

MSFS - MISSIONARIES OF ST.FRANCIS DE SALES
SOUTH-WEST INDIA PROVINCE



VINAYALAYA, MSFS Provincial House P.B.No.5557, Malleswaram West P.O
Bengaluru 560 055, INDIA

Tel. 080 23340379 Mob: 91 9739010026, Fax: 080 23341329

E-mail:provincialsouthwestmsfs@gmail.com Website:www.msfsouthwest.com
secretaryprovincialsouthwest@gmail.com

SWIP Circular BK/23

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Running the Race Gracefully...

Loving You My Master Ceaselessly...

Never Turning Back at Hurdles...

I Am Returning Home Eternally...



Rev. Fr. Zacharias Onayathumkuzhy MSFS

(1926-2018)

My dear Confreres,

The painful reality of death has once again loomed over us, inviting us to keenly dwell on the mystery of life and death. **Rev. Fr. O.V. Zacharias**, the veteran Missionary and venerable Confrere, having completed his earthly sojourn of 92 years, has gracefully gone home to receive his eternal reward. Even as I am feeling smothered by the heaviness of vacuum left behind by the sad demise of Fr. Zacharias, I am proud to place before you a MISSIONARY in whom there was no guile. The unaspiring life that he lived, the total fidelity to religious life that he convincingly depicted, the unfathomable love for Jesus that he undauntedly possessed and the indomitable sense of obedience that he showed to his religious authorities make Fr. Zacharias different from the rest of the lot.

My dear Confreres, in spite of his advanced age until recent time Fr. Zacharias kept up good health. He was regular in all his daily activities, especially the spiritual activities. But in the course of time he developed kidney-related diseases and was admitted in Matha Hospital, Ettumanoor. After a few days of hospitalisation he was brought back to SFS Seminary, but was no more able to manage his daily chores without assistance. From then until his death he was given nursing assistance. A week and half ago Fr. Zacharias had a fall and was admitted in the hospital and had to undergo surgery on his shoulder bone, which in addition to the constant pain also caused physical restlessness in him. He was again brought back to SFS Seminary on the 28th of December 2017 and I had the privilege to administer him the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick on the 29th of December 2017. Although sailing through with his struggles, he was able to speak well and consume food. On the 6th of December 2018 at 8 a.m. Fr. Zacharias suffered a fatal heart attack and succumbed to death on the spot. May He Rest in Peace.

Rev. Fr. Zacharias Onayathumkuzhy was born on 20th May 1926 in Velichiani, in the diocese of Changanacherry, Kerala. He was baptised in St. Michael's Church, Pazhaidom. After his schooling he joined the Minor Seminary in Kottayam in the year 1947. He completed the Formation as a Novice in the year 1953 at Margao. His First Profession was on the 27th May 1953. He secured the philosophical graduation in the year 1952 from Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamally and accomplished his theological studies from the same hallowed seminary in the year 1957. He was ordained a priest on 27th April 1957.

Missionary Commitments:

- June 1957 – Kondadaba Mission
- June 1960 – S Kota Mission
- May 1968 – SFS Seminary Ettumanoor
- June 1969 – MSFS Philosophate Nilambur
- May 1971 – Novice Master, Salesianum, Visakhapatnam
- 1978-1984 – MSFS House, Engineering College, Anantapur
- April 1983 – Correspondent, LRG English Medium High School and Vinayakumar Telugu School, Anantpur
- 1984-1988 – Parish Priest, Dornala
- 1988-1990 – St. John’s Regional Seminary
- 1990-1993 – Rector, Vinayalaya, Bangalore
- 1993 – Superior of Mermier Bhavan and Manager of SFS Schools, Hebbagodi
- 1999 – Parish Priest, Holy Rosary Church, Venkatala, Bangalore
- 2000-2018 – Spiritual Director and Lecturer at SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor
- 2002-2014 – Director of Charis Marian Maids
- 2015-2018 – Spiritual Director of Charis Marian Maids

My dear Confreres, MSFS Congregation is proud today because we experienced the legacy of a Missionary whose renown does not stop with death. The sublime spirituality -‘**you alone my God**’ - proposed and expounded by Fr. Zacharias, is the daunting task ahead of us. It would be easier to illustrate his sublime character and applaud accolades on him; but it would demand us to ‘pay the cost’ to imbue his nobility, religiosity and extreme commitment to unassuming surrender to the person of Christ. My dear Confreres, there is a vacuum created in our Congregation through the demise of Fr. Zacharias. This vacuum would remain still and hurt us deep unless we begin to challenge the decadence that surrounds us. The aura around the person of Fr. Zacharias is his indelible mark of credibility and character developed through the Gospel values. **He was a man of heightened focus and sublime commitment.** Does he challenge the susceptibility of my/your credibility? **MAY HE INTERCEDE FOR US.**

The funeral rites of Rev. Fr. Zacharias Onayathumkuzhy will begin at 3 p.m. on the 9th of January 2018 at SFS Seminary Ettumanoor. Bishop Sebastian Thekethecherry of the diocese of Vijayapuram will officiate the rites. I request you, my dear Confreres, to

participate in large number in the funeral ceremonies of our beloved Confrere and pray for him and show our solidarity with him and with each other.

Fraternally

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Benny Koottanal MSFS', written in a cursive style.

Fr. Benny Koottanal MSFS

Provincial

SALESIAN THOUGHT

“If only God would seal my heart, so that nothing could ever enter there but His divine love and that nothing could open it but charity.” - **SFS**