

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



P R E F A C E



Father Francis Vineeth Vadakethala CMI (1935-2021), whom I have closely known for about four decades, was for sure a *Sthithaprajña*, a person of equanimity stemming from his realized consciousness of the Divine, rooted and flourished in the person of Jesus Christ.

Being an erudite and innovative philosopher-theologian, with his academic grooming from Dharmaram College (Bengaluru), Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome), and Oxford University (UK), Father Francis Vineeth could explore new domains of integration in religious consciousness, consecrated life, contextualization and inculturation of his Catholic faith, with greater commitment and determination.

Having been involved in the grooming of hundreds of priests and consecrated religious for about six

decades at Dharmaram College and elsewhere, Father Francis Vineeth is remembered by his students and colleagues for the great model of committed religious and priestly life that he offered in and through his personal life of witness and the clear and sound teachings that he had imparted in the classrooms and his manifold writings.

Vidyavanam Ashram, a realization of his cherished dream for an integrated Indian-Christian way of life, both as an institution and a movement, offered a new avenue for his self-expression: here, an academician was transformed into a *Sādhaka*, an innovative seeker of the Ineffable, but truly practical and very much down to earth. At the Ashram, he could accompany and animate many a seeker who approached him for establishing themselves in the Unfathomable, whom he had encountered and realized in Jesus Christ.

Father Francis Vineeth was a philosopher-theologian with an ever-growing interest to pursue research, which, in the course of time, gave way to an unceasing search; he was a teacher and mentor, who was ever



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available for academic and spiritual grooming of his wards, or anyone who approached him for guidance and support. He was a prolific writer and a poet, who mastered the art of *fathoming* the Unfathomable; his unquenching thirst for the Divine formed his open perspectives and firm positions, which, in turn, took him to greater heights of religious realization. The way of life that Father Francis Vineeth charted for himself remains, at the same time, a challenge and a promise: for those who followed him closely, he remains a beacon of assured accomplishment of the goal of life; indeed, he offers all of us a great model to emulate!

Although Father Francis Vineeth has left his earthly sojourn on 30 June 2021, his person, insights and perspectives, inspirations and aspirations, shall continue to resound amidst us for the greater good of humanity. In an attempt to capture how his confreres, students,

friends, and fellow-pilgrims perceived the impact of his life, an invitation was sent out and the response was indeed stupendous; it has resulted in this large collection of reminiscences from a cross-section of his associates. This collection, titled *Francis Vineeth Vadakethala CMI: Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic*, brings to us the cherished memories of many, from a variety of perspectives. These pages, it is believed, will enable us to recapture and perpetuate the person and accomplishments of Father Francis Vineeth for posterity.



May Father Francis Vineeth, who had encountered and experienced the Ineffable Divine, continue to inspire and empower us in our unceasing search for “the revealed, yet hidden...!”

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