

FR. JOSEPH THADAVANAL, S.J. (80/60)

Born :10.04.1943 Entered the SJ: 01.07.1962
Ordained :14.05.1975 Final Vows : 15.08.1982
Died at Xavier Bhavan, Digha Ghat, Patna, India, on 14.05.2023

Studies & Formation:

Secondary Education; St. Mary's High School, Teekoy, Kerala, 1960
Higher Sec. Education: St. Thomas College, Palai, Kerala, 1962
Graduation: St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, Jharkhand, 1968
Post-Graduate Study: Boston University, 1977-78
Post-Graduate Study: Loyola University, Chicago, 1992.
Novitiate: XTTI, Pana, 1962-64
Juniorate: XTTI, Pana, 1965
Philosophy: Shembagannur, 1968-70
Regency - Yr 1 & 2: St. Xavier's School, Jaipur, 1971-72

Theology:

Vidyajyoti, Delhi, 1972-76

Apostolic

Assignments as a Priest:

Teacher, CHS, Arrah , 1979-80
Rector & Teacher. XTTI, Patna, 1981-85
Rector, Papal Seminary, Pune, 1985-1991
Director & Superior, Navjyoti Niketan, Patna, 1992-2000
ADF & Superior, Jor Bagh, Delhi, 2000-2006
Rector & Teacher, KR, Bettiah, 2006-2012
Rector, XTTI, St. Xavier's College, Patna, 2012-20
School Counselor, Aurangabad, 2020-2023



Since Fr. Donald, the Provincial, was on visitation of Patna Jesuits in Europe and North America, Fr. Jose Thayil, the acting provincial, welcomed the people for the funeral mass for Fr. Joe Thadavanal and gave a short introduction of Fr. Joe Thadavanal. Archbishop Emeritus Most Rev. William D'Souza, SJ, was the main celebrant. He spoke about his personal experience of Fr. Joe. Since Patna Archbishop, Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, who was in Rome attending Caritas General Assembly, could not be present for the funeral services, he sent a short message of condolence to the provincial that was read out at the beginning of the mass. He wrote, "Heartfelt condolences. I just heard about the death of Fr. Thadavanal. May the Lord bless him and accept him to his Eternity, I pray. A fine gentleman, who loved Jesus, the Society of Jesus and Jesus' people. I remember the days when he used to visit the parishes where the diocesan priests were. It was always a joy to have him among us. We played cards, with plenty of jokes and life. He shared life with people. As a serious Jesuit, he kept guiding people to God. A genuine human being. I place him in the hands of the Lord. Since I am attending Caritas General Assembly in Rome, I will not be there for the funeral. But I pray for him and also for the Jesuits of Patna province. God bless you".

Fr. Joe remained quite active till Feb. 2023. From then on his health deteriorated rather fast. None of us thought that he would say goodbye to us so fast. Though he was weak, we thought that he would carry on for some more months or years. So, his death came quit unexpectedly. He celebrated his 80th birthday on 10th of April and he died on the 48th anniversary of his ordination. He was ordained on 14.05.1975.

About 12 of the close relatives of Fr. Joe Thadavanal, including his brother, sisters, nephews and nieces, came from Kerala and spent some time with him during the two weeks before his death. From their interactions with him, I could realize that he was very close to them and they were also very close to him. I take this opportunity to thank each one of them for their visit and for expressing their love and concern for him. They considered him very kind, loving, compassionate, integrated, joyful and generous and one who touched their lives.

Fr. Joe was well known and well loved by many people in India and abroad, especially in Bihar. He shared his life and love with all those whom he came in contact with. He was a wonderful community man who enjoyed the company of others. His gentle smile, warmth and genial presence endeared him to many people.

Fr. Joe was known for his leadership qualities. Patna province and South Asian Assistancy looked up to his ability to inspire the province and the Assistancy. He remained in leadership position for 39 years. He was very creative and optimistic. He definitely was a man of vision and a go-getter. Fr. Joe was a motivator and a youth leader. He was a man of wisdom, courage, deep faith in God and dedicated service to people. He was fortunate to shake hands with St. John Paul II, who visited Pune, while Fr. Joe was the Rector of Papal Seminary, Pune.

Fr. Joe lived a good and intense life. He has left a lasting legacy of love and kindness for us that will continue to inspire us and the coming generations. We pray for Joe Thadavanal that God may give him eternal rest.

All the Patna Jesuits are requested to offer one mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Joe Thadavanal and all the members of St. Ignatius High School community, Aurangabad, are requested to offer two masses for the same intention.