

## The Epic Adventures Of Fr. Nély : Palayamkottai



*Mass of Christmas Day.*

On Wednesday 19th December, after saying goodbye to the megalopolis, Fr. Nély was met at the rural airport (one flight per day) of Tuticorin by Fr. Brucciani. The flight was one hour late on account of a storm that had grounded all other aircraft from Chennai. When Father emerged from the throng of passengers there was a noticeable contrast between his immaculate cassock and his

ashen face. "That was the worst flight I have ever experienced", he explained. The aeroplane had been in freefall on occasions, fellow passengers had asked for blessings and Father even admitted to rehearsing the formula of general absolution. After an excellent meal in a nearby hotel, equanimity was soon restored and the journey continued to the Priory of the Most Holy Trinity in Palayamkottai.



*At the wheel of the HM Ambassador*

The next day, with a desire to experience the life of an Indian Missionary, Fr. Nély took the wheel of our original (and up until recently our only) priory car, the Hindustani Motors Ambassador, to drive to the 'The Land'. 'The Land' is a plot of land five miles from the priory which has been purchased for the construction of the new orphanage. On the land is a small plantation of bananas and many palm trees. The greatest attraction, however, are the wild peacocks. They are bigger than the peacocks we can see on the lawns of the great houses of Europe, and they can fly too; it is a most wonderful sight. Unfortunately, as we trudged through the muddy undergrowth, we only saw one peahen. Fr. Nély deemed his soaked shoes and muddy white cassock to be a high price to pay for this privilege



*On 'The Land'.*

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*Six helpful shop assistants and Fr. Nély.*

and proceeded to threaten Fr. Brucciani with a posting to Antarctica.

Friday 21st December is the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle. St. Thomas was martyred in Chennai (Madras) and is the Principal Patron of India. The feast was celebrated with a Solemn High Mass at Palayamkottai in the morning and at St. Thomas' Church in Nagercoil in the evening. Nagercoil is about two hours (50 miles) south west of the priory.

On Saturday, after having given a conference to the sisters at the orphanage, the next stop was the Pothys Silk Emporium in Tirunaveli (the neighbouring town to Palayamkottai). Such was the excitement at receiving so distinguished a customer that Father was besieged by six helpful shop assistants almost as soon as he entered the shop.

Sunday Mass was celebrated at the priory, followed by catechism for the faithful. In the evening Father joined



*Western inculturation. Francis has his rather stylish new tie done as the boys look on.*



*Catechism after Mass at Palayamkottai.*



*The crib of the atrium of the priory.*



*St. Anthony's Chapel, Singamparai.*