



FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic

George Edayadiyil CMI

A Visionary Spiritual Guru with a Compassionate Heart



When I recall the memory of late Fr. Francis Vineeth Vadakethala CMI, a vivid picture comes to my mind: a CMI clad in a brown shawl with a happy, spontaneous, contented, and radiating smile. I haven't seen him otherwise in the classrooms, in the corridors, and in the campus of Dharmaram College, Bengaluru, or anywhere else. Noble thinking and simple living were his trademarks.

In Fr. Vineeth, I find the essential features of a true Indian Sanyasi and a Guru who followed *Jnana*, *Karma*, and *Bhakti margas* at the same time. For him, they were not three different paths; for him, one did not exist without the other two. This is evident from the story of his life, the testimony and the legacy that he has left for us: Vidyavanam Ashram in Bengaluru, the classes

that he had taught, the retreats that he had guided, the articles, books, and songs that he had written or composed, and the various services that he had offered. His words and thoughts were the outpouring of his heart and there was an essential harmony and oneness in his thoughts, words, and deeds: indeed, he was a man of integrity.

He was a man of dreams and a genuine seeker of truth, beauty, and oneness. This is evident all through his life. But, basically, everywhere he sought God with a passionate, focused, and an inclusive mind and heart. The harmony of Indian, Eastern, Carmelite and Western genii that can be seen in Vidyavanam Ashram at Bengaluru demonstrates this.

I remember with gratitude his stay at Karunyagiri (Ashram), Pullikanam, Vagamam, which I was instrumental to start. In 2012, he came for a month to the Ashram to write some more terms for an *Indian Christian Dictionary*. After one week, when he heard that his fellow ashramite in Vidyavanam Ashram, Fr. Anto

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



Vattakuzhy CMI had an operation, he rushed back to be of help to him. On the way back, travelling in a public transport bus from Pullikanam, we got down at Thodupuzha town for lunch. As we got inside the restaurant, he found that the wash basins were not very clean. So, he washed them all before proceeding to take the meals. He did that with the intention to leave the place clean for others who would come after him. He was a welcome presence wherever he was. He never was a guest in his entire life and he welcomed everybody with lot of enthusiasm and love and was very eager to spare his precious time and talents for others. This was Fr. Vineeth. He prepared way for others; he was an inspiration for generations of CMIs and seekers of God.

He was generous and compassionate. The seekers, the children, the poor, and the weak found space in his heart. He sided with them with a prophetic courage calling always for justice and truth. Fr. Vineeth was a man who positively appreciated life and God's blessings with a deep trust in God. Even though he was endowed with exceptional intellectual acumen, his faith and devotion were very simple. In his childlike simplicity, joy, openness, and spontaneity of life, the Kingdom of God was nearer to us. He was always hundred

percentage – a man of total mindfulness, focus, and clarity. CMI congregation and the Indian Church have very few persons of such depth in Indian thoughts and spirituality. A man of interiority, Fr. Vineeth loved the clear expression of that interiority in silence, aesthetics, wonder, devotion, and hospitality. His was a gentle, noble, calm, and serene presence as his smile, sound, and movements were. He has absorbed the serenity, silence, joy, and peace of the Divine in his heart with wonder as an authentic Indian CMI Sanyasi. His heart's desire has come true in his passage from our world. May God continue to bless us through his intercession!

