

FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic



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Serenity, Simplicity, and Sincerity



I met Fr. Vineeth for the first time during my novitiate days. Since then I started admiring his personality and it continues even after his demise. He was found to be different and unique from all other priests I had met. He possessed various qualities that made him outstanding and incredible. Out of many, I picked up three qualities of Fr. Vineeth to share my views on his life.

Serenity: Serenity was the hallmark of his personality. Even in the midst of ups and downs of life, he kept serenity and peace of mind. Such serenity was the result of his deep spirituality. It seems, he had an innate inclination to keep intimacy with the divine. I believe that he had experienced the real touch of the divine or he had experienced a glimpse of the *Paramatman*. That intimacy with the divine made him to be serene, joy-

ful, and peaceful. Consequently, most of the ordinary and worldly worries could not affect him. I vividly remember his serene look when he conducted classes and meditations during my novitiate in 1992. I continued to observe the same serenity in him throughout his life. When I visited him more than once while he was taking rest in Preshitharam, Mannuthy, due to ill health and old age, I noticed that he still maintained serenity and peace of mind. Personally, I would say that it is something I wish to have in my life. Yes, I need to learn the secret from the life of Fr. Vineeth.

Simplicity: He obtained high academic degrees both in theology and philosophy. He held many important positions like President of Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Vicar Provincial of CMI Preshitha Province, founder and director of Vidyavanam Ashram, and so on. He had an exceptional ability to synthesize the western and eastern genius and spirituality. He authored many books and articles. Many people from India and abroad approached him for spiritual



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guidance and enlightenment. He received a number of invitations from various parts of the world to teach, preach and to give retreats. He had all the reasons to be proud and arrogant. But, on the contrary, the more he was recognized, the greater was his simplicity and humility. Only great people manifest such simplicity in a world where people compete with each other to boast about their petty achievements. Indeed, he was



a great man though he never claimed it. Fr. Vineeth showed through his life that simplicity and humility create a valley of life where the real greatness would grow and flourish.

Sincerity: Covid-19 pandemic compels us to wear face masks for the safety of oneself and others. It is a need of the time; however, there are people who wear masks in their personal life and even they change it from time to time or context to context. This kind of masking helps them to hide their real self; it is a kind of duplicity. Fr. Vineeth is a contrast to such kind of masking. He was sincere and genuine in his dealings, opinions, approaches, and principles, irrespective of situations and people. He manifested congruence in what he said and what he did. In other words, he walked the talk. For example, he taught the need of spiritual depth and he himself practised it; he preached truthfulness and kindness and he lived them all through his life. Such sincerity gave him unique moral power and braveness. I remember certain occasions where he raised his voice even in front of higher authorities against some injustices without any fear or hesitation. Those who knew him well never questioned his integrity and sincerity. Such a personality of Fr. Vineeth drew many closer to him in order to learn from him and, like him, to become closer to God.

I believe that Fr. Vineeth still lives dynamically as he inspires and challenges many through the various virtues and qualities he demonstrated in his blessed life.