



# FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

*Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic*

place along with him one evening. The acceptance towards evening changed into negative... But, to my surprise, Fr.Vineeth smiled and replied:“It is alright” and went on with his work.

That simple phrase surprised me of his goodness of accepting any situation that came across positively. Even after that simple incident, Father never gave me a glimpse of ignoring or even showing a shade of anger for my behaviour on the previous day.

A noble personality, who can smile at other’s mistakes, has only multiplied his blessings and prayers from heaven. His motivating seminars had influenced the audience with positive reinforcement which made the entire week remarkable and memorable.

Beautiful is his soul which has ascended into heaven to sing the unceasing glories along with the hosts of archangels and cherubs. May his soul rest in Jesus’ arms!

## Sebastian Athappilly CMI, Austria

**A Tribute and an Appreciation**



**I**t was in 1968, as I was in the Juniorate (Ampazhakad) that I met Rev. Fr Francis Vineeth, then known as Fr Francis Vadakethala, for the first time. He gave us the juniors a spiritual/theological talk. One new insight from his talk impressed me then so much that I remembered it ever since, and even

now, that is, even after 53 years! Fr Vineeth spoke to us then about the work of redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. He used the following analogy. He said, it was like a musical director (conductor), when the first violin in a concert, unfortunately strikes a false note, composes on the spot a new concert that begins with this false note that has been played! This note thus did not become false any more, but the *first note* of the new symphony! Similarly, God turned the false note of the sin of our first parents into the first note of the

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new creation/symphony in Jesus Christ. This inspiring thought has been accompanying me since then. Later when I came across the words of St Augustine, who spoke of the “fortunate fault” (“*felix culpa*”) of Adam that brought us a wonderful Redeemer Jesus Christ, I thought of what Fr Vineeth told us then.

After many years during my higher studies in theology in Austria and Germany I had the opportunity to be befriended with the late German family *Geschwister Riebesecker* in Bavaria through Rev. Fr Norbert Edatukaran. This was a family of three pious women belonging to the (lay) Third Order of Franciscans, two siblings Theresa and Marianne, and their niece Lieselotte Ponnath, who were running a textile shop. This family was a great benefactor of our congregation; they have sponsored many of our seminarians and projects. It was Fr Vineeth, through whom this family made the first contact with our congregation. The acquaintance began at the famous Bavarian Marian shrine in Altoetting, a well-known pilgrim centre in South Germany. Fr Vineeth was spending a few days there in retreat. This contact and friendship between Fr Vineeth and this family paved the way for a longstanding relationship with our congregation. The greatness and spirituality of Fr Vineeth are manifested in that he did not

keep this acquaintance and connection only for himself, but shared it with many of our confreres, who had been in Europe then. This was according to me an authentic spirituality in the spirit of the vow of poverty, a spirituality of sharing with others whatever you have, not only money but also all the wealth and resources of know-how, knowledge and information, power, acquaintance and influence! Family Riebesecker always spoke of “*Pater Vineeth*” in great love, respect and appreciation.

My close contact with Fr Vineeth began while I was at DVK (Bangalore) as a member of the teaching staff from 1985. Later I had the pleasant opportunity to work with him closely as the Registrar, while he was the elected President of DVK for a term of three years. Working with him was very smooth, relaxing and enlightening. He respected each member of the team and considered our opinions and suggestions with due seriousness. I had also occasional discussions with him on philosophical and theological subjects. He enlightened me on many things, especially Heidegger’s philosophy of being and Husserl’s phenomenology. My Austrian friend Univ. Professor Dr Otto Koenig, who visited India several times, was very much inspired by the vision and insights of Fr Vineeth and invited him



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to the University of Graz (Austria) for guest lectures on matters related to Indian philosophy and spirituality. Fr Vineeth could inspire the student body with his erudite talks. All who stayed at his ashram Vidyavanam, which he started in Bangalore after retirement, spoke to me in great appreciation of it. Among them

were also people from Germany and Austria. What I appreciate most in Fr Vineeth is his simplicity and approachability combined with original thinking that has well digested both the Indian and Western philosophical and spiritual insights and that he tried to integrate academics with spirituality!

## Thomas Thottungal CMI, USA

ഭാരതസംസ്കാരത്തിലുനിയ ആത്മസാക്ഷാത്ക്കാരം.



ആർഷഭാരത സംസ്കാര ദാർശനിക തയിലുനിയ വിനീതച്ചന്ദ്രൻ തനതായ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക നൈപുണ്യവും, ആർദ്രതയും, ആഭിജാത്യവും ഇന്നും എനിലെ മായാത്ത സ്മരണകളായി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. 2000-2002 കാലഘട്ടത്തിലാണ് ഞാൻ എന്റെ പൗരോഹിത്യത്തിലെ ആദ്യപ്രവർത്തനമേഖലയായ അദ്ദേഹം സ്ഥാപിച്ച കർണാടക ബെണ്ണാർഘട്ടയിലെ വിദ്യാവനം ആശ്രമത്തിലെത്തുന്നത്.

പുരാതന ഋഷിവര്യന്മാർ തലമുറകളിലൂടെ കൈമാറിയ വിജ്ഞാനവും, സംസ്കാരവും, ദർശനചിന്തയും ഉൾക്കൊണ്ട ആർഷഭാരത സംസ്കാരം എന്നെയും ആ നാളുകളിൽ വളരെയേറെ സ്പർശിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

ശ്രവണം, മനനം, നിദിദ്ധ്യാസനം എന്നിവയിലൂടെ നേടിയ അനുഭവ രൂപത്തിലുള്ള വിജ്ഞാനംകൊണ്ട് മാത്രമേ അഹങ്കാരം നശിച്ച് പരമാനന്ദം നേടാനാകൂ എന്ന ജ്ഞാന യോഗസൂത്രം എന്നും എന്റെ കർണ്ണപടങ്ങളിൽ അലയടിക്കുന്നു. വിനീതച്ചന്ദ്രനെയും വളരെയേറെ സ്പർശിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു ദാർശനിക സൂക്തമാണിതെന്നു ഞാൻ ഓർക്കുന്നു.

ശ്രവണം, മനനം, നിദിദ്ധ്യാസനം, ഭക്തി, ജ്ഞാനം, കർമ്മം ഇവയെല്ലാം സമജ്ജനസമായി ഉൾക്കൊള്ളിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് നിഷ്കാമ കർമ്മത്തിലൂടെ മാതൃകാപരമായി ജീവിക്കാനിടയായ നമ്മുടെ പരിശുദ്ധ കന്യകാമറിയത്തോട് അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു വളരെ അടുത്ത ഭക്തിയായിരുന്നു.

ഒരു ദിവസം തിരക്കൊഴിഞ്ഞ സായാത്തിൽ ബെണ്ണാർഘട്ട് നാഷണൽ പാർക്കിനടുത്തുള്ള പ്രധാനവീഥിയിൽ വച്ച് അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു തസ്കരന്മാരിൽ നിന്ന് ആക്രമണം നേരിടേണ്ടിവന്നപ്പോൾ കയ്യിലുണ്ടായിരുന്ന ജപമാലയിലുള്ള ശരണത്താലും