



Kerala Tidings

VOL. LXII NO. 1 ■ JANUARY 2022 ■ CHRIST HALL ■ KOZHIKODE

From the Provincial's Desk

PATHWAY OF POVERTY IN THE IGNATIAN YEAR

The Kerala Province Congregation 2021 came to an end on 31 December after its successful completion. I thank God for protecting all delegates from the pandemic. As we move ahead in the Ignatian Year, allow me to reflect on the vow of poverty in the Society of Jesus. Fr General's letter on "Our Vow of Poverty in the Following of Jesus Poor and Humble" provides the backdrop.

The structures and systems that we have in the Society are such that we have to constantly negotiate matters of finance related to our ministries and the maintenance of our men. Dealing with money, actual or virtual, is non-negotiable in today's world. Yet the existence of poverty around us, structural or imposed, haunts us. Our vow of poverty is freely chosen as an evangelical gift, and it is not a matter of budgeting but of relating to God. It asks us to constantly reflect on these questions: why have I made this vow that involves much privation and negation? Does it help me to feel secure in the hands of God as I live in an insecure world? The grace of conversion enabled St Ignatius to take the pathway of poverty in following Jesus poor and humble. May the Ignatian Year be a blessing to us in growing in this grace of conversion through prayerful reflection on our vow of poverty.

*E. P. Mathew, SJ
Provincial*

APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS BY FR PROVINCIAL

- Fr Antony P.S.:** Director, Samskriti, Pariyaram (resides at IRC, Pariyaram, 15 January 2022)
- Fr Deepak Edattu:** Director, SRC, Christ Hall, Calicut
- Fr Devasia Kuzhuppil:** Vice-Principal (Administration), Loyola School, Thiruvananthapuram (March 2022)
- Fr Gracious Stephen:** Socius to Novice Master (March 2022)
- Fr Jacob Kumminiyl:** Vice-Superior, Sarvodaya Community, Eachome, Wayanad (March 2022)
- Fr Jose Pittappillil:** Assistant Province Treasurer, Christ Hall, Calicut (March 2022)
- Fr Kuriakose Puthanapra:** Sarvodaya, Eachome

FR PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAMME

JANUARY 2022

- 06 : Memorial Mass of Fr Zucol, Mariapuram
- 15 : Visitation ICTA, Kalamassery
- 16-18 : Sameeksha, Kalady

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ORDINATION

Deacons Steevensen Maliekal Cheniyara and Biji Thomas (KHM) were ordained to priesthood by **Mar Remigiose Inchananiyl**, Bishop of Thamarassery on 28 December 2021 at Christ Hall, Calicut.

Deacon Lijo Antony Pathickal was ordained to priesthood by **Mar Joseph Porunnedam**, Bishop of Mananthavady, on 05 January 2022 at St Joseph's Church, Chundakkara, Wayanad.

We wish all the three new priests God's blessings as they move to their respective dioceses for pastoral ministry.



CHANGE IN MOBILE NUMBER :

Fr Raphael Thottan new mobile number is: **9544996147**

FROM OUR INSTITUTIONS

CHRIST HALL, CALICUT

Fr Thaiparambil directed an eight days' retreat at SRC for two sisters amidst his busy infirmary work. The First death anniversary of **Fr O.P. Mathew** was celebrated on Dec 3rd with his relatives and friends. **Bro Mathew Puthiedom** made his annual retreat under the guidance of Fr Thaiparambil. **Fr Joe Mathew** too made his annual retreat before the Province Congregation as part of the spiritual preparation for the P.C. This year's Christmas Crib was designed and executed by **Sch Vysakh**. It was very unique in portraying the faceless humanity and total denial of justice for humanity in today's world in the backdrop of Ignatian Year. **Fr Pullat** had a fall and broke his hip bone; he is operated and is convalescing. **Fr Deepak** joined the community after his Tertianship and directed the recollection of candidates from St Joseph's Jesuit community. Fr Deepak also gave the recollection talk for the community as part of Christmas preparation. On Dec 23rd the staff of Christ Hall had a wonderful Christmas celebration under the craftsmanship of **Fr P.S. Antony**. The ordinations of **Deacons Stevenson** and **Biji** (of Kohima) was a spiritual experience for the

community. The Province Congregation from December 29th to Dec 31st kept the campus lively and vibrant. After a long gap of Covid menace Christ Hall community felt the closeness of the vibrant men of our province. On Dec 31st Mr. Michael chettan passed away (many of us knew him as the faithful and committed sacristan of our parish and a regular visitor of our community). The community has generously supported **Sch Nikhil's** family when his elder brother Mr. Nibin met with an accident. He is in the hospital in need of our prayers. Prayers are requested for Mr. Nibin and for the whole family to face this situation.

Devasia Kuzhuppil

ST JOSEPH'S, CALICUT

Our candidates have gone home for Christmas holidays. All the Jesuits participated in the feast of the Mother of God Cathedral. At the St Joseph's Boys' School, the Ignatian Jubilee year celebrations were marked by Inter Jesuit-School Elocution Competition. The school also conducted Christmas Examinations for all the students. SPC (Student Police Cadets) and NSS (National Service Scheme) camps were arranged for students during the Christmas vacation.

At St Joseph's ICSE School, term II examinations were conducted for all students. The admission process for 2022-23 are completed successfully. **Fr Pious** conducted a seminar on Child Protection policies for all the staff members. Christmas celebrations were organized for all students. **Fr Provincial** was the chief guest at the Christmas celebrations for the staff members. We have already started special coaching camps in football and basketball. We have received government sanction for the change of name of the school from 'St Joseph's Junior' to 'Loyola School-Kozhikode' is received. The official change will take place from June 2022.

Ramlal

S.M. FARM/NIRMALA ITI/IRC, PARIYARAM

I R C is leaping back to normal with the retreat for Priests of Kannur Diocese. Two DSS sisters have joined IRC from 01 January 2022. **Fr Kannadan** is back in IRC. The regular classes are on in Nirmala ITI. Cleaning up of weeds in farm in view of collecting cashew nut is in progress.

K.P. Mathew

LOYOLA, ALUVA

The month of December was very special for the Loyola Novitiate community. We celebrated the feast of St Francis Xavier. **Fr Provincial** and **Fr Binoy** visited us on the 4th of December 2021.

Fr Kumminiyil gave discernment retreat for FCC novices in Kottayam and also directed an eight day retreat at S.R.C. We celebrated the Feast of Immaculate consumption of Mother Mary with a solemn Holy Qurbana. We installed a statue of St Joseph and blessed it on the 10, by **Fr Jacob Madakkakuzhy**. M.S.J. Nuns did their long retreat under the guidance of Fr Madukkakuzhy. The Novice Master of the Darjeeling Province visited us. Novices started participating Sunday Holy Mass in Mariapuram Parish. We had a course on Sexuality and Relationship by **Fr Gracious** from 13th to 14th of December. **Sch Vyshak** came for his *triduum*. Novices had monthly recollection in connection with Christmas on the 20 December, led by **Fr Xavier Tharamel**. Christmas vacation was from 21st to 25th December. Novices prepared Star, Crib and Christmas Tree during these days. We warmly welcomed carol service from nearby Malankara Catholic Parish on the 22nd. Novices went for the Carol services in the neighborhood. **Fr E.J. Thomas** joined the community for his Christmas holidays. Community Christmas Mass was celebrated on 25th by **Fr Jacob Kumminiyil**. On the 25th night we exchanged Christmas gifts during Community Recreation.

Loyola Community days, named AMOR, was started on 26 December. **Fr James Morais** gave us a session narrating the activities of our mission in Tripura. **Fr Biju Vadakkumchery** and three scholastics from Chennai, Satyanilayam visited us on 27 December. **Sch Jomon** came to the Novitiate on 28th evening.

Two candidates re-registered for PhD under **Fr E.J. Thomas**, Kerala University through Loyola College Thiruvananthapuram. Thus this makes a dozen candidates for Fr. E J Thomas, if they succeed in clearing their defence.

Rachans

SAMEEKSHA, KALADY

Fr Anil Kochumethikal has taken charge as the new Superior of the Sameeksha community. **Fr Xavier** shifted his residence to Loyola, Aluva, to attend to his new assignment as full-time vocation promotor. The birthdays of **Frs Emmanuel Koyan** and **George Nedungatt** were duly celebrated. **Frs Toby, Sebastian** and **Xavier** attended the Province Congregation. Fr George Nedungatt came back refreshed after spending a few days with his nephew. Based on his new book Fr Sebastian Painadath gave a three-day retreat on the Gita to an inter-religious group. Several individuals and small groups come to Sameeksha for retreat.

Sebastian Painadath

AKJM & SAMANAYA JESUIT HOUSE, KANJIRAPALLY

The birthday of **Fr Linto** was celebrated. **Fr Jose Jacob** is back from Shembaganoor. Sr. Sonia of Piarist Congregation had one month retreat under the guidance of **Fr Stephen C** and Sr Maria had one week retreat guided by **Fr Tom Panikulam**. Centre for Ignatian Spirituality organized a five day online retreat for fathers and sisters from 17 to 22, December, 2021. Fr Stephen presented a paper on "*The Transformative Potential of Yoga and the Christian Response*" at the International Conference organized by the Department of Christian Studies, Madras University. **Fr Antu Xavier** presented papers in International Conference on "*Recent Advances in Biosciences*" organised by Marian Centre for Advanced Research, St Mary's College, Thrissur and on "*Technology and Advanced Nanomaterials*" organised by Amal Jyothi College of Engineering, Kanjirappally.

Antu and Linto

SANTHINILAYAM, KOTTAYAM

The Santhinilayam Community went for an outing to Kumarakam. **Sch Steev** is ready to go to Pune to attend classes in philosophy after completing the B.Sc final exams. **Sch Libin** was the director of the cultural programmes of the Christmas celebration in his college. He along with his friends visited the inmates of *Sampreethi*, a home for the differently abled people managed by the MCBS Congregation. The CARP, with **Fr Roy Thottam**, the animator of this group of artists, had three days camp here. Ms Susan, a member of the counseling team here, is on leave and **Fr Sunny** has got a replacement in Ms Elizabeth who is specialised in de-addiction therapy. Snehahavan, the Special School here, in a meeting of the governing body, teachers and some parents paid loving tributes to late **Fr Sebastian Thengumpally**. In a memorial Mass at St. Thomas Church Nalukodi, the home parish of Fr Sebastian, **Bishop Mar Tharayil** observed that "in the case of Fr Sebastian *a life that would have been written off became a life to be written about*".

Joseph Pulickal

VIDYANIKETAN, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The month of December began with a joyful gathering at Aikara Auditorium to celebrate the feast of St Francis Xavier. Vidyaniketan community participated in this gathering which was organized by St. Xavier's College Community. Diocesan Priests as well as members of different religious congregations also participated in this gathering which was a refreshing and memorable experience for us. The Juniors gradually plunged into

intense study as they were having their 2nd term exams from 16th to 21st December. Soon after the Exams, Vidyaniketan's ambience regained its celebrative mood with activities like preparation of the crib, decorating the house and practice of Christmas Carols. On 23rd December, we went to St Xavier's community singing carols. We had a small Christmas gathering there. Considering the aspect of safety, we celebrated the Christmas Vigil Mass in our Community Chapel. The 'Community Days' followed the Christmas celebrations. They were full of fun and creativity. All of it was a booster dose in building up our community spirit. Special thanks to **Schs Abbey, Abraham** and **Pawan** who were the Coordinators of these three days of celebration. Now the Juniors are relaxing and preparing themselves for their *Triduum* before the Renewal of Vows on January 4.

Rina and Abbey

AADI, ATTAPPADI

AADI organised a national level webinar on the theme, "Malnutrition in the light of National Food Security Act". **Fr Mathew Aerthaiyl** addressed the webinar. AADI family celebrated Christmas by exchanging Christmas gifts. Fifteen students of MSW and BSW from Lissah College, Calicut, MD College Trissur and Holy Cross College completed their twenty-five days of Block placement at AADI. Nineteen MSW students from Vigyan College of Applied Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram did their five days of Rural Camp at AADI. **Fr Anthony Dias**, the Secretary Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) visited us and interacted with Lok Manch partners. Fr Mathew Aerthaiyl SJ left for Christ Hall, Calicut for Province Congregation.

Rephin Kamal

DE NOBILI COLLEGE, PUNE

The vibes of Christmas holidays hit the DNC campus with the end of mid-semester exams on December 17. The community joined together in various amusements and games during the community days on December 19 and 20. **Sch Francis** was on the organising committee.

The Memorial Mass remembering Fr Ted was held on December 22. During our community picnic, we had an opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with the mentally challenged children in Ashagram, Satara, a MCBS House. We were privileged to start the year 2022 with a *triduum*. **Fr Thomas Karimundakal, Fr Dolichan, Schs Rosan** and **Deslin** were out of the JD campus to be part of the Province Congregation. **Sch Sooraj** went home to meet his brother due to some health concerns. Kindly keep him in your prayers. Our

classes will hopefully begin on 4 January 2022. Final year theologians and philosophers will be having off-line classes.

Vysakh Titus

ST XAVIER'S HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY, MUMBAI


The Jesuits of South Bombay gathered at St Xavier's High School community for a talk organised by the community in preparation for the Christmas season. Dr Agnelo Menezes, former principal and currently HoD of Public Policy, St Xavier's College, Mumbai, shared his insights on the relevance of the birth of Jesus in contemporary India. The input session was followed by an animated discussion. The St Xavier's College and School communities celebrated the Feast of their patron, St Francis Xavier, with pomp and gaiety. The College organised a Eucharistic Celebration for all the teaching and non-teaching staff, even in the midst of the fears unleashed by the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron. **Sch Rosan Roy** paid a short visit to the community on his way to Kerala to attend the Province Congregation. The college closed for Christmas vacation on 22 December.

Quin Tommy


GESÙ COMMUNITY, ROME

The Christmas season blessed the Gesù community with different graces. The community had a one-day outing to **Royal Palace of Caserta** (Italian: Reggia di Caserta) which is a former royal residence in Caserta, southern Italy, constructed by the **House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies** as their main residence as Kings of Naples. It is the largest palace erected in Europe during the 18th century. It is known for its fountain-filled gardens. The Monumental Complex in North **Belvedere San Leucio** was built as a model town, with a silk factory and workers' houses. At the East, the imposing **Carolino Aquaduct** is an 18th-century structure. At West, is the **Santa Maria Capua Vetere**, the ruins of

Pope's Intentions
Jan 2022



For True Human Fraternity
We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination & persecution; may their own rights & dignity be recognised, which originates from being brothers & sisters in the human family.



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
INDIA

the **Anfiteatro Campano**, which once hosted gladiator fights. We made our Triduum at Rocca di Papa before the Feast of Nativity under the guidance of **Fr McClain J. Thomas, the Treasurer General**. The Christmas and exam holidays began in Gregorian University on 23rd December. Our province men in Rome had a Holy Mass in St. Ignatius' room and fellowship together in Gesù on 11th of the same month. the Gesù community celebrated the Feast of Nativity with different cultural events and special Italian dishes. We had also a carol gathering along with General Curia, in St. Peter Canisius community, the house of writers. We, the first-year Indian theology scholastics made a pilgrimage to the chapel of vision of St. Ignatius at La Storta. The same first year group, met **Fr D'Cunha Vernon**, the General Assistant, and had a chat together.

The community welcomed the New Year with solemn Eucharist, presided by **Bishop Daniele Libanori SJ, the Auxiliary Bishop of Rome**, and with cultural food events. **Sch George** got a special reserved ticket as new year gift and was privileged to attend **Pope Francis' Mass** on 1st of January. We celebrated the Titular feast of the Society of Jesus with Solemn Mass, presided over by **Fr Arturo Sosa, the General**. After all the celebrations, we, the scholastic community, are getting into the season of examinations in the Gregorian University. We kindly request your valuable prayerful supports.

George Karuppallyil

LOK MANCH PROGRAMME

Lok Manch programme has successfully completed its second phase by 31 December 2021 and we have entered the third phase. Along with rights-based and issue-based action we will have specific focus on climate-change related activities in this third phase. we are grateful to all our partners and grassroots level leaders for completing the three major items of our programme in the fag-end of the second phase, namely 1) the project called 'Community-Based Health Surveillance System' (CBHSS) focused on the COVID-19 affected population, 2) 'Ko-Bo Collect' survey, as part of a research project for assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the marginalized people of India and 3) a national level health campaign for assessing and improving the functioning of Public Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) as per Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS). Our state level research for assessing the functioning of PHCs and CHCs as per IPHS provided us with some major findings that could be communicated to the health minister Ms. Veena

George. In an exclusive meeting with Lok Manch State level functionaries, the Minister appreciated our work and shared how she was focusing on health systems in the marginalized areas such as Attappady. Interface meetings of ward members and ASHA workers at the Panchayat level helped us reach out to the COVID-19 affected population better and the medical officers and Panchayat authorities supported us in our work.

As part of scaling up of Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) programme in Sneharam, we have accompanied 21 students of Global English Language programme from Cheru Resmi Centre, Loyola College of Social Sciences and Sneharam and ensured the completion of C1 level of the programme. In the meanwhile, the students of our two Professional Certificate Courses, namely the Learning Facilitator and Peace Leader, are making significant progress.

We are looking forward to getting support of various stakeholders to prepare a fish-landing centre at the backwaters' side of our property, considering the lack of landing facilities due to the recent coastal erosion and the extreme weather events such as Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Ockhi and Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm Tauktae.

Benny Chiramel

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF VOCATION PROMOTION

"If we find meaning in our religious life and in our vocation to the Society of Jesus, if we love this life that we have chosen to follow Jesus, we will be very motivated to promote this precious charism that the Lord gave to his Church, through St. Ignatius and the first companions, for which we are currently responsible. It is worth remembering how the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus ended in which Ignatius shaped the basic characteristics of the charism received. The tenth principal part is entitled: How the whole body is to be preserved and increased in its well-being".

(Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ, Extended Council of Father General on Vocation Promotion, 11 Sept, 2020)

KERALA JESUIT PROVINCE CONGREGATION DECEMBER - 2021

The Kerala Jesuit Province Congregation (PC) was held from 29 December to 31 December 2021.

There were five sessions in the PC spanned over three full days.

The business in stock for the PC was explained by Fr Provincial

1. Elect a Procurator and his Substitute to attend the Procurators' Congregation in Loyola, Spain in early May 2023.
2. Vote whether a GC should be convened or not.
3. To discuss questions and problems to be proposed to a future GC.
4. Consider the Postulates as according to the guidelines proposed in the formula.
5. Discuss the Questions of proposed by Fr General.

The PC elected its Secretaries **Frs Dominic Palakeel** and **Toby Kozhuppakkalam**. Similarly the two deputies for sorting the postulates were elected, **Frs Maruthukunnel Jose Jacob** and **Karimathil Joye James**.

Fr Provincial gave a very detailed presentation of the status of Province. The PC considered the questions given by Fr General in smaller groups to prayerfully reflect, discuss and make collated reports. The day was concluded with Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Provincial.

The second day began with a Eucharist celebrated by Fr Socius. After Mass the delegates assembled in the cemetery to pay homage to our brotheren who had gone for their eternal reward in recent years.

In the first session, the Province Congregation duly elected **Fr Sunny Kunnappallil** and **Fr Thomas Karimundackal** as Kerala Province Procurator and his Substitute respectively.



The PC then took up the the three postulates chosen by the deputation. After detailed deliberation and discernment, it was decided that these postulates need not be sent to Fr General or to a GC. However, Fr Provincial assured the PC that these matters concerning the general life of the Province will be followed up in the days to come.

The third day began with a Eucharist celebrated by Fr Sunny Kunnappallil. Two more postulates were suggested by the delegates of which one was selected by the deputation and after due deliberation it was reformulated and it was recommended to the General. The sum and substance of the postulate deals with the exercise of power and authority, in the context of synodality, in the Province and in the Conference as a whole. In the ensuing session there was discernment on whether calling or not calling a General Congregation. The PC decided against calling a General Congregation

There was a business session in which **Fr Peter Mulluparambil** presented the financial status of the Province, the legal interventions and the Master Plan of Christ Hall campus which was very informative and warmly welcomed.

Fr James Morias gave a detailed presentation on Tripura Mission. **Fr Binoy Pichalakkattu** gave a brief presentation on the activities of LIPI and Ezhuthu magazine.



The PC congratulated **Sch Rejoy** (First Year Philosophy in Pune) for the Kerala Province Catalogue App prepared and maintained him. We will in course of time reduce the number of printed catalogue .

After completing certain formalities the delegates of the PC stood up and sang the Te Deum with great reverence and Fr Provincial declared the PC closed. The Kerala Jesuit Province Congregation came to a close at 4.42



pm on the 31st of December 2021. We are grateful to the Lord that in these times all experienced good health and excellent support systems of SRC & Christ Hall. This Province Congregation deeply affirmed our communion and it was yet another experience of union of minds and hearts.

Socius

OURS IN MEDIA

- **Fr Ephrem** My Cannonball Moment, in December 2021, *Issue of Jeevan*
- **Fr K.J. Mathew** “ദിവ്യ സാന്നിധ്യം” *Jeevanadam*, November 4, 2021
- **Fr Midhun J Francis**,
- “ഇതര വിശ്വാസങ്ങളും രണ്ടാം വത്തിക്കാൻ കൗൺസിലും”, *Jeevanadam*, No. 38. December 16, 2021
- “മനുഷ്യാവതാരം സാംസ്കാരിക അനുരൂപണം”, *Jeevanadam*, No. 39. December 23, 2021.
- **Fr Thomas Karimundackal** “Towards an Integrated Dialectical Biblical Hermeneutic,” *Journal of Indian Theology* Vol. XIV, No. 3, September - December 2021, 7-34.

GONE FOR THEIR REWARD

Fr Joseph (Josey) Kunnunkal (PAT), 84/60
on 8.12.2021 at Patna.

Fr Jose Feliu (BOM), 92/74
on 10.12.2021 at Mumbai.

Fr Lawrence Pinto (KAR), 88/66
on 16.12.2021 at Mangaluru.

Br Maria Michael Santiago (AND), 85/62
on 19.12.2021 at Guntur.

Fr Thomas Vattakunnel (KER), 93/ 71
on 26.12.2021 at Christ Hall.

Fr Michael V. Panimegam (DUM), 72/53
on 03.01.2022 in Kalidanga, Rampurhat.

Mr. V.M. John Vattukulam (98) eldest brother of
Br George Vattukulam on 14.12.2021

Ms Thankamani Joseph (80) sister in law of **Fr Syriac Panjikaram** on 24.12.2021

Mr. Dhamodharan (71), paternal uncle of **Sch Frangle Xavier B.R.** on 28.12.2021 in Trivandrum.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January

01 John Elamkunnappuzha

01 David Mathew Madathinakathe

01 Ramlal Mekkulathil

02 Peter Mulluparambil

03 Tomson Vadakkeputhenpura



04 Varkeychan Mecheril

06 Biju George Kunnappillil

06 Joseph Pulickal

07 Biju Vadakkumchery

08 Abraham Adappur

08 Augustine Paruthipallil

10 Roy Alex Kuzhimannil

11 Thomas Erinjery

13 Rabin C

16 Rejoy Johnny Chiriyankandath

18 Joseph Edassery

20 Jacob Kumminiyil

20 Jijimon Puthuveettikalam

25 Antu Xavier Kalamparambil

26 James Pullokan

26 Thomas Panikulam

February

01 Anil Kochumethikalam

02 Eby Shajan Parankimalil

02 Joel Thomas Chennothil

04 George Varangalakudy

05 George Vattukulam

IN CHRIST WITH GLORY

January

02 (2019) Samuel Rayan

06 (2007) Cecil Veliath

06 (2014) Linus Maria Zucol

07 (2006) Kurian Padapurackal

13 (2018) George P Kandathil

13 (2020) John Molekunnel

15 (2007) Antony Manipadam

18 (1967) Thomas Kalam

19 (1977) Joseph Koilparambil

21 (2003) Chandy Varickamakal

23 (2007) Dominic Gomez

26 (1963) Fortunatus Cutinho

31 (1986) Cherian Karippaparambil





OBITUARY



FR THOMAS VATTAKUNNEL, S.J.
09 JULY 1928 — 26 DECEMBER 2021

Fr Thomas Vattakunnel left for his heavenly reward soon after celebrating his final Christmas. After a life of hectic activity lasting 93 years and a brief encounter with COVID-19, he breathed his last on 26 December at Christ Hall, Kozhikode. From 2013 onwards he had been taking rest in Christ Hall.

Fr Thomas was born at Kanjirapally in Kottayam district on 9 July 1928 as the fourth among 12 siblings. After his Secondary Education, he joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Shembaganur in 1950. He had his Juniorate studies at Shembaganur itself and his Philosophy studies at De Nobili College, Pune. After graduating from the University College with Malayalam as main, he taught at St Mary's High School, Madurai for his regency. After completing his theology studies at De Nobili College, Pune, he was ordained a priest on 24 March 1963 at Pune itself. He went to St Stanislaus, Hazaribagh for his Tertianship and made his final commitment in 1968 at St Joseph's school, Kozhikode. Soon after, he went to St Berchman's College, Changanacherry, to pursue PG studies in Malayalam.

Fr Thomas was interested in education and spent many years in various Jesuit institutions. He began at St Joseph's High School, Thiruvananthapuram, teaching French and then moved to St Xavier's College at Thumba and then to St Joseph's High School, Kozhikode, teaching French. He returned to St Xavier's College, Thumba as a lecturer in Malayalam in 1970 and continued till 1980, and also served as its Principal. He took a pastoral break to work as parish priest in the Catholic Mission at Ezhimala before moving to Paris to attend French Language Teacher's Course. He continued in Paris teaching English at Marseilles Ecole de Province. On his return, he was assigned to Beschi College, Dindigul to teach Malayalam in the Common Juniorate. From 1986 to 1988, he was in Himachal Pradesh serving the Mission. After returning to the Province, he joined AKJM School, Kanjirapally as a teacher for a year and



proceeded to Thenhipalam near Kozhikode as parish priest of Aquinas Church. He remained there from 1989 to 1996 and moved to Lady Immaculate Church, Ottapalam in 1999 and St Mary's Church, Pariyaram in 2002. In between, he served as Director of Arnos Padiri Academy, Velur from 1996 to 1999. In 2003 he was transferred to Prasanthi, Pachilakkad (Wayanad) as Minister-in-charge for four years and continued to stay there till 2013.

It was during his stay in Pachilakkad that I came to know Fr Thomas closely and personally. I found him a very genuine and affectionate person despite his occasional outbursts. Many people could experience his love and care, and he always had a special love for the poor. He arranged benefactors to support students from poor backgrounds to study nursing and other

professional courses so that they could become self-reliant. He found support to build houses for many families. He lived closely with the real-life of the poor, and this made him compassionate to all. A second factor that made me admire Fr Thomas was his love for the soil and the earth. He loved farm work even when he was teaching in the school or college. His interest in caring for our common home led him to plant trees in abundance wherever he lived. He expected the same from others too and did not tolerate laziness or half-hearted work. He was equally committed to sharing the fruit of his labour with the other Jesuit communities and the poor in the neighbourhood.

What made Fr Thomas unique was his ability to combine his love for the earth and the poor with his academic pursuits. He had a passion for languages which made him fluent not only in Malayalam and English but also in Tamil, Sanskrit and French. Jesuits as well as others found him a multi-lingual scholar ever available for consultation. Even when he was weak and sickly, he found time to get the Jesuit supplement of the Latin Missal translated into Malayalam, and he could see it in printed form before his final journey.

He kept his passion for languages alive with his daily reading of the Bible in different languages.

Rev Fr Pedro Arrupe, the then Superior General, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Fr Thomas' Jesuit life in 2020, wrote to him: "Fr Thomas Vattakunnel, you have inspired many by your hard physical and intellectual work and your simple and disciplined life. As a pastor, you are tender-hearted and compassionate. You upheld values of discipline, hard work, honesty and transparency and were available to the Church and the Society. You are bold enough to speak the truth, to question and challenge and to speak against injustice wherever you are." Fr Thomas leaves behind fond memories of his unique personality. May the Lord reward him.

Wilson Malackal



Happy New Year



Please send your news before the end of every month.
Editor's Email ID: kjscalicut@gmail.com [www: keralajesuits.org](http://www.keralajesuits.org)

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