

## FR. PAUL FREDERICK JOSEPH JACKSON, S.J. (83/64)

Died in Kurji Holy Family Hospital Patna, India, on 05 July 2020

Born : 11-06-1937  
Entered the SJ : 01-02-1956

Ordained : 07.03.1968  
Final Vows : 15.08.1976



### Studies & Formation:

Secondary Education: Marist College, Ashgrove, Australia 1952-1955

\ Delhi University.

Post-Graduation: M. A. History, Jamia Islamia Millia University, New Delhi, 1972-1974 & Diploma: in Urdu: ^

Study of Persian: Shiraz, Iran; 1974-1975.

Doctoral Study : Ph.D. in Patna University, 1976-1980

Novitiate: Loyola College, Watsonia, Melbourne, 1956-1958

Regency 1: St. Xavier's, Hazaribag, 1961-1964

Philosophy: Loyola College, Watsonia, Melbourne, 1958-1960

Learning Hindi: St. Xavier's, Ranchi, 1964-1965

Came to India: Hazaribag Province, 18.01.1961

Theology: St. Mary's College, Kurseong, 1965-1969

Ordination: St. Stanislaus, Sitagarah, 07.03.1968; Bishop Peter Kerketta

Tertianship: St. Stanislaus, Sitagarah; 1976; Director: Fr. M. Dullard, SJ

Final Vows: Hazaribag, 15.08.1976

### Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:

1976-2010: resided at St. Xavier's, Patna

Asst. Parish Priest Catholic Asharam, Hazaribag, 1969

Doctoral & post-doctoral studies in the writings

Head Master, Middle School, Maheshmunda, 1969-1970

of Sufi Saint of Bihar – Sharfuddin Maneri;

Teacher, Hostel In charge, Mahuadnr, 1970-1972

teaching & writing on Islam & Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Fr. Paul Jackson was a scholar in Islam par excellence. He was single-hearted and single-minded in his mission of Christian-Muslim dialogue: his intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social life was focused on this single point, without any distraction or dissipation. He was very disciplined in his life and work - for thirty-three years, five days a week, he sat in the reading room of Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna, labouring over the manuscripts of the writings of Sufi saint Sharafuddin Maneri and many other related ones. But personal discipline and intellectual pursuit did not diminish the warmth his heart for all the people he met and shared life with, as was amply evidenced in his trademark hearty laughter. Above all, or rather, the richness of his life and mission flowed from, his love for Jesus Christ and loyalty to His mystical body, the Church. He was meticulously regular with daily Eucharist and all other spiritual exercises including personal prayer and the breviary.

Fr. Paul Jackson was born in Brisbane, Australia. Having joined the Society of Jesus there, he came to Hazaribag, Bihar, India in 1961 as a scholastic/seminarian. Wanting to reach out to the Muslims as a way of implementing Vatican II, he did his doctorate on the writings Sharfuddin Maneri, a 14<sup>th</sup> century Sufi saint of Bihar. Along with other Christian and Muslim scholars, he was one of the founding members of the Islamic Studies Association (ISA) in 1979 in Delhi, and for a term served as its president. ISA publishes '*Salaam*', a monthly journal for promoting Christian-Muslim relations; Fr. Jackson wrote many articles in this journal and served as its editor for a term. He wrote six books and over 80 articles: '*Sharafuddin Maneri, The Hundred Letters*' (Paulist Press, New York; 1980) and '*The Muslims of India: Beliefs and Practices*' that he edited (TPI, Bangalore; 1988) are outstanding among them; the latter has been a valuable and precious hand book for generations of students in many seminaries in Asia and elsewhere. His entire life was dedicated to teaching and writing on Islam, and building spiritual communion and scholarly dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Fr. Jackson's life and ministry are indeed a proud link in the tradition of the historic Jesuit mission (1580-82) to the court of the great Mughal Emperor, began by Bl. Rudolf Acquaviva and companions, at the invitation of Emperor Akbar.

In 1983 Fr. Jackson was requested to teach a course on Islam at the Regional Theology Centre (RTC), Patna. For the course he designed a new methodology: sharing life with Muslims in families, *madarsas*, seminaries or institutions, shrines and Mosques for which the scholastics were sent two-by-two; when they returned, experiences and observations were shared and then academic input was given to supplement and provide comprehensive understanding of Islam. This methodology revealed the richness of the person of Fr. Jackson, in the form of his ability to integrate intellect and emotions (head and the heart); and it showed his understanding of Christian-Muslim dialogue: building relationships by sharing spiritual and intellectual resources. Fr. Jackson taught this course for twenty-five years, though at times his health made it very difficult for him to travel to over fifteen towns of Bihar with sizeable Muslim population, to make arrangements for the scholastics. All the lectures which he delivered at RTC and other seminaries, national and international conferences as well as all his writings bore the mark of or were enriched by this methodology.

*Kuda Hafis* (farewell/goodbye) Fr. Paul Jackson. Your life and legacy will be a constant source of inspiration for promotion of Christian-Muslim relations and guidance for inter-religious dialogue in Asia and beyond.

[All the members of Patna Province are to offer one Mass intention for Fr. Paul Jackson.]

By- Fr. Susai Raj, SJ