

CHURCH HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

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April 1951: Mr. T. P. Varghese Master donates Agathimandiram to Mar Thoma Church. The Late Mr. T. P. Varughese of Nellikunnu near Trichur established "Ravivarma Institute Home" in 1941 in his 8 acre property for charitable work. For 10 years he continued his noble work and in April 1951 he donated the entire institution and all its properties free of cost to the Mar Thoma Church which later became the Trichur Ravivarma Agathimandiram. At present more than 40 inmates are living in this Agathimandiram.

1 April, 1909: Birth of Rev. K. T. Thomas, Karimparampil Anaprampal, - (Sihora Ashram). Rev. Thomas became a priest in 1941. He is one of the founders of our Sihora Ashram in Madhya Pradesh. Achen gave able leadership for the formation of many of our parishes in North India, including Delhi, Jabalpur, Bhilai, Bilaspur, Nagpur, Katni, Agra, Bombay, Poona and Kirkee. He was called home on 8 February, 1989, and was buried in Sihora.

1 April, 1548: Parliament orders the publication of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP). Though Thomas Cranmer is rightly credited with the final form of the BCP, he worked with a committee of scholars, including Reformer Martin Bucer, to shape his famous liturgy.

2 April, 1877: Fundamentalist Baptist evangelist Mordecai Ham is born in Allen County, Kentucky. At the end of his ministry, he claimed one million converts—including Billy Graham, who made a declaration of faith at a 1934 Ham meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina.

2 April, 1893: (Palm Sunday) Kakkassery K. M. Varughese makes his maiden sermon in his home Parish. K. M. Varughese (b.1868) got married at the age of 12 to his wife who was only 8 years old. A year later his wife died and he remarried. In 1895, in a meeting of the Church authorities (Samasthalochana Sanghom) held in the Puthencavu Mar Thoma Church, amendments were made to its prevailing rules to ordain Mr. K. M. Varughese (during that time married men were not ordained by the Church). In 1895, he was ordained as a deacon by Most. Rev. Titus I at the Paliyekkarara Church in Tiruvalla. Many in his home parish were not willing to accept him as a deacon as he was a married man. He was the translator of the first Maramon Convention held in 1895. He became priest in 1896, but never celebrated Holy Communion in his life. He was called home on 20 June, 1897.

2 April 1826: Bishop dies in Bathtub. Bishop Heber was the second Anglican Bishop of Calcutta. On his way to Travancore to visit the Syrian Christian Church Leaders, he died while having a bath at Thiruchirappallay –Trichy, on 2 April, 1826.

4 April, 1968: Civil rights leader and Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

5 April, 1811: Robert Raikes, founder of English Sunday schools in 1780, dies. Raikes built his Sunday schools not for respectable and well-mannered children of believers, but for (in one woman's description) "multitudes of wretches who, released on that day from employment, spend their day in noise and riot." In 4 years, 250,000 students attended the schools, by Raikes's death, 500,000, and by 1831, 1.25 million.

5 April, 1922: Panditha Ramabhai passes away. Pandita Ramabai was the youngest daughter of Anant Shastri, a social reformer who believed in educating women. Her learning impressed the scholars in Calcutta so much that they named her 'Saraswati', and 'Pandita', the first Indian woman to be called thus. She described herself as rejecting Hinduism and chose to marry a Shudra. Her husband died young, and at 23 she found herself widowed with a young child. After her husband's death she converted to Christianity. She founded an ashram for widows, Mukti, where women of all castes ate and lived together. She translated the Bible into Marathi.

5 April, 1871: Birth of Hymn writer T. J. Andrews. Born as a member of the Thazhathu family of Muledathu, Kottayam, he spent much of his life time as a missionary in Central Travancore. His famous Hymn "Yeshu en adisthaanam" was written in his sick bed. He narrated the Hymn to his son as he was bedridden. He passed away on his 72nd birthday, in 1942. Hymn nos.200 (187), 219(204), 237(215), 258(368), 317(312), and 406(355) in our Hymn book are written by him.

7 April, 1541: Francis Xavier starts his journey to India from Lisbon. On his 35th birthday, Francis Xavier, cofounder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) sets sail from Lisbon, Portugal, for Goa, India. The first Roman Catholic Missionary in India, he traveled to Japan, Sri Lanka, and other countries in Asia. It is hard to say how many people Xavier, the Roman Catholic patron saint of all missions, converted; the figure goes as high as 1 million, but modern scholars peg the number around 30,000, Jesuits claim 700,000.

8 April, 1546: At its fourth session, the Council of Trent adopts Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible (called the Vulgate), completed in 405, as the only authentic Latin text of the Scriptures. It became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

9 April, 1945: The Gestapo (Secret police in Germany during Hitler's time) hangs German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, after discovering his plot to kill Adolf Hitler.

10 April, 1913: Birth of Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan. Alexander Mar Thoma was born in 1913 as the son of Rev. M. C. George (17 April 1874-to 23 October 1923), Maliyekkal, Kuriannoor. Before his ordination, he was a teacher in Kottayam C M S High school for 12 years. He took his Ph.D. on the Bhagavad-Gita (Holy Book of the Hindus) from the Kennedy School of Mission of the Hartford Seminary foundation. He was ordained in 1945 and became bishop on 23 May, 1953. He became our Metropolitan in 1976. He passed away on 11 January 2000.

10 April, 1829: English evangelist William Booth, founder and first general of the Salvation Army, is born in Nottingham. In 1865, Booth and his wife, Catherine, set out to reach the desperate poor and unchurched by conducting open-air meetings with lively music; preaching in theaters, bars, and jails; and creating large-scale plans to relieve poverty. His organization launched what became one of the most successful religious revivals in the modern era. Salvation Army started its work in India on 19 September 1882. The Salvation Army has no Holy Communion, Baptism or other sacraments.

11 April, 1988: Bishop Easow Mar Timotheos passes away at Port Blair in Andamans Islands. Bishop Easow Mar Timotheos (born Nov 25, 1932) was a member of Valiyaparampil Family of Thonniyamala near Pathanamthitta. He was a permanent member of our Sihora Ashram from 1951-to 1972. He became deacon on 15 Oct. 1961; priest on 4 March 1962, Ramban on 11 January 1975 and Bishop on 8 Feb 1975. His life of prayer and deep spiritual experience were his special characteristics. He was deeply interested in the rural development activities. Being also in charge of the parishes in the Arabian Gulf area, he raised funds from there for the development of Malabar area. He passed away while visiting our parishes in the Andamans Islands and was buried at Tiruvalla.

12 April, 1799: Formation of the Church Mission Society. Founded in 1799, CMS has attracted more than nine thousand men and women to serve as mission partners during its 200-year history. Today there are about 150 mission partners in 26 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. A budget of £7.02 million a year is needed to maintain and expand this work.

13 April, 1986: Pope visits Synagogue. Pope John Paul II visited a Jewish Synagogue in Rome, marking the first such visit by a Pope in the recorded history of the Roman Catholic Church.

13 April, 1909: Birth of Rev. C. V. John, Theverthundiyl, Manganam, Kottayam. Achen was a member of the Chirapurathu family Thottakkadu. He became a

priest in 1938. He was one of the defendants in the Daniel Case which was filed on 29 July 1955. For many years he was one of the translators of the Maramon Convention. Achen was called home while he was preparing for the Holy Communion Service in the Mar Thoma church in Ernakulam on 02 September 1979.

16 April, 1913: Birth of Rev. C. V. George B.A. B.L, Chandanakuzhiyil, Ettichuvadu, Ranny. Rev. George was an Advocate (Lawyer). Before his ordination, he was in jail for almost a year for his participation in the Freedom movement of India. He became a priest in 1947. From 1947- 1950 he was the General Secretary of the Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam. He was the only Mar Thoma Priest who is recognized and awarded as a freedom fighter by the Government. He was the founder president of the Ranny Medical Mission. He passed away on 31 October 2001 and was buried in the Nazareth Mar Thoma church cemetery in Ranny.

18 April, 1929: Sadhu Sunder Singh (born 3 Sep 1889) disappears on his way to Tibet. The mystery of the disappearance of Sadhu Sunder Singh after leaving Sabathu-near Tibet on 18th April 1929 has never been solved. The route he was to have taken was one he had often traveled before. Reports of his disappearance appeared in newspapers all over the world. No one knows what happened to him and how he died. By whatever means God took His servant home, He evidently did not intend it to be known. Sundar manifested into his life the verse written in Mark 8:35 which says, "For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the Gospel will save it."

17 April, 1492: Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella give Christopher Columbus a commission to seek a westward ocean passage to Asia. Though he was also interested in wealth, Columbus saw himself as a "Christ-bearer" who would carry Christ across the ocean to people who had never heard the gospel.

17 April, 1955: M. M. Lukose Kassesha, Aattupurathu. Cherukole, Mavelikkara passes away. Lukose Kassesha born in 1878 became priest in 1900. He was deeply interested in Gospel work. Seven families were converted in Chennithala due to Achen's work. He gave leadership for the construction of the Salem Mar Thoma Church (Chennithala South). Much of his income was spent for Gospel work and for the welfare of destitute and orphans. Our Bishop, Isaac Mar Philoxenos is his grandson. Achen was called to rest on 17 April, 1955.

20 April, 1982: Rev. O. J. Joseph Malpan (b. 4 April, 1904) passes away. Achen was the son of Joseph Malpan, Olasseril, Manganam. He was one of the rank holders of the Syriac Language Examination of Kerala University. For many years he was a teacher in M. T. Seminary School and Mar Thoma Theological Seminary in Kottayam. In addition, he was an expert in treating eye ailments.

20 April, 1995: Rev. M. V. Benjamin (born 9th Dec, 1936 – grandson of Sadhu Kochoonju Upadeshi) passes away. Born as a member of the Moothampakkal family of Edayaranmula, he became priest in 1962 and served 18 parishes. For a few years he was the Chaplain of Santhi Mandiram and Balika Bhavan in Elanthur.

21 April, 1855: Conversion of D L Moody, one of the greatest Christian Preachers that ever lived. Edward Kimball, a Sunday School Teacher in Boston, leads 18-year-old shoe salesman Dwight L Moody to Christ at the Holton Shoe Store. Moody went on to become the most successful evangelist of his day.

23 April, 1968: Formation of the United Methodist Church. The Evangelical United Brethren Church joins with the much larger Methodist Church, forming the United Methodist Church, the largest Methodist group in the world and America's second-largest Protestant Denomination.

26 April, 1877: Residents of Minnesota observe a state-wide day of prayer, asking deliverance from a plague of grasshoppers that had ruined thousands of acres of crops. The plague ended during that summer.

27 April, 1667: Blind, bitter, and poor, Puritan poet John Milton sells for ten pounds the copyright for *Paradise Lost*—a book that would influence English thought and language nearly as much as the King James Version and the plays of Shakespeare. The theme of the epic appears in its opening lines: "Of man's disobedience and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world, and all our woe, / With loss of Eden."

