

## FR. SUSAI RAJ, S.J. (68/48)

Born :07.05.1955 Entered the SJ : 01.07.1975  
Ordained :24.04.1985 Final Vows : 03.12.1993  
Died at Ruban Hospital, Patna, India, on 09.09.2023

### Studies & Formation:

Secondary Education: St. Joseph's High Sc, Trichy, 1970

Higher Sec. Education: St. Joseph's Colleg, Trichy, 1971

Graduation: St. Joseph's College, Trichy (B.Com), 1974

Novitiate: XTTI, Patna, 1975-77

Juniorate: XTTI, Patna, 1977-78

Philosophy: Jnana Deepa Vidyapeet, Pune 1978-80

Regency (1): K.R. High School, Bettiah, 1980-81

Regency (2 ) Seva Sadan, Ratanpurwa, 1981-82

Theology: RTC, Bettiah & Vidyajyoti, Delhi, 1982-85

Ordination: St. Mary's Cathedral, Kumbakonam, 1985

Tertianship: Lonavala, 1991-92

M.Th: Vidya Jyoti, Delhi, 1993

Fr. Susai Raj remained quite active till the end of his life. Though he had a heart problem, none of us thought that he would say goodbye to us so suddenly. So, his death came as a great shock to all of us. He was very close to all his family members. This was quite evident from the fact that 15 of his close relatives, including his brother and two sisters, came from Tamil Nadu and England for the funeral services in Patna. Most Rev. James Shekhar, Bishop of Buxar diocese, was the main celebrant. Large number of priests, religious sisters, Catholics from the parishes where he had served as Parish Priest and some of his Hindu friends attended his funeral service. This was an indication of his popularity among the priests, religious and ordinary people in and around Patna.

Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, Archbishop of Patna Archdiocese, wanted to come for the funeral services of Fr. Susai Raj. Unfortunately, he was not well and was admitted in the hospital and could not come for the funeral service. He sent the following message to the Patna Provincial: "I feel so sad that I can't even be present at the funeral of Fr. Susai, a priest who meant very much to me, personally. In many ways, he was my ideal, as a priest, as a pastor, as a motivator, as a reconciler and much more as a spiritual guide. Ever since I came to Patna as the Archbishop, he has been my personal spiritual guide, has been my confessor and he has been my main advisor. I don't think I have taken any major decision for the Archdiocese, without discerning with him. Whenever there was a tension between priests of the diocese, people and priests, or priests and religious, the person sought after for reconciliation was Fr. Susai. He was a pastor who could beautifully blend the pastoral and the social aspects for the good of his people. I have seen this at Sasaram, Barbigha and at Kurji. He was an ideal pastor. He was a love-filled person, love for God and love for His people."

Fr. Thomas Antonysamy in his homily mentioned the following: "In the year 1974, Fr. Susai, as a pre-novice, was sent to Bettiah for his mission experience. To enter deeply into the struggles of the poor, one day he went to the Bettiah railway station and worked as a porter carrying the luggages of the passengers. At the end of the day, having earned some money, he distributed it to the poor and quietly slipped back into the Jesuit community – un-noticed. This experience or experiment set the tone and direction for his entire life and mission as a priest and as a Jesuit. This experience would tie his destiny with the destiny of the poor and the marginalized. This preferential choice would unfold gradually during his formative years. During his studies of philosophy and theology, he would together with his studies be fully involved in the life struggles of the slum dwellers and prisoners. Later as a theology teacher, he brought the concerns of the poor of Bihar right into the classroom and made it pivotal for the study of theology. As a parish priest, he would sit and listen to the problems of his parishioners after Sunday Mass until he had listened to the last person.



### Apostolic Assignments

#### as a Priest:

Staff, RTC, St. Stephen's

Church, Danapur, 1989-93

Superior & Parish Priest, RTC, Danapur, 1993-97

Parish Priest, Barbigha, 1997-2007

Superior & Parish Priest, Sasaram, 2007-08

Socius of Provincial, St. Xavier's Patna, 2008-2016

Superior, Barbigha, 2016-2017

Province Coordinator of Young Priest's Forum 2017-

Co-Pastor, Kurji Parish 2018

Acting Parish Priest, Kurji 2019-20

Socius of Provincial 2021

Parish Priest, Khagaul 2022-

Fr. Susai was meticulous and highly organized in his ministry as Socius to the Provincial – a great help to the Provincial in the administration of the Province. God had blessed Fr. Susai with a sharp intellect and an analytical mind. He could summarize the disjointed ideas and thoughts expressed in groups and make sense out of them and present it back to the group, to the amazement of all, a compact and intelligible report. He was the preferred secretary in many of our province meetings. He placed this intellectual gift at the service of the Church in animating Province Chapters of many congregations, moderating several Diocesan pastoral council meetings, parish council meetings and as a resource person for recollections to priests and religious.

Above all, as a man of God, he compassionately accompanied many people in their spiritual journey. In the true Ignatian sense, he helped people to seek and find God's will in their lives. In the year 2001, Fr. Susai suffered a massive heart attack. The doctors told us that nearly 30-40 percent his heart muscles were dead, a permanent damage. But, entrusting his life into the care of his heavenly Father, he carried on with his apostolic life with great vigour and intensity and above all with the same serenity as before.”

Fr. Susai lived a good and intense life. His personal simplicity, humility, integrity, his frugal life-style and his years of closeness to His Creator and Lord, will stand with us as an inspiration for years to come. We pray for Fr. Susai Raj that God may give him eternal rest.

(Jose Thayil, SJ)

*All the Patna Jesuits are requested to offer one mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Susai Raj and all the members of Manthan Community are requested to offer two masses for the same intention.*