

# FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

*Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic*



## Fr. Thomas Chathampampil CMI, Prior General

**I**n the death of our dear Father Francis Vineeth Vadakethala CMI our Congregation has lost an original thinker and spiritual leader, who was much sought after by the religious at home as well as abroad. The Vidyavanam Ashram that he founded in the outskirts of Bangalore in the year 1997 became so famous within a few years that many religious and spiritually seeking persons belonging to different faiths came there to spend even weeks for spiritual nourishment, renewal, and refreshing.

Father Vineeth was a real acharya, well-versed in the Indian and Western philosophy as well as the spiritual traditions of the East and the West. As a Professor of Philosophy at Dharmaram College and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram (DVK), Bengaluru, and visiting professor and guest speaker in many other institutes in India and abroad, Father Vineeth has proved his calibre as an original and creative thinker, who integrated well both the Indian and Western thought patterns, on the one hand, and academics and spirituality, especially, mysticism, on the other. I remember him as a soft-spoken gentleman and a sincere confrere. It is also to be especially mentioned that he observed total abstinence from meat at least for two years for expediting the process of the canonization of one of our blessed founders, Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

Along with academic and research activities he was also involved in the social and ecclesiastical issues in India. He had a soft heart for the poor and marginalized. His book, Justice and Reconciliation, bears witness to his prophetic spirit of criticism against certain forms of oppression. I gratefully remember his services as the President of DVK, and Professor of Philosophy as well as Theology there. I am glad that the Province of Coimbatore is publishing a book of memoirs in his honour.

