



***Rev. Fr. Mukala George sdb***

***01. 11. 1931 - 14. 03. 2017***



## **Fr. George Mukala SDB. (1931- 2017)**

### **Early Life**

Fr. George Mukala was born on 1 November 1931 at Aruvithura in the diocese of Palai, Kottayam Dt., Kerala. His parents were Mrs. Aley and Mr. Mathai. They belonged to a traditionally pious Syrian Catholic family which has given many vocations to priesthood and religious life. They are eight siblings, four boys and four girls. Fr. George was the 7th among them. He completed Cl. VII in the Government Upper Primary School at Thidanad. In 1945 he joined the Cambridge School at Poonjar for what was then called 3rd Form. He willingly joined the group desiring to be priests and missionaries and left his home town on 6 May 1946. His companions and he arrived in Tirupattur (Tamilnadu) on 8 May 1946. Fr. John Med who was the Rector there welcomed them cordially. Though there were initial difficulties with food, language etc., he forged ahead with great enthusiasm. He completed his matriculation in 1950. He showed signs of detachment and a keen sense of piety and prayer even as a child. He had a great love for our Blessed Mother. All his brothers and sisters were given gold chains when they were young, but surprisingly when George was offered a gold chain; he turned down the offer and expressed his desire to have a Rosary instead.

### **Initiation into Salesian life**

The Salesian fathers began recruiting priest-aspirants from schools and parishes in

Kerala towards the end of the nineteen forties. George Mukala belonged to one of the first groups that came to the aspirantate at Tirupattur. He completed his matriculation there and began his novitiate at Kotagiri in 1951. He made his first profession on 24 May 1952. He completed his B.Ph at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu (1952-1955). His practical training assignments were at Matunga, Mumbai (1955-1957) and at Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu (1957-1958). He made his Perpetual Profession on 24 May 1958 at Yercaud, Tamilnadu. He went to Sacred Heart Theological



College, Mawlai Shillong for his theological studies (1958-1962). He was ordained a priest by Venerable Stephen Ferrando SDB, Bishop of Shillong on 29 June 1962 at St. Francis Xavier Church, Broadway, Madras. He celebrated his first mass in his home parish church at Aruvithura on 1 July 1962.

### **Apostolic Ministry**

After ordination Fr. George returned to the province of Madras (Chennai) to take up various assignments. He served as Cat-





echist at Yercaud, Tamil Nadu (1962-1963); he was Catechist at St. Joseph's Tech. Inst. Basin Bridge, Chennai (1963-1964). He moved to Kodiveri as the Asst. PP (1964-1965); he was transferred to Irinjalakuda, Kerala in 1965 as the Prefect of Studies and in 1966 he took charge as the Prefect of Studies at Ernakulam, Kerala (1966-1967). He completed his B.A. in Economics in 1965 from Tribuan University, Khatmandu.

### **Assam, his home away from home**

During the rule of the Janata Government under Morarji Dessai the foreign missionaries of Assam were asked to leave. And many veteran missionaries like Fr. Bolini, Fr. Frassi, Fr. Joseph Fantin, Fr. Dalzovo, Fr. Larrea and others had to leave the mission stations they had served for several years. The Indian confreres were too few to replace them and fill in the vacuum. Therefore Fr. Casaroti, the then provincial of Guwahati appealed to the provincial of Madras (Chen-

Fr. Ittyachan (RIP), Fr. Mathew Tharakan, Fr. P.K. Mathew and many others. Their arrival was a great blessing and the work in the missions continued without interruption.

It must be kept in mind that when these volunteers arrived from Chennai there was neither Dimapur province nor Diocese of Kohima. There was only Shillong and Dibrugarh Dioceses apart from Guwahati province. Fr. George Mukala arrived in the North-east in 1967 and took up assignment as the Asst. PP at Wokha, Nagaland in August 1967 (1967-1970). From 1970 he worked in many places in Assam. He was Parish Priest at Digboi, Assam (1970-1976), Parish Priest at Margherita, Assam (1976 - 1985) and Parish Priest at Tinsukia, Assam (1986-1992). He worked for a short time in Roing, Arunachal Pradesh (1993). In 1994 he went to Jagun, Assam where he was Asst. Parish Priest (1994-1995). It was from here he pioneered and looked after the mission at Nampong, Arunachal Pradesh. From 1996 to 2000 he



nai) to send volunteers and save the situation. In response to this appeal many confreres of Chennai province volunteered to work in the Province of Guwahati. Fr. George was one of them; the others include Fr. Scaria Nedumala (RIP), Fr. M. M. Michael (RIP),

was Confessor at Salesian Novitiate, Ngarian, Manipur. He moved to Catholic Church, Doomdooma, Assam in 2000 as Asst. PP & Confessor (2000 - 2006). He was transferred to the Novitiate at Sechii-Zubza, Nagaland in 2007 as Confessor & Teacher (2007-2015).





Towards the end of 2015 Fr. Mukala arrived in Salesian College, Dimapur and spent nearly 2 years before his demise on 14 March 2017.

### **An ardent Missionary**

He did not stay at Wokha for long since he was asked by the Provincial to take charge of Digboi Parish in 1976. The priest's residence at Digboi was a villa bequeathed by the Oil India Company. From Digboi Fr. George looked after the whole area including Margarita and Jagun. He pioneered two mission centres in Arunachal Pradesh, Nampong and Roing. He carried benches and desks from Tinsukia to Roing with the help of the oarsmen at Dhola. He went through many hardships and trials single handedly. It was a real challenge as he had no personal vehicle and made use of public transport that was often over crowded. He had on many occasions travelled standing from Nampong (Arunachal) to Dibrugarh (Assam). He toured the villages on foot

bravely and silently bore up all the inconveniences that came in the way of pioneering mission centres. His indomitable missionary dynamism and undying commitment to Christ is truly remarkable and outstanding.

### **Mukala the man of Prayer**

He would rise early for his personal prayer whether alone or in community. He would recite the breviary with great devotion. He would never miss community prayers and always arrived on time for practices of piety. Fr. George was a holy man who spent lot of time



in prayer. Fr. Mathew Pulingathil vouches for his holiness. Many used to speak of his special gift or God-given charism to divine water, find lost articles and locate lost persons besides in removing charms that diabolically affected places and persons. He spent a lot of time in personal prayer otherwise he

and took the word of God and sacraments to the people. His residence did not have all the conveniences that we now enjoy in a presbytery. He did not even have a cook and cooked food himself. Fr. Mukala very

would not be able to exorcise persons and places. This gift was the result of his deep and intimate union with Jesus. In divining water or choosing medicine for a sick person his medium was the Rosary. His child-





hood devotion to our Blessed Mother and his deep trust in Jesus were powerful weapons in his fight against evil spirits. Let me cite one example. The land where now stands the aspirantate and MSW college in Bagchhung (Jorhat) proved to be quite barren. Vegetable cultivation produced nothing, domestic animals like cows and pigs used to die at regular intervals. Fr. George was requested to come over and on arrival went round the compound and found in several places three

ing over it with his rosary he would tell them for example, "Dig four feet from the front steps of the house; there a foot below you will find a piece of bone. Remove and burn that away and you will be alright" People would surprisingly find the bone he referred to and removing the same they were able to enjoy good health and prosperity. He would always pray before and after such sessions and incidents. It was his continuous prayer that gave him this power which he used gen-



to four feet below the surface pots of coagulated blood. He ordered these to be taken and burned and believe it or not the land became fertile. He has often given medicine to sick people choosing from the many bottles he had on the table with the unique power he had, of course with the Rosary as the medium for the selection of the right medicine. Some families suffering from illness or misfortune would come to consult Fr. Mukala to find a remedy for their problem. He would ask them for a sketch of their house and go-

erously for the people of God. It needed a lot of energy. At times he would be dead tired after one of these demanding and weary sessions. It was so enervating that he discontinued it towards the end of his life. He was a much sought after confessor. He was the regular confessor of our novices in Zubza (Kohima). He was available for people and confreres whenever they requested to hear their confessions. I remember how he was available for confessions even in his sick bed.





## **The Welcoming Host**

Fr. Vazhayil Devassia Sdb (INS) sharing about his experience of Fr. George when he was an aspirant at Pachalam, Kerala praised the care Father took of the young boys. One thing that boys in a boarding complain about is food. Fr. George saw to it that the food of the boys was good and no one had a chance to complain, nay, they enjoyed every meal in the boarding prepared under the direct supervision of Fr. George.



Fr. Mukala was known for his hospitality. Where flowers are, there bees gather. Confreres loved to visit him all the more for his gastronomic skills. He could prepare many tasty dishes especially fish curry. It is natural for bees to gather honey from flowers; so guests and confreres gathered round the sumptuous table prepared by Fr. George for a delicious bite. Fr. C. T Varghese remembers how when he was in Bosco Bible school Hijuguri, Fr. George who was parish priest at Tinsukia Parish would prepare appetizing fish curry and invite him and other confreres not for the celebra-

tion of a feast day or birthday but precisely to enjoy the tempting curry he had prepared.

While at Zubza (Novitiate) his apostolate other than being confessor was to serve a good cup of tea to every guest. He did not trust the hot water kept in the flask. He used to say, "To make good tea we need fresh sizzling water." In fact like the Japanese, he had a 'tea ceremony' of his own before guests could have a fine sip of a cup of Assam tea. He would follow the same course every time. He was very

particular that tea leaves are from Assam and must be kept in air-tight containers so that the aroma would be captive and linger on.

## **They love, remember and speak of him**

It was a great shock for me to learn of the departure of Fr. George Mukala. I was in Rome at that time. I had known him closely during the years he was working at Margherita (Assam). I had toured many villages and tea gardens with him and taken part in many pastoral events. He was a steady worker neither showy nor glamorous; he was careful, judicious, consistent and persevering.





I admired his eagerness to help the people in all the ways possible: village visits, celebration of feasts, meeting of Catechists, 'Sangath' (youth association) and other parish groups, updating programmes, retreats etc. He would not boast of anything and was always committed to his work. We are living in a time when we look back with pride on some of these stalwarts who gave us wonderful example. May the Lord reward him



abundantly for all the great work he did at Margherita and other places. (**Arch Bp. Emeritus Thomas Menampampil Sdb, DD**)

I knew Fr. Mukala well from 1983 when he was in Margharita. After his arrival in Tinsukia in 1986, we had a lot to do in common and I always found in him a very convinced and hardworking Priest. One thing I liked most in him was that he was never prepared to compromise on Religious convictions and duties and never feared to call a spade a spade. He respected those who were serious about life and worked hard. As the Tinsukia Parish and Bible school worked in close collaboration those years, we had a lot to do together.

## His stint in Arunachal Pradesh

When he was the Parish Priest in Margharita, he always moved around in Cassock. In 1982, Mr. Josham Lungphi, a class XII student from Lungthoi village, now settled in Manmao town, met Fr Mukala and introduced himself. Josham and his family were baptized in Myanmar in 1970 and later moved to Lungthoi. They were the only Catholic family in the whole of

Nampong, Jairampur and Manmao circles. Though in the midst of the Baptist families and villages, this family kept their faith alive and waited in patient prayer. As Josham was in Margharita town for some work, he saw Fr. Mukala in cassock and followed him to the mission. There he told his story and Fr. Mukala introduced him to Fr. Job Kallarackal SDB, who was in charge of

Arunachal, from Naharkatiya. The contact was kept up and on 30 January 1983 Fr. Job and I (just ordained) reached Margharita. After Don Bosco's feast day Mass, Fr. Anand SDB dropped us at the Tirap gate near Ledo. Josham was waiting for us. We walked the whole day with him and in the evening reached the village. We met people and instructed them. Next morning a number of people were baptized and we came away. Fr. Mukala allowed us to use Margharita for meetings and transit. Thus he can be called the one who made the first contact among the Tangsas. Whenever I had to go to Nampong, Manmao and Miao area, Fr. Mukala always accommodated me and took good care





of those who were moving to the missions.

In Tinsukia too, he was helpful with confessions and so on in the bible school. In 1991, he came with me for a trip to Sadiya and Roing. From then, a new thought dawned and grew in him. One day he told me, "I have been working in Assam for so many years. Now it may be good to have a change". Accordingly, as the building in Roing was complete and Naba Ita Pulu wanted us to do something, Fr. Mukala agreed to try Roing. With the permission of the Provincial, he went to Roing for a few days. But the river and other problems made it clear that Roing would not be the place for a man of his age. So he came away from Roing.

On 19 December 1993 Bishop Abraham Alangimattathil blessed the church in

days. It went on for some time. But as there was no vehicle and he could not be travelling to the villages by bike or on foot, he could not continue as he was able to cater to the center only. So he decided to move out from there and left Nampong. People of Nampong remember him very fondly. When we had the silver jubilee in February 2017, they spoke about his stay and contribution. We are all very grateful to him for his great support. May God grant him eternal rest. **(Bp. Palliparampil George SDB - Bishop of Miao Diocese)**

"When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of Scripture will come true: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death where is your sting? Now the sting of death



Nampong and Fr. Mukala came for the blessing. He was impressed with the faith and activity of the people. When they expressed the desire to have a Priest as by then the church had grown quite well in Nampong as well as Manmao area, Bishop Aind agreed to allow Fr. Mukala to stay in Nampong. Fr. Provincial too agreed and Fr. Mukala moved to Nampong in 1994. The people in Nampong center were very happy as he was always available at the mission and they knew that he was the one who started the school at Margharita. Some more people joined the church in those

is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory, through Our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15. 53- This was the passage that came to my mind when I saw for the first time the emaciated frame of Fr. George, covered only with a thin skin beyond recognition. Fr. George was stout by nature and I had that image before me, as I was travelling to take part in the Funeral on the 15 March 2017. I was not prepared for the shock I was to receive when I looked at his mortal remains lying-in-state in Salesian College Chapel. He was literally skin and bone





and it was hard to identify him as the person of old. With the demise of Fr. George, we have lost one of the last surviving group of five Confreres. Right from the Novitiate, Fr. George was a soft spoken and a very reliable member of our group. If some task was entrusted to him, he would see that it was done well.



**Skills:** By patient and persevering effort, he cultivated many skills. He became a skilled Horticulturist, specialized in Rose cultivation. Wherever he worked as Cleric in Practical training and during the Theological studies, and in all Mission Centres where he worked, he cultivated and maintained beautiful gardens. He also learned the skill of Bee keeping in a scientific way, as promoted by the Government. Fr. George was especially in great demand for locating water sources. Wherever he pointed out a location for a well, water was found at the depth he had indicated. He had no difficulty in showing how this talent could be developed in any one. Numerous are the instances when he was able to locate lost persons.

## The Missionary

He was a member of the erstwhile Madras Province. The name CHENNAI is of recent change, as many names of places have undergone changes in recent times. When the foreign Missionaries had to leave the Missions of Assam, at the request of the Rector

Major, Madras Province made a great sacrifice and sent many Priests to the Assam Missions which included the entire North East. Fr. George was one of the Volunteers. He worked in several places as a Missionary. His appointment to Digboi was a very important event. From Digboi, he

would visit all the surrounding villages up to Jagun and beyond. During these Missionary journeys he used to see the large plot of land vacated by the Army, after the War. By dint of many sacrifices, journeys and contacts, he was able to get that land for a Parish. The land on which the School now stands was not of Assam, but of North East Frontier Agency.

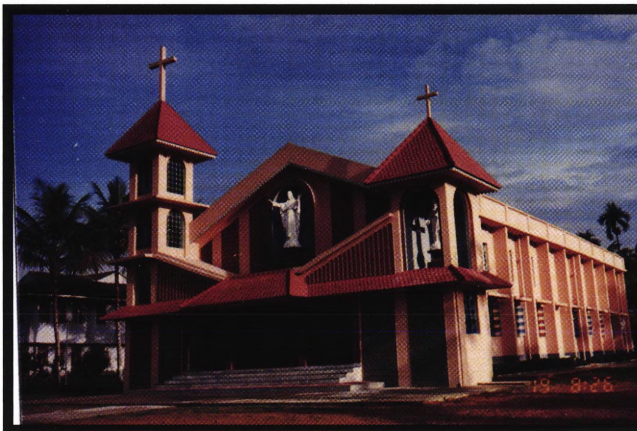
In Shillong, the Government was hard pressed to find water. Fr. George's ability to divine water was known through some one, and they requested him to help. They took him to Shillong, and the finding of a rich source of water, was very much appreciated. In return, as a sign of gratitude, they





granted that land for him to start a school there. Eventually the land was cleared and building came up and the Parish was opened. From Magherita, Fr. George was transferred to Tinsukia when Fr. Zachary the Parish Priest suddenly passed away on 24 November 1985. Here his works increased as there was a school, a Boarding for the Boys and large Parish. He utilized fully his talents and capabilities here for the good of the people. The Parish Church of Tinsukia was built under his personal supervision, years later. Lost and Found: Fr. George was also able to locate people who got lost during journeys or young people who ran away from Home.

he had said all he wanted to say. He shared his spiritual experiences and his habit of prayer. He was a man of Prayer and a silent worker. He told me that he was often disturbed at night, and that he had to pray much and for long. Only prayer kept him safe. He said that very few people think that Prayer is so very powerful and necessary. When he was no longer able to do anything, he spent his time praying. He did not want anyone to know that he was praying. He would cut short long winded chatting even by his own relations, Religious Sisters, who were in the Missions and had gone to visit him in the Salesian Novitiate at Zubza. On the



He was also able to exorcise the evil forces, and to bless and clear haunted houses. He was thus at the service of the people to the very last years of his active life. Even after retirement from Ministry in the Missions, he continued to receive requests for help from many people. He never refused help to anyone. He had to pray much and for long for all the people who came to him for help.

#### **Fr. George, a good and holy Salesian Priest**

As a companion and a Provincial, he trusted me. There was no formality between us. We were just companions right from the Novitiate days. He would share with me all his experiences, difficulties and sufferings. There was no time limit. We would talk till

other hand, he used to say that he was waiting for my annual visit to the Novitiate to preach the Retreat to the Novices, to have ample time and opportunity to speak of things that mattered for the soul. Conclusion: Mine is a small contribution. We have been praying for each of our companions since our First Profession. Now the whole Province is united in praying for the eternal happiness of our dear Fr. George Mukala. As I earnestly pray for his eternal repose, may he also pray for us till we meet again at Jesus' feet. **(Fr. Matthew Pulingathil SDB - former Provincial - Don Bosco, Tinsukia)**

"The souls of the just are in the hands of God and no torments shall touch





them... those who are faithful will live with him in love, for His grace and mercy are for His chosen ones.” (Wisdom 3:1, 9) At times in our life’s journey God becomes visible to us through human beings who come across our way. They resemble Him and leave an indelible mark in our memories when they leave this world. One such person is Fr. George Mukala SDB whom I admire and whose

pirants and sisters with fatherly kindness and firmness. His homilies and talks on recollection days were very inspiring and motivating. Fr. George was a grateful person. He lived the exhortation of St. Paul “Pray at all times. Give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thes 5: 17-18). He was very straightforward and expected the religious to be well-mannered and mature. He often spoke about the impor-



memories I cherish today with gratitude and love. I had the privilege of associating with him from 1986 to 1991 during my stay at St. Stephen’s Tinsukia, which was the Aspirantate of the Congregation. After the sudden demise of Fr. Zachary SDB who was the parish priest of the Catholic Church, Tinsukia, Fr. George took over as the Parish Priest. Though the parish had three religious communities to cater to the spiritual needs, Fr. George gave special attention and priority to St. Stephen’s community as it was a formation house.

Like a good shepherd he would willingly take up any trouble to provide the needed spiritual assistance. There were days when he came by cycle-rickshaw to the convent for the Holy Mass. Seeing his trouble I told him that we would come to the parish to attend the Mass.

But he offered to come as it was a formation house that needed much attention. He was meticulous with the preparation of the liturgy and also demanded the same from the as-

tance of expressing one’s idea with clarity and precision. He faced the struggles of life courageously and silently and wanted others also to do the same. Once when I approached him with a problem, he said, “Sister, learn to solve your own problems.” And another time he said, “Sister, struggle and live.” His directions helped me to face the challenges and adversities of life with courage and faith. Whenever real need occurred, he was there to offer help and support. Let me recall one incident. In 1987, I had to reach a group of girls to St. Luke’s Hospital, Tinsukia for Nursing. As we had no conveyance, at my request Fr. George gave us the parish jeep. On the way a tragic accident took place during which a child was killed on the spot. The angry mob damaged the jeep and it was towed and taken to the police station. Meanwhile, the driver of the jeep managed to escape and informed Fr. Mukala through Fr. P.K George who was at Bosco Bible School, Hijiguri. Fr. Mukala





received the news with serenity and calmness and continued with the normal duties in the school. After having completed all the formalities in the police station I went to the Parish escorted by two policemen. I was anxious and worried, not knowing how to face Fr. George as I did not know how he would react to the situation. When I entered the compound

I found him with Fr. P. K. George. He directed me to take them to his office. Prior to the meeting with the policemen he turned to me and said, "Sister, don't worry." Those words came as a soothing balm that comforted and consoled me. I still recall those moments and remain deeply grateful. He accompanied me to the court whenever I was called for hearing. Once in the court I heard him say, "How long will you make Sister walk up and down? Do something to settle the matter." Certainly, he spoke with power and authority and thereafter I did not have to go to the court. He took over the whole issue and settled it with the child's family. He had a loving, forgiving and compassionate heart which could understand the agony of persons in trouble. Fr. George, being a parishioner of St. George, Aruvithara, I strongly feel that he was blessed with many special gifts and charism through the intercession of St. George his patron. He was a healer of both soul and body. Besides rendering spiritual assistance he also rendered homeopathic treatment. He was gifted with the special power for diagnosing sickness, divining water, finding lost persons and articles. He was a self-made architect and a meticulous planner. The church, hostel and part of the school building at Tinsukia parish were designed and supervised by him. His simplicity was manifested even in the construction. Once when I made a comment on his simple, beautiful design, he said, "My personality is shown there". He was a lover of flowers and loved maintain-

ing flower gardens wherever he worked. Fr. George was a silent, holy, virtuous, unassuming and tireless missionary who never boasted of his achievements. He did everything with much love and perfection. The words of St. Paul, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as if you are doing it for the Lord and not for men" (Col 3:23) were actualized in the life of Fr. George. He lived a disciplined and dignified life and people had great regard and respect for him. He was a learned person with lot of practical knowledge and wisdom. Though serious in appearance, his wit and wisdom, occasional jokes and gentle smile earned the love and respect of all. After his transfer from Tinsukia I had the opportunity to meet him a few times in different places where he welcomed us happily. He would never let us go without a cup of special tea prepared by him. My last meeting with Fr. George was in November 2015 at Salesian College, Dimapur. By then his health was deteriorating but he was serene and contented. After spending sometime at his side, I asked him to offer his pain for us too and to bless us. Sitting on his bed he said a short prayer and gave me his priestly blessing. He assured me of his prayers and we parted. My acquaintance with Fr. George has left in me an indelible image of him as a saintly priest who gave himself totally to the service of God and his people. He was an example of hard work and temperance. He sanctified the Church by his holy and dedicated priestly life, silently enduring the sufferings that came on his way. On behalf of all the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians whose lives were touched by the sanctifying life of Fr. George, I sincerely thank him for being a source of spiritual strength and for all the loving services he rendered to us. He was gripped by





God's love and humbly lived for the Lord and served Him in gladness. May he continue to inspire and intercede for us that we too may live for the Lord and one day reach our abode in heaven. Thank you Fr. Mukala and may you rest in the peace of Christ. **(Rev. Sr. Mary Perunilam MSMHC - Assistant General)**

**Excerpts from the Provincial's Homily at the Funeral Mass:**

Your Lordship Rt. Rev. James Thoppil the Bishop of Kohima, Your Lordship Rt. Rev.



Joseph Aind the Bishop of Dibrugarh. Rev. Fr. Januarius Sangma the Vice Provincial of Guwahati province, Representatives from Shillong province. Rev. Fathers concelebrants, Salesian family members, Rev. Sr. Mary Perunilam Msmhc (Asst Mother General), Rev. Sr. Daisy Msmhc (Provincial - Tinsukia Province), Sisters Provincial, Rev. sisters and Brothers; Family members of Fr. George present here - CMC sisters: Binsy and Merly (His nieces), Mr. Mathew, Mr. M. T. Mathew and Mr. Georgekutty Mathew (three of his nephews who could not be present as one of them suddenly took ill at Kolkata airport), Sr. Rose Joe CMC (His grandniece) and all of you brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. I stand here 'with a feeling of humble gratitude' to God for the gift of Fr. Mukala to the Church, Salesian congregation and to the

province of Dimapur. I thank God for the love and fraternal solidarity that we Salesians feel today. I thank God for Fr. George Mukala's contribution to the congregation through the province of Dimapur. We thank God for his wonderful life of prayer, holiness, dedication and commitment in the Salesian Congregation. May I also place on record some of his services and contributions rendered to the province of Madras and Dimapur for which we ought to be grateful to God. In some places he was a pioneer and worked



alone, but he was a man of prayer, punctuality and perfection. He was a self-made builder who built a couple of Churches. He was gifted with the power of healing and exorcism. He had the gift of finding lost things and persons. He had the ability to divine water in many places. At times he might have appeared serious in his demeanor but by nature he was gentle, quiet and humorous. He was a happy Salesian and had a deep sense of belonging to the congregation. We shall certainly miss him. Fr. George's passing away is not the end but the beginning of a new innings in his life. He has gone to his true home. A man on the Lewisham High Street used to go around saying to people, "there are no hospitals in heaven, there are no doctors in heaven, there are no nurses in heaven and there are





no ambulances in heaven.” What he meant was, there is no more suffering and there is no more pain. That is heaven. And it is to this place of rest and happiness that Fr. Mukala has gone. Let us assist him now with our prayers, so that Christ can make up for what is lacking in his life. Adieu Dear Fr. George Mukala. **(Fr. Nestor Guria SDB – Provincial)**

Fr. George Mukala was fondly remembered by all the confreres, fathers, sisters and parishioners as Fr. Mukala. He was sought after by many people who were in desperate situations. He was indeed God’s instrument in bringing blessings to all those who approached him for help. Today he is no more with us.



5. *Mr. Serjius Xess, Head catechist on behalf of Margherita Parish (Assam)*

Your Lordship Rt. Rev. Joseph Aind, the bishop of Dibrugarh and Rt. Rev. James Thoppil the bishop of Kohima, Dear Rev. Fr. Nestor, Provincial, Fr. Januavarius (Vice-provincial of Guwahati), Representatives from the provinces of Silchar and Guwahati, Parish Priests, Rectors and In-charges of various institutions, superiors of various convents, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Family members of Fr. George Mukala, Parishioners from Assam, Salesian Cooperators, Don Bosco Alumni members, Friends and Well Wishers of Fr.



As we bid him farewell, I call upon few individuals to deliver the condolence messages:

1. *Fr. Mathew Pulingathil, the 1st provincial of Dimapur province on behalf of the Confreres of the province.*
2. *Fr. Devasia Vazhayil on behalf of the confreres of Shillong province*
3. *Fr. Januarius Sangma, Vice Provincial of Guwahati on behalf of the Confreres of Guwahati Province*
4. *Sr. Bincy on behalf of the family members of Fr. George Mukala*

Mukala and all the faithful who have gathered here for the funeral of our beloved Fr. George Mukala. I stand here on behalf of the Salesian Province of Dimapur to express our sentiments of gratitude to all of you for your valuable presence at this funeral mass and the last rites for our loving Fr. George Mukala. At the outset we are grateful to our beloved bishops James Thoppil, bishop of Kohima and Joseph Aind, bishop of Dibrugarh for being present with us for today’s Eucharistic Celebration and pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Mukala. We thank our Bishop James Thoppil for officiating at the funeral mass and Bishop Joseph Aind for the inspiring homily.





Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria the Provincial announced during lunch yesterday saying: we have very sad news that Fr. George Mukala is no more. It was indeed shocking for all us at the provincial house. I realized how the Lord has visited our province suddenly. I also recalled the day when we brought Fr. Mukala from the Novitiate at Zubza to the Referral hospital at Dimapur and then to Holy Redeemer hospital at Chumukedima. Later, when his health improved he was brought to Salesian College so that he could be better looked after by the Brothers and Fathers of Salesian College Community. The love and concern of the Salesian College community made Fr. Mukala live serenely and happily for the past one and half years. They took good care of him with great love and concern. At this moment we also remember Samuel, William, Blasius, Konstan and Marcel who were his personal assistants during the days of illness. We are very grateful to them for their generous sacrifice and love. I would profoundly thank Fr. Tom the rector, Fr. Rajesh the administrator and all the fathers and brothers of Salesian College who personally assisted Fr. Mukala during his illness. May God bless them all. We are grateful to all the fathers, sisters and lay people who have come from the Diocese of Dibrugarh, Nagaland and Manipur. We thank all our Salesian Confreres representing various houses of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. We thank all the sisters representing various religious communities of Dimapur. Thank you very much for your prayers, your brotherly and sisterly support during this bereavement. We gratefully acknowledge the presence of Mr. Mathew, Mr. M. T Mathew, Mr. George Kutty Mathew the Nephews of Fr. George Mukala, Sr. Bincy CMC, Sr. Merly CMC, the Nieces of Fr. Mukala and Sr. Rose Joe, the Grand Niece of Fr. George Mukala repre-

senting his family. They have made a great sacrifice to be here for the funeral service and to pray for the repose of the departed soul of their beloved family member Fr. Mukala. May the Lord be with them and console them in this moment of great sorrow. We thank those who have sent us condolence messages, namely: Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati, Fr. Francesco Cereda (Vicar of the Rector Major), Fr. Maria Arokiam (Regional superior of South Asia), SDB provincial of Mumbai, SDB provincial of Guwahati, FMA provincial of Shillong. Once again thank you very much for being with us during this time of bereavement and praying for the repose of our beloved Fr. George Mukala. Today also is the death anniversary of Fr. Scaria Nedumala. With the death of our dear Fr. Mukala, the province has 30 confreres in heaven in the short span of 35 years of the existence of Dimapur province. May Fr. Mukala George rest in the peace of Christ. ***(Highlights of the Vote of Thanks proposed at the end of the Funeral Mass by Fr. Perianayagam Bosco Sdb - Vice-provincial).***

I lived with Fr. Mukala nearly 10 years. 4 years in Ngarian Novitiate and 6 in Zubza. They were practically the last years of his life. It took some time for me to get used to being comfortable with him. He was a man of precision, clarity and brevity. So if you are not clear in what you say, he would say bluntly: I don't understand you. So you learn to say only what is required and say it loud and clear. In matters where he has expertise like construction, gardening, art, beekeeping etc., you don't give suggestions unless you are asked.

### **Interested and concerned**

It appears that he is not interested in the affairs of the community. But I discov-





ered that he follows everything that goes on in the house. He observes everything. He is deeply interested in all that concerns individuals and the community. He would willingly help with advice, suggestions and



personal intervention when needed. One afternoon suddenly a fire from a spark on the road below spread rapidly and was about to reach the building. All of us came out in panic wondering what to do. He quickly broke some branches from nearby and cleared a path ahead of the fire and thus stopped what could have been a conflagration in a building with plenty of pine wood planks all over.

Pretty soon I found that he is very sensitive and feels for the confreres and the novices. In the early days sitting somewhat silently with him at table with occasional guarded remarks was rather uncomfortable and unsettling for me. Gradually I realized talking much is not required for communication. Just sitting together is enough to convey understanding, care and concern. When he returned from his home visit he would always bring a good cake from floury's in Kolkata. He would personally cut it and make sure everyone gets a share including the domestic staff.

## His sense of humour

In spite of his serious bearing he had a great sense of humour. Before ill health overtook him, during family gatherings especially on his birthday, he would keep the community entertained with his jokes. One of his methods was to narrate the idiosyncrasies of his numerous cooks. And he had nearly a hundred of them during his long solitary missionary life in the early years. He was not averse to laughing at himself: Once he quoted to me what one of his companions, later a diocesan priest said : Companion: "Mukala , you will be a great man.' Mukala : "Why?"; Companion " Because God makes use of useless people." Another time he was narrating what happened while travelling in a bus from Tinsukia to Margherita. The only place he found was the narrow seat behind the driver. The driver looking back said: "Burah be hai, mota be hai!" Once we were observing the novices searching for their names in the new morning job list. He narrated what he overheard. One novice was asking another: "Eh! Who are the next victims of Mukala?" (referring to the gardeners to help him in the garden)

## Judicious use of money

He was very careful about money. He would never spend a pie if it was not really necessary. He was not shy to bargain with the shopkeepers, including the 'imas' (Manipuri ladies selling things on the roadside). Once when he was going to market I asked him if he could buy some notebooks as spiritual diaries for the novices. I was surprised when in the evening he brought me very attractive and surprisingly cheap notebooks. Of course he went to dozens of shops till he found this particular set. Refuge of the sick & helpless The sick who found no help in doctors or those under the influences of evil found refuge in him. In the Ngarian novitiate days





several people used to come to him. It took a heavy toll on him. He would not deal with any of these cases unless he celebrated Mass and had breakfast. All these cases involved careful diagnosis, and treatment which called for spending long time in prayer. Most of these took not less than two to three hours. Generally he would be exhausted at the end of it all. As long as he was healthy enough he never refused to help anyone. I have seen people who were carried to the room, walking away happily at the end of his ministrations. Whatever contribution he received he would hand over to me for the community. Never had any complaints about food. One thing that surprised me was his attitude to food. Except for one or two ordinary items required for his health he had absolutely no demands for food of any kind. Even as his health deteriorated he was not at all interested in our efforts to provide him with more tasty stuff. He was happy with what was provided for the community. I never heard him grumble about food or for that matter about anything else.

### **Deeply spiritual**

Fr. Mukala was a deeply spiritual person. He prayed much. He never did anything to gain applause. He said what he honestly thought. He did what he was convinced was right. He did not mind the disapproval or negative criticism that may have come as a consequence. He had the patience of an elephant when it came to gardening or doing some artistic work or supervising constructions. He would be on his feet day and night to supervise workmen. He was acutely aware of his impatience with people and he acknowledged it to me more than once. But this caused him a lot of suffering later on when he was no more able to do anything to keep himself busy. Fr. Mukala was indeed a multi-faceted personality: an artist, a builder, a healer, mis-

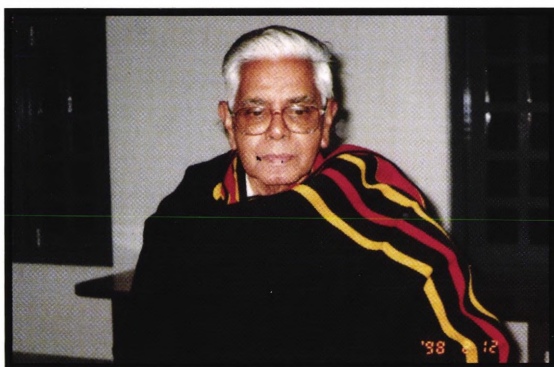
sionary and an educationist. Above all he was a holy priest and a deeply convinced and committed religious. It was indeed a privilege for me to have lived with him so long. **(Fr. Mulayinkal Thomas sdb)**

I am happy to put down in words my short experience of being with Fr. George Mukala for the last three years. First and foremost, I want to say that he was a very holy Salesian. In spite of his painful sufferings in his old age, he had a commendable desire to participate in the prayer moments of the community. He never missed his daily mass until his health did not permit him to do so. He never complained about his health as he used to say, "I am alright, thank you". This tells us about the joyful acceptance of his sufferings and pain.

Fr. Mukala was quick-witted and very jovial. His puns brought smiles on the faces around him. At times he feigned to be harsh but those acquainted with him knew very well that he did not intend to offend anyone. That was simply the way with him. Another noble virtue that I noticed in him was his gratitude to others for their help and guidance. He would always say, 'Thank you, thank you.' He was always available for confession when anyone approached him at any time. He had great interest in watching sports especially football. This attracted many young brothers into his room. His love for nature was evident whenever we took him out for a stroll on his wheel chair; he would invariably admire the verdant vegetation and the flowers in the garden which was looked after by Fr. Tom. I pray that the Lord who called him will grant him a place with the saints. May he intercede for all of us from heaven. May his soul rest in the peace of Christ. **(Bro. Amal Raj Sdb)**







**Verse by Fr. George Mukala Sdb.**

O Lord! Make me:  
 A man of God, a man of prayer.  
 A man of stability in a wavering world  
 A person of planning and hard work,  
 A tender, loving and caring person,  
     A light that shines,  
 A pinch of salt that brings taste,  
     A path that leads,  
 A praying and thanking person,  
 A man of truth and simplicity.  
 A man of silence and patience,  
     A servant ready for service,  
 A man who goes about doing good,  
     A communicator of God's love.  
     A channel of God's power  
     To deliver and heal,  
 A man of suffering and endurance,  
 A man radiating love, joy and peace,  
 A devoted and loyal son of Mary,  
     A living sacrifice till  
 the final oblation into your loving arms."

**Fr. Tom Karthik Sdb,  
 Fr. Sebastian Jose Sdb and  
 Fr. Christudoss sdb (DTP)  
 Salesian College, Dimapur**

**Data for Necrology**

Birth: 01-11-1931  
 Profession: 24-05-1952  
 Ordination: 29-06-1962  
 Death: 14-03-2017

**ABIDE WITH ME**

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
 The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;  
 When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
 Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
 Change and decay in all around I see—  
 O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
 What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's  
 pow'r?  
 Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?  
 Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide  
 with me.*

*I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;  
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;  
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy  
 victory?  
 I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;  
 Shine through the gloom and point me to  
 the skies;  
 Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain  
 shadows flee;  
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*







## **PSALM 91**

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,  
will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust."*

*For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence;  
he will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.*

*You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noon-day.*

*A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand;  
but it will not come near you.*

*You will only look with your eyes  
and see the recompense of the wicked.  
Because you have made the LORD your refuge,*

*the Most High your habitation,  
no evil shall befall you,  
no scourge come near your tent.*

*For he will give his angels charge of you  
to guard you in all your ways.*

*On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.*

*You will tread on the lion and the adder,  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.*

*Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him;*

*I will protect him, because he knows my name.*

*When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble,*

*I will rescue him and honor him.*

*With long life I will satisfy him,  
and show him my salvation.*





