

FR. JOSEPH (JOSEY) KUNNUNKAL, S.J. (84/60)

Died at Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, on 08 December 2021

Born : 09.10.1937 Ordained : 14.03.1970
Entered the SJ : 01.07.1961 Final Vows : 15.08.1979



Formation & Studies:

Secondary Education : St. Mary's School, Madurai; 1949
Higher Secondary : Xaviarana, Tuticorin; 1950-53
Graduation : Loyola College, Madras; 1956-58 Post-Graduate studies : Loyola College, Madras; 1958-60

Formation & Studies:

Novitiate : XTII, Patna; 1961-63 Theology : DNC, Pune; 1967-71
Juniorate : XTII, Patna; 1963-64 Ordination : DNC, Pune; 14.03.1970
Philosophy : DNC, Pune; 1964-66 Tertianship : Beschi, Dindigul; 1978-79
Regency : St. Xavier's, Patna; 1966-67 Final Vows : St. Xavier's, Patna; 15.08.1979

Special study & Work: Trained in Group Therapy in Indian Society of Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS)
Did a Research on the Dalit Psyche with Dr. Pulin Garg, IIM, Ahmedabad (Ara; 1985-89)
Founder member of the Indian Society for Individual and Social Development (ISISD)
Worked as a professional faculty in various associations of Group Training from 1978

Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:

Superior & Director : Navdeepti Sadan, Patna; 1971-77 Socius to Provincial : St. Xavier's, Patna; 1979-85
Superior : Catholic Church, Barbiga; 1990-95 Superior : Indian Social Institute, Delhi; 1996-2000
Asst. Director, BDVS : Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti (BDVS), Patna; 2000-03
Superior : Aurangabad; 2004-06 Superior : Phulwarisharif, Patna; 2006-07
Parish Priest : Catholic Church, Buxar; 2008-09 Co-Pastor : Catholic Church, Itarhi; 2009-10
Staff, Novitiate : Loyola Sadan, Lucknow; 2011-12 Co-Pastor : St. Stephen's Church, Danapur Cantt.; 2013-17
Rest : Xavier Bhawan, Patna; 2018-

Fr. Joseph (Josey) Kunnunkal, SJ was a 'gentle giant'. Because of his short stature, he was affectionately called 'unniso' ('Baby Jesus' in Malayalam). He was soft spoken, affable, unassuming and a lover of nature. He was a compassionate pastor, an artistic builder and a gentle spiritual guide. His dealings with parishioners, the construction workers and those whom he guided in retreats or in spiritual life, were very gentle and marked by the qualities described by prophet Isaiah regarding the Servant of Yahweh: "He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged." (42:2-4).

Fr. Joe was a person of interiority: he was prayerful, in constant union with God and relished sharing and discussing spiritual matters. From this inner resource flowed his exterior life of apostolates, relationships and life style. He was very creative in his apostolates, trustworthy in relationships and frugal in personal needs. He was a builder – of people and buildings (churches, houses, institutions, water-fountains in gardens). In both types of constructions, there was a sense of care, attention to details and aesthetics.

He did eminent pastoral work in a number of parishes and mission stations in Muzaffarpur and Patna dioceses - Darbhanga, Jamalpur, Bariarpur, Barbiga, Barauni, Muzaffarpur and Phulwari Sharif. In all these places, the poor, lowly and marginalized people, irrespective of religious affiliation, experienced in Fr. Joe, divine love, God-given dignity and sensitive care of a shepherd. In all his construction works, if materials such as bricks, sand, cement, steel, stone chips, etc... received his meticulous attention, the labourers and artisans received equal and more attention and affection from him. Similarly, those whom he guided in short recollections, eight-day retreats and long retreats appreciated his attentive listening and gentle guidance to experience the compassionate love of God and beauty in creation.

Fr. Joe was a self-made person: he learnt architecture and construction, not through any formal training, but by sheer hard work in the form of prolonged hours of painstaking study, observation and learning from others as well as his own experiences. He was courageous and articulate to present his views clearly.

Besides the usual challenges of the ministry, Fr. Joe encountered some prolonged physical ailments too: heart, sugar and blood pressure; eyes, in the last few years Parkinson and in the last few weeks carbuncle. He bore

them all with strong faith, stoic courage and always with a smile that endeared him to everyone who came into contact with him.

Thank you Fr. Joe, for your exemplary Jesuit and priestly life. Intercede for us, your companions on earth.

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