

EC#BAT. 4

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of the Archbishop



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April 1, 1996

Dear Bishop Kunnacherry:

Father Thomas Paprocki, Chancellor of the Archdiocese and my delegate for the Archdiocese's Knanaya Catholic Mission, has given me a copy of your letter of March 21, 1996 to Father Simon Edachiparampil, the Mission's Director. I am very grateful for your efforts to help bring unity to Knanites living in the Chicago area. You are correct in saying that the continued existence of the two separate organizations, K.C.S. and K.A.N.A., will do more harm than good.

At the same time, I must express my serious concern about the following statement in your letter:

One who fails or refuses to observe the custom relating to endogamy forfeits his right to be a member of the Kottayam Diocese and the Knanaya Community. He also forfeits his right to be a member of an association or society of Knanites. There can be no compromise on this. It is better to close down the Mission and withdraw the priest if it becomes necessary to compromise on our basic principles.

This is contrary to the instruction which we have been following from the Congregation for Oriental Churches in Rome, stating that

the special ministry for the Knanaya Community can be faithfully conducted only on the basis that those Knanaya Catholics who married non-Knanaya spouses enjoy equal status in the ministry. This Congregation does not accept that the customary practice followed in Kerala, of excluding from the community those who marry non-Knanaya spouses, is extensible to the United States of America.

It is in keeping with this instruction and my own wishes that Father Simon established a pastoral council in February, 1996 which allowed for non-endogamous representation. When Father Simon was assigned to the Mission last year, you wrote to Father Paprocki on July 5, 1995, with assurance that Father Simon "will be working under the authority and jurisdiction of His Eminence Cardinal Bernardin and that he will comply with the policy of the Chicago Archdiocese with regard to the Knanaya Catholic Mission there." That is why I was surprised to see your recent letter to Father Simon, telling him that it is "necessary to continue the pre-February 1996 position in the Knanaya Catholic Mission in order to facilitate the unity among our people."

Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry  
April 1, 1996  
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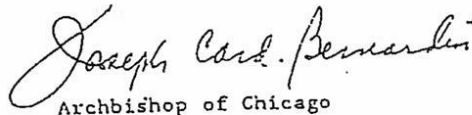
A return to the pre-February 1996 position, excluding non-endogamous representation on the pastoral council, would be contrary to my wishes and the policy of the Archdiocese. While unity among the social organizations would be desirable, those groups are independent of the Archdiocese. My primary and direct concern is for the unity of the Mission, and I do not see how unity can ever be achieved if non-endogamous people are excluded from full participation.

It is my understanding that Father Simon will be going to India after Easter and that he will have an opportunity to speak with you. I ask that you please communicate to Father Simon that he is to follow my wishes and the Archdiocese's policy for the Mission. Specifically, this means that he is to continue with the February 1996 plan for the Archdiocese's Knanaya Catholic Mission, which provides for non-endogamous persons to enjoy full participation in the Mission and representation on the Mission's pastoral council.

Your understanding and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

With cordial good wishes for a blessed Easter, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Chicago

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