

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



James Muttickal CMI, Bhopal

Gurudaskhina

I attended the classes of Father Vineeth always with great enjoyment, especially when he sometimes diverted from

the topic and spoke spontaneously from his heart. Then, his lectures were like poems of mysticism. That is why I took him as the guide for my BTh thesis.

I joined theology studies after my Masters degree in Hindi literature. At that time, I was very much fascinated and influenced by the poems of the mystic poets of the Bhakti Movement. So, I had interest in a comparative study of the mystic poems of Saint Ephrem and the poems of the Bhakti poets. Father Vineeth encouraged me and guided me in this study and I had many discussions with him on the topic of my thesis, before

I wrote it. I had his guidance in learning the mysticism of the Oriental Fathers. About his own spirituality, as a CMI religious priest, he said: "The Spirit of Carmel means silence, contemplation, and abnegation. I am trying to capture this spirit and put it into practice in an Indian way. I emphasise the Indian way, because the Carmelite spirit is very much in the Indian tradition – the spirit of *tapas*, contemplation, and abnegation."

After my theology studies and ordination, when I started to work in the field of mass media, he came forward with a valuable suggestion to record some of his meditations. We produced eight volumes of his meditations in sets of four cassettes. It was a combined effort by both of us, since he permitted me to participate in the project. He gave me the themes of the meditations and I wrote Bhajans based on those themes to complement the meditations. There were also the contributions of Father Anto Amarnad, who composed music and Father Joseph Palackal who sang those Bhajans. The audio meditations of Father Vineeth were very



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well received. After many years, when it was the time of video CDs, I met him in his Vidyavanam Ashram and put the suggestion to produce those meditations in the video form. I thought that it was worthwhile to preserve his reflections and meditative thoughts for the future generations. He liked the idea and within a few months' time he came to Navchetana, Bhopal, for the recording session; he was accompanied by Father Anto Vattakuzhy.

This time too he discussed the themes with me and asked me to write Bhajans based on the proposed themes. After writing, I showed him those Bhajans.

He changed some Bhajans to Sanskrit, saying that for those who are not familiar with Hindi, Sanskrit may be better understandable. Again, it was Father Amarnad, who composed the music of those Bhajans. He used to appreciate Father Amarnad's music saying that his music to Bhajans is of a superior quality, since his music flows from the heart. This time too we produced eight volumes of meditations. It was my *Gurudaskhina* to Fr. Vineeth and I am very happy that I could do it. After the recording, before leaving Bhopal, he gave me a diary and told me that it was his personal diary, and I was supposed to open it only after he has gone from this world. I kept his word.



Paul Thekanath CMI

A Mystic-Genius

A mystic-genius in Indian spirituality, founder of Vidyavanam, a professor of philosophy, and, above all, a simple human being. He was a great inspiration for generations of CMIs. This is a great loss for us. He hails from my own village. His sense of detachment from worldly success continues to inspire us.