

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



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Being Missional by Being Passionate!



While 're-remembering' with Fr. Vineeth, that which lingers in me is his 'passion' for scripting and living an Indic way while being seeded and coded in his Christian legacy. It was the passion (*ichchha shakti*) of his heart more than being in the comfort zone of a mere Indologist or Philosopher or a Theologian of notional texture and context. Passion germinates hope effortlessly, and it easily spills over to *kriya sakti*, and makes one a *karma-yogi*. It is the passion that which makes one missional, and engaged in the life process whatsoever be the hurdles and failures one has to brace up. Passion makes us sportive and playful, and transforms our life into a *lila* (divine play). It is the passion that makes one the celebrant of life and sequentially, life churns out to be a vibrant celebration in the "fulness of life" in virtue of itself. It is a natural and spontaneous sequence and consequence. This is what we find in the narrative of Fr.

Vineeth's life. This passion had been the grammar as well as the inner credential of Fr. Vineeth's journey of life. When St. Thomas Aquinas was asked about how to become a saint, he told three things: 'desire', 'desire' and 'desire'! In our Indian tradition it is *mumukshutam*. Fr. Vineeth nurtured, nursed and cultured a profound desire with consistency and constancy through and through to start a Christian Ashram even while doing his early studies. He could take emphatic steps towards his life-long ambition only in his sixties. What was remarkable was that he never gave it up. This engaging enthusiasm is the sacred secret of the intelligibility of the heart. Vidyavanam Ashram is the blossoming of his life ambition for the Lord. As an associate in the initial endeavours of starting the ashram, what I learn from Fr. Vineeth is that we will ever remain creatively and proactively engaged in the life process if we primarily listen to the promptings of the heart; if we spin out our life in the wisdom of heart, we will, unaware, have enormous inner resources and strength to figure out new vistas and paths even in the present pandemic times when the uncertainty is the new nor-



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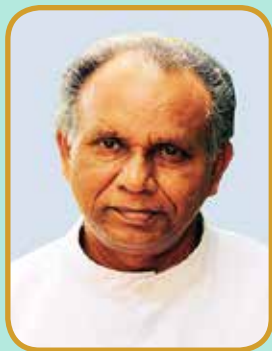
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mal of life. Follow the 'Call of the Heart'. Let's be passionate, missional and compassionate in the 'Holy Optimism' which is pervading and prevailing in the text

and texture of existence, both within and without; we will never fail, and we will never, ever go astray while we correlate passion and mission in our life's narrative.

Augustine Keemattam CMI, Darsana, Wardha

Remembering Father Francis Vineeth



In June 1970, the new batch of students of philosophy had arrived in Dharmaram College, Bengaluru. Christ College was launching the first year of its degree courses. We the new batch was expected to join both the philosophy course at Dharmaram and the degree course at Christ College. Our time would be divided between the two In-

stitutes – 10 am to 4 pm at Christ College and the remaining at Dharmaram. Fr. Francis Vineeth was one of the professors who gently explained to us the new arrangement and helped us to make a choice of science or humanities stream at Christ. He was kind, ami-

able, gentle, and genuine. Later, in Philosophy classes, when he explained to us Existentialism and other subjects, we enjoyed the originality and spontaneity of his thoughts. His work, *Call to Integration* (Bangalore: ATC, 1980), is an insightful theological reflection on religious life and vows. The book has helped me to evolve my personal convictions on religious life. I was fortunate to be with him in the renewal retreat team of the CMI Congregation, which gave me a chance to experience his spirit of team work. He was always generous to share his thoughts, insights, stories, experiences, etc., with other team members, in spite of the fact, that he could use them in his talks. Above all, he was a fine human being, sensitive to the needs of others with an extremely refined sensibility. May the 'Word Become Flesh' unite him to the Triune God, Amen!