



FR. JOSEPH AMALADASSOU

18 OCTOBER 1917 — 16 JULY 1979

DIREZIONE GENERALE
OPERE DON BOSCO

12.DIC.1979

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18 OCTOBER 1917 - 18 JULY 1975

When it happens that a salesian yields up his life whilst working for souls, you can say that our Congregation has registered a great triumph and that on it will descend in abundance the blessings of heaven.

From the spiritual testament of Don Bosco

parishioners. He was deeply devoted to Mary Help of Christians and tried to instil it in the hearts of his people. The Marian Month and all Marian feasts were major events in the life of the parish. As a modern apostle he made use of every means to spread the message of the Gospel, particularly music and drama.

Fr. Amaladassou was kind, generous, outspoken and straightforward in all his dealings. He was simple, charitable and greatly concerned about the welfare of the poor. Fr. Christie who was with him in Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar, recalls that though he appeared to be stern, he had a very kind heart. He was somewhat excitable due to his long illness. But he repented almost immediately and would make generous amendment, especially when those involved were poor boys or confreres.

One of his remarkable qualities was his great sense of salesian hospitality, even when people arrived without notice. He would order something special for the visitors saying, "It would be a crime to serve you the kind of food I am accustomed to eat."

Always surrounded by poor boys, his mind constantly kept thinking up projects for helping them. One day after showing me around, he told me, "Please send me a poor boy from anywhere and I will look after him." He was very keen on training them and equipping them with a trade for earning their livelihood. For this purpose he was ready to face any amount of sacrifice. One instance is worth noting. A few hours before his death, he told some confreres who went to see him that he had just received news that he had passed the M.A. (Sociology) examination of the University of Mysore in First Class. What made him attempt this exam at the age of 62 and despite many ailments and numerous time-consuming projects on hand is more interesting. It seems someone had told him that he could not be head of the industrial institute without a post-graduate degree. He accepted the challenge and wrote the exam as a private candidate showing that neither age nor ailments could deter a salesian who loved youth.

But the spiritual needs of his charges were uppermost in his mind. He was very exacting in the Catechism classes conducted regularly. He gave very attractive prizes for the winners in the annual competitions. With great care he prepared the children for confession and communion and

spirit of forgiveness and service. Before the body was interred representatives of the Diocese, parish and the parish boardinghouse paid their homage of gratitude.

Fr. Amaladassou was born of Michael Soundiradassou and Caroline Lerock in Pondicherry, on October 18, 1917. He joined the salesian aspirantate at Tirupattur in 1938 at the age of 21. He did his novitiate at Tirupattur and made his first profession in February 1943. In the novitiate he was noted for his spirit of hard work, cheerfulness and sense of humour. He did his philosophical studies (1943-45) at Yercaud. In 1949 he made his final profession at Mawlai. He did his theological studies at Shillong (1947-49) and at Yercaud (1949-51) and was ordained priest at Yercaud on May 31, 1951 by Bishop Selvanathar of Salem.

His varied priestly ministry included that of catechist at Panjim (1951-53); Asst. Parish Priest at Wadala and St. Francis Xavier's, Madras (1953-55); Parish Priest of A-Kattupadi (1955-61); bursar of Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar (1961-62); Acting Rector and Rector of Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar (1962-64); Rector of St. Joseph's Home, Katpadi (1964-65); and Parish Priest of Mary Help of Christians' Church, Tirupattur from 1965 till his death.

Under his guidance, the parish of Tirupattur soon became a lively centre of christian activities, all geared to the spiritual and material welfare of the people. There was Catholic Action for men; the Sodality of Mary Help of Christians for women and girls; Dominic Savio Club for boys and girls and the Sodality of Maria Goretti for the tiny tots.

In October 1966 he opened a "refectory" for poor boys, followed by a mat-weaving shed in November. In December he began the Auxilium Centre for Shorthand and Typing which became a Government recognized Training Institute in 1977. In 1974 he built houses for the Catechist and the kitchen staff near Arul Illam. A grotto of Our Lady was erected and blessed on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes 1969.

All along, evangelisation works, especially adult baptisms were steadily on the increase. In 1969 a new Mission was begun in Kandali in the house offered by a Hindu gentleman. A chapel was put up in its place in 1975. Also in 1975 the chapel of Sacred Heart was put up in Boomikuppam. From 1969 Father Amaladassou organised regular monthly recollections for his

The Citadel
18 Landons Road
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25 November 1979

My dear confreres,

On July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Father Joseph Amaladassou, an ardent devotee of Our Lady and a great lover of the poor, left us for his heavenly home. He was 62 years old.

In the sudden passing away of Fr. Amaladassou the Province of Madras has lost a dear confrere, the Diocese of Vellore a zealous priest, the people of the parish of Mary Help of Christians, Tirupattur, a devoted pastor and the poor children of Tirupattur a loving father.

Father Amaladassou had suffered a heart attack early that morning but he did not take it seriously. He thought the pain was due to gastric trouble. The doctor who examined him found his condition was serious and suggested that he should be removed to a hospital immediately. As father preferred to go to St. Martha's Bangalore, an Ambassador car was fitted with a bed (no ambulance was available at that time) to take him to Bangalore. Fr. Joe Arimpoor, Bro. P. K. Jose and father's secretary accompanied him in the car.

On reaching Krishnagiri at about 2.15 p.m., Father Amaladassou suggested that they stop awhile to allow the driver to have his lunch. As they drove up to a hotel father's breathing became heavy and soon he also lost consciousness. Fr. Joe called a doctor from a nearby nursing home who found father's condition fast deteriorating. Immediately he was rushed to the nearby St. Charles Hospital. But it was too late. The end came before they could reach the hospital. Fr. Joe gave him absolution and the parish priest of Krishnagiri, who had arrived in the meantime, administered the last sacrament.

He was laid in the salesian cemetery at Tirupattur the following day. At the funeral Mass 86 priests concelebrated with Bishop Antony Muthu of Vellore. Among the concelebrants were also Fr. Thomas Thayil, the Provincial of Bangalore, and Fr. Tony D'Souza, Provincial of Bombay. After Mass I spoke on behalf of the salesians stressing his childlike dispositions, his

for the liturgical festivals. He loved to see altar boys in their fine costumes. When some complained that he was spending too much money on vestments and altar linen he replied, "To the Lord we must give the very best we have."

As a true salesian he promoted vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. At his death of young salesian priest said, "I was a boy at Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar when Fr. Amaladassou was prefect there and I owe my vocation to his care and guidance."

He attributed the success of all his undertakings to Our Blessed Lady. With Don Bosco he used to say, "It is Our Lady's work". He was silent and cheerful in suffering. During all his long and numerous illnesses he never complained.

He used to say that a priest ought to prepare himself before he sits at the confessional through self denial and sacrifice to render the ministry fruitful.

On hearing of his death, Father Di Fiore, his former Provincial wrote, "He died as he lived, in harness, fighting, we might say. A strong and determined character, he rarely gave in when he was convinced of the goodness of his cause. Obstacles and difficulties did not deter him. He was a lover of the poor and an enterprising worker in the apostolate. Under a stern exterior he hid a good and affectionate heart."

My dear confreres, Fr. Amaladassou is no more with us. We remember him with gratitude and we pray for him. He lived for the poor and died with the comforting assurance of the Divine Master, "As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). Let our prayers hasten his entry into the joy of the Master and the hundredfold reward of the elect. We are "united to him in love that never ends" (Const. 122); his remembrance is for us too, a stimulus to continue faithful in our mission (Const. 66) and to make of our lives as well, "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Const. 67).

Pray for me too and the province of Madras.

Yours affectionately in Our Lady,

Fr. BENJAMIN PUTHOTA

Provincial

Necrology :Fr. Joseph Amaladassou † Krishnagiri (India) 1979, 62 yrs.