

## FUNERAL ORATION FOR BRO. ANSELM



Dear Rt. Rev. Dr. Singaroyan, the Bishop of Salem, Bro. Arul, the Provincial Superior of Trichy Province, Beloved relatives of Bro. Anselm, Brothers, Fathers, Sisters, Past students, friends and well wishers.

In the race of life, when one person surges ahead of the rest, we call it by a poor term 'the death'. The latest and the most valiant amongst us, who has overtaken us and gone ahead in time is our beloved Bro. Anselm, also known as V K Joseph. For St. Paul, 'death' is nothing but a straight 'run' to reach what is ahead, forgetting what is behind. **Phil: 3/13** That is exactly what Bro. Anselm has done in his pursuit for the 'Victory Prize'.

*"I run straight towards the goal in order to win the Prize"* **Phil: 3/14**

The invisible chords that bind us as relatives, friends and members of our great religious family, wet our hearts with tones and overtones of grief and sorrow. To quote the poet Kahlil Gibran, **"Our sorrow is that of the owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day that cannot unveil the mystery of light"**. No man would discover the secret of death, unless we seek for it in the heart of life through Christ our Saviour, who has destroyed death and obtained for us life eternal through His death and resurrection. For a true Christian, Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. At this moment of sorrow and loss, we can only console ourselves with the words of Michelangelo, "If we have been pleased with life, we should not be displeased with death, since it comes from the hand of the same Master".

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them.” (Rev1: 14:13)

Bro. Anselm (V K Joseph) was born in Chazhikattu Vettuparapurath family on May 27, 1933 at Veliyanoor, Kottayam Dt. In 1947, he joined our Juniorate at Coonoor and completed his High School studies. In 1951, he had his Postulancy at Coonoor followed by his Novitiate at Eachinkadu from 1952-53. He was an astute student which paved way for his administrative skills in the years to come. He used to suffer frequently from a bad cold and this menace never left him until his death.

After his teachers’ training in Tindivanam, he was posted at Santhome High School, Mylapore where he would later go on to create history as one of the most successful Headmasters of the School. Later he completed his B.Ed and was in charge of Juniors at Kazipet from 1960-61. In 1961, he returned to Santhome High School as its Headmaster and Correspondent. His social contacts and excellent relationship with the students, public, parents and officials made him distinct and unique. He also added new structures and started the Montfort Preparatory School. It looks as if he had left a good portion of his heart at Santhome, and the same may be said of his love for other institutions where he had worked for long years, such as Montfort, Yercaud and Campion, Trichy.

Bro. Anselm was appointed Superior of Montfort Yercaud in 1968 and took over as the Principal from 1969-75. The main swimming pool was constructed during his tenure as Principal. The past students of Montfort will have a whole lot of stories and beautiful memories about Bro. Anselm who distinguished himself as an efficient administrator, Brother, guide, friend and leader. They love and admire him, especially for his humane qualities.

Bro. Anselm was appointed as the Regional Superior of South India from 1971-75. His efforts in starting the Fiji mission in 1973, can never be forgotten. In 1975, he became the Provincial Superior of the Province of South India. Nearly

10 new Institutions were started and the Province flourished during this period in every way. Again, Bro. Anselm was responsible for starting our mission in Mizoram which became a district in 1978. Campion Trichy, St. Stanislaus Sathur, St. Peters, Royapuram and St. Mary's A N Mangalam were taken over by the Province during his tenure as Provincial Superior.

From 1980-86, he was the Superior and Principal of Campion Hr. sec. School, Trichy. He proved to be a master builder of men and structures. Once again his administrative acumen came to the fore. Campion became a Champion and the most sought after school in the city. I had the pleasure of working with him for one year at Campion during the Golden Jubilee year in 1985. I did learn much from this administrative genius. He was very popular with everyone around and hence was included in many high power committees and Associations. He was a member of the Board of Hr. Sec. Education, Govt of Tamil Nadu. In 1982, he was honoured by the Govt. of Tamil Nadu with the Dr. Radhakrishnan Award for the Best Teacher. In 1986, he became the Superior and H M of St. Antony's Hr. Sec. School, Coonoor.

In Dec. 1987, he left for Fiji as a missionary. He was the Superior and Principal of Xavier College, Ba from 1987-1997. His commitment, dedication and hard work won him much appreciation from the Students, members of Staff and Parents. The Govt recognized his great service by appointing him as envoy for Fiji at the International Parliament for Safety and Peace. He was also made an honorary citizen of Ba and Chairman of the selection committee for the Govt of India scholarship. He returned to India in 1997 and completed one year diploma course in Holistic counseling at Montfort College, Bangalore.

From 1999-2013, he was in Montfort School, Yercaud – contributing in many ways especially as a warden in one of the dormitories. During the last 3 years, he was not keeping good health especially due to some malignant tumors and a mild attack of Parkinson. However, he was cheerful and kind, always with a lot of 'hope' and 'trust' in the Lord.

Amidst many peculiarities and specific characteristics, Bro. Anselm remained a unique person who continued to impress everyone with his love and concern. He loved his family members, relatives and old boys most, not that his love for the 'Brothers' was least. He loved the congregation and was always concerned about the welfare and growth of the Province. By the fag end of his life, we noticed in him so many new directions and U -turns. He started to speak and contribute whatever he could do for the poor, especially with financial assistance.

He focused more on the beatitude "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" – **Mathew: 5/3**. I have no doubt that with the blessed, the good Lord has already welcomed him with these words "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." **Mat: 25/40**. I had the rare privilege of living with him in the community from 1999 – 2010. He has inspired and educated me so much. There were moments when he stood like a pillar and a shield, rather than a mere onlooker. There is so much we can, and must continue to learn from Bro. Anselm. He would often repeat "Brother, you will bury me, but what about you?" Initially I was rather uncomfortable to hear such remarks – but later, I understood how he is inviting us to enter into the mystery of death and to reflect on the shortness of our lives! Perhaps he was telling us, "Death from which you are fleeing will certainly catch up with you. Death is one of the few things in life certain to occur. Death will catch up with you at any time, who knows, perhaps this is the moment or, it may be much closer than you have ever expected.

Bro. Anselm had returned from home only three days ago after attending the death anniversary ceremonies of his beloved father. On 7<sup>th</sup> evening at about 7.30 pm as Bro. Ignatius, the Director, was entering the community parlour, he found Bro. Anselm struggling to hold on to the door of the wash room near the refectory. Bro. Ignatius rushed to him and held him. But Bro. Anselm collapsed into his hands. Immediately a doctor was summoned, but all his efforts to resuscitate him were in vain... One more strong pillar of the Gabrielite family had fallen. God's finger touched him, and he slept.

Bro. Anselm was a professed Religious for the last 60 years and would have been 80 years old in May 2013. It is foolish and wrong to mourn that Bro. Anselm is no more. Rather we should thank that such a man lived amongst us. Say not in grief; "He is no more" but live in thankfulness that he was.

"Those who walk uprightly enter into peace;  
They find rest as they lie in death" **Isaiah 57/2**

Quoting Tagore I conclude and speak for our beloved Bro. Anselm.

"No, shed no tears for I need them not

All I need is your smile.

If you feel sad do think of me

For that's what I'll like, when you live in the hearts

Of those you love, remember then

You never die."

Bro. George Kalangod  
Provincial Superior

*I would like to thank, specially our dear Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Singaroyan for presiding over the solemn funeral service. I also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the relatives of Bro. Anselm who have come all the way from far off places. I consider you all as a natural extension of the goodness of Bro. Anselm. I specially appreciate the presence of his beloved brother Thomachan, sisters Mrs. Annama Joseph and Mrs. Lena Babu, along with our Brother Kuriakose Chettiath. My sincere appreciation to all those who have sent condolences and also are present for this funeral service. I appreciate very much, the presence of Bro. Arul, the Provincial Superior of Trichy along with a numbers of Brothers from that Province. I thank all the past students of Bro. Anselm who have come together to pay their homage to the departed soul from various Institutions. I also take this opportunity to thank our Parish Priest, the Superior, and Brothers of Montfort community for all the arrangements and for having looked after Bro. Anselm with care and concern. I thank the Novice Master, his assistants and Novices for the Night vigil and their sincere collaboration and help for the last three days. I also take this opportunity to appreciate all the medical support given to Bro. Anselm by Mr. Venketachalam our past student, and the doctors of Ramachandra medical college, Chennai.*

*United as one family, let us celebrate the Holy Eucharist and pray for the repose of the soul of Late Bro Anselm. May his soul rest in peace.*

*Condolence messages.*

January 7, 2013

The Provincial Superior and all the Brothers  
Province of Yercaud

Dear Brothers,

It was with a heavy heart that I received the sad news of the sudden demise of our beloved Bro. Anselm, this evening. All the members of the Central Administration, and the Brothers of Casa Generalizia, join me in extending our heartfelt condolences and our deepest sympathies to each one of you in this hour of grief and loss, and assure you of our sincere prayers for the repose of the soul of our beloved brother. May the peace which comes from the memories of the love we have shared with Bro. Anselm and the assurance that we have another intercessor in heaven now, comfort us now and in the days ahead.

I had the privilege of knowing Bro. Anselm for over 4 decades, and I still have vivid memories of all the encounters I had with him, especially in the recent past. In Bro. Anselm I have always found a person who had a positive attitude towards life and people, and a person who always had the love of the Congregation uppermost in his mind. The expansion of our Congregation to the North East India and our mission in Fiji are ample examples of his missionary dynamism and the desire to spread the Montfortian charism beyond the shores. I was a witness to the miracles he had worked in Xavier College, BA, in Fiji islands. I am sure that all the former students of Bro. Anselm will bear eloquent testimony to the great love he had for his students and all the pains he took to train them up in discipline and instill in them some of the essential human values in order to make them men and women of competence and character. The description of Robert Louis Stevenson of a great person fits Bro. Anselm well: *"That man is a success, who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the love of innocent children and the respect of intelligent men... His memory is a benediction"*.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey my deepest sympathies to all the members of Bro. Anselm's family, and all the former students, colleagues, friends and well wishers of Bro. Anselm. May he continue to inspire us to live our lives fully and to make a difference in the lives of others, through our gentle words and through our little acts of kindness. May his tribe increase and may God grant Bro. Anselm the bliss of eternal life.

Fraternally yours,



Bro. John Kallarackal, SG  
SUPERIOR GENERAL

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Dear Brother George,

It is with much sadness that I learn of the demise of our dear Brother Anselm. My deepest sympathies to you, to the Brothers of the Province of Yercaud, and to the family and friends of our Brother! I remember the interesting conversations that I had with him each time I visited Yercaud. I was always impressed by his kindness, by his respect for others, by his solid religious values, and by his profound love for our Congregation.

I am united to all of you in these days where you pay homage to him and lead him to his final rest. I thank the Lord for the gift of Brother Anselm to our Congregation and for all that he has done for its development. We have one more protector in heaven. May he intercede for all of us, so that we may always be true to our commitments.

Bro. Rene

Dear Brothers of the Yercaud Province,

My heart felt condolences to all the Brothers, at the sad demise of Bro. Anselm. Bro. Anselm was man of humour and positive energy. His capacity to instill confidence in people even in trying situations, will be greatly missed by the Province.

I express my condolences to the bereaved members of his family and pray God that He gives them strength and Christian fortitude to bear this great loss.

May his soul rest in peace.

Yours Fraternally,

Bro K M Joseph  
Assistant General

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Dear Bro. George Kalangod, Provincial Superior

It is with great shock that I received the news of the sudden death of Rev. Bro. Anselm this evening. I am deeply saddened by his death. In fact I had spoken to him four days ago and he told me that his doctors had told him that all is well with his medical reports and that he could go on for some more time without any problem. He sounded very confident and cheerful when he spoke to me.

Please accept my heartfelt condolences I wish to offer you and to all the Brothers of the Province of Yercaud. I am with you at this time of sorrow. I promise my prayers for you, for the Brothers of the Province, and for the repose of the soul of Bro. Anselm. May his soul rest in peace.

Yours in solidarity,

Bro. Paul Raj

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Dear Rev. Brother Provincial Superior,

Greetings from Rome.

Thanks for sending the information about the Bro. Anselm's demise.

The whole community of the Generalate assures you, Bro. Anselm's family and the Province of Yercaud of its fraternal sympathy and of the support of its prayers.

With best wishes and prayers,

Bro. Georges Le Vern  
Secretary General