give me Extreme unction. It was with great difficulty that she wrote it. The superior who felt with the patient responded to her whole heartedly and gave all that she asked for. The Rosary was her weapon. She used to recite Rosary whenever she got time. Even in her death bed, though she was weak and collapsing, the Rosary beads were moving through her fingers. And her heart was fixed on God. Even the visitors were raised to the point of contemplation of God by the peace and radiance that enveloped her face. Like that she lay in bed for three days, but silent without speech.

Hearing about her sickness and exhaustion, sisters from various convents rushed to see her. Just to have a final look at their dearly beloved Mother, and to receive her blessing. The news that the saintly nun of Cherpukaran family is nearing her last moment spread like wild fire. Mothers rushed to the place with their children to receive her blessing. Even in those last moments she had only one gift for all of them – a sweet smile – when her hand could not lift by themselves, those who came took her hand and placed it on others so that they could feel blessed.

It was near sunset on the 29<sup>th</sup> Aug., there was some sudden change on her face. Yet, that face was perfectly calm. All the sisters came round. All were praying for Mother Euphrasia. Exactly at 8.40 p.m. that holy dove of Jesus flew to her eternal home.

Whoever gazed at her face with devotion in that silent flight heavenward said to one self: "Even if I die I will not forget" – what a beautiful declaration which she always took care of: "will not forget even after death". And she kept the promise.

## THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE ★

Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC

### **The Miracle Bell**

Time 8.40 p.m.! The sisters are all gathered together in the recreation hall. The place is Cheralayam convent. As usual during the recreation sisters are exploding into laughter. Amidst the ringing laughter and the explosive jokes, they hear the chapel bell ringing. Not yet time to close the recreation and start silence. So all looked at each other. And the question rose, who rang the bell? Some ran to the exact spot of the bell! No one! A servant was sitting there. She said: “no one came here, and no one rang the bell. But I also heard the sound of the bell ringing”. They went to sleep that day with a lot of questions in their mind! Who rang the bell? They were puzzled and anxious! Next day during Mass the obituary note came (in those days no phone in that convent). And it announced that Mother Euphrasia passed away at 8.40 p.m. The exact time when the chapel bell rang in Cheralayam convent. So they whispered among themselves about this miraculous ringing of the bell. They started telling about it to all people who came to the convent. They could not contain it themselves. Mother Euphrasia’s Spiritual Father had specially requested Sr. Euphrasia’s prayer to save the people of Cheralayam from the Schismatics. So he had asked for the penance and intercession to raise a convent, a church and a school in the place to teach them the right faith and give them the right formation and education. Must be, some thought, the bell rang to announce the death of a prayerful Mother, who dedicated herself to save the people from a schism.

## **The End**

Now you can hear the sound of sister's praying and chanting in the Ollur St. Mary's convent chapel. Everywhere a heavenly atmosphere seemed to exist. A divine vibration was filling in. All those who came for the funeral of Mother Euphrasia stayed beside the coffin and looked at her face longingly. If only she was alive for a few days more! They longed for those comforting words! And the compassionate smiling look of a saintly Mother! You can hear them weeping! You can hear their sighs! The children, the adolescent, the adults, the old – all were there! Her prayers had enveloped all of them! Amidst thousands of them watching, her body was taken and buried in the row of tombs attached to the chapel. The tomb was on the top row. And that was a tomb in which no one was buried till then. After the burial, everyone returned home with a deep sentiment of gratitude to God! For they had felt that they were fortunate enough to be near a saintly nun and could receive her blessing participating in her burial.

## **A Dramatic Moment after the Burial**

After the burial service, when people had moved away the house maid Thressiakkutty moved gently to the room in which Mother passed away. There she was searching for something. She couldn't find anything. So she almost wept aloud: "Why? Where did all those disappear? I cannot find even a flower! Who has taken it all away! She complained loudly." She had wanted at least to keep some flowers in memory of Mother, to whom she was attached very much and who she thought was a saint. She could not move out from the room without getting something. But she had to. So, very disheartened she returned to the kitchen and complained to her companion maids why they didn't take and keep something for her from the coffin. "I was waiting here to finish all the work. That was why I was delayed. Moreover I cannot move quickly or walk into the

crowd. Now I must get something. I cannot go like this,” she said to her companion maids. One of them empathetically responded: “I too wanted a keepsake. But I found that our sisters have taken everything possible. So we are left with nothing. But here is the cloth with which we finally dried the body. That is precious. Both of us shall share it.”

‘That is enough for me.’ She could scarcely finish the sentence that the servant was in tears. Unable to contain herself, keeping the cloth nestled close to her, she moved to her own room. Now she remembered something. One of those days when she woke up, blood spot, was found in her dress that covered the chest – something like blouse. She understood that the bleeding was from the breast. She was immediately taken to the Jubilee Mission hospital and she was examined by Sreekandha Menon. Doctor diagnosed breast cancer! The breast had to be removed according to the directions of the doctor. But the stitch was not drying. Because of the rush of patients, to accommodate them, this sister had to be discharged and taken home. Hearing this news it was with a heavy heart that the old maid came back to the convent kitchen maid’s room. As she entered, a few times Mother Euphrasia’s face came before her as if in a dream. Suddenly she decided to keep that precious cloth which dried Mother Euphrasia’s body. She took the piece from that and kept it near the sick area. Suddenly she felt a lightning like sensation. She felt something was happening to her body. She spoke to herself a while” “Mother Euphrasia, it looks that you are very near me, tho’ you have actually gone from this world. I believe you are near, and you can heal me mother.” Closing her eyes she prayed a few moments. However she kept that piece of cloth on her body and believed in its healing power. As she believed she was healed. Never did that sickness return to her. She had a long life. Mother Euphrasia did not forget that maid who loved her even after her death.

## **Children and People Flowing to the Tomb**

As days passed by more and more people used to gather round Mother Euphrasia's tomb. There were children and grownups, rich and poor. There was no limit for her special concern for the student. While she was alive she had always expressed her tender care for the children. This made Mother Euphrasia their friend and intercessor. When the children narrated their small and big problems she gave good listening to them. When they expressed their little desires she would respond to them with a smile and would look confident that she would get it for them from the Good God! The students could never forget their wonderful advocate near God. Because of this reason they never forgot to visit her tomb. Rather the students were the daily visitors. So, too they received favours from God through her. It was difficult for the little children to stretch out to see the tomb which was a little aloft. But that was no problem for them. Though it pained their tender feet, they pressed forward on the steps near the chapel to hold secret conversation with their old Mamma – Euphrasiamma. Yes, Mother Euphrasia's tender love had conquered their hearts!

## **The Dumb Girl Speaks**

It was like one of those days, one family came with their baby girl. She was not talking at all. Doctors simply said she has no power of speech. She was three years old. They had gone to several doctors. Also made several offerings to the saints. The parents had the firm belief that even if everyone leaves them, Mother Euphrasia will not. Instead she will show a solution that was their hope. The Mother of the child vowed that she will bring the child and lay it on the tomb for several consecutive days. So she did without any delay. When she herself couldn't come, she sent the maid with the baby. She met the sisters and shared with them her sorrow! The sisters also started praying for the child. One day, the child was laid on the tomb – suddenly it cried out 'Mamma', it cried out again.

From that moment onwards the power of speech came on the child. It was a real miracle. The parents rejoiced in the Lord. And the sisters thanked Jesus for the marvellous gift of speech! Praise flowed from the place!

### **“You Must do Something for This Nun”**

Devotion to Mother Euphrasia was on the climb day after day! So also miracles increased. Seeing the showers of blessings, the then Trichur Bishop, Mar George Alappatt on the 11<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary published the first prayer to Mother Euphrasia on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1963. It was as if His Excellency had an intuition that this religious sister of ‘Cherpukaran’ family would become a saint. One day, he felt or heard something like this: “You must do something for this nun.” So he did one thing, he kept a Marble Stone with the markings of the important dates in her life on the tomb, facing the audience.

### **Do These Carmelite Sisters Have a Saint?**

In those days it also happened that Rev. Fr. Philip O.C.D was conducting a retreat for sisters at Ollur. He began the inaugural session with certain critical comments on the sisters. He said: “Actually you don’t need a retreat. I am simply wasting my time by preaching a retreat here. How many retreats have you made before. Did it produce any fruit? It is no good preaching retreats to sisters. Isn’t it almost a century since your congregation was founded? But do you have at least one saint? That’s why I said, it is no use preaching to you! Your congregation has not produced even one saint. Isn’t it so?” My hands went up spontaneously. So father asked, ‘there is one young sister who has put up her hand. What’s the matter? Then I responded: “We have a saint sister.” Sisters started pulling my habit and scapular to get me seated and silent. But I wasn’t bothered. He asked, “who is that?” I said “Mother Euphrasia” my tone was such that anyone would feel that it is a pity that Fr. Philip did not know about her. I added: “She lived here,

died here and was entombed here.” He was wounderstruck, and he didn’t say anything more.

But he did one thing after the retreat. He went straight to Mar George Alappatt the then Bishop of Trichur and asked him, “Do these Carmelite sisters have a saint. One young sister said that they have a saint. Is it so?” Bishop answered “Yes, father. They have a saint. Father, will you do me a favour? Thus posing a request he went inside his room and came back with Mother Euphrasia’s letters. Then Bishop added, “Father, you must write a book on Mother Euphrasia, after reading the letters.” So, father Philip OCD was obliged to write a book on Mother Euphrasia. *Kerala Karmala Kusumam* – the first book ever published on Mother Euphrasia!

### **“Never Open, Mother Euphrasia’s Tomb”**

In the period from 1974 – 77 in St. Mary’s Ollur, nine sisters passed away. If one more die, Mother Euphrasia’s tomb would have to be opened. Sisters used to pray that again no one may die. They were unwilling to open Mother Euphrasia’s Tomb because of their conviction that she was a saint. But all on a sudden, Sr. Mercy got sick and died. So what to do? They thought there is no other way except open Mother Euphrasia’s Tomb. For permission to open it they approached Bishop George Alappatt. Bishop said: “Never open Mother Euphrasia’s tomb. The person who is died may be buried in the tomb in the nearest convent. Never shall we bury another person in Mother Euphrasia’s tomb. That was a command. Sr. Mercy was buried in the tomb attached to Fathima Convent, Ollur. Even after her death how carefully God Himself was handling every detail connected with Mother Euphrasia. Here God intervned through the Bishop.

### **The Letters Entrusted to Mother Borgia**

When he was 75, Mar George Alappatt thought to himself that he is old now. He cannot continue with heavy responsibilities. A successor has to be found out. He was alert

to finish all pending work and thus reach the finish line. It is then that he thought about Mother Euphrasia's letters which was kept precious by his predecessor and handed over to him. It should not be missing and has to be entrusted with those who have a claim on it. Bishop entrusted the letters to Mother Borgia, the then provincial and said: "Now, you keep it. You will need it." Mother was happy to receive the letters from the Bishop. What Mar George Alappatt said was a prophecy.

### **Sr. Cleopatra, the Provincial who Initiated the Cause**

People used to pray near Mother Euphrasia's Tomb. Miracles and healing were reported on a progressive scale. Though the fragrance of her virtues was spread far and wide no step was taken for the cause. It was at such a juncture I was elected as the Provincial of CMC Nirmala Province, Trichur.

It was a day of significance that I reached St. Mary's Convent Ollur. The annual retreat was about to begin. At the outset, as Provincial I reached there to give them instruction preparatory to the retreat. I said, "Where you are now is a holy place where saints like Mother Euphrasia had lived and moved and then died. Their tombs are here. You should often go there and pray." Because of certain inspirational insightful pull I said those words. They were touched deeply by those words, they said. When I was almost ready to go, one of the revered Mothers, Mother Eucharista held my hand in hers and said: "Look, I have something to tell you. You must do something about Mother Euphrasia." So I asked her, "What am I supposed to do?" "If you cannot do anything else, write a book on her," she responded. The earnest desire of this revered Mother compelled me to start the process. It became an absorbing thought with me. How do we do this? What can be done? When I reached the Provincial House at Kolazhy, I was again taken up by the same thought. I spoke to God in this manner: "If two things which I desire happen, if you show them to me as a sign from you, I shall receive this request as your will. Standing face to

face to the Tabernacle I made a tryst: “You must heal a mentally sick person. You must also show me a person to write a book on Mother Euphrasia.” Both happened in no time, without any delay. So I decided to go ahead with regard to the process of Beatification cost what it may. From there things moved fast. Thus on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1986 the initial steps were taken. Asking those who are informed about the causes of saints and meeting such people I tried for the permission to take up the cause. The acceptance letter from Mother Prima, the then Mother General was received on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1987 and from Mar Joseph Kundukulam the then Bishop of Trichur on 13<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1987. Then I approached Fr. Lucas Vithuvattikal who was the Postulator General of Fr. Chavara Kuriakose Elias. He was very happy to receive me and to respond to all my queries. On 17<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1987, he was appointed as postulator for Mother Euphrasia.

### **35<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary**

35<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Mother Euphrasia was a significant day in every way. Mar Joseph Kundukulam accompanied by five priests approached the altar to celebrate the High Solemn Mass of the Glorious Day. The divine symphony filled the place. Amidst the Holy Mass Rev. Fr. Lucas Vithuvattikal knelt down before the Bishop to accept his heavy official responsibility. He pledged as the Postulator on 29<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1987. Thus one more official step was taken in the Beatification Process. On 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1987 Sr. Perigrine was appointed as Vice Postulator.

### **The Missing Letters**

Meanwhile there was a search for the letters Mother Euphrasia had written to the spiritual Director. When the provincialate campus in Kolazhy had to be surveyed the Adharam was to be taken from the Almara. Sr. Godwin the then Provincial treasurer was picking up bundles after bundles from the shelf and suddenly alighted on the bundle titled

“Mother Euphrasia’s Letters.” There was no limit to the joy of all concerned. She took it and ran to the next room where Provincial was sitting. There was no limit to the amazement and joy! It was more like a revelation of God’s glory.

### **Initial Steps**

Immediate steps had to be taken. Myself and Rev. Fr. Lucas approached Mar Joseph Kundukulam and spoke about the Diocesan Tribunal to be set up with regard to the Beatification Process. Bishop was ready to do whatever was needed. People were ready for everything. To all the Parish Churches letters were sent.

There was someone with a lot of commanding power – one tall well-built personality taking the lead. Many observed him from the distance. That was Rev. Fr. Joseph Pulikan, the vicar of Ollur Parish church. That revered priest did all he could in this great beginning of an important event.

### **The Diocesan Tribunal**

The three days from Oct 20-22, 1988 were days of new awakenings. 20<sup>th</sup> was a Prayer Day. On the 21<sup>st</sup> was the installation of the Diocesan Tribunal for the study and research of Mother Euphrasia’s heroic virtues in Ollur parish church. The members of the Diocesan Tribunal took up the oath in the presence of the Bishop, Mar Joseph Kundukulam – Rev. Fr. Joseph Vilangaden, Rev. Fr. Paul Kadichini CMI, Rev. Fr. Antony Anthikkatt, Rev. Fr. Andrews Thazhath, Rev. Fr. Jose Irimpan, Sr. Alphonse Santhi CMC, Sr. Anija CMC. On 22<sup>nd</sup> a drama was staged on Mother Euphrasia. Postulants and aspirants were mainly involved in the event. Everything went well. The news that Mother Euphrasia’s Room would be opened reverentially for the public made the people of Ollur really happy and rejoicing. They declared aloud that this diocesan Tribunal Installation is a great blessing for the people. Hundreds of people started coming and praying in the room. Some felt

the fragrance of Rose flowers in the room. People started sensing that it is actually the fragrance of her virtues. Many healings also were happening while or after visiting the room. Everywhere there was wonder and amazement! A new awakening was in the air.

### **The Interring 30 January 1990**

The opening of the Tomb was an unforgettable event. At 9.00 am on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1990 Mar Joseph Kundukulam arrived accompanied by Mar James Pazhayattil, Bishop of Irinjalakuda and Mar Joseph Irimpan, Bishop of Palaghat, to proceed with the event of opening the tomb and interring ceremony. The diocesan Tribunal members, Superior General Mother Prima, Mother Cleopatra, Provincial Superior, Nirmala Province, Trichur, Provincial Councillors, Rev. Fr. Joseph Pulickan, Vicar, Forane Church Ollur, Rev. Fr. Paul Manjaly, Convent chaplain Dr. Nelson Chandy, Dr. Sunny Pazhayattil, contractor, workers – all presented themselves near the tomb and prayed for a while. Sr. Santhi CMC, notary read the relevant section about Sr. Euphrasia's death from the chronicles. The collection of the witness report was done from the convent superior Sr. Vladimir, and from Sr. Mary Peter and Sr. Lambert who were witnesses for Mother Euphrasia's death and burial service. After that Bishop officially commanded the opening of the tomb. When all were curiously watching, the contractor and the workers together removed the frontal slab. The two doctors took out the mortal remains. The notaries recorded everything correctly. All those who witnessed the event and saw the remains of the body of the Revered 'holy' Mother praised God, praying in the depths of their hearts. After collecting every part of the bones they were separately collected in glass jars. Then slowly they were placed in the steel casket and closed. After that Mar Joseph Kundukulam gave the approval by placing his signature.

### **From 3.30 p.m. on Jan 30<sup>th</sup> 1990**

From 3.30 p.m. there was a flow of people to the chapel. The Bishop of Trichur, Mar Joseph Kundukulam started the burial service. Sisters gathered reverentially near the steel casket that held the revered remains of their beloved Mother Euphrasia and took it to the main Aisle of the Chapel. The ‘holy’ remains were placed in the tomb newly made in the centre of the chapel to the front of the Altar. She who desired to lead a hidden life is willed by God to be revered by all the people of God. Man proposes but God disposes. His plans are often hidden from man’s understanding.

### **3 December 1997**

That is the auspicious day the newly elected General Council took up their charge. Sr. Cleopatra who was appointed Vice Postulator in 1992 after her provincial ship, was also in the General council. That day something marvellously significant happened. A person named Thomas Tharagan who was sent to the cancer institute Trivandrum by Dr. Rajiv Rao on detection of cancer had come back and got admitted in Mission Hospital as the Doctor at TVM had advised operation to remove the areas affected by cancer. Operation was fixed on the 5<sup>th</sup> December. Rosy, Thomas’ sister, a devotee of Mother Euphrasia was there to look after Thomas. She continued to tell Thomas, “I am praying to Mother Euphrasia every day. Mother will help you heal by her intercession.” Rosy prayed to Mother Euphrasia “Mother you have promised that you will not forget us even after death. I pray to you, give me back my brother. You must.” Tears flowed from her eyes.

### **December 4, 1997**

Doctor Rajiv Rao was taking a fresh scan of Thomas to find out accurately which are the affected areas to be removed. To his great amazement, he could not find any cancer affected area. Cancer had disappeared. The bones were not sick. He

asked for the earlier scan. In it the cancerous area was clearly visible. He said: “Look! Here! The affected areas!” He almost cried out loudly: “This is a miracle! I have not seen something like this in my studies or experience. This is God’s intervention.” He told Thomas: “Thomas, you have no sickness, no need of operation.” At the scheduled time for operation he was discharged and went home with his bag. Immediately Rosy said aloud” “This is done by Mother Euphrasia, as a result of my prayer. Praise be to God. She went on telling it to people after people, as a continuous thanks giving! She could not contain herself. Thus she herself publicized the miracle.

### **The bone cancer healing**

The bone-cancer healing became another milestone in the beatification process. Once I heard about the bone-cancer healing miracle in Thomas, I started from Aluva knowing that this would be another significant marking in the beatification process. I tried to collect the necessary reports and documents. The Postulator Rev. Fr. Lucas Vithuvattikal and the Vice Postulator Sr. Cleopatra went to meet Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy.

### **8<sup>th</sup> January 1999**

The installation of the Apostolic Miracle Tribunal was done on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1999 with the members:

Rev. Fr. Raphael Thattil  
Rev. Fr. Andrews Thazhath,  
Rev. Fr. Shaju Ukkam  
Dr. Sunny Pazhayattil  
Dr. Sr. Celestine CMC  
Sr. Anija CMC

They took oath before Mar Jacob Thommkuzhy and accepted their responsibility.

### **10<sup>th</sup> January 1999**

After two days after the installation of the Apostolic Miracle Tribunal, in St. Mary's Convent Chapel was started rosary, according to my request. Providentially it coincides with Mother Euphrasia's vestition date Jan 10, 1898.

On 2000 May 24<sup>th</sup> the Centenary celebrations of St. Mary's convent Ollur and of Mother Euphrasia's Religious Profession went on beautifully well. To pay homage to the adorable Eucharistic Presence of the Lord for the immense showers of grace He was pouring out I prepared sisters.

### **1 May 2002**

Perpetual adoration started in the St. Mary's Convent chapel on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2002. 4 sisters were appointed for the same. The adoration started soon after holy Mass and went up to 4 p.m. after which the cleaning of the chapel had to be done. People started coming regularly for the adoration. It was also in view of the devotion Mother Euphrasia had to the Sacramental Presence of Jesus. As she was named the 'guardian of the Tabernacle' the sisters who were devoted to her wanted to show their devotion by emulating her exemplary model. More over it was the seasonal climate of Pope John Paul II's *The Ecclesia De Eucharista and the Mane Nobiscum Dominae* emphasizing the meaning of the Eucharist as well as the significance of the Eucharistic Adoration.

### **July 05, 2002 - Venerable Mother Euphrasia**

In the most unexpected moment the Good news reached – "Mother Euphrasia is being raised to the status of venerable. The paper reporters and the public arrived wanting to publicize the latest glad tiding. That day the Catholic Church acknowledged the Heroic Virtues of Mother Euphrasia – so she was declared "Venerable Mother Euphrasia." Sisters and the Ollur Public specially exchanged the glad news "Venerable Mother Euphrasia!" 'So the cause is progressing', they

comforted themselves, encouraged one another and inspired mutually. In prayer, in conversation, in banquets, in communication – everywhere great rejoicing was manifested. Thousands of people joined in the liturgical services on July 5, 2002. After a month the centenary of her death and on October 17<sup>th</sup> her 125<sup>th</sup> birth Anniversary also were celebrated. This was fulfilment of Blessed Chavara's dream to a certain extend.

### **December 3, 2009 Mother Euphrasia Declared BLESSED**

The Ollur Forane Church was got ready in all its glory for 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2006. Quite early dawn people started flowing to the Forane church ground where a big pandal was raised. Several Bishops and Arch Bishops and dignitaries and hundreds of priests and thousands of religious and ten thousands of people took their place in the pandal and the ground. Standing between Ma Jacob Thoomkuzhy, Arch Bishop of Trichur and Papal Nuncio Pedro Lopez Quintana, Major Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil read out Pope Benedict XVI<sup>th</sup> Apostolic Letter declaring Mother Euphrasia to the status of the Blessed. All with one heart and mind sang the praises of God. There was a torrential flow of spontaneous joy, thanksgiving and rejoicing! Halleluiah was on every lips!

### **Towards November 23, 2014**

Very soon the Lord gave the next miracle, ie; on 26<sup>th</sup> December the healing of the thyroglossal cyst of Jewel Jenson, a boy of 6 years. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2007 Sr. Cleopatra (Myself) was appointed Postulator and on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008 the Diocesan Tribunal was established in the diocese of Irinjalakuda by Bishop James Pazhayatil. The tribunal was successfully completed and closed on 31 August 2010 by Bishop Pauly Kannookadan the new Bishop who personally submitted the acts of the tribunal in Rome.

On 25 May 2011, Rev. George Nedungatt, S.J. the Postulator received the validity decree of the Diocesan inquiry on the

miracle. On 22 October Rev. Fr. Cherian Thunduparambil became the postulator. On 2 April 2014 Pope Francis accepted the miracle and on 12 June he announced the date of canonization. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 Pope raised the Carmel Virgin Blessed Euphrasia to Sainthood. Thanks be to God!

Now the joy of joy is that the founder of our congregation, Blessed Chavara Kuriakose Elias and the daughter Blessed Euphrasia are both together raised to sainthood on 23-11-2014. Both CMI and CMC Congregations are united in this great Joy and celebrations in Rome and other places. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014 was the National celebrations of both together in Rajagiri, Kakkanad, Ernakulam District and on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2015 was the Archdiocesan Celebrations of Saint Euphrasia in the Ollur Forane church ground. God be praised for raising a saint from our congregation of the Mother of Carmel, the first indigenous Congregation of Kerala! Glory to God! Praised be His name.

**(Footnotes)**

**Chapter 1**

- <sup>1</sup> Quotations from the Bible are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, India 1993.

**Chapter 3**

- <sup>2</sup> *Mother Euphrasia Letters* Translated and edited by Sr. Dr. Cleopata CMC, Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum, Kerala, India 2013, Hereafter references to this book *Letters* will be given in the text itself.
- <sup>3</sup> The Congregation of the Mother of Carmel to which St. Euphrasia belonged was founded by Father Chavara Kuriakose Elias and by the Co-founder Fr. Leopold Becaro, a Carmelite Missionary Feb. 13, 1866. Here after denoted as CMC.
- <sup>4</sup> CMI - Carmelites of Mary Immaculate was founded by Father Chavara in the year 1831.

#### Chapter 4

- <sup>5</sup> Following the re-division of the dioceses into Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanachery when the sisters belonging to the Trichur Diocese were brought to Ambazhakad convent from Koonammavu, the Superior of the Koonammavu convent sent this letter along with the sisters to Bishop John Menachery of Trichur.

#### Chapter 6

- <sup>6</sup> St Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, Vol II.  
Trans by Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD & Otilio Rodrigue 3 OCD, Carmel Inter National Publishing House, 2001. Mansion 5, chapter 4, article 4. Hereafter reference to this book IC with in the text itself.
- <sup>7</sup> Sr. Dr. Chrisologa, CMC, *Mystic Euphrasia* (Mal.) CMC Publications, 2014, Chapter 1

#### Chapter 7

- <sup>8</sup> *The Praying Mother : Servant of God Mother Euphrasia*, Rev. Fr. J. Ephrem, CR, Trans. Prof. C. A. Regina, Ed. Sr. Cleopatra CMC Vice Postulator, Centenary Inaugural Edition, 1999, p. 16
- <sup>9</sup> Aspirations in *Novena Prayer, Blessed Euphrasia* Prit. Vice Prostulator, St. Mary's Convent, Ollur.

#### Chapter 9

- <sup>10</sup> Sr. Dr. Cleopatra, *Spirit - Filled Virgin : Saint Euphrasia*, Publ. Director Sr. Eupharisia Pilgrim Centre, Ollur, Thrissur, Kerala, India. Further reference to this book SV given in the text itself.

#### Chapter 10

- <sup>11</sup> Sr. Dr. Omer CMC, "*Prayer at its Pinnacle*" from *Hiding to Glory* (Sr. Dr. Cleopatra ed.) Eupharasia publications, Canonization pub. 2014 Hereafter referred as H.G. in the text itself.
- <sup>12</sup> Sr. Dr. Cleopatra ed., *A Dream comes True : St. Chavara and St. Euphrasia* Canonization Publications, Mount Carmel Generalate, 2014, here after referred as *A Dream* in the text itself.
- <sup>13</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican City, 2003. Here after reference to this book EE given in the text itself.

- <sup>14</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, Apostolic exhortation, 1996. Here after referred as V. C.
- <sup>15</sup> *Starting A fresh From Christ* Vathican, 2002. Hereafter referred as SAC in the text itself.
- <sup>16</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* Here after reference to this book MND given in the text itself.
- <sup>17</sup> *Novena Prayer*, St. Euphrasia : Brief Biography, Intercessory Prayer, *Gems of Thoughts, Aspirations* and letter to her niece.

### Chapter 12

- <sup>18</sup> SanJose, *Servant of God Mother Euphrasia* (Mal) Pub. Mother Cleopatra, St. Mary's Convent, Ollur P.O., Thereafter referred as San jos in the text itself.

### Chapter 14

- \* a chapter added to indicate the starting of the cause to the moment of canonization - the fulfilment of the Promise. Refer, Sr. Cleopatra ed. *Anugraheetha Kanyaka* (Mal.)

## CHRONOLOGY

13 Feb 1866	The Foundation of the first indigenous Religious Community of Women (T.O.C.D.) in Kerala by <b>St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias</b> with the co-operation of Fr. Leopold Beccaro OCD in Koonammavu.
02 Jun 1868	The starting of the Boarding ('Edukkumdath' in old Malayalam Language) attached to the Carmelite Convent.
03 Jan 1871	The demise of St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias.
17 Oct 1877	The birth of Rosa (Saint Euphrasia); Parents Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Antony and Kunjethy.
25 Oct 1877	Baptism in the Church dedicated to the Mother of Carmel, Edathuruthy. Name given 'Rosa'.
03 Jul 1888	Rosa entered in Koonammavu Boarding with a desire to become a religious.
15 Aug 1889	Jesus puts a Mystical Ring (First time) on her finger at Koonammavu Boarding at the age of 12 (Letter 37).
17 Sept 1889	The vision of the Holy Family and the miraculous healing from her severe sickness.
17 Aug 1890	The division of the Koonammavu community according to Latin and Syrian Rites.
15 Jan 1897	Aspirant (Koonammavu Convent Chronicle)
09 May 1897	Rosa came to the newly started St. Joseph's Convent, Ambazhakad along with other aspirants and the sisters from Koonammavu Boarding.

A Biography of St. Euphrasia

10 May 1897	Receiving the headdress and the religious name, Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
10 Jan 1898	Receiving the religious habit from Bp. John Menachery, the first native Bishop of Trichur.
24 May 1900	The Blessing of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur and the Profession of Sr. Euphrasia in the Convent Chapel along with the other novices.
08 May 1902	Transferred to Ambazhakad Convent.
29 Apr 1904	Comes back to Ollur Convent.
29 Apr 1904 to 1910	Asst. Superior in St. Mary's Convent, Ollur and In-charge of the Novices.
1910 – 1913	Officially appointed as the First Novice Mistress for a period of 3 years.
1913	The death of her father Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Anthony.
29 Apr 1913 to 14 Apr 1916	Mother Superior of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur
14 Apr 1916 to 26 Oct 1916	In Manalur Convent after transfer.
19 Dec 1919	The demise of Bp. John Menachery.
06 Jul 1921	Episcopal Consecration of Mar Francis Vazhappilly
1923	The death of her mother Kunjethy.
24 May 1925	The Silver Jubilee of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur and that of Mother Euphrasia's Religious Profession.
17 Aug 1928	Transferred to Ambazhakad Convent as Assistant Superior.

29 Mar 1931	Transferred back to Ollur Convent.
12 May 1942	The demise of Bishop Francis Vazhappilly.
01 May 1944	Episcopal Consecration of Bishop George Alappatt.
08 Mar 1948	Death of Mother Euphrasia's brother Kakku.
24 May 1950	Golden Jubilee of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur and that of Mother Euphrasia's Religious Profession.
29 Aug 1952	Death of Mother Euphrasia.
15 Oct 1961	The Central House at St. Mary's Convent, Ollur shifted to Kolazhy, Thrissur.
29 Aug 1963	Bishop George Alappatt publishes the First Prayer for Canonization of Mother Euphrasia.
16 Nov 1963	Unification of CMC of Ernakulam, Changanasserry, Thrissur, Pala and Kothamangalam Provinces.
02 Mar 1967	CMC raised to Pontifical status. Temporary permission for the new Constitution.
18 Feb 1968	Blessing of CMC Generalate in Aluva by Cardinal Hustanburg.
17 Apr 1968	The first General Synaxis of CMC
29 Jul 1969	Inauguration of the Common Juniorate at CMC Generalate.
29 Jul 1969	Bishop George Alappatt handed over the Letters of Mother Euphrasia from the Bishop's house to Thrissur CMC Provincial Superior, Mother Borgia.
16 Aug 1970	The Episcopal Consecration of Bishop Joseph Kundukulam.

29 Aug 1970	The publication of the first book on Mother Euphrasia – <i>Kerala Carmela Kusumam</i> by Fr. Philip OCD.
06 Nov 1973	The demise of Bishop George Alappatt.
17 Oct 1977	Mother Euphrasia’s Birth Centenary.
06 Feb 1986	Pope John Paul II’s papal visit to Trichur.
08 Feb 1986	Beatification of the Founder Father Chavara Kuriakose Elias along with Alphonsamma of Bharananganam in Kottayam.
27 Sep 1986	Thrissur Nirmala Provincial, Mother Cleopatra began the initial steps for the Canonization of Mother Euphrasia.
26 Jun 1987	Permission from the Superior General Mother Prima to take up the Cause of Mother Euphrasia.
13 Aug 1987	Permission from Bishop Joseph Kundukulam for taking up the Cause of Mother Euphrasia.
15 Aug 1987	Appointment Fr. Lucas Vithuvattical CMI as the Postulator for the Cause of Mother Euphrasia by Superior General.
17 Aug 1987	Approval by Bishop Joseph Kundukulam for the appointment of Fr. Lucas Vithuvattical as Postulator.
27 Aug 1987	Cardinal Lourde Swami visited the Tomb of Mother Euphrasia at Ollur.
29 Aug 1987	The 35th Death Anniversary of Mother Euphrasia. Fr. Lucas Vithuvattical CMI took oath as Postulator in front of Bishop Joseph Kundukulam. Mother Euphrasia becomes <b>Servant of God.</b>

09 Sep 1987	Sr. Peregrin is appointed as the Vice-Postulator.
01 Jun 1988	Approval of the Syro-Malabar Bishops Conference for the Cause.
08 Sep 1988	Rome approved the decision to start the Canonization Process.
22 Oct 1988	The Founding of the Diocesan Tribunal under Bishop Joseph Kundukulam in St. Antony's Forane Church, Ollur. Tribunal members: Fr. Joseph Vilangadan – Judge, Fr. Antony Anthikadan, Fr. Dr. Andrews Thazhath, Fr. Dr. Jose Irimpan, Fr. Dr. Paul Blaize Kadicheeni CMI, Sr. Santhi CMC and Sr. Anija CMC.
30 Jan 1990	The official opening of the Tomb of the Servant of God and the interring of the bodily remains in the new Tomb in the middle of the Convent Chapel.
19 Jun 1991	The official closing of the Diocesan Tribunal by Bishop Joseph Kundukulam in Lourdes Cathedral Church.
20 Jun 1991	All the records regarding the Servant of God were sent to Rome through the Nuncio.
Jan 1992	Approval of Rome for the Diocesan Tribunal Acts.
4 Mar. 1992	Sr. Cleopatra too is appointed as Vice-Postulator by the Postulator Fr. Lucas Vithuvattical CMI.
20 Apr 1994	The <b>POSITIO</b> of the Heroic Virtues of the Servant of God is submitted in Rome.

15 Feb 1997	Trichur Archbishop Joseph Kundukulam retired from official status. Bishop Jacob Thoomkuzhy, the Bishop of Thamarassery, is appointed and consecrated the Archbishop of Trichur.
10 May 1997	The Centenary of Mother Euphrasia's coming to Ambazhakad Convent of Trichur diocese from Koonammavu.
04 Dec 1997	The Miraculous Healing of Thomas Tharakan's Bone Cancer through the intercession of Mother Euphrasia.
10 Jan 1998	The Centenary Celebration of Mother Euphrasia's Vestition.
08 Jan 1999	Founding of the Apostolic Miracle Tribunal of the miraculous healing of Thomas Tharakan by Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, the Archbishop of Trichur.
10 Jan 1999	Chain Rosary began in St. Mary's Convent Chapel, Ollur.
12 Feb 1999	The Closing of the Diocesan Miracle Tribunal presided over by Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy.
06 Mar 1999	Miracle Tribunal records submitted in Vatican.
07-21 May 2000	The Centenary celebration programmes of Ollur St. Mary's Convent and also of Mother Euphrasia's religious Profession.
24 May 2000	The Centenary day of Ollur St. Mary's Convent and Mother Euphrasia's Religious Profession.

01 May 2002	Started Perpetual Adoration in Ollur Convent Chapel.
03 May 2002	The acceptance of the heroic virtues of Mother Euphrasia by the Theologians in Rome.
05 Jul 2002	The declaration of Mother Euphrasia <b>'Venerable'</b> by Pope John Paul II.
29 Aug 2002	Golden Jubilee of the death of Mother Euphrasia.
17 Oct 2002	The 125th year Jubilee of Mother Euphrasia's birth.
07 Jan 2004	The visit of Cardinal Moosa Davud, the Prefect of Oriental Congregation, to the tomb of Mother Euphrasia.
08 Jan 2004	Visit of Archbishop Pedro Lopes Quintana, Papal Nuncio, to the Tomb of Venerable Euphrasia.
11 Jan 2004	Visit of C.B.C.I. Bishops to the tomb of Venerable Euphrasia.
10 Mar 2004	Demise of Sr. Perigrin, the Vice-Postulator.
26 Jan 2005	Fr. Lucas Vithuvattical retired from the office of the Postulator.
03 Feb 2005	In the Medical Consultation at Rome, the miraculous healing of Thomas Tharakan from Bone Cancer was approved unanimously.
20 Sep 2005	The approval of the Miraculous Healing by the Theological Consultation in Rome.
25 Nov 2005	The appointment of Fr. George Nedungatt SJ as Postulator with the approval of Rome.

06 Jun 2006	The Cardinals' Consultation accepted the Miracle of Thomas Tharakan.
26 Jun 2006	Pope Benedict XVI gave approval to the miracle.
01 Dec 2006	The Inauguration of Mother Euphrasia Museum by Mar Andrews Thazhath, the Archbishop of Trichur.
03 Dec 2006	The <b>Beatification</b> of Venerable Euphrasia in St. Antony's Forane Church, Ollur by Major Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, reading the Apostolic Letter of <b>Pope Benedict XVI</b> .
20 Dec 2006	Jewel Jenson's Thyroglossal Cyst miraculously healed by the intercession of Bl. Euphrasia.
29 Aug 2007	First Feast of Blessed Euphrasia.
10 Apr 2008	Opening of the Miracle Tribunal of the miraculous healing of Jewel Jenson by Mar James Pazhayattil, the Bishop of Irinjalakuda, in the Bishop's House. Members are (1) Fr. Jose Irimpan – Episcopal Delegate, (2) Fr. Varghese Palathingal – Promoter of Justice, (3) Fr. Joji Palamattath – Notary, (4) Fr. Jaison Karippai – Adjunct Notary, (5) Dr. Sunny George – Medical Expert, (6) Sr. Anija CMC – Office Assistant
23 Apr 2008	The death of Fr. Lucas Vithuvattikkal CMI, former Postulator of Blessed Euphrasia in Mannanam.

29 Jun 2009	A new Convent is constructed attached to the old one to accommodate the sisters, as the major portion of St. Mary's Convent, Ollur is converted to Museum & Art Gallery of Mother Euphrasia.
22 Jan 2010	Death of Thomas Tharakan
31 Jan 2010	The closing of the Diocesan Miracle Tribunal presided over by Bishop Pauly Kannukkaden of Irinjalakuda diocese who succeeded Mar James Pazhayattil.
03 Oct 2010	Mar Pauly Kannukkadan presented the Acts of the Tribunal in the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Rome.
03 Oct 2010	Vice-Postulator Mother Cleopatra, Sr. Chrisologa and a team started the First Retreat for Sisters 'Union with God', in the Novitiate Hall of Blessed Euphrasia. This monthly Retreat continues.
25 May 2011	The Validity Decree of the Diocesan Enquiry of the Miracle of Jewel Jenson is received from Rome.
22 Oct 2011	Fr. George Nedungatt SJ retired from his office in Rome and also from Postulatorship.
22 Oct 2011	Appointment of Fr. Cherian Thunduparambil CMI as Postulator General.
04 Jul 2013	Jewel Jenson's miraculous healing is approved by the Medical Consultation.
17 Dec 2013	Jewel Jenson's Miracle is approved by the Theological Consultation.

18 Mar 2014	Cardinals' Consultation confirmed the approval of the Miracle.
03 Apr 2014	Holy Father Pope Francis signed the document confirming the Miracle.
12 Jun 2014	Pope Francis announced the date for Canonization as 23 November 2014
23 Nov 2014	Canonization of Blessed Chavara and Blessed Euphrasia at St. Peter's Square in Rome.
24 Nov 2014	Pope Francis greets Indian Community at Thanksgiving Mass for St. Chavara and St. Euphrasia, the new Saints, in St. Peter's Church, Vatican.
29 Nov 2014	National Thanksgiving Celebration for St. Chavara and St. Euphrasia at Kakkanad, Ernakulam.
10 Jan 2015	Trichur Archdiocesan Thanksgiving Celebration for St. Chavara and St. Euphrasia at Ollur.





## *About The Author*



**Sr. Dr. Chrisologa  
Moothedan, CMC**

Co-founder of the Retreat Programme along with the Founder Director Mother Cleopatra, CMC of the St. Euphrasia Retreat Centre, started preaching the Retreat for Consecrated Religious from October 3, 2010 during the progressive events towards Canonization, November 23, 2014. Sr. Chrisologas' Doctoral Thesis, *Mysticism in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A study in Inscap and Instress* had already consolidated her insights on Ignatian Mysticism. Now her interest centres round the Carmelite Mystics, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and Saint Euphrasia. She is the author of *Mystic Euphrasia* (2014) in Malayalam. *A Biography of Saint Euphrasia*, is her second publication.

*A Biography Of Saint Euphrasia*