



# THE MARTYRS OF MANNAR

(From Authentic Documents)

FOURTH CENTENARY

1944

BY

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## FOREWORD

The following is an attempt to place before the Public a record of the Martyrdom of the Mannar Christians, compiled chiefly from Authentic Documents relating to the Martyrdom. It is published this year 1944, to commemorate the Fourth Centenary of the Mannar Martyrs.

Most of the Documents have been taken from Fr. George Schurhammer "Ceylon zur Zeit des Konigs Bhuvaneka Bahu und Frans Xavers" 1539-1552, Leipzig 1928, 2 Vols. Fr. Schurhammer's work has been described as "a marvellous piece of the most accurate research."

But for the major part of the work I am very greatly indebted to the eminent historian the Very Rev. Fr. S. G. Perera, S. J., the Vicar General of Galle, who placed all his notes and documents at my disposal, and above all for the judicious and valuable suggestions he was so kind as to give me.

I must also express my indebtedness to Fr. S. GnanaPrakasara, O. M. I., whose "History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon" was very helpful in the compilation of this booklet.

My thanks are also due to Fr. S. Gomez, O. M. I. a Spanish priest for helping me in the translation of the Spanish and Portuguese Documents, and also Fr. Hubert, O. M. I. and Br. Wryma, O. M. I. for the assistance rendered in translating the notes from German.

In accordance with the prescriptions of Pope Urban VIII the terms MARTYR, MARTYRDOM have been used here in a popular sense, without in any way intending to anticipate the official pronouncement of the Holy See.

A. J. B. ANTONINUS, O. M. I.

St. Xavier's College,  
Mannar.  
3rd Sept., 1944.

## OPINIONS

Fr. S. G. Perera, S. J. who has gone through this booklet and made the necessary corrections and alterations, is now ill in the Private General Hospital, Colombo. From there he writes as this booklet goes to Press:—

Private General Hospital,  
Skelton Road,  
Colombo.  
22nd August, 1944

My dear Fr. Antoninus,

I have gone through these documents with pleasure. I am unable to add anything more to them.

Yours V. Sincerely Xt.  
(Sgd.) S. G. PERERA, S. J.

Rev. Fr. S. GnanaPrakasara, O. M. I. who has scrutinized this Manuscript with his usual historical acumen writes:—

I have gone through the typescript. It is all right with the disclaimer in the Foreword about the use of the words Martyr and Martyrdom. There is nothing like presenting the documents in a case and congratulate Fr. Antoninus for having marshalled them in the true historian's way.

After the publication of "The History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon," some new facts have been brought to light, by Fathers Schurhammer and I Perera who had access to original documents in Lisbon and old views had to be corrected.

(Sgd.) S. GNANAPRAKASARA, O. M. I.

Nallur,  
29-8-44.

Bishop of Chilaw writes:—

Bishop's House,  
Chilaw,  
6th May, 1945.

My dear Fr. Antoninus,

Your booklet on the "Martyrs of Mannar" is a model of careful and accurate research, on one of the most glorious events in the history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon. I am glad you have gone to original documents for information. You have done an excellent job for it. It is well documented, as good history should be, and there is no folklore in it. This fact indeed enhances the value of your work.

Yours devotedly in J. C. & M. I.  
(Sgd.) EDMUND PEIRIES, O. M. I.  
Bishop of Chilaw.

## PREFACE

The publication of a third edition of the "Martyrs of Mannar" had long been a pre-occupation in our minds. The necessity to do so has now become urgent due to feature articles by Rev. Fr. Claude Lawerance O. M. I. both in the Catholic Messenger and the Sunday Times of the 16th January 1983. under the titles "Reviving interest in the Martyrs of Mannar" (Messenger) and "Toddavely and the Martyrs of Mannar" (Sunday Times). Purpose behind these feature articles is to arouse interest in the faithful to collect funds to build a new Church or Basilica at Toddavely in honour of the Martyrs. It is our view that this is not the purpose but a move to shift the site of the Martyrdom to suit new theories. Fr. Claude who was in contact with Fr Antoninus in 1956 regarding the Martyrs sensed this diabolical move, for in the Messenger article he has stated that "other sites of the Martyrdom have been discovered (like Pattim by Fr. Antoninus in 1945) and are awaiting to be enshrined" The Sunday Times is very brief and no mention is made of this site of Pattim, but covertly says that Toddavely is one of the sites. So it appears that the Editor of the Times has given a precis of the article forwarded to him, omitting the salient points. We do not intend to comment on this omission, it is obvious.

To commemorate the fourth Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Kaurawa-Kurukula people (Careas) of Mannar, an authentic history of the events from original documents was published by the late Rev. Dr. P. A. J. B. Antoninus O. M. I. of revered memory in 1944. Among the opinions expressed by well known historians considered authorities produced in this work, the most important one, is that of the late Rev. Fr. S. Gnana Prakarsar O. M. I. quoted from a letter of his to the Superior - General of the Oblates. However, having admitted his inadequacy in this letter and congratulating his colleague for having marshalled documents where by "some new facts have been brought to light by..... who had access to original documents in Lisbon and old views had to be corrected," Fr. GnanaPrakarsar attempted to retract his admission of facts by a letter to the Catholic Messenger of the 3rd June 1945. A prompt rejoinder by the author dated 12. 6. 1945 from Mannar was we presume not published in the Messenger and these letters were added to the second edition on the "Martyrs of Mannar, reprinted in 1945 (Vide App: II & III)

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Fr. Claude Lawerance who sparked off this interest by his feature article to the Messenger and Sunday Times, recalled the discovery by Frs. Desloges and Stanislaus sixty years ago. At that time Fr. GnanaPrakarsar who did not accept this theory contested the findings in a letter to the Catholic Guardian Jaffna dated 13. 12. 1924. Commenting on Toddavely Church excavated by these priests in 1924, he states, "Either the site had been a burial ground previously for some notable persons .....it might have been a number of priests one after the other were buried in it perhaps before the floor, found 'intact' by the excavators was laid". If swords were found at this site as mentioned by one writer, then the site surely was a "Burial ground for some notable persons". It is strange that Fr. GnanaPrakarsar did not mention this view in his letter to the Messenger of the 3rd June 1945!

When the new Mannar Diocese was announced, columnists in the Messenger drew attention to the Martyrs of Mannar (26th July 1981). A scholar priest of the present day, Rev. Fr. V. Perniola S. J. elaborated on the subject of the "Early Christian Community of Mannar". We therefore take the liberty to reprint the authentic version on the Martyrs of Mannar and the site documented by the late Rev. Dr. P. A. J. B. Antoninus. O. M. I, M. A: Phd D: Dip. Adv. Education. In this edition we incorporate a description of the excavation done by the author in 1945 and a Supplement on the Post Antoninus Period since 1975 on the subject of the Martyrs and Madu Shrine published in the Messenger and those not published. The Kadeas themselves admit in their writings that they came to Mannar only in the year 1560. Will the authorities gracefully erect a fitting memorial at the proper site.

12, Claessen Place,  
Colombo. 5  
Sri Lanka  
21st April 1983.

F. B. Jagath Wijayanayaka  
Managing Editor  
Kurukshetra  
Siri-Lak-Indo Studies.



IMPRIMATUR

✠ J. A. GUYOMAR, O. M. I.

BISHOP OF JAFFNA.

## 1. STATE OF CEYLON AT THE ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE

The Portuguese had landed in Colombo for the first time in 1506<sup>1</sup>. By 1518 they had built a fort there and promised their protection to the King of Kotte in return for an annual tribute. Though the fort was dismantled six years later, the influence of the Portuguese continued to increase especially after 1521. The three brothers, Bhuvaneka Bahu, Rayigam Bandara and Mayadunna had murdered their uncle, the King of Kotte and divided the kingdom between them. Batticaloa and Trincomalee were governed by a Tamil ruler. The kingdom of Jaffna which included the northern extremity of the island, Mannar, the Island of Cows or Neduntivu and the neighbouring islands, was ruled by a Tamil Raja, Chekarasa Sekaran VII, popularly known as Sankilly<sup>2</sup>.

By 1540 Pope Paul III had canonically instituted the Society of Jesus. Within six months one of the original members of the new Society became deeply interested in the island of Ceylon. This was Francis Xavier, the ardent Spaniard who renounced the professorship of the University of Paris and joined the noble band of Ignatius of Loyola.

By 1541 the Indian missions begun by the Portuguese Missionaries needed a Papal Legate. Simon Rodriguez, a Portuguese Jesuit, was selected for the task but owing to his illness, Xavier was chosen in his stead. It was at Lisbon, while getting ready to set sail with the new Governor of India, Martin Affonso de Souza, that Francis Xavier first heard of Ceylon. On the 18th March, 1541 he wrote to Ignatius Loyola that he heard from the Governor "of an island in India inhabited by gentiles, with no Moors nor Jews, where there was great scope for the Gospel, as the King of the island himself, makes no difficulty about becoming a Christian with all his people."<sup>3</sup>

### Notes:

1. About the date see Ferguson in J. C. B. R. A. S. 59, pages 234—400.
2. See Schurhammer Ceylon. Translated by Fr. S. G. Perera, C. L. R. Volume IV, page 380.
3. Cf. Schurhammer Ceylon page 98, D. 3 and Fr. S. G. Perera, Jesuits in Ceylon, page 2.

The King referred to, is Bhuvaneka Bahu VII of Kotte with whom Martin Affonso de Souza was well acquainted. cf. Schurhammer (D 127, 111, 34).

## 2. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER IN INDIA

Francis Xavier who was destined to be the Great Apostle of the Indies had set foot on Indian soil, at Goa on the 6th of May, 1542 - date ever memorable in the Christian annals of the East.

Two years had scarcely elapsed since his arrival, when the renown of his Apostolate spread far and wide and drew to him deputations from different quarters praying him to come to their country and instruct them in the Catholic Faith.

The year 1544 seems to have been the peak year of conversions in the East. King Joao III of Portugal writing to Pope Paul III mentions this year as a record year "during which a great number of souls was converted in many territories of the pagans, because in the kingdom of Travancore which is situated along the coast of India near the Fortress of Colao, about the month of October of the same year, Father Master Francis baptised ten thousand pagans, called by the natives themselves from place to place. To this Father, Our Lord granted so much favour and grace that those who were baptised, no sooner returned to their houses, than they got all their families baptised, and they stripped the temples and smashed their idols to pieces." cf. (D. 10).

## 3. DEPUTATION TO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

"Of the various states which sent to ask Xavier to come and impart the light of Gospel to them" writes Bartoli "none is so deserving of remembrance. none so deserving of praise and as we may say, of a holy envy as the Mannarites who proved themselves the beautiful models and masters of patience and heroic fortitude to the whole of that new Eastern Church." cf. (D. 25)

The deputation from Mannar came from 'Careapatao' to Francis Xavier while he was in Punaikayal in August 1544. He had decided to send Fr. Mansilhas, S. J. to Mannar and to send Francis Coelho a native priest who worked with him in the Fishery Coast to replace Fr. Mansilhas. Fr. Mansilhas was to see the captain of Nagapatam, to get a letter of recommendation from him to the King of Jaffnapatam, on whom the Island of Mannar depended.

Writing to Fr. Mansilhas, S. J. from Punaikayal on the 21st of August, 1544, St. Francis Xavier says 'As soon as the land is freed from the Badagas, have me informed of it, so that without danger to the people I may send Francis Coelho to replace you. You will then go to render to God the service of baptising those of Careapatao as also the Careas of Baedale and their Mudaliyar. The captain of Nagapatam enjoys the favour of the King of Jaffnapatam on whom these Isles of Mannar depend. He could undertake to recommend them to their King. As soon as your country shall be secured against the Badagas, send me a messenger so that I may send you Francis Coelho with money and letters and instructions as to what you should do at Mannar.' cf. (D. 1).

The Badagas, in Tamil, the Vadukar were the emissaries of the Nayaka rulers of Madura. At this time these Vadukars were devastating the defenceless Christian villages of the Fishery Coast. The Paravas of the fishery Coast, *ie* from Comorin to Ranmad - were then under the jurisdiction of the Nayakas or 'Naiques' of Madura, Governors subject to the King of Vijayanagar, the Bisnager or 'Narsinga' of the Portuguese. The Nayakas were at war during those days with Travancore, and the Moors of the Western Coast had profited by this circumstance to exploit the Pearl Fishery (cf. Fr. Gnanapragasar. Catholic Church in Ceylon, page 40).

It was a period of anxiety for St Francis Xavier. He had placed Francis Mansilhas, a Jesuit Novice who had accompanied him to the Pearl Fishery Coast, in charge of the Parava Christians. As the menace of the Vadukars continued, Mansilhas who had received orders to proceed to Mannar in August 1544, was unable to go there to baptise those people of Careapatao.<sup>1</sup>

### Note:

1. Careapatao according to Schurhammer refers to the little village of Patim, the so called small village of the Careas of which Father Anriquez writes from Tuticorin to the Superior General in 22nd December, 1564 "In Mannar there are two villages of the Christians, of the caste of Careas. In the larger there did not enter the illness (Pestilence) of the last year. In the smaller are the Christians who were dwellers of the said Mannar before we passed over it". cf. (D. 23). The big village of the Careas consisted of Careas and the Paravas who as Fr. Anriquez wrote, migrated from the Fishery Coast to Mannar in 1560, cf. (D. 20) and that big village must be San Thomepatanam, which is now the Moorish village of Erukalam-paddi.

Schurhammer also remarks that Brou and after him Fr. Gnanapragasar erroneously identified Careapatao as Lugar dos Careas or Peisale which Lopez mentions in 1664. cf. Schurhammer page 135.

#### 4. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER SENDS A CLERIC TO MANNAR

It was now October 1544. As St. Francis Xavier was engaged in baptising the Mukkuas of Travancore. cf. (D. 2) (D. 10) and as Mansilhas could not be replaced he sent to Mannar a Cleric. St. Francis Xavier writing on the 27th January, 1545 from Cochin to the Jesuit Fathers in Rome says "Now I speak of what I know, you are most anxious to hear about the state of religion in India. In this region of Travancore where I am now, God has drawn many to the Faith of his Son Jesus Christ. In the space of one month I made Christians of more than ten thousand.

The Island of Mannar is about 150 miles from this place. Its inhabitants sent me some of their people to beg me to go there to baptise them, as they had determined to become Christians. I was occupied on affairs of the greatest importance, relating to the interests of religion and so could not go myself, but I asked a Cleric to go and baptise them and after he went and baptised many of them, the King of the land inflicted many tortures and great cruelties also, because they became Christians." cf. (D. 3).

St. Francis Xavier does not say that he sent a priest but that he sent a Cleric — *Rogue a un Clerigo*. According to Queyroz, the Cleric's name was also Francis Xavier<sup>1</sup> and though there were some Clerics, he (St. Francis Xavier) had others ordained who showed some capacity and among others, one to whom he gave his own name, thinking that thus he placed him under greater obligation. The name Francis Xavier however sat well on his disciple, on account of his virtues and fervour with which he preached and converted his countrymen" cf. (D. 26), The Cleric therefore must have been a native.

#### 5. THE FACT OF CONVERSION REACHES THE EARS OF KING OF JAFFNAPATAM

God was pleased to crown the labours of this Cleric Francis Xavier with such success, that in a short time he instructed a vast number of inhabitants of Mannar and "made them Christians with the usual ceremonies" cf. (D. 10).

Note:

1. This is mentioned only by Queyroz.

The fact that this Cleric was making a number of converts was reported to Sankilly, the King of Jaffna by the "Jedacas or Hindu priests" says Queyroz. "The Cleric Francis Xavier reached Mannar where he was well received and after catechising the people he baptised up to six hundred persons thoroughly well grounded in the Faith as their constancy showed. The Jedacas or priests of that heathendom received tidings of this and tumultuously marched to Nelur to represent to the King in the darkest colours, the outrage of a Minister of another religion going about his territories, perverting the people and setting them against him. They said that unless he took prompt action, he would soon find himself without a kingdom, without lieges and without pagodes, that a great many of the existing pagodes were already razed and an unknown God was worshipped in their place. And they represented these dangers and what would result, with such exaggeration that the King forthwith determined to avenge it." cf. (D. 26).

#### 6. SANKILLY, KING OF JAFFNAPATAM

In those days Mannar was dependant on the crown of Jaffnapatam. King Sankilly, by force of arms had dispossessed his elder brother and assumed the throne under the name of Chekarasa Sekaran. cf. (D. 1). Bartoli and Maffei describe him as a cruel man, a compound of vice and barbarity, a tyrant rather than the sovereign of his people. cf. (D. 25). Regarding his cruelty, Couto says "At the gate of his palace our people found a very huge block on which he ordered many of his vassals to be beheaded; and to do this it was not necessary to have many trials or proofs of crimes, since there sufficed for it a very little story and even suspicion, imagination or dream." cf. (Couto VII. ix 3). He acted the pirate on the high seas in the neighbourhood of his kingdom, and claimed as his own all the merchandise of the ships stranded off its shores.

#### 7. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE MANNAR CHRISTIANS

When Sankilly heard of the conversion of the Mannarites he swore not to leave one of them alive. According to Queyroz "he mustered five thousand men-at-arms partly

from the coast of the mainland and partly from Jaffnapatam and set out for Mannar where he met no other resistance than that of tears which some shed out of consolation and joy at seeing the constancy with which others died. the smallest children crying out when their mothers tried to hide them from seeing their companions beheaded: they offered their throats to the executioners with wonderful power of Faith." cf. (D. 26).

"The order was executed with as much cruelty as it was given: without distinction of age, sex, or rank, men, women, youth and infancy - in a word whoever received Baptism, were ruthlessly slaughtered - admirable were the effects of the Grace of Baptism. As each one in turn was asked whether he or she were Christian, whereas a negative answer would at once have placed their lives in safety, so generous were those neophytes that far from having recourse to subterfuge they boldly confessed the Faith fathers and mothers answering for their little ones to whom age has at yet denied the power of speech. cf. Bartoh (D. 26).

St. Francis Xavier was indignant when he heard of this news. In the letter he wrote to the Jesuit Fathers in Rome on the 27th January, 1545 from Cochin he says ".....and after he (the Cleric Francis Xavier), went and baptised many of them, the King of that land inflicted many tortures on many of them and great cruelties also, because they became Christians. Thanks be to God our Lord, because we do not lack martyrs in our time. And that while he sees so few souls avail themselves of all His Divine mercy and indulgence to work out their salvation, He permits in the mystery of His Providence that human barbarity should fill up the destined ranks and number of the Blessed.

I have already written to you word how great a friend the Governor of India is to me, and to all the Society. He was so angry and indignant at the horrible slaughter of the converts that as soon as I began to speak to him about it he ordered a powerful fleet to be fitted out for the destruction of the tyrant, and I was obliged myself to restrain the warmth of his most righteous indignation. This same Raja, who has put the Christians to death has a brother the legitimate heir to the crown, who lives in exile for fear of his brother's cruelty. This Prince has promised that if he is put in possession of his dominions by the Governor, he would become Christian, as well as the principal persons of

his kingdom. The Governor has given orders to his officers, to restore him to the throne, if he embrace the Christian religion, and to put to death the Raja who persecuted the converts or to treat him as I shall think proper. I do not doubt that the prayers of the converts whom he has rendered martyrs may win for him the Grace to acknowledge his wickedness and blindness, and that after doing a wholesome penance he may obtain pardon from God, for so much crime and barbarity." cf. (D. 3). This is the earliest record we have of the Martyrdom of the Mannar Christians.

The King of Portugal, D. Joao III, in his memorial to Pope Paul III, written on the 19th of February, 1546, mentions the Martyrdom of the Mannar Christians. "The King of the place instigated by the devil began to persecute the said Christians with great tortures and cruelty. Praise be to God that in our days the name of the elect is increasing. All those who a short while ago had received Holy Baptism, died confessing our Holy Catholic Faith bravely received the crown of glorious Martyrdom.

"The greater part of the people are so touched and stirred at the constancy of those glorious martyrs and are so much scandalized at the tyranny which the aforesaid king exercises over his subjects and at the treachery he showed to a brother of his, who was the legitimate heir to the kingdom, that please God, all the kingdom and people who are more than ten thousand persons may soon be converted and saved, and so we hope through the prayers of those holy martyrs and through the care and holy indignation with which the Governor was informed and advised by Master Francis, he (the Governor) plans to punish the aforesaid king of Jaffnapatam and to restore to his brother the possession of the kingdom which belongs to him by right, which brother offers himself to become a Christian with all his people." cf. (D. 10).

## 8. THE NUMBER MARTYRED

Most of the documents published speak of a number between 600 to 700 that were martyred. St. Francis Xavier says "many of them." cf. (D. 3). Andre de Souza writing

Note:

1. The punishment of the king of Jaffnapatam, vide infra XIII.

to King Don Joao III of Portugal on the 15th November 1545, says that the King of Jaffnapatam "has killed 700 and odd Christians." cf. (D. 4).

Fr. Juan de Beira, S. J. writing to Fr. M. de Santa Cruz, S. J. from Goa on the 20th of November, 1545, speaks of "seven hundred" others who were his vassals he put to death, cf. (D. 8).

Prince Don Joao of Kotte writing to King of Portugal Don Joao III from Goa in November, 1545, says "the tyrant" had put to death seven hundred Christians. cf. (D. 15).

Fr. Le Fevre in a letter to Fr. Martin Sancta Cruz mentions about the "glorious death of the six hundred martyrs" cf. (D. 17).

The opinion of the learned on the Indian Missions written in Evora in November, 1545, mentions the number of martyrs to be six hundred. "It was the King of Jaffnapatam who sent to kill the six hundred people who became Christians." cf. (D. 6).

Maffei and Bartoli give us the impression that all those who received Baptism "whoever had received Baptism were ruthlessly slaughtered." cf. (D. 25). This is not correct. Fr. Anriquez Anrique writing from Mannar on the 19th of December, 1561 says that there were Christians before we came to this island and that was in 1560. "It is true" he says "that at the time we came to inhabit it, they were out of the said island on account of the said cruelties inflicted on them by the king of the country." cf. (D. 20 & 23, D. 3) Note 3.

It is therefore obvious that some of the converts had escaped to the mainland, to Mantota, but returned to their village at Patim when the Jesuit Fathers of the Fishery Coast came to Mannar with their flocks in 1560.

## 9. PERSONS MARTYRED

In the earliest records, we have no mention of any persons by name that were martyred. Only Queyroz speaks

of two individuals. He says that "the tyrant thought that he could kill the Christians and the Cleric Francis Xavier with impunity." cf. (D. 26) also cf. Queyroz p. 243. So the Cleric Francis Xavier was also martyred along with the rest, according to the above. But Schurhammer thinks that this is unhistorical (cf. Schur. p. 141 (D. 20) note). It will be no doubt interesting to know what happened to this Cleric Francis Xavier who with such zeal preached the Faith and baptised so many Christians. It is natural to expect that he perished with his flock, the shepherd falling with the sheep.

Queyroz also mentions among the Martyrs one Uracinga *i. e.*, Ilam Singha, who was at that time a sort of Governor of Mannar, a tributary prince. "He was so fortunate as to suffer for the Faith with the rest." cf. Queyroz by Father S. G. Perera, page 393.

There is an old tradition as recorded by Dr. Bonjean in the Missions Catholiques of Lyons (VI, 539) that a valiant Christian named Santa Cruz also suffered for the Faith. "This convert was a man of some standing among his own and Sankilly's men were in hot pursuit after him as he had been known to be going about among the Christians, comforting and encouraging them to lay down their lives joyfully for God. The executioners are said to have overtaken him just where the old Cemetery of Mannar is, and to have severed his head with one stroke of the sword." (cf. Fr. Gnanapragi sar, History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon—Page 45).

We have no early records or documents to support this tradition. It is true that the Island was once known as "Sancta Curusu Teevu," and the old cemetery is mentioned in Boake's "Manual of Mannar" as Sancta Cruz Cemetery.

In the map of Duperron in 1789, Mannar Island is divided into five sections—Talaimannar, Pesalai, Karsel, Totewallie and St. Kroes, with a Church marked.

## 10. THE DATE OF THE MARTYRDOM

The exact date of the Martyrdom is not known. Judging from the existing documents, the event seems to have taken

place between the month of October and December 16th 1544. On the 21st of August, 1544, St. Francis Xavier wanted to send Fr. Mansilhas to Mannar to "Baptise those of Careapatao." cf. (D. 1.)

In October, 1544, St. Francis Xavier was busy converting the Mukkwars of Travancore and as he could not come to Mannar he sent the Cleric Francis Xavier—cf. (D. 10). On the 18th of December, 1544, St. Francis Xavier, writing to Fr. Mansilhas from Cochin, says "On the 16th of December I arrived at Cochin. Before I arrived, I baptised all the Mukuwa fishermen who live in the kingdom of Travancore and God knows how much I would have rejoiced to return immediately to finish the baptism of those that remain, if it did not seem to the Vicar General that it was of greater service to God to go where Signor Governor is, to negotiate the punishment of the king of Jaffnapatam." cf. (D. 2).

This is the first intimation we have of the Martyrdom and the effort of St. Francis Xavier to move the Governor to punish the king of Jaffnapatam. The work of the conversion in India was momentarily stopped owing to the news of the massacre of the Mannar Christians. King D. Joao III. writing to Pope Paul III, says "In the kingdom of Travancore, which is situated along the coast of India, near the Fortress of Colao, about the month of the same year, Fr. Master Francis baptised 10,000 pagans called by the native themselves from place to place. To this Father, Our Lord God granted so much favour and grace that those who were baptised, no sooner returned to their homes, than they got all their families baptised and they stripped the temples of their idols and smashed them to pieces. And he gave orders in those places that the people may be instructed in the Holy Catholic Faith twice a day. Thus in a short time, the Word of God bore much fruit and it would have produced much more were it not for an important affair concerning the Faith. The aforesaid Fr. Francis has been forced to set off to go to the Governor of those places for the following reasons . . ." cf. (D. 10). Then the king goes on describing the Martyrdom of the new converts of Mannar.

Prince Don Joao of Kotte writing to King D. Joao III from Goa, on the 15th of November, 1545, says "The tyrant eight months ago put to death 700 Christians" cf. (D. 15). That will mean March 1545, which is inaccurate. St. Francis Xavier mentions the Martyrdom already in his letter to the Jesuit Fathers in Rome written from Cochin on the 27th January, 1545, and speaks of the "punishment" of the King of Jaffnapatam in his letter to Mansilhas dated 18th December, 1544. It is generally held that the Martyrdom took place in November or the beginning of December, 1544—cf. Schurhammer — page 216 (D. 40), Note 5.

## II. THE PLACE OF MARTYRDOM

The name of the place where the Mannar Martyrs were killed is given as Patim, which was later called by the Portuguese Illa dos Martyres—the Island of Martyrs. cf. (D. 25).

In 1583, A Valignani, a visitor for India in his *Hist. del principio-y-progessos dela Compagnia de Jesu en las Indias Orientales* for which he used the work of Teixeira, pointed out Patim in Mannar as the place of the Martyrdom. He verified this on his visit to Cape Comorin in 1575. cf. Schurhammer page 21, also Mon. Xav. 1.55.

In 1594, Tursellinus describes in his book *De Vita P. Francis Xav. the Martyrdom of the 600. in Patim*—CH. 12 to 13 cf. p. 24— Schurhammer.

In 1601, Lucena, in his *Vida do P. Fr. Xav. II, Ch. 19* mentions Patim as the place of the Martyrdom.

In 1616, out of the 12 witnesses from Mannar, giving evidence in India during the Process of Beatification of St. Francis Xavier, a certain 40 year old Manoel de Thaide said that he heard from Joao Mello Sampayo, the Captain of Mannar and Captain General of Kandy who saw with his own eyes that, when there were daily 200 to 300 people dying from pest in Patim in Mannar, 3,000 inhabitants had asked him for help. St. Francis Xavier offered prayers and in three

days all the sick were cured and the pest disappeared. So all the heathens asked him to baptise them—cf. Mon. Xav. II, 561 to 562 also Schurhammer page 35.

In 1653, Bartoli, in Book I says "between 600 and 700 were slain on this occasion. The place of their Martyrdom called Pasim deserved a more noble name and accordingly from this date it has been called Illa dos Martyres—the Island of Martyrs." Pasim is evidently a misprint in Bartoli. repeated by subsequent writers like Bouhours, De Vos, Van Nieuwenhoff, who even made it "Passim."

In 1672, Garcia in his Vida y milagros de St. Fr. Xav. follows exactly Bartoli but writes Patim correctly, only makes Jaffnapatam into Xasana -patam.

P. Giuseppe Massi, S. J., in his life of St. Francis Xavier which was published in Rome in 1681, writes Pisan instead of Patim.

One writer, P. Marcellino de Civezza, uses the word "Pontino" for Patim. He speaks of the Mannar Martyrs and the Franciscan Missionaries in Pontino on the Island which is in the Mantote District. cf. Schurhammer page 56.

But in 1644 Fr. A. Lopes, the Provincial of Malabar wrote to the General of the Society "Residence of Totavely. The Patron of this Residence is the Apostle St. Andrew. It has 430 Christians. These Christians are the first that received baptism in the Island in the time of the Apostle St. Francis Xavier and from among them were 600 who died Martyrs. On account of them this Island is called the Island of Martyrs."

Fr. S. G. Perera thinks that this passage of Fr. Lopes about Totavely has misled a number of Historians. Totavely is not the place of Martyrdom. "My reasons for discarding Totavely" writes Fr. Perera, as the place of Martyrdom are:—

1. All previous writers speak of Patim. Fr. Anrriquez in 1561, Valigani in 1583, Tursellians in 1594, Lucerna in 1601, Manoel de Thaida in 1616, Garcia in 1672—all mention the place of Martyrdom as Patim.

2. It is so stated 100 years after the event by Fr. Ander Lopes only.

3. Fr. Lopes was only a passing visitor—a Provincial making his visitation.

4. Fr. Anrriquez was a missionary actually working in Mannar and who was more likely to know facts than a Visitor coming 100 years later. There is also no reason to suppose that the people of Totavely were brought to Patim for massacre. The idea that the massacre took place at Totavely is a misreading of what Fr. Lopes wrote 100 years after the event. Speaking of the residence of Totavely, he said in his account of the Jesuit Missions, that the people of Totavely were the first to embrace Christianity in the time of St. Francis Xavier and the martyrs were "from among them" This statement is intended to apply to the people, not to the place; in other words the congregation of Totavely consisted of the Careas of Mannar. They belonged to Totavely in 1644. There is no reason to conclude that they were at Totavely at the time of the Martyrdom. The identity is the people not the place. Besides Lopes is not to be relied on too much, for he merely mentions the fact in passing apparently off his own bat, for he confuses the martyrs and the prince put to death about the same time, believing him to be a son of the King of Jaffna. Schurhammer criticises Fr. Gnanapragasar for his Totavely version, saying that he is following Courteny, Queyroz, Zalesky and Bartoli "a dangerous combination" cf. letter. Fr. S. G. Perera, 4 Jan. '44.

There is no doubt that Patim was the place of the Martyrdom. The -im in Patim is only the Portuguese way of writing a name ending in -i e.g., Cochin or Cochim for Koch-chi, Chettim for Shetti, Lascarim for Lashkari, Patangatim for Paddankaddi, etc. So the vernacular name must have been Patti.

## 2. WHERE IS PATIM, OR PATTI?

The exact spot of the Martyrdom has long been a puzzle. But the letters of Fr. Anrriquez Anrrique who was Parish priest of Mannar (1561-1564) give us some indication as to the position of Patim.

Writing from Mannar on the 19th of December, 1561, Fr. Anriquez Anrique says "Half a league from the Fortress is a place which they called Patim. In it were Christians of the same island of the caste of Careas, who were already Christians before we came to this island. It is true that at the time we came to inhabit it, they were out of the said island on account of injuries done by the king of the country: cf. (D 20). "*Meya fêgoa da fortaleza esta hum lugar a que chamam Patim; neste estam christaos da mesma ilha de casta de Careas, que eram ja christaos antes que a esta ilha viesemos. Verdade he que no tempo que a viemos povoar, estavam elles fors de mesma ilha por agravoz feitos do Rei de terra,*"

Again from Tuticorin Fr. Anriquez writes on the 22nd of December, 1564 "*Em Manar estam dous lugares da Christaos de casta de Careas. No mayor nao lentreu a doenca do ano passado No pequeno estamos Christaos, que eram moradores do dito Manar: antes que para elle passemos.*" In Mannar there are two villages of the Christians of the caste of Careas. In the larger there did not enter the illness.— (pestilence) of the last year. In the smaller are the Christians who were dwellers of the said Mannar before we passed over to it. cf. (D) 23).

From the extracts given above we know two things. First that the village of Patim was half a league from the Fortress. Second that the Christians of Patim were the first converts of the Cleric Francis Xavier.

Fortress or the Fort of Mannar was built by the Portuguese in 1560 under the supervision of the Viceroy D. Constantino de Braganca. cf. (D. 19, Note 1). The same Fort says Emerson Tennent was "strengthened by the Dutch" when they captured it under Ryklof Van Goens in 1658. It is still in a good state of preservation standing as it does close to the strait and fronting the mainland. The Christians of the Pearl Fishery emigrated from their lands to this Island of Mannar in 1560 and for their defence a Captain by name Jorge de Mello de Castro with 150 soldiers and six ships were left. Fr. Jeromino Vaz was made Chaplain of the Fort. He built a

Church and a hospital in the Fort and from there he looked after the Christians of Patim. At Patim a church was built and as Fr. Anriquez says: "Fr. Jeromino Vaz comes there every Tuesday to say Mass and deliver a sermon and spends the day in Patim" This village of Patim was half a league from the Fort. A league is generally three or three-and-a-half miles. But according to Ferguson a Portuguese league was four and one-fourth English miles cf. J. C. B. R. A. S. Vol. XX, p. 29. So half a league should be a little over two miles.

We also note from Fr. Anriquez's letters that the village of Patim was the abode of the "Christians of the caste of the Careas" who were the first converts of the Cleric Francis Xavier. It was from Patim or Careapatao that the deputation went to St. Francis Xavier inviting him to come to Mannar. cf. Schurhammer. p. 135, (D. 17), Note 4. Fr. Anriquez says that "they were already Christians before we came to this island. It is true that at the time we came to inhabit it, they were out of the said island on account of the cruelties of the king of the country." And again "in Mannar there were two villages of the Christians of the caste of the Careas. In the large village where the pestilence did not enter lived the immigrants from the Fishery Coast. It was called Luger dos Careas or Lugar for short. Brou identifies it with Peinale or Pesale but according to the Memoir of Vanhee, Lugar therefore should be identified with St. Thomepatao which is the present Moorish village Erukalam paddi.

"In the smaller are the Christians who were the dwellers of the said Mannar before we passed over it." This obviously refers to Patim, "There were others of the same caste of the Careas" continues Fr. Anriquez, "who were heathens when we came and were on the other side of the river before our arrival. They came to their kinsmen and were baptised." cf. (D. 20). The other side of the river refers to Mantota in the mainland. cf. (D. 9).

### 13. THE EFFECT OF THE MARTYRDOM

The brutal onslaught which Sankilly, the King of Jaffnaparam made on the Catholic converts of his realm at Mannar,



resulted in the downfall of his power and a total surrender, to the Portuguese, of his kingdom. "The tyrant thought that the could kill the Christians with impunity without considering that their blood would cry out to the Portuguese for vengeance and that sooner or later he would have to pay for cruelty wherewith he cut off those tender plants and hard-won fruits, and desolated the island to people Heaven, to the holy envy of the Europeans and the great grief of King D. Joao, who as he desired that new Christians should be treated in all matters with great, love and regard, felt this tyranny as a personal affront" cf. (D. 20)."

Though the Portuguese had occasionally touched at the port of Mannar, they had not effected any settlement nor did they show any desire to capture Mannar. It was the persecution of the Mannar Christians which drew on Sankilly the vengeance of the Portuguese. St. Francis Xavier who was aghast at the news of this Martyrdom, had to suspend all his work of conversion and went straight off to Cochin and thence to Goa to get in touch with the Governor Martim Affonso de Souza. He felt that if the Raja of Jaffnapatam were not immediately punished there would be no hope for Christianity. The Governor was so angry and indignant that he ordered a powerful fleet to be fitted out for the destruction of the tyrant. cf. (D. 3 & D. 2). "The Governor sent letters to the Captains in command of the Coast, ordering them to assemble all their troops and meet together in Nagapatam, from whence they should fall on the King of Jaffnapatam and either slay him or capture him alive, and place him in the hands of Fr. Francis who was to be the arbitrator for his life or death." cf. Bartoli, by Faber p. 83.

St. Francis Xavier went over to Cochin and then travelled with Fr. Mansilhas to Ceylon, intending to go to Nagapatam from there where the Portuguese fleet was nearly equipped. Bartoli makes St. Francis Xavier go from Ceylon to the Island of Cows (Neduntivu) and there he converts a Saracen boy and then to Mannar "where he reverently, kissed the soil which had been saturated with the blood of so many glorious champions of the Faith." And at the same time he stopped the

pestilence at Patim and then proceeded to Nagapatam to urge on the Portuguese fleet, then nearly ready to set sail. To his extreme regret he found that an unexpected event had quite changed the aspect of affairs. A merchantman returning from Pegu had struck on the coast of Jaffnapatam and had been plundered by the tyrant; the merchants fearing that the declaration of war would at once destroy all chance of recovering any of their property, made such strong representations that the officers stopped the movement which finally was utterly abandoned. St. Francis Xavier mentions this in a letter to the Directors of the College of Sancta Fe. written from Cochin on the 27th January, 1545 "Jaffnapatam was not taken nor was the possession of the kingdom given to the king who was to become a Christian. This was not done because they ran ashore a ship of the king that came from Pegu and King of Jaffnapatam seized the goods and until what he seized is recovered, that which the Governor ordered is not to be done; Please God that it be done if it shall be for His service... I was in Jaffnapatam some days." St. Francis Xavier after prophesying about Ceylon returns to St. Thome. cf. Bartoli (C. 4a).

"But Our Lord would not permit that an affair so conducive to His glory and so ardently desired by the Saint should be entirely forgotten. Fifteen years later D. Constantine de Braganca, Viceroy of the Indies defeated the barbarous king, wrested Mannar from his iron rule and subjected it to the crown of Portugal." cf. Bartoli also (D. 19),

De Braganca inviting the Christians of the Fishery Coast to come to Mannar, a land which "the Holy Martyrs purchased it for them in gratitude for the Faith which came to them from that country" says "The conquest of the Kingdom of Jaffnapatao and of the Island of Mannar are both due to one reason, though the results are different." cf. (D. 19).

#### 14. THE EFFECT OF THE MARTYRDOM IN EUROPE

The news of the glorious Martyrdom of the Mannar Christians no doubt made a profound impression in Europe. Miguel Vaz, the Vicar. General of Goa, reached Portugal in

October, 1545. He delivered in person the Indian letters to King D. Joao and gave a detailed account of the Martyrdom as he heard it from St. Francis Xavier, before he set out early in January of the same year. The King was thrilled with the news. He wrote at once to the Jesuit Superior asking for more missionaries to be sent to India. There was a wave of enthusiasm of the Indian Missions. Fr. Martim de Santa Cruz, the Rector of the College of Coimbra writing to Fr. Le Fevre the Visitor General of the Jesuit in 1545 betrays his emotion. "We have received letters from Father Francis. We are all moved by them to such an extent that no effort is needed to transfer all the College of Coimbra to India. There are more glad tidings than Master Francis has written about. The King asked me for a dozen priests for being sent to India this year." cf. (D. 16).

Fr. Le Fevre with transports of joy exclaims "I do not know how to give expression to all that my soul has felt in Jesus Christ on learning about the glorious death of the six hundred Martyrs of India. How happy we would be if we could possess in Europe the relics of their bodies and of their blood— we who are the elders in Faith." cf. (D. 17).

## 15 THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS — THE SEED OF FAITH

There is no doubt that the marvellous conversion of the entire Island of Mannar was due to the prayers of these Glorious Martyrs. Fr. Anriquez gives us interesting details as to how rapidly the Island got converted. Numerous churches were built all round the Island. The Christians of the Island of Martyrs were held up as a model to others. cf. (D. 29).

The conversion of Jaffna too, may be attributed to the prayers of the Mannar Martyrs. Speaking of Jaffnapatam, King D. Joao III says "all the Kingdom and people who are more than ten thousand persons may soon be converted and saved, so we hope, through the prayers of these Holy Martyrs." cf. (D. 10).

Sir Emerson Tennent in his "Christianity" (p. 10, 11.) had to resort to fantastic conjectures to explain the phenomenal

success of the conversions in Ceylon. He was puzzled to find "their Chapels and Churches at all points along the sea coast on the Western side of Ceylon and the fishermen as far south as Berberyn are to a great extent, Roman Catholics" But the Missionaries engaged in the enterprise attributed their success to "the prayers of the six hundred Martyrs whom the King of Jaffna put to death." cf A. Lopez 1627. Ig. Bruno 1628 also Fr. S. G. Perera in the Jesuits in Ceylon p. 95.

## AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE MARTYRDOM - TRANSLATED DOCUMENT 1.

*Letter of St. Francis Xavier to Fr. Mansilhas, S. J., written from Punakayal on the 21st August, 1544.*

"Most beloved brethren in Christ, May God be always your help." Amen. I enjoyed much the letters you sent me.

As soon as the land is freed from the *Badagas*<sup>1</sup>, have me informed of it so that, without danger to the *people*<sup>2</sup>, I may send Francis *Coelho*<sup>3</sup> to replace you. You will then go to render to God the service of baptizing those of *Careapatao*<sup>4</sup> as also the

### Notes:

1. *Badagas*: In Tamil they are called *Vadukar*: in Canarese *Badagu*.
2. The people, i. e. the *Parava* Christians.
3. *Coelho* was a native priest who worked with St. Francis Xavier in the Fishery Coast. cf. *Mon. Xav.* I-321.
4. *Careapatao* refers to the *Careas* of the little village of *Patim*, the so-called small village of the *Careas* of which Fr. H. Anriquez writes from Tuticorin to the Superior General on 22nd December, 1564. "In Mannar there are two villages of the Christians of the caste of *Careas*. In the larger there did not enter the illness (pestilence) of the last year. In the smaller are the Christians of the said Mannar before we passed over to it." cf. (D. 23).

The big village of the *Careas* consisted of the *Careas* and *Paravars* who as Fr. Anriquez writes migrated from the mainland (India) to Mannar.

Schurhammer remarks that Brou and after him *Gnanapragasar* erroneously identify *Careapatao* as *Lugar de Careas-Penale*, which Lopez mentions in 1664.

Careas of Baedala<sup>5</sup> and their Mudaliyar. The captain of<sup>6</sup> Nagapatam enjoys the favour of the King of Jaffnapatam<sup>6</sup> on whom these isles of Mannar depend. He could undertake to recommend them to their King. As soon as your country shall be secure against the Badagas send me a Messenger, so that I may send you Francis Coelho with money and letters and instructions as to what you should do at Mannar.

## DOCUMENT 2.

*Letter of St. Francis Xavier to Mansilhas, S. J.  
written from Cochin on the 18th December 1544.*

Most beloved brother in Christ,

On the 16th of December I arrived at Cochin. Before I arrived I baptized all the *Makuwa*<sup>7</sup> fishermen who live in the Kingdom of Travancore and God knows how much I would have rejoiced to return immediately, to finish the baptism of those that remained if it did not seem to the Vicar General<sup>8</sup> that it was of greater service to God to go where the Signor is to negotiate the punishment of the King of Jaffnapatam<sup>9</sup>. I will set out for Cambaya 2 or 3 days hence in a catur (a boat), very well equipped.

## Notes:

5. Baedala or Vadalai near Ramnad.
6. King of Jaffnapatam is Sankilly as Vaipava Malail says and gives the throne name as Chekarasa Sekaran and according to Queyroz it is Xaga Raya, cf. Fr. Gnanapragasar (Kings 5-6)
7. *Makuwa* in Tamil the *Mukkuva* Caste, people engaged also in fishing. About 10,000 in number were converted by St. Francis Xavier in the month of October, 1544. cf. Mem. of King John III to Pope Paul III (D. 10).
8. Vicar General was Don Miguel Vaz.
9. The punishment of the King of Jaffnapatam. This expedition to punish the King of Jaffna (Sankilly) was to be undertaken as a result of Maanar Martyrdom, which must have taken place before December 16, 1544.

## DOCUMENT 3.

*Letter of St. Francis Xavier to the Jesuit Fathers in Rome  
written from Cochin on the 27th January 1545.*

May the grace and love of Christ our Lord always help and favour us. Amen. God knows, my dear brothers, how much more happy I should be to see you, than to write you this letter, which must run its chance as to reaching you on account of the distance which divides us . . .

Now to speak of what I know you are most anxious to hear about the state of religion in India. In this region of Travancore, where I am now, God has drawn very many to the Faith of His Son Jesus Christ. In the space of one month I made Christians of more than ten thousand (in Travancore).

The Island of Mannar is about 150 miles from this place. Its inhabitants sent me some of their people to beg me to go there to baptize them, as they had determined to become Christians. I was occupied on affairs of the greatest importance, relating to the interests of religion and so could not go myself, but I asked a *Cleric*<sup>1</sup> to go and baptize them. And after he went and baptized many of them, the *King of that land*<sup>2</sup> inflicted many tortures on *many of them*<sup>3</sup> and great cruelties also, because they became Christians. Thanks be given to God our Lord because we do not lack *martyrs* in our time. And that while he sees so few souls avail themselves of all His divine mercy and indulgence to work out their<sup>3</sup> salvation. He permits in the mystery of His Providence, that human barbarity should fill up the destined ranks and number of the Blessed.

## Notes:

1. *Cleric*: Francis Xavier does not say that he was a priest. That he was a native priest by the name of Francis Xavier (Queyroz 191) and that he was ordained by the Bishop of Goa. John Albuquerque, as Mgr. Zaleski writes cf. martyrs 75. and that he was martyred along with his first converts is held by Schurhammer to be unhistorical.
2. The King of the land refers to Sankilly, King of Jaffnapatam.
3. Many of them — all the Christians were not martyred as Bartholi) meant Part of the same people went to the mainland and returned to Patim in 1561. cf. (D. 20)

I have already written to you word how great a friend the Governor of India is to me and all the Society. He was so angry and indignant at the *horrible slaughter* of the converts that, as soon as I began to speak to him about it, he ordered a powerful fleet to be fitted out for the destruction of the *tyrant*, and I was obliged myself to restrain the warmth of his most righteous indignation. This same Rajah who has put the *Christians to death* has a brother, the legitimate heir to the crown, who lives in exile for fear of his brother's cruelty. This prince has promised that, if he is put in possession of his dominions by the Governor, he will become Christian, as well as the principal persons of his kingdom. The Governor has given orders to his officers to restore him to the throne if he embrace the Christian Religion and to put to death the Rajah who persecuted the converts or to treat him as I shall think proper, I do not doubt that the prayers of the converts whom he has rendered martyrs may win for him the grace to acknowledge his wickedness and blindness, and that after doing a wholesome penance he may obtain pardon from God for so much crime and barbarity.

In one kingdom of these parts which is forty leagues away from where *Francis de Mansilhas* and I are, the *prince of that kingdom*<sup>1</sup> decided to become a Christian and the King coming to know this, ordered to put him to death. Those who were present<sup>2</sup> say that they saw a *cross of fire* in the sky and in the place where he was killed, the earth was opened in the form of a cross. They add that many of the inhabitants at the sight of these prodigies became disposed to embrace the Christian faith. A *brother*<sup>3</sup> of the prince I have mentioned

1. The Prince of that Kingdom St. Francis Xavier in the same letter mentions about the death of the Prince of Kotte. The Prince was, Jugo the eldest son of Bhuvaneka Bahu by another wife. Jugo knew that if he became a Christian he could expect to receive the support of the Portuguese in his claim to inherit the throne of Kotte. He declared himself ready to accompany. Andre de Souza to Goa to receive Baptism there. But Bhuvaneka Bahu came to hear of it and caused Jugo to be killed. cf. Schurhammer "History of Ceylon," C. L. R. 382.
2. Those who were present — were Andre de Souza, Prince de Joao and a Chief.
3. Brother of the Prince — was Prince Don Joao, who was actually the son of the sister of Bhuvaneka Bahu.

touched by these marvellous events persuaded a *certain priest*<sup>1</sup> to give him baptism. He has now taken refuge with the Governor of India in order to ask his assistance against the Rajah who killed his brother. I met and talked with this prince in the course of his journey and I have great hope, from what he said, of seeing that Kingdom before long embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. The people are strongly moved by the prodigies and signs which have taken place and the prince who has lately become a Christian is the heir of the throne . . .

The least and most lonely of your brothers from Cochin,  
January 27, 1545;

(Sgd.) FRANCIS.

#### DOCUMENT 4.

*Andre de Souza to King Joao III.*  
*written from Goa, 15th November, 1545.*

Last year I explained<sup>2</sup> to Your Highness how I came to Cochin with a Prince of Ceylon<sup>3</sup> who was a Christian and I gave you an account in detail of the land and what happened in it through letters and notes. After 8 days of our departure I saw another younger brother<sup>4</sup> of the Princes and likewise many other honourable people of Ceylon all of whom afterwards became Christians.

Don Luiz was the name given to the young prince. I came with all of them to Goa where the Governor Martim Affonso was, who received us with honour as was befitting those who had the privilege of being your princes and to the renown of Your Highness.

#### Notes:

1. Certain priest—refers to one of the two Franciscan Fathers who was with Andre de Souza at Kotte. cf. D. 36, Schur. It was Andre de Souza who brought the Prince to be baptised and was his god-father
2. Last year I explained—that was on the 27th January, 1545. That letter is lost.
3. Prince of Ceylon—is Don Joao cf. D. 3, Note 6.
4. Younger brother — was Don Luiz. the younger brother of the martyred Prince Jugo of Kotte.

All this time till April, I was busy with the despatch you sent inquiring about me and other people who were dispersed in Ceylon. I consented to send them to Ceylon and to put them in possession of the lands of the brother whom the King had killed. I also took possession of a port from the King for them; and while we were with the people and the ships in the sea to get out, there came news that the Turks<sup>1</sup> were coming on us on account of which it did not appear to me reasonable to take the people out of India in such a time. I made the Princes go and offer themselves to the Governor for which I am thankful and am under great obligation. In the middle of winter<sup>2</sup> some ambassadors from Jaffnapatam came to the princes and to the Governor in charge of those parts and said that they were formerly vassals of the King of Ceylon and that the Senhor who was reigning was forcing them to obey and since the sons of the King of Ceylon were Christians they wanted to obey him (one of them) as King and become all Christians. Because of this Martim Affonso took charge of this affair and ascertaining himself of the truth, thought of sending it to the Princes and at this time Don Joao de Castro arrived and nothing came out of it.

Again. As soon as Don Joao came he ordered to call the Princes and gave them much more honour than Martim Affonso had done. Because he made them to be accompanied by his sons; because until this time they never left my house. He got information as to how Martim Affonso was to send them away. He had decided to send them to Jaffnapatam for the great service of God and Your Highness. He was waiting for an ambassador<sup>3</sup> who had been sent to Ceylon to make inquiries which Your Highness ordered to make, to find out what the King replied; perhaps it will be necessary to inquire

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1. The Turks (Rumus) — one Catour came from Ormuz.
  2. Middle winter—the rainy season which in Goa lasts from June to September, during the South-West Monsoon.
  3. Ambassador—was Duarte Earbudo.

into other bigger affairs<sup>1</sup> because we came to know that the King has agreed with his brother to prevent anyone to become Christians in Ceylon. With all certainty he said that the Governor would write to Your Highness, because he is waiting every day for your instructions.

Again. This Island in which I say they are going to put the princes, is not the same island of Ceylon. It is a point that bends to the North-West. It is about 40 leagues in the longest, 18 in the broadest and three in the narrowest. It is inhabited by simple people without armaments; it is a land of little profit. The King who was ruling was a *tyrant* and wicked who knows first of all how to obey the Kings of Ceylon and after rebel against them. On account of which wars and quarrels arose between him and the Kings of Ceylon. On account of this the King of Jaffnapatam did as he liked and one who is now (reigning) is not one of those Senhores who knows how to command: he cannot remain quiet and idle in war. He wanted other people to be so, and kill his Senhor and in the same way he killed more than two thousand men who did not want to obey him. On account of these all were in enmity and are in revolt against him and now by his more daring action *he has killed seven hundred and odd Christians<sup>2</sup>* and thereby he has earned on himself the penalty of his misdeeds. And it is for these reasons I said above that the Governor has decided to give it (the lands) to the Princes. This being so there will be a way to make the whole of Ceylon Christians because all of them are waiting to see what steps Your Highness is going to take to deal with these men.

Again. They (Princes) desire that Your Highness should vindicate their rights against their father who killed their brother on account of his becoming a Christian and they asked that they may be confirmed as Princes of Ceylon and they sent a note of the things they needed. In granting them this favour you will be doing a great service to God and to yourself. If these Princes are honoured they will be anxious to increase our

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Notes:

1. Bigger affair—refers to the persecution by Sankilly.
2. 700 and odd Christians—refers to the Manner Martyrs.

Most Holy Faith because with God's help and Your Highness's favour the way is open to accomplish much in His service and for my part it will be a relief to my conscience.

Again, I humbly and respectfully beg to explain to Your Highness the expenses and the trouble I have undergone with these Princes. It will be a great favour if you would get the information yourself of every person who goes from here and if you find that I deserve favours you will make to me in return for the many other services that I have rendered for the twenty-four years in these parts. And my father who died in your service after having spent many years in Africa without receiving the least favour. I crave Your Highness to grant me the favour of the Pearl Fisheries for four years to enable me to pay the debts and along with this what the Prince begs you for me. I shall myself be satisfied for my services and that of my father and I am asking this Fishery from Your Highness for it is held in the same Island of Jaffnapatam where I shall be with these Princes, and I can do one thing or the other. Because I have no one in these Kingdoms who could intercede for me, I leave everything in the hands of God Our Lord, and in the conscience of Your Highness to whom God may bequeath days of life and your real Kingdom for many years.

(Sgd.) ANDRE DE SOUSA.

From Goa—15th November, 1545.

## DOCUMENT 5.

*King of Kandy to D. Joao de Castro*  
written by Nun' Alvers Perera<sup>1</sup> and signed by the King  
from Kandy, 13 October, 1545.

SENHOR

I being in Negombo was pleased to know that the King was in good friendship with our King Our Lord, and this friendship was about to be broken for want of someone who could negotiate. On the 5th of November of the said year I sent from here the ten thousand chacroes and the two pedras with the men because the Portuguese were coming by way of Jaffnapatam by which way they went before and came. During the time they were there I had sent to his men the papers and olas which he was carrying to Miguel Ferreira—because he was told that Amaro Mendez had gone to India and he sent them with a certain Francisco Louis who was with them and who told me to be a subject of the Lord Governor, the father of Your Lordship. And he gave me . . . because I was born not far from his house. As the man of the King was making away with *the money*<sup>2</sup> and refused to come he sent for him to say that the King did not want to give him a passport to go to India. The two men who went with Francisco Louis when he took the letters came back and brought a *Catumaram*<sup>3</sup> for his embarkation which vessel was sent by Antonio Mendez on orders of Miguel Ferreira and with one . . . *for the King*<sup>4</sup> In the meantime on their return, to despatch that man to proceed to Nagapatam. He took from them everything they earned and sent them to *this King*<sup>5</sup> saying that if by that way more orders were sent to him for the Portuguese, all who carried it would have to die for that. And in this way landed here in a day in March of 1545 without any other order.

May our Lord God increase life and estate of Your Lordship.

(Sgd.) SRI  
RY.

From Kandy, 13th October, 1545.

## Notes:

1. Nun Alvarez Perreira was at the Court of Kandy since 1542
2. The money—since the end of 1543 the Jaffna King was forced to pay tribute to the Portuguese and he was on friendly terms till the end of 1544 when by killing the Mannar Christians he courted trouble from the Portuguese.
3. Catumaram — is a canoe made of three logs tied together.
4. For the King — the King of Jaffnapatam.
5. TO this King — King of Kandy.

## DOCUMENT 6.

*The opinion of the learned on the Indian Missions  
written from Evora, November, 1545.*

The Bishop of Coymbra,<sup>1</sup> the Bishop of St. Thome<sup>2</sup> and the Father Provincial are of opinion that it was the King of Jaffnapatam who sent to kill the 600 people who became Christians. In spite of that fact he must be advised and the Faith preached to him if hitherto he was not shown the truth . . .

And that he should give a guarantee that he would not prevent the preaching of the faith and the preservation of the promises he had accepted in his Kingdom—to consent to the preaching of the Gospel in his Kingdom and war must not be waged in spite of the fact that he had *killed those Christians*. Since it is clear that they did not declare the faith to the said King and did not point out to him that his religion was false.

## DOCUMENT 7.

*Michael Vaz to Don Joao III, on the Indian Mission,  
written from Evora, November, 1545.*

On account of Ceylon being one of the honoured things India by which many reasons for our need bring much exaltation of the Faith and Glory to the name of God . . .

The King of Jaffnapatam inflicted the cruelties about which your Highness had heard.<sup>4</sup> The Governor<sup>5</sup> informed you by letter<sup>6</sup> which I do not know if it reached you. *The injured Christians* were determined if any other favour was lacking, to take revenge themselves. In case this king is got rid of, it will be

## Notes:

1. Bishop of Coymbra — was Friar Joao Soares, O. S. A.
2. Bishop of St. Thome — was Friar Bernado de Cruz, O. Pr.
3. The King of Jaffnapatam — refers to Sankilly.
4. Which Your Highness had heard — about the murder of the Mannar Christians.
5. The Governor — was Martim Affonso de Souza.
6. Informed by letter. Michael Vaz came to know from St. Francis Xavier that the Governor had arranged against Jaffna a punitive expedition about which he did not know as yet.

good to instal this prince of Ceylon here, so that there will be a beginning for the favour and spread of Christianity. Your Highness ought to instruct the Governor to take care not to allow the King to go without the necessary punishment in favour of the Christians, so that they may not go back in the affair of their conversion, on account of the fear of a repetition. Since they are Christians and of Your Highness they pay you tax so that you may defend them.

## DOCUMENT 8.

*Fr. Juan de Beira: S.J.<sup>1</sup> to Fr. M. de Sancta Cruz, S.J. in Coymbra  
written from Goa, 20th November, 1545.*

. . . of Father Master Francisco, we find out one of his letters in which he informs us how he had gone to a land—which is very far away from here — it is called Macacar to which it takes nearly one year of travelling. In his letter he was asking for two of us to go with the prince's who are here come from their land to become Christians. The land from where they are is called Seilan. The King there whose territory they were living in wanted to kill them because they have both desired to become Christians. He had already killed a prince one of his brothers who was the elder who wanted to become a Christian and so he was baptized in his own blood and he together with *seven hundred others who were his vassals<sup>2</sup> he put to death* for being Christians. After his death the earth where he was buried opened and formed itself into the shape of a cross. And another one appeared at the same time in the sky. This miracle being seen by those present many became Christians; out of those the King killed many. On account of which it is said that all the people are angry with him. The Governor sent there (men) to call him to order and ask him whether he would become a Christian. Every day they are

## Notes:

1. Juan de Beira - was born in Potevedra, entered the Society of Jesus in 1544, was sent to India where he was in St. Paul's College, Goa, till 1546 and then worked in Cape Comorin. He died in 1564.
2. Who were his Vassals - the Mannar Martyrs and the Prince of Kotte are confused here. The Spanish priests who first came to India mix up Jaffna and Kotte, The Prince too is the Prince of Kotte.

awaiting the ambassadors who went with the two Friars<sup>1</sup> and owing to his obstinacy and cruelty he has no good will. On the contrary he has an armada ready to go there with the princes and restore to them the kingdom. There are many people in this land. It is said that the majority of them like to become Christians . . .

## DOCUMENT 9.

*Merce D Joao de Castro to Michael Ferreira  
written from Goa, 15th January, 1546.*

Don Joao . . . to all those who will see this my letter I make known that by Michael Ferreira a letter was presented to me written in Pergamine and addressed to Don Joao de Castro of my council and Viceroy in India, by which letter I deigned to give in my name and offer him the other Island of Manaa<sup>2</sup> which is a Second baxos of Chillam near the land of Ceylon: Of the land called *Mendote*<sup>3</sup> which is in the land of Jaffnapatam. Gist of it is as follows: Don Joao, by the Grace of God, King of Portugal and of the places on this and that side of the sea of Africa, Lord of Ginea and of the conquest navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and of India; to all those who will see this my letter, I make known that I have responded to the many services that I have received from Michael Ferreira in these parts of India from many years hence that . . . in the Captaincy of the people ships which have been entrusted to me many times by my Captains and Governors of those places of India as well as in other causes of much importance which have been ordered to him by them who belong to my service. That I always gave a very good account. That I have made the best use as I ought to have done so I hope to do the same from now on wards. And I am willing to give you pleasure in all and show kindness for your services and merits of your person . . . one Island which is called Manca which

## Notes:

1. One of the Friars - was Friar Joao de Villa.
2. The Island of Manna — is Mannar.
3. Mendote — is Mantota or Mathotam.

beyond the Baixos of Chillaw and attached to the *land of Ceylon which is well detached*<sup>1</sup> from a land is called Mendote and th's is in the land of Jaffnapatam which is now in possession of the King of the said Jaffnapatam will belong to him and to his heirs ascendants and descendants: And of this Island and the land he may do anything that will please him, in favour of said Michael Ferreira as his own property, and he may profit of them and make of them anything he may please.

## DOCUMENT 10.

*Memorial of King Joao the III to Pope Paul III  
written from Almeirim, 19th February, 1546.*

. . . Not only during these years our Lord God was pleased to deliver these souls from the blindness and worship of their idols. He was pleased at the same time that the king and sixty thousand souls in the islands of Malucho which are situated far away from India, were converted to His Faith. And through the fruits of these years concerning such conversions was so fertile yet it was much greater this past year of 1544, <sup>2</sup> during which a great number of souls were converted in many territories of the pagans because in the Kingdom of Travancore which is situated along the coast of India near Fortress of Colao about the month of October of the same year, Fr. Master Francis baptized 10,000 pagans<sup>3</sup> called by the natives themselves from place to place.

To *this Father*,<sup>4</sup> Our Lord God granted so much favour and grace that those who were baptized no sooner returned to their homes than they got all their families baptized and stripped the temples of their idols and smashed them to pieces. And he gave orders in those places that the people may be instructed in the Holy Catholic Faith twice a day. Thus in a short time the word of God bore much fruit and it would have produced much more were it not for an important affair concerning the Faith.

## Notes:

1. That part of Ceylon which is detached — refers to the mainland near Mantota where the Carcaas of Patim went after the massacre of their people at Patim.
2. Year of 1544-seem to have been the peak year of conversion in India.
3. Ten thousand Pagans—refers to the conversion of the Mukkuvars of Travancore in October, 1544.
4. To this Father—St. Francis Xavier.



The aforesaid Father Francis has been forced to set off to go to the Governor of those places for the following reasons:

The aforesaid Father finding himself in the midst of the increase of those that were converted to God, the pagans of the *Kingdom of Jaffnapatam*<sup>1</sup> which was 150 miles away sent him word that he may go and baptize them. And he not to leave alone those that were already converted, sent them a Father who with usual ceremonies made them Christians.

The King of the place instigated by the devil *began to persecute the said Christians with great tortures and cruelties*. Praised be to God that in our days the name of the elect is increasing *All those who a short while ago had received Holy Baptism died confessing Our Holy Catholic Faith and bravely received the crown of glorious Martyrdom*.

The greater part of the people are so touched and stirred at the constancy of those glorious martyrs and are so much scandalized at the tyranny which the aforesaid king exercises over his subjects and at the treachery he showed to a brother of his who was the legitimate heir to the kingdom that, please God, all that kingdom and people who are more than ten thousand persons may soon be converted and saved and so hope through the prayers of those Holy Martyrs and through the care and indignation with which the Governor was informed and advised by Master Francis he (the governor) plans to punish the aforesaid king of Jaffnapatam and to restore to his brother the possession of the kingdom which belongs to him by right, which brother offers himself to become a Christian with all his people.

In the same year the King of Ceylon made two of his nephews become his heirs. The elder of the two was liked by all the people. He was desirous to become Christian and wished to go to Goa to get baptised. The king, his uncle knowing this, immediately got him put to death. Those who were present in the place where he was killed say that they saw in the sky a Cross

Notss:

1. The Pagans of the kingdom of Jaffnapatam—refers to the people of Mannar living in Careapatao, the Careas of the village of Patim. cf. (D. I), Note 4.

of Fire and that in the place where he was killed the ground opened up in the form of a Cross. This was seen by many pagans who are about to become Christians.

The other younger brother requested the Portuguese Christians who were on the spot to baptise him. And so they did. And Andre de Sousa, a virtuous and honoured gentleman with some Portuguese and other native Christians protected him from the wrath of the king who was persecuting him.

This Prince is called Don John and if it pleased God, that he become king as it is hoped by the favour and help of His Majesty, the Kingdom of Ceylon and all the Malabar country will soon receive the Faith of Christ. And in the aforesaid year 1544, a day before the departure of the last ship which was coming from India arrived at Cochin, another ship that was coming from Malucho in which came Antonio de Paiva created by His Majesty, who in the year 1542 went from Malaca to discover the Island of Macazar.....

DOCUMENT 11.

*Instructions of King D Joao III to Michael Vaz  
Almeirim, 5th March, 1546*

Extract cited by Erste Fassung (some documents).

14. You will know the *affair of Jaffnapatam*<sup>1</sup> how it happened and the Christians will be pacified of the *injury*<sup>2</sup> that was caused to them and be in such a mood that others may not say..... — (Arresceo) that he would repeat such another misdeed. You will write to me of everything and inform me as I ought to know..... —

A similar version of this is also found in Letste Fassung (Seb. Goncalvez).

Notes:

1. *Affair of Jaffnapatam* — refers to the Martyrdom of the Mannar Christians caused by Sankilly, King of Jaffna.
2. *Injury* — refers to the persecutions.

DOCUMENT 12.

D. Joao III to D. Joao de Castro  
Almeirim, 8th March, 1546.

-----In the affair of the King of Jaffnapatam and of the death inflicted on those Martyrs I got very greatly displeased and I felt it as much as it could be. Secondly I saw in the letters of Master Francisco that Martim Affonso was asked to impose a punishment according to the gravity of the case. If it was done so, I would greatly be pleased, if not I would recommend you to do so as he deserves because it would be a bad precedent in those lands to pass a similar incident without any punishment which it deserves. Master Francisco writes to me to say that this King<sup>1</sup> had a brother who said that he would become a Christian and all was possible if I gave him this land and it would be very good to gain these souls and make them Christians. There is another thing -----

DOCUMENT 13.

Dom Joao III to D. Joao de Castro  
Almeirim, 8th March, 1546.

(a) Extract as given by Freire de Andrede. 1551.

19- And in the meantime it pleases us that you would take account of the cruelties of the tyrant<sup>2</sup> with all rigour which he did against us, that he may be converted to Our Holy Faith compelling to give satisfaction for his great insolence so that all the Princes of India may see how much justice we have at heart and how we take to heart to favour the helpless.

(b) Extract as given by Maffei, 1588.

19. But the tyrant inflicted tortures on those people who believed in the Gospel ..... I demand from you to inflict the punishment as early as possible. And I have decided on the penalty of his grave audacity so that it may be understood that nothing is so dear to me than that everyone should be preserved unharmed - those who pass from the camp of the evil to the sign of the Christians.

Notes:

1. This King — refers to Sankilly, King of Jaffna.
2. Tyrant — refers to Sankilly, King of Jaffna.

(c) Extract as given by Camara, 1564.

19. Of the affair of the King of Jaffnapatam you are aware and of his cruelties which he inflicted on the Martyrs (and how) he had put them to death because they became Christians. Because Martim Affonso de Sousa had ordered punishment on him as he deserved I believe that land has got what this case deserved. But if by chance he did not get it, which I don't believe, I suggest to you and I order that he be so rigorously punished that the Christians may see how much I felt what the said King did and how much it displeases me (to know) that they were tortured for having become Christians.

(d) Extract as given by Lucena.

In that relating to Mannar the following was the wording.

19. You must have known already about the affair of the King of Jaffnapatam and of the cruelties that were inflicted on those Martyrs who were ordered to be killed for becoming Christians and because Martim Affonso de Sousa ordered to punish him as he deserved I believe that the land has got according to its due. But if by chance it is not so, which I doubt, I strongly exhort you and command that he may be so rigorously punished so that the Christians may see how much I felt what the said King did and how much I feel that they were tortured because of their having become Christians.

DOCUMENT 14.

Miguel Ferriera<sup>1</sup> to D. Joao de Castro.  
Sao Thome, 28th March, 1546.

SENHOR

The letter which Your Lordship gave me for Friar Antonio<sup>2</sup> I gave to him as soon as I reached Cochin. And I told him to touch on Calle<sup>3</sup> with those two men that Your Lordship gave me

Notes:

1. Miguel Ferriera was born in 1466 in Alcobaca, came to Ceylon in 1545.
2. Friar Antonio — was Friar Antonio Padram.
3. In Calle — Kayalapatam.

and to speak to the Brahmin who is *heir to Jaffnapatam*.<sup>1</sup> He told me that it appeared to him good that all of us go together. A few days later he went away one morning without telling me anything. Immediately I started after him. When I reached Calle he had already left the place. I sent word to the Brahmin and the Brahmin did not want to come. He left afterwards *via* Fishery Coast where I got news that the Friars of Ceylon had already left *via* Kandy and I had no patience -----

Sir, I came to Calle and as soon as I reached it, I sent word to the Brahmin who was three leagues away. As soon as he came I went along with him to a house to ask him if he would become a Christian with his sons and grandsons and relatives. He told me that Joao Fernandez Corea, the Factor of the Fisheries who made him embark once and he could not do anything and he took him ----- And that Martim Affonso had ordered him to embark to the *Island of Cows*<sup>2</sup> and from there ordered him to go back and told him certain things that he had else to say. Four or five thousand Pardaos which the King of Jaffnapatam gave him, I will not like to put ----- and he told me many other things ----- that he would embark afterwards with me, and trusting in my word that they would become Christians himself with his sons and grandsons and many of his household and friends.

## DOCUMENT 15.

*Prince Don Joao<sup>3</sup> of Kotte to D. Joao III. Goa,  
15th November, 1545.*

The last year I explained to Your Highness how God Our Lord had shown me such mercy that by His infinite condescension He had made me a Christian—a thing that my ancestors had

## Notes:

1. Heir to Jaffnapatam — The two Princes D. Joao and D. Luiz died on the 14th of January, 1546. That is why de Castro made up his mind to send Andre de Sousa to Kandy and Miguel Ferriera to help the Jaffna King's brother to the throne. He was a Brahmin.
2. Island of Cows — Nedunthivu.
3. Prince Don Joao was the son of Bhuvaneka Bahu's sister. The mother fearing for the life of her son after the murder of Jugo the Prince of Kotte entrusted him and Don Luiz, the brother of the murdered Prince, to Andre de Souza. that he might flee to India with them. cf. C. L. R. Page 382. Both Princes who became Christians, died of small-pox on the 14th of January, 1546.

disregarded so much and remained so much obstinate in this evil sect they followed, who with falsehood and vain talks defended it as my father does now. He is trying to defend it with arms because vain words and falsehood cannot succeed anymore, on account of the many miracles Our Lord has wrought by the death of my brother whom God has received in Paradise. Because crosses were opened in the soil and others appeared in the sky and the earth quaked at which I do not know which heart was not stirred as many do even today. In the town of my father they are getting baptised against his wish, on account of which I thank God Our Lord most heartily because through the intercession of such an openhearted person he is making so good a work in His Service and extending the kingdom of Your Highness.

Again, eight days after the ships had left last year I had with me *my younger brother*<sup>1</sup> whom my mother had hidden from being killed by the King. I made him a Christian with many other honourable people who came with him and we came to this town of Goa where we are at present. We were received honourably by the Governor Martim Affonso de Sousa. There we remained till April with many ----- that was shown to me everyday. He had already given me the lands of my brother and a seaport of my father which I asked from him. Being already ready with many ships in the sea there came news that the Turks were definitely roaming about. On account of these it did not appear to me reasonable to proceed any further. I went with my people and my brother to offer myself to the Governor, for I did not wish to give him the trouble of allowing the people to go out of India at that time and also for having the pleasure of serving Your Highness. This he greatly appreciated.

Again from January to April I did not want to accept money from the Governor to spend on my house because of other reasons which are not necessary to mention. I sustain myself all this time only with that which Andre de Sousa had, and with the ----- that

## Notes:

1. My younger brother — was Don Luiz who was baptised at Coehin and from there he went to Goa.

he collected. After that Martim Affonso assigned to me forty Cruzados a month, for the expenses of myself and household. I was forced to accept them to meet my expenses because many people from the land used to come to me and it so happened that they came from three hundred to four hundred leagues to be made Christians.

Again at the end of winter I was to tell Martim Affonso to give me the things necessary to go away to the lands he gave me before. I asked for Jaffnapatam which is a point of the Island of Ceylon which was my own by right because the Kings of Ceylon rose against us and the chiefs of the land came here with me and were hated by the people because all of them wanted to become Christians and obey me as their King. The tyrant should be taken away from the land and many other things which Your Highness wrote to Andre de Sousa.

After Martim Affonso had a council and ordered to tell me again that he was pleased to put me in Jaffnapatam, and when I was about to set out it happened that Don Joao de Castro arrived—and everything fizzled out. He was informed of myself and my affairs. He sent for me and paid me due honours and respect. I gave him an account of my affairs in the way that Martim Affonso had ordered. After consultation he ordered to carry on the affairs Your Highness had planned out. He is awaiting orders so much so that as soon as it comes he will look after my affairs. I am certain that his son *Don Alvaro* will put me in possession of Jaffnapatam, for two reasons. I would endeavour to make those people Christians since otherwise three thousand souls will be lost. The other reason is to send away from that land *the tyrant who eight months ago had put to death seven hundred Christians*, And also because my father had consorted with his

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Notes:

1. Don Alvaro was the eldest son of De Joao de Castro, was born in 1525, travelled to India with his father in 1537 and went to the Red Sea 1541.
2. Eight months ago—the date is inaccurate. We know the date from other sources. The Martyrdom took place in November or the beginning of December, 1544.

brother to fight and defend them if they do not become Christians in his land And I being myself in this place he would not attempt it for I would wage war against him. And all the people of Ceylon will come to my help because they are with me. I began to doubt if Your Highness would favour me because they are people who are troublesome and unreliable. For this reason I wish that you place me in the meantime in Jaffnapatam because as for myself I am confident in God that it may be for His service and for the justice and favour of Your Highness.

Again I omit many things to save you the trouble of reading. Most of the things left are in the letter of Andre de Sousa and of other persons who intend explaining to Your Highness. I beg of you to interest yourself in me and my affairs which are in the state I relate, and obtain redress from my father who has killed my brother in order to make his grandson heir to the kingdom and because he was aware that if he came to India with Andre de Sousa he would become a Christian. Make me the gift of the kingdom of Ceylon at the death of my father or earlier if he happens to lose it on account of his faults, since it is mine by right. And failing this to put my brother Don Luiz as King of Jaffnapatam. In the meantime to order him to give the lands which belonged to my brother whom God may have, which lands the King my father does not want to give because I am a Christian. I sent Your Highness the points of the affairs of which you will grant favour. Grant me all that I asked of you and do not leave it to the Governors, because they have many cares and also I desire and it is but reasonable that I should be favoured by Your Highness in the eyes of the Moors and Pagans.

Again after asking for me everything which is of the service of God and Yours, I beg that you may show favour to Andre de Sousa my godfather that he may be made Captain and Governor of all my lands so that by this way I may repay him for all the trouble he has taken over me—not the least was to make me a Christian and protected me from being killed. He has made many people Christians—he clothes and feeds them at his own expense. Similarly the expenses of my house and of my brother have been made on his account, until now. Owing to this he deserves from

God and Your Highness favour, because he had us in good esteem and well taught in Doctrine as it befits us, being until now very little favoured by the Governors. Only for God's sake and Yours he did this and many other services during the last twenty years. Hence he has been much indebted and asks from Your Highness the Pearl Fisheries and in this you will grant me power to give it to him so that he may pay his debts.

Again: I am also under great obligation to *Master Diergo*<sup>1</sup> for his many instructions and consolations and also in my request from the Governors he had taken much trouble for the sake of God and Your Highness. And because in some way I would like to know the work done for me and for many other religious persons of good life and behaviour, I crave Your Highness this great favour that you make him Bishop of all my lands anywhere I may be, because he is a very virtuous person and it is but right that such dignity should be conferred on a man of such qualities.

With these I end praying to our Lord to prolong the life of Your Highness and Your Kingdom for many years.

From Goa

15th November, 1545.

DON JOAO

To the king my Lord—from the Prince of Ceylon.

### DOCUMENT 16.

*Father Martim De Santa Cruz, Rector of the College of Coimbra to Father Le Fevre,*<sup>2</sup> *Visitor General of the Jesuits, 1545.*

*cf. Ep. Mixtae I, 231-2.*

We have received letters from Father Francis. We are all moved by them to such an extent that no effort is needed to transfer all the College of Coimbra to India. There are more glad tidings than Master Francis has written about. The King asked me for a dozen priests for being sent to India this year<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes:

1. Diergo was a priest at St. Paul's College, where he taught the 'Princes'
2. Father Prerre Le Fevre was the Visitor General of the Jesuits who was just then leaving Portugal for the Council of Trent. King D. Joao III. had also written to him to send to India as many priests as he could.
3. It is the news of the Martyrdom of the new converts in Mannar that moved them and caused this wave of enthusiasm for the Indian Missions.

### DOCUMENT 17.

*Father Le Fevre to Father Martim De Santa Cruz. 1545.*

*cf. L. Pages II. 436<sup>1</sup>*

I do not know how to give expression to all that my soul has felt in Jesus Christ on learning about the *glorious death of the six hundred Martyrs of India*.<sup>2</sup> How happy we would be if we could possess in Europe the relics of their bodies and of their blood — we who are the elders in the Faith.

### DOCUMENT 18.

*St. Francis Xavier to the Directors of the College of Sancta Fe from Cochin 27th January, 1545*

*(cf. Miss. dos Jes. 37-38 also Cey. Lit. Reg III, 327.)*

Jaffnapatam<sup>3</sup> was not taken, nor was the possession of the Kingdom given to the king who was to become a Christian. This was not done because there ran ashore a ship of the king that came from Pegu and the king of Jaffnapatam seized the goods and until what he seized is recovered that which the Governor ordered is not to be done: please God that it be done if it shall be to His service. I was in Jaffnapatam some days.....

#### Notes:

1. Letters De Saint Francois—Xavier published by Leon Pages in 2 Vols. 1855.
2. Mannar was considered part of India by the Westerners.
3. This expedition to Jaffnapatam was organised to punish Sankilly, the king of Jaffna for his massacre of the Mannar martyr.

## DOCUMENT 19.

*Letter of the Viceroy D. Constantino de Braganca<sup>1</sup> to Manoel Rodriguez Coutinho the Captain of the Fishery Coast. 1560 cf. (Queyroz by Fr. S. G. Perera. page 394).*

"The Conquest of the kingdom of Jaffnapatao and of the Island of Mannar are both due to one reason, and though the results are different, let us be patient till they agree, and accept as a good fortune what Heaven disposes. What (fortune) I had you know, and am content with it as it is God's will, and He knows why, giving me easily Mannar, where I am, and I await you with all the Christians who live in that country, to whom I have written not to grieve at quitting their fatherland when this land invites them with its greater ease and liberty, since the *holy Martyrs purchased it for them* in gratitude for the faith which came to them, from that country; when Saint Francis Xavier was going about there, recalling to life the Christianity that was dead either for lack of teachers, or on account of the

## Note:

1. De Braganca was Viceroy from 1558 — 1561 After the capture of Mannar in 1560 he had set about erecting a fortalice of stone and mud. His letter reached the Fishery Coast along with another for the Christian Paravaz (Barathas), which was read to them by their Kanakapullais (writers). And though it seemed to them a hard thing to leave their thorny and arid lands, Coutinho succeeded in persuading them to come to Mannar, along with him. They arrived at a time when the Portuguese were carrying stones for the building of the Mannar Fort. There went to meet them the Bishop D. Jorge Themudo, with a cross borne before him: and after thanking them for the service they rendered to the King and the pleasure they gave the Viceroy, he blessed them and made a long speech pointing out to them the favour which God did to them by bringing them "to that Island in which they would see manifest signs of those *happy Martyrs who had given their lives for Christ*" The speech was still going on when the Viceroy came with a small retinue and publicly thanked all and welcomed them with embraces full of affability, as he was wont to do, with other gentlemen, and as the procession of Catechumens passed by, being on horseback, he took a little child in his arms and took him to the Church. He did many honours to Manoel Rodriguez Coutinho and entrusted the Fort to him. cf. Couto Dec. VII Bk. IX Ch. V. also Queyroz by Fr. S. G. Perera pg. 395.

inconstancy of the natives. Let them not think of despising an offer so just and incur the wrath which is reserved for the disobedient, nor forget that heaven punishes those who are ungrateful for its favours. Here is a fruitful country in exchange for a barren one, safety for peril, happiness for misfortune. I hope when you represent to them what they gain they will consider that what I promise them is not only an easy thing, but a great good fortune. And you with them will render a great service to the King, better than in the Coast where the Fishery will be continued and as the principal fishery I seek is that of souls, here you can win two kinds of rewards, one from his (King's) hands, the other from God's. And thus you will be obliging me in such a way that what I possess will be little in comparison with what I owe you."

## DOCUMENT 20.

*Letters of Fr. Anriquez  
(1520—1600) found in the Archives of the Society  
translated by Fr. S. G. Perera.*

## I. Mannar — 19th Dec., 1561.

I wrote last year how the Christians of the pearl fishery emigrated from their lands to this Island of Mannar as for many years past we desired to do and we the Fathers and Brothers are here with them. For their defence there is here a Captain by name Jorge de Mello de Castro with 150 soldiers and 6 ships

We can understand their grief to leave their country and friends who were dead and buried\_\_\_\_\_

The Captain defended\_\_\_\_\_of the King of Jaffna\_\_\_\_\_  
He is liked by the people\_\_\_\_\_

There is Fr. Jeronimo Vaz with the Captain and the Portuguese and Christians on Sundays and feast days. A soldier made up his mind to join the society\_\_\_\_\_He has set up a hospital for sick soldiers. They are building a new one.

*Half a league from the fortress there is a place which they call Patim. In it were Christians of the same island of the caste of the*

*Careas, who were already Christians before we came to this Island. It is true that at the time we came to inhabit it they were out of the said island on account of injuries (cruelties) done by the King of the country, with whom we were at war and are so now. The Father comes there every Tuesday to say Mass and give a sermon and spend the day in Patim, where live the Christians of the place: there are others of the same caste of the Careas who were heathens when we came and were on the other side of the river before our arrival. They came to their kinsmen and were baptized. The number of the newly baptized were more than 200.*

A little more than a league from Patim there is a large Village of our Christian Paravars from all parts of the coast, the places from where immigrants came, except those of Manapar. The Fathers and the Brothers made it an abode.

A little lower at this place of the Paravars, there are the Christians of the caste of Careas in a small place and the others are in larger one.

There are also along with the Paravars, other Christians of the caste of Pallivilli. For these few we have built 3 churches. On some Sundays there is no Mass in one. I have asked the Provincial for leave for Fr. Diego de Soveral to say two masses on Sundays. When there is no mass the Brother goes there to give a sermon. The Careas of the smaller place and the Pallivillies spoken of before, have each a small church, in which prayers are taught to children, but the men go to mass on Mondays to the other church.

It has been ordered that the women should come on Mondays to the chief church and widows on Fridays but as I, on account of my illness, do not say mass except on Mondays and because they come to the two or 3 churches, it is not easily possible to come, there is now a different arrangement. The Carear women of the smaller place who have two churches, are made by Fr. Jeronimo Vaz to come on Thursday, and on Fridays those of the large place. On Wednesdays Fr. Soveral says mass for the women of one of the villages of Pallivillies and on Tuesdays the widows one week to one of the larger churches and another week

to the other. On Fridays the married women of one of the large churches, on Saturdays in the other the married women who were in the other church.

Thus every week they have mass and a sermon. Moreover there is a sermon for boys and girls for while learning prayers plus the things of faith and good customs.

Besides these towns mentioned above, 3 leagues from here on the point of the island there are Christians of a place called Manapar. There is there another church, a priest of the country with them but for some time he is irregular about the dispensations and we wrote about it last year to our General. To this place goes Fr. Soveral every 4th Sunday to visit them and say mass. Last year the other Christians of the coast were at this point, the captain made them come here, which they call alcoram for certain reasons.

There are also in this island 2 Brothers Francisco Dureo and Estevao de Goes. Thus the Fathers and Brothers gave a good account of themselves and work well in the vineyard of the Lord. Fr. Soveral had the affairs of the Church which are many and the Christians are surprised how he could do this. Sometimes we have some Christians of the country who do it. He and the brothers and we are busy in the usual exercises of baptizing, visiting the sick and giving instructions to the Christians on Sundays when they come to church and bringing peace between estranged husbands and wives and inquiring into faults and other small affairs.

On Thursday evenings we have spiritual conferences among ourselves speaking of God and when one has something that makes for our spiritual advancement or purpose, something for the spiritual profit of ourselves or our Christians. This does much good through the mercy of God. We also have some judges good and honourable elected before the Captain by the Pattankatties and Chiefs. I am greatly consoled by the doings.

I have spoken before of the disputes we have with unbelievers. I feel that even Christians profit by it and improve on their faith. On occasions when an unbeliever comes to this island they

speak to him of God.....thus sometimes the unbeliever is .....the Christians are glad, and even the other unbelievers who happen to be present admit whom I spoke this year was a Joghe (Yogi) who deemed to know something he showed in his answer to be perfidious. It happened that at this conversation there was an unbelieving gentleman who going up to his pagodes came to this Island to seek money from the Christians for his upkeep. One of the judges I spoke of replied with good reason that the Yogi was not correct in what he said and that the means of obtaining pardon for sins which we Christians had (for that was the subject of the talk) was the true one and the reasons were clear and well know.....

Besides the Careas who received baptism at Patim as mentioned above, there came other Careas asking baptism and other people from the caste of Timillas and others and many.....whom we have for baptism exceed one thousand.

We have built a hospital for the people of the country as in Punicale at the cost of the Christians. It is a work of great edification to the Catholics and unbelievers. For though the unbelievers build many things, but hospitals they have not.

It is a great great grief to me that there is no one to hear the confessions of the sheep. — orate Deum.....

I mentioned this to the Provincial. He said he would ask the Bishop of Cochin for some Malabar priests he had ordained. The Provincial wrote that a young man who was following the course of arts had finished his studies and was to be ordained and sent here. I hope that on his arrival we shall be able to do many things. I hear the confessions of some but of few. I can assure you that some shed tears of repentance. They edify and console me because of my indisposition and many occupations I cannot hear many. This year I made better advance in the Malabar<sup>1</sup> catechism and other things I am hoping to do, except labouring sometime in the Malabar vocabulary which is partly done.

Note:

1. Here means Tamil.

In Ceylon there is a good Malabar singer, a Christian with whom a Franciscan Friar named Friar Joao de Villa de Conde had some dealings with regard to a prose Catechism in the manner of Canticles, which they want to learn in the school and church, other Canticles in praise of God and the B. V. Mary which are accustomed to sing like what our young orphans sing. It is sometime that this singer had composed them and knowing that the pearl fishing is taking place here, he sent to the Pattankattis and Chief men, what he has composed and for which he was already rewarded by the said Franciscan Friar Joao. The Christians were very pleased to hear of such a catechism and Canticles which are now being sung throughout this place and they fixed 50 *cruzados*. Moreover some young men with good voices who learnt their canticle and sing them in certain parts when the Christians assemble and they have collected a good sum of money. There are only 4 or 5 who sing them and they maintain themselves by this singing. The said Friar Joao himself wrote to me to see whether there were errors, if they are to be printed, for which reason I think there are errors in the Canticle, which I cannot find because of the obscure Malabar which I do not understand, nor is commonly spoken and as there was with the same Father Friar Joao a priest of the country who knows Latin well and knows also something of making canticles. I wrote to ask him to come here that we may amend them together. The Malabar Father wrote to me that if I sent him a message to this effect that he would see about the Catechism, and there after his amendment, it was excellent and should be printed—about this I wrote to the Provincial and he replied that the brother who would make the type was very ill and could not do them. I wrote, to him again whether he could not cause a workman to come from Portugal because there are also other things to be printed in Malabar as well for the instruction of the Christians or to bring the unbelievers to see their error and to print the Vocabularies and Arte Melabar.

The Christians of the Pearl Fishery are the only ones who crossed over to this Island. The Christians of the Kingdom of Travancore who are of the caste of the *Mucuas* and all the other fishermen did not come nor will they come. Some days ago there asw need to have in the coast a rowing ship for their help because their King and his officials often tyrannize over them and also the



latter to chastise the rebel Christians. The Bishop of Cochin like a pastor who does not care for the wool of his flock but to give good pasturage, coming to know the need sent at his cost the ship and one of our brothers comes in it as they told us when I was writing this.

Some Parava Christians of that coast and those of Fishery remain alone in those lands and some fishermen who fish in the three joined trees which they call Cattamaran. They have not yet given orders to abandon their places which-----As regards the health of the Fathers and the Brothers, it is good-----

Mannar, 19th Decr., 1561. (Sgd.) ANRRIQUEZ, ANRRIQUE.

## DOCUMENT 21.

### 2. Letter. Mannar, 29th December 1562.

We are at present in this Island. Fr. Diogo de Soveral and I up to the end of October. Fr. Jeronimo Vas was here-----There is also Brother Francisco Durao and Estevao de Goes and Brother Pero Luis who is a Brahmin native of India to whom Your Reverence gave permission to be received in to the Society. There is also another Brother Go-----Fry who was received by order of Fr. Provincial-----

When Fr. Vaz was here he spent 4 days in the Forteleze but on Tuesdays he visited a place 1/2 a league from the Fort which is another small place of the Christians *the Careas*. Fr. Soveral said mass and preached in another church on Thursdays. Fr. Jeronimo Vaz is in another large *Town of the Careas*. On Sundays and feast days Fr. Soveral said masses in two churches and preached. I-----Fr. Toveral and Brother went visiting a place 3 leagues and the Brother preached, Brother Francisco Durao makes good progress in the study of the language. He knew how to read and write Malabar. If he learns Latin he could be ordained a Priest. Br. Estevao de Goes is not able to learn. He knows many words to understand the people-----We want priests for confessions. I hear little owing to ill health.

There is a *Malabar Father* here who was Vicar in a place in Ceylon who helped to write a Catechism about which I wrote to you last year. He helps in hearing confessions. I hope to ask the Bishop to let him remain here; for then we two can do much in instructing the people. This Father is *loved by our* Christians and says they are better than in Ceylon. When we were in Punicale men were accustomed to come to our houses for instruction. Many come---more than the house could hold. Now we hear confessions on Friday night in the Church -----

When Fr. Jeronimo Vaz was here, he was in the fort, preached looked after the sick built a *good Hospital* better than the former one. At Easter he came from the Fort after the *Troubles of Lent* and there remained in the Fort a Visitor or the Bishop and some priests of the Society. People went to ask for their Father-----

My health---bad since end of April---went to Nagapatam for con----- While in Nagapatam order was given to complete, the Malabar Vocabulary, putting words in Alphabetic order for many days----- Some buy the Tamil grammar adding many things to improve it. In this I was helped by Br. Pero Luis. He also preaches on Sundays in the Church to the children ---4 months in Nagapatam --- Churehes not quite furnished --- another small one erected for instruction of children.

(Sgd.) ANRRIQUEZ, ANRRIQUE.

Mannar, 29th December. 1562.

## DOCUMENT 22.

### 3. Letter. Mannar, 11th January, 1564.

Now we are 4 Fathers and 3 Brothers Frs. Jeronimo Vaz. Diogo de Soveral, Manuel de Varris and Brothers Francisco Durao. Estevao de Goes, Manuel de Valedareo. Fr. Bayres was here some years ago as a Brother and learned the language carefully, went to Goa, learned Latin which he already knew. Ordained priest knows languages very well. I was ill and did not say mass on some Sundays.

Now 16 years with the people, but never had better successes than in 1563. Wrote to Bishop about need of priests who knew the language. He sent one who knew Malabar well. He came in February. But as the confessions were many, there was no time for Malabar instruction.

I had to help in confessions. Though ill I can hear confessions. A young man the son of the richest man in the place, asked his parents to make restitution as in certain contracts in the fishery and in lending money on usury, saying that he did not want to be the heir of ill-gotten goods.

Teachers of schools and pupils come to mass and hear a sermon on Sundays, the Fathers spread out in churches—say two masses at a place of Christians 3 leagues away from here—and they have a church for instruction and confessions.

Enlarging two churches. This year Fr. Several baptized 730. All learn Tamil and we speak only that language. Fr. Sovera not so well. Fr. Manuel de Barros knows enough. Fr. Durao makes progress. About the grammar, this year also revised and all those who saw it say it is much better—when I cannot sleep I write. Two hospitals one for Christians and the other in the Fort for the Portuguese. When the Provincial came to Cochin the Captain went there and begged for him. He was then sent to Mannar to the Fort. Two young men (soldiers) went to become Religious, one, Franciscan the other a Jesuit. Both came here and served in the Hospital. Two others followed.

11th January, 1564. (Sgd.) ANRRIQUEZ, ANRRIQUE.

## DOCUMENT 23.

## 4. Letter from Tuticorin, 22nd December 1564.

4,000 died—They wanted to leave and were not given permission and they came to this coast. Fr. Diogo still ill in Mannar. Recalled to Tuticorin. Fr. Durao remained in Mannar— one knows the language. Manuel de Barros wrote in two languages of the country in Mannar. About 600 are baptized.

In Mannar two places of Christians (Carear) one larger than the other. In the larger, hospital kept up by alms weekly. My companion advanced in study of language. They have decided to (speak) only Tamil.

*In Mannar there are two villages of the Christians of the caste of the Carear. In the larger there did not enter the illness (pestilence) of the last year. In the smaller are the Christians who were dwellers of the said Mannar before we passed over it. In the former place a kind of misericordia was made a Hospital.*

22nd December, 1564.

(Sgd.) ANRRIQUEZ, ANRRIQUE.

## DOCUMENT 24

## 5 Letter. Mannar, 29th January, 1574.

Came to meet the Bishop of Cochin in February. Dio de Cunge, Manuel Ferdinandes, Fr. Durac, in Punical. Captain asks help for Fort.

29th January, 1574.

(Sgd.) ANRRIQUEZ ANRRIQUE.

## Notes:

1. Anriquez, Anrique (1520—1600) entered the Society of Jesus on 8th October, 1545 and set out for India in 1546. After two years in Goa, he was sent to the Fishery Coast. He was in Mannar from 1561—1564. He became Superior and died at Punnaikayal on the 22nd of February at the age of 86 and was buried in the Church of our Lady of Snows, Tuticorin. Many of his letters including four written from Mannar have been published in Europe and translated into various languages. He was the first European to master the Tamil language, which he began to study on the recommendation of St. Francis Xavier. While he was in Mannar he was engaged in the composition of—

1. A Tamil Grammar.
2. A Vocabulary for the use of the Missionaries.
3. Tamil translation of The Christian Doctrine of Marcos Jorge. Adding to it a method of instruction by question and answer.
4. A method for Confession.
5. Life of Saints.

A Copy in Tamil of his "Vita Christi Domini, Beatissimae Virginis et aliorum Sanctorum" sent to Rome in 1602 is now in the Bibliotheca Vaticana.

## DOCUMENT 25

From Rev. Fathers D. Bartoli and J. P. Maffei,<sup>1</sup>  
cf. *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, pages, 78 & 79.

Of the many various States which, as we have already remarked, sent to ask Xavier to go and impart the light of the Gospel to them, none is so deserving of remembrance, none so deserving of praise, and, as we may say, of a holy envy, as the Mannarese who proved themselves the beautiful models and masters of patience and heroic fortitude to the whole of that new Eastern Church. With them the reception of Baptism and the shedding of their blood, their birth unto Christ and their death for Christ, went hand in hand. So rapidly did the fruit ripen of which God has blessed the seed, that they who yesterday were idolaters and today Christians would tomorrow be Martyrs.

Manaar is a small island, about forty miles in circumference situated just above the *rocks of Ramanancor*; it has a good port called in their own language Talemannar where merchants resort for commercial purposes. The soil in general is poor; between it and Ceylon there are about twelve miles of dangerous sea, where the fury of the currents arrested by the rocks of Ramanancor occasions the wreck of many and unwary crew on the shores of Jaffnapatam. Widely different from and far more favoured than Mannar is its neighbour Ceylon or as the natives call it Ternasseri,—

## Notes:

1. Daniel Bartoli and John Peter Maffei were both Jesuits.

Bartoli was born at Ferreira in 1608 and died in November, 1685. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1623. He was first an orator of repute. In 1650 his superiors called him to Rome to write the history of the Society in Asia which he wrote in three volumes. The first volume to India and is mostly connected with St. Francis Xavier's life. Maffei was born in Bergamo in 1515 and died at Tivoli in 1603. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1565. He was invited by Cardinal Avigo to Lisbon so that from original documents he might write the history of the Conquest of India by the Portuguese. It was written in Latin. It fell into the lot of Father Faber to give us the English edition "From the Italian of Bartoli and Maffei."

2. Rocks of Ramanancor in the present Rameswaram.

that is to say, the Land of Delights. If we may trust the opinion of the Cingalese, their island is the original terrestrial paradise; in support of their belief they still show, on the summit of a high and almost inaccessible rock, the impression of two gigantic human feet, left there, as they affirm, by Adam. Without subscribing to the whole of their tradition, we may safely allow their country to be called the Paradise of the East: an unclouded sky, with two summers and two springs; an atmosphere so pure and salubrious that the natives live to extreme old age; indeed, decrepitude seems to be their only malady. Their trees are green, and whilst the fruit ripens on one side, new blossoms are budding forth on the other. The soil is luxuriant and requires but little cultivation: there are mines of metals and precious stones; valuable woods and spices; the finest of pearls abound on its coasts, and, in a word all that can gratify the senses of man is to be found in this favoured island. Yet, in the midst of all these advantages, there was, at the time of which we treat, one plague spot sufficient to ruin all—namely, the infamous habits of the people, who lived surrounded by the blessings of Almighty God, without the slightest knowledge of God, until the fame of the sanctity and stupendous miracles of the new Apostle, St. Francis Xavier spreading through the two coasts of Travancore and the Fishery, excited the desire in other Kingdoms of beholding so wonderful a man, and of hearing the new doctrines which he preached.

But before Ceylon made this request, the natives of Mannar had sent ambassadors to the Holy Man, entreating him to go and baptize them. As he was then actually engaged in the conversion of the Kingdom of Travancore, he could not forsake his new Church: so, in place going himself, he sent one of the two priests who had accompanied him to Goa; and Almighty God was pleased to crown his labours with such success that in a very short time he instructed and baptized vast numbers of the islanders. In those days Mannar was dependent on the crown of Jaffnapatam, the King of which was a cruel man—in fact, a compound of vice and barbarity, the *tyrant* rather than the Sovereign of his people. By force of arms he had dispossessed his elder brother;

## Note:—

1. The King and the tyrant refer to Sankilly, King of Jaffnapatam.

he despoiled and slew the most illustrious of his subjects. lest they might raise the people in defence of their lawful Prince; but, above all, he was the implacable enemy of the very name of Christ, although he simulated friendship for the Portuguese from fear of their power and arms.

When this man heard of the conversion of the Mannarese, he swore not to leave one of them alive. He collected his troops, and stealthily walked over to Mannar, condemning all those innocent victims to the sword, by way of striking terror into other states. The order was executed with as much cruelty as it was given: without distinction of age, sex, or rank, men, women, youth, and infancy, and in a word, whoever had received Baptism, — were ruthlessly slaughtered. Admirable indeed were the effects of the Grace of Baptism. As each one, in turn was asked whether he or she were Christian, whereas a negative answer would at once have placed their lives in safety so generous were these neophytes that far from having recourse to subterfuge, they boldly confessed the Faith, fathers and mothers answering for their little ones; to whom age has yet denied the power of speech. Between six and seven hundred were slain on this occasion. The place of their Martyrdom called *Pasim* deserved a more noble name and accordingly, from this date it has been called the Land of Martyrs.

### DOCUMENT 26.

(1617 — 1688) *Queyroz — Conquest of Ceylon.*  
Translation by Fr. S. G. Perera. Page 242

The Holy Xavier had by this time already baptised seven other villages on the coast of the Fishery from Brigao to Per-manel besides confirming in the Faith some whom he found baptised, but either ill instructed or negligent. And though there were some Clerics, he had others ordained who showed some capacity, and among others one to whom he gave his own name, thinking that thus he placed him under greater obligation, as in the case of Alexander Severus, who, when promoted to the

Notes:

1. *Pasim* is a misprint for *Patim*.

Empire, gave up the name Antoninus for fear lest he should not be able to accomplish what the Emperors of that name had achieved. The name of Francis Xavier, however, sat well on this disciple on account of his virtues and the fervour with which he preached and converted his countrymen. Meanwhile rumour brought tidings to Mannar of the Law which the Saint was preaching, and of the prodigies he wrought all along that Coast. The chief men of Mannar, moved by the Divine Spirit determined to send (messengers) to signify to him the dispositions that were therein and the importance of his visiting it, and the account which he would have to give to God, if he failed to visit it. In a short time (the messengers) met the Saint and offered him the fruit of the echo of his preaching and miracles. Fain would he have been present at two places simultaneously, as happened to him on another occasion but as God disposed other wise he sent for the Cleric Francis Xavier and spoke thus to him, "Well you know how willingly I would go to haul in these nets but as these neophytes are still so tender in Faith, I do not dare to exchange an actuality for a hope On this account I entrust to you the enterprise of Mannar. Wherein I trust in the Lord you will reap such great fruits, that I shall have to be emulous of your deed. But bear in mind that God alone is the Author of such works and that it is not right to attribute the success to ourselves for no good can come from such a limited capacity as ours. Go my son, and may God help you," He set out at once with the envoys, who though they regretted not to take the Saint with them were greatly relieved to learn from him that they would have him later on in that island.

Francis Xavier reached Mannar where he was well received, and after catechising the people, he baptised up to six hundred persons, thoroughly well grounded in the Faith as their constancy showed. The (Je) dacas or priests of that heathendom received tidings of this and tumultuously marched to Nelur to represent to the King in darkest colours the outrage of a Minister of another religion going about his territories perverting the people and setting them against him. (They said) that unless he took prompt action, he would soon find himself without a Kingdom, without lieges and without pagodes, that a great many of the existing

pagodes were already razed and an unknown God was worshipped in their place. And they represented these dangers and what would result therefrom with such exaggerations, that the King forthwith determined to avenge it. He mustered five thousand men at arms partly from the Coast of the mainland and partly from Jaffnapatam, and set out for Mannar, where he met with no other resistance than that of tears which some shed out of consolation and joy at seeing the constancy with which others died, the smallest children crying out, when their mothers tried to hide them from seeing their companions beheaded, they offered their throats to the executioners with the wonderful power of Faith. The tyrant King himself was their Captain and spared neither sex nor age, whereby he earned such hatred, over and above his other tyrannies that his own minions often-times tried to kill him by poison, as these tyrannies were manifest offences against nature, they were abhorred even by those who were not affected thereby; nor are there any chains which bind lieges more firmly than, those of humanity, as the Ottoman Amurates counselled his son Mahamet, for courtesy and mildness win what pride and rigor lose. The tyrant thought that he could kill the Christians and the Cleric Franeis Xavier with impunity, without considering that their blood would cry out to the Portuguese for vengeance, and that sooner or later he would have to pay for the cruelty wherewith he cut off those tender plants and hard won fruits, and desolated the island to people Heaven, to the Holy envy of the Europeans and the great grief of King D. Joao who, as he desired that new Christians should be treated in all matters with great love and regard, felt this tyranny as a personal affront.

Note:

1. Fernao de Queyroz was born at Amarante in Portugal in 1617, entered the Society of Jesus at Coimbra in 1631, came to Goa in 1635, became Provincial of the Order (1677—1680) died on April, 1688 after a continuous residence of 53 years in India. Queyroz's greatest work was the "The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon." For a great deal of information for the history of events up to 1612 Friar Francisco Negrao a missionary in Ceylon in 1610, seems to have been his authority, besides the information he gathered from many persons very familiar with the Island. (cf. Conquest pg. 14.)

DOCUMENT 27.

*The Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai by Mayilvakanam 1736*<sup>1</sup>  
Translated from the Tamil by C. Brito (page 33).

I. "For sometime past the *Parangkis* frequented Mannar for purposes of trade. They first came to Lanka in the Year *Parithapi* corresponding with the *Saka* year 1428, in the reign of *Parak-Kirama-Vaku* of Kotta, and having obtained his permission they commenced to trade in his territories, and by degrees extended their trade to this kingdom also. It was a sworn duty among the *Parangkis*<sup>2</sup> to endeavour to spread their religion wherever they went. By the force of their preaching numbers of families embraced the *Sathiya-Vetham* at Mannar. As soon as *Sankily* heard of this conversion he put six hundred persons to the sword without any distinction of age or sex. This took place in the month of *Adi* of the year, "*Kara*"<sup>3</sup>

II. Again in page 37 we find:

"The cruelty of *Sankily* increased with his power. His subjects were not able to endure it any longer and all eyes were turned to *Para-nirupa-singkan*.<sup>4</sup> This Prince felt himself too weak to be able to wrest the kingdom from the usurper. But as he did not care who possessed his patrimony if he himself could not possess it, he thought of the *Parangkis*, whose feelings *Sankily* had outraged by his massacre of their 600 converts in *Mannar*. The eloquent *Saveriyar* had since that massacre made several fruitless attempts to establish the Faith again, but went away in disappointment."

Notes:

1. The *Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai*: This work in Tamil Brose was written by *Mayilvakanam Pulavar* of Madagal at the request of *Jan Maccara* who was Governor of the Dutch possessions in Ceylon in 1736. This is the earliest record in Tamil of the Massacre of the Mannar Christians.
2. *Parangkis* were the Portuguese.
3. The year *Kara*: July to August of the cyclic year *Kara* which corresponds to the year 1531—1532 A. D. This date is evidently incorrect as *St. Francis-Xavier* came to India only in 1542.
4. *Para-nirupa-singkan* was the son of *Para-rasa-sekaran* by *Vallamma* while *Sankily* who usurped the throne was an illegitimate son of *Para-rasa-sekaran* by *Mang-kath-thammal*.

APPENDIX 1.

(*Catholic Messenger*, May 6, 1945)

NOBLE SIX HUNDRED

"Thanks be given to God our Lord," wrote St. Francis Xavier to the Jesuit Fathers in Rome, "because we do not lack martyrs in our time. And that while He sees so few souls avail themselves of all His divine mercy and indulgence to work out their salvation, He permits in the mystery of His Providence, that human barbarity should fill up the destined ranks and number of the Blessed."

There could be no better statement of the glory of martyrdom set down within the brief compass of two sentences. The Saint was writing the sentences in 1545 to report the glory of the Six Hundred who witnessed to the Faith of Christ in the Island of Mannar, part and parcel of the Island of Ceylon.

Four hundred years ago the Six Hundred flourished. Their most flourishing condition in life was when they died. In rounding off the four centuries the duty of thanksgiving is upon us.

And it is indeed most apposite that we also, in our time, in this time of the Second World War, do not lack martyrs. God only knows how many there could be who in this global conflict testified also to Christ. We also are face to face with the mystery of His Providence that human barbarity should be permitted to fill up the destined ranks and number of the Blessed.

Nevertheless we have to spare some thought for the Six Hundred of four hundred years ago.

They were inhabitants of our own soil. By their glorious dying they returned to the soil to fructify it.

The human barbarity of our own soil laid them low. From the history of our own peoples they were chosen to fill up the destined ranks and number of the Blessed.

Even here among us few availed themselves of the divine mercy and indulgence. Of the numbers who hearkened to the word some drew the line at dying for the Faith that was in them.

But not, not the Six Hundred. God permitted it; and in the flashing of a headsman's axe they worked out their salvation.

That thus they gave their all is undeniable. It is history. Documents of unimpeachable veracity and authority support the fact. But there are details of their supreme sacrifice, which are the problems of historians and re-discoverers of the truth of the past.

When we say they were Six Hundred, it is to say that they numbered any where between six and seven hundred. Some documents round them off at the seven hundred. Others make it seven hundred and odd. Only the Recording Angel could tell them off to a nicety, down to the unit of them.

If they were men, women and children, these is no hope of an exact enumeration under these separate categories. But one little circumstance coming under this head has come down. It seems the grown ups of the Six Hundred gathered in the children and infants and held them up to receive their crown by the stroke of the axe saying as they did so the executioner: These also are Christians.

The spectacle of such devoted constancy affected the beholders. Numbers who had never thought of the Faith marvelled to hear how the victims had offered their throats to the executioner.

The axe which is meant for destroying the Faith by its very act of destruction restores the Faith. It is a divine irony which the generations of the persecutors cannot control.

In the Island of Mannar the Six Hundred were successfully despatched,

But the persecutor failed.

In the earliest documents they are called the Carcas.

They are also known as Karawas. Their town in the Island was known to St. Francis Xavier as Careapatao, but the chances are that they held not this one town but inhabited the whole island and controlled its entire sea-board in the interest of the Pearl Fishery. This historic business was in their hands.

Hearing of the new gospel preached on the Indian coast, over the water by St. Francis Xavier they were one of the several peoples who sent an invitation to the Apostle to come with the good news to them. The Saint was at the time having his hands full with his converts on the Indian continent, safeguarding them against the attacks of the pagans. He could not go out in answer to the call of the Careas. He sent a deputy.

Curiously he sent on an Indian convert, a cleric, who bore his own name of Francis Xavier. He carried all before him in Mannar with a sweep of apostolic energy worthy of his name.

The Careas had no very lengthy practice of the new Faith assured for them, since, in the words of the biographer of St. Francis Xavier "their birth unto Christ and their death for Christ went hand in hand." They were cut out from the start for martyrs.

The human barbarity, which St. Francis Xavier was aware of as permitted to fill up the destined ranks and number of the blessed, was on this occasion, supplied by the King or rather the pretty ruler of Jaffnapatam, one Chekarasa Sekaram, otherwise known as Sankilly.

This Sankilly heard and boiled with anger. The only token of Sankilly's rule which people seem to have remembered was a huge block for decapitation which he had had conveniently placed at his palace gate, and any old fib or fabrication or false charge sufficed him to have any number of heads as he desired laid upon that block.

It is said that this Sankilly mustered a body of five thousand to march out against the new Christians of the Pearl Fishery.

In those days it would have appeared to be a blitz in the Mannar of our Adolph Schickelgruber.

The island was forty miles in circumference and the enemy were only Six Hundred, if not seven.

The war aim of this Sankilly was perfectly realised.

There was no resistance of the Six Hundred except to refuse to abjure the Faith.

The documents are full of the horror and indignation which this atrocity evoked in the Christian people in the converted areas of India. St. Francis Xavier has recorded his immense revulsion of feeling and in several letters demanded that the Portuguese power should summarily punish the gangster of Jaffnapatam,

This was later done; and it is good to add that the Apostle was concerned for the soul of this Sankilly,

Francis Xavier the deputy received the crown together with his converts. We have no names to give to any others of the Six Hundred except for a tributary prince resident at the time in Mannar, one Uracinga, whom de Queyroz names and whom others call Ilam Singha.

Where exactly in the forty miles of the island the martyrdom took place is not known for certain, nor the place of sepulture of the Noble Six Hundred. But their veneration began early enough.

St. Francis Xavier who had a particular affection for the Pearl Fishery, the name combining two words which evoked two of the great brief parables of the Gospel, came at last to the other side of the Pearl Fishery, preached the word, worked miracles and is recorded to have "reverently kissed the soil saturated with the blood of so many glorious champions of the Faith."

J. P. DE FONSEKA.

## APPENDIX II.

*(Catholic Messenger, June 3, 1945)***Who were the Martyrs of Mannar?**

The question of the particular caste of those brave neophytes of Mannar, put to death by the King of Jaffna in 1544, fades into an insignificant detail in face of the effulgent glory of their martyrdom. As, however, this question has been raised recently in your issue of the 6th instant will you be good enough to permit me to say a word on the subject?

There is a persistent and well-known tradition in North Ceylon which affirms that the Martyrs were from the caste of Kadear. The word Kadear is probably from the Tamil *kali*, "agricultural tract," with the suffix *-ar*, "persons belonging to." In old Tamil classics the Kadear are found as cultivators of the soil, but they occupied themselves also with fishing when they found themselves in maritime tracts as some of them are doing to the present day, especially in South India. In modern times there are sections of them also burning lime, tapping for toddy, etc. From the earliest time they are found in the island of Mannar and it is very likely that they originally followed here their avocation of fishing. Casie Chitty, who compiled his Ceylon Gazetteer more than a hundred years ago, says about Mannar that it belonged to the Kadears and that the Martyrs were from among them. Two centuries earlier the Jesuit Visitor, Father Lopes had recorded that the Martyrs of Mannar belonged to the same section of people as the Christians of Toddavely who, we know, were then as they are now, Kadear. And it is remarkable that the Kadear alone, among all the sections of the North, have always claimed the Martyrs as their ancestors. Well known also is the fact that they have been celebrating, from time immemorial, the feast of the Pentecost as their "caste festival" in all their chief centres. Old Missionaries tell us that the Kadear are attached to this feast as a token, of the grace of fortitude which their forbears received from the Holy Spirit.

What then about the Martyrs being called Careas "in the earliest documents?" The reference here is to a letter of Father Enriques, S. J. written in 1561. Their place is also called Careapatao in it as well as in a letter of St. Francis Xavier. Does not this show definitely that the "Noble Six Hundred" belonged to the Tamil community known as Kuru-kulam? That does not follow, I think. For, we must note that the word Careas, as used by the Portuguese of those days, is a generic term including all fishing communities. See instances in Dalgado's excellent Luso-Asiatic dictionary. The word indeed is from the Tamil *karai*,

"maritime tract," with *as*, for the suffix *-ar*, Careas would then simply mean people of the maritime tract, people chiefly occupied with fishing. Careapatao is the fishing people's town. The second member of the word is the Tamil *paddanam* which any Tamil scholar will tell you designates a large seaboard village or town. It is a variant of *paddi*, village. Now if the chief occupation of the Kadear of Mannar in those days was fishing they might have been very appropriately called Careas by their generic appellation, so long as there was no need for the mention of their distinctive name. There seems to have been indeed only one homogeneous community at Careapatao. And the term Careas has probably no reference at all here to the community called Kuru-kulam as there is no trace of its having been ever settled in Mannar. This is not the case with the Paravas who were connected with the pearl-fishery in the Gulf of Mannar from olden days. They were permanent inhabitants of the island at least from 1560 when large colonies of them were brought into it by the Portuguese Government.

The tradition so dear to the Kadeas on North Ceylon is not, therefore, contradicted by the Jesuit letter in question. Fr. Schurhammer, who first published parts of that letter in his learned work on Ceylon in the time of St. Francis Xavier, would suggest that Careas in that letter is a misspelling for Cadeas (Kadear), the peculiar cerebral *d* of Tamil being represented by the Portuguese *s*. He indeed calls Careapatao the Place of Kadear. But he goes further and writes Kadear for Careas indiscriminately in other connexions too. So also did early Indian Missionaries confuse Kadear and Careas. This shows how foreigners are liable to err in transcribing oriental sounds and how we have got to be careful in dealing with their proper names.

At this distance of time it is not easy for us to decide which particular section of the fishers had the incomparable happiness of testifying to the Faith in their blood. The venerable tradition of the Kadear is there uncontested till now by any other community in the land, and we may not dare gainsay it so long as we do not possess unimpeachable evidence to the contrary.

S. GNANA PRAKSAR, O. M. I.

Manipay, 9-5-45.



## APPENDIX III.

**Who were the Martyrs of Mannar?**

Since the publication of my Booklet on 'The Martyrs of Mannar' from authentic Documents, Fr Gnana Pragasar has raised a very pertinent question. "There is a persistent and wellknown tradition in the North of Ceylon," he says "which affirms that the Martyrs were from the caste of the Kadeas," No doubt there is such a tradition. But is this tradition consistent with written records? Here is what Fr. S. G. Perera says: "With regard to the popular tradition that the Kadeas were the Martyrs; I must say that I give no credence to local traditions unless in agreement with written records, or accepted provisionally in the absence of records. The earliest writers refer to the Careas and not to the Kadeas cf. 1. St. Francis Xavier writing from Punakayal on the 21st of August, 1544 calls them "Careas of Patim" Carea Patao.

2. Fr. Anriquez (1520--1600) who was a Missionary and Superior in Mannar, and the foremost Tamil Scholar in his days and who wrote a number of Books in Tamil including a Tamil Grammar, and who compelled his subjects to speak Tamil,—in his letters refers to them as belonging to "de casta de Careas." In the same letter written on the 19th of December, 1561, he speaks of other Castes—the Christian Paravas, the Pallivilli, the Timilar, the Mucuas—who were all engaged in fishing. He was fully aware of the different caste of people among whom he was working.
3. Queyroz speaking about the castes in Ceylon, mentions "the Bedas (veddhas), the Muchuas, the Careaz the Chandaz, the Chaleaz, the Palaraz, the Berbayas and the Roris cf. pg 19.
4. Queyroz also speaks of the "Kinglets of the Careas." pg. 466, "the village of the Careas." cf pg. 638 also about the "Careas of Mannar" when the Captain of Mannar gave him (Andre Furtado) 16 more shipstakeing a loan of 2,000 pardaos from the Careaz (of Mannar) besides 30,000 of the fishing rent of the year. cf. pg. 450.
5. King Don Joao III writing about the conversion of the 70,000 Careas with their Patangatims in 1556 to Friar Francisco de Chaves says: "I the King send you much greeting I am much pleased and rejoice at the news you gave me of how our Lord was pleased to enlighten by the means of the religious of your Order, the *Nation of the Careas* who you say live in the seaports of Ceylon and are said to be more than 70,000 souls whose Captains called Pantamgatim (Patamgatims) came with them."

6. In 1591 when Andre Furtado proceeded to Mannar "more than 6,000 Paravas and Careas living in front of the Bar near S. Joao received him in procession." cf. Queyroz pg. 445.
7. Ribeiro in his "Historic Tragedy of Ceilao" speaks of some of the castes in his days. "The Careas are fishermen, the Mainatos (washers) and the Pachas (sandal-makers)." cf. ch. xvi.
8. Andre Lopez in 1644 writing about St. Thome Patanam (modern Erukampaddy) says "The Residence of the place of the Careas." This caste of the Careas was well known to the earlier writers. It is only the later writers who confused the 'r' for the 'd' and made it Cadeas, cf. Crow and Besse Schurhammer, erroneously followed Fr. Gnana Prakasar and translated Careapatao as Kandyan Ort (place of Kadeas) 1, 135 and fell into the same error of saying that 30,000 Cadeas were converted between Chilaw and Maggona! cf. Fr S. G. Perera's Letter October, 1944.

It is now beyond the shadow of a doubt that all the earliest writers, A. Valignani, in 1583, Tursellinus in 1594, Lucena in 1601, Bartoli in 1653, Gracia in 1672, P. Guiseppe Massi in 1682, all mention Patim as the place of the Martyrdom, and the people of Patim belonged to the caste of the Careas, and as Fr. Gnana Prakasar admits "there seem to have been indeed only one homogeneous community at Carea Patao

In the face of all this array of written evidence it is still puzzling to hear Fr. Gnana Prakasar telling us that "this venerable tradition of the Kadeas is not contradicted by the Jesuit Letter in question. He further suggests that the generic term Careas was used for the Cadeas because they lived in the "Maritime tracts" and that "their original avocation was fishing." Fr. Anriquez mentions in the same letter other castes like the Paravas, the Pallivilli, the Timilas, who were also engaged in fishing, and living along the "maritime tracts" The generic term Careas could have equally been applied to them.

There is no evidence to prove that the chief occupation of the Kadeas in those days was fishing. The earliest statistics in 1826 mentions two classes of Kadeas.

(1) Kadea (originally lime burners) 692; (2) Kadeas (choya root diggers) 720. cf. Boake.

Also the fact that the Kadeas always claimed the martyrs as their ancestors is no historical proof that their claim is correct, particularly when written records go against it.

"Well known also is the fact," says Fr. Gnana Prakasar, "that the Kadeas have been celebrating, from time immemorial, the feast of the Pentecost as their Caste Festival." These caste festivals were creations of the Goanese Priests who allotted principal feasts to different castes as is done in the Mantot today. Even if the Kadeas were given the feast of Our Lady they could still claim her as the Queen of Martyrs. Fr. de Rhode who visited Mannar in 1622 speaks of only the Corpus Christi, Holy Cross, St. Matthew, St. Lawrence, St. Ignatius, the Martyr, which were celebrated with solemnity, with long procession and choir singing." cf. Fr. S. G. Perera's Ceylon Antiquary, Vol. IV.

Is it possible then that the Portuguese could not pronounce the letter 'd' (cerebral) occurring single within a word? Hence they wrote Careas for Cadeas. At any rate Fr. Anriquez could not have made a mistake. He wrote a Grammar in Tamil. He would have noted the difference. The cerebral *d* was not unknown to the Portuguese writers. We come across in their writings words like Madagar for Mathagal, Bedas, Badagas, Careas of Bedale, Verdade, padeceo, moradores, pardaos, Caderipai Cardive. Cruzados, Residence of Paditerippu, Passado, Furtado, and a string of other words could be cited. If the Portuguese really wanted to refer to the Cadeas they could at least have written either, Catheas or Cateas.

I have been at pains to find out the origin of this 'venerable tradition.' The earliest record is the Gazetteer by Simon Casie Chitty published in 1834. He says "with regard to the pristine state of Mannar we are not in possession of any written accounts, and are therefore compelled to rest on the tradition current among the natives. According to *one of these accounts* the island was in early times the hereditary property of the Kadeas and exclusively occupied by them." So Casie Chitty had to rely on one of these accounts. There must have been several accounts. At least according to the Government Statistics in 1826 there were 34 castes mentioned. cf. Boake. Compared to the 1886 figures the figures are these:

	In 1826.	...	In 1886.
Careas	1,000	...	1,048
Cadeas (originally lime burners)	692	...	1,134
Cadear (choya root diggers)	720	...	438

There were Careas in the Island. Today we find only five families of them in Mannar.

Mention is also made of the Careas and the Paravas having a long line of adigars among them; not so the Kadeas.

The term Patamgatim was common among the Careas. cf. 70,000 Careas and their patamgatims were converted from Chilaw to Maggona. Fr. Gnana Prakasar himself speaks of the traces of vast buildings which he discovered at Erukampitty "were according to the Lebbe, those of a rich Pattamgatti Moor" It is interesting to know that the tradition of the great chief of the Karawas of the place was still persisting. cf. Catholic Guardian 24th April, 1936.

One cannot rely too much on Tradition, for as Newman says in one of his lectures "To go by tradition is to go by that very mode of information in its worst shape. Tradition is an anonymous informant. Tradition might have been kept ever so accurately and religiously, it might have been derived from the foregoing generation, and have existed beyond the farthest memory, by itself it proves nothing . . . When the origin is false the tradition will be false. It becomes a fraud, it might make it venerable; it could not make it true."

For nearly 400 years the so-called Tradition about Totaveli being the place of Martyrdom and the Prince Martyr of Jaffna persisted. Very scholarly arguments were adduced in the Ceylon Antiquary in support of the Prince Martyr of Jaffna. And on the 6th May, 1945. Fr. Gnana Prakasar wrote "I myself was party to this error in my history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon, but this error was recanted long ago in a Colombo Daily. Early Portuguese historians were confused as to the province of the Prince Martyr, some ascribing him to Kandy, some to Trincomalee, some to Madampe, some to Kotte and some finally to Jaffna. Supporters of Jaffna were more numerous and there was a local tradition, dating from at least 1664, giving circumstantial details as to the very place of Martyrdom. The fact of many writers having supported Jaffna and the persistence of local tradition made me adhere to the Jaffna theory. New light has been

Note:

1. Paddankaddi—The word Paddankaddi is an exact equivalent of the Sinhalese Patabendi as in Patabendi Aracci, and literally means a person having title (pattam) 'tied' to him. Both are designations of Fisher Headmen whose duty was to divide the fish between the renter and the fishermen. The Paddankaddi was paid two per cent on the fish taken. cf. J. P. Lewis' Manual of Vanni, pg. 30.

"The Paddankaddi received two per cent. for making a just division of fish between the renter and the fishermen. of this one per cent. is for the use of the poor." cf. Mannar by Boake. This title is common today among the Karawas of Chilaw, Negombo, Ambalangoda etc. as Ge names. Even in the Mantote, this title persists in the Kurukula Community. I have not come across any Document in which the Cadeas were given this title.

sbed recently by the publication of the letters of Andre de Sousa and the other contemporaries in full by Dr. Schurhammer and Voretzsch. There lingers no doubt as to the place of the origin of the Prince who gave his life for the Faith. It was no other than Kotte. Writers on the Church History in Jaffna have to sacrifice many a beautiful page; many a theatrical centring round the legendary Prince Martyr of Jaffna, the son of Sankily Raja, has to be thrown to the winds; but let truth alone prevail." Catholic Messenger, 6th May, 1945.

In spite of the recantation the traditions about Totavelly and that the Prince of Jaffna was martyred in front of the present Cathedral have persistently continued as attested by "Francisco" in the Catholic Messenger of 22nd April, 1945.

It is now accepted by most modern writers in India that it was the Careas who were martyred. cf. Madura Catholic Mission 1937 edition, page 34 "The Mannar massacre." In September, 1544, St. Francis Xavier sent a Goan Secular Priest to the island of Mannar where a small tribe of fishermen the Karayars had called him by letter."

Fr. D. Ferroli, S. J. writing about Christ's Heralds—an article which appeared in the Indian Ecclesiastical Review page 12 says "Its foundations were not laid on the gold of the Conquerors. They were watered by the blood of Martyrs. In 1544, about 600 humble fishermen of the island of Mannar were massacred for the Faith.

A. J. B. ANTONINUS, O. M. I.

Mannar, 15-5-45

#### APPENDIX IV WHERE IS PATTIM?

The six Hundred Martyrs of Mannar were put to death at a place called Pattim in Mannar. Pattim according to the earliest Portuguese Documents is "Half a league from the Fort of Mannar" cf D. 20.

In 1945 I set out with a few of my Hostellers of St Xavier's College, Mannar in search of this place called Pattim. I had obtained from the Survey Department a few ancient maps of the Island of Mannar. Armed with these we covered an area within a radius of 2 to 3 miles from the Fort of Mannar. We began from Pallimunai end. At first we came across some ruins of an old building which was about 15 by 8 feet and a number of graves around. The Muslims of the area said it was one of their mosques, besides that spot was within half a mile from the Fort. Hence we rejected that spot and went on daily scouring the jungle overgrown with umbrella trees and cactus plants. We crossed the main road that runs from the Fort to Talaimannar. At the end of the 2nd mile post we turned to the west. There was an open barren land. We followed a foot-path till about half a mile from the main road close to the railway line a mound covered with umbrella and accasia trees. We noticed some bricks protruding. Here at last we thought was a place worth excavating. We planted a rough cross made of sticks on the top of the mound and returned home.

The next day I took Mr Bastian Fernando the District Engineer, P. W. D. Mannar with some senior boys of the College. We took also mamotties and pickaxes.

The Engineer asked the boys to cut a trench on the east side of the mound, from a distance of about 15 feet, at the end of the trench we came across a wall. We directed the excavation along the left side of the wall. But finding it difficult as the wall looked hardened, the excavators proceeded to the right. Hardly had they cut about 10 feet, we noticed a full skeleton lying face downwards. I took the skull and marked it "TOP" and later brought it to St. Sebastian's Church where it is kept.

The excavations continued till the wall turned to the left. About 15 feet we came across two steps, evidently the main

steps of the building. We continued excavating another 15 feet then the wall turned left. We proceeded about 5 feet and stopped.

The following Sunday we came to the spot and this time cut down the accacia trees and gradually cleared the mound. After several days the base of the building appeared. We continued removing the sand and rubble till another floor 6 feet raised appeared. The work continued till an area 30 by 10 feet on the raised floor was cleared. Then in the centre we came across a broken down altar. That convinced us that there was a church. The raised floor was the sanctuary. The floor was glossy, thick hardened mortar.

#### Further Excavation

On inquiry I found that the property in which these ruins were located belonged to one Mr. Muttutamby a retired Adigar of Mannar. I spoke to him and obtained permission to enclose the area.

A few days later the place was enclosed. Then I resumed the work of excavation. We dug up a trench 8 by 6 feet in the nave of the church. About three feet below we came across several skeletons lying in all directions. Some were small, evidently those of children. Others heads got separated. We were just finishing this work when we saw Rev. Sister Gonzago taking the Convent girls out for a walk, we called the group to the spot. We recited some prayers and I told the children not to speak about it till we came across further evidence. But they could become useful witnesses of the presence of the remains of the Martyrs if that spot was proved to be the exact place of the martyrdom.

I got the trench covered and put some leaves over it so as not to attract any curious people to the spot.

A month after I met Fr S. Gnanapragasa O. M. I. the Philologist and historian of the Diocese. I gave him the details of the excavations carried on the spot. So he decided to visit the spot. A few weeks after when he came to Mannar, I took him to that spot. He wanted me to have the trench opened at the centre of the church. We got a trench 6 by 3 feet opened. There was a

full skeleton lying with the head slightly turned. Part of the bones on the edges showed reddish colour. Fr Gnanapragasar shook his head and said, "Yes, I think this is the spot where some were martyred." He was then under the impression that the martyrdom may have taken place in several places in Mannar. But I maintained that there is no evidence to that effect. Only Pattim is mentioned.

I closed the trench and took Fr Gnanapragasar back to Mannar.

#### Identification of the Place

I was anxious to find out the exact name of this place. Only an opportunity came when I was cycling behind a cart driven by a moorman. I asked him the name of the place as we passed 2nd mile on the Mannar Talaimannar road. He pointed to the direction of the spot where I had carried on the excavations and said, "That place is called 'PADDI TARAVAI'. It means 'The open plain of Patti'. The Portuguese writers used the word 'PATTIM' for 'PATTI'.

Rev. Dr. P A. J. B. Antoninus O. M. I.

Director

"SETIK"

21 Weerakoon Gardens Kandy  
16th August 1965

P. S.

There were two objects found while excavating the Church at Pattim

1. A copper Broach like object
2. A Coin.

I sent this coin to Dr Paronavitana the then Archeologist for identification. He wrote back to say that the words "CLAUDIUS IMPERATOR" were found on the coin inscribed. Evidently it was a Roman Coin.

From an old note book I found the following entries:

17. 7. 45. Head discovered - Teeth behind head.  
A big skull lying downwards with left hand bones, fingers facing downwards.
20. 7. 45. The floor was discovered
25. 7. 45. The altar was discovered (sanctuary)
28. 7. 45. The entrance to the church discovered
29. 7. 45. The outer wall was traced
31. 7. 45. The altar was discovered.

POST ANTONINUS PERIOD SUPPLEMENT  
**MADU SHRINE, MANNAR AND THE MARTYRS**

Rev. Dr. Antoninus passed away on the 23rd December 1973 having handed his manuscript on the History of the Madu Shrine to the Bishop of Jaffna Mgr Deogupillai who assured him that it would be published for the Golden Jubilee celebration of July 1974. Strangely, however, "The Chronicle of Madu Shrine" saw the light of day only in 1979, with "a few modifications in the text, before publication," says Mgr Deogupillai in his presentation dated 14th January 1979. The author's Foreword is dated 1956 and the Introduction by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Pieris O. M. I. is dated 31st May 1955. It is beyond our comprehension that a reputed scholar of the calibre of Bishop Pieris did not see that any of "these changes were mostly petitions and passages irrelevant to the theme of the book" and should be deleted when he wrote the Introduction! He was not consulted before the changes were made. Mgr Deogupillai claims that he discussed in detail the manuscript with the author who was very ill in a Nursing Home, and that he agreed to the deletions and additions. Fr. Antoninus never mentioned any such agreement to his kith and kin or close associates. All he said was that it would be published for the Jubilee in 1974. In July 1975 a reader queried in the columns of the Messenger regarding this matter. There was no reply to this query. Many of Dr. Antoninus's close associates are aware of his historical gleanings and the fervour with which he pursued his research and nothing could have been irrelevant. The question of the martyrs of Mannar and the builders of the Madu Shrine were very close to his heart.

A Tamil translation of two Catechisms published in India was in use in the schools of Sri Lanka in 1975 as pointed out by two readers of the Catholic Messenger in May/June 1975. The Catechisms in question were "Valum Valium" and "Thirumari Vilakim" published in Poona in 1961. The Tamil version of these books were published by the National Catechetical Commission of Ceylon, at St. Joseph's Press, Jaffna. No date of publication is given. The two correspondents to the Messenger pointed out that an Appendix has been added to these Catechisms

and is titled "History" of Ceylon 1505 - 1658" (pages 127-140) at the end of this "history" it is signed by B. Deogupillai - Auxillary of Trincomalee. There is no date to this Appendix too. In the absence of a date to this Appendix, so important to historians and scholars, posterity would take it for granted that it was also published in 1961. It is a glaring slip for one who assumes to be a "historian," for the Interpolator was not Auxillary in 1961!

There was complete silence regarding the Martyrs of Mannar till 1975 exposing the distortion of historical facts in this Appendix. The main reason for this addition was to impose the now debunked theory that the Martyrs of Mannar were Kadeas and Toddavely was the site of the Martyrdom. The exposure of this ruse by two readers and two supporting letters not published in the Messenger by the potent Editor of the year are reproduced in this Supplement. The deception of the interpolator with regard to his position and his theory of the Martyrs of Mannar is far too glaring for this generation. Could any credence be given for his claim that deletions and additions were discussed with the Author of the Madu Shrine. It is patently clear that a sinister motive delayed the publication of the work and its appearance after the publication of the two Catechisms around in 1975, (both after the demise of Dr. Antoninus) is no coincidence, but deliberate action.

F. B. Jagath Wijayanayaka.

SUPPLEMENT I  
CORRESPONDENCE  
The Martyrs of Mannar.

The Editor,

"Catholic Guardian," Jaffna.

Sir,

I read with great interest, the account of Father Delandes' excavations of the Thoddavely church in quest of indications about the Martyrs of Mannar. A Tamil journal concluded, all too soon, that the bones of these Martyrs have been found. Before this can be confidently asserted we should be sure we have satisfactory circumstances conclusive proof can be had only with documentary evidence. But of this we have unfortunately none. However, a certain degree of *probability* can be established if at least the following points are settled.

1. Is it certain that the church under whose floor the bones were found is the old Portuguese church in ruins? The local tradition in 1912 when I visited the place was that the present Catholic chapel of Toddavely is the *third* put up to suit the exigencies of the people who were shifting their hamlet from time to time. According to that tradition the first church would have been built under the Oratorian Fathers (1687 - 1836). The Portuguese church in fact could not have been used by the post Portuguese period Catholics, as they were all appropriated by the Dutch and were afterwards handed over to the British. As a rule no Portuguese churches were "razed to the ground by the Dutch." They kept them, as they meant to convert the people to the "Reformed faith." It is a well known fact that most of the old Portuguese churches fell into ruins by degrees for sheer want of worshippers.

2. Is it certain that the Martyrs were *buried*? Their bodies might as well have been burnt in heaps. According to first hand sources, the body of the Prince-martyr of Jaffna was cremated. We must bear in mind that the Mannar Martyrs numbered from six to seven hundred. If the two mounds surmounted by a Cross in the drawing of Le Grand's Rebeiro (See the History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon, part 1, opposite p. 44) represent the places of the martyrdom of the Mannar Christians, we have

also a spot at the west end of the Island where the bodies of the Martyrs would have been disposed of either by burial or cremation. Still if the bones of the Martyrs are to be found at Toddavely they will be found in extraordinarily large quantities in the same level. We must again bear in mind that the martyrdom took place three hundred and eighty years ago. On the supposition that the remains were interred, is the soil of the locality of such quality as to preserve the bones for such a long period, aside, of course, from miraculous intervention?

That ordinary people are not buried within the church is no doubt true. But the other alternative is there that a church may be built in an old burial place. The present Navatkuli church, for instance, stands in the church-yard of the old Portuguese church abandoned by the Dutch and gone to ruins under the British. If the church excavated at Toddavely belongs to Goanese times, the presence of bones is easily explained: Either the site had been a burial ground previously of some notable persons—it might have been a number of priests one after the other,—were buried in it, perhaps, before the floor, found "intact" by the excavators, was laid.

I hope that Revd. Father Deslandes whose efforts to discover the remains of the Martyrs are so praiseworthy will, by further investigations on the above lines be able to clear difficulties. The Jesuit Visitor General of that time in Portugal, Father Le Frere, when he heard of the martyrdom exclaimed: "How happy we would be if we could possess in Europe the relics of their bodies and of their blood we who are the elders in the Faith." Doubly should we, their countrymen, be nappy if by good fortune we came upon their holy remains.

S. Gnana Prakasar, O. M. I  
13/12/1924

THIS PAGE IS DEDICATED  
TO ALL UNBIASED WRITERS,  
AND SEEKERS OF TRUTH

*"A historian not open to correction  
does not deserve the name"*

—Rev. Fr. S. Gnana Prakasar, O. M. I

SUPPLEMENT II.

**The Martyrs of Mannar**

I was shocked to read an appendix in the Tamil Catechism book for Standard 7 used by my son about the Mannar Martyrs, which does not conform to actual facts as known throughout this district and so would like if some of our readers would be so good as to enlighten me.

It was recorded without the slightest shadow of doubt that the martyrs were from the warrior-caste Kaurawas or Kurus who were in the Tamil king Sankili's Army and Navy in the Mannar Island. Vide Revd. Dr. P. A. J. B. ANTONINUS, O. M. I. in "MARTYRS OF MANNAR."

It is significant that while the Kurukula people on the mainland form the largest single community of farmers and cover about 30 villages in Mathoddam, there is not a single Kurukula Village in the Island of Mannar. Why is this? Tradition says that the Kurukula people of the aforesaid Sinnakaraiapattu and Periyakaraiapattu who were in the employ of the Jaffna King's Army and Navy under the Commander Illame Singam, were the first to invite the Apostle of the East, St. Francis Xavier who was preaching the Word of God to their kinsmen in South India. As he was unable to come over, Francis Xavier sent in his place an Indian priest of that name who actually evangelised the first Christians of not merely Mannar but of the entire Island of Sri Lanka. It is strange that the King of Jaffna led an army of 5000 strong recruited in Jaffna against the Mannar Catholics, whereas he could have utilised his own military and Naval garrison stationed at Mannar under Commander Illam Singam. It is because his Commanding Officer and all other ranks in the Mannar Garrison had become Catholics, Sankili had to take a detachment from Jaffna to implement his edict "renounce Christianity or die."

As the entire families of the soldiers and sailors refused to give up the new faith they were all put to the sword by the detachment from Jaffna led by Sankili himself. Hence the absence of kaurawa villages now in the Island of Mannar.

S. L. EDIRIMANNA SINGHE  
*Periyakavetkulam*

18th May 1975.  
Catholic Messenger

## SUPPLEMENT III.

**Who were the Martyrs of Mannar?**

In December 1944 Mannar celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the martyrdom of her 700 first Christians of Sri Lanka, with an Eucharistic Rally at which the writer of this article was present. I had just returned from the Middle Eastern theatre of operations in world War II.

That event was marked with the publication of a historical book entitled "THE MARTYRS OF MANNAR" by the late Rev. Dr P. A. J. B. Antonius O. M. I. This book was well received as the author displayed his deep learning and insatiable search for truth and his natural acumen in marshalling historical facts supported by historians and scholars of no mean repute. Fr. Antoninus had been a long time resident of Mannar where he fathered the Co-operative Movement and initiated the development of the Fishing Industry. Literally and physically he left no stone unturned to delve deep into the genuine facts and locate the site connected with the first Catholics to die for the Faith in this Island of ours.

**LISBON DOCUMENT**

The erudite historian that he was, Fr. Antoninus O. M. I. searched far and wide for facts and figures and was able to put his methodical fingers on the very document in the Portuguese Imperial Archives in Lisbon. His research exploded the myth of Nallur Swami Gnanapragasa O. M. I. who had been propounding the theory, now proved fallacious, that the Martyrs of Mannar were from the lime caste or KADAYAS. The written evidence produced from the Portuguese Capital was so overwhelmingly against Fr. Gnanapragasar's totally erroneous theory, that the master of several languages had to admit in a letter published in Fr. Antoninus' historical book "The Martyrs of Mannar," that when he put forward the incorrect theory he did not have access to historical document which Fr. Antoninus was able to produce.

I was therefore taken aback when one Catholic Teacher in a Tamil School in the North, drew my attention to some Catechism books in our Catholic Schools in the Island: "VALVUM VALIUM" and "THIRUMARAI VILAKAM" for Standard seven.

**UNAUTHENTIC**

These are Catechism books written by some Indian Priests and translated into Tamil and used in Catholic Schools in Sri Lanka. At the end of these books an Appendix had been added by the present Bishop of Jaffna. Rt. Rev. Dr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai. May I, through the medium of the premier Catholic Journal in the Island, request the learned Bishop to quote chapter and verse to substantiate his unauthentic writing that it was the "PARAWAS AND THE KADAYAS" who were first to be converted to the faith and that the Martyrs of Mannar were "PARAWAS AND KADAYAS" and not Kurus or Kauwrawas as had been proved without any doubt by the late Historians Frs. Antoninus and Nallur Swami Gnanapragasar, Oblates of Mary Immaculate?

For the information of the Bishop of Jaffna I would like to point out that his reference to Illam Sinhan as the leader of the Martyrs proves the truth that the people who were slaughtered ruthlessly by an army of 5000 led by King Sankili himself, were no other than the Kaurawas who were in the King's armed forces and Prince Illam Sinhan was their Commanding Officer, and the Jaffna King Sankili's representative in the Island of Mannar.

It is a well known fact of history that Jaffna was ruled by the Kshattrya Ariya Chakarwathies — vide Dr. St. John Puvirajasinghe's book — "THE SINGHE DYNASTY."

It is significant that since the martyrdom the entire Kaurawa population of the Island of Mannar disappeared while their kith and kin on the mainland form the bulk of the Matodda residents and are all agriculturist in about 30 villages in the Mannar District.



The descendants of the Glorious Martyrs of Mannar and all right thinking people both Catholics, non Catholics would like to get the record straight from Church Historians in Ceylon. Can they not enlighten us through the medium of your valuable journal about the historical source for a far fetched theory which had been exploded as totally fallacious as early as in 1944!

Truth is indeed stranger than fiction!

A VIEWPOINT

M. A. P. PUVIRAJASINGHE.  
(Hon. Gen. Sec. Mannar  
Kurukula Association)

The Ceylon Catholic Messenger Sunday 22nd June 1975.

SUPPLEMENT IV

VALUM VALIUM

Part ii for Standard 7

by

Rev. Desmond A. D'Abreo S. J.

Tamil Translation by Rev. P. P. Xavier

Published

With the kind permission of the Catechetical Centre

*De Nobili College of Poona. 6. India 1961*

Appendix pages 127 - 140

History of Ceylon 1505 - 1658

by

B. Deogupillai Co-Adjutor of Trincomalee

Published by the National Catechetical Commission of Ceylon

St. Joseph's Press Jaffna

(undated)

Literal translation of the Martyrs of Mannar according to this unauthenticated version. It is a misrepresentation of facts and a mischievous propaganda on the part of the author.

"The Barathas and Kadeyars who colonised the Island of Mannar heard about it (i. e. conversion of their kinsmen in South India by St. Francis Xavier) and being desirous of becoming Christians like their kinsmen, sent a deputation to St Francis Xavier soliciting that the Gospel be preached to them. Since there were several obstacles which did not permit, St. Francis to be away from the new converts in South India in his place he sent to Mannar his name sake and Indian priest. Father Francis Xavier preached the Gospel to the Barathas and Kadayars in Mannar. Nearly 700 people inclusive of their administrative leader Prince Elamchiya were received into the Church" p. 131. para. 3

"The Island of Mannar being part of the Jaffna Kingdom, King Sankilli was scared and infuriated at hearing this. The Hindu priest carried propaganda that their temples would be

destroyed and like the Kotte Kingdom, the Jaffna Kingdom also would be annexed by the Portuguese. It was believed that because the Christian Faith was introduced by the Portuguese, the converts to Christianity would support the Government. Therefore Kingr Sankilli personally led an army of 5000 soldiers to Mannar and published an Edict. 'Unless the converts renounce their new Faith and re-embrace the Hindu religion, they would be severely punished.' But the Mannar Christians stood firmly in their Faith. Consequently 700 persons approximately, inclusive of Fr. Francis Xavier were most atrociously slaughtered by the military in December 1544. King Sankilli did not spare even small children. Christian blood was shed in a deluge. With that the King thought wistfully the Christian Faith would disappear from the Kingdom'' (P. 132).

## SUPPLEMENT V

## MARTYRS OF MANNAR

Reference to Mr. M. A. Punia Puvirajasinghe's article on the above subject, appearing in your journal of the 22. 6. 75, I regret to note that the Bishop of Jaffna has so far not disclosed the source of his information that the Martyrs of Mannar were Kadaias and Barathas.

The second edition of the Martyrs of Mannar by Rev. Dr P. A. J. B. Antoninus was published in 1945 in which the Martyrs had been referred to as "Careas" which is a corrupted term used by the Portuguese priests in their books to the Kaurawa Martyrs. In this book is also found the learned opinions of the Church Historians, viz, Rev. Mgr. S. G. Perera. S. J. Rev. Fr. S. Gnanprakarsar O. M. I. and Rt. Rev. DR. Edmund Pieris O. M. I. Bishop of Chilaw.

In expressing his opinion and accepting the evidence of Dr. Antoninus's views, Fr. Gnanaprakarsar states, "After the publication of the 'History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon' some new facts have been brought to light, by Fathers Schurhamar and Perera who had access to the original documents in Lisbon and old views had to be corrected". Rt. Rev. Dr Edmund Pieris commends the publication thus, "Your bookle, on the 'Martyrs of Mannar', is a model of careful and accurate research, on one of the most glorious events in the history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon. I am glad you have gone to original documents for information. You have done an excellent job of it. It is well documented as good history should be and there is no folklore in it. This fact indeed enhances the value of your work."

It is regretable that Mgr. Deogupillai appears to have not read the above in the two editions on the Martyrs of Mannar and hence his erroneous statement affixed to the Tamil Catechism books for school use. The history of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka does not go beyond 450 years and therefore there is no reason for the Catholics to depend on mixed legends or folklore when documented evidence from original sources are available to us.

I am aware that many pilgrims to Madhu Shrine on their return journey take the opportunity to visit the Church at Toddavelly to pay their homage to the Martyrs of Mannar, although the actual massacre is known to have taken place in a Church which existed in the village of Pattim. I believe that it is the duty of the Bishop of Jaffna to make every effort to acquire this hallowed spot and erect a Church to commemorate the event and make the Catholics sincerely feel that their homage is given at the very spot where the Catholics of Mannar sacrificed their lives for the Faith. "To err is human to forgive is Divine" and in the light of the evidence led by Dr Antoninus, I trust the Bishop of Jaffna would take early steps to have the erroneous statements corrected and such corrections made available to students and teachers of the Tamil catechism. Also the Printers and Publishers both in India and Sri Lanka should be made aware of his action, Unless this is done, I fear that even the descendants of the very Martyrs of Mannar may in course of time fail to perpetuate the memory of their ancestors who shed their blood for the Holy Faith.

I therefore trust that the Bishop will have the good grace to rectify the errors he has fixed to the Tamil Catechisms "Valum Valium" and "Thiru Mari Vilakam"

144 Mahawatte Road,  
Colombo. 14  
26th June 1975

C. S. G. FERNANDO



## SUPPLEMENT VI

**Martyrs of Mannar**

I have followed with interest the letters on the above subject in your esteemed Journal. Apart from the unauthenticated narration of the Martyrs of Mannar by the Bishop of Jaffna, may I draw the attention of your readers to the publication of the Catechism "Valvum Valium" printed in India in 1961 prior to the elevation of Mgr. Diogupillai. The appendix to this book by him is perhaps a "History of Catholicism in Ceylon". How and when did Mgr. Diogupillai emerge as a historian and subtly introduce an appendix to a book originally printed and published in India, by the Indians, for the Indians? He has not given a date to his appendix thereby creating the impression that he was Bishop of Trinco in 1961. This historical error will be unwittingly accepted by posterity just as his notion that the Martyrs of Mannar were Kadeas and not Kaurawas, labelled by the Portuguese in their ignorance and inability to pronounce the term, wrote in its place Careas.

Bishop Diogupillai evidently has ignored Rev. Fr. Antoninus's documented evidence on the Martyrs and hitched his ignorance to Nallur Swamy Gnana Prakarsar's letter to the Catholic Messenger dated 3rd June 1945. This very letter is a contradiction of his (Fr. GnanaPrakarsar's) communication to Dr. Antoninus dated 3rd September 1944. The "potent editor" of the Messenger at the time declined to publish Rev. Dr Antoninus's rebuttal, consequently a 2nd edition on the Martyrs of Mannar was re-printed in 1945 with three appendices. Has Mgr. Diogupillai ignored this edition too? We could now add one more authority to the list of Portuguese writers who dealt on the subject of Martyrs..... Friar Paulo Da Trinidade.

When Mgr. Diogupillai ventured to write his "history" he was aware that it would rouse a hornets nest. Did he put in his appendix after the demise of Rev. Dr. Antoninus of revered memory, the authority on the Martyrs of Mannar, hoping that nobody will challenge him?

As custodian of Rev. Dr. Antoninus's historical manuscripts and letters referred to above and one who moved (very closely) with him during his ~~last~~ days may I ask Mgr. Diogupillai <sup>last</sup> what happened to the "History of Madu" compiled by Dr. Antoninus and handed to him for publication? I was informed a few days prior to his sudden death that it was to be published for the Centenary in 1974. Was there anything that the Mgr did not agree in this work? Would it not have been a hot seller during the celebrations? Incidentally, Mgr very eloquently sent out a Lenten Pastoral to his sheep in the Jaffna Diocese on caste prejudices, but one has to read two little booklets "The Internal History of the Jaffna Diocese" and "The Life of Rev. Fr. N. J. Nicholas" to realise the importance of caste and how a minority group dominates the majority group within the Catholic Church. More evidence could be published to expose the hypocrasy of these specious call to bury the hatchet. There was nothing holy in the soil of kayts (as Trumpfed) to produce three bishops: it was pure and simple caste politics and so will it be as long as moral dishonesty prevail

F. B. JAGATH WIJAYANAYAKA

Colombo 5.

28th June 1975

SUPPLEMENT VII

**Madhu query**

I shall be thankful to any knowledgeable person of Church History especially of the Portuguese era to kindly state through the medium of your paper from where, when and by whom the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Madhu was brought to Madhu.

It was stated sometime back that the Bishop of Jaffna would get Rev. Dr. Antoninus's book on Our Lady of Madhu published before the Golden Jubilee celebrations of July 1974. I shall be grateful to know from His Lordship whether the said book has been published and if not when it would be done.

I am anxious to see this book in print because I feel that Dr. Antoninus would have made some reference to the Martyrs of Mannar in it too.

**K. J. FELIX FERNANDO.**

*Negombo,  
6th July 1975.  
Catholic Messenger*

SUPPLEMENT VIII

19. 11. 80

*The Editor,  
Catholic Messenger*

Dear Rev. Fr,

I shall thank you to publish the letter below in your valuable paper.

*Yours faithfully,*

**Sgd K. J. Felix Fernando**

The Chronicle of the Sanctuary of our Lady of Madhu by the late Rev. Fr. A. J. B. Antoninus O. M. I. M. A. Ph D. which was expected to be published before July 1974 came out in 1979. His Lordship B. Deogupillai Bishop of Jaffna in his presentation says that he has made certain deletion and additions with the author's permission. As it His Lordship must also be considered as a co-author of the book. It will be interesting to know the passages deleted from the original manuscript and also the few lacunae filled from the Madhu Codex II.

**K. J. FELIX FERNANDO**

*Negombo*

## SUPPLEMENT IX

*The President,  
Sri Lanka Kshattriya Maha Sabha  
12, Claessen Place,  
Colombo 5.*

*38/109-4th Cross Street,  
Jaffna  
1st April 1981*

*Dear Mr President,*

Comments on "The Chronicle of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Madu" by Rev. Dr. P. A. J. B. Antoninus. O. M. I.

When the author was alive he had with much pleasure mentioned many references to the Kurukulams who settled at a village facing the Shrine at Pandivirutchehan. This fact has not been included in the text. This omission is very mysterious, something has gone wrong somewhere! Surely Bishop Edmund Pieris must have read through these passages before he wrote the Introduction.

As recorded in the "Codex Madu" the author may have abstracted passages as they appeared. He may have with an asterisk given notes as done in page 50.

When he was at the Nursing Home he may have given instructions to Mr. & Mrs Martyn to hand the manuscript to Mgr. Deogupillai for publication. Since he was too ill he could not have brushed through the manuscript with the bishop as asserted,

Could the term "Karaiyar" have been interpolated as "Kadiaya" to fit into a new theory that the Martyrs of Mannar and the hereditary owners of the Madu were from this group. The petitions mentioned should be scrutinized. It may be argued that these Kadaiyars could not have been the descendants of the Martyrs due to immense trouble they gave the Bishops of the time.

Shall be pleased if this matter is taken up at the Annual General Meeting of the Sabha. Regret my inability to be present at the Meeting due to ill-health.

Yours sincerely,  
BEN. C. DAS. ABRAHAM

## SUPPLEMENT X

## THE EARLY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF MANNAR

The first Catholic community of Mannar began in 1544 when the Careas who inhabited the island, hearing that their kinsmen in South India had become Catholics, sent messengers to St. Francis Xavier to come over, instruct and baptize them. Xavier was sad that he could not go personally. He sent a cleric, that is one who was not yet an ordained Priest. This cleric came to Mannar, instructed and baptized them.

Conversion to the faith carried with it the protection of the Portuguese might, and this was a threat to the king of Jaffna, who sent his troops to oblige the new converts to return to Hinduism. On meeting with a refusal the soldiers put to death about 600 Christians while the others fled to the mainland, cherishing their faith and waiting for the moment to return to their homes.

## Expedition to Jaffna

In the eyes of the Portuguese the action of the king of Jaffna would retard the work of conversion. Hence an expedition had to be organized to punish the king, to vindicate for the people the right to become Christians and to place themselves under the protection of Portugal. This expedition materialized only in 1560 when D. Constantine de Braganza invaded Jaffna and conquered it. His victory was ephemeral. The people of Jaffna soon rallied, attacked the Portuguese soldiers and forced them to retreat: Braganza retreated to Mannar which he occupied and in which he built a fort in the hope of conquering Jaffna when the occasion presented itself. For the defence of the fort and of the Island, Braganza left behind a captain with 150 Portuguese soldiers. From that time Mannar remained a Portuguese possession till it was lost to the Dutch in 1658.

Under such favourable conditions, the Christian Careas who had fled to the mainland returned to their own ancient home. But their number was rather small and the Portuguese authorities invited the Jesuits working on the Fishery Coast to prevail upon the Paravars of Manapad to come and cultivate the island. Many

came together with their missionaries and settled down in Mannar. Thus, most of the apostolic work in Mannar was done by the Jesuits though the Franciscans had at least one house and Church from the very beginning.

### Mannar's Social group

Father Anrique Anriquez the first and best Jesuit missionary of Mannar, in a letter written in December, 1561 gives us some information of the various social groups inhabiting the island at that time. The most numerous community was that of the Paravars; then came the Careas, both Christians and Hindus; a small number of 'Palivilis' and of 'Timilas', and finally, a great number of slaves whose social group is not mentioned.

The Franciscans built the Church dedicated to the Mother of God; the Jesuits, whose number very soon rose to four priests and three brothers, built three big churches; two for the Paravars and one for the Careas. They built also two smaller churches for the Careas and the Palivilis respectively.

The Christian community that was in such a flourishing state, very soon suffered a very serious setback. In 1564 a pestilence spread almost all over the island and carried off more than 4,000 persons. Many of those who survived preferred to go back to their motherland India and with them went also their pastors. Thus the number of Jesuits was reduced to two priests only.

The Christian community that remained behind, reorganized itself and began to grow again with most of the Hindu Careas becoming Christians. But a more serious setback occurred in 1608 when the Bishop of Cochin deprived all the Jesuits of their apostolic work in the Churches of the Fishery Coast and of Mannar. The people of Mannar were neglected but they remained faithful to their faith.

The Jesuits came back to Mannar in 1621 and from that year till 1658 the Christian community flourished and grew numerous. The Secular Clergy were in charge of two churches,

the Franciscans had their house and church, the Dominicans also had a church. The Jesuits had five churches dedicated respectively to St. Thomas at Patim, to Our Lady of Good Success at Pesalai, to the Pieta Karisal, to St. Andrew at Totavalli, and another to St. Peter in the fishermen's village.

With the advent of the Dutch all these churches were taken over and the Catholics lost their right of citizenship. They were all expected to join the ranks of the Reformed Kirk. Some did, most others kept their faith intact and they rejoiced when, finally, the Oratorians from Goa came to Ceylon.

### Charity of the people

During the time of the Portuguese sovereignty, the people of Mannar came to be known for their zeal in sharing their faith with others. It was certainly a triumph of Christian charity to put up at their own expense two hospitals and to maintain them and to serve the sick personally. And to make sure that the collections were made regularly and that the sick were looked after properly, during the epidemic of 1564 even a Casa de Misericordia was set up to look after the needs of the hospitals.

Whenever they met a non-Christian, the people of Mannar engaged him in a religious conversation and if they found the other person well disposed, they brought him to the priest where any discussion or instruction was given publicly so that any one could take part in it and everyone could profit by it.

Most of the Oratorians that came to Ceylon, landed at Mannar and from there they made their way to Mantota and to Puttalam. Fr. Joseph Vaz landed at Mannar but he soon made his way to Jaffna. Others that came later, were usually welcomed by the people of Mannar. The Chronology of the Oratory of Goa for the year 1705 relates how Fathers Jacome Goncalves, Joseph de Jesus Maria, Manoel de Miranda and Miguel de Mello were received at Mannar. "They embarked on the 26th of August and after a journey of four days they came to anchor at Talaimannar, where they found our Christians

sent to receive them and guide them to Mantota. For this purpose there was a boat in readiness as at that time, on account of the conversions, the Dutch had published new edicts against the missionaries and against the Christians who helped them enter the mission. They disembarked in the silence of the night. But in spite of the disguise and of the silence not to be discovered by the heretics, the Catholics, of whom there are many at Mannar, on hearing of the arrival of the Fathers, despising all fears, assembled in great number, knelt down greeting them with joint hands and asking their blessing. Then they vied with each other to carry their luggage, each trying to outdo the others in his attentions to the new shepherds sent to them by God. Much time was spent in this manifestation of love and respect "

Father Jacome Goncalves who was so well received at Mannar, had this same island as his first apostolic appointment.

Again the Chronology for the year 1708 speaks of Frs. Ignacio de Almeida and Basilio Barreto being stranded at Tuticorin and then "our new converts of Mannar, on hearing that our missionaries were stranded there, sought them out and offered to take them across". On Pentecost Sunday, 27 May, "they went ashore at Pesalai, the port of Mannar, where our Christians gave them a most affectionate welcome".

Naturally, the Manarens (as the Oratorians called them) were not unaware of the penalties threatened by the Dutch against those who gave hospitality and helped Catholic missionaries, and thus in 1729 they pleaded with the missionaries not to land at Pesalai. But even on this occasion, one of the Catholics took it upon himself to guide the missionaries till they reached Mantota.

The penalties threatened by the Dutch were severe. We need not speak of all the Plakkaats issued against the Christians of the whole of Ceylon. Repressive measures taken by the Dutch in 1720 started from Mannar where the Dutch confiscated a box full of little statues, rosaries, relics and other pious articles brought from Goa by one Jose Dias for the Fathers working in Ceylon.

### Public Profession of faith

The Oratorian Report of the year 1758 speaks of a public profession of faith made by the people of Mannar when they were being forced to attend the sermons of the Dutch Predikant. They even accepted to go to jail rather than deny their faith.

The Oratorian Reports speak of other difficulties the people of Mannar had to contend with. Sometimes it was the scarcity of rain that made life difficult. The Report of 1787 speaks of the havoc caused by the sea.

In spite of all the precautions of the Dutch, the Oratorians were able to make their way to the island of Mannar and even into the very Dutch fort. They could not have large churches; they set aside tiny buildings where a group of families would gather for Mass and the sacraments and instruction when the priest was present; at other times for their prayers and instruction.

The Report of 1797, after the English had taken over Mannar, speaks of 41 such little chapels. The size of the Catholic community may be guessed by the number of confessions. The Report of 1776 gives 3250 confessions for the year while the Report of 1785 gives 5060 confessions. These numbers suggest what may have been the number of adult Catholics at the end of the 18th century in the island of Mannar.

FR. V. PERNIOLA S. J

The Messenger Sunday 26th July 1981.



## SUPPLEMENT XI.

New Church to mark anniversary of the diocese

### REVIVING INTEREST IN THE MARTYRS OF MANNAR

*A new Church will be inaugurated at Thoddavely on Sunday 23 January by Bishop Tom Savundaranayagam of Mannar. This will coincide with the second anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Mannar. The inauguration of the Church is a step to awaken the people towards an interest in the Martyrs of Mannar.*

Referring to the inauguration of this new Church Bishop Savundaranayagam state: "This is one little step to rouse up the people towards an interest in the Martyrs of Mannar as a living memory".

Moves to place the "Cause" of Sri Lanka's first martyrs before the Holy Father, for prompt ("summary") Beatification of these A. D. 1544 witnesses of the Faith, inspired by St Francis Xavier, were already afoot when Bishop Savundaranayagam received his nomination as the first Bishop of Mannar.

In pursuit of that line of action, Cardinal Thomas Cooray had already broached the question in a personal audience with Pope John Paul II. Meanwhile the Secretary of State of the Vatican assured Cardinal Cooray that Holy Father has in hand the 122 page Documentary, giving a statement of case in required form and has expressed "his personal concern for everything that effects the life of the Church in Sri Lanka". (letter dated 25th January 1982.)

While waiting for a suitable moment to put his own appeal as newly installed "Ordinary" of the locality immediately concerned, Bishop Savundaranayagama considered that his particular task under the circumstances was to revive the memory of the martyrs on the spot and promote widespread devotion to them as a background and support for the petition to Rome.

In this sense, the Bishop's sign-post policy is definitely a step forward towards the hoped for goal of Beatification.

The current revival was also sparked off by taking a general "Consensus" in March 1981 that revealed a widespread desire

and demand for the immediate action in favour of the Beatification among the Clergy, Religious and Lay leaders of the entire Island.

Duly apprised of it, the Bishop's Conference (Easter 1981) accepted its significance and set about examining what action could be taken at their own level.

The inauguration ceremony of the new Church at Thoddavely and the cause has a concrete point of reference in a suitable landmark.

Sixty years ago, excavations conducted by Frs. Desloges and Stanislaus, led to the identification of Thoddavely as burial place of the "Heroic Six Hundred" (martyrs). The spot was immediately marked by a rustic chapel in honour of Our Lady "Queen of Martyrs".

Today's achievement is that the Pastor and People of the new Diocese of Mannar have by dint of work and at considerable cost been able to replace the tottering thatched structure with a proper church.

For all its modest proportions this is justly hailed as a "Landmark and Milestone". Pending the Beatification, it could not be dedicated to the Martyrs themselves. On the other hand naming it after our Blessed Mother, is not only a means of ensuring Her powerful patronage for the success of the Cause. It is a just tribute to Her role in the story of our Faith and of the signal grace of its being sealed at the outset by the blood of St Francis Xavier's converts.

The years that follow the Beatification will see greater things. Other sites of the martyrdom have been discovered (like Pattim by Fr. Antoninus in 1945). Thoddavely itself looks forward to a "Basilica of Our Lady of Our Martyrs".

Bishop Savundaranayagama and his team have set up a Statue of Our Lady at the turn off on the Mannar-Talaimmar Road for the guidance of pilgrims to Thoddavely.

FR. CLAUDE LAWRENCE O. M. I.

The Messenger - Sunday 16th January 1983

## SUPPLEMENT XII

**A Church in honour of Mannar Martyrs**

Fr. Claude Lawrence's contribution on the above subject in your esteemed paper raises two important questions. Who are the Martyrs and where were they martyred? Before a proposal to erect a Basilica in honour of the Martyrs, the identity and site of the martyrdom must be established. Fr. Lawrence states that a new Church will be inaugurated, at Toddavelly shortly a site erroneously claimed by the Kadears alone, and also refers to other sites discovered by Rev. Dr. Antoninus (Pattim in 1945).

There is no doubt that Fr. Antoninus is an accepted historian and researcher and the work he has done on the subject of the Martyrs is the only one of its kind from authentic Documents, interpolations in catechisms notwithstanding. He had long ago debunked old theories held even by famed historians and lexicographers like Fr. S. Gnanaprakasam. Says Fr. Gnanaprakasam in a letter to the Oblate Superior (Nallur, 28. 9. 1944) "There is nothing like presenting the documents in a case and I congratulate Fr. Antoninus for having marshalled them in the true historian's way" and ends his comments, "Some new facts have been brought to light by Frs. Schurhammer and Perera (S. G. Perera) who had access to original documents in Lisbon and old views had to be corrected." (Martyrs of Mannar.)

Fr. Antoninus in his book on the Martyrs of Mannar has very clearly and intelligently documented that the Martyrs were Careas or Karawas alias Kurukulams and the place of the Martyrdom was Pattim.

The Bishop of Mannar would do well to get his record straight before he embarks on a grandiose building scheme. If he wishes to "rouse the people towards an interest in the Martyrs of Mannar" he may well re-print Fr. Antoninus' book in Tamil.

F. B. JAGATH WIJAYANAYAKA.  
OF COLOMBO

Messenger 6th February 1983.

## SUPPLEMENT XIII

**SITE OF MARTYRDOM IN MANNAR**

## THODDAVELI OR PADDIM

M. A. Punnia Puvirajasinghe of Mannar writes:

The late Rev. Dr. P. A. J. B. Antoninus O. M. I. who had been resident at Mannar for about 17 years with his meticulous method and erudition carried out research with the assistance of other historians like the late Fr. S. G. Perera S. J. and the Bishop Emeritus of Chilaw, and published a classical history on the Martyrs of Mannar. This was lauded by all historians.

Fr. Gnanaprasad who had earlier propounded the theory that the martyrs had been massacred at Thoddaveli after seeing some swords and the bones at the site, had in his preface to the book by Rev. Dr. Antoninus admitted that in view of the documentary evidence furnished by the writer regarding the findings at Paddim, that he agreed with Dr. Antoninus' contention that the Martyrdom had actually taken place at Paddim and not at Thoddaveli.

The swords found among the bones at Thoddaveli were actually those of the Generals Paddam Kaddis and officers of Sankili's Army who were buried at the Thoddaveli Grave with military honours,

In the light of these facts the new Mannar Bishop's proposal to erect a Basilica in honour of the Martyrs at Thoddaveli would be an insult to the Memory of martyrs who were witnesses to the Catholic Faith at Paddim. Hence students of History would appreciate it very much if the Bishop of Mannar shifted the proposed Basilica to Paddim and not at Thoddaveli where the Kaurawa - Kurukula victims of a plague that wiped out the entire population of the former Periya - Karayapattinim were buried.

If however, the Basilica is erected at the Thoddaveli site it would be in honour of the plague victims and not the genuine martyrs of Mannar who as documentarily proved were slaughtered at the sacred site at Paddim.

The Kadear Community on their admission actually arrived in the Island of Mannar, in 1560 sixteen years after the event which took place in December 1544. They might have been victimised by the Dutch persecutions in the next century. An additional reason for the recognition of Paddim is that the Kaurawa - Kurukula Community completely vanished from the Island of Mannar after the martyrdom. On hearing of this atrocious deed by the Hindu King, the martyrs' kinsmen along the Western Coastal Belt, 70,000 of them had embraced the Faith.

#### PUT THE RECORDS STRAIGHT

Felix Fernando of Negombo writes:

So once again the question as to who the Martyrs of Mannar were has cropped up. I thought that this question had already been answered beyond all reasonable doubt that they were none other than Karawas, by Rev. Dr. J. A. B. Antoninus in his book "Martyrs of Mannar." Anybody reading his book will not fail to realise the amount of research that has gone into it. Although Fr. S. Gnanapragasar in the C. M. of 3-6-1945 said that the Martyrs were "Kadaya" caste people. Fr. S. G. Perera refuted this statement saying that he preferred to accept the earlier versions which definitely established that they were Karawas. Fr. Enrique Enriquze writing in 1551 ie. just 17 years after the martyrdom says that he is definite that they were Karawas put to death at Patim. Fr. Gnanapragasar himself had admitted in his book "Martyrs of Mannar" (p. 40) that "The Careas of the neighbourhood of Mannar are today called Kadayar by their missionaries." Evidently the 'r' in Karayar is mis-spelt as 'd' to make it Kadayar. Fr. Antoninus produced his book after laborious research. He quotes authority for all his assertions. He had the good fortune to go through records in the Portuguese archives of Lisbon which opportunity very few Ceylonese have had. Fr. Gnanapragasar himself had admitted that he did not have access to some documents mentioned by Fr. Antoninus. In the C. M. of 22. 6. 1975 M. A. P. Puvirajasinghe asked His Lordship Bishop Deogupillai to quote his authorities for saying that the Martyrs were not Karawas, but there is no reply up to date. St. Francis Xavier in his letter of

27-1-1545 - ie just one month after the event to the Society of Jesus had referred to 600 Karawa Catholics. Even King John II of Portugal in his letter of 19-2-1546 addressed to Pope Paul III had referred to this. Dr. Paul E. Pieris in his History of the Portuguese Era (p. 138) says "The Karawa, colonists from South India, who had in course of time been absorbed among the Sinhalese, occupied the sea board of the Island. The readiness with which this caste welcomed Christianity, whether in South India or the Tamil or Sinhalese speaking districts of Ceylon is very remarkable."

If Bishops Deogupillai, Savundaranayagam and Fr. Claude Lawrence cannot accept Fr. Antoninus' "Martyrs of Mannar" as the historically correct version I would ask them to quote their authorities to put the record straight.

#### BE BOLD ENOUGH TO FACE THE TRUTH

Eldred Fernando of Negombo writes:

While endorsing the views expressed by Mr. Jagath Wijayanayaka on this subject as published in your valuable Journal of the 6th February I would like to make the following observations.

It is nothing but fair and just, that before anything is done to honour these exemplary band of converts, who in the very infancy of their faith, made the supreme sacrifice of their life for their belief, correct authenticity as to who they were and where they suffered martyrdom as far as research studies have established must be determined and our faithful made fully aware of facts. This is a step not only honest scholarship demands but also common sense dictates.

The late Rev. Dr. P. A. J. Antoninus O. M. I., has done an in-depth study on the martyrs of Mannar and has identified their place of massacre and their authenticity. He has published his findings in his book on "Martyrs of Mannar." As suggested by Mr. Wijayanayaka it is fair that Bishop of Mannar should get this book published in Tamil, and Sinhalese for the general information of the faithful and the people of this country. It

is not unknown that late Rev. Fr. G. Gnanaparagsar O. M. I. who had held contrary view, later came to accept the views of Fr. Antoninus in this regard.

The disposition made by late Rev. Dr. P. A. J. B. Antoninus O. M. I. on his discovery of the site of the massacre of the Christians of Mannar will be of interest to your readers, and particularly to the Bishop of Mannar. This disposition is incorporated as Appendix in the little booklet by late Dr. Joseph M. F. G. Fernando. This booklet is on the Six Hundred Martyrs of Mannar - 1544.

It is perhaps in keeping with the signs of the times and the work of the Holy Spirit, that after nearly four hundred and thirty-eight years of the massacre of the noble band of converts of Mannar, and that within two years of the creation of the Diocese of Mannar that steps are being taken to honour these Martrys.

Down the years, we have reached the stage when high walls of social prejudices and ostracizations are crumbling with the advance of education and unchallengeable facts of research and history. It is time, we are bold enough to face the truth.

#### SUPPLIMENT XIV

##### More light on Mannar Martyrs

G. I. O. M. Kurukulasuriya of Colombo 5 writes:

The oral tradition that has been prevailing in Negombo is that the Martyrs of Mannar are of the Kurukulam.

When I was about fourteen years old, in 1933, and my paternal grandmother (who was Kurukulasuriya Anna Regina Fernando, nee Peiris) whose home was the present "Christu Niwasa" Chilaw Road, Negombo, had something to say on the subject. She referred to the Martyrs of Mannar as "our people," meaning the Kurukulam. At that time my grandmother was about eightysix years old and in perfect health.

It is common knowledge that the Kurukulams of Grand Street, Negombo had Tamil Cultural roots and St. Mary's school used the Tamil medium at that time. My grandmother read her prayer book in Tamil.

The oral tradition extends to say that the Kurukulams were Saivite, Hindus on their arrival in Sri Lanka and the Franciscans converted the whole clan into Catholicism around 1550. My grandmother's claim was that the martyrs of Mannar were of origin a settlement of soldiers and their alienation from the Hindu faith through the influence of foreign invaders was a military threat to the security of the Hindu Kingdom. Hence the military action against them.

To choose a site alien to them is an insult to the martyrs.

27th February 1983 C. M.

## SUPPLEMENT XV

**The Precise spot of the Martyrdom**

P. Eldred Fernando of Negombo writes:

Reference correspondence in your valuable Journal as to the place of Martyrdom of Mannar, under the caption.

"Patim or Totavely" according to the findings of Rev. Fr. Antoninus O. M. I. the place of Martyrdom is Patim which, as recorded in the earliest Portuguese documents, is "half a league from the Fort of Mannar". After much research and excavation, making use of few ancient maps of the Island of Mannar Dr. Antoninus has established that Pattim known as "Paddi Theravai" (meaning the open place of Pattim) was the place of Martyrdom. The Portuguese writers used the word Pattim for Patti. Later Portuguese referred to Patim as "Illa dos maryres i. e. the place of Martyrdom. This place as identified, is situated at the second mile post along the main road that runs from the Fort to Talaimannar, off half mile from the said main road to the West.

According to Dr. Antoninus this place at the time of his excavation in 1944, was owned by one Mr. Muttutamby, a retired Adigar of Mannar. It goes without saying, that a study of the title deeds of this property would give, in the context, revealing details.

When the excavation of this spot was carried out in 1944 by Dr. Antoninus the ruins of a Church, a broken down altar and several skeletons lying in all directions, some small, evidently those of children, others with heads got separated, had been found. Evidently, one could surmise that the massacre must have taken place when the converts would have congregated for prayer or for service and after the murder even their place of worship destroyed with a view to wipe out all trace of Christianity in the area!

The precise spot of the Martyrdom, it is true, had been a controversy because several writers mentioned Patim while few others Totavely.

Fr. S. G. Perera S. J. our recognized historian thinks that it was Fr. A. Lopes who was the first to mention Totavely and has misled a number of historians. His reasons to hold, that Totavely was not the place of Martyrdom are:

1. All previous writers speak of Patim, Fr. Anriquez in 1561, Valigani in 1583, Turesellinus in 1594, Lucerna in 1601, Manuel de Thaida in 1616, Garcia in 1672, all mention the place of Martyrdom as Patim.

2. It is so stated i. e. Totavely 100 years after the event by. Fr. Andre Lopes only.

3. Fr. Anriquez was a missionary actually working in Mannar and who was more likely to know facts than a visitor coming 100 years later! There is also no reason to suppose that the people of Totavely were brought to Patim for massacre. The idea that the massacre took place at Totavely is a misreading of what Fr. Lopes wrote 100 years after the event. Speaking of the residents of Totavely he said in his account of the Jesuit Missions, that the people of Totavely were the first to embrace Christianity in the time of St. Francis Xavier and the martyrs were "from among them" This statement is intended to apply to the people, not to the place. Besides, Lopes is not to be relied on too much, for he merely mentions the fact in passing apparently off his own bat, for he confuses the martyrs and the prince put to death about the same time believing him to be a son of the King of Jaffna.

Schurhammer criticises Fr. Gnanapragasar for his Totavely version, saying that he is following Courteny, Queyroz, Zalesky and Bartoll, "a dangerous combination". Fr. Anriquez, was the Parish Priest of Mannar from 1561-1564 i. e. just 23 years after the massacre. Writing from Mannar on December 19, 1561 he stated: "Half a league from the fortress is a place which they call Patim, In it were Christians of the same island of the caste of Careas who were already Christians before we came to this Island. It is true that at the time we came to inhabit it they were out of the said Island, on account of iniquities (cruelties) done by the King of the country, with whom we were at war and are so now."

December 22, 1564 Fr. Anriquez wrote from Tuticorin, "In Mannar there are two villages of the Christians of the caste of Careas. In the larger there did not enter the illness (pestilence) of the last year. In the smaller are Christians who were dwellers of the said Mannar before we passed over to it" This also indicates that the first converts of Mannar were Careas.

**CONTROVERSY BEGETS ILL FEELING**  
Arul Rajendram of Colombo 13 writes:

I find that the controversy on the question as to who the martyrs of Mannar were Karawars or Kodyars — and so to the place at which they were massacred, has been revived in your columns.

I think it is a wastage of valuable time and space. What does it matter, now, whether the people who were massacred were Karawars or Kodyars or of any other caste? The fact is that certain persons had been massacred at a certain period of time. Why revive it now and, unintentionally, generated certain ill-feelings among the people of the same faith?

13th March 1983 - Catholic Messenger.

**SUPPLEMENT XVI**

20th March 1983

The Editor,  
Catholic Messenger,  
Colombo. 8.

**The Martyrs of Mannar and the place of Martyrdom**

Dear Sir,

The search for the place of the Martyrdom and the martyred has raised no controversy nor ill feeling as suggested by your correspondent Mr. Arul Rajendram. It is relevant to get the record straight before the Beautification of the Martyrs is done and a Memorial is erected in their memory.

Against documented historical evidence some persons have attempted to distort the facts since 1975 and these distortions have been challenged but never answered, all we want is a clarification from these persons with historical evidence Interested persons should not deceive Rome.

Yours sincerely,

F. B. Jagath Wijayanayaka.

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Note:

The following Supplements were not published;  
Nos. V. VI. VII. VIII. IX. & XVI

N.B.

Supplement I Should be Appendix V.