



# FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

*Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic*

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**In Memory of Father Francis Vineeth CMI**



**W**hen Father Saju Chackalackal asked me to write a few words in memory of Father Francis Vineeth, I did not hesitate a single moment. His memory is a precious treasure for me and a source of inspiration. I considered it an honour to work with Francis during many years in the International Academic

Advisory Board (IAAB) of the Institute of Spirituality Asia (ISA) in Manila (Philippines). We all enjoyed his spiritual insights, particularly his mystical insights from the Indian perspective.

But Francis was not only an empathic colleague, a trustful companion, and a great scholar in the field of spirituality and mysticism, but, during the years, he also became a friend and, above all, a Carmelite fellow-student. I learned a lot from Francis and I would like to share with you four spiritual insights.

Firstly, I appreciate very much his starting point: God is not simply an object of our knowledge; He is the subject of our being. He is our innermost Self. We are called to become aware of His presence. This is the source of our real God-knowledge.

Secondly, spirituality and mysticism are Self-realization. Knowing Him is realizing Him from within. Spiritual knowledge is realisational. This is the essence of Francis' ashram-ideal: a combination of search and research in the experiential knowledge of God.

Thirdly, within Christian spirituality these two basics are essential. Christians are called to become another Christ; Christ is not an object, but he gives himself as the subject of knowledge. This Christ-knowledge is realized when we embody him in our life from within.

Fourthly, for Francis, the lead and the legacy of the Carmel are essential in the interreligious dialogue between Christian and Hindu spirituality: Carmel is realisational knowledge of God. Many times, Francis

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referred to Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross as the spiritual masters in the field of inter-spiritual dialogue. Within the same context, he pointed, time and again, at the Carmelite core values, like silence, and the agonizing experiences of the dark night.

Grateful for his insights, his friendship, and his Carmelite companionship, I pray that Francis may rest in the great Self of our Lord. I feel deeply connected with him and all the Carmelite brothers and sisters in India. Please, pray for me and the whole Carmel around the world.

## **Davis Panakkal CMI Provincial, Devamatha**



I met Fr. Vineeth for the first time when I was doing my philosophical studies at Dharmaram College, Bengaluru. I was amazed by his simplicity and sincerity in the classroom and his loving approach towards students. He taught us Metaphysics and, while he was teaching philosophy, he communicated concepts and ideas very clearly to his students. I remember an encouraging gesture I received from Fr. Vineeth when I was participating his seminar on Bhagavat Gita. He assigned the subjects for seminar presentation for each student. When I presented my seminar paper, I was a little bit frustrated about my presentation but he congratulated me and, at the same time, he corrected the way of my presentation. As a good teacher, he supported me; he corrected certain things in my presentation for improving my academic pursuit. I loved this approach very much in my younger age. Although after my philosophical studies I had many opportunities to meet him and talk with him, what I remember most is his approach towards me during the seminar presentation. When I was participating in the funeral ceremony of Fr. Vineeth, I remembered the seminar room experience and I prayed for the departed noble soul. I always cherish his calm, serene, and pleasant approach to each and every person in our Congregation. *May the angels and saints carry this beautiful soul to the heavenly abode!*