

**Mortuary Letter of
Fr. CHACKO EDAMALA SDB**



**Born : 7.6.1939 Bharananganam—Kerala.
Died : 28.8.1985 Dibrugarh—Assam.**

1 cor. 15:26 *"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."*

:54 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable,
and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall
come to pass the saying: 'death is swallowed up in
victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death,
where is thy sting?'"*

It is with great sorrow that I write about the unexpected death of Fr. Chacko on 28th August 1985 at Medical College, Dibrugarh.

History of his illness :

It was only on the 20th August during the Holy Mass that Fr. Chacko showed that something was not going well with his health. He had fainted. As soon as it was medically ascertained that his condition required rest and treatment everything was done by Father Joseph Murickal (M.K.) and Sister Felicia, the Superior and in charge of the dispensary, at Mon. He was brought to the Medical College, Dibrugarh, on Saturday, 24th August. He was noticed to have sunk into delirium, incoherent speech and unconsciousness. Once at the hospital, the care given by teams of doctors, continuous care of expert nursing, the love and prayers of the Confreres and friends, could not stop the progress of the disease which caused the complete breakdown of the vital organs of the Liver and the Kidneys.

All the communities of Dibrugarh, Dimapur and elsewhere, Aspirants, Brothers, Postulants and Sisters kept up an earnest and continuous plea to God to spare Fr. Chacko for us, and for his mission. But God willed otherwise.

His death :

The grey light of the early summer dawn was clearly on the horizon bringing relief to the sick and the suffering at the Medical College Hospital at Dibrugarh, when Fr. Chacko Edamala was in the throes of a death struggle. With laboured breathing he was making the final struggle to reach out to the heavenly lights beyond. Those standing by his bedside and those dearest and closest to him were plunged into the utter darkness of gloom and grief when they realized that their fight for his life was a lost battle. Sobs and tears were evident for there was a concerted and united effort on the part of all to save Fr. Chacko from death. It was 4.40 in the morning of August 28th when Fr. Chacko's body became quiet, convulsions stopped, spasms of pain ceased, and a serene radiance of peace and relief from suffering pervaded his whole countenance and body. FR. CHACKO WAS DEAD. We had hoped for a miraculous

Character of the man :

Fr. Chacko was a good man, friendly to all, with malice to none, and always good and kind to the young. A man of strong character and temperament, he was in complete control of himself. While he was working at the mission of Tungjoy, on 29th Dec. 1983, at about mid-night, three young men armed with guns knocked on his door. Thinking that it was someone calling him for an urgent sick call he opened the door to find a gun pointed at him. As there was no electricity at the mission he used the darkness to good advantage and rushing into the next room he closed the door. He had to call for help while putting his weight against the door to keep it closed while the attackers outside were pushing to open it. At that moment they opened fire and several bullets went hissing by while one struck him on the leg above the knee. Eventually the noise made by the others, who came to his rescue, sent the attackers scurrying across the hill. Though wounded, it was Fr. Chacko who calmed the others and waited for the morning to go and consult a doctor. While all around him were worried he remained calm and serene. He carried that bullet to his grave and it was for him a constant reminder of the price he had to pay for working in the missions.

He was a man of deep religious and priestly convictions. He lived a simple, austere and frugal life. His work and life were fulfilment for him without creature comforts, and he never went out for unnecessary visits, but stayed at his post and at his tasks. He was a good religious, obedient, available and faithful to his rules and obligations both as a priest and a religious. Even difficult assignments did not upset him, but calmly made the unavoidable sacrifices that the duties involved.

He was a tireless worker, a man with remarkable practical bent, unassuming and unobtrusive. He did not care for himself. Gifted with a sturdy constitution, slight in-built but of great stamina and an indomitable spirit, he spent himself for the missions, for evangelization and for the Church.

pound. It was chosen because of the hope that there will always be someone to pray for Fr. Chacko daily.

Fr. Chacko is no more with us. He lives in our memories and in our love for him. He lives especially with God. Our faith in the resurrection gives us comfort and the hope of eternal life helps us to bear up the great grief and loss at the sudden and untimely death of Fr. Chacko. Let us pray for his soul, and prove our abiding love for him.

Life sketch :

Fr. Chacko was born into the respectable and deeply religious family of Edamala at Bharananganam. Three sons, John his elder brother a CMI, Chandy a Salesian in the Province of Bangalore, who also worked in the undivided Guwahati Province for a number of years, and Chacko himself, were given to God as priests and Religious and a daughter in the family became a nun and is working in Brazil. After his aspirantate at Tirupattur, he made his novitiate at Yercaud and made his first religious profession on 24.5.1960. His Philosophical studies were completed in the same place, after which he did his practical training at Katpadi. While still a student of philosophy for a brief spell he was asked to be assistant of the Novices. After his theological studies at Bangalore, he was ordained a Priest on 20.12.1969.

As a new priest, he volunteered for the Missions of the North-East and came over in 1970, and was posted to the mission of Tangla. He learned Hindi, Assamese and was dedicating much time and interest to learn Boro when he was transferred to Mao in 1976. There he worked with renewed zeal and enthusiasm. He toured the hills and valleys reaching as far as the Chiluvei and the Burma border despite the bitter and organized opposition of the people. In 1981 he was sent to Tungjoy to start the new parish there. Never flagging in zeal he worked hard and alone, till his transfer to Mon in 1985, January 15th. There he worked till the last days, refusing to rest because, he used to say, "how can I rest when there is so much to be done?"

cure, but God willed otherwise and called him to Himself. "Come, you, my faithful servant, enter into your heavenly inheritance, prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Mt. 25:34).

Fr. Chacko is no more with us, he lives with God. He has discarded the earthly dwelling, and has won the bright promise of a heavenly home.

Funeral Rites :

The body was prepared and brought to the Cathedral Church of Dibrugarh. A solemn funeral Mass was celebrated by Bishop Thomas Menampampil concelebrated by Bishop of Diphu and about 24 priests. The homily was preached by Bishop Mathai. The body was then transferred to the Aspirantate of Dibrugarh, where the aspirants in groups prayed by the side of the body. Groups of Confreres, Teachers from the schools, Boys, Sisters and Girls of the convents came in large number to pray for him and to see him.

At 3.45 p.m. the body was taken and placed in the Ambulance, at 4 p.m. accompanied by Confreres in various vehicles we started the long journey to Dimapur. Bishop Mathai also was with us. We reached Dimapur by 12.30 after midnight. The body was laid in state at the Philosopate.

The Final Rites and the Burial :

Early morning of 29th, people began to pour in to visit the body and to pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Chacko. The Mass was fixed for 4 p.m. Bishop Abraham presided, Bishop Mathai and Bishop Thomas of Dibrugarh concelebrated with more than 80 priests. The chapel was filled to capacity and was overflowing with participants. Bishop Mathai preached the homily, and Bishop Thomas and Bishop Abraham blessed the body and the grave. Besides the farewell talk given by the Provincial, one of the boys of the school of Mon and a Catechist from Mao read short addresses to express their deep felt gratitude to Fr. Chacko and their great sorrow at losing him.

Fr. Chacko's mortal remains were then lowered into the grave and laid to rest in the grave in the Philosopate com-

Conclusion :

In his death we have lost one of the best men and a great missionary of our Province. I cannot understand why it should happen thus except through faith. "We have no lasting city here." "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God Himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning or crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (*Rev. 21: 4ff.*)

With St. Paul, *Rom. 8:18*, we admit: "...the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed...and we know that not only the whole creation, but we ourselves groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

In our sorrow, we share the grief of the family members of Fr. Chacko. It is a common loss that we all suffer. May it unite us in our prayers for the repose of our dear departed Fr. Chacko.

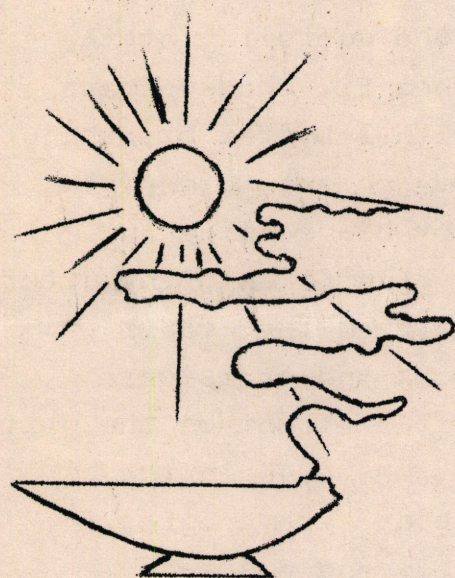
In your charity pray also for the Province of Dimapur that has lost such a valiant and youthful missionary.

Yours Affly. in Don Bosco

Dimapur

Fr. Matthew Pulingathil SDB.

dedicated to the memory of
fr. chacho
edamala
EDAMALA
edamala



who left us for his eternal
reward on

28 August 1985

7.6.1939 - 28.8. 1985

FAREWELL TO FR. CHACKO EDAMALA SDB GIVEN BY
FR. PROVINCIAL AT THE GRAVE, 29.8.85.

1. Cor. 15: 26: The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
54: When the perishable puts on the imperishable,
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1. Death of Fr. Chacko Edamala

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Fr. Chacko is no more with us, he lives with God. He has discarded the earthly dwelling, and has won the bright promise of a heavenly home.

2. History of his illness

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was noticed to have sunk into delirium and incoherent speech and unconsciousness. Once at the hospital, the care of teams of doctors, continuous care of expert nursing the love and prayers of confreres and friends could not stem the progress of the disease which caused the complete breakdown of the vital organs of the Liver and the Kidneys.

All the communities of Dibrugarh, Dimapur and elsewhere, Aspirants, Brothers, postulants and sisters kept up an earnest and continuous plea to God to spare Chacko for us, and for His Missions. But God willed otherwise.

3. Biographical Sketch

Fr. Chacko was born into the respectable and deeply religious family Edamala at Moolamattam. Three sons of the family were given to God as Priests and Religious and a daughter became a nun. After his aspirantate at Tirupattur, he made his novitiate at Yercaud and made his first religious profession on 24.5.1960. His philosophical studies were completed in the same place, after which he did his practical training at Katpadi. For a brief spell he was asked to be Assistant of the Novices. After his theological studies at Bangalore, he was ordained a Priest on 20.12.1969.

As a new priest, he volunteered for the Missions of the North East and came over in 1970, and was posted to the missions of Tangla. He learned Hindi, Assamese, and was dedicating much time and interest to learn Boro when he was transferred to Mao in 1976. There he worked with renewed zeal and enthusiasm. He toured the hills and valleys reaching as far as the Chiluvei area despite the bitter and organized opposition of the people. In 1981 he was sent to Tungjoy to start the new parish there. Never flagging in zeal he worked hard and alone, till his transfer to Mon in 1985 January 15th. There he worked till the last days, refusing to rest because, he used to say "how can I rest when there is so much to be done ?"

4. Character of the Man

Fr. Chacko was a good man, friendly to all and with malice to none, and always good and kind to the young. A man of strong character and temperament, he was in complete control of himself. When he was brutally attacked and fired upon by his assailants on Dec.29th 1983 he did not panic, but calmly went to see a Doctor to see if anything could be done. Incidentally, he carries that bullet in his leg to the grave. While all around him worried, he remained calm and serene.

He was a man of deep religious and priestly convictions. He lived a simple, austere and frugal life. His work and life were fulfilment for him without creature comforts, and he never went out for unnecessary visits, but stayed at his post and at his tasks.

He was a good religious, obedient, available and faithful to his rules and obligations both as a priest and a religious. Even difficult assignments did not upset him, but calmly made the unavoidable sacrifices that the duties involved.

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5. Conclusion

In his death we have lost one of the best men and a great missionary of our Province. I cannot understand why it should have happened thus except through faith. "We have no lasting city here". "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God Himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning or crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (Rev.21:4ff)

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In our sorrow, we share the grief of the family members of Fr. Chacko. Here present are Fr.Chandy, Fr.John who are priests and his nephew and niece. It is a common loss that we all suffer today. May it unite us in our prayers for the repose of our dear departed Fr. Chacko.

