

OUR TRIBUTE



M. Paul Nadchethiram, OMI

OUR TRIBUTE

Volume IV - Part II
(2011-2022)

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From the Provincial Superior of Jaffna... The Oblates: The Men after the Heart of Jesus



I am happy to write and contribute to this volume “OUR TRIBUTE” “to remember and to honor the Oblates who are no more with us but still remain as a great inspiration to us all. These accounts are written in appreciation of all that they have accomplished on behalf of the poor of this land in the Oblate Congregation. Some of the aspects of their life and how they touched the hearts of the poor are highlighted in this Tribute.

We admire the Oblates in this Tribute who were teachers, mentors, researchers, writers, Formators, spiritual guides, social workers, channels of peace, justice and reconciliation, Pastors, Companions of the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable, the helpless, the sick who struggled on various occasions in their lives.

We also take note of the Oblates who unreservedly committed themselves to the poor. Their commitment, guidance, inspiration, accompaniment, brilliance, sharpness, orthodoxy, and contribution in the fields of pastoral, academics and intellectual are excellent. Some were available for spiritual ministries. Many of us have profited from their holy Eucharistic celebrations, homilies, confessions, recollections, and spiritual guidance. Their passion for the poor souls are evident.

Some have met very sick people at their death beds, at homes and in the hospitals. Some by themselves had to help the sick, admitted in the hospitals or made arrangements for their treatment and after admitting them, regularly followed their progress.

For them it was not enough to see the plight of the poor, but to do something to alleviate their pain and wounds, wipe away their tears and sweat, and bring rays of hope, smile, happiness and dignity to them.

The lives of some are inspiring, challenging and thought provoking. We honor them not only to thank them for their lives they lived but also to follow and inherit all the lessons, inspirations, visions, insights, values they left behind. They will remain our true friends and their cherished memories will never fade but inspire us.

It was Late **Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Jesuthasan, OMI** who initiated this “OUR TRIBUTE” and brought out in four Volumes with much commitment and dedication. After his departure to the heavenly Father, the continuation came to a standstill. After taking the Office of leadership of the Province, I approached **Rev. Fr. Marimpillai Paul Nadchethiram, OMI** to continue the same work and he accepted generously. I am grateful for his committed and dedicated labour, pinned to the desk even at the late hours, doing things meticulously. Stay blessed always

Yours fraternally,
Rev. Fr. Eugene Benedict, OMI
Provincial Superior,
Oblate Province of Jaffna Province.
May 21, 2022.

From the Provincial Superior of Colombo...



“OUR TRIBUTE” was a result of the hard work of the students of the Oblate Study Club of Oblate Scholasticate Ampitiya under the direct supervision of late Rev. Fr. Philips Jesuthasan, OMI. We are really grateful and thankful to Fr. Jesuthasan and the past pupils of the Oblate Study Club for their hard work.

As a staff member Fr. Jesuthasan was trying his best to help the students to cultivate within them a desire to study and learn the lives of exemplary Oblates. “He desired that present Oblates know and are familiar with the vision, mission, quality of life, labors, difficulties, sacrifices, endurance, and courage and daring of our forefathers.” (Fr. Jesuthasan). Constitution Number 43 says; “we will keep alive the memory of our deceased and not fail to pray for them, faithfully offering the suffrages prescribed on their behalf.” As we mark the 175th Anniversary of the Oblate Presence in Sri Lanka, Fr. Eugene Benedict OMI, the present Provincial Superior of Jaffna Province took the initiative to publish another Volume of OUR TRIBUTE and he handed over that responsibility to Rev. Fr. Paul Nadchethiram OMI. I am grateful to Fr. Paul too for his willingness. I am sure this Volume too will help us to keep alive the memory of many Oblates who have toiled hard to spread God's Kingdom among the people and the poorest of the poor.

As this Volume is presented as a Jubilee gift, I wish everyone a very happy Jubilee. We salute our veterans gone before us, for the Provinces and the Congregation are what they are today because of them.

Fr. Roshan J.L. Silva OMI
Provincial – Colombo
21.05.2022

From the Writer



The Oblates of Jaffna and Colombo Provinces inaugurated the 175th year of the arrival of the Oblate Missionaries to Sri Lanka on the 14th of February 2022 at De Mazenod Chapel at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. Both Provincials, the Bishops from the four Tamil dioceses, Mannar, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and a large number of Oblates from both Provinces, other Major Religious Superiors and diocesan clergy graced the occasion. A Concelebrated thanksgiving High Mass was celebrated. The Chief Celebrant was Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Bernard Gnapragasam, the Bishop of Jaffna.

This Jubilee year is nothing but our fond remembrance of the veteran Oblate Missionaries who came to Sri Lanka from the West, made it their loving Home, built the dioceses, preached the Good News of God's Kingdom, made hundreds of new Christians by baptizing them, and promoting significant Marian Devotion throughout the country. They died and were buried here and the hundreds of local Oblates who trot their path.

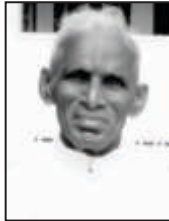
We still proudly speak of them and of their indefatigable ministries and contribution to the shaping up of the Local Churches. Is it enough to glory in their contribution and remain in complacency without launching into new Mission Horizons with renewed foresight, and with prophetic nuances? It is a year that invites us to rediscover our roots, to delve into our Oblate Charism as our Founder wanted it to be interpreted, lived and shared with the people of God throughout the world according to the signs of the times. We need to evaluate our present in the light of the inspiring and powerful legacy bequeathed to us by our stalwarts, to realistically accept our own ministerial failures, to own them with responsibility and humility and to rise once again to the Oblate Heritage.

Let the whole Jubilee year vibrate in our hearts and minds leading us to leave nothing undared. Let us profoundly reflect on the above insights and needs.

At the request of the Provincial Superior of Jaffna Very. Rev. Fr. Eugene Benedict, OMI, I have tried my best to write the live stories of the twenty seven dead Oblates of both Provinces, from 04 March 2011 to 05 April 2022 highlighting their ministries, witnessing to Evangelical Counsels and what they have left behind for us to be emulated. It is significant that we gratefully record their history in this Jubilee year. Fr. Emmanuel Jesuthasan, OMI was a prolific writer and did an excellent job in publishing “OUR TRIBUTE” in four Volumes but I with my own uniqueness and above all as my maiden effort tried to pen with whatever information was available. The details and the information of our dead Oblates may not be found in their entirety in this volume but I have recorded and included every information collected by me and given by the Provincials' Secretaries of both Provinces. It is not simply a record of the past Oblates but a humble contribution to the Oblate World to know some basic history of the foreign missionaries who toiled in Sri Lanka and died here and the many local Oblates who did the same. Let this contribution be a hallmark of the Jubilee year and a light shining on our future missionary endeavours.

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Kilinochchi, SRI LANKA

REV. FR. BASTIAMPILLAI SINGARAYAR
MARIATHASAN, OMI
(1920 – 2011)

Birth	: 2 July 1920 at Mathagal,	
First Vows	: 8 September 1943 at St. Francis Xavier's Novitiate, Bambalapitiya, Colombo	
Final Vows	: 8 September 1947 at Scholasticate, Kynsy Rd, Borella.	
Oblation	: 7697	
Ordination	: 6 August 1948 at St. Thomas's Church, Mathagal.	
Death	: 4 March 2011 at Holy Cross Health Centre, Jaffna	

Fr. Singarayer Mariathasan was born on 2 July 1920 at Mathagal. He was from the Parish of St. Thomas, Mathagal in the diocese of Jaffna. His parents were Bastiampillai Singarayer and Rosamma Santhiapillai. He was the eldest in the family among four siblings, two boys and two girls. He had his primary education at St. Thomas's School at Mathagal and his secondary education both at St. Patrick's College from 1934 – 1936 and at St. Henry's College at Ilavalai from 1937 – 1940. His family was very religious in nature and all his brothers and sisters were strictly formed by their parents to be pious and well disciplined.

Mariathasan was desirous of dedicating his whole life to serve God and his people by becoming an oblate religious Priest from his early age. He was attracted by Fr. S. Peter OMI, the recommending Oblate and by Fr. Viard OMI who was the Parish Priest. Both of them became instrumental in promoting his vocation to religious life. It is to be noted that Fr. S. Peter OMI kept Mariathasan under his strict surveillance and sent him to St. Martin's Minor Seminary in Jaffna on 6 September 1941. Having completed his initial studies at St. Martin's Seminary, he entered St. Francis Xavier's Novitiate at Bambalapitiya, Colombo on 30 August 1942. After fulfilling his period of probation, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 8 September 1943 at the Novitiate at Bambalapitiya.

He entered the Oblate Scholasticate in Colombo on 8 September 1943 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate at the Scholasticate at Kynsey Road, Colombo on 8 September 1947. Once he completed his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God by Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. A. Guyomar OMI, the bishop of Jaffna on 6 August 1948 at St. Thomas's Church at Mathagal, Jaffna. He left the Scholasticate in 1949 with much enthusiasm and eagerness to receive his first obedience to begin his priestly ministries that he had been longing for.

Fr. Mariathan received his first obedience to serve as assistant Priest at Nallur Oblate Mission on 2 September 1949 and continued till 1952. He gained much parochial experience working under senior Oblates in this mission and was transferred to St. Henry's College at Ilavalai to serve as warden and teacher on 5 January 1952 and served there for two years. He was a strict disciplinarian and therefore all the boys at the Hostel and at the College were formed, guided and motivated well. Many of them who had gone from his hands are even today speak well of his committed services to the College. Again an important responsibility was assigned to him on 12 February 1954 to St. Patrick's College Jaffna. He provided a yeoman service at the College as warden, disciplinarian and teacher. He was very strict with the students and with himself. His services at the College won great admiration from the Rector and the Staff. Mariathan took pride in his services at St. Patrick's College saying, "Those were the golden years". From there he was transferred to Adampan Parish in Mannar as Parish Priest on 7 April 1959.

The Parish of Adampan had many sub-stations and Fr. Mariathan was faithfully dispensing his priestly services to all the faithful without exception. There were travel hazards, drinking water problem and even limited material facilities for a decent living. Being young and energetic he committed himself unreservedly to the demands of the Parish and Missions. From there he was transferred to Mullaitivu Parish as Parish Priest in 1963 and served there only for two years. From there he was given obedience to the Parish of Suruvil in Kayts in 1965 and again in 1966 he was transferred to the

Parish at Urany/ KKS. He was given his next obedience to Mugamalai Parish as Parish Priest in 1971 and served there till March 1973. Then he was transferred to Delft in May 1973 and worked there for a year.

In December 1974 he was sent to India to work in the Oblate Delegation where already some Oblates from Jaffna were ministering. He joined the delegation team of Oblates and worked in a few Parishes as assistant and in Formation Houses at Poonamale and Bangalore. He returned to Sri Lanka in 1976 and took residence at St. Martin's Minor Seminary in Jaffna, assisting the Rector for a month and then was made Parish Priest at Pandianthalvu in Jaffna in January 1977. Pandianthalvu Parish was already going through serious problems, i.e problems of relationship and administration between the Oblates and the Local Ordinary of the diocese. Mariathan was at this Parish only for three months and given the next obedience to Myliddy Parish on 24 March 1977. He served there till the 15 September 1980. In September 1980 Fr. Mariathan took a well-deserved Holiday and went to India, Singapore and Malaysia. He was visiting the Oblates, his friends and relatives and returned to Sri Lanka in January 1981 and took residence at Amala Utpavam.

When he was residing at Amala Utpavam at Colombuthurai, Jaffna, he met with a Motor Cycle accident and broke his knees. He was operated on his knee cap and was convalescing at Amala Utpavam and at Valaipadu/ Iranaitivu Mission with Fr. Conzaves OMI but his residence was Amala Utpvam till 1990. From 1992 – 1995 he was at Haputale Parish with an Oblate from Jaffna who was the pastor.

The famous displacement of the people of Jaffna in 1995 brought much traumatic and painful experiences to many of our Oblates especially to the retired senior priests who were residing at Amala Utpavam but Mariathan was miraculously exempted from all that ordeal as he was at Haputale Parish. Then after a few years he moved to the diocese of Mannar in 1995 and took residence at Pesalai Parish till 2001 assisting in small ways the Parish Priest who was an Oblate. His stay at Pesalai was remarkable and well-remembered by

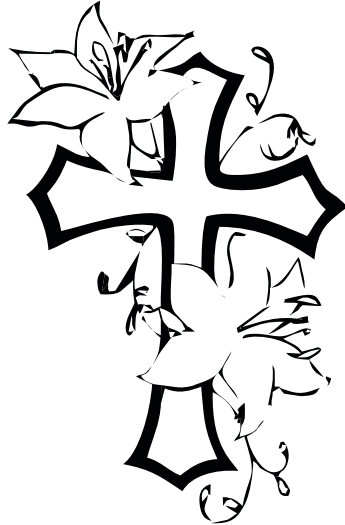
everyone even today. The youth of the Parish were drawn and attracted by his stylish and smart way of dressing and neatness. They called him “Badsha” a name of an Indian Tamil movie acted by Rajinikanth playing the lead role as Badsha. Mariathasan was happy to be called by that name and was rejuvenated in spirit. He used to go for walks well dressed up, putting on a hat and carrying an umbrella in his hands.

However Mariathasan was not enjoying the best of his health. He was a victim of chronic Asthma for many years and this kept him confined to his room most of the time. He had been frequenting his doctors and got medical treatment. When he was at Pesalai he used to go to Valaipadu Parish, to the Madhu Shrine and to Amala Utpavam for rest and recuperation and had been doing so for many years. Again he went to the shrine of Madhu in 2001 and stayed there till 2003. He had an ardent desire for hunting and therefore chose to go to Valaipadu frequently. He together with the Parish Priest went for hunting at nights into the thick jungles of Vanni and was successful intargeting many wild animals like deer and wild boar. He was a perfect shot.


In 2008 he wanted to have a change of place and went to Colombo and stayed with his sister's family at Mutwal almost a year. Then he came to the North and spent his last days of retirement at Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai. From 2010 onwards his health got deteriorated day by day with acute asthma and other ailments. He was going through severe pain and uneasiness. He was being looked after well by care takers and by the Superior of the House. Mariathasan became silent and bedridden and was admitted at the Holy Cross Health Centre. The last sacraments were administered and finally he breathed his last on 4 March 2011 at the Health Centre at the age of 91.

His mortal remains lay in state at St. Joseph's Chapel at the Juniorate at Colombuthurai on 5 March 2011. Many people from Mannar, Mathagal, his home village, Colombo, Jaffna and his former Parishioners thronged to the Chapel and paid their last respects to him. His brother and sister from Canada and United Kingdom came

to Jaffna and attended their brother's funeral. On 7 March 2011 at 4.pm, a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was celebrated, presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, the Bishop of Jaffna at which Fr. M.Paul Nadchethiram OMI who was baptized by Fr. Mariathan delivered the panegyric. A good number of priests and religious and lay faithful were present. After the final obsequies, the mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's burial ground, where they were laid to rest. Fr. Mariathan's personality was a unique one. He was a man of few words, straight forward, challenging, non-compromising, and sometimes unpredictable and demanding. But he was a self-disciplined person and wanted everyone to follow suit. May he rest in peace.



REV. FR. ANTHONY FRANCIS KULAS, OMI
(1924 – 2011)

Birth	: 12 September 1924 at Vankalai, Mannar	
First Vows	: 08 September 1946 at St. Francis Xavier's Novitiate, Bambalapitiya	
Final Vows	: 08 September 1949 at the Scholasticate, Bambalapitiya	
Oblation	: 8203	
Ordination	: 17 August 1951 at St. Anne's Church, Vankalai, Mannar	
Death	: 22 September 2011 at Mathew's Memorial Home, Colombuthurai	

Fr. Francis Kulas OMI was born on 12 September 1924 at Vankalai, Mannar. His parents were Anthony Kulas and Marie Catherine Peries. Kulas was the first child in the family among six siblings. Vankalai is a hundred percent Catholic village, very traditional in religious practices, and centered on a Church related living. It is a society in itself with unique social fabric and family customs and traits. The people are very much known to others because of their attachments to their Parish Church and celebration of liturgical services. There have been also ruffians among them.

Kulas' family was considered an educated family at that time because his brother and sisters became teachers and religious. His brother Mariyathan Kulas served as a teacher at Vankalai school for many years and two sisters Terese Juliana became a Holy Family Nun and Pauline Marietta became a Holy Cross Nun, and two other sisters Matilada worked as a teacher and his last sister Annamma was married to a teacher. The whole family was living in and around the Church participating in the life and activities of the Parish actively and faithfully. As it was a Church centered society, the Church played an important role in solving and resolving all the problems of the village either sacramental or social. The Church was the judge under the guidance of the Pastor and the Church committee. It was a very powerful system and the village people had to simply adhere to them if things were to be done.

Being a fishing community naturally there arose from time to time quarrels and fights among them but whenever such events took place they approached the Church for solution. The Parish Priest and the Church Committee used to resolve them and reconcile them. The Pastor had a strict surveillance over the whole village. The Parishioners took pride in their social standard and considered themselves superior to other Parishes in Mannar. Vankalai was a part of the diocese of Jaffna then. In this background little Kulas was growing up.

Kulas being an altar server to the veteran missionary and saintly Oblate Fr. Nallaiah, the Parish Priest, got attracted by his way of living in the spirit of simplicity, piety and holiness and was gradually motivated towards priestly vocation. Seeing Kulas' aptitude and docility Fr. Nallaiah identified him to be a suitable candidate for Oblate religious life, moulded him and kept him under his strict vigilance till he sent him to the minor Seminary in Jaffna. Kulas also expressed his willingness in humility to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people. He was motivated from his childhood to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the most abandoned. This willingness was inherited by Kulas from his Parish priest and many other Oblates who had been his Parish Priests.

After his primary education at St. Anne's school in Vankalai, Kulas joined St. Martin's Seminary in Jaffna under the guidance of Fr. Nallaiah in 1939 and pursued his secondary education at St. Patrick's College. He was successful in his S.S.C examination with matric exemption. St. Martin's seminary was under the leadership of the Oblate Fathers who were responsible for the formation of young candidates. Kulas with his college education was given a severe and strict training in English and Latin. He, being an average student with the experience of having had his primary education at a village school worked hard depending entirely on the providence of God. His companions used to remark that Kulas was a slow learner but he was steadily applying himself to the formation demands and overtook some of them in academic achievements.

After completing his college studies and the initial formation at St. Martin's Seminary, Kulas entered St. Francis Xavier's Novitiate at Bambalapitiya, Colombo on 08 September 1945. At the end of the Novitiate formation and probation he made his First Oblation as an Oblate on 08 September 1946 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to St. Bernard's Scholasticate at Borella on 10 September 1946 and pursued his philosophical studies that lasted up to 10 September 1948. He made his Final Oblation on 08 September 1949 at the Scholasticate. He had his theological studies both at Bambalapitiya and Nugegoda Scholasticates from 1948 to July 1952. During his scholasticate formation Kulas was very much interested in manual labour, sports and in many other extra curricular activities. He was a good football player with a huge physique that the other players were afraid to go near him. As it was the practice at that time Kulas while doing his ecclesiastical studies was ordained a Deacon at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena by the Archbishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Benjamin Cooray OMI on 20 December 1950 and after his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a priest of God at St. Anne's Church at Vankalai, Mannar on the 17 August 1951 by Mgr. Emilianuspillai OMI, the Bishop of Jaffna. The people of Vankalai celebrated this holy event with great joy and pride because he was the first Priest from their Parish and witnessing for the first time a celebration of priestly ordination at their village. Fr. Kulas in return loved his relatives and the whole Parish community expressing his sincere gratitude.

Fr. Francis Kulas had a personality with sturdy buildup, full of energy and tall. As a new Oblate Priest he was vibrant, missionary oriented, enthusiastically zealous and willing to take up in any assignment that would be given to him by his Major Superiors. Enthused by the zeal and charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod father Kulas manifested a deep seated desire to commit himself unreservedly to any kind of Oblate Ministry and in particular to the most abandoned people and the poor. His Major Superiors being aware of his unique personality and multi-faceted talents appointed him to different ministries in different fields. Young Kulas attracted the people of God in no time wherever he was and won many friends even among the Oblates. His obedience to his superiors was very

challenging to many of his companions. He simply accepted whatever obedience was given.

His first assignment was to the Nallur Mission in 1952 as assistant pastor. This mission was a typical paganone started and administrated by the great Missionary Nallur Swamy Gnanapragasar OMI. Kulas continuing the Oblate Tradition visited the people, the new Christians amidst lots of challenges fulfilling their spiritual needs. He became a good preacher in no time. People began to admire him and followed his liturgical services in big numbers. He became friendly also with the Hindubrethren in no time and was able to engage in meaningful dialogue with them. This paved the way to young Kulas to work with more enthusiasm and courage. He was moving in and around on a bicycle. From there he was sent to St. Joseph's College at Anurahdapura on 6 May 1953 as a warden to the Hostel, bursar and a teacher. Though he tried his best to be of good service there, his heart and soul were in Jaffna Nallur Mission. He was loving the students at the hostel and was looking after them as a loving father. The students saw in him an Oblate with a big heart of generosity and cherished his services. They were obedient to Fr. Kulas and became well disciplined.

St. Joseph's College was very popular at that time for education, sports, discipline and integral formation. The College was run by the Priests from the Jaffna Diocese and many Oblate Priests were teachers and formators. From there Fr. Kulas was sent to Sea Street, Negombo as assistant pastor on 6 August 1953 and served till 20 January 1954. On 12 September 1954 he was sent to Grand Street, Negombo as assistant Pastor. He worked among both the Tamil and the Sinhala Catholics with a sense of Commitment. The Parishioners liked his homilies and wanted to have him for many years in their Parishes but Fr. Kulas from there was transferred to Manipay Parish in the diocese of Jaffna as assistant Pastor on 22 January 1955. Manipay was again a Mission started by Nallur Swamy Gnanapragasar OMI and was surrounded by Hindus. Of course Fr. Kulas was happier to serve among the new Catholics and made use of his preaching talents to evangelize them. He gave highest priority during his pastoral care to the visiting of Houses. Most of the houses

were regularly visited, blessed and encouraged to participate at the liturgical services in the Church. From there on 29 September 1956 Fr. Kulas was sent to Nallur/ Kopay mission as assistant Pastor.

After serving in different places both in the South and North, Fr. Kulas was appointed Parish Priest for the first time on 3 December 1958 to Atchuveli and Vasavilan. These two places became very dear to his heart not only for being the parish priest first time but also for the presence of the Rosarian brothers at Tholagaty. Kulas was visiting the monastery time to time and gave them spiritual talks, guidance and the sacrament of confession. Since the Rosarian Congregation was founded by the Oblates, (Fr. B.A Thomas OMI) Fr. Kulas became much interested in their formation and spiritual welfare. From there on 3 September 1959 he was transferred to Mullaitivu as Parish Priest. All the Parishioners loved him and became obedient to him seeing in him an image of a father who had much concern for them and for his relevant homilies and beautiful singing. He was very particular in visiting the houses of all the Parishioners. They also in return were open to him with great willingness to be spiritually formed and guided.

As the village was a fishing community surrounded by Hindus, there arose certain problems from time to time and they were resolved by Fr. Kulas with amicable solutions. From Mullaitivu Fr. Kulas was sent to St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna on 20 January 1960 as assistant Pastor just for three months. On 18 May 1960 he was appointed to Mirusuvil Parish as Parish Priest. Being a musician, preacher and a singer he got much appreciation from the Parishioners but now and then getting into unnecessary problems for which his superiors visited him and helped him to solve them. By this time Fr. Kulas became a well accomplished Pastor. He served at Mirusuvil for almost two years and on 22 July 1962 was sent to Puthukudiyiruppu as Parish Priest. It was a very difficult Mission with minimum facilities and Fr. Kulas roughed out a lot but committed himself with sacrifice to the spiritual formation of his faithful. The Parishioners were docile but rigid. As time went along they loved Fr. Kulas and supported him in all his parochial efforts. They used to celebrate their Church Feasts with much enthusiasm and devotion. Drinking water was the worst problem for Fr. Kulas at Puthukudiyiruppu.

On 22 January 1964 Fr. Kulas was sent to Amala Utpavam, Colombuthurai as a Preacher which ministry was dear to him. He became popular among the people wherever he was sent to preach. His voice was melodious and pleasant to the listeners. He served there a little less than two years. On 15 June 1965 he was sent to Thalaiyadi as the Pastor. He liked this mission a lot as the people accepted him well in their midst. The Parish became active in celebrating the sacraments and feasts. Again he was transferred to the Island of Delft on 8 September 1967 and from there Fr. Kulas was sent to a different type of Pastoral ministry at Dickoya Estate to assist the Pastor. Of course he gained valuable experience from the estate workers and their simple life style. Though he was there for a short period it was a memorable experience for him. From there Fr. Kulas was transferred to Mirusuvil for the second time as Parish Priest on 20 September 1968 and again on 7 July 1969 he was transferred to Pandianthalvu Oblate Parish as Parish Priest.

Pandianthalvu Parish was comprised of Koiyathoddam and Colombuthurai. He invited many Oblate Priests to help him in liturgical services and to conduct a grand mission. He served there for three years. There too his first priority was to visit the families and bless them. He used to go around the Parish on his bicycle. From Pandianthalvu on 2 October 1972 he was transferred to Vasavilan for the second time as Pastor and again appointed Parish Priest at Sillalai on 3 March 1973. Fr. Kulas served at this Parish for 5 years with much dedication and enthusiasm. The faithful observing his pastoral activities and the importance he gave to house visiting became closer to him and listened to his fatherly advice but this Parish was also very challenging to him. On 20 June 1978 he was appointed Parish Priest at Kayts and served there almost five years. Here he concentrated on the people who were keeping away from the Church and indifferent to the reception of sacraments. He became a successful pastor there and when he was transferred people accompanied him to the new Parish. From there Fr. Kulas was appointed to the Parish of St. Antony's Church at Passaiyoor as Parish Priest on 1 September 1983. Thereafter he was sent to Kopay as Parish Priest on 6 October 1984 second time and from there to Erlalai – Soorawathai Parish as pastor.

From there he retired from active pastoral ministries and took residence at Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. After a few years, he took residence at one of the houses at Eechammodai, Jaffna with the permission of the Provincial Superior and was teaching organ music to many youngsters both girls and boys. Many of them were students in the Advanced level and students awaiting University entrance. He used to teach our Juniors at St. Joseph's Seminary on Sundays keyboard and Carnatic music. This ministry kept Kulas very busy and our many students who were music lovers benefitted a lot.

Fr. Kulas expressed his long standing desire to the Provincial Very Fr. P. P. Philip OMI to be in his home diocese of Mannar and he was given permission to take residence at Eugene Illam at present “Gananodhayam” premises in 1994. He was teaching English to the future candidates to the Oblate Juniorate in Jaffna and helping our scholastics who were stranded in Mannar unable to travel to Jaffna waiting the in turn for ship via Trincomalee. Fr. Kulas was also helping them in their spiritual needs and became a moral support to them. The political situation was dangerous and became more and more tensed with escalation of confrontations between the militants and the Government security forces. When the International Pre-Novitiate was blessed and opened during the tenure of office of Very Rev. Fr. Jeevendra Paul OMI, the Provincial Superior in 2003, Fr. Kulas was made one of the spiritual directors to the pre-novices.

During his stay at Eugene Illam, the Bishop of Mannar and the Pastor of St. Sebastian's Cathedral requested Fr. Kulas to help the Parishioners, and the Priests and Religious working in the diocese for confessions and spiritual direction. With the permission of the Provincial Superior Very Rev. Fr. S.M.Selvaratnam OMI he took residence at the Cathedral in 2007. It was remarkable that many of the Priests and Religious sought his guidance and direction. From there he was called to Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai, Jaffna in 2010 by the Provincial Superior Very Rev. Fr. M. Paul Nadchethiram OMI as Fr. Kulas was advancing in age and becoming feeble, dependent and needing medical attention. At Mathew's Memorial Home he helped our Juniors and Jaffna Diocesan major seminarians and priests for confession and spiritual direction.

Fr. Kulas was a man of prayer, simplicity, unassuming and made his companions happy and cheerful. He was a very lively person availing himself to be at the service of others. In all the Parishes and Communities he has been a loving father, a faithful friend, an obedient oblate, a simple and ordinary person. He was faithful to the evangelical counsels and fearing his conscience. He has been communicating with his superiors periodically and seeking their advice when needed. He served as the District Superior of Ilavalai and Jaffna and tried his best to visit the Oblates, holding meetings and sharing their joys and sorrows. Kulas was a person who rose to the occasion and many Oblates were eager to listen to his jokes. He enjoyed delicious dishes and shared them with the others too. Being a hardworking man he accepted the most difficult Parishes under Obedience. He was sent to the Philippines to follow the Oblate Asian Pastoral Conference in 1977. Fr. Kulas used to proudly cherish this opportunity and was grateful to the then Provincial Superior Very. Rev. Fr. James Cooke OMI (Province was one).

Kulas was falling ill often due to his old age and problem of Philaria and good medical care was given to him by the Holy Cross Sisters. His relatives, nieces and nephews from Vankalai and Mannar visited him often and were very supportive. He spent his last days reciting his daily Rosary and peacefully passed away on 22 September 2011 at Mathew's Memorial Home at 11.30 pm at the age of 87.

His mortal remains lay at St. Joseph's Chapel at Colombuthurai and many people, priests and religious from Mannar and Jaffna paid their last respects to him. A few of his former parishioners also came and paid their last respects. The funeral and the burial took place on 24 September 2011 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, the Bishop of Jaffna in the presence of a large number of Priests, religious Men and Women and laity from Jaffna and Mannar. Many relatives and people from Vankalai participated at the funeral services. Fr. Jerome Lambert OMI delivered the panegyric and after the final obsequies, the mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's Burial Ground where they were laid to rest. May he rest in Peace.

FR. FR. SILVA ANSELM, OMI
(1936 – 2011)

Birth : 22 February 1936 at Mattakkuliya
First Vows : 17 February 1956, at Novitiate,
 Kalutara
Final Vows : 17 February 1959 at the International
 Scholasticate, Rome
Oblation No : 10082
Ordination : 9 March 1963 in Rome
Death : 18 November 2011 at Marian Grove,
 Kohuwela



Rev. Fr. Anselm Silva OMI was born on 22 February 1936 at Mattakkuliya, Colombo. His parents were Liyanage John Silva and Ellege Mary Magdalene Perera belonging to St. Mary's Parish, Mattakkuliya. He had his primary and secondary education at St. Benedict's College at Kotehena and at Aquinas University College, Borella. He successfully completed his London Advanced Level Examinations. Drawn and motivated by the Oblate Missionaries and inspired by his very devout parents, Anselm decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. He entered St. Aloysius Seminary at Borella on 17 January 1949 and fulfilled the basic academic requirements.

Anselm was an exceptionally intelligent student and performed all studies very successfully. He entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at kalutara on 16 February 1955 and after the successful completion of his probation period, he professed his First Vows on 17 February 1956 at the Novitiate at kalutara. Seeing his intellectual acumen and the spirit of a solid vocation in him, the superiors sent him to Rome for further Priestly and Religious formation at the International Scholasticate on 17 February 1957. He followed his philosophical and theological studies at the Gregorian University in Rome and obtained Licentiate in Philosophy and Theology. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation on 17 February 1959 at the International Scholasticate in Rome. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained a Priest in

the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 9 March 1963 in Rome by Bishop Pietro Sigismondi, the Secretary for the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide.

Young Oblate Anselm returned to the Island in August 1963 and his first Obedience was to the National Seminary at Ampitiya as a Professor and a resident Formator at the Oblate Scholasticate. Again in September 1966 he left for Rome for further studies in Biblical Theology and obtained a Licentiate at Gregorian Pontifical University and left for Paris, France in September 1967 for doctoral studies in Theology. Having obtained his doctorate in Theology he returned to the Island in October 1970 and was appointed to the National Seminary as Professor of Theology and as the Moderator of the Postulants and as a formator at the Oblate Scholasticate. In October 1971 he was made the Prefect of Studies at the National Seminary at Ampitiya. He was made the Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate in September 1972 while serving as the Professor at the National Seminary. In October 1978 he was given his next obedience to Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela as assistant to the Novice Master. He received his next obedience again to the Oblate Scholasticate in October 1979 as a formator and as a Professor of Theology at the National Seminary. Again in October 1983 he was appointed as the Superior of the Scholasticate and as one of the academic staff at the National seminary.

On 18 June 1984 he was elected the Provincial Superior of the Oblates in Sri Lanka and took his residence at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya. After his leadership ministry he was again appointed as the Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya in 1990. He served in this capacity for six years and was transferred to St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela as a staff member. Fr. Anselm was called for special ministries in different places and countries from 1991 onwards. He served as the Lecturer in Theology at the Seminary in Cedara, Natal, South Africa in 1991 and then went for a well-earned sabbatical at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkely, California, U.S.A. In 1997 he became the Head of the Inter- Religious Unit at CSR and in 2002 he was invited to lecture in Theology at the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A. In June 2003 he was

appointed the Director of the Centre for Society and Religion at Maradana having his residence at Marian Grove at Kohuwela, Nugegoda. Again on 22 September 2005 he was appointed the Superior of the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy and was moved to Marian Grove in 2009.

Fr. Anselm Silva was a jack of all trades and master of all. He, being an exceptionally gifted person with many extraordinary talents, served the Oblate Family with dedication and hard work. Most of his ministries were limited to the fields of formation, teaching, administration and teaching abroad for many years. He was invited by the Bishops' Conferences here and abroad to teach at their seminaries and Anselm did a good job. He was a thorough gentleman, a faithful friend and a confidant, cheerful companion and a very understanding formator and leader. He was so kind and friendly that it was difficult for him to say "NO" to others on many occasions. He was very sensitive to the marginalized and to the needs of many Scholastics and Seminarians who needed special attention in their academic efforts. He was an excellent Professor for many years on "Eucharist", "One God" and "Holy Trinity" and was highly appreciated by the staff and the students at the National Seminary. He was very much loved and well respected by the scholastics when he was the Superior for more than three terms. He held many responsible positions during priestly undertakings. He was the Member of the Oblate International Formation Team, representing the Asia Oceania Region, attended the first Meeting in 1976 in Rome and the second meeting in 1977 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He was elected as one of the capitulants from Sri Lanka Province to the General Chapter of 1980. He was elected as one of the Provincial Councillors in 1981 with the portfolio of Formation.

The last years of Fr. Anselm were very pathetic. He was diabetic and gradually lost his memory not knowing what he was doing. Even his conversations with others became inconsistent and was dependent on others for his movements as well. The disease of Alzheimer too made him incapacitated in many ways. Fr. Anselm with all these impairments was cheerful and made no complaints. He became very feeble and sick during his stay at Marian Grove. Thus his last days were heavy for him and he was almost confined to his room.

He breathed his last on 18 November 2011 at Marian Grove, at Kohuwela and entered his eternal reward. His mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 20 November 2011 and lay in state. A large number of Oblates, Religious, Priests, a few Bishops, his relatives and many of his past students came and paid him their last respects. His mortal remains were moved to Fatima's Church at Maradana on 21 November 2011 morning and there was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 3.30 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the Acting Provincial Superior of Colombo in the Presence of Bishops, and numerous priests and religious. Fr. Srian Ranasinghe OMI delivered the panegyric and after the final obsequies by Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis OMI, the Arch Bishop Emeritus of Colombo Diocese, his mortal remains were taken to Kanata General Cemetery and were laid to Rest in the Catholic Section. May He Rest in Peace.



REV. FR. RUPESINGHE CHRISTIAN MARCUS, OMI
(1923- 2011)

Birth	: 2 February 1923 at Kotikawatta, Angoda
First Vows	: 1 January at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 1 January 1954 at the Oblate Scholasticate at Nugegoda
Oblation No	: 8962
Ordination	: 24 August 1955 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena
Death	: 18 November 2011 at De Mazenod House, Mattakkuliya



Rev. Fr. Marcus Rupesinghe OMI was born on 2 February 1923 at Kotikawatta, Angoda in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Abraham Rupesinghe Perera and Dona Agitha Hettiarachi belonging to Weliwita Parish. Rupesinghe had his primary and secondary education at St. Benedict's College at Kotahena, Colombo -13 and completed the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Examinations successfully. After his studies he was working as a civil servant in the field of accountancy and was drawn to the Oblate Vocation by the veteran Oblates who were working at his home Parish. Rupesinghe decided to dedicate his life as an Oblate Priest to the service of God and his faithful.

His decision was very mature and welcomed by the Oblates. After some initial formation he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, “Mont Eden” at Kalutara on 20 December 1948 and after the successful completion of his probation period at the Novitiate, he made the First Profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Nugegoda and pursued his philosophical studies from 1950 – 1952 and theological studies from 1952 - 1956. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate on 1 January 1954 at the Oblate Scholasticate at Nugegoda. He was ordained a priest of God in the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 24 August 1955 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena, Colombo by Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Cooray OMI , the Archbishop of Colombo and continued his

ecclesiastical studies. He left the Scholasticate on 31 August 1956 expecting his first obedience to begin his priestly ministries. Fr. Rupesinghe OMI was ready and willing to accept any assignment from the hands of his Major Superiors as he sought first the will of God.

But to his surprise his Major Superiors sent him to Rome in September 1956 to do his higher studies in Canon law at the Gregorian University. He earned a Doctorate in Canon Law at the Gregorian University and returned to the Island in September 1959. As everyone presumed he was appointed to the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy in September 1959 as Professor of Canon Law and as one of the formators. He served at the National Seminary for many years and left for Rome again in August 1972 for a course in Spirituality at the Gregorian University. On his return to the Island in August 1973, he was appointed as the Novice Master of Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela. He was at the Novitiate for five years and became the Provincial Treasurer in October 1978 having his residence at De Mazenod House. In October 1984 Fr. Rupe was appointed to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy as Superior and then was made the Secretary to the Provincial Superior in October 1987 taking his residence at De Mazenod House, at Mattakkuliya. In August 1991 he was made the District Superior of Colombo North and again was called upon to continue his responsibility as the Secretary to the Provincial in August 1997.

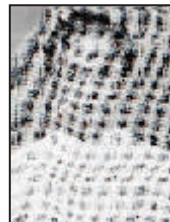
Fr. Rupe OMI was always considered a practical man with practical solutions to any problem. He was motivated by a deep sense of spirituality and faithfulness to the Evangelical Counsels. He was a holy, committed and exemplary Oblate. He was a man of prayer and used to motivate others to grow in prayer life. Fr. Rupe being an exceptionally gifted person with many extra ordinary talents and practical knowledge served the Oblate Family with dedication and hard work. Most of his ministries were limited to the fields of formation (Novice Master and Superior of the Scholasticate), teaching, and administration. As an administrator and Secretary he worked as the right hand of the Provincials. Even the Provincials delegated many of their duties to Fr. Rupe counting on his abilities.

He was a kind hearted person and wanted to do good to others always. If he is convinced of doing something extra ordinary he would somehow do them. He was known for his hospitality and welcoming spirit. Whenever the Oblates were to go to Rome for studies or for any purpose Fr. Rupe was the one who did all the paper work for visas. He was so kind and friendly that he was frequented by many Oblates at De Mazenod House. He was very sensitive to the marginalized and to the needs of many Scholastics, Novices and Seminarians who needed special attention in their academic efforts. He was an excellent Professor on Canon Law for many years at the National Seminary and was highly appreciated by the staff and the students. He was very much loved and well respected by every student who was under him. He held many responsible positions particularly in administrative sector during priestly undertakings.

The last years of Fr. Rupe at De Mazenod House didn't have any serious health concerns. He was generally a healthy person and was going about all alone not depending much on others. He was confined to his room and was found always with the Holy Rosary at his hand. Fr. Rupe peacefully breathed his last on 18 November 2011 in his room at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya and entered his eternal reward. His mortal remains lay in state at the Chapel at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 19 and 20 November 2011. A large number of Oblates, a few Bishops, Religious, Priests, his relatives and many of his past students came and paid him their last respects. His mortal remains were moved to Fatima's Church at Maradana on 21 November 2011 morning and there was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 3.30 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the acting Provincial Superior of Colombo in the Presence of Bishops, and numerous Priests and Religious. Fr. Srian Ranasinghe OMI delivered the panegyric and after the final obsequies by Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis OMI, the Arch Bishop Emeritus of Colombo diocese, his mortal remains were taken to Kanata General Cemetery and were laid to Rest in the Catholic Section. May He Rest in Peace.

REV. FR. BONIFACE BASTIAN, OMI
(1947- 2013)

Birth : 5 June 1947 at Ampitiya, Kandy
First Vows : 8 September 1973 at Sacred Heart
 Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows : 1977 at Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No : 12269
Ordination : 19 July 1978 at Fatima Church,
 Maradana
Death : 10 May 2013 at Rakwana Hospital



Fr. Boniface Bastian OMI was born on 5 June 1947 at Ampitiya, Kandy. His parents were Lazarus Boniface Patrick and David Arokiamarie. They belonged to St. Mary's Parish at Ampitiya in the diocese of kandy. Bastian had his primary and secondary education at St. Mary's College at Ampitiya and successfully completed the General Certificate Examinations.

Motivated by the Oblate Priests who had been working at his Parish, Bastian decided to dedicate his life to serve God and the faithful as an Oblate Priest. He entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela and from there entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Bandarawela on 3 September 1973. At the completion of his probation period at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 8 September 1974 at the Novitiate in Bandarawela. He proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in 1974 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate in 1977 at the Scholasticate, at Ampitiya. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God on 19 July 1978 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus, the Archbishop of Colombo.

After his priestly ordination, he was given his first obedience to the Centre for Society and Religion at Maradana to help Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI. From there, he was appointed as Hospital Chaplain at the General Hospital, Colombo in 1978 and had his residence at the Archbishop's House, Colombo. In 1979 he received his next

obedience to Nilaveli Parish in the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa as Pastor. From there he was moved to St. Anthony's Parish at Kochchikade, Colombo -13 as Parish Priest in 1980 and for the second time he was appointed Parish Priest at St. Joseph's Church at Nilaveli as Pastor in 1985. In 1986 he got his obedience to the General Delegation of Jaffna and was at the Pre- Philosophate at Colombuthurai. From there he was appointed as one of the staff members at the Oblate Pre- Novitiate at Maggona in May 1987. He was sent abroad for further training in Formation programme and on his return he was again appointed to the Pre-Novitiate as the staff member and the Bursar on 17 September 1991. He was given his next obedience to Thoppu Parish as Parish Priest on 9 October 1996. On 30 January 2006 he on his own came out of Thoppu Parish and in May 2006 was appointed the Bursar at Nazareth Oblate Preaching Community at Wennappuwa. In February 2007 he travelled to India for holidays and returned to the Island on 16 March 2007 and was made Parish Priest at Rakwana Parish in the diocese of Ratnapura. While he was serving there Fr. Bastian got a severe heart attack on 10 May 2013, was rushed to the Hospital and succumbed to it on the same day at the general Hospital at Rakwana.

Fr. Boniface Bastian OMI was a cheerful and energetic Oblate right through. He tried to give his best of service to the people of God wherever he ministered. He was simple in his life style, loved the people and accepted them as they were. His beginnings of Priestly life and ministry were rather challenging and painful. As years passed by, he became a successful Pastor, Hospital Chaplain, Formator and the Bursar at different communities. He had a special love for the poor and the delinquent youngsters and helped them. He used to feed the beggars who were seated on the streets in front of St. Anthony's Church at Kochchikade. His untimely death was a blow to everyone as it was never expected. He was a strong man but later on became a victim of many complicated physical illnesses.

His mortal remains were brought to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 12 October 2013 and lay in state. Many Oblates, Priests, Religious, his relatives from Kandy and former Parishioners came in big number and paid him their last respects. In the afternoon

on 13 October 2013 his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana where a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was celebrated presided over by Very. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo. Fr. Gerard Rosairo OMI delivered the panegyric and after final obsequies, his mortal remains were taken to Kanata general cemetery and were laid to rest at the Catholic section on 13 May 2013. May He rest in peace.



REV. FR. BERNARD QUINTUS, OMI
(1936 – 2013)

Birth : 2 February 1936 in Negombo
First Vows : 15 August 1953 at Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows : 15 August 1958 at Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No : 9933
Ordination : 29 June 1961 at Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Death : 9 October 2013 at Marian Grove, Kohuwela. Nugegoda



Rev. Fr. Bernard Quintus OMI was born on 2 February 1936 in Negombo in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Mahawattage Don Edward Joseph and Dehiwala Liyanage Dona Mary Rejulis Ellen belonging to the Parish of Bolawalana. Bernard had his primary education at Maris Stella College, Negombo from 1945 – 1947 and his secondary education at St. Aloysius Seminary, Borella from 1948 – 1954 and successfully completed the Senior School Certificate Examinations. Motivated by the Oblate Priests who had been working at his Parish, Bernard decided to dedicate his life to serve God and the faithful as an Oblate Priest. He entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, “Mont Eden” at Kalutara on 14 August 1954. At the successful completion of his probation period at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1955 at the Novitiate, Kalutara.

Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 15 August 1958 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya. After his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God on 29 June 1961 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya by His Lordship Rt. Revd. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara O.S.B., the Bishop of Kandy. He left the Scholasticate in April 1962.

Fr. Bernard Quintus OMI was eagerly waiting for his first obedience after the priestly ordination and it was given him in April 1962 to the Oblate Preaching Community of Nazareth at Wennappuwa. He served as a preacher for five years and in September 1967 was sent to the Philippines to follow a course at the EAPI in Manila. On his return in September 1968 he was again appointed as one of the preachers at Nazareth Community at Wennappuwa. He was called by his Major Superiors to go to Rome for higher studies and left for Rome on 26 June 1969 and pursued his studies in Spiritual Theology and earned a Licentiate. He returned to the Island in October 1971 and was appointed to the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy, as one of the staff members. Again on 17 March 1972 he was given his next obedience to St. Joseph's Juniorate, at Kohuwela, Nugegoda as the Rector while chosen to serve as one of the Provincial Counselors holding the Portfolio of Formation.

In September 1978 he was elected the Provincial Superior for a period of three years (First term) and in September 1981 he was reappointed as the Provincial Superior of the Oblates in Sri Lanka for a second term of three years. Afterwards he was elected in 1984 as the assistant General in Rome. When he returned to the Island, he received his obedience as the Director of the Oblate Pre- Novitiate at Maggona on 12 January 1987 and again on 8 January 1996 he was appointed the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda. From there he was elected the Provincial Superior in 1997 and was reappointed the Provincial Superior on 7 May 2000. On 17 February 2003 he retired from active ministries and was sent to Marian Grove at Kohuwela.

Fr. Bernard Quintus had been a unique Oblate right from the beginning of his priestly ordination. He was holding many important responsibilities both in Sri Lanka and in Rome. His life was mostly confined to the ministry of formation and administration. As a formator, Professor, Director, Rector, General Councilor and especially as the Provincial Superior of Sri Lankan Oblates for twelve years (four terms) he provided a yeoman service. He was a committed Oblate and a responsible administrator. He was a man of few words,

well organized, well accomplished, well-disciplined and above all a faithful Oblate. He lived the evangelical counsels faithfully and was motivated by the Charism of the Founder always and everywhere. He was a well-respected person and highly emulated by many Oblates. As the Provincial Superior, he performed his duties well and justly.

The period of his Provincial-ship was not that easy because the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka was on the rise and many violent events were taking place. Fr. Bernard Quintus was concerned about the safety of the Oblates of the North and made several visits to Jaffna to be with them. He was a faithful confidant to many, lover of the poor and sensitive to the needs of the Oblates. At the General House in Rome he was highly respected and revered by the inmates for what he was doing as the Assistant General and for his appealing personality. His contribution to the Oblate Family and to the Congregation at large was remarkable. He was successfully organizing his programmes and executed them with the support of his council members and implemented many innovative projects. He loved the Oblates and made himself available to them. He wanted everyone to be happy as an Oblate but he was also very challenging. He was a very honest, methodical and prayerful Oblate.

Towards the end of his priestly apostolate Fr. Bernard Quintus became a victim of Parkinson disease and hunched but had a clear mind till his end. It was pathetic to see him always with his computer receiving emails and replying to them. He became unable to walk and was mostly confined to his room on a wheel chair. It was a blessing to have an Oblate of the caliber of Fr. Bernard Quintus and a man to be proud of for what he did and emulated.

His health conditions began to deteriorate as days went along. He was at Marian Grove for almost ten years but never was a burden to others. He was on his own doing things not depending on others. He was looked after well but his days came to an end as he peacefully breathed his last on 9 October 2013 at Marian Grove at Kohuwela, Nugegoda. His mortal remains were removed to De Mazendod House at Mattakkuliya on 10 October in the morning and lay in state. Large number of Priests, Religious, Oblates, and a few Bishops and

his relatives paid him their last respects. His mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana on 11 October 2013 morning and placed for the people to pay their last respects. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 3.30 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo in the presence of Bishops, Priests, religious and a large gathering of Oblates. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were taken to Kanate General Cemetery at Borella and laid to rest at the Catholic Section. May He rest in Peace.



REV. FR. SANTHIAPILLAI JOSEPH FRANCIS, OMI
(1933- 2014)

Birth : 24 September 1933 at Mathagal,
Jaffna
First Vows : 24 September 1953 at Mount Eden,
Kalutara
Final Vows : 24 September 1956 at Ampitiya, Kandy
Oblation No : 7350
Ordination : 13 June 1959 at Ampitiya, Kandy
Death : 23 January 2014 at Mathew's
Memorial Home, Colombuthurai



Fr. Nicholapillai Santhiapillai Joseph Francis was born on 24 September 1933 at Mathagal in the diocese of Jaffna. He was the one and only son of Santhiapillai Joseph and Joseph Yogathamma. He had his early education at St. Thoma's school, Mathagal, at St. Joseph's Mathagal and his secondary education both at St. Henry's College, Illavalai and at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. He entered St. Martin's Seminary, Jaffna on 06 June 1947. While at the Seminary he continued his studies at St. Patrick's College. He was strictly trained in English and Latin languages. Since he was a bright student Francis picked them up within a short period of time.

Having successfully completed his initial formation under the Oblates at the Minor Seminary he entered "Mont Eden" Novitiate at Kalutara on 24 September 1952. When he completed his year of probation at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate on 24 September 1953 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Scholasticate at Nugegoda on 26 September 1953 to pursue his philosophical studies. Having completed his first and second year of Philosophy at Nugegoda, he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy and continued his third year of Philosophy and pursued his theological studies, at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 24 September 1956 and was ordained a Deacon on 3 October 1958 at the Scholasticate by Rt. Rev. Dr. Regno O.S.B, the Bishop of Kandy. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained a Priest of God by Rt. Rev. Dr. Laudadio S.J. at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya on 13 June 1959.

After his priestly ordination Fr. Francis left the scholasticate full of enthusiasm, energy and zeal for souls. He developed also varied skills like electrical works, wiring, plumbing etc. besides his academic programs at the Scholasticate. He was ready to go and work anywhere accepting the assignments that would be given by his Superiors. He received his first obedience to St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna in May 1960 as assistant Pastor. He served at the Parish with enthusiasm and dedication fulfilling the types of ministries designed by the Parish Priest. He inaugurated some pious associations and served as their spiritual director. He was much interested in promoting small group prayer sessions adapting some charismatic methods. After serving for two years young Francis was appointed to St Lawrence's Parish at Thalaimannar as Parish Priest in May 1962.

He lived and worked there as a real Oblate with a simple life style and exemplary witnessing. Being slow in his movements he took his own time and gave much importance to house visiting, praying in small groups and organizing pious associations and looking after their spiritual needs. The Parishioners loved him very much because he was also giving himself to them like a loving father. Fr. Francis was a loving person and a handsome Oblate and naturally people were attracted to him. The Parish became lively and active during the tenure of his spiritual leadership. Thereafter he was appointed Parish Priest at Senthankulam in the district of Illavalai in Jaffna diocese in August 1964. Being a small Parish with limited catholic communities Francis was organizing prayer services and Rosary campaigns inside and outside the villages and also on the streets. This new venture brought the faithful together as a community and paved the way for them to participate at Sunday services in their respective Churches in big numbers and with a family spirit. He used to visit all the families on a bicycle and gave special attention to the elderly and the sick. People were admiring his inspirational homilies on Mary and on other subjects. Fr. Francis was very particular in building up the family life of his Parishioners. The celebration of the Sacraments and the Church Feasts were well planned and executed though he took his own time. From there Fr. Francis was assigned to St. Anthony's Church at Vathiry, (Karaveddy) as Pastor in May 1966

but worked there only for six months and again in November 1967 he was transferred to Manipay St. Anne's as the Pastor. He ministered there giving much importance to meaningful liturgical services and for charismatic prayer services in small groups. People liked his ways of conducting liturgical services in small groups and actively participated. Here he got the help of all the pious associations to support and implement his pastoral plans.

From there he was transferred to Vidaltivu Parish in Mannar in February 1969 as the Pastor. After working there for a short period of time he was transferred to Fatima Church at Pandeteruppu as Pastor in June 1970. Since it was the Marian Shrine Francis organized meaningful and devotional services on her behalf. People from neighbouring Parishes and outside stations started visiting the shrine and expressed their devotion to Mary. He used to attract people by sharing little reflective anecdotes during his homilies that paved the way for the spiritual formation of the Parishioners and the devotees whoever visited the shrine. In January 1973 he was transferred to St. Mary's Kayts as Pastor and in October 1974 he was assigned to St. Joseph's Parish at Atchuvveli as Pastor. While being at this Parish he was also catering to the spiritual needs of the Rosarian Sisters and Brothers. He also served as their Spiritual Director and Confessor. In October 1976 he was assigned to St. Jame's Church at Gurunagar, Jaffna as Parish Priest. This Parish took his energy and made him tired because it was a large and extensive Parish and Francis expressed his readiness to be removed from there and thus was assigned to Amala Utpavam Preaching Band in December 1976. After serving at the Preaching Community he was assigned to St. Peter's Church at Manaditivu in May 1980 as the Pastor and again he took charge of the Urani/KKS Parish as Pastor in May 1981.

In August 1981 – August 1982 he was sent to Carmelaram, India for spiritual and charismatic renewal and to learn different methods of meditations. On his return he was appointed Pastor of Soorawathai Parish in September 1983. He served there till July 1987 and came to Amala Utpavam for rest and recuperation but in December 1987 he left Jaffna and went to Mannar to escape possible dangers in consequence to the ethnic violent events. Then he took

refuge at Mugamalai with the IVD Fathers in 1987 -1991. Then he moved to the Shrine of Madhu again in 1991 and stayed there till 1999. When Mgr. R. Joseph was consecrated the Bishop of Mannar at Madhu in 1991, Fr. Francis was there and attended the ceremony. The new Bishop immediately requested Fr. Francis to be at Madhu as the Confessor and Spiritual Director. Thus he remained at the shrine till 1999 and took residence at Pesalai Parish in 1999 to 2000. Then Fr. Francis took residence at St. Sebastian's Cathedral Mannar in 2000 and continued to serve as Confessor and Spiritual Director. During this period Fr. Francis was also assisting the Rosarian Sisters at Pattim in their spiritual needs. When he came back to Jaffna in 2004 he expressed his willingness to spend his days at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Voyage at Chaarty in Jaffna diocese and went there. Again in 2005 he came back to Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai and was spending his days.

This time the ground situation became worse and fearful with the escalation of bombing, shelling and aerial attacks and he was really frightened of his safety and life. Francis in order to be away from this situation went to Mugamalai to the IVD Fathers' House again and stayed there for some time inside a built bunker spending sleepless nights and falling sick very often. When the situation got aggravated Fr. Francis wanted to go to the South for some time to be away safe and secure. He came back again to Mathew's Memorial Home and stayed for a short period of time. Very Rev.Fr.M.Paul Nadchethiram OMI, the Provincial Superior of Jaffna made arrangements with the Provincial Superior of Colombo for Fr. Francis to stay at Marian Grove at Kohuwela, Nugegoda till the situation in Jaffna eased. They very willingly accepted Francis to be in their home, "Marian Grove". Thus Francis spent his stay there during the years of 2008 – 2009. When the final war between the LTTE and the Security Forces came to an end in May 2009, Francis continued to stay in Nugegoda till he came back to the North in 2010 with a sense of relief and safety. After being at Mathew's Memorial Home for some time he took residence at De Mazenod Scholasticate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna in 2010. He was helping the scholastics in their spiritual needs and was very well looked after by the staff and the students. The scholasticate community was very particular about his

happiness and wellbeing. His stay over there made him more relaxed and refreshed. He came back to Mathew's Memorial Home in 2013 and spent his last lap of journey there.

Fr. Francis had a unique personality with different traits like slow moving, undisturbed by any remarks, pleasant but a faint hearted person always living in fear. He respected others and received respect, a loving friend to many, a jovial companion, welcomed everyone with a pleasant smile, a man of few words, obedient to the Superiors, most loved by our young Oblates, enjoyed social gatherings, prayerful, a much sought after Confessor and Spiritual Director and Counselor.

Since he had right from the beginning an aptitude for Charismatic movements and interested in prayer services, he was sent to India to Carmelaram for courses on spiritual renewal and he made use of this opportunity to follow also some courses in charismatic movement and a short counseling course at Asinad in Bangalore. On his return from India he got actively involved in Charismatic movement, organized small prayer Groups, conducted prayer services to the Priests and Religious, animating different peer groups in prayer both in Jaffna and Mannar. Many Parish priests from both Dioceses invited him to their Parishes for such spiritual renewal.

He was physically not healthy and falling sick now and then but never complained about his sickness to anybody. He silently suffered. In spite of his limitations he accepted the assignments given by his Superiors and gave his best to be of good service to the faithful.

The Parishes and Communities where he was, loved him and appreciated his prayer services and his simplicity. He published small pamphlets with short meditations with biblical quotations for short prayer services and community animation. He also published a book on Psalms, “ Aanadavar Evalavu Nallavar Ennu Suwaithu Paarunkal”, (Taste and See the Sweetness of the Lord). It was very remarkable that Fr. Francis through his hand phone was regular in sending daily thoughts for the day and inspirational messages to his many friends.

During his retirement both at De Mazenod Scholasticate and Mathew's Memorial Home, he led a life of silence enjoying the company of other retired Oblates. Many priests from Mannar and Jaffna visited him now and then and expressed their gratitude to him for what he had been to them. Since he was an electrician he was interested in fixing up bulbs, connecting wires that were broken in his room, fixed up many switches as well to make his room brighter. He used to sleep at nights with lights on. He had a transistor radio that would give him all kinds of news and kept him busy all the time. Towards the end of his last stages he became sick and feeble; he used to pray the Holy Rosary silently and sought the love and intercession of beloved Mary. He remained close to his Master Jesus Christ experiencing him as his lifelong companion.

Fr. Francis passed away peacefully to his eternal reward on 23 January 2014 at Mathew's Memorial Home. His mortal remains lay at De Mazenod Chapel at the Juniorate complex where many people, priests and religious paid their last respects.

The funeral and burial took place on 24 January at St. Mary's Cathedral Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided by Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayam, the Bishop of Jaffna and Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, the Bishop of Mannar who was present. Many Priests and Religious, both men and women from Mannar and Jaffna were present. The panegyric was delivered by Fr. Stanislaus Philips OMI. After the final obsequies, the mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's Burial Ground where they were laid to rest. May he rest in peace.



REV. FR. THEVATHASAN EDWIN, OMI
(1974 – 2014)

Birth	: 17 August 1974 at Vidathalthivu, Mannar
First Vows	: 8 September 2000 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows	: 7 May 2007 at Gnanodhayam, Keeri, Mannar
Oblation No	: 14167
Ordination	: 12 November 2007 at Sebastian's Cathedral, Mannar
Death	: 18 August 2014 at Teaching Hospital, Jaffna



Fr. Thevathasan Edwin OMI was born on 17 August 1974 at Vidathalthivu in Mannar. His parents were Varapragasm Thevathasan and Peduru Thevamanya. There were eight siblings in the family, six boys and two girls and Edwin was the seventh in the family. His father Thevathasan was a fisherman and his mother was a house wife. Edwin had his primary education at M.V.V at Vidathalthivu, Mannar from 1981 – 1989; at St. Xavier's College in Mannar from 1989 – 1990 and at M.V at Vidathalthivu from 1990 – 1995. Fr. David Vincent Patrick OMI played an important role in promoting religious vocation in Edwin when he was his Parish priest. He then joined the Oblate Juniorate at Colombuthurai, (temporarily functioning at Amaithy Puram, Kilinochchi due to displacement) Jaffna on 28 February 1996. After completing his basic requirements at the Juniorate, he was sent to the Pre- Novitiate at Maggona on 2 February 1998 and then proceeded to the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 7 September 1999. His whole family got displaced from Vidathalthivu due to ethnic war and lived at Pesalai for a year and then went to Thoddaveli, Mannar and permanently living at Joseph Vaz Nagar.

When Edwin successfully completed his year of probation at the Novitiate to the satisfaction of his superiors, he made his first profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation on 8 September 2000 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy on 30 September 2000 and followed his philosophical studies at the National Seminary. He entered De

Mazenod Theologate, “Vasanthaham” at Colombuthurai, Jaffna in 2004 and pursued his theological studies at St. Xavier's Diocesan Major Seminary at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. He made his final profession of Vows as an Oblate Religious at “Gnanodhayam” at Keeri, Mannar on 7 May 2007. Once he successfully completed his ecclesiastical studies and all the requirements of Oblate formation, was ordained a Priest of God at St. Sebastian's Cathedral, Mannar on 12 November 2007 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, the Bishop of Mannar.

The young Oblate Edwin was enthusiastic and eagerly waiting for his first Obedience to serve God and his people. He was ready and willing to accept any kind of assignments that would be proposed by his provincial superior and he was given the first assignment on 7 January 2008 to help the Director of “Angeli Aham”, a counseling center at Point Pedro. However in his heart he had a deep desire to serve at a Parish. After completing a year, he was appointed the Director of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) covering both Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts. He served in this capacity for almost five years. The Provincial Superior of the Jesuits and their former Jesuit directors of JRS were full of admiration and valued Edwin's services to the war victims and the displaced. Then he was appointed the assistant Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, at Pachchanoor, Iruthayapuram, Muthur on 7 March 2013 but again at the request made to the Provincial Superior of Jaffna by the Bishop of Trincomalee Diocese, he was assigned as the Parish Priest at Sampalthivu temporarily in May 2013. While serving at this Parish Edwin was falling sick very often. Since he was a freelance and care free person he didn't take sufficient care about his health but his health started deteriorating very fast and took its toll. He was admitted to one of the Private Hospitals in Trincomalee and eventually at the Teaching Hospital in Jaffna. He was in the ICU almost for a month in a coma state and never recovered.

Edwin was one of much loved Oblates in the Province of Jaffna. His untimely demise couldn't be accepted by most of his companions and priest friends. His parents, brothers and sisters are still crying and experiencing untold pain and suffering at the loss of

their beloved son and brother who bade farewell to them at the prime of his age. Edwin had been a unique person right from the beginning of his initial formation. Even his formators couldn't understand his inner self but Edwin was going through every event of his life with conviction and determination. He went through different challenging situations during his formative years. When he joined the Oblate Juniorate, it was temporarily functioning at Madhu due to the famous displacement of Jaffna Peninsula in 1995 and then at Keeri Suddan. Edwin was almost taking a lead role among other Juniors in organizing the logistics of the place and the community under the guidance of the Director. He came back in 1997 to the Juniorate in Jaffna and later went through his entire formation successfully at different formation houses. During the formative years he didn't shine as a bright student but being gifted with average intelligence, he cultivated the Oblate Spirit in his personal life very deeply. He was simple in life style, obedient, readiness to go through hard situations, accepting his limitations, simplicity, respecting the elders and willing to serve them. His service as JRS director and Parish Priest at Sampalthivu in the diocese of Tincomalee were outstanding and still being remembered by the poor and the parishioners.

He was a passionate lover of the poor, of the displaced, injured, hospitalized, war victims and refugees. He was looking after the refugees at Kilaly areas for many years, providing them food and medical facilities. To the widows he provided tailoring machines, to the poor students cycles and school materials and visited them now and then risking his own life even at deadly and dangerous ground situations. It was a time of intensified war but he dared to face every risk. Many priests and religious and sisters got his help to visit their relatives who were experiencing untold sufferings in various refugee camps under the Sri Lankan Security Forces. Edwin became so familiar with the heads of the security forces that he was able to release many of the refugees and reunited them with their families. He could have easy access to the camps because of his loving manners that attracted the security forces. They trusted him and asked the people to come to them through Father Edwin for any assistance. As many of his Oblate companions were aware, he didn't take sufficient care about his health. Right from the beginning of his

formation, he had a husky voice and a heavy stature. He was sent for medical checkups and treatment. He gained a little benefit but went along with ardent desire and enthusiasm about his missionary work entrusted. He obediently accepted any assignments given to him by his major superiors and worked till he was transferred again by them.

He never grumbled nor reacted to anyone. Whenever difficult situations arose he could address them with a smile. He roughed out the most difficult situations in terms of his ministries and faced many challenges and even got reprimanded by his superiors. The sense of oblateness and the spirit of commitment were deep in his heart. His motivating inspiration was our beloved Mother Mary (Oblate Madonna).

Fr. Edwin's final illness was very short but acute. He passed away while being in a coma state at the General Hospital, Jaffna on 18 August 2014 at the age of forty. The death was caused by a Chronic Liver Disease and acute Kidney injury. His mortal remains were at De Mazenod Chapel at Colombuthurai, Jaffna on 19 August 2014. Many people from Mannar, Trincomalee and Jaffna thronged to the Chapel and paid their last respect to him. It was a very pathetic situation to see his parents, brothers and sisters and a big number of his relatives from Mannar in tears. His funeral took place on 20 August 2014 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by His Lordship Bishop Kingsley Swampillai, the Bishop of Trincomalee diocese at 3.30pm, at which Fr. Sebamalai Anpurasa OMI delivered the panegyric. There was a big gathering of Priests, both men and women Religious from the dioceses of Jaffna, Mannar and Trincomalee and many faithful and his former Parishioners. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were laid to rest at St. Mary's Cemetery, Jaffna. May he rest in peace.



REV. FR. RODRIGO JOSEPH TARCUS, OMI
(1947- 2015)

Birth : 16 March 1947 at Duwana,
 Kochchikade
First Vows : 31 May 1967 at the Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows : 11 June 1970 at Oblate Scholasticate,
 Ampitiya
Oblation No : 11838
Ordination : 6 August 1975 at Fatima's Church,
 Maradana
Death : 28 April 2015 in India



Father Rodrigo Joseph Tarcus OMI was born on 16 March 1947 at Duwana, Kochchikade, Negombo in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were C.S. Rodrigo and Ambrosia Miranda belonging to Duwana Parish. Rodrigo (Bob) had his primary education at St. Mary's College, Negombo and his secondary education at St. Peter's College, Colombo and successfully completed his Ordinary and Advanced Level Examinations. Having been inspired by the Oblate Priests, Bob decided to dedicate himself to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. He entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda on 16 January 1965. Having fulfilled his basic academic requirements, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, "Mont Eden" at Kalutara on 30 May 1966. At the completion of his probation period at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 31 May 1967 at the Novitiate at Kalutara.

From there he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in September 1967 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 11 June 1970 at the Oblate Scholasticate. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God on 6 August 1975 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund J. Fernando OMI, the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo at Fatima's Church at Maradana, Colombo.

Fr. Bob was enthusiastic about receiving his first obedience after the priestly ordination. He was given his first obedience to

Grand Street Parish in Negombo as assistant Pastor in September 1975. From there Fr. Bob was given his next obedience to St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda as one of the staff members in November 1976. Then he was assigned to the Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Bandarawela on 5 October 1980 as the Bursar and Socius. Again on 6 May 1982 he was appointed as Parish Priest at Nikeweratiya Parish and then on 1 October 1982 Bob was given his next obedience to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy as the Bursar. In August 1984 he became the Provincial Treasurer residing at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya. In July 1987 he was sent to Rome to earn his Licentiate in Canon Law. On his return from Rome, he was appointed as the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela on 30 November 1989. Bob was called by his Major Superior on 17 January 1996 to be the Novice Master at Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela. Having served there for six years, he was made Parish Priest of Fatima's Church at Maradana, Colombo in April 2003 and from there he was transferred to St. Lawrence's Parish at Wellawatte in Colombo on 4 February 2006 as Parish Priest. Again in February 2008 Bob was appointed the Vicar Forane to the Deanery of Colombo South. To the surprise and shock of many Bob was diagnosed of Cancer while he was involved in active ministries. The mortal disease spread very fast and made him suffer immensely. He was patiently going through his medical treatment with his trust in the Lord and in the powerful intercession of our Mother Mary.

It is to be noted that Fr. Bob Rodrigo OMI played significant roles in the life and ministry of the Province of Colombo. He was appointed to very important positions by his Major Superiors. As Parish Priest, Novice Master, Provincial Treasurer, Provincial Councilor, Formator and as Vicar Forane he did a marvelous job. He was very creative, innovative and always was interested in the Province's welfare. He was greatly appreciated by all the Oblates and loved by his Novices, Juniors and Scholastics. He was very systematic with capacity to organize and was successful in all his efforts. Wherever he ministered he was greatly appreciated particularly at Fatima's and at St. Lawrence's Parishes. His sickness was very sudden but he went along working. He was faithful to his responsibilities and having been observed by his superiors was called very often for higher offices in the Province.

Fr. Bob was sent to Hyderabad Cancer Hospital in India in 2015 for further treatment. His family members were also with him by the side. His health began to deteriorate suddenly and on 28 April 2015 he breathed his last and entered his eternal reward at the same Hospital in Hyderabad, India. His mortal remains were brought to Colombo after three days of his death and lay at De Mazenod House. On 6 May 2015 his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana in the morning. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 3.30 pm presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo in the presence of many Oblates, diocesan Priests, Religious Sisters, scholastics, relatives and many of his former Parishioners. After the final obsequies his mortal remains were taken to Kanatte General Cemetery and buried in the Catholic Section. His untimely demise is an irreparable loss to the Oblates in Sri Lanka but his committed ministries and faithfulness to the Evangelical Counsels will be remembered always. May he rest in Peace.



REV. FR. RAYAPPU MARIYANAYAGAM, OMI
(1948- 2015)

Birth : 13. 05. 1948 at Vasavilan, Jaffna
First Vows : 02. February 1977 at Sacred Heart
 Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows : 09 March 1980 at Oblate
 Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No : 12387
Ordination : 29 August 1980 at St. Mary's
 Cathedral, Jaffna
Death : 23 October 2015



Fr. Rayappu Mariyanayagam OMI was born on 13 May 1948 at Vasavilan, Atchuvveli in the diocese of Jaffna. His parents were Pandary Rayappu and Anthony Elizabeth belonging to St. Jame's Parish, Vasavilan, Atchuvveli. Mariyanayagam was the eldest son in the family. He had his primary and secondary education at Vasavilan Maha Vidyalayam and completed his Advanced level Examinations successfully. His family was very devout and Church centered. His parents instilled in all their children a deep faith and a thorough spiritual formation in the family. Since his father was working at the Rosarian Ashram, at Tholagaddy, the whole family was involved in Church related activities. Mariyanayagam was attracted by the Oblate Priests who were in charge of the Ashram looking after the spiritual formation and life of the Rosarian Brothers.

After a few years of the Advanced Level Examinations, he was helping his parents and family for a few years and then was called by the Oblates at Colombuthurai, Jaffna to be the warden at St. Joseph's Orphanage run by the Oblates at one of the blocks of the Teachers' Training College. Mariyanayagam was working in this capacity with a sense of dedication for 3 years. In 1970 when St. Joseph's Juniorate was started in Jaffna at Colombuthurai, the Orphanage too came under the supervision of the Rector. When Fr. Adrian Joseph OMI became the Rector of the Juniorate, Mariyanayagam had to work under him. Mariyanayagam was greatly attracted, influenced and inspired by the life and ministry of Fr. Adrian Joseph OMI and expressed his desire to him to join the

Juniorate and to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. In this background Mariyanayagam joined St. Joseph's Juniorate in January 1972. From there he was sent to the Oblate Pre- Philosophate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in January 1974 and after a few months he entered the Oblate College of Philosophy at De Mazenod House at Mattakuliya. Having completed his course in Eastern and Western Philosophy with a Diploma, Mariyanayagam entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 1 February 1976. After the successful completion of his probation period at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 2 February 1977 at the Novitiate at Bandarawela. From there Mariyanayagam proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, kandy in March 1977 and pursued his theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 9 March 1980 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya, kandy. After the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest on 29 August 1980 at Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai, the Bishop of Jaffna.

Fr. Mariyanayagam was very energetic and enthusiastic about his first Obedience to serve in the Vineyard of the Lord. His first Obedience was served to him to be the assistant at St. Joseph's Juniorate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna on 29 August 1980. He served at his Alma Mater for two years. From there Mariyanayagam was given his next obedience on 30 August 1982 to be the assistant at Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela and continued to minister as one of the members of the Colombo Province. In March 1986 he was sent to Rome for studies on Spirituality and obtained a Master's Degree at Angelicum. On his return from Rome in September 1987, Mariyanayagam was made the Socius at Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela. Again in October 1990 he was assigned to Fatima's Church at Maradana, Colombo as the Co- Pastor. From there he received his next obedience to the General Hospital, Colombo as the Chaplain.

He was sent to the Indian Oblate Delegation in June 1996. In India Fr. Mari served mostly as one of the formators. From June 1996 to March 2000 he served as the assistant at Oblate Philosophate,

“Nivedanam”, in Bangalore, India and in March 2000 he was assigned as the assistant at Oblate Juniorate at Perambakkam, India. In February 2002 he returned to the Island and was installed as the Novice Master at Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Bandarawela. He was the Novice Master till August 2005 and got a well-earned sabbatical year from September 2005 onwards residing at Polwatta Oblate Centre. Then he went to India for his doctoral studies at St. Peter's Pontifical University in Bangalore and obtained a doctorate on Spirituality with special reference to Mary. Then Fr. Mari was called upon by the Superior General to go to the foreign Mission in Lesotho. Having obtained the necessary Visa Documents, Mari went to the Mission in Roma, Lesotho in April 2007 and was appointed as one of the formation staff members at the Scholasticate, Roma, Lesotho.

He returned to the Island in January 2012 and was residing at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya till October 2013. In November 2013 he was assigned to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya as the Spiritual Director. From there Mari did a research study about the Catholic Families at his own village and made a publication with historical information about each catholic family at his own village with their photos. This work was highly appreciated by his relatives as they had their own ancestral history in their own hands. During this period Fr. Mari was diagnosed of having intestinal cancer. He was removed to Marian Grove at Kohuwela in 2014.

Fr. Mariyanayagam's life and Ministry as an Oblate Priest in Jaffna, in the Province of Colombo, and abroad need to be recorded in history. He was God-fearing, duty conscious, and with multi-faceted talents, hardworking, prayerful, exemplary, systematic, methodical, accountable, generous, challenging, honest, and a holy Religious Priest. He had a simple life style, accepting everything in obedience as the will of God, respectful towards his Superiors and a faithful and humble servant of God. As the formator at St. Joseph's Juniorate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna, as the Novice Master at Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela, as the Spiritual Director at the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya and as the formator in the Indian

Delegation at “Nivedanam” in Bangalore, at the Oblate Philosophate at Perambakkam and as the formator at the Oblate Scholasticate in Roma, Lesotho, he worked tirelessly being present to

the Students always. He was minutely attending to their needs whether it was academic or otherwise. Mari had also a very demanding spirit that was sometimes misunderstood and not welcomed by the members of the staff as well as by the students. This character created uneasy situations in many communities and Institutes where he worked and mostly by his students. He was strict with himself and demanded the same from the others. There had been instances where the students and even some of his Novices were angry with him and disliked him but Mari was not ready to compromise as he was convinced of his honesty and openness. His sense of commitment to responsibilities was very remarkable. Very often he was appreciated by others once he left the places where he ministered. He was faithful to the Evangelical Counsels and lived as an exemplary Oblate. However many of his students everywhere emulated him and his ways of doing things and being even today.

Mari had been suffering a lot due to his illness at Marian Grove. He was given the best medical treatment. He never complained about his sickness or pain but accepted them joyfully. Though he knew that his days were approaching to say farewell to this world, he was cheerful till the last. The mortal sickness took a big toll from him. Mari was always found with the Rosary in his hand and praying in silence. He was given the last sacraments and on 3 October 2015 he breathed his last and entered his eternal Reward. His untimely loss created a big vacuum in the Oblate Circle in Sri Lanka. His mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakuliya, Cololmbo on 5 October 2015 and lay in state. A number of Priests, religious and his brothers and sisters and his relatives and past students were present and paid him their last respects. Again his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana on 6 October 2015 morning and his funeral services were held there at 3.30 pm on the same day. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo in the presence of many Oblates, Religious, Scholastics and his brothers and sisters. The panegyric was delivered by two of his classmates, Fr. Sriyan Ranasinghe OMI in English and Fr. M. Paul Nadchethiram OMI in Tamil. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were taken to Kanata general burial ground and laid to rest in the catholic section. May He rest in Peace.

BROTHER CECIL MARCUS PERERA, OMI
(1945- 2017)

Birth : 9 April 1945 at Kadalana
First Vows : 15 October 1968 at Vincent's Home,
 Maggona
Final Vows : 15 August 1975 at St. Anthony's
 Church at Kadalana, Moratuwa
Oblation No : 12111
Death : 16 February 2017 at Marian Grove at
 Kohuwela, Nugegoda.



Brother Cecil Marcus OMI was born on 9 April 1945 at Kadalana, Moratuwa in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Peter Paul Perera and Josephine Dias belonging to the Parish of Kadalana, Moratuwa. Cecil had his primary education at St. Anthony's School at Kadalana.

He, from his early stage of life was attracted by the great Oblate Missionaries and particularly by their Oblate Parish Priests, decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Brother. This desire of him was further nurtured and instilled by his parents in their family. He was a well-disciplined boy and an obedient altar server. Recommended by his Oblate Parish Priest, Cecil entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Kalutara on 14 October 1967. After the successful completion of his Probation period at the Novitiate he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate lay brother on 15 October 1968 at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona. After fulfilling his religious formation under different Oblate formators he made his Final Profession of Vows in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 15 August 1975 at St. Anthony's Church at Kadalana, Moratuwa.

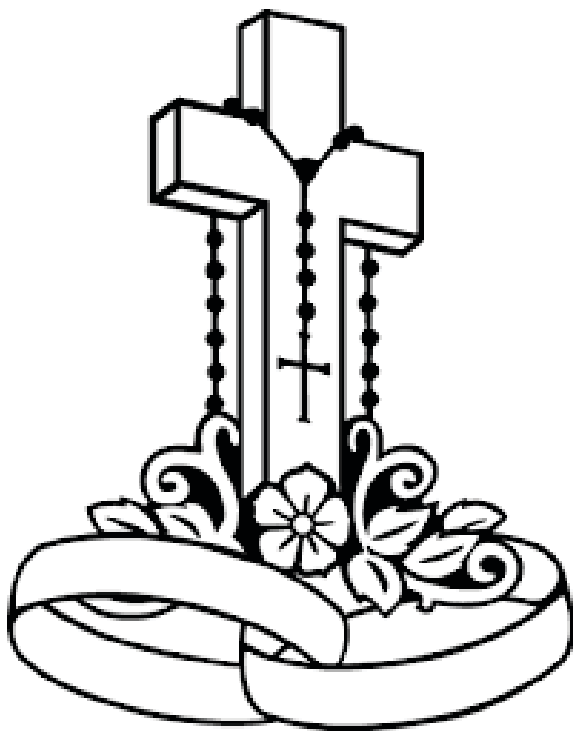
Cecil was given different assignments after his Final Profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation and he was obediently accepting them and served with commitment. After his First Profession of Vows Cecil was assigned to the Orphanage at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona and served there till 1972. From there he was given obedience to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy

in 1972. In 1975 after his Final Profession of Vows, Cecil was made the Director of the Orphanage at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona. He was transferred from there to St. Anthony's Church in Colombo - 13 in 1985 to assist in the candle store. Then he was made the Director of Marian Grove at Kohuwela in 1991 and again was given obedience as the Director of the Orphanage at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona in 1998. In 2001 he was made the Bursar of the Pre-Novitiate Community at Maggona and again became the Director of the Orphanage at Maggona 2003. From 2007 to 2012 he served as the assistant Bursar at De Mazenod House at Mattakkulya. His next obedience was on 16 February 2017 to be a resident member at Marian Grove.

Brother Cecil Perera was a simple soul in the Province of Colombo, loved and admired by his brother Oblates. He was a physically strong man doing hard manual work. Whatever he did was done with cheerfulness. His contribution to the Orphanage at Maggona is remarkable because he initiated many income generating projects and made the community self-sufficient. Everywhere he did hard work to improve the infra structures of the communities. He was much appreciated by his Superiors. At St. Anthony's Church at Kochchikade he was in-charge of the Oblate Candle Store and handled its running fruitfully and efficiently. He loved the Congregation very much and had a filial love to our beloved Mother Mary. He was carrying the Holy Rosary in his pocket and went about his work with that. He also met many challenges and difficulties in his ministries as a lay brother. His presence and commitment were challenging to some Oblates and even they used to tease him and looked down on him. His hard manual work was exemplary to many easy going Oblates. Cecil remained a faithful servant of God and of the Congregation. He was a man who feared his conscience and tried his best to live and interiorize the Evangelical Counsels.

Brother Cecil was becoming weak and feeble towards the end of his days. He fell ill many times at Marian Grove and was taken to Hospitals. After being at Marian Grove for 5 years, he breathed his last peacefully on 16 February 2017 and went to his eternal reward.

His Mortal Remains were taken to his home Parish Kadalana on 17 February 2017. There was a Requiem High Mass presided over by Very Fr. Fr. Irwin Moraes OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo in the presence of many Oblates, Brothers, religious sisters, the Parishioners and his relatives. After the final obsequies, his Mortal Remains were laid to rest at St. Anthony's Parish Premises at Kadalana, Moratuwa. May he Rest in peace.



REV. FR. GABRIEL NANAYAKKARA, OMI
(1935- 2017)

Birth	: 16 December 1935 at Mahawatta, Pamunugama
First Vows	: 15 August 1958 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 15 August 1961 at Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya, kandy
Oblation No	: 10468
Ordination	: 21 December 1965 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena
Death	: 23 February 2017 at Nagoda (Kalutara) Hospital



Father Gabriel Nanayakkara OMI was born on 16 December 1935 at Mahawatta, Pamunugama in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were J.D. Manuel Nanayakkara and H.D.Maria. Nanayakkara had his primary education at Sinhala Boys' School and his secondary education at Gonsalvez College, at Pamunugama and successfully completed his Senior School Certificate of Education.

Nanayakkara from his early stage of life was attracted by the great Oblate Missionaries and their Oblate Parish priests. His Parish Pamunugama had already given many Priests and Religious to the service of the Church and of the Faithful. As a young altar server he was formed very strictly by his parents and family members. He decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. He was a well-disciplined boy from his childhood and an obedient student. Recommended by his Oblate Parish Priest, Nanayakkara entered St. Joseph's Oblate Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda on 14 January 1957. At the completion of his basic academic requirements, Nananayakkara entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Kalutara on 15 August 1957. After the successful completion of his Probation period at the Novitiate, he made his first profession of vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1958 at the Novitiate, Kalutara.

He entered the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya in September 1958 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the

National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 15 August 1961 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God on 21 December 1965 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena, Colombo by Mgr. Frank Marcus Fernando, the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo.

Young Oblate Nanayakkara was very enthusiastic and energetic after the Priestly Ordination to receive his first obedience. On 3 May 1966 he was given his first temporary obedience to be assistant pastor at Moratuwa Parish and then transferred in June 1966 to Grand Street Parish in Negombo as assistant Parish Priest. Again on 17 October 1966 he was sent to the Pastoral Institute at Fatima Church at Maradana to do some studies on pastoral ministry. In May 1967 he received his next obedience to the Arch Bishop's House Colombo as the Hospital Chaplain and on 17 October 1968 he was appointed Parish Priest at Nikaweratiya.

Young Fr. Nanayakkara was performing his priestly ministries everywhere he was assigned to the satisfaction of his Major Superiors. From there he was transferred on 3 May 1972 to St. Vincent's Home at Maggona as the Bursar. Then on 31 August 1974 he received his next obedience to Anamaduwa as Parish Priest. On 13 November 1978 he was appointed as the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda. While being the Rector he attended a course on Pastoral Renewal at EAPI in the Philippines for 7 months. On 2 May 1983 he was made the Novice Master at Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela. Then again on 8 September 1985 he was made Parish Priest at Fatima's Church at Maradana. Fr. Nana was again called upon by the then Provincial Administration in August 1987 to be the Provincial Treasurer. He held this responsibility till February 1992 taking a short break in between in 1991. In February 1992 he was given obedience to Nazereth Oblate Preaching Community at Wennapuwa as the Superior and again in April 1993 he was assigned to St. Vincent's Home at Maggona as the Superior. On 29 May 1997 he was appointed as the Superior at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya, elected as one of the Provincial Councilors and functioned also as a member of Capital Fund Sharing Programme

from 1999. On 6 October 2000 he became one of the members at De Mazenod House and again on 18 December 2002 became Parish Priest at Fatima's Church at Maradana. On 15 May 2003 he became a resident Priest and a Pastoral Assistant at the Catholic Church at Burullapitiya. On 5 January 2009 he was given his next obedience to Nazereth Community at Wennappuwa as the Bursar. Again on 21 June 2015 he was assigned to St. Vincent's Home at Maggona as one of the resident priests.

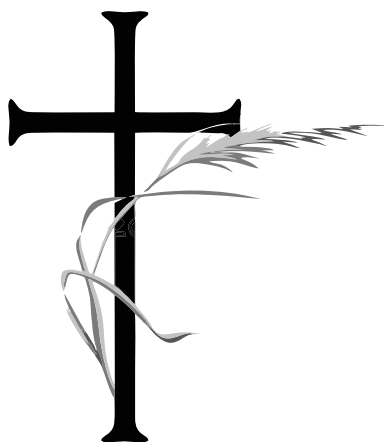
Fr. Gabriel Nanayakkara was one of the important and well accepted members in the Province of Colombo. He was called upon by the Major Superiors to shoulder many vital responsibilities. They identified his talents and the sense of commitment called him for important Offices in the Province. As Parish Priest in many big Parishes, as the Rector of the Juniorate, as the Superior of the Oblate Institutes and Communities, as the Novice Master, as the Provincial Treasurer, and as a member of the Provincial Administration, he provided a yeoman service. His sense of oblate spirit and dedication to offices that he held are beyond recording.

He was loved and respected by every Oblate, by his students and Novices. He was a very human, spiritual and just person wishing always good to others. He had a positive outlook to life and a spirit of resolving any uneasy situation. He was very faithful and honest to the responsibilities entrusted to him and sacrificed his ease and comforts for the betterment of his Province. He lived a holy life according to the Evangelical Counsels integrating into his personal life the Oblate Charism.

Fr. Nana was diagnosed of cancer while being the Provincial Treasurer but it didn't in anyway deter or stop his ministry. He was taking treatment and was continuing his responsibilities. Thank God and to our beloved Mother Mary for the speedy healing that Fr. Nana received. He was almost cured of this menace in answer to the prayers of so many. He never complained of anything to anyone but obeyed the will of God. He kept himself busy doing some ministry always even during his last years. He was pleasant and happy as an Oblate, a very generous host to everyone, making the people in and around him

feel comfortable and smiling. His last days were spent quietly at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona. He became feeble and almost confined to his room. He was well taken care of by the community. Fr. Nana fell sick in February 2017 and was admitted at Nagoda (Kalutara) Hospital for treatment. He peacefully breathed his last and entered his eternal reward at the Hospital on 23 February 2017.

His Mortal Remains were removed to Fatima's Church at Marardana in the morning on 23 February and lay in state. In the meantime his close relatives and family members wanted to have his funeral and burial at Pamunugama and made a request to the Provincial Administration. Permission was not granted and his funeral services were held at Fatima's Church at Maradana on 25 February 2017. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Irwin Moraes OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo, attended by many Oblates, Bishops , diocesan Priests, Oblate Scholastics and religious sisters, relatives and after the final obsequies, the mortal remains were removed to Kanata Cemetery, Borella and was buried at the Catholic section. May he Rest in Peace.



REV. FR. LAWRENCE JAYATILLEKA, OMI
(1939- 2017)

Birth	: 22 October 1939 at Tittapattara
First Vows	: 15 August 1959 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 15 August 1962 at Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya, kandy
Oblation No	: 10654
Ordination	: 21 December 1966 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena
Death	: 28 February 2017 at Marian Grove, Kohuwla, Nugegoda



Father Lawrence JayatillekaOMI was born on 22 October 1939 at Tittapattara, in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Senarath Mudalige Don Ambrose Jayatilleke and Ranatungega Dona Paviatma Hamine belonging to the Parish of St. Mary's Church at Yattowita. Lawrence had his primary education at the Roman Catholic School at Yattowita. He was a well disciplined boy and an obedient altar server and a student.

Initially he entered St. Aloysius Seminary at Borella but having been attracted by the great Oblate Missionaries and particularly by their Oblate Parish Priests, decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. His parents too had already sown the seeds of oblate vocation in his heart. Recommended by his Oblate Parish Priest, Lawrence left St. Aloysius's Seminary and joined St. Joseph's Oblate Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in 1951. He fulfilled his basic academic requirements at the Juniorate School and on 14 August 1958 entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Kalutara. After the successful completion of his Probation period at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1959 at the Novitiate, Kalutara. He entered the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya in September 1959 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 15 August 1962 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya. At the completion of his

ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest on 21 December 1966 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena, Colombo by Mgr. Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI, the Archbishop of Colombo.

Young Oblate Jayatilleke was eagerly and enthusiastically waiting to receive his first obedience after the Priestly Ordination. His first Obedience was in 1967 to St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda as one of the teaching staff members and as the Bursar. He was given his next obedience in 1970 to Anuradhapura St. Joseph's Church as assistant Pastor. From there he was assigned as Parish Priest to Alagollawa Parish. From there he was transferred to Talawa in 1975 as Parish Priest. His next obedience was to be one of the staff members at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona in 1977. Fr. Jayatillega was transferred from there and appointed Parish Priest at Beruwela in 1983. In 1987 he received his next obedience to Kamaragoda as Parish Priest and in 1992 he was assigned as Parish Priest at Moragoda. He became Parish Priest again in 1997 at Tibbatugoda, Ganemulle. In October 2002 he was given obedience as Parish Priest at Delatura. From there he was given obedience in February 2008 to be the Pastor at the Parish of Miriswatta – Gampaha. In May 2010 Fr. Lawrence was appointed as the Chaplain to Good Shepherd Convent at Bolawalana. From there he was given his next obedience on 25 November 2015 to the Oblate Community, “Dev Arana”, Polwatta in Minnuvangoda. From there he retired to Marian Grove at Kohuwela, Nugegoda on 2 March 2016.

Father Lawrence Jayatilleke had a pleasant personality, simple in his life style, very respectful, obedient to the Superiors, and readily accepted any type of ministry from the Superiors and a non-assuming Oblate. He led a life in quietness, not ostentatious but very committed. He has worked in the most difficult Parishes in Anuradhapura almost 10 years and in the diocese of Colombo for many years. He worked also in a spirit of commitment at the Oblate Institutes and Communities. He promoted Marian Devotion in all the Parishes he worked. His Parishioners supported him whole heartedly in all his efforts. His humane approach and integration with them won their hearts. They loved him and invited him to bless their families and their work places. He was particular in administering the

sacraments to the seniors in his Parishes and taking Holy Communion to them and to the sick Parishioners. He was kind towards the sick and the poor people on the streets and welcomed them to his Parishes and fed them.

Fr. Lawrence was not enjoying good health. He had many health complications and with medical treatments he was continuing his pastoral ministries to the admiration of his Superiors. He depended only on divine Providence and on the powerful intercession of our Mother Mary. He received from the people and his friends whatever he needed for a decent life and priestly ministry. He was very energetic and sportive when he was a young Oblate.

He became weak gradually and was going through physical pain. The Holy Rosary was his refuge and arm of support. He was given the best of care at Marian Grove and on the 28 February 2017 he entered his eternal life peacefully at Marian Grove. His mortal remains were taken to his home Parish at Yattowita and the funeral services were held at his own Parish Church on 2 March 2017. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 4.Pm presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, and a good number of Oblates, diocesan Priests, Religious Sisters and his own Parishioners were present. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were taken to the Yattowita Parish Cemetery and were laid to rest. May He rest in peace.



REV. FR. PERERA JAMES DUDLEY, OMI
(1937 – 2017)

Birth : 28 November 1937 at Hatton
First Vows : 15 August 1957 at Sacred Heart
 Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows : 15 August 1960 at Oblate
 Scholasticate, Ampitiya, kandy
Oblation No : 10282
Ordination : 16 December 1964 in Rome
Death : 3 May 2017 at Marian grove,
 Kohuwela, Nugegoda



Father Dudley Perera OMI was born on 28 November 1937 at Hatton in the Diocese of Kandy. His parents were William Perera and Beatrice Jeyawardene. Dudley had his primary education at St. Mary's College at Navalapitiya and his secondary education at St. Joseph's College, Colombo and successfully completed his Senior School Certificate of Education.

Dudley from his early stage of life at St. Joseph's College, Colombo was attracted by the great Oblate Missionaries and teachers, decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. He was a God – Fearing boy from his childhood and a committed altar server both at his Parish and at the College.

His family was very devout and God-fearing. He received a solid and disciplined formation from his childhood from his parents, brothers and sisters. He was an above average intelligent boy. His family members were all attached to the Oblate Priests who were also serving in their Parishes. Under the direction and guidance of the Oblates, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at “Mont Eden” Kalutara in January 1956. After completing his year of probation at the Novitiate, made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1957 at the Novitiate at kalutara. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, kandy and was doing his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 15 August 1960 at the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, kandy.

On 16 December 1964 Scholastic Dudley was sent to Rome to pursue his higher studies. He entered St. Thomas' University in Rome and continued his Philosophical and theological studies obtaining Licentiate in Western Philosophy and in Theology. He was ordained a Priest of God in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 16 December 1964 in Rome by Mgr. Faweri.

He returned to the Island in 1965 and in July in the same year was appointed as one of the Professors of Philosophy at the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy while being the formation staff member at the Oblate Scholasticate there. Again Fr. Dudley was sent to Rome in 1972 for studies on Sacred Scriptures at Biblicum. He obtained a Licentiate in Sacred Scriptures and returned to the Island in 1975 and was again assigned to the National Seminary as the Professor on Sacred Scriptures and the staff at the Oblate scholasticate at Ampitiya. He was teaching at the National Seminary till 1982 and was transferred to Fatima's Church at Maradana, Colombo as an assistant. From there too he was a visiting lecturer at the National Seminary teaching Sacred Scriptures. In 2000 he went to the Philippines for continued biblical studies at De LaSalle University and obtained a doctorate in Biblical Theology. He returned to the Island in 2003 and went to Australia in December 2003. He worked as Parish Priest at St. Bernard's Church, Tasmania, Australia till 2012. He returned to the Island in 2013 and became a semi-retired Oblate taking his residence at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya, Colombo.

Fr. Dudley's life style got dramatically changed during the years 2013 – 2016, the time he spent at De Mazenod house. He became a little scrupulous in his behavior doing peculiar things. Even his talking with others was very inconsistent. Due to his old age his physical condition too became very feeble and needed help from others for his personal requirements. He was taken to Marian Grove at Kohuwela on 26 November 2016.

Fr. Dudley Perera was once considered the best Professor on Sacred Scripture at the National Seminary Ampitiya, Kandy. His many years of teaching was greatly valued and appreciated by the

academic staff of the Seminary as well as by the students. Hundreds of students got special taste for Sacred Scripture after following his lectures. His methodology was very scientific and crystal clear. He took pain to prepare his lectures and his presentations were very simple but appealing.

Fr. Dudley was a very strict Professor demanding a lot from the students. He was very exacting with regards to giving marks to the students, very often just 40 or 60. Because of his exacting character and his ways of assessing the students, he became a little unpopular among the students in 1980s. The Seminarians and the Scholastics were virtually frightened to face him during oral examinations and some of them didn't go to Exam at all. They used to remark saying that, "We are sweating when we go to him". However in the history of the National Seminary Fr. Dudley stands as one of the top and best Professors. The Oblate family in Sri Lanka is proud of him.

His academic achievements are very notable. He tried his best to give to the students and to the people what he had studied. His homilies were highly appreciated by all the faithful at Fatima's Parish at Maradana, Colombo and in Australia. His biblical knowledge and the experience of long years of teaching made him a successful preacher. The Parishioners in Australia kept him for many years in their Parish just to listen to his homilies. At the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, his reflections during daily liturgical services were of high quality. Many Oblate Preachers today go about with their preaching apostolate in the path of Fr. Dudley. He was a faithful Oblate Religious living to the expectations of the Evangelical Counsels. Though he didn't look simple, he led a simple life and was satisfied with what he had and what was given.

He was also invited by the Bishops and the Provincials to preach the annual Retreats to their members. He kept his listeners spell bound with his inspiring reflections and presentation with biblical images and parable stories in a didactic process. Dudley was a Professor and Preacher par excellence.

The last days of Fr. Dudley at De Mazenod House and at Marian Grove were not that pleasant and healthy. He almost lost himself not knowing what was happening in and around him. It was very pathetic to see a person of this caliber in that state. He was given the best care and medical treatments. Finally he succumbed to his illness quietly at Marian Grove on 3 May 2017. His mortal Remains were brought to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 4 May in the morning and lay in state. Many Priests, Oblates and Religious and his relatives paid their last respects to him. His mortal remains were taken to St. Fatima's Church at Maradana on 5 May in the morning. His funeral services took place at 4pm on 5 May 2017. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Irwin Moraes, OMI the Provincial Superior of Colombo, attended by many Oblates, Bishops, diocesan Priests, Oblate Scholastics and religious sisters, relatives and after the final obsequies, his mortal remains were removed to Kanatte Cemetery, Borella and was buried at the Catholic section. May He Rest in Peace.



REV. FR. PADIDILIAN ANTHONY, OMI
(1931 – 2017)

Birth	: 18 April 1931 at Periyamulla, Negombo
First Vows	: 15 August 1952 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 15 August 1955 at Oblate Scholasticate, Nugegoda
Oblation No	: 9269
Ordination	: 21 December 1958 at Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya, Kandy
Death	: 18 August 2017 at Marian Grove, Kohuwela, Nugegoda



Father Padidilian Anthony OMI was born on 18 April 1931 at Periyamulla, Negombo, in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Visuvakulage Francis Patrick Padidilian and Mary Margaret Alacoque De Costa belonging to the Parish of Pallansena, Kochchikade, Negombo. Padidilian had his primary education at Roman Catholic Boys' School, Kochchikade, at St. Peter's School in Negombo and his secondary education at St. Mary's College in Negombo and successfully completed his general certificate of Education (Ordinary Level Examination).

Padidilian from his early stage of life was attracted by the great Oblate Missionaries and the Oblate Parish Priests who were conducting Grand Mission Preaching at Different Parishes and at his Parish, decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. He was a God – fearing boy from his childhood and a committed altar server.

His family was so greatly attached to the Oblates and to the Parish Community that motivated young Padidilian towards his vocation. Under the direction and guidance of the Oblates, he entered St. Aloysius Seminary, Borella in 1947 and was going through his initial formation till the year 1951. On 6 August 1951 he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at “Mont Eden” Kalutara. After completing his year of probation at the Novitiate, made his First Profession of

Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1952 at the Novitiate at kalutara. Then he proceeded to do his Philosophical studies at the scholasticate at Nugegodain 1952 and then to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, kandy for theological studies at the National Seminary in 1955. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 15 August 1955 at the Oblate Scholasticate at Nugegoda. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies at the National Seminary, he was ordained a Priest of God in the Oblate Congregation on 21 December 1958 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya on 21 December 1958 by His Lordship Bishop Edmund Peiris OMI, the Bishop of Chilaw. Fr. Padidilian left the Scholasticate on 18 April 1959.

Fr. Padidilian was very enthusiastic and eager about receiving his first obedience and it was given on 20 April 1959 to be on the staff of the Oblate Juniorate at Nugegoda. From there he was given his next Obedience on 6 August 1960 to be on the staff of St. Vincent's Home, Maggona. From there he was made the assistant to the Parish Priest at Ragama and the Hospital Chaplain at Welisara Hospital. Then again in 1962 he received his transfer to Moaratuwa Mission as assistant to the Pastor. From there he was moved to Kalutara Mission and Holy Cross College as assistant on 11 April 1964. On 9 May 1966 he was given obedience to be the Parish Priest at Ratmalana Mission. On 3 February 1967 he was made assistant Parish Priest at Bolawalana and was appointed as the moderator for S.V. Brothers at Maggona and Bolawalana. He was assigned as Parish Priest on 24 July 1969 at Tillanduwa Mission and again on 5 February 1970 he was given obedience as Pro Parocho for Moratuwa Mission and from there he was made Parish Priest of Kattuwapitiya on 1 January 1971.

Fr. Padidilian after many years of Parochial Ministries, mostly in the diocese of Colombo was assigned to the Oblate Preaching Community “Nazareth” at Wennappuwa. After a few years of preaching apostolate Fr. Padidilian went to the Philippines to follow a renewal course on Pastoral Theology at EAPI. On his return he continued the preaching ministry at Nazareth at Wennappuwa. Between the years 1971 – 1997 Fr. Padidilian held different and responsible portfolios as the Superior of St. Vincent's Home at

Maggon, then as Parish Priest of Weliveriya and as the Chaplain at the Colombo General Hospital residing at the Archbishop's House. He was assigned to the Oblate Community “Dev Arana” at Polwatta on 25 November 1997 and became the Chaplain to the Good Shepherd Sisters at Bolawalana in 2009 and also to be the chaplain at Dr. Cyril Wass Centre at Wennappuwa. After many years of tireless services to the people of God in different places holding different responsibilities Fr. Padidilian retired to Marian Grove at Kowuwela, Nugegoda on 2 July 2014.

Fr. Padidilian was blessed with a unique personality. As a Scholastic and as an Oblate Priest he was loved very much by everyone with deep respect. A man of few words, speaking loud in and through his personal life - witness, won the hearts of many people of God. He was a saintly Oblate Priest who was emulated by many young Oblates and by the diocesan clergy. He was the spiritual director for many Priests and Religious. He was a humble, simple and obedient priest giving himself totally to the Oblate Mission. The Major Superiors were well pleased with Fr. Padi for his exemplary oblate values. When he left the Scholasticate as a young, energetic new Priest, his motto was, “Oblati Parati”. He was ever ready to accept any work assigned to him anywhere by his Superiors. He proved himself a successful oblate wherever he served. The people who were under his care greatly admired him for his fatherly approach and loving presence among them. He fostered many priestly and religious vocations. A great number of Oblates were initiated by him to join the Oblate Congregation.

His services at the Preaching Community at Wennappuwa need to be given special mention. He was highly appreciated by his listeners for his deep reflections and appealing presentation. At the Marian Shrine of Madhu Fr. Padidilian was a regular Preacher par excellence at Major Feasts and his homilies on our Beloved Mother Mary were of high qualities. The pilgrims who went to Madhu for the major festivals will never forget his sermons. He was faithful to all his assigned responsibilities. Many religious sisters and seminarians sought his help for their spiritual direction. Fr. Padi was a good and faithful servant of God and his people in the Congregation of the

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Oblate Spirit was his motivating and inspiring force behind.

After holding all these responsible positions in the Congregation he was now old and feeble. He spent the last part of his life mostly in the places and communities where he served. Fr. Padi had been a dedicated and model religious priest right through his life. He understood the charism of St. Eugene de Mazenod and was ever ready to spread the good News of Salvation won by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was enthusiastic about this particular call and offered his services in humble obedience to his Superiors. His life could be summarized as good and faithful Oblate who knew that his religious life of evangelical counsels was the source of spiritual energy to fulfill such a noble calling. A faithful religious who gave a primary place in his life to prayer with a total surrender to the will of his superiors.

At Marian Grove Fr. Padi was spending his last years depending on others for his daily needs. He was looked after very well by the Superior and by the minor staff there. He never complained of anything to anyone but was spending his days reciting the Holy Rosary and helping the Oblate Juniorists for confessions and spiritual direction. His health conditions began to deteriorate gradually and on 18 August 2017 he quietly passed away and entered his eternal reward.

His mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 19 August 2017 morning and lay in state. A number of Oblates, Religious Priests and Nuns paid him their last respects. In the afternoon on the same day his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church, Maradana where his funeral services took place at 4pm on 19 August. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, attended by many Oblates, diocesan Priests, Oblate Scholastics and religious sisters and after the final obsequies, the mortal remains were removed to Kanatte Cemetery and was buried at the Catholic section. May he Rest in Peace.

REV. FR. GEORGE CANISIUS MORAES, OMI
(1948 – 2018)

Birth	: 20 October 1948 at Talgaswatta, Kandana
First Vows	: 08 September 1975 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows	: 27 September 1979 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No	: 12377
Ordination	: 27 June 1980 at the National Basilica, Tewatte
Death	: 07 January 2018 at Marian Grove, Kohuwela



Father George Canisius Moraes OMI was born on 20 October 1948 at Talgaswatta, Kandana, in the Diocese of Colombo. His parents were Kolormuhandirange Sylvester Virgil Moraes and Ranadura Arachchige Rosalin Perera belonging to the Parish of Halanduruwa. Canisius had his primary and secondary education at Christ the King College, Tudella and successfully completed his general certificate of Education (Ordinary Level Examination) in 1968. Attracted by the missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who were working in his Parish, Canisius decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. Under the direction and guidance of his then Parish Priest, he entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in 1970.

Having completed his advanced Level Examinations and the initial requirements of English and Latin languages, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 8 September 1974. After completing his year of probation at the Novitiate, made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 8 September 1975. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in March 1976 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy till June 1980. He met with a very serious motor Cycle accident when he was a scholastic and was bed ridden for almost a year. He got cured very slowly and because of this event he was delayed with his formative programmes. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 27 September 1979 at the

Scholasticate, Ampitiya. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies at the National Seminary, he was ordained a Priest of God in the Oblate Congregation on 27 June 1980 by His Grace Most Rt. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando, the Archbishop of Colombo at the National Basilica at Tewatte. His walking conditions remained poor due to the impairment caused by the accident but he was eagerly waiting to receive his first Obedience.

He was assigned in 1980 to be assistant Parish Priest at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena. He served in this capacity till 1986. Then he was sent to the Philippines to follow a Pastoral Course at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in 1986 – 1987. On his return to the Island he was assigned as one of the staff members at St. Vincent's Home, Maggona. Then he was given his next Obedience to be the Co-Pastor at Fatima Parish, Maradana on 15 August 1988 and then again he was assigned to be Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Parish, Nuggeoda on 15 August 1989 and served there till 3 June 1997. He received another opportunity to go to the Philippines for a short renewal Course in Manila on 4 June 1997 and returned to the Island on 30 September 1997. His next obedience was to St. Mary's Parish at Mattakkuliya as Parish Priest on 1 October 1997 and served till 30 September 2000. On 1 October 2000 he was transferred from St. Mary's Parish to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya. On 17 December 2000 he was given permission by his Provincial Superior at his request to serve in U.S.A for two years in a Parish and on his return to the Island he was given his obedience to serve as Parish Priest at Holy Cross Church Parish at Gampaha on 10 December 2002. In the month of October 2012 he was appointed as the Chaplain to the Holy Cross Convent at Gampaha. After serving in different Parishes, Communities and abroad, he retired to Marian Grove at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in December 2017.

Fr. Canisius Moraes was always a cheerful person and a happy Oblate. His poor physical conditions didn't deter him in any way to perform his entrusted ministries. After the accident his life was slowed down but he went through with conviction and achieved his goals. As Parish Priest in all the Parishes that he served, he was well accepted by his Parishioners and given full support and cooperation.

He was particular in visiting the houses often and used to pray the Holy Rosary with them. He promoted the habit of praying the daily Rosary in families among his Parishioners and they cultivated this habit and continue even today. He loved the poor and the most abandoned people in the Parishes, brought them to the Mission Houses and fed them. He was getting his charitable work organized by the members of Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) and distributed things, clothes and food items to the poor people and the beggars who were found on the streets. Some of the Parishes where he worked were financially self-sufficient but he organized different charitable helps through them to the poor. As an Oblate he was having a strict surveillance on the formation of the Altar Servers and on the education of the young students. He was appreciated very much by the teachers and the parents for this significant efforts and involvement. Needless to say that in certain Parishes he had to face also much opposition and challenges but with his unique smile he managed to win their hearts and was again on the track.

He was loved and much appreciated by the Parishioners at Gampaha and by the Carmelite Nuns for the many years of services as their chaplain. Fr. Moraes had been going through ill health right from his Priestly Ordination. Trusting in the Lord and in the powerful intercession of Our Mother Mary he went about performing his normal priestly ministry. His physical health conditions improved dramatically as years passed by and he was given important assignments at the Parishes and at the Oblate Institutions. He was reprimanded and challenged by his major Superiors whenever he wanted to have his own ways with regards to his assignments and studies. He worked in U.S.A for two years with the permission of the Provincial Superior and returned to the Island with renewed Oblate Spirit of commitment and eagerness to work accepting the orders of his superiors. He worked for long years at Gampaha Parish and at the Carmelite Convent as the Chaplain for many years. He welcomed everyone who visited him with a pleasant smile and solicited his generous hospitality. At meetings he used to share his thoughts and opinions very pleasantly and the listeners were happy with his expressions. Even his homilies were very pleasant with little biblical anecdotes that touched the hearts of the faithful very deeply. Fr.

Moraes was over all a happy and pleasant Oblate, obedient and with a simple life style. He made everyone happy and laugh by his interactions. He was faithful to the Lord, the High Priest, to the celebration of the sacraments and to Mary Our Mother. He maintained the image of the Oblates wherever he ministered. He was very sensitive to the needs of others and identified himself with them.

At Marian Grove he was confined to his room almost unable to walk around. His health began to deteriorate considerably and was dependent on heavy medical care and treatment. As his state became serious he was administered the last sacraments and on 7 January 2018 he was called to his eternal rest in the Lord at Marian Grove.

On 8 January 2018, his mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya in the morning and lay in state for the Priests, religious, relatives and his former Parishioners to pay him their last respects. Many of the Oblates of the Colombo Province and Carmelite Nuns too paid him their last respects. Again his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana in the morning on 9 January and lay in state. His funeral services were held at 4pm at Fatima's Church on 9 January 2018 amidst a large Congregation of Priests, Nuns, Scholastics and many Oblates and laity. The Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Irwin Moraes OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo. After the final obsequies the mortal remains were taken in procession to Kanatte Cemetery and laid to rest in Priests' section. May He rest in Peace.



Birth : 16 November 1945 at Thibbotugoda
First Vows : 02 February 1977 at Sacred Heart
 Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows : 09 March 1980 at the Oblate
 Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No : 12385
Ordination : 23 August 1980 at Fatima's Church,
 Maradana
Death : 09 August 2018 at Marian Grove, Kohuwela



Father Andige Silva Camillus Anthony OMI was born on 16 November 1945 at Thibbotugoda in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Andige Valarius Silva and Andige Babara Silva belonging to the Parish of Ganemulla. Camillus had his primary and secondary education both at the Roman Catholic School at Thibbotugoda and at De Mazenod College at Kandana and successfully completed his general certificate of Education (Ordinary Level Examination) in 1965 and later had his advanced Level Studies at the Oblate College of Philosophy at De Mazenod House, at Mattakkauliya, Colombo in 1975 in English medium.

Attracted by his Parish Priest and by Oblate Fathers like Mewell OMI and Sarath Silva OMI, Camillus decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. Under the direction and guidance of his then Parish Priest, he entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in January 1973 and proceeded to the Oblate College of Philosophy at Mattakuliya in 1974. He completed his Philosophical studies successfully in 1975 and entered Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 1 February 1976. After completing his year of probation at the Novitiate, made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 2 February 1977. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in March 1977 and pursued his theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy till June 1980. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 9 March 1980 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical

studies at the National Seminary, he was ordained a Priest of God in the Oblate Congregation on 23 August 1980 by His Grace Most Rt. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Marcus Fernando, the Archbishop of Colombo at Fatima's Church at Maradana.

After his priestly ordination young Fr. Camillus was eagerly and enthusiastically waiting to receive his first obedience. He was assigned to the Parish of Polonnaruwa in the diocese of Anuradhapura as assistant Parish Priest on 13 September 1980. From there he was given a transfer to Kekirawa Parish as acting Parish Priest on 1 January 1981. From there he received his next obedience to the Parish of Madawachchiya as Parish Priest on 1 June 1981 and served there till 15 May 1985. He was given his next assignment to the Parish of Weliveriya in July 1989 as Parish Priest and ministered till July 1991 and again in August 1991 he became Parish Priest of Thalangama Parish. From there Fr. Camillus got his next transfer to Nazareth preaching Community at Wennappuwa in June 1993. He served at the Preaching band till May 1997.

He was then given a chance to go to the EAPI in the Philippines for higher studies in May 1997 till July 1998. On his successful completion of the course Fr. Camillus returned to the Island in August 1998 and was assigned immediately to be Parish Priest of Buttala. He served there for one year and was transferred to the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at Padaviya as Pastor in September 1999. Fr. Camillus served in this Parish for almost six years and became the Parish Priest at Kagama in March 2005. Again on 6 February 2007 he became a resident priest at De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya. He started falling sick often and needed special medical treatment. It is notable that Fr. Camillus got a severe heart attack and went through a by Pass open Heart Surgery. He was resting and convalescing after his surgery till 28 October 2009. On the same day Fr. Camillus expressed his retirement from active priestly ministry and had his residence at Marian Grove at Kohuwela. He spent many years of retirement with continued health complications but silently going through his pain accepting his last days in faith.

Father Camillus was a happy and joyous Oblate from the beginning of his Priestly formation. The Oblate Juniorate at Kohuwela, the Oblate Philosophate at Mattakkuliya, the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Bandarawela and the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya will speak of many events that were jokingly and willfully performed by him. At the Novitiate he was very often reprimanded by the Novice Master for making others distracted even while praying, eating and playing. He was an innocent soul loved by all his companions. He will be the first actor on stage taking up the role of a comedian making everyone relax and enjoy. Even the corridors of the Scholasticate, Ampitiya were his hidden places of making fun in front of the doors of the scholastic companions. Though he had many reasons to be unhappy, Camillus made everyone happy and cheerful with his loving presence.

Camillus had been an obedient Oblate and very respectful and reverent in front of his superiors. He used to politely execute their orders in terms of any assignment given to him. He was satisfied with what he had in his personal life and in the mission places and never went after things and fame. He was appreciated for his simplicity of life by the Bishops under whom he ministered.

Most of his priestly ministry was confined to the diocese of Anuradhapura. The Parishes where he worked were very remote and poor. He loved all his Parishioners alike and served them like a sensitive but a humble shepherd. He visited the families that were spread far and wide in the diocese and promoted Marian Devotion in the families. He was not demanding anything from his sheep but always identified himself with them. His Parishioners loved him for what he was. Particularly his simplicity and the frugal way of living attracted the faithful to him. It is to be noted that many of the Parishes didn't have even the basic facilities but he made himself happy and contented. Though he had health problems he fulfilled all his pastoral responsibilities with commitment and love but without complaints.

Some might take him for a joker and a simpleton but Camillus was not so. He was serious and conscious of what he had to do and how he had to do things. In his later days he had some issues of

mental disorder but quietly and prayerfully accepted them and continued his treatment. The superiors at Marian Grove gave him their best of services. As years passed by his health condition began to gradually deteriorate, the last sacraments were administered and on 9 August 2018 he was called to his eternal rest in the Lord at Marian Grove.

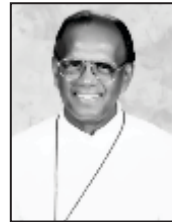
On 11 August 2018, his mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya in the morning and lay in state for the Priests, religious, relatives and his former Parishioners to pay him their last respect. Many of the Oblates of the Colombo Province too paid their last respects to him. Again his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana in the afternoon on 11 August 2018. His funeral services were held at 4pm at Fatima's Church on 11 August 2018 amidst a large congregation of priests, nuns, scholastics and many Oblates and laity. The concelebrated Requiem High Mass was presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Irwin Moraes OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo. After the final obsequies the mortal remains were taken in procession to Kanatta Cemetery and laid to rest in Priests' section.

Fr. Camillus is no more and has gone to his eternal reward. He exhibited a simple life style, faced many challenges in his parochial ministries, served in several Parishes and Communities but was a faithful Oblate who had a deep love for the Oblate Congregation and to our beloved Mother Mary. He had promoted also a number of vocations for priestly and religious life. May He rest in Peace.



REV. FR. HILARIAN VETHANAYAGAM, OMI
(1929 – 2018)

Birth	: 3 April 1929, Jaffna
First Vows	: 8 September 1951 at Mount Eden, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 8 September 1954 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No	: 14167
Ordination	: 6 August 1957 at the National Seminary, Ampitiya
Death	: 29 November 2018 ,at the General Hospital, Jaffna



Fr. Hilarian Vethanayagam was born on 3 April 1929 at Gurunagar, Jaffna. He was from the Parish of Our Lady of Miracles, Gurunagar, in the diocese of Jaffna. His parents were Amirthanathar and Loppiah Agathamma. He was the eldest in the family among three siblings. His sister Hedwidge became a Holy Family nun and his youngest brother Jesuthasan an architect. He was called lovingly by everyone as Fr. Vetha. He had his primary education at St. James' Boys' School in Jaffna for seven years; at St. Joseph's Boys' School at Colombuthurai for eight months and then had his education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna for seven years. His family had been very traditionally catholic and God- fearing and therefore Vetha cultivated his vocation to become an Oblate Priest in this solid background and formation.

His family was well accepted, respected and loved by their Parish Priests who were Oblates and by all the parishioners as well. They were closely associating themselves with the Oblates and reverently and obediently serving them. Having been inspired by a deep seated desire to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people during the years that he served as an altar server, he expressed his deep willingness to Fr. Charles Navaratnam OMI and to his Parish Priest. He entered St. Martin's Minor Seminary in Jaffna in 1945 guided and recommended by Fr. Charles Navaratnam OMI and by his Parish Priest Fr. A. Huctin OMI. From St. Martin's Seminary, he entered the Oblate Novitiate, "Mont Eden" at Kalutara on 7 September 1950. After completing his period of probation, he made his first profession

of vows as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate on 8 September 1951 at the Novitiate in Kalutara.

He entered the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in September 1951 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation on 8 September 1954. On successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained a Priest of God on 6 August 1957 at the National Seminary at Ampitiya by Bishop Armandus Clabout OMI, the Bishop of Troadenses. The new Oblate Fr. Vetha with much zeal and enthusiasm was eagerly waiting for his first Obedience. His first Obedience was to be the assistant Novice Master at “Mont Eden” Novitiate at Kalutara. He served there for a year and came to De Mazenod House at Mattakuliya on 19 April 1959 and from there followed some short courses at Aquinas College, Colombo. Then his Major Superior assigned him to the Diocese of Jaffna on 15 December 1959. He was assigned to St. Sebastian's Church, Mannar in September 1959 to be assistant Parish priest. When he finished his services there after two years, he received his next obedience to St. Maria Goretti's Parish at Pandivirichan as Parish Priest on 25 January 1962. He served there for one year and nine months under trying situations with limited facilities having his residence at the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu. He was transferred from there to be Parish Priest of Adampan and Vidathaltivu on 31 August 1963. From there he was transferred to D - 8, Uruthirapuram, as Parish Priest and as the Director of the Orphanage and Agricultural and Industrial Centre on 17 August 1965. He served there for four years and provided a yeoman service to the youngsters who loved him much. He was given his next obedience to St. Vincent's Home at Maggona on 20 April 1969 to be the first assistant to the Superior. Then Fr. Vetha had an opportunity to go to the Philippines in 1974 to follow a course on Architectural Engineering and became a qualified architect. While being in the Philippines he was ministering at Parishes, assisting the respective Pastors and helping for the constructions of new buildings.

In 1976 he was given Obedience to the Indian Delegation. Fr. Vetha's presence in Tamil Nadu, India was significant and historical



in terms of his architectural contribution to a Unit that was beginning to establish itself. Fr. Vetha gave the building plan for the Juniorate House at Perambakam which now serves as the building for De Mazenod Institute of Philosophy. He was the man behind the architecture designing and supervising practically all the existing new and earlier buildings in the Oblate Province of India. There was a long list of his contribution to the architecture and supervision such as St. Joseph Bhavan Chapel at the Oblate Provincial House in Chennai, Tamilnadu, St. Paul's Institute Chapel at the Oblate Scholasticate at Karayanchedi, Poonamallee, St. John the Baptist Church Sanctuary at Karayanchedi, Poonamallee, Gnanalayam Building and chapel Plan at Perambakam, Aanmodaya Ashram Building and Temple at Kanchipuram(Oblate Centre for Inter Religious and Inter Cultural Dialogue), Nivedanam Building, the Chapel and the Garden in Bangalore, Karnataka, Arpanalayam, St. Joseph's Novitiate Building and the Chapel in Musunuru, Andhra Pradesh. The Juniorate Compound, "Nivedanam" in Bangalore, is still considered the most outstanding contribution of Fr. Vetha in India. There are many other buildings and Chapels that he



designed and supervised up to their completion. Particularly he provided his generous services also to the Holy Family Sisters who went there from Jaffna as missionaries. According to some reliable sources he was also one of the designers of the existing Provincial House in the Philippines.

Back in Sri Lanka again he made historical contributions in the fields of Architecture and engineering. A number of Churches, and Chapels were his productions. The Oblate building at Polwatte in the Province of Colombo was designed by him, for “Marian Grove” retired Oblate Home at Kohuwela, Nugegoda he was the consultant. At Haputale Parish in the Diocese of Badulla, he designed and supervised practically all the existing Churches and Chapels in the substations.

In the diocese of Mannar he designed many Churches, Chapels and beautiful Eucharistic Chapels. The Retreat House at Madhu, the Eucharistic Chapel at Madhu Shrine, the Bishop's House Mannar and the Eucharistic Chapel at the Bishop's House were all his master plans. The Late Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph got the maximum benefits from Fr. Vetha when he put up new mission Houses and Churches in his diocese. The diocese of Jaffna as well speaks much of his contribution to the local Church in terms of constructions and renovations. The Bishop Emeritus of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam was heavily dependent on Fr. Vetha for all the new constructions and renovation of buildings. He designed and architected many churches and Chapels as well. Even the Holy Family sisters of the Province of Jaffna got his expertise when they put up new buildings and chapels. He designed the present Church at Venpuravi, a sub-station of Chaaty Mission. The Church of Our Lady of Miracles, Jaffna stands as an elevated monument of Fr. Vetha's contribution to his own Parish. There were other numerous buildings and chapels in different dioceses and religious communities both national and international that were designed and monitored by Fr. Vetha.

He succeeded Fr. Louis Ponnaiah OMI and became the third Vicar Provincial of the Jaffna delegation in 1977. The Oblates of the North were part of the Colombo Province. His services to the Jaffna Delegation were remarkable. Vetha dispensed his leadership services under very trying and uncertain political ground situations. The ethnic conflicts were beginning to escalate with sporadic events of violence. The Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and other movements were trying to consolidate their presence in the North-East to fight for the freedom of the Tamils. Amidst all these complexities Fr. Vetha was continuing his work assiduously and strenuously.

Thodarpaham, the Provincial House of the Oblates of the Northern Province at Hospital Road is Fr. Vetha's brain child. He took many years to fulfill his dream. His efforts to find the necessary finances to purchase a plot of land and to build this administrative block were praise worthy. With much pain and strain he continued this project and was able to complete it. Initially Thodarpaham was designed by him to be the Centre for many specialized Oblate ministries like Communication, Mass Media and Preaching under one roof but eventually it became the Provincial House of the Jaffna Province. Vetha was the first Oblate leader to occupy this main building. Even today Thodarpaham building stands as a symbolic contribution of Fr. Vetha.

The political development in the North-East in consequence to the emergence of many Tamil militants was worsening the ground situation particularly in the North. This aggravation affected also the relationship between the Oblates of the North and the South. It was generally felt by the Oblates of the North that they were not justly treated by the South where the administrative power got accumulated. All efforts made by the North to the South to share and decentralize power to the Jaffna delegation, contributing financial support and all other plans and suggestions were all politically interpreted by Colombo. This situation led towards a gradual but a deep divide among the Oblates of the North and the South. Needless to mention that Fr. Vetha and his Councillors were continuously communicating all these intricacies and anxieties to the General Administration in Rome so that it could understand the sufferings and losses that the Tamil community was experiencing. Everything was

politically interpreted and justice and fair play were denied and delayed. It took years for the General Administration and Southern Oblate leadership to understand the realities and aspirations of the Tamil population and of the Oblates of the North. In the meantime there were continuous and simultaneous attacks and exchange of fire between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the Tamil militants. People including the Oblates were frightened to come out of their houses and to walk or travel on the roads. Eventually the two Oblate Units of the North and South had a healthy transfer of power.

In the meantime Fr. Vetha had his own understanding and attachment to the Tamil freedom fighters tacitly supporting them but was against any violent activity but played the role of an active advocate of human rights. He was heartbroken when the Tamil leaders were assassinated by the Tigers in Colombo, and condemned it in unequivocal terms. He never called the boys who were fighting on behalf of the minority Tamil people as terrorists.

Things became worse when one of our Oblates from the North Fr. Abaranam Singarayer OMI who was very much involved with the so called boys (LTTE) and gradually became their advisor was arrested by the Sri Lankan Security Forces in November 1982 at Amala Utpavam Preaching Community at Colombuthurai. This arrest put Fr. Vetha in a dangerous and panicking situation.

Fr. Singarayer became very independent and was conniving himself with the members of the LTTE totally supporting their activities. Fr. Vetha got so frightened of his life and of being arrested himself. He was really nervous and began falling sick. The ground situation became more dangerous and uncertain. He decided to hide himself because he was also implicated together with Fr. Abaranam Singarayer. Fr. Vetha fled out of the country to India to be safe from all imminent dangers and then to the Philippines and later to Australia. He was welcomed by the above Oblate Units and looked after for many years with the best of medical assistance.

According to the Provincial Secretary of the Australian Province Fr. Vethanayagam was in Australia from 1995-2001,

serving around the Province where there were needs, often for short terms. He served in Parishes in all the Australian states where the Oblates minister. He arrived in Australia for the second time on 5 January 1995 but appeared to have visited for a few months in 1994. He served in Dernancourt, South Australia by Feb 1995 and in Burpengary, Queensland from January 1996 and in Sunshine Victoria from May 1997. From there he was removed to Eagle Vale NSW 1999 and to Sorrento Vic in October 2000. His last place of service was Lesmurdie, Western Australia.

He then returned to Jaffna in 2001. Having spent many years in each of these countries and recuperated himself, Fr. Vetha came back from Australia after the conflicts between the Government Security Forces and the LTTE were over. Thanks to the Oblates of these countries for accommodating Fr. Vetha when he was helpless and with agonizing mental stress.

In India he was helping the Oblates in many ways not only with construction work but also with his spiritual experiences as an Oblate. He stayed in Bangalore for a few years and contributed much to its shaping and initial stages of development and then in the Philippines and to Australia in 2001. His personality and his bodily health were enriched and blessed with many sublime attributes and qualities. He was humane, jovial, outgoing, always making himself available to others with much eagerness towards the most needy, a friend to all, guileless, much wanted architect, designed and built hundreds of formation houses, provincial houses, institutes, monuments, churches and chapels, sculpted many statues of saints and priests of outstanding personalities.

Our Oblates in India shared their own experiences of Fr. Vetha when requested. He was accepted by them as a great soul, that feels happy when dreams come to a reality, and as an inspiring personality. St. Eugene Province of India remains ever grateful to this great man for his outstanding contribution to build their formation Houses, communities and many other worshiping places. They observed Fr. Vetha to be a man of Aesthetic sense being influenced by the architecture of Indian Temples and Mosques. He was a lover of

interculturality and designed all the Oblate Chapels with the mixture of religious flavour apart from traditional Roman Catholic Architecture. They used to say that Fr. Vetha was a great Engineer who had his plans in his mind. Although he jots them down on the papers, he executes what he dreamt in his mind in reality. He will be found always working on something in a construction site. It was he who crafted by his own hands all the statues of the Resurrected Jesus found in their Chapels. He used to buy the materials by himself, made the drawings and brought out the statues exactly in reality.

The “Nivedanam” building one of the attraction points in Bangalore speaks volumes of Fr. Vetha. He was behind the complete architecture of this building. Besides our Oblate Houses he designed for many religious societies to construct their chapels in intercultural style of architecture. Some of them are found even today in “Amala Bhavan” Chapel, Missionaries of Mary Immaculate(MMI) and Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) Houses in Chennai, “Lumen Institute” for Sisters at Dindivanam, “National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre” at Dindivanam, “Holy Family Sisters' Convent” at Meenambakam, and “Bible Institute” at Karayanchavadi.

Fr. Vetha's stay in Indian Oblate delegation was a memorable one. He made every oblate joyful, immensely involving himself in the works of architecture and didn't compromise even on a small mistake. He used to work round the clock to bring out the product perfectly. Fr. Vetha was one of those who encouraged Inter Religious Dialogue and Inculturation and that was realized in all his architectures. He was with late Swami Amalraj OMI, loved to celebrate the Indian Rite Mass and saw that the dialogue could bring unity among the people of different cultures, faith and religions making them believe the truth in Christianity. He was very pious and prayerful having special devotion to Mother Mary. He was found always in full Oblate Dress Code with the Oblate cross. He had a very beautiful English handwriting with a creative mind to draw pictures.

The Oblates of India saw Fr. Vetha as a spiritual man having a special devotion to Jesus and to our beloved Mother Mary. He had a good relationship with every one which helped them to accomplish

his visions. Many of their important Oblate Chapels in India carry the statue of the Resurrected Jesus instead of a crucifix in the sanctuary. The specialty of the Resurrected Jesus was that it was made of iron rods as the base, Gypsum plasters mixed with unique materials were used to make the outer shape and painted in metallic colour. One could easily correlate the Resurrected Jesus to an Indian poor man. His creativity was associated with what he saw in reality. The social reformation that was in his mind was exhibited in the chapels. The tabernacle model was another transcending Indian Cultural design and the hanging lamps instead of electric lights clearly attract any Indian to sit with the Lord. The window of the chapels were also drawn and designed by him. His designing the windows was in such a way that the whole nature and the Indian Tradition had to be reflected in our chapels.

The members of St. Eugene Province of India were indeed grateful to him in every way as the buildings, chapels, statues and plans that he gave them almost 20, 30, 40 years back still express their beauty and elegance. The new generation of Oblates who haven't seen his face are wondering how his architectures didn't get even a small crack. Fr. Vetha although is with the Lord in heaven, his presence is still felt and cherished among the Indian Oblates. It was like yesterday that he designed a plan for the Indian Province and left with a note saying, “I will come back soon to build another”.

Fr. Vetha's life was blessed and gifted with multi talents and values. Apart from his different pastoral and architectural ministries, what is noteworthy is the exemplary life he led and the dedication and commitment he clearly manifested in service to the people of God. He gave priority to God and his people. He didn't seek his personal comforts and easy way of living. He led a simple way of life, a single minded Religious priest who sought the will of God always. He was very sensitive to the sufferings of the people particularly the sufferings of the Tamil community and didn't look for a comfortable life style.

Fr. Vetha was residing and relaxing at the Oblate Provincial House, “Thodarpaham” ever since he returned to the Province from

Australia. He was continuing to help many Priests and Religious in a little way to put up new buildings, renovations and to give a new face lift to their existing buildings. It is with great pride that we record here his last contribution to the Oblates of the North to design and to supervise in entirety the St. De Mazenod Chapel at the Juniorate premises at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. All those who come to visit this Chapel greatly admire and value his excellent architectural mind. Though he was enjoying his stay at the Provincial House he fell ill now and then but recuperated with proper medication and went along with his normal duties. He often visited in the evenings his own Parish Church of Our Lady of Miracles at Gurunagar on foot and prayed for long hours. Fr. Vetha developed a pain in his chest and found it difficult to breathe. He was rushed to the General Hospital in Jaffna on 29 November 2018 and was admitted at the Emergency Unit at 9. Pm. The doctors tried their best to treat and save him but Fr. Vetha was called to his eternal life by his Master on the same day 29 November 2018 at 10.30 pm at the age of 89 at the General Hospital, Jaffna.

His mortal remains were brought to De Mazenod Chapel at Colombuthurai on 30 November 2018 where they were laid in state for two days to give an opportunity for his relatives, Priests and religious and his family members to pay him their last respects. Many Priests and Religious from Jaffna and Mannar Dioceses and a big number of his friends, relatives and lay people paid their last respects. The Oblate Scholastics of Jaffna and the Oblate Juniors were continuously conducting prayer services for the repose of the soul of Fr. Vetha. The final Oblate Rites were conducted by the Provincial Superior at the Chapel in the afternoon on 2 December 2018 and then his mortal remains were taken to St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna at 3pm. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by the Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B. Gnanapragasam at 3.30 pm during which Fr. S.M.Selvaratnam OMI delivered a beautiful panegyric bringing out the sterling priestly, religious and missionary qualities of Fr. Vetha. A large number of Priests, Religious and lay people were present. After the final obsequies his mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's Cemetery where they were laid to rest.

Fr. Vethanayagam OMI is no more with us but we feel his loss very deeply and differently. We don't reflect only on a person but on every value that he lived and revealed. It is his oneness with God that made Fr. Vetha lead a unique life. We also feel that we can't limit the personality of a Priest to the Sacrament of priesthood but should transcend beyond its parameters. Vetha was always magnanimous, respectful, obedient, simple and loving. His loss will be irreparable and void in the history of the Oblate Province of Jaffna. May he rest in Peace.



**REV. FR. JOSEPH ST. MIACHAEL
JEEVANADASFERNANDO, OMI
(1956 – 2019)**

Birth : 24 September 1956 in Anuradhapura
First Vows : 8 September 1986 at Sacred heart
 Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows : 8 September 1989
Oblation No : 12966
Ordination : 08 December 1990 at St. Joseph's
 Chapel, Colombuthurai Jaffna
Death : 16 April 2019 at Mankulam



Father Sammichael Jeevanadas Fernando OMI was born on 24 September 1956 in Anuradhapura. His parents were Mark Croos Anthony Selvam Ferando and Sammichael Arokiamma Fernando. There were ten children in the family, seven boys and three girls and Jeeva was the sixth child. Anuradhapura was (is) known for its Buddhist heritage, traditions and history. The majority of the population was Sinhala Budhists and a few Catholic families and a handful of Tamil Catholic families as well. His father who came to Sri Lanka in 1942 from India was living in Anuradhapura for employment purpose and eventually his whole family lived there. Jeevanadas had his primary and secondary education at St. Joseph's College in Anuradhapura and completed his G.C.E Ordinary Level Examination and while doing his advanced level the famous ethnic violence and riots erupted in 1977.

It all started at Mahdu roadin a train bound to Colombo. The violence got escalated and became very dangerous when the train was halted at Anuradhapura railway station. It got spread throughout the Island in no time and Tamils became victims in the hands of the Sinhala murderers, looters and hooligans and it took a big toll of the innocent Tamils. Jeeva's family escaped miraculously and took refuge at Pesalai, Mannar in 1977 and Jeeva and his brother Ranjan's family took shelter at Akkarayankulam in Kilinochchi District. Akkarayankulam was covered by a thick jungle and the Oblates of the North under the guidance of Fr. Hilraian Vethanayagam OMI, the Vicar Provincial chose the 5th mile post and cleared a few acres of

forest to render SOS emergency services to the arriving refugees. Fr. Vetha involved a few Oblate Scholastics as well from Kandy who were also sent to the North in consequence to the riots in this forest clearing task. Everyone and the new comers from all parts of the country got involved in this difficult labour. Their initial state of life was very pathetic, miserable, difficult, dangerous and challenging. Fear of the wild animals like elephants, poisonous snakes, deadly poisonous reptiles and many other insects etc. All the refugees were gradually settled down there and the Oblates under the surveillance of young Oblate Arulappu Gnanapragasam (Left the Congregation) were managing the administrative work. Young Jeevanadas and his brother's family were playing an important role in clearing up the forest and in the running of the refugee camp. It is to be noted that Jeeva was very much attracted by the Priests and particularly by Arulappu Gnanapragasam OMI who had been serving at Anuradhapura diocese and later at this refugee camp.

Having been encouraged and guided by Fr. A. Gnanapragasam OMI, young Jeeva wanted to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people. Jeeva entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna on 1 May 1978. He continued his Advanced Level Education there and got through the same Examination with flying colours and got qualified to enter the Jaffna University. He was granted permission to follow the degree course at the University of Jaffna from the Juniorate itself. When he finished his studies and obtained a bachelor's degree he was initiated to the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 30 August 1985. When he successfully completed his year of probation, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate scholastic on 8 September 1986 at the Novitiate. He did his philosophical studies at St. Francis Xavier's Major Seminary, Jaffna and his theological studies at the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy being at the Oblate Scholasticate. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 8 September 1989 at St. Joseph's Chapel, Colombuthurai, Jaffna. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies and the initial formation, he was ordained a Priest of God on 8 December 1990 at the same Chapel by Rt. Rev. Dr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai, the Bishop of Jaffna.

It was very sad that the event of his Priestly Ordination couldn't be witnessed by his parents nor by his brothers and sisters and even by his close relatives from Pesalai due to the closure of the main passage to the North and his whole family escaped to Tamil Nadu, India in 1988. The ground situation became deadly with many casualties resulted in consequence to the fierce fighting between the warring parties. The North was fully cut off from the rest of the country. Even our Oblates couldn't attend his Ordination as in the normal days. It was a lingering experience in the mind of the new Oblate too.

Fr. Jeevanadas after his priestly ordination was very enthusiastic, energetic and eager to receive his first obedience. Though he was academically qualified to undertake teaching ministry he was willing to work in a Parish to gain some pastoral experience and maturity. So his first Obedience was served on 2 February 1991 to serve as assistant Parish Priest at Point- Pedro in the diocese of Jaffna. From there he was assigned to the Oblate (settlement) Mission at Amaithipuram, Akkarayan. This mission was very close to Fr. Jeeva's heart because as a young boy he was involved in clearing up this place that was covered with a thick forest. That refugee settlement became an Oblate Mission with the name "Amathipuram". A few catholic families were there initially and the Oblates were responsible for this mission and gradually built it up. Jeeva worked there from 1991 – 1992.

At this point his ministry took a different turn as he was called upon to the ministry of teaching. Being a graduate he was easily accepted by the Department of Education and in 1993 he was enrolled as a teacher at St. Patrick's College Jaffna. Jeeva being a young and enthusiastic Oblate got involved in every activity of the College and served as the Sectional Head and the warden. He proved himself a successful sportsman being an excellent Basket Ball player. The staff and the students valued his presence and services very much and became respectful toward him. He served at the college from 1993 – 2002. In 2002 he was given Obedience to be the Parish Priest of Paalaiyuttu in Trincomalle – Batticaloa Diocese and while being the Pastor he was soon installed as the Rector of St. Joseph's College,

Trincomalee. He later took residence at Amala Uthayam Oblate Community at Uppuveli and continued his carrier as the Rector and as the House Superior. Fr. Jeeva worked at the College in a challenging situation but zealously. Though there was opposition for him from different corners, he never got discouraged but spearheaded his duties successfully and wisely. He was the Rector of the College till 2013.

Fr. Jeeva then became the Director of OBTEC, the Oblate Technical and Education Centre at Kanagapuram, Kilinochchi in 2013 and served till 2016. Then he was appointed Superior of the Provincial House, Thodarpaham, Jaffna on 31 December 2016 and from there he was appointed the Director of the Oblate Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) in Jaffna and served till 2017. From there he was assigned to Kokilai Oblate Mission in the diocese of Jaffna as Parish Priest and in late 2018 he was appointed the Director of Amaithikarankal, (Amputee Clinic) at Panikkankulam, Mankulam and worked there until his death.

Fr. Jeevanadas was a loving person, a faithful friend, cheerful with his work and with his companions, enthusiastic about Oblate Ministries, out going to help people in need, always looking for the good of others, obedient to his Superiors, faithful to his religious and priestly responsibilities and demands. Sanguine, active and energetic, brisk and alert, had a mature outlook on life and could face challenges and hardships patiently and manfully, had convictions and defended them boldly, speaks out what he feels and thinks quite frankly but yet he listens to others' views and used to accept corrections from senior Oblates. Sometimes he took things lightly and yet he had strong determination and will to persevere. Very friendly, cheerful and cordial, had winning ways, very sociable and easily adjusts himself to people and situations, kind and very generous, very obliging and outgoing, sympathetic, understanding and sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. He was open, sincere in his dealings and honest and a pleasant person.

He was very much loved, accepted and appreciated by the people and students wherever he ministered. People became highly taken up by his human approaches and respected him.

Both St. Patrick's College, Jaffna and at St. Joseph's College, Trincomalee, students, the parents and the staff admired at his administrative system and leadership qualities. He brought much innovation particularly at St. Joseph's College developing the infrastructure of the College. Being a sportsman himself, he took many initiatives to train the students in different sports and games and paved the way for their winning island wide. Different literary associations were inaugurated at the Colleges and discipline became his first goal and priority.

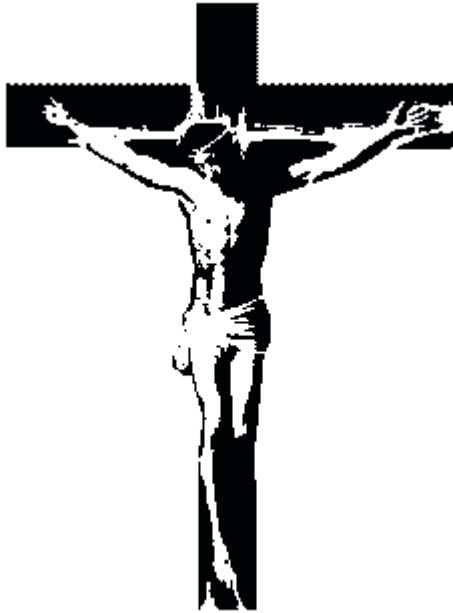
He was sent to Aix, France to follow the De Mazenod Experience that brought much renewal and ignited his Oblate spirit, went to India to follow seminars on education, spirituality and short courses on Counseling.

It was very sad that Fr. Jeeva didn't take sufficient care of his personal health in spite of the constant requests and warnings by his major Superiors. His primary concern was his duty. He developed high cholesterol, diabetes and hypertension. He fell ill suddenly at Amaithikkarakal at Mankullam, fell down from his bed on the night of 16 April 2019 and collapsed breathing his last. He was called by His Master for eternal rest at the age of 63. The death reports stated that he died of a massive heart attack caused by high blood pressure and high Cholesterol. His body was taken to the Government Hospital at Mankulam in the morning and in the evening to Jaffna.

His mortal remains lay at De Mazenod Chapel at Colombuthurai, Jaffna for the people, teachers and students to pay him their last respects. It is to be noted that people from Trincomalee, Mannar and Jaffna came in big numbers and paid their last respects. Most of them were screaming with tears moved by much grief and sadness.

His funeral and burial took place on 17 April 2019 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided by His Lordship Bishop Bernard Justin Gnanaprgasam, the Bishop of Jaffna at 3.30 pm at which Fr. Andreas Fernando OMI, one of Fr. Jeeva's Cousins from Colombo delivered the panegyric. A large

number of Priests and Religious from Trinco, Oblates from Colombo, Mannar and Jaffna and a large number of teachers and students from St. Patrick's College and St. Joseph's College Trinco were present. His relatives from Mannar came in large numbers and were mourning over his untimely demise. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were laid to rest at St. Mary's Burial Ground, Jaffna. May he rest in peace.



REV. FR. EMMANUEL PHILIPS JESUTHASAN, OMI
(1940- 2019)

Birth	: 25 December 1940 at Puloly, Point-Pedro
First Vows	: 15 August 1958, at the Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 5 January 1961 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No	: 10599
Ordination	: 21 December 1964 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena, Colombo
Death	: 23 September 2019 at Mathew's Memorial Home, Colombuthurai, Jaffna



Father Philips Emmanuel Jesuthasan OMI was born on 25 December 1940 at Puloly, Point Pedro. His parents were V.Anthonipillai Philips and Mariampillai Francisca Philips. There were twelve siblings in the family, eight boys and four girls. His father Philips was a Head Master and died in a motor accident before his retirement. Jesuthasan had his primary and secondary education both at Roman Catholic School at Puloly from 1945 – 1950 and at Sacred Heart College at Karaveddy from 1951 – 1955. Attracted by the Oblate Missionaries who were his Parish Priests, particularly by Fr. N. Joseph OMI, he decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people. Under the direction and guidance of Fr. N. Joseph OMI he entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in January 1956. Being an extra ordinarily intelligent student he successfully mastered the languages of Latin and English within a year and entered the Novitiate “Mont Eden” on 15 August 1957.

When he successfully completed the year of probation at the Novitiate, made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholasticon 15 August 1958. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy on 16 August 1958 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy till April 1965. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 5 January 1961 at the Scholasticate. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies at the National Seminary, he

was ordained a Priest on 21 December 1964 by Mgr. Thomas B. Cooray OMI, the then Arch Bishop of Colombo at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotehena, Colombo. He left the scholasticate in April 1965.

After the priestly ordination Fr. Jesuthasan was very zealous, energetic and eager to receive his first obedience to work in the vineyard of the Lord. It had been his habit and desire right from his priestly formation to obey the orders of his superiors and to accept their decisions. With the same attitude he was expecting his first assignment and it was given to him to be the assistant parish Priest at Kayts, in the diocese of Jaffna in May 1965 and he did a good job for a few months till September. Having seen his keenness and knowledge in Sacred Scripture, the fluency of his Tamil language and his interest in preaching ministry, the superiors assigned him to “Amala Utpvam” Preaching Community in 1965 to be a full time preacher. Jesuthasan loved this ministry and committed himself to it unreservedly. He created a deep impact on his listeners and was in much demand. He raised the preaching quality of the Preaching Community by his innovative planning and insights. The other members were eagerly getting his help for their preparation of homilies under different themes. He utilized new ways and means of taking the message of the Gospel to the people. While being at the Preaching Community he was sent to Manila to the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) to follow a Course on Catechetics for one year and when he finished this course successfully, he came back and continued the preaching ministry with renewed vigour and ardour. After having served as a Preacher for eleven long years he was assigned to St. Mary's Co-Cathedral in Batticaloa in 1976 and served as co-pastor till 1979.

In 1979 he was assigned as the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna which responsibility he held till 1987. From there he received his obedience again to the Preaching Community at Thodarpaham, Jaffna in 1987. Having finished his preaching assignments in 1994 he got the opportunity to go to Canada for Biblical studies at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. Thus he graduated himself both in Theology and Biblical studies obtaining two Master's Degree in both sciences at St. Paul's and at the

University of Ottawa. On his return he was appointed as one of the formators to the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya, Kandy in 1997. He was also lecturing on Sacred Scripture (New Testament) at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy. The scholastics and the seminarians highly appreciated his method of teaching and his self-prepared notes given to them. We shall read below what and how he did fare throughout his priestly life.

It is again for a new apostolate and formation ministry that he was called upon to shoulder from the Scholasticate to be the first Director of the Oblate Center for Religious Studies and the International Pre- Novitiate inaugurated at Gnanodhayam, Keeri, Mannar by the Jaffna Provincial Administration in 2003 under the Leadership of Very. Rev. Fr. Jeevendra paul OMI. He was installed the first Director of this integral Formation Center in 2003 and ministered till 2005. From there he was given the Obedience to be the Superior of de Mazenod Theologate at Vasanthaham, Colombuthurai, Jaffna. While being the Superior he was also lecturing on Sacred Scripture at St. Francis Xavier's Diocesan Major Seminary at Colombuthurai. He received his next obedience to Amala Uthayam, Oblate House in Tricomalee in 2008 and served the community as the Superior till 2011. Then he was assigned for the second time to be the Director of the International Pre-Novitiate at the Oblate Center for Religious Studies at Gnanodhayam, Keeri, Mannar and then due to the decline of his general health he retired from active ministry and took residence at Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai, Jaffna in 2016.

Fr. Jesuthasan was a multi-talented Oblate, a successful pastor, a prolific writer, an excellent preacher, a genius teacher and professor par excellence and a long standing formator. Wherever he worked either in Parishes, Preaching Communities or Formation Houses he left behind an indelible mark by his presence and commitment to responsibilities assigned to him. His whole priestly life, one could say was mostly confined to three areas namely the ministries of preaching, formation and writing. His long years of stay in the preaching band at Amala Utpavam were a period of growth and development of the preaching ministry throughout the Island. He by

his innovative thinking, planning and organizing brought new blood to the community and to the ministry of evangelization. He wrote and published in Tamil many reflections on preaching nuances, techniques, wrote on different themes for Grand Mission Preaching and published in small booklets. Our preachers are still using them as guidelines when they undertake Grand Missions. Jesuthasan was much interested in conducting grand missions and did so throughout the Island in a team with other members. He also wrote and published many books both in Tamil and English in Book forms and Pamphlets. They were namely, “Salvation History” (Irachaniya Varalaru), “A seed Grows” (Vithai Onru Valargirathu), “Word of God in Word of Man” (Manu Vaarthaiyil Iraivaarthai), “The Four Faces of Jesus” (Jesuvin Naanku Mugangal), “Mustard Tree” (Kaduhu Maram), “Leavened Dough” (Pulippu Maavu) (both of these books were written for A/L Christian Civilization Syllabus), “Studying Holy Documents” (Parisutha Eduhalai kattal), “Our Tribute” in four Volumes (Life history of the Dead Oblates in Sri Lanka from the beginning of their arrival), “ Reflection on the Cross”, “How to study the Bible”, “The Origin of the Bible”, “ Your Name is Rock”, “Is Any Sect a Church” (Echabaiyum Thiruchabaiya), “Devotion to Mary”, “ Is the worship of Saints a Sacrilege”, (Punithar Valipadu Silai Valipaada), “Last Tribute” (Iruthi Anjali), “ Gleanings from the Oblate Mission Field in Ceylon”, Notes on “History of the Church”, “Church in the Modern World”, “Acts of the Apostles”, “The Gospel of St. John”, “Synoptic Gospels” for the Advanced Level Students and “A Saint For Sri Lanka” (The life and ministry of Fr. B.A. Thomas OMI, the founder of the Rosarian Congregation).

He was involved in catechetical ministry and was called to teach at the Catechetical Centers of the Tamil dioceses. His stay at the Oblate Juniorate at Colombuthurai was a milestone. He created history over the years with regard to the development of religious and spiritual knowledge of the students and of the religious men and women. He wrote the entire Syllabus for Advanced Level Roman Catholic Religious Subject and the Notes for them as guides to the teachers and to the students and printed them in book forms. It is needless to say that hundreds of students, religious and lay people entered the University in Jaffna because of him and his religious

books. They got through the Advanced Level Examinations in Christianity successfully and entered the University. Even many of our Priests both Oblates, other Religious and the diocesan Priests were able to enter the University because they had access to his questions and Answers of the past papers and his notes on Christianity. They still remain grateful to Fr. Jesuthasan. The Juniorate and its complex stand today in the present set up were due to the successful stewardship of Jesuthasan. Many of our young Oblates still feel proud to have been under him at the Juniorate and received formation in his hands.

During the period of his ministry at St. Mary's Co-Cathedral in Batticaloa, he impressed the clergy and the faithful greatly. Organized different liturgical services, street preaching, conducted spiritual seminars to clergy and religious; shared excellent homilies on Sundays and at Festive masses, taught at the diocesan catechetical center and highly won the admiration of the Bishop late Rt. Rev. Dr. L.R. Anthony. His most outstanding contribution there was the establishment of an Organization for the youth of the Cathedral. He brought the delinquent, unemployed and the indisciplined youth together, formed them, educated them and made them good citizens. They became very committed Christians, well behaved members of the Parish and got themselves involved in many social and common welfare works. Jesuthasan wrote to many charitable organizations for financial assistance and with the financial support received for this particular ministry, successfully implemented them. The youth of the parish profited a lot and accepted him as their mentor and inspiration. They were very sad when Fr. Jesuthasan was transferred from there. Many of them accompanied him to his new place.

“Gnannodhayam” the Oblate Centre for Religious Studies and International Oblate Pre-Novitiate stands today as his monumental work. He was appointed the first Director and if today Gnannodhayam stands with the beautiful landscaping, surrounded by shady trees, coconut trees, fruit trees, cadju trees and above all with a natural beauty and salubrious surroundings, it is because of his hard and foresightful work and sacrifice. He was the designer and the executer of all that we have today there. Fr. Jesuthasan deserves to be called, “well done good and faithful servant”.

At the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy, he started writing the famous book “Our Tribute” about the life and ministry of all the dead Oblates from the beginning of the arrival of the Oblate Missionaries to Sri Lanka with the help of the Oblate Scholastics of the Study Club. Fr. Jesuthasan spent much quality time, energy and reflections on this great Project and proved himself a versatile writer and published them in four volumes. He became popular in the whole of the Oblate world because of this historical contribution. Most of the Oblates got their copies and read the history of the beginnings of the Oblate Foundation in Sri Lanka and how the Oblate Missionaries right from the beginning of their arrival committed themselves to the ministry of Evangelization under very trying situations and how they met their last moments and deaths. His last “OUR TRIBUTE” was on Fr. Patrick Gnanapragasam OMI who died at Mathew's Memorial Home on 21 December 2009 and published on 17 February 2010.

When he was ministering at the International Pre- Novitiate for the second time in 2013 at Gnanodhayam he launched again a great historical Project on writing different text books on Christian Civilization for the Advanced level and University students. When this new Subject was included as one of Advanced Level subjects and introduced by the Government of Sri Lanka for Catholic and Christian students, Jesuthasan became one of the designers, consultants and founders of this new venture. He wrote books treating on different subjects in forms of “Questions and Answers” to facilitate the students and the teachers. His work became the Syllabus for the Teachers, Advanced Level students as well as University students. He was also serving as a teacher on this subject and became instrumental to many students to enter the Universities. Today there are hundreds of Catholic Graduates in Sri Lanka who are working as Religious Teachers who owe a big debt to Fr. Jesuthasan for his outstanding contribution to the field of Christian Education and Christian Civilization. He continued updating his notes and additions to his already written books both at De Mazenod Theologate in Jaffna and at Amala Uthiyam at Uppuveli, Trincomalee. His Prayer Book, “LAST TRIBUTE” (Iruthi Anjali) a prayer booklet to be used at Funeral Homes and at the Services became well accepted and used

practically in every Tamil Catholic Diocese. His updated last version of this book was released during his funeral services as a mark of gratitude to him and to his services to the faithful. Another remarkable contribution of Fr. Jesuthasan was writing the Working Papers for the Provincial Chapters of the Oblates of the North. He wrote on different themes that were well accepted, shared, reflected and documented.

Generally Jesuthasan had been a polite and well-mannered Oblate, a man of few words, capable of vigorous and sustained efforts, orderly and systematic, given to much mental concentration, good will power, energetic and firm, good intelligence both speculative and practical, quick at grasping things and getting at the core of a problem. In all his academic performances he obtained the highest grades and was adjudicated the best in the class. He had good common sense and practical judgement, and thorough in whatever he undertook. A jack of all trades and master of all. He received a gold medal at the National Seminary at Ampitiya, Kandy for being the best student and obtaining the highest Marks. Fr. Jesuthasan made a significant contribution to the Oblates of both Provinces Colombo and Jaffna then and now. Specifically his contribution to the Oblate Province of Jaffna is incalculable. He was one rare personality with witty mind and intelligence. The Province of Jaffna owes a great debt to him and to his services and badly misses him.

He spent his retirement peacefully at Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai, Jaffna but was working continuously on his “OUR TRIBUTE” publication. His old age didn't deter him from applying himself to intellectual work as he had a clear mind. Later, he was falling sick now and then and had to be admitted in the Hospitals both at Holy Cross Health Center and at the General Hospital Jaffna. He was diagnosed of heart ailments and suffocation due to short breath. He was treated lastly at the general Hospital, Jaffna where he was administered the last sacraments and finally succumbed to his illness on 23 September 2019.

His mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod Chapel at St. Joseph's Juniorate at Colombuthurai in the morning on 24 September 2019 and lay in state to give an opportunity for the people

to pay their last respects. His students, including ex - Juniorists, ex - scholastics, Oblates, religious men and women, a big number of diocesan clergy and the major seminarians, his relatives, and all those who came into contact with him thronged in big numbers to pay their last respects to the great, valiant and indefatigable Oblate expressing their gratitude and love. His sister in Colombo and his brother and close relatives from the United Kingdom came to Jaffna immediately and stayed close to his coffin shedding tears. Periodic prayer services were conducted by the scholastics, the Juniors, the pre-novices and the Oblates who were his students. His mortal remains were taken to St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna on 26 September where a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was celebrated, presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B. Gnanapragasam, the Bishop of Jaffna at 3.30pm. Fr. S.J. Emmanuel, a senior Jaffna diocesan Priest and a renowned theologian delivered the panegyric in which he highlighted the contribution made by late Fr. Jesuthasan in the fields of education, formation, writings, teaching and preaching. A big number of priests and religious, lay people and his close relatives participated at this Mass. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were laid to rest at St. Mary's Cemetery, Jaffna.

Fr. Jesuthasan is no more, but his memory will remain with us for many years to come. He has left behind before us certain oblate values which we will cherish and emulate, namely his sense of obedience to the Superiors, his fidelity to his religious consecration, his apostolic zeal and commitment to his duties and responsibilities. We inherit from him the heritage of deep love for the Word of God and the unquenched fire and unrivalled enthusiasm manifested and translated in concrete and creative ministries.

“Well done good and faithful servant since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your Master's Joy”(Mt. 25:23).May He Rest in Peace.

REV. FR. PEDURU ARULNATHAN, OMI
(1948 – 2020)

Birth	: 03 March 1948 at Saravanai, Naranthanai
First Vows	: 02 February 1977 at Sacred heart Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows	: 09 March 1980 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No	: 12386
Ordination	: 29 August 1980 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna
Death	: 16 March 2020 at Mathew's Memorial Home, Colombuthurai, Jaffna



Father Peduru Arulnathan OMI was born at Saravanai, Naranthanai on 3 March 1948. His parents were Suwani Peter and Deogu Maria. There were three siblings in the family, two boys and a girl. Arul was the second one in the family. His father Peduru was a farmer and mother was a house wife. Arulnathan had his primary education at J/Saravanai R. C.T.M school from 12 March 1952 – 18 January 1960, at J/ Velanai M.M.V from 19 January 1960 – 31 December 1966 and secondary education at J/St. Anthony's College, Kayts. After schooling he was working as a labourer in the health department for a short period and then was sent to Thindivanam, India by Fr. Augustine OMI to be trained as a permanent catechist. Arulnathan however had a deep desire to become an Oblate Priest and dedicate his life to the service of God and his people. Of course he was very much attracted by Fr. Augustine OMI, who was his Parish Priest and decided to follow him. With his guidance and direction Arulnathan entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Nugegoda in 1970 and began his initial formation.

After much hard work, he managed to get through the stipulated examinations in English and in Latin qualifying himself to enter the Major Seminary. He entered the Oblate College of Philosophy at De Mazenod House, at Mattakkuliya in 1974 and completed the philosophical course in 1975. He entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 1 February 1976. When he

successfully completed his year of probation at the Novitiate, he made his First Profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation on 02 February 1977. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in 1977 and pursued his theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate Religious at the Scholasticate at Ampitiya on 9 March 1980 and left the Scholasticate in July. He was practicing his diaconate pastoral Ministry at Horona under the veteran Oblate Julius Wijesinghe and then joined the Oblate Grand Mission Team at Puthukudiyiruppu, in the diocese of Jaffna and helped them for a few months. Once he completed his ecclesiastical studies, was ordained a Priest of God on 29 August 1980 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna by Rt. Rev. Dr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai, the Bishop of Jaffna.

Fr. Arul (Name used by the Oblates) was very eager and enthusiastic to receive his first obedience with a deep desire to serve at Parishes. Though he had some health concerns, was generally energetic. He received his first Obedience in September 1980 to St. Anthony's Parish at Chunnakam in the diocese of Jaffna to be assistant Pastor and served in this capacity till September 1981. Then he was given the Obedience in September 1981 to St. Peter's Parish at Mullaitivu to be the Co- Pastor and served there till July 1982. Then he received the obedience to Valaipadu Mission in July 1982 to be Acting Pastor. From there he was sent to the diocese of Mannar in December 1982. He took his residence at St. Anthony's Parish at Rambaikkulam, Vavuniya and was looking after the sub-stations of Omanthai and Illamaruthankulam. When Illamaruthankulam was made a separate Parish in 1982, Fr. Arul became the first Parish Priest and served there for more than two years.

He amidst difficult and challenging situations developed this Parish Community and formed the Parishioners in faith and morals. The Parishioners were poor farmers and economically paupers unable to eke out their daily existence but a hardworking clan. Cultivation of Paddy and other small vegetables were the main sources of income. Arul brought the youngsters together and educated them at his Mission House which was a cadjan thatched one. The young boys spent their days and night with him besides school hours

and studied. Arul was very strict with them and also very demanding. The whole village considered him to be their savior as he became the first Pastor and a shepherd with a smell of the sheep. He trained the altar servers, catechists, choir and established various pious associations and kept them under strict surveillance. They participated very actively in all liturgical services. They still remain grateful to him for his indefatigable services rendered to them. He also promoted a few vocations to Priesthood and religious life. Arul was prophetic in his pastoral planning, preaching and brought unity among Hindu people and his parishioners. They were working hand in hand in healthy integration. Arul organized cultural programs like dramas, Koohtu, Christmas Celebrations and Church Feasts were celebrated in a grand scale. The people had a deep referential fear for him and obeyed his orders and executed his plans. They protested against his transfer.

Then he was given transfer to St. Anne's Parish at Vankalai, Mannar in April 1985. The Parish of Vankalai was experiencing excruciating pain after the shooting and killing of Fr. Mary Bastian, the Parish Priest by the Sri Lankan security forces on 06 January 1985. All the Parishioners were dismayed with his untimely demise under tragic circumstances and almost going through untold nightmare experiences. The Parish was void of a Pastor for a few months and was hoping for an equally enthusiastic pastor. The Local Ordinary Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam chose Fr. Arul to succeed late Fr. Mary Bastian as Pastor. Fr. Arul took charge of the Parish with mixed feelings and with much reluctance but eventually was able to successfully revive the spirit of the people who were saddened and depressed by the cycle of events of violence that occurred continually in their parish. Fr. Arul dedicated himself unreservedly to revamp the spiritual life of the parishioners and reorganized the Parish activities. The political situation in the aftermath of Fr. Mary Bastian's murder became serious and escalating in the district of Mannar and particularly at Vankalai. People were unwilling to come to the Church for spiritual services and even to attend Mass because of fear but Arul gradually convinced them and brought them back to normalcy.

In 1989 he was transferred to St. Joseph's Parish at Thalvupadu in Mannar. Here too the same situation existed. The whole village was cordoned off now and then by the security forces and on Sundays people were not allowed to come out of their homes to go to Church. Fr. Arul with his already gained experiences at Vankalai was facing this entire ordeal and was providing the spiritual food to the people. They appreciated his homilies and the liturgical services. Arul acted as the mediator between the security forces and the people when the people were not given permission for fishing. Very often people suffered extreme poverty due to the ban on fishing made by the forces. Thalvupadu was also suffering a lot during his tenure of pastoral care but he excelled himself as the custodian of his parishioners. He was hard on himself and hard on his people and won their hearts. Then he was given obedience in 1993 to the Oblate Mission at Thachanamaruthamadhu. This mission was very difficult with minimum facilities. That time no proper drinking water, no electricity and above all no proper Mission House but Arul roughed out a lot and served as a successful pastor. Here too he was educating many poor children keeping them with him and providing food, space and was also teaching them. He used to assist financially many such poor students, widows, poor families and orphans. He received financial support from his major Superiors for this charitable work. The parishioners still remember his services. From there he received the next obedience to the Parish of South Ilupaikkulam and served for nearly three years. He revived the spiritual life of the people, educated the young boys and girls, brought the parish community together and reorganized all the pious associations and made them function fruitfully. He promoted some vocations to priesthood and religious life and some of them are today Oblate priests. From there he was given obedience to Thalaimannar Parish in 1999 and served there till 2000. He was transferred to the Parish at Komarasankulam as the parish priest in 2000 and served there till 2004. From there Fr. Arul was transferred to Vidalthaltivu Parish in 2004 and rendered his services till 2006. From there he took up the Parish of Thevanpiddy in 2006. Again this was a new erected parish and Arul was trying his best to build it up. He was particular about the spiritual formation of the people and especially of the families. He paid much attention to the sick and the elderly. A historical event took place when he was there

i.e the famous displacement of the people from Madhu refugee camps and surrounding areas towards Thevanpidy, Mulankavil and Poonary. Due to severe artillery shelling and bombing and exchange of fire between the fighting parties and due to the advancements of the security forces all the people were leaving Madhu.

Fr. Arul has been a person of poor health with many physical complications like asthma, hernia, diabetes, bronchitis and dental problems for many years but he never went to a physician neither for consultation nor for medical treatment. He was taking some native medicine with the help of a few native doctors. But his poor health didn't in any way hinder his commitment to his ministry. He served in some of the most difficult Parishes in the diocese of Mannar from 1982 till his retirement to Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai in 2012. Even at Mathew's Memorial Home he was falling sick time to time but continued with his native medicine. Whenever the superiors of Mathew's Memorial Home wanted to take him to the hospitals, he refused and stayed indoors always. His long stay at Mathew's Memorial Home was very beneficial to the Parish Priests in the vicinity as well as to the major Seminarians and religious and Priests. Many of them sought spiritual direction and the sacrament of Confession both at the house and at different Parishes. He has been also assisting the Pastors whenever he was invited particularly during the season of Lent. He used to be jovial with inmates and sometimes bursting with loud laughter. He led a silent and solitary life during the last years of life and almost confined to his room.

Father Arulnathan had been serious in his outlook, honest, responsible, satisfied with simple things in life, well-motivated, emotionally stable, hard on himself and on others and reasonable in practical judgements. His attitude of being often out-spoken displeased others such as his companions, Priests, religious and his Parishioners. His facial appearance was seemingly rough but inside very soft. Sometimes he pretended to be hard but inside loved them with a fatherly spirit. Had a great love to the poor, went in search of the orphans and the lost ones, and brought them back to the sheepfold. Educated many poorest children and students keeping them with him

and feeding them. Many of his students are today Government employees and some are abroad doing very well. They still remember him with gratitude. His commitment to the integral formation of his Parishioners and the poor children is unique. Whenever the news of his transfer to a new Parish reached them, the whole community became shocked and dismayed. They were shedding tears to have missed him.

His stay at Thachanamaruthamadhu and at Sithamparapuram need to be recorded with pride. The living conditions were very pathetic and without even minimum facilities. Worse at Sithamparapuram as he was living in a tiny hut behind the sacristy. One couldn't imagine as to how he was living there. But Arul was witnessing to the hundreds of refugees who were at the camps there after many displacements. He had been falling ill from time to time but went on doing his ministry. Before he took residence at Sithamparapuram he served as the Spiritual Director and Confessor to the sisters of Mother Theresa at Pampaimadhu. The last Parish he served was Thevanpiddy where large number of refugees took shelter from different corners of Mannar and Madhu. The refugees from Madhu started displacing after the shelling on the Eucharistic Chapel and in the surroundings of the Madhu main Church killing many people and injured also many. They were moving towards Thevanpiddy area and finally took shelter there.

A historical event took place amidst all these intricacies. The statue of Our Lady of Madhu was brought to Thevanpiddy for fear of being destroyed and vandalized by the advancing security forces towards Madhu. Fr. Arul was privileged to have been the custodian of the statue of Our Lady of Madhu for a few weeks together with the other displaced priests from the diocese of Mannar. Then the Statue was removed to the Bishop's House at Mannar.

His life and ministry at the Parish of Vankalai need to be recorded with oblate Pride. In the aftermath of the killing of Fr. Mary Bastian, a Jaffna diocesan Priest by the Sri Lankan security forces, the people of Vankalai were left in the lurch experiencing fear and uncertainties. Many of them were getting ready to go to India for

safety but when after a few months Fr. Arul became their Pastor they decided to stay back. Arul was also like the people going through and experiencing pain and fear. Anything could happen at any time was the situation. God has been with him and with his people protecting them from all imminent dangers. Arul served there under fearful situation but formed the people convincing them and urging them to trust in the Providence of God and in the intercession of St. Anne. Most of the Parishioners obeyed him as he gave much importance to the spiritual formation and survival. He was also organizing many charitable assistance to the people through St. Vincent de Paul Society. He won the hearts of the people as time went on.

It is to be noted that Fr. Arul was one of the main preachers at the major feasts at Madhu Shrine. From the Parishes of Vankalai and Thalvupdu he was invited by the Bishop of Mannar for this important ministry. Due to the ethnic problems the preachers couldn't come to Madhu always but Fr. Arul and other oblates were preaching. Fr. Arul used to sing the final Eucharistic Procession Hymn, “Pugalvai Jerusalem un Aandavarai” (Laudate Jerusalem) for many years and which was much appreciated.

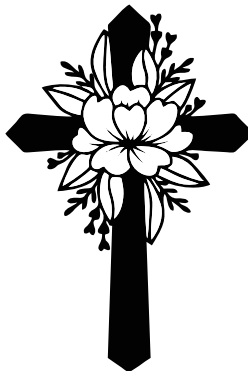
Arul as a scholastic wrote an article in English on “YOGA and CHRISTIANS” which was published in the Ceylon Catholic Messenger on 8 July 1989. His reflections were that “Yoga is nothing but a way of physical and psychological discipline. It is not a religion but it is a way of union with God. Yoga can be used as a method of Christian prayer. It is very helpful to Christians for their solitude and contemplation. Much growth can take place when we enter into Yoga Meditation”. There were some negative remarks made on this article by one of the Priests from Colombo as response to Arul's article.

From the beginning of the year 2019, Arul was falling sick and his general health deteriorated. He was not exposing himself too much but confined himself to his room. He was getting the help of a Physiotherapist to treat his weakening legs and hands but his problem of breathing became acute. Thus Arul's health became poorer day by day. Fr. Arunathan passed away peacefully to his eternal reward on 16 March 2020 in his room at Mathew's Memorial Home,

Colombuthurai at 9.15 pm due to Cardiopulmonary arrest secondary to Bronchial Asthma and Hyper tension.

His mortal remains lay at De Mazenod Chapel at the Juniorate on 17 March 2020 and many people, Priests and Religious paid him their last respects. It was sad that many of his former parishioners, friends and relatives couldn't attend his funeral services due to the Corona Pandemic and travel hurdles.

The funeral rites were conducted on 18 March 2020 at De Mazeond Chapel at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B. Gnanapragasam, the Bishop of Jaffna. Many Oblates, and a few Priests and Religious both from Mannar and Jaffna were present. The panegyric was delivered by Fr. M. Paul Nadchethiram OMI. After the final obsequies, the mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's Burial Ground, Jaffna, where they were laid to rest. May he rest in peace.



REV. FR. ALBERT VICTOR JEYASIGHAM, OMI
(1955 – 2020)

Birth	: 28 April 1955 at Koiyathodam, Jaffna (Inuvil Hospital)
First Vows	: 8 September 1979 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows	: 8 December 1982 at Sto. Crucifisso Parish, Rome
Oblation No	: 12530
Ordination	: 2 May 1984 at Christthe King Church, Koiyathodam, Jaffna
Death	: 29 September 2020 at General Hospital, Jaffna.



Father Albert Victor Jeyasingham OMI was born on 28 April 1955 at Koiyathodam, Jaffna. His parents were Joseph Albert and Patrick Mary Rosalin. There were five in the family, three boys, two girls and Victor was the eldest son. His father Albert worked as a clerk in the Police department in Colombo and died rather early after a few years of Priestly ordination of Victor. Victor had his primary and secondary education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. From his childhood, he was very much attracted to the Oblate Priests who had been his Parish priests. He was a dutiful altar server and the whole family was living in and around the Church and became very attached to the Oblates. They used to assist the Pastors whenever needed. Fr. Francis Kulas, the veteran Oblate was his Parish priest and had been observing Victor and motivated him to consecrate his life to the service of God and to his people. Victor seeing Fr. Kulas' dedication, holiness and simplicity in priestly activities in the Parish expressed his desire to be an Oblate Priest. Thus Fr. Francis Kulas OMI recommended Victor to the Oblate Juniorate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna and Victor was enrolled as a candidate in 1972.

He continued his education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna and completed his advanced Level Examinations in Mathematics stream. Having completed his college education and the initial formation at the Juniorate he proceeded to the Oblate College of Philosophy at Mattakkuliya, Colombo in 1976. It is to be noted that the Oblates had their own college of Philosophy for many years and then terminated

for reasons not known. Having completed his philosophical studies, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela in 1978. When he successfully fulfilled the year of probation, he made his First Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 8 September 1979 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in 1979 from where he pursued his theological studies at the National Seminary.

Victor was observed by the Superior and staff of the scholasticate to be a suitable candidate with many outstanding oblate qualities and correct aptitude was recommended to go to the International Scholasticate in Rome to continue his ecclesiastical studies at the Gregorian University and his priestly formation at the International Scholasticate. Thus Victor having finished his first year of theology at the National seminary, Ampitiya, kandy was sent to Rome in 1980. He made his final Profession of Vows as an Oblate on 8 December 1982 at the Parish of Sto. Crocifisso, in Rome. Then he returned to Jaffna, was ordained a deacon and was practicing his diaconate ministry for some months in Parishes in Negombo district and was ordained a Priest of God by His Lordship Rt. Rt. Dr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai, the Bishop of Jaffna at Christ the King Church at Koiyathodam, Jaffna on 2 May 1984.

His first Obedience was to the Preaching Community at Amala Utpvam, Colombuthurai in 1984 and continued this ministry in his own way and style till 1987. It was remarked by some Oblates and Parish Priests that Victor had difficulties and had been much wanting in Tamil language but Victor continued this ministry with conviction. Then he was appointed the Rector of St. Joseph's Juniorate, Colombuthurai in 1987 and an additional responsibility as the Provincial Treasurer was assigned to him in 1988. Victor was shouldering these two responsibilities with minutest care and vigilance. His stewardship in financial matters was much appreciated by the members. He served as the Rector till 1993 but continued to serve as the provincial treasurer till 1994.

From there he was invited by the General Administration to Rome to serve as the Assistant to the Oblate Treasurer General being a

member of the General Administration at the General House. Fr. Victor served in this capacity with prudence and dedication winning the admiration of the General Administration and particularly by the Treasurer General. His simple ways of witnessing was challenging every one there.

He was prudently handling and maintaining all the accounts faithfully. Having terminated this ministry he opted to work among the Tamil Catholics in Palermo, Italy. With the consent and blessing of the then Superior General and the Provincial Superior of Jaffna, he was appointed the Chaplain of the same in 2005 and continued till 2013. He was a member of the Italian Oblate Province and then of the Mediterranean Province. It was a very challenging and difficult mission for Fr. Victor. He went through untold suffering and rejection but trusting in the providence of God he continued this task till his term came to a completion. The superior general then gave Victor the Obedience to Jaffna Province but Victor accepting the Obedience expressed his desire to work in Norway being a member of the Jaffna Province. The Provincial Superior Rev. M. Paul Nadhceethiram negotiated with the Bishop of Oslo, made a contract and assigned Fr. Victor as the Chaplain of the Tamil Catholics there in 2013. This mission also was very tough for Victor because he was a law abiding and honest Pastor but people couldn't fall in line with his ways. Victor managed to work there for two years and came to Jaffna in 2014. On his return he was appointed the Provincial Treasurer of the Jaffna Province in 2014 which office he held till he met his death under tragic circumstances. While continuing his treasurer responsibility he was appointed as one of the formators at De Mazenod Scholasticate at Colombuthurai, Jaffna in 2017 and continued his work residing at the scholasticate.

One can write volumes about Fr. Victor's personality, life and ministry. He has been an active and energetic person though he was silent, unassuming and never assertive, a silent hard worker, self-controlled, well-disciplined and emotionally balanced, had strong determination and perseverance, had convictions and acted on them. Had a mature and realistic outlook on life, faced challenges and hardships calmly and patiently, a very deep listener and not a talker,

cheerful, friendly and sociable, could easily adjust himself to people and situations, very generous, lover of the poor, kind and helpful, very obliging and sensitive to the needs of others, a very self-sacrificing person, dutiful, honest, trustworthy, responsible and dependable, calm and sober, very soft in speech and refined in manners.

He also had some temperamental qualities, strong-willed, not imaginative, gentle, with initiative for action but not in conversation but internally his own man. Had a strong analytic intelligence, being a mathematician lacked fluency in the spoken expression of his ideas.

At the General House he made a noteworthy impression by his total commitment to his official ministry as the Assistant Bursar General of the Congregation. His life spoke stronger than his words and work. Well accepted by the community and by everyone who visited the General House in Rome. He was very serious about his religious and priestly vocation observing the demands of the evangelical counsels. His spirit of docility and obedience to Superiors won their hearts. The experiences he gained both abroad and home over the past many years made him a well accomplished person and an Oblate. He loved the poor students in the vicinity at De Mazenod Scholasticate and taught them Math and other subjects in the evenings and whenever he had free time. He rarely rested in the afternoons. Fr. Victor was not accepted and appreciated by every Oblate at the Jaffna Province for his ways of dealing with them and his sense of rigidity but if they had known his true personality things would have been better observed. However he was a real Oblate with many outstanding values and qualities.

His last days were very, tragic, sad and pathetic. One day he was going to his Office at the Provincial House, Thodarpaham on a bicycle, from the Scholasticate, a motorist came behind very fast and knocked him down. Victor had a grievous fall on the road injuring severely his head and shoulders. He was rushed to the General Hospital, Jaffna and was admitted in the intensive care unit. He lost his consciousness due to the big blow on his head that damaged also his brain. Later he came to a state of coma and remained in the hospital almost for two weeks. Fr. Victor breathed his last under these tragic

circumstances at the hospital on 29 September 2020 making everyone with a sudden shock and sadness. It is an irreparable loss to the Province of Jaffna. His mortal remains lay at De Mazenod Chapel at Colombuthurai on 29 September 2020 where many of his students, priests and religious and many lay people paid their last respects.

His funeral took place on 30 September 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna. There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass presided over by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Bernard Gnanapragasam, the Bishop of Jaffna at 3.30 pm at which Fr. Maria Sebastian OMI delivered the panegyric. It was a beautiful eulogy about Fr. Victor's personality and commitment. There was a big gathering of Priests, Religious, relatives, Seminarians and students. After the final obsequies, his mortal remains were laid to rest at St. Mary's burial Ground, Jaffna. May he rest in Peace.



RT. REV. DR. GNANAPRAGASAM VICTOR, OMI
(1940 – 2020)

Birth : 21 November 1940, at Paasaiyoor,
Jaffna
First Vows : 31 May 1960 at the Novitiate,
Kalutara
Final Vows : 31 May 1963 at Scholasticate,
Ampitiya
Oblation No : 10863b
Ordination : 21 December 1966, St. Mary's
Cathedral, Jaffna
Death : 12 December 2020, in Lahore, Pakistan



Bishop Victor Gnanapragasam OMI was born on 21 November 1940 at Passaiyoor, Jaffna. His parents were Jovan Gnanapragasam and Sayamma belonging to St. Anthony's Parish, Passaiyoor. His parents were God-fearing and exemplary Catholics. They were well respected by their relatives and by the whole Parish for their attachments to the Parish and to the Parish Priests. Two sisters of Victor became nuns in the Apostolic Carmelite order. Victor had his primary education at St. Patrick's College Jaffna. Victor was an altar server to his Parish Priest at St. Anthony's Church at Passaiyoor who was an Oblate. He expressed his willingness to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people and after observing his correct aptitude, the Parish Priest recommended Victor to enter the Oblate Minor Seminary at Kohuwela at the age of thirteen in 1953. From there he pursued his secondary education at St. Peter's College at Bampalapitiya.

After fulfilling his basic formation requirements, Victor was sent to Sacred Heart Novitiate at “Mont Eden” at Kalutara on 30 May 1959. At the successful completion of his probation period he made his first Profession of Vows on 31 May 1960 at the Novitiate at Kalutara. Thereafter he entered the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy in September 1960 and followed his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary till 1966. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 31 May 1963 at the Scholasticate. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of

God on 21 December 1966 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna by Rt. Rev. Dr. Jerome Emilianuspillai OMI, the Bishop of Jaffna.

Young and energetic Fr. Victor received his first obedience to St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena on 19 March 1967 to be assistant Pastor. Again on 30 May 1967 he was sent to follow a short Pastoral Course at Maradana and then was given his next obedience on 18 October 1967 to Nilaveli, in Trincomalee to be the assistant Pastor and became the Pastor after a few months. Fr. Victor's next assignment was given on 1 November 1969 to the Preaching Community, "Amala Utpavam" at Colombuthurai, Jaffna. He took this ministry joyfully and was going about preaching the Gospel with dedication. He was well appreciated by the listeners and by the Oblate Companions for his meaningful preaching. In January 1971 he was sent to Bangalore, India to conduct Mission Preaching in different Parishes together with the Oblates who were already working there. Fr. Victor gained much experience of the Preaching Ministry and became a full-fledged Preacher.

Then he was called for a special mission and was sent to Pakistan as a Missionary on 19 May 1973 and he continued to be there till the end of his life. Thus Pakistan became his haven of laurels. He has been a Parish Priest in Gojra, in the Diocese of Faisalabad from 1976-1977. Then he attended a training course in the Youth Ministry in Manila, Philippines from 1977- 1978. Then again he served as Parish Priest in Toba Tek Singh, in the Diocese of Faisalabad from 1979 – 1980. He became the Superior of the Oblate Delegation of Pakistan in 1980 and continued this post till 1982 and then became Parish Priest in Gojra in 1982 and was serving there till 1986. He was once again Parish Priest in Toba Tek Singh from 1987 – 1989.

Then he got the opportunity to go to St. Anselm's Institute in Kent, UK to follow a course on Psychology and then followed another course in Spirituality at the Angelicum, Rome from 1989 -1992. On his return to Pakistan again, he was appointed Parish Priest in Gojra for the third time from 1992 – 1993. He was appointed to assist the Oblate Formation team in Karachi in 1993 and served till 1997 and then from 1997 – 2001 he served as the first Councilor of the Oblate Delegation in Pakistan.

The Apostolic Prefecture of Quetta, consisting of the whole of the Province of Baluchistan, the biggest Province in Pakistan was erected as a separate Ecclesiastical Unit, by the Bulla “Spectantibus Cunctis” (Congregatio Pro Gentium Evengelizatione, Prot. Num.5947/01), on 9 November, in the year of the Lord 2001 by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. This new ecclesiastical territory was carved out of the Archdiocese of Karachi and the Diocese of Hyderabad. The official announcement was made in the Vatican City and in Pakistan, on 7 December 2001. The official Promulgation was made in Quetta by His Excellency Msgr. Alessandro D'Errico D.D., Titular Archbishop of Carinensis and Apostolic Nuncio of Pakistan, on 7 April 2002. The Archbishops and Bishops of Pakistan, together with many priests, religious and laity were present on that occasion. On the same day, Very Rev. Fr. Victor Gnanapragasam OMI was installed as the First Apostolic Prefect of Quetta and he took charge of the newly established Ecclesiastical Unit.

On 29 April 2010, on the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena, announcement was made in the Vatican that His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, has raised the status of the Apostolic Prefecture of Quetta to an Apostolic Vicariate by the Bulla “Singulari Quidem” and Very Rev. Fr. Victor Gnanapragasam OMI, the incumbent Apostolic Prefect, was appointed as the Apostolic Vicar of Quetta, with Episcopal dignity. His Excellency, Msgr. Adolfo Tito C. Yllana D.D., Titular Archbishop of Montecorvino delegated by the Holy See, ordained the Bishop-elect Very Rev. Fr. Victor Gnanapragasam OMI on 16 July 2010. The Episcopal Ordination took place at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Karachi. The ordaining Prelate was His Excellency, Msgr. Adolfo Tito C. Yllana D.D., Titular Archbishop of Montecorvino, the Apostolic Nuncio of Pakistan. The co-consecrators were His Grace Msgr. Evarist Pinto D.D., Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Karachi and His Lordship Msgr. Max J. Rodrigues D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Hyderabad. Many Oblates from Sri Lanka too attended this Holy Event.

On Sunday the 25th of July 2010, the Proclamation Ceremony of Quetta Prefecture as a Vicariate was held in Quetta, presided by the Apostolic Nuncio of Pakistan and His Lordship Msgr. Victor

Gnanapragasam, OMI, Titular Bishop of Thimida, assumed the responsibility of the Vicariate as the First Vicar of Quetta.

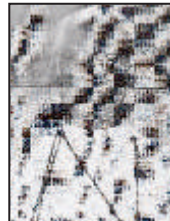
Bishop Victor has been a very loving Person right from the beginning of his young age. He received a solid spiritual formation from his parents and brothers and sisters. Even as a scholastic and as a Priest he was always found with a charming smile that attracted many friends to him. He was very human, kind, sensitive, obedient, generous and God –fearing. He showed high respect to others especially to the Priests and religious and won the same from others. Wherever he served as the servant of God he was well received and appreciated. As Pastor, Preacher, formator, missionary, and as the Chief Shepherd he was very well welcomed by all. He was a duty conscious administrator with a spirit of promoting healthy relationship among his members. He was well respected by his priests and religious in Pakistan.

It was a great blessing that many Oblate Missionaries in Pakistan both from Sri Lanka and Pakistan were closely supporting him in all his missionary endeavors. He being a son of Jaffna, the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, and a Tamil missionary in Pakistan since 1973 was called by God to be the Chief Pastor of Quetta Vicariate and did a good job till the end. The Oblates of Sri Lanka still feel proud of having given one of their own to be raised to the rank of Episcopate. While continuing his leadership ministry, his health conditions became poor curtailing his travel and pastoral visits.

He visited St. Eugene Church, Sibi (160 km away from Quetta city) for the annual Church feast on the 5th of December 2020 and that was his last visit. He embraced a peaceful death in his room early morning on the 12th of December 2020 at the Bishop's House, Quetta. His funeral took place on the 15th of December 2020 at St. Francis Grammar school, Quetta. The Funeral Mass was presided over by His Eminence Joe Cardinal Coutts, the Archbishop and Bishops of Pakistan, and many priests, religious and laity were present on this sorrowful occasion. The body of the late Bishop Victor Gnanapragasam, OMI was laid to rest at the Holy Rosary Church (Pro Cathedral), Ordinance Road, Quetta. May He rest in Peace.

24 REV. FR. SYLVESTER BLASIVS LUCIANPERERA, OMI
(1936- 2021)

Birth : 03 February 1936 at Moratuwa
First Vows : 15 August 1958, at the Novitiate, Kalutara
Final Vows : 15 August 1961 at the Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation No : 10469
Ordination : 21 December 1965 at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena, Colombo
Death : 28 March 2021 at Marian Grove, Kohuwela



Father Sylvester Blasius Lucian Perera OMI was born on 03 February 1936 at Moratuwa in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were W. Simon Perera and B. Annie Luseline Mendis. Lucian had his primary and secondary education both at Our Lady of Victories Sinhala School at Moratuwa from 1940 and then at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa from 1947 and successfully completed his senior school certificate and general certificate of Education in both Sinhala and English Medium in 1954. Attracted by the Oblate Missionaries who were his Parish priests, Lucian decided to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest. Under the direction and guidance of his then Parish Priest, he entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda on 24 January in January 1957. Having successfully mastered the languages of Latin and English within a short period of time, he entered the Oblate Novitiate "Mont Eden" at Kalutara on 15 August 1957. After completing his year of probation period at the Novitiate, he made his first profession of Vows as an oblate Scholastic on 15 August 1958.

He proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy on 16 August 1958 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy till April 1965. He made his Final Profession of Vows on 15 August 1961 at the Scholasticate. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies at the National Seminary and formation at the Oblate Scholasticate, he was ordained a Priest of God on 21 December 1965 by His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Marcus Fernando, the auxiliary

Bishop of Colombo at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena, Colombo. He left the Scholasticate on 14 March 1966.

After the Priestly Ordination Fr. Lucian Perera OMI was very zealous, energetic and eager to receive his first obedience to work in the vineyard of the Lord. It had been his great desire right from his priestly formation to work as a Parish Priest in the most and remote villages where the most abandoned poor people lived. His first assignment was to be assistant Parish Priest at Fatima Church at Maradana in the diocese of Colombo on 17 April 1966 and to follow some pastoral courses from there at Aquinas College. On 18 October 1966 he was given his next obedience to serve as assistant Pastor at Halpe, Katana. Fr. Lucian was given a different ministry on 20 April 1967 to serve as assistant Hospital Chaplain at the General Hospital, Colombo. He was very actively involving himself to be at the service of the Patients, particularly attending to the medical needs of the most senior patients who were in need of special care and who didn't have any by standers.

From there on 26 June 1967 Fr. Lucian was sent to the University College of Aquinas for Higher Studies and at the completion of his studies on 21 May 1969 he was given his next Obedience to be assistant Pastor at the Cathedral in Chilaw and again from there he was transferred on 21 May 1970 to be assistant Pastor at Mattakotuwa Parish. On 27 June 1970 he was given his next obedience to be the caretaker of the Parish of Alagollawa in Anuradhapura. From there he was transferred to Wellawatte Parish in the diocese of Colombo on 10 August 1970 to be assistant Pastor. Again on 25 September 1971 he was assigned with a big responsibility to serve as the Chaplain at the General Hospital in Colombo. Fr. Lucian held this responsibility with a great sense of dedication for a little more than four years and then was assigned as Parish Priest for the first time at St. Sebastian's Parish at Hulftsdorpt, Colombo on 17 May 1975. He worked as a committed Oblate giving top priority to the visiting of families both rich and the most poor alike. This Parish had many poor people living in slums and many daily wage earners. Fr. Lucian loved them and went after them and tried his best to integrate them into the Parish community. He faced

lots of challenges but stood firm with his oblate way of ministering. He was highly appreciated by many priests. He also got the pastoral help of the Oblate scholastic Philosophers who were at De Mazenod Oblate College of Philosophy at Mattakkuliya. They were also given direction by Fr. Lucian in their pastoral formation. On 14 February 1977 he was appointed as Parish Priest at Weliveriya Parish.

Fr. Lucian was given a golden opportunity to follow a renewal course in Pastoral Theology at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) in the Philippines from 23 August 1981 to July 1982. He made use of this chance to the maximum and returned to the Island with renewed vigor and strength. He was appointed Parish Priest at Nikaweratiya on 3 September 1982 and served there under very challenging situations. This Parish was very poor and the people were mostly daily wage earners with bare minimum facilities. Lucian kept the Oblate Spirit and identified himself with the people experiencing their pains and struggles. He was loved by the people when they realized that Lucian was a real Pastor and father to them. He visited all the families that were scattered far and wide, administering the sacraments to the sick and the elderly and participated in all their social and family events. He had also very many opposing elements from the so called rich people who were trying to suppress the poor parishioners. Lucian was with every one making himself available to all. Then again on 6 June 1985 he was transferred to Nochchiagama (NCP) as Parish Priest. This Parish too was very challenging but Lucian withstood all the difficulties and successfully spearheaded his missionary tasks. Then again on 18 August 1987 he was transferred to Paiyagala Parish in Colombo diocese as Parish Priest. Lucian promoted Marian Devotion among his Parishioners here and taught the people the importance of reciting the Holy Rosary. In fact people cultivated a deep devotion to our beloved Mother Mary and started praying the Holy Rosary at their Homes. Fr. Lucian used to walk on the streets of the Parish with the Holy Rosary in his hands. On 18 August 1989 he was transferred to Bopitiya as Parish Priest.

After serving at Bopitiya for four years he took his residence at De Mazenod House, at Mattakkuliya, Colombo on 10 September 1993 at the instruction of his Major Superior to work out his visa to go to Aix en Provence to follow the De Mazenod Experience.

From 14 January 1994 he followed the de Mazenod Experience in Aix en Provence, in France and then visited the Oblate General House in Rome on 14 April 1994. From there he proceeded to the Diocese of Portwanys, Indiana, USA and worked as assistant Pastor at the Parish of Decatur, Portwanys from June 1994. He returned to the Island on 12 December 1995 and resided at De Mazenod House until he left for India in January 1997 for Eye treatment. On 22 May 1997 he returned to the country and took residence at the Elders Home at Kohuwela. From October 1997 he worked as an unofficial assistant at Koralawella Parish in Moratuwa and again as unofficial Chaplain for Melville House for the elders at Moratuwa till July 1998. On 4 September 1999 he received his next obedience to the Oblate Community at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona. On 25 May 2003 he was appointed to the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu to be the Chaplain to the Sinhala speaking pilgrims. This appointment kept Fr. Lucian very busy and occupied. He was happy to be at the foot of Mary and dispensed his priestly blessings to the many pilgrims who visited the hallowed Shrine.

On 6 May 2004 he was given obedience to Awissawela Parish as assistant and again on 17 October 2004 he took his residence at Udammitta, Dehiyagatha helping the community in a little way. On 19 August 2005 he became the resident Chaplain to the Elders' Home at Darley Road, Maradana and from there on 29 October 2011 he joined the Community at Marian Grove, Kohuwela, Nugegoda. He was again placed at St. Vincent's Home at Maggona in March 2015 and was appointed the Chaplain at Our Lady of Grace and Compassion Convent (Melville), Moratuwa. From there he was moved to De Mazenod House on 16 May 2017 as a resident priest to relax and recuperate from his old age discomforts. Again he was moved to Marian Grove, Kohuwela in June 2020.

Father Lucian though he appeared to be physically strong and healthy, had all sorts of health issues and complications. From time to time he fell very sick and was taken to the hospitals for medical treatments. He had difficulties in walking with a severe disability in his knees due to overweight. He used to get irritated easily and

complained of even the smallest pains and discomforts. He used to express his dissatisfaction in spite of the best health care given to him by the Oblates at Marian Grove. His health condition began to gradually deteriorate, the last sacraments were administered and on 28 March 2021 he was called to his eternal rest in the Lord.

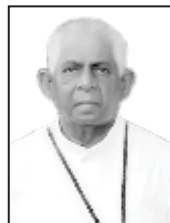
On 29 March 2021, his mortal remains were taken to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya in the morning and laid in state for the Priests, religious, relatives and his former Parishioners to pay him their last respects. Many of the Oblates of the Colombo Province too paid their last respects to him. Again his mortal remains were taken to Fatima's Church at Maradana in the afternoon on 30 March 2021. His funeral services were held at 4pm at Fatima's Church on 30 March 2021 amidst a large Congregation of Priests, Nuns, Scholastics and many Oblates and laity. The Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo and at which Fr. Gamini Silva OMI delivered the panegyric. After the final obsequies the mortal remains were taken in procession to Kanatte Cemetery and laid to rest in Priests' section.

Fr. Lucian is no more and has gone to his eternal reward. He exhibited a simple life style, faced many challenges in his parochial ministries, served in several parishes and communities for short periods, received transfers one after another but was a faithful Oblate who had a deep love for the Oblate Congregation and to our beloved Mother Mary. He had promoted also a number of vocations for priestly and religious life. May He rest in Peace.



25 REV. FR. GNANAPRAGASAM EDMUND MICHAEL, OMI
(1944 - 2021)

Birth	: 1 December 1944 at Koiyathoddam, Jaffna
First Vows	: 31 May 1964 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, “Mont Eden”, Kalutara
Final Vows	: 24 July 1968 at the Oblate Scholasticate, Ampitiya
Oblation	: 11648
Ordination	: 21 December 1970 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna
Death	: 13 November 2021 at Mathew's Memorial Home, Colombuthurai



Fr. Gnanapragasam Edmund Michael OMI was born on 1 December 1944 at Koiyathoddam, Jaffna. His parents were Mr. Madutheen Gnanapragasan Ponnuthurai and Michael Arulamma Sellam. He was the last son of the family, after 8 years of his two elder sisters. They belonged to St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, Jaffna. His family was well accepted and recognized by his relatives and also by the Oblate Priests. They were very pious and involved themselves in the Parish activities. His father left this world when Michael was pretty young. Michael was a faithful altar server to Fr. L.J. Augustine OMI who was the parish priest. Michael had his primary education at St. Joseph's Boys' School at Colombuthurai and his secondary education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna.

Michael having been attracted by Fr. Augustine when serving as his altar server cultivated a deep seated desire to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people. He expressed his willingness to his Parish Priest Fr. Augustine OMI and he in return began to foster his vocation with proper guidance and surveillance. With his recommendation Michael entered St. Joseph's Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in January 1962. At the Juniorate he was given a thorough training in English and Latin Languages. Since Michael was quite intelligent, picked these two languages fairly fast and was sent to the Sacred Heart Novitiate “Mont Eden”, at Kalutara on 30 May 1963. When he successfully completed his year of probation, made his First

Profession of Vows as an Oblate Scholastic on 31 May 1964 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy from where he pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary. He made his final Profession of Vows as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate on 24 July 1968 at the scholasticate, Ampitiya. At the completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God on 21 December 1970 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna by Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. L. R. Antony, the Bishop of Jaffna. The new Oblate Priest Fr. Michael left the Scholasticate in March 1971 with full of vigour and enthusiasm to receive his first obedience.

He was given his first Obedience to serve as assistant Parish Priest at St. Sebastian's Church in Mannar in April 1971 and served there very zealously and committedly till October 1973. From there he was transferred to Mullaitivu Parish in November 1972 to act for the Parish Priest till January 1973. From there he was transferred to Arippu Parish in Mannar as Parish Priest in February 1973. Arippu had many substations like Chilawathurai, Kokkupadayan and Mullikulam to mention a few. Traveling to these places was very difficult and tiring as there were no good roads. Even wild animals like elephants used to cross roads and enter the villages. Mission houses too were not well furnished at that time but Michael was given a Land Rover for the use of the mission. He roughed out a lot and did a good job. He was interested in promoting religious knowledge and other secular studies among the students. He maintained a good rapport among the people of other religions too.

Michael is still being remembered with love by his former Parishioners. He left behind a remarkable witness to the Oblate way of life wherever he ministered. From there he was transferred to St. Theresa's Parish at Kilinochchi on 14 May 1976. Again it was a very challenging mission with many substations and some of them surrounded by thick jungles. Here too he had a Land Rover for his traveling and did a yeoman service to the Parishioners. One memorable event to be mentioned here about Fr. Michael's involvement in the new Project that the Oblates began at 5th Mile post at Akkarayankulam in 1977, when hundreds of Tamil Refugees came

from the South to save their lives from the ethnic violence that took a big toll of Tamil lives. Fr. Michael being the parish priest was executing the plans and the logistics indicated by Fr. Hilarian Vethanayagam, the Vicar Provincial. Michael was mostly supervising the clearing of the forest by the scholastics of the North and other labourers and the progress of the establishment of the new settlement that the Oblates of the North envisaged and began. Michael was initially attending to the spiritual needs of the people and then the other Oblates took charge of the refugee camp. Michael was working hard also to feed the people and to provide their basic needs as a liaison person of the Vicar Provincial. With his tireless efforts and his love for education, he succeeded in founding a school now called “Bharathy Vidyalayam” at Red Bana, Vishvamadu. It stands today as a monument of Fr. Michael's love for education of the poor children. He served at Kilinochchi Parish till October 1981.

Then he was transferred to St. Anthony's Parish at Chunnakam in October 1981. The people of Chunnakam still remember Fr. Michael for his indefatigable services to them. He spent his time and energy to form the Parishioners in religious and sacramental knowledge. He paid special attention to the formation of the youngsters in their education and integral formation. He kept many boys with him and taught them Mathematics, English and other disciplines beside religious education. The altar servers were monitored with much vigilance by him. Today a few of them are Oblate Priests and diocesan Priests. Everyone would agree that Fr. Michael's services at Chunnakam Parish still stand as an outstanding contribution. He was well respected and received by the Parishioners and by the Hindu people not only as a servant of God but also as one of the best teachers. He was very strict with the youngsters and made them become well-disciplined and responsible citizens. From there he was transferred to Mullaitivu as Parish priest in March 1986 and served there till October 1988. This time was very difficult for Fr. Michael as the fighting and violent events between the Security Forces and the Tamil Freedom Fighters escalated bringing the movement of the people to a standstill. He took residence for sometime at the Holy Family Convent there and provided the basic spiritual needs. Roads were closed and travels curtailed. Michael was

close to the people in their sufferings and uncertainties. From there he was transferred to St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna on 4 January 1989 as one of the assistant Priests and from there he was given obedience to St. Anthony's Parish at Passaiyoor as assistant Parish Priest on 23 August 1990 and served there for two years.

Fr. Michael was sent to, Tamil Nadu, India on 21 March 1996 to work with the Indian Oblates. He worked as the Spiritual Director at St. Paul's Scholasticate at Poonamallee, at the Oblate Minor Seminary and for the Congregation of the Missionaries of Immaculate Mary founded by an Oblate and to many other Religious Congregations. He provided his agricultural expertise at these places and helped them increase their local production of vegetables, dairy farming and production of different fruit trees. He was an asset to the communities wherever he served.

He returned to Sri Lanka on 23 July 2002 and was appointed the Director of Amala Annai Anpaham at Mulankavil. He was trying his best to serve the orphaned children but his relationship with them was not that welcoming. He was seen and observed by them as a hard person and children were afraid to approach him but Michael had his own story about them and the previous administrations at Anpaham. He managed to serve there till 2005. Then he was made the Parish Priest at Komarasankulam in the diocese of Mannar in 2005 and worked strenuously to make this Parish as the shrine of Calvary, a diocesan Shrine. Today big number of pilgrims makes their Lenten Pilgrimages to this Shrine. However, Fr. Michael's committed services were not appreciated nor recognized by some of the diocesan clergy.

In 2005 Micheal received his Obedience from the Superior General Most Rev. Fr. Whilhem Steckling OMI to work in Namibia in South Africa. He worked at Formation Houses and contributed his mite to the growth and formation of the candidates. He was a challenging figure for many Oblates and the Scholastics there and sometimes his personality was not correctly understood.

He returned to the Province in 2010 and was appointed as one of the staff members at St. Joseph's Junorate at Colmbuthurai. He was teaching mainly English to the juniors and sometimes Mathematics. From there he was given his next obedience to be the Director of “Sangamam” at Kopay on 15 July 2011. He worked hard and developed the premises and the garden to his maximum capacity. The fruits of his labour are being reaped by the present oblate community there. From there he went to India in 2015 to visit his nieces and nephews. When he returned to the Province on 25 November 2016 he was given obedience to Mathew's Memorial Home at Colombuthurai with the responsibility to teach English to the Juniorists at the Juniorate. This responsibility he carried out with commitment till his death. He was very strict and demanding with the students and made them study well. That was his nature while teaching.

Fr. Michael was naturally a silent Oblate with few words. Though he looked a rough person he deployed love and concern towards the poor and the poorest students. Those who have studied English and Mathematics under him and left the Oblate Formation Houses are doing very well in their social milieu. He taught Latin to many diocesan fathers at Amala Utpvram when they were preparing themselves to go to Rome for higher studies. They used to remark saying, “Fr. Michael is the best teacher they have ever seen”. He collected the poor students and taught them to be successful in their Scholarship Examinations and in their post Advanced Level studies. He was instrumental for many to get admission in high schools and Universities. His contribution to the academic field was highly observed with unique appreciation. In his room at Amala Utpavam one could find all sorts of question papers of the past examinations, syllabus books, cuttings of articles in English and all other materials for teaching. He used to sleep on the floor as his bed was covered by such materials.

Michael followed a simple way of life right from his priestly life. This witnessing value had drawn many youngsters from different Parishes to priestly and religious vocations. Most of the Priests who had studied under him still remain grateful to him. He used a very practical methodology in his homilies and sermons whenever he was

invited to preach. He was an ardent lover of nature and so developed all the premises of different Institutes with planting trees, fruit trees, different vegetables that would suffice the needs of the community. He was also making profits by selling his local products.

He had a deep love for our beloved Mother Mary and used to visit the Shrine of Madhu and prayed in front of her statue for long hours. He cultivated a spirit of prayer and personal meditation and maintained this habit till the end. Simplicity, obedience and non-ostentatious life style went with him till the end.

Sometimes he had bitter and very hurtful experiences and feelings with his Major Superiors in terms of relationship. Michael was not regular in submitting his accounts to the Provincial Treasurer as a result of his sense of procrastination. However they were rectified towards the last years of his life. His personality could be worded as a multi-faceted icon. He was normally attending and helping during his last days the Sisters of Mother Theresa at Kopay, the Salesian Sisters at Urumpirai and hearing the Confessions of many religious and diocesan Priests. His last event was to administer the Sacrament of Confession to the Jaffna diocesan Priests who were making their annual retreat at Pandeteruppu.

Father Michael's last moments were sudden and surprising. He went to his room after dinner with the members of the Community on 12 November 2021 and never showed up in the morning. His absence made the superior of the House very anxious and he opened Fr. Michael's room in the morning on 13 November 2021 and found him dead. All were panicked and called the doctor and the doctor said that the reason for his death was a massive heart attack.

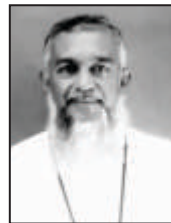
Fr. Michael left this world to his eternal reward on 13 November 2021. His mortal remains lay at St. De Mazenod Chapel at Colmbuthurai from the morning on 13 November 2012 and many people from different parishes, Chunnakam, Mannar, Mullikulam, Mutharipputhurai and a big number of Priests and religious from Mannar and Jaffna dioceses and his many past students paid him their last respects. The Oblate Scholastics, the Juniorists and the Jaffna

District Oblates were all present almost always near his coffin praying for the repose of his soul. The Final Oblate Rites were conducted by the Provincial Superior Very. Fr. Eugene Benedict OMI at 8 am on 15 November and then his mortal remains were taken in Procession to St. Mary's Cathedral Jaffna where a concelebrated Requiem High Mass was celebrated presided over by the Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B. Gnanapragasam at 9 am. Fr. S.M. Selvaratnam OMI delivered the panegyric. There was a good number of Priests, Religious and lay faithful present. Then his mortal remains were taken in procession to St. Mary's burial ground and after the final obsequies they were laid to rest. May he rest in Peace.



26 REV. FR. ANTHONY CHRYSANTHA FERNANDO, OMI
(1957- 2022)

Birth : 1 June 1957 at Minuwangoda
First Vows : 8 September 1983 at Sacred Heart
 Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows : 8 September 1986 at the Oblate
 Scholasticate at Ampitiya
Oblation No : 13384
Ordination : 6 August 1987 at Fatima Church,
 Maradana
Death : 17 January 2022 at Holy Cross Convent, Gampaha



Rev. Fr. Anthony Chryshantha Fernando OMI was born on 1 June 1957 at Minuwangoda in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Augustine Fernando and Elizabeth Perera belonging to Burullapitiya Parish. Chryshantha had his primary and secondary education both at Roman Catholic School at Burullapitiya and at Christ the King College at Tudella and passed the Examinations of the General Certificate of Education successfully. While he was studying at Christ the King College, he was drawn to the Oblate Vocation by the veteran Oblates who were working at his home Parish and particularly by the Oblate Preachers who were frequenting his Parish for preaching Novenas and Grand mission preaching.

Having decided to dedicate his life to serve God and his people as an Oblate Priest, he entered St. Joseph's Oblate Juniorate at Kohuwela, Nugegoda in 1980 and was going through the training in basic English and in other required disciplines. He entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate, at Bandarawela on 7 September 1982 and at the completion of his probation period successfully, he made his First Profession of Vows on 8 September 1983 at the Novitiate. Then he proceeded to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya in October 1983 and pursued his philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary at Ampitiya. He made his Final Profession of Vows as an Oblate on 8 September 1986 at the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya. After the successful completion of his ecclesiastical studies he was ordained a Priest of God in the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate on 6 August 1987 at Fatima Church at Maradana, Colombo by Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, the Bishop of Kandy.

Fr. Chryshantha was eagerly waiting for his first obedience to begin his priestly ministries with a willingness to accept any apostolate. He received his first Obedience to the Oblate Preaching Community, “Nazareth” at Wennappuwa on 26 August 1987 and served as a Preacher till 31 December 1990. He received his next assignment on 1 January 1991 to the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy to be the Bursar of the Community. He served in this capacity with a sense of commitment for more than three years and then was appointed the Chaplain to De Mazenod College, Kandana on 20 October 1994. Here he provided a very dedicated service to the students, teachers and the staff with an Oblate identity getting much appreciation from all. He sacrificed a lot to give a solid spiritual formation to the students. They all respected him and accepted him with love. They sought his direction and guidance whenever they were dismayed. His simplicity and availability attracted the students to him in no time. He was the Chaplain at De Mazenod College for seven years.

Then he left for France accepting the given chance by his Provincial Superior to follow the De Mazenod Experience in Aix-en-Provence on 7 November 2007. On his return he was assigned to Nazareth Community for second time on 22 April 2008 to be the Bursar and to be the Chaplain to the Holy Family Sisters at Wennappuwa. Again on 27 February 2011 he was given his next Obedience to De Mazenod College, Kandana as the Chaplain. He worked again in this responsibility for many years and in January 2015 he was made the chaplain to the Holy Cross Convent at Gampaha.

Fr. Chryshantha was ministering mostly at the Oblate Preaching Band, Institutes, Formation Houses and at Colleges and Convents. He has been a long standing chaplain at De Mazenod College at Kandana and at Holy Cross Convent at Gampaha. His dedicated services were very much valued by the members of the respective religious communities. It is to be noted that Fr. Chryshantha was not giving sufficient care to his personal health. He was from the beginning of his priestly ministry a victim of diabetes. As a worsened sign of this

deadly sickness he had an incurable wound in one of his toes on the right leg. This wound was not curing in spite of his medical treatment in western and Ayurvedic medicines for many years. It was a very pathetic situation to see him going about his priestly ministry with a huge bandage in his toe. He was never disturbed or reluctant about fulfilling his responsibilities. There was no doubt that he was suffering a lot for years.

Fr. Chryshantha was always found with a smiling face in all the communities where he lived and served. His piety and the sense of dedication won much appreciation from the people and the inmates. He was a sign of unity and happiness among the members of the communities. He was able to help others in their difficulties with practical and amicable solutions. He always exhibited a simple life style throughout his priestly and religious life. He was accepting his physical pain and suffering patiently without grumbling or complaining. He was motivated and inspired by the life and mission of St. De Mazenod. He was faithful to his Oblate way of life fulfilling the demands of the Evangelical Counsels.

His life spoke more powerfully than his words. When he bade farewell to the students, teachers and the staff and to the religious sisters, they were all in tears saying that Fr. Cryshantha was a duty conscious priest and a humble servant of God. He had a deep sense of love and affinity to our Mother Mary and followed her fiat whenever he was given different assignments. Holy Rosary was his powerful arm. His services as the Chaplain to the students need to be recorded in the history of the Oblates of Colombo Province. He was a lover of the poor, of the poor students, the slow learners and beggars on the streets. The Scholastics used to say that Fr. Chryshantha was a faithful and committed steward, making himself available for them. His presence at the Scholasticate as a bursar was much appreciated as he took many initiatives to develop the infra-structure of the community. He was a silent but systematic worker. Even at the preaching band after his first Obedience, he did a good job in his preaching ministry. His presentation and reflections were much appealing to the listeners. After all his dedicated services he continued to reside at the Holy Cross Convent, Gampaha providing the sisters some limited spiritual

services. He began to fall sick now and then and his diabetes deteriorated severely. He was given the best care by the sisters and by the Oblate confreres. However the sickness never got cured. This situation aggravated his pain and suffering.

Fr. Chryshantha succumbed to his sickness on 17 January 2022 at Holy Cross Convent, Gampaha. His mortal remains were brought to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya, Colombo on 19 January 2022 and lay in state. A large number of Oblates, diocesan clergy, sisters from Holy Cross Convent, past students, teachers and the staff from Christ the King College, Kandana thronged to pay their last respects to late Fr. Chryshantha. The following day his mortal remains were taken to Fatima Church at Maradana where a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass was presided by Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo in the presence of a large number of priests, religious, Oblates and the lay faithful. The panegyric was delivered by Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI and after the final obsequies his mortal remains were taken to the General Cemetery, Borella and were laid to rest on 20 January 2022. May He rest in Peace.



REV. FR. ANTHONY GAMINI SILVA, OMI
(1949 – 2022)

Birth	: 24 June 1949 in Kattuwa, Negombo
First Vows	: 8 September 1975 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Bandarawela
Final Vows	: 29 July 1980, at “Nazereth”, Wennappuwa
Oblation No	: 12402
Ordination	: 15 November 1980, at St. Anne's Church, Pallengathurai
Death	: 5 April 2022 at the General Hospital, Negombo



Rev. Fr. Anthony Gamini Silva OMI was born on 1 June 1949 in Kattuwa, Negombo in the diocese of Colombo. His parents were Balasuriyage Joseph Silva and Hettiarachchige Allina Perera belonging to Kattuwa Parish in Negombo. Gamini had his primary education at St. Mary's College, Negombo and passed the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Examinations successfully. Gamini was quite fluent in English language from his early age as both his parents who were Government teachers trained him. He got a solid spiritual formation from his parents and sisters in the family that inspired him to decide to become an Oblate Priest to serve God and his people. He was further observed and guided by the veteran Oblates who were working at his home Parish and particularly by the Oblate Preachers who were frequenting his Parish for preaching Novenas and Grand mission preaching.

Fr. Theodore Paulinus, OMI, a onetime popular preacher became convinced of this young Gamini and of his motivation, recommended him to the Oblate way of life. On a fine day in 1974 his mother and eldest sister took Gamini to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya and gave him to Fr. Dassanayake omi who sent him to the Scholasticate at Ampitiya, Kandy. Since the knowledge of Gamini's English was quite good, he was sent to Sacred Heart Novitiate at Bandarawela on 7 September 1974. At the successful completion of his probation period he made his first Profession of Vows on 8 September 1975 at the Novitiate. Then his major superiors being convinced of his outstanding commitments and application to

the Oblate Formation and having observed his right motivation and orientation to the Oblate way of life sent him to the Roman International Scholasticate to continue his priestly formation and to pursue his philosophical and theological studies at the Gregorian University. He was successful in obtaining baccalaureate degrees in Philosophy and Theology. Then he returned to the Island towards the end of 1979 and took residence at the Oblate Preaching Community, “Nazareth” at Wennappuwa to prepare for his final Profession of vows. He made his final profession of Vows in the Oblate Congregation on 29 July 1980 at Nazereth, Wennappuwa. After the completion of his diaconate ministry he was ordained a Priest of God on 15 November 1980 at St. Anne's Church at Pallengatura by Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Marcus, the Bishop of Chilaw.

After the priestly ordination Fr. Gamini was eagerly and enthusiastically waiting to receive the first obedience. His first assignment was given on 13 December 1980 to the Oblate Preaching Community, Nazereth” at Wennappuwa. Fr. Gamini joyfully accepted this revered apostolate as he was much interested in the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was going about preaching the Gospel throughout the country and in no time became a very popular preacher. The Parish Priests and the faithful were much interested to listen to his homilies. He was well known for his inspiring homilies at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mahu during major festivals. His personality was such that he drew the attention of all his listeners.

After almost three years of preaching ministry, on 16 March 1983, he was given his next obedience to St. Mary's Parish at Ampitiya, Kandy as parish Priest. Then on 10 September 1984 he was assigned to St. Sebastian's Church at Nochchiagama, in the diocese of Anuradhapura as Parish Priest. Again in 1985 he received his next obedience for the second time to the Oblate Preaching Community at Wennappuwa. He continued this ministry for almost five years and then left for Rome for higher studies in September 1991. Being at the Oblate General House in Rome, he followed his studies on Biblical Theology at the Gregorian University and obtained a Licentiate in Biblical Theology and returned to the Island in July 1994.

He was made the Superior of the Nazereth Preaching Community in July 1994 and served in this capacity till 2004. Then he got an opportunity to go to Canada in 2004 for his doctoral studies at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. He started his doctoral research well and after two years he decided to terminate his studies and worked for a year in the Diocese of Grouard McClennan in Alberta, Canada as the Pastor in one of the Parishes. He returned to the Island in September 2007 and was appointed as one of the formation staff Members at the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya, kandy. On 27 September 2012 he was given his next obedience to Nazereth Community to be a Preacher.

Fr. Gamini Silva's life and ministry have left behind unique values to be emulated and his personality cannot be limited to one single category. He exhibited throughout his priestly and religious life human values, a simple lifestyle, joy and generosity that won hundreds of admirers for him. He made himself available to everyone and to every situation, was always accepting the orders of his major superiors, very respectful, maintaining confidentiality, sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable people, lover of the poor, spiritually motivated, and identified himself with the victims of injustice and a faithful Oblate to religious consecration. As a Preacher, Pastor, Formator, and Professor he rendered valuable services with a sense of dedication and sacrifice.

As a Preacher for many years, he went throughout the Island, practically to all the Parishes in Colombo, Kandy, Chilaw, Badulla, Galle and others expounding the Word of God methodically and practically that were well accepted by the listeners. His presence at the Shrine of Madhu during major festivals was well felt. Since he was a man of biblical theology, he integrated very often biblical images, parables and other biblical nuances that enhanced his reflections and presentations. The faithful highly appreciated his preaching ministry. He was also a retreat preacher to the religious, priests and seminarians both nationally and internationally. His way of presentation always created an impact on his listeners.

As the Pastor at St. Mary's Church at Ampitiya, his services need to be given special mention. Ampitiya Parish comprises of Sinhala and Tamil faithful. It was in July 1983 that the famous pogrom, the BLACK JULY took place throughout the Island. The Tamils were targeted everywhere, hundreds of them were killed, their shops looted, houses burnt and consequently they fled their traditional homes and places of habitation in order to seek refuge. The Tamil Catholics of Ampitiya Parish thronged to the Parish Church for safety. Fr. Gamini immediately made himself their custodian. He welcomed everyone to his mission House, gave them food and protection for many days. He even kept vigilance at night to protect and safeguard his vulnerable sheep. He had a licensed gun in his possession and was guarding them from possible attacks. The Tamil victims of this July Ethnic Riots will never forget him and his fatherly concern. He was even risking his own life and very many times he was warned by the assailants. Fr. Gamini still remains in the hearts of the Tamil victims for what he had been to them in their horrific nightmares. The Oblates as well as many diocesan clergy greatly admired at him for his brave involvements.

When he came to Nochchiagama from Ampitiya as Pastor, similar situation was awaiting him. There was an attack in and around Nochchiagama town supposed to have been maneuvered by the militants from the LTTE group. Many innocent people got injured and some were killed. Fr. Gamini hearing this news rushed to the scene from his Parish and immediately took the injured to the nearby Hospital. He was in an ordinary man's attire attending to the emergency needs of the victims. Fr. Gamini was for all, he loved all the people of God irrespective of ethnic differences and social status, a man without barriers reaching out to everyone. The people of Nochchiagama Parish greatly depended on him for their continued security and spiritual formation.

He was serving as one of the formators at the Oblate Scholasticate at Ampitiya for many years and was lecturing at the National Seminary on Biblical Theology. The Scholastics were blessed to have him among them as he was a man of community and of human relationship. He helped them in their spiritual and academic

needs. The Superior as well as the other staff members enjoyed his presence there. Fr. Gamini was always obedient to the Superiors that made him satisfied and happy with any type of ministry. As the Superior of Nazareth Community from 1994 – 2004, he played a significant role in organizing the Preaching ministry well and in providing the preachers with biblical updates and continued studies. It was noted that during his regime as the Superior, Nazareth community received the highest number of requests for preaching Novenas and Grand Mission Preaching.

He was well received by all the Oblates of the both Provinces in Sri Lanka. He was very much loved and respected by the Oblates of the Jaffna Province because he stood with them as a moral support during their difficulties in war time. He made a couple of visits to the North and identified himself not only with the Oblates but also with the affected and suffering Tamil people. He simply welcomed everyone on sight with a beautiful smile. He was very sensitive to the needs of the poor, the hungry and the elderly. He took initiatives to feed them and to accommodate them even in his presbytery. Thus from a humanitarian point of view Fr. Gamini was a different Oblate but with unique personality traits. His positive outlook to life and people made him a successful Oblate and a very human person.

From 2012 Fr. Gamini was one of the community members at Nazareth. He was taking up retreats and Novena Preaching. During these years he used to come to the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu practically for all the major festivals. His homilies were mostly geared towards bridging the gap between the Sinhala and Tamil Catholics. He made use of the Word of God for this purpose for which he was highly appreciated by all who were present there. He had also preached one of the annual Retreats to the Oblates of the Jaffna Province in the recent past and all of them liked his ways of sharing and presentation.

It was a very sad and disturbing news that Fr. Gamini was diagnosed of cancer in his colon towards the end 2017 but with the medical treatment he was going about his preaching ministry accepting the will of God for him. He took medical treatment and had

a few surgeries at Ragama Hospital and was convalescing at his community. In this situation with the permission of his Provincial Superior, he also went to his own home at Kattuwa, Negombo to be with his sisters and nephew. They were taking a very good care of him, but the deadly disease kept on developing further. Fr. Gamini was suffering with much pain but he never complained of anything. When he was recuperating both at home and at Nazareth community after a surgery he was rushed to the General Hospital in Negombo on 4 April 2022 for emergency medical treatment as his physical conditions deteriorated immensely and he succumbed to his illness on 5 April 2022 at the general Hospital in Negombo.

His mortal remains were brought to De Mazenod House at Mattakkuliya on 6 April and lay in state at the Chapel. A large number of Oblates, diocesan clergy, religious men and women and his relatives paid him their last respect. Periodic prayer services and Eucharistic celebrations were held and on 7 April 2022 morning, His Eminence Malcom Cardinal Ranjith, the Arch Bishop of Colombo conducted a prayer service at the Chapel for the repose of the soul of Fr. Gamini with a few of his Priests and around 1 pm, his mortal remains were taken to Fatima Church at Maradana.

There was a Concelebrated Requiem High Mass at 2. 30 pm presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, the Bishop of Galle, with Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, the Bishop of Anuradhapura and Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo amidst a large Congregation. The panegyric was delivered by Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI and after the final obsequies by Very Rev. Fr. Roshan Silva OMI, the Provincial Superior of Colombo, his mortal remains were taken to the general Cemetery, Kanatta, Borella. The final recommendation prayers at the Cemetery were conducted by Rt. Rev. Dr. Valence Mendis, the Bishop of Kandy and Chilaw dioceses and then Fr. Gamini's mortal remains were laid to rest. May He rest in Peace.



RT. REV. DR. GNANAPRAGASAM VICTOR, OMI