



**DON BOSCO**

Cochin 682.023

INDIA

31st January 1974

## **BR. THOMAS POONOLLY**

**WHO LEFT THIS WORLD ON DECEMBER 2, 1973 AT THE AGE OF 36**

Dear Confreres,

Vatican II has it: "For God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption."

On December 2, 1973 Br. Thomas Poonolly, Principal of Don Bosco Technical School, Cochin, left us to join God in an endless sharing of the divine life beyond all corruption. He was apparently enjoying good health. A few days before his death he complained of earache. He tried to treat himself with some 'healing dust' and since he did not get any relief, he resorted to some





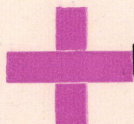
drops of oil. This hardened the 'healing dust' in the ear. When pain became severe, the doctor was consulted and he was given ear drops and pain-killing drugs. But the pain persisted and Br. Thomas spent two long sleepless nights.

Thursday morning, November 28, Br. Thomas was admitted to Lourdes Hospital, Cochin, for earache. In the afternoon of the same day, he complained also of severe headache. On thorough examination the doctor discovered that he was suffering from acute meningitis. He advised complete rest and doctors began to treat him in real earnest. Unfortunately he was allergic to penicillin and hence he was given other kinds of antibiotics, nonetheless he was unable to sleep or rest due to severe headache and earache.

In spite of his suffering, not a word of complaint was heard. No sign of the intense pain was shown exteriorly. He had a calm, serene and gentlemanly behaviour towards all who visited him. He often joked with those who were near him. Even when he was having severe headaches, his preoccupation was for the convenience and comfort of those near him. When asked how he felt, he would say he felt better and would be out of the hospital soon. Though sleeplessness, severe headache and acute earache continued, the doctors were of the opinion that brother was getting better.

Suddenly in the early hours of Sunday, December 2, his condition deteriorated and he passed away unexpectedly at 2.15 a.m. Though his death was sudden, Br. Thomas was ripe for heaven. He was well-prepared to meet the Good Master, whom he had so generously followed and served during his life, and hear from Him the sweet words: "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of heaven."

The news of his death was soon conveyed to his dear ones and to the Provincial House and to all the Salesian Houses. Fr. Thomas Panakezham, the Salesian Provincial, the Vice-Provincial, members of the Provincial Council and representatives from all the Salesian Houses and a good group of Salesian Brothers participated in the funeral service. Fr. Provincial together with twenty-nine priests concelebrated the funeral Mass. In the funeral oration, Fr. Varghese Menacherry, touched upon the outstanding virtues of Br. Tho-





mas, especially his attachment to his Salesian vocation, his piety, cheerfulness and devotion to duty. Fr. Abraham Poonolly, an uncle of the deceased, officiated at the funeral service which was attended by many Salesians, members of the diocesan clergy, religious, the staff and students of the Technical School, members of the youth centre, members of the various associations of the parish and a large crowd of the faithful.

Earlier, Mgr. Francis Payyapilly, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Verapoly, came to offer his sympathy. Other prominent mourners included: General Managers, executive engineers and leading citizens of Cochin. The many wreaths laid on his tomb were an eloquent proof of the love and esteem the people had for the deceased.

Br. Thomas Poonolly, son of Mr. Mathew Poonolly and Kunjila Chet-tupuzha, was born on June 6, 1937 at Trichur. After finishing the middle school studies, he entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Tirupattur. From the very outset, he endeared himself to both superiors and boys. He was always a perfect gentleman. He was an excellent sportsman and athlete. When he completed his Pre-University Course he was drawn to the vocation of the Salesian Brother. Br. Thomas entered the Salesian Novitiate at Yercaud in May 1957 and made his first vows in May 1958.

He was then sent to St. Joseph's Technical School, Madras, to assist and to study. In December, he was asked to go to Don Bosco, Liluah, to begin his studies in mechanics. After completing his studies and passing his examinations with distinction, he returned to St. Joseph's Technical School, Madras, in 1961. He served this Institution till 1969 when he was transferred to Don Bosco Technical School, Cochin, where he served till his death.

The transfer from Madras to Cochin was a very great sacrifice for Br. Thomas. It was difficult for him to leave St. Joseph's where he had worked very hard to bring up the school to a high standard in studies and games. This sudden transfer also forced him to abandon his college studies at the Engineering College at Guindy. The job that awaited him in Cochin was not an easy one. Things were not going on well in the workshop. With his pleasing manners and gentlemanly behaviour, he won the goodwill of the





workers and customers and thus put the workshop in order in a very short time.

He was remarkable for his piety, devotion to duty, order, kindness to the poor and suffering. He had a natural bend for games and he played most games excellently. It was a real pleasure to see him in action in the foot-ball field. Under his able coaching, the Don Bosco Youth Centre was able to win a number of trophies.

Seeing the many unemployed youngmen he tried to help them by teaching them a trade and then helping them to get parmanent jobs in various factories and companies. Through his efforts the I.T.I. (Industrial Technical Institute) was introduced into Don Bosco Technical School and he had the happiness of sending the first batch of students for the Government examinations. The results were a fine testimony to the high standard maintained at the institution. Love for boys, especially the poor and abandoned, was deeply rooted in the kind heart of Br. Thomas. He was always ready to help the poor boys by giving them some training in the workshop and getting them good jobs outside. His death is a great loss to the Province and this House in particular.

Dear Confreres, we believe that the Good Lord has already rewarded Br. Thomas, His zealous and faithful follower; nevertheless, let us continue to remember him in our prayers. Pray also, that the Good Lord may continue to inspire many young men to embrace the vocation of the Salesian Brother. Please pray for this House and for

Yours affectionately in C. J.,  
Fr. James Adayadiel S.D.B.  
Rector

Necrology: Br. Thomas Poonolly, born at Trichur (India) on 6-6-1937 died at Cochin, on 2-12-1973 at the age of 36. He was a Salesian for 15 years.

