

# FR. AUGUSTINE AMBROSE, S.J. (87/58)

Died at Xavier Bhawan, Digha, Patna, India on 16 January 2021

Born : 15.11.1933                      Ordained : 28.03.1971  
Entered the SJ : 13.07.1962              Final Vows : 15.08.1977



## Formation & Studies:

High School : St. Mary's High School, Dindigul; 1947-52  
Pre-University Course (PUC): St. Joseph's College, Trichy; 1952-54  
Graduation BA, & B.Sc.: St. Joseph's College, Trichy; 1954-57  
B. Ed. B.T : St. Xavier's Training College, Palayamkottai; 1957-58  
Work Experience before joining the Society: 5 Years as a Science teacher 1958-62.

Novitiate: XTTI, Patna; 1962-64  
Juniorate: XTTI, Patna; 1964-65  
Philosophy: Pontifical Athenaeum, Pune; 1965-67  
Regency: St. Xavier's, Godavari, Nepal; 1967-68  
Theology: St. Mary's College, Kurseong; 1968-72

Diaconate: St. Mary's College, Kurseong; 21.12.1970  
Ordination: Madurai, 28.03.1971; Bp: J. Diraviam  
Tertianship: Beschi College, Dindigul; 1975-76  
Final Vows: XTTI, Patna; 15.08.1977

## Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:

Headmaster, K.R. Bettiah; 1972-75  
Head Master, Catholic High School, Ara; 1976-78  
Teacher, St. Xavier's School, Jaipur; 1978-83  
Parish Priest, Bakhtiyarpur, 1983-88  
Head Master, K.R. School, Bettiah; 1988-89  
Head Master, Sacred Heart School, Latonah; 1989-95

Co-Pastor, Darbhanga; 1996-97  
Head Master, Catholic Middle School, Ara; 1998-2000  
Teacher & Spiritual Father, XH, Bangalore; 2000-07  
Co-pastor, Kurji Parish; 2007  
Retired to XTTI, Patna; 2008  
Moved to Xavier Bhawan; Dec, 2017.

Fr. Augustine's vocation to the Society of Jesus reads like the call of Jesus to the apostles Peter and his brother Andrew, James and his brother John (Mt 4:18-22), and Mathew (Mt 9:9). After his Graduate studies, Fr. Augustine did his B. Ed and began his career as a Science teacher in his *alma mater* St. Mary's High School, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu and after a year moved on to Municipal High School, Palani. He was doing well – was receiving a handsome salary, had job security and pension benefit that would be his right on retirement. Four years into his successful professional life at Palani, he 'heard' the Lord's call (which may have been simmering within him for long) and decided to leave everything and followed the Master who directed him to the mission land of Bihar.

The skills he acquired through his Jesuit education and teachers' training as well as his administrative skills were put to much apostolic use in various schools at Bettiah (twice), Ara (twice – once as Hm of High School and another time as HM of Middle School), Jaipur and Latonah where he was instrumental in upgrading the Middle School into a High School. As a good educationist, he was much disciplined (which included punctuality, order and cleanliness) and hardworking; and, he inculcated these values in all those whom he served as well as those with whom he shared life with.

In spite of his orientation to and success in education ministry, as a Jesuit priest his availability for other ministries was not lacking: his five year stint as Parish Priest at Bakhtiyarpur and short periods as Co-pastor in Darbhanga and Kurji, and teacher cum spiritual guide for the Candidates for seven years; in all these he gave himself fully to the given mission.

Fr. Augustine was a loving and loveable person. In his conversation with a person, Fr. Augustine would say the name of that person so often, with such affection and diction, that the other person is sure to experience the warmth of divine love as radiated by Fr. Augustine in and through that conversation. He endeared everyone – students, teachers, support staff, parents, parishioners, Candidates, Jesuit companions of all age groups and of course his relatives and family members.

What was unambiguously clear in his life and ministries was the fidelity of the Master to this beloved disciple of His, and in response, the all-encompassing fidelity of the disciple to his Master. This kernel of the life of Fr. Augustine was evident not only during his active life, but even more so when, his gradually declining health forced him to lead a retired life in the Province Infirmary for the last twelve years – beginning at XTTI in 2008 and moving to the new building of Xavier Bhawan in 2017. Fr. Ambrose remained as humble and prayerful as he always was, exuded warmth and joy just as earlier and accepted gracefully all the services rendered to him, without a word of or grumble or criticism.

From the last week of August 2020 Fr. Augustine was more confined to bed and frequently slipped into unconscious state. Yesterday (15 January 2021) morning his sugar level went down and he began to gasp for breath, as it has happened a few times in the past. Immediately he was provided medical attention; he was also administered the Sacrament of the Sick. Though he revived soon, this morning he answered the final call of the Lord at 5.30 am. and concluded his earthly pilgrimage. He can surely say with St. Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me ..." (2 Tim 4:7-8).

Thank you Fr. Augustine Ambrose, SJ for your life of exemplary witness to fidelity and dedicated service to the Lord. Bye.

*[All the members of Patna Province are to offer one Mass intention for Fr. Augustine and members of XB, two Masses.]*