



# FRANCIS VINEETH VADAKETHALA CMI

## *Footprints of a Philosopher-Theologian Mystic*

യേശുവിൻ അമ്മേ നീയെന്നും.” ഈ ഗീതം അച്ചൻ എന്നും പാടാമായിരുന്നു.

എളിയവരെയും വിനീതരെയും ദൈവം കൈപിടിച്ച് ഉയർത്തുമെന്ന ദൈവവചനം വിനീതച്ചന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാണ്. അച്ചനെ പരിചരിക്കുവാനും അച്ചന്റെ ദൈവൈ

കൃജീവിതം മാതൃകയാക്കാനും സാധിച്ചത് എന്റെ ജീവിത താളുകളിലെ സ്വർണ്ണ നിമിഷങ്ങളായി കണക്കാക്കുന്നു. ദൈവം തന്റെ കാര്യം തന്റെ തിരുമുഖ ദർശനത്തിന് വിനീതച്ചനെ യോഗ്യനാക്കട്ടെയെന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവതിരുനാമത്തിനു മഹത്വമുണ്ടായിരിക്കട്ടെ!

## Naiju Jose Kalambukattu CMI, Samanvaya, Bhopal

### Vineethly in Mission



**M**y memories of Fr. Francis Vineeth go back to 2009 when I, along with my confreres, made a journey from Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bengaluru, where I pursued my Licentiate in Theology to Vidyavanam Ashram, located in Bhoothanahalli village, nearly 6 km away from Bannerughatta. I met the acharya Francis Vineeth at the ashram but it was a casual, passing meeting and hardly we spent an hour at the

ashram. That was the only meeting I had with this man of great intellectual acumen, academic calibre, and profound spirituality. Though it was a short visit without any prior notice, the alacrity with which he welcomed and the hospitality he extended prompted us to think as if he were waiting for us with bated breath. As Pope Francis states, “Fraternal love increases our capacity for joy” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 128). With a bright smile, he radiated “a positive and hopeful spirit” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 122). As his name ‘Vineeth’ signified, he was quite unassuming.

It was a mind-boggling experience to be there in the ashram premise at the top of the hill and walking

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around the campus along with Fr. Vineeth, who explained every detail of the master plan, structure, establishment, ideals of the ashram, and the lifestyle of the ashramites. He never minced words on the ideals of simple and contemplative dimensions of ashram life, which demonstrated his passion for the same, unflinching faith and nimbleness to cope with the crisis. He had immense confidence in God and believed that all things are possible through him who called him, and this confidence in the Lord was visible in the challenging situations like starting the ashram life which he cherished even as a research student at Oxford. Everyone in the group marvelled at the person and mission of Fr. Vineeth, who always remained free of anxiety of any kind and trusted in the Lord who invited his followers to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...” (Mt 6:33). On this trust he lived and worked for the Lord (Lk 12:28).

Fr. Vineeth explained to our curious minds how having imparted wisdom to many of his students in Vidya Kshetram, temple of wisdom, he established Vidyavanam, forest of wisdom, where many seekers experienced the Ineffable One. Prayer as a sublime means of relating to the Lord, he spent much time in prayer and contemplation, and it resulted in growing



wisdom, sagacity, and simplicity of life. “For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly” (Prov 2:6-7). Fr. Vineeth promoted simple and contemplative life in tune with the Indian and Carmelite spiritual traditions to bequeath the spiritual legacy of the founding fathers of the CMI Congregation to the future generations. Through his simple life and openness, he radiated the joy of the Gospel. His words and gestures expounded his faith as solid as rock, ability to go beyond and to look at the reality with openness that equipped and empowered him to be creative, original,



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and genuine. As a great and genuine acharya, who was innovative in thinking, he could guide and lead many *sishtyas* and *sadhakas* to the farther shore of darkness. He could do these and many other great services to the Church because he hearkened more intensely to “what the Spirit says to the Churches” (Rev 2:7). It was with profound admiration, respect, and love we bade a fond farewell to the simple and humble mystic, who tirelessly sought to obtain unity with or absorption into the Absolute and tried to express the desire through his lofty poems. In him we found a genuine, jovial, and loyal religious, who took pride in being an Indian Carmelite of Mary Immaculate, and “in mission

by virtue of his very consecration” (*Vita Consecrata* 72). As we commenced our journey back from Vidyavanam to Vidya Kshetram, after a dramatic silent driving, one in the group exclaimed of “our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us” (Lk 24:32) and listening to him.

Now, as in the case of Fr. Vineeth, “the dust returned to the earth as it was, and the breath returned to God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7), we pray: “Lord, God Almighty, look with mercy on those who are deceased. Protect those who are alive, and grant glorious resurrection to those who died with the hope of resurrection” (*The Order of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, 122).



## **Emmanuel CSSE, Vandana Convent, Guna**

### **Memories of Fr. Francis Vineeth CMI**

I feel deeply sad about the sudden demise of our beloved Fr. Vineeth. Vineethachan was very close to the Elizabethan Sisters of Van-

dana Convent, fondly known as Guna Sisters.

We had returned from Germany in the year 1974 after 10 years of training and stay there. As we had our formation and professional training in Germany, we were quite unaware of the Indian Spirituality and