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SUNNY MANIAKKUNNEL

# THE DISCALCED CARMELITES IN INDIA

Volume I

THE CARMELITES AND THE MALABAR CHURCH (KERALA)  
IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> AND 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES  
(1642 - 1773)



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## General Introduction

The Carmelite Order in India is rapidly progressing, standing first in the number of members all over the world and extending the spiritual activities to all most all parts of India and abroad. Once India was the mission field of many Carmelite missionaries of Europe who toiled much in India, dedicated their time and energy, announcing the salvation to the people of India and reuniting the dissident Christians of Malabar. Now the history has changed, India is sending the Carmelite religious to Europe and other countries to help in the pastoral and mission work.

The history of the Carmelites in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the result of the hard work of the Italian Congregation of the Discalced Carmelite Order. The Malabar mission of the Carmelites was not an initiative of the Carmelites but it was entrusted to them by the Holy See after the *Coonan* Cross Oath, which made schism among the St. Thomas Christians. Their main mission in Malabar was reuniting the dissident St. Thomas Christians. The mission to Ad Gentes started in the second face of their work in Malabar. The Carmelites had no political or colonial interest in Malabar. They represented the Holy See in Malabar and the Propaganda Fide as against the Portuguese Jesuits who always represented the Portuguese Crown. In this work we will see how the Carmelites carried out the mission entrusted to them faithfully in spite of the many

difficulties they met with in Malabar. We do not ignore the failures of some of the missionaries as we know that error is human.

The aim of our study is not a mere historical study of the Carmelites but we study it in close relation with Malabar Church. Therefore, it is the study of the Malabar Church in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Our book is divided into six chapters. Our study in the first chapter starts with some insight into the historical background which paved the way for the arrival of the Carmelites in Malabar. Then, we shall deal with the first arrival of the Carmelites in Malabar from Goa to start a religious house which was opposed by the Jesuits and Msgr. Garcia, the Archbishop of Crangannore. We will speak about the familiarities of the Carmelites with Archdeacon Thomas, his appeal for the Carmelites, Holy See sending the Carmelites, the reunion ministry of Sebastiani and Hyacinth of St. Vincent. In the second chapter we shall narrate the events after the expulsion of the Carmelites from Malabar by the Dutch, but their continued assistance to the St. Thomas Christians till the rule of Msgr. Angel Francis. Third chapter concentrates on the various activities of the Carmelites under the government of Msgr. Angel Francis, the Vicar Apostolic of Malabar and the jurisdictional struggle of double regime. In the fourth chapter, we describe various events that took place in the Malabar Church during the time of Msgr. John Baptist Mary. In the fifth chapter we shall deal with the contribution of Msgr. Florence of Jesus, his death and troubles in Malabar. During this period the Carmelites in Malabar started the Mahe mission. Therefore, we shall deal with this mission in the sixth chapter shortly.

Many of the documents for this study are found in the historical archives of the Generalate of the Discalced Carmelites, of the Society of Jesus and of the Propaganda Fide. We had many documents of the Propaganda Fide in the typed copies kept in the archives of the Carmelite Generalate which facilitated our studies. These typed copies seemed to be the tedious work carried out by Fr. Ambrosius of St. Teresa of blessed memory, the former archivist and scholar. But in



our work the references are given to the original document of Propaganda Fide because we have verified the documents in the archives of the Propaganda Fide. We have also consulted many other documents in the archives of the Propaganda Fide and the published documents and books.

We do not claim absoluteness to our work. We tried to find out the information which is available to us. Therefore, the scholars are welcome to indicate the short comings or possible errors if there are.