



FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic

വിനീതച്ചൻ അവസാനം താമസിച്ച പ്രേഷിതാരാമിൽ ഞാനും രണ്ടുവർഷത്തിലേറെ ഒന്നിച്ചുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വളരെ രസാവഹമായിരുന്നു ആ സഹവാസം. എന്റെ പട്ടത്തിന്റെ സുവർണ്ണ ജൂബിലി എന്റെ അനുജന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ ആഘോഷിച്ചപ്പോൾ പ്രേഷിതാരാമിൽ നിന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾ നാലഞ്ചുന്മാർ പങ്കെടുത്തിരുന്നു. പ്രാർത്ഥനാശുശ്രൂഷയും അനുഭവദാനവും അത്താഴവും മാത്രം. അതിൽ കൂടുതൽ സന്തോഷസമേതം പങ്കെടുത്തനുഭവമോദിച്ചത് വിനീതച്ചനാണ്.

ഞാൻ, പ്രേഷിതാരാമിൽ എന്തെങ്കിലും തമാശയോ, വിടുവായത്തരമോ പറഞ്ഞാൽ ചിലപ്പോൾ എന്നെ തല്ലും അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ഇടിക്കും! അച്ചന്മാരെ തല്ലാൻ പാടുണ്ടോയെന്ന് ചോദിച്ചാൽ

സ്നേഹംകൊണ്ടല്ലേയെന്ന് പറയും. ഞാനും അതുപോലെയാണു സ്നേഹിക്കട്ടെയെന്ന് ചോദിച്ചാൽ വേണ്ട, വേണ്ടയെന്ന് പറയും. അവസാനനാളുകളിൽ ഓർമ്മക്കുറവിന്റെ ക്ലേശം വിനീതച്ചനിൽ ശക്തമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാലും, പലപ്പോഴും ഞാൻ കാണാറുണ്ട്, ചാപ്പലിൽ ചെന്നിരുന്ന്, കണ്ണിമവെട്ടാതെ സക്രാരിയിലേയ്ക്കുതന്നെ നോക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്! എല്ലാം മരന്നാലും, മരാക്കാത്തവനെ മരക്കാത്തൊരു അമാനുഷിക ദർശനചൈതന്യം ഞാനതിൽ കണ്ടു! “അഹം ബ്രഹ്മസ്മി, തത്വമസി” തുടങ്ങിയ ഭാരതീയ ദർശനശകലങ്ങൾ വിനീതച്ചന്റെ പ്രേഷ്ഠസുഹൃത്തുക്കളാണ്. ദൈവൈക്യബോധം അദ്ദേഹത്തെ നയിച്ചിരുന്നു, ഭരിച്ചിരുന്നു. അതനുഭവത്തിലാക്കാൻ വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ട വിനീതച്ചാ, ഞങ്ങൾക്കും ആ ആവേശാനുഭവങ്ങൾ പകുന്നുതരണേ.



Jose Paul Edakkalathur CMI, Shoranur

A Joyful Musing of a Guru and Acharya

Knowledge can make man capable; wisdom can make one sensible; but only spiritual wisdom can make man humane. I met a man in 1979 while I was doing my Philosophy in Dharmaram College, a man of true spirituality and deep wisdom, none other than Fr. Vineeth.

What he learned he lived, mastered, and taught. He combined his mastery in Philosophy and Theology into a way of life; this life he shared with his students. His life in the *kudil* was an expression of his interior blending of Eastern and Western philosophies and theologies and it became an experiment, example, and experience for him and his students.

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



A man of true spirituality and wisdom shall be simple, sincere, humorous, etc. Once, while we were talking during the recreation, one of us casually pointed out to him that one button of his shirt is missing, to which he instantly remarked with all simplicity: "We need one person who can stitch at least for ten priests." A loud laughter was the result...

I had very close relationship with Fr. Vineeth which I cherish to remember. As a philosophy student, I did electives under him; he directed my philosophy paper and, above all, he was our senior tutor. It was he who taught us the meaning of 'having' and 'being', 'sein' and 'Das Sein'. My appreciation towards him was on the increase as I had the chance to work with Fr. Jose Chungan in translating *Call to Integration*, his renowned publication on religious spir-



ituality, into Malayalam (*Sanyasa Yogam*). When CMI Bhavan, Palakkad, was re-baptized, I had no doubt about its name, 'Samagra', which means 'Integrated'. Its open, eco-friendly structure, rain water harvesting of unique nature, solar powered energy system, bio-gas plant, and bio-waste agriculture, everything was inspired from the concept of 'Integration'.

I proudly remember the printing of the first brochure about Vidyavanam Ashram, using my computer and printer. We had a long chat before that, which resulted in the formatting. Even later in his life he used to recall that incident with a lot of appreciation. A man of spiritual wisdom...

Fr. Vineeth was a true contemplative, both acquired and infused. Through learning and ascetical



FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic

life, he acquired contemplation which pleased God to gift him with infused contemplation, leading to a genre of mysticism of his own, the Acharya in the Ashram and a Guru for numerous.

He was much concerned about the Preshitha Province and its members. While we were travelling to Dharmaram in 2018 to participate in the function arranged to honour the veteran achievers of Dharmaram, including Fr. Vineeth, we were talking continuously, especially regarding our Province and the members. That was the time when he was slowly falling into dementia. Yet, he was eloquent and inquiring on the topic. He was quite grateful to the Congregation and the Province for what he was and he had.



Every student of him is proud to acknowledge that. Everyone who came into contact with him likes to cherish those moments. The wisdom he poured out was enormous, but simple and digestive. The way he lived was humble but challenging. He could synthesize both the East and the West... Secular and Sacred... Mountain and Ocean... Philosophy and Theology... Heaven and Earth... and, finally, Divine and Human... His life was always an open-book in which he was trying to write "How to transcend humanity with all its limitations into Divinity without any boundaries at all."

That is the huge legacy Fr. Vineeth has left behind him, for us to continue... Thanks be to God for the person of Fr. Vineeth!