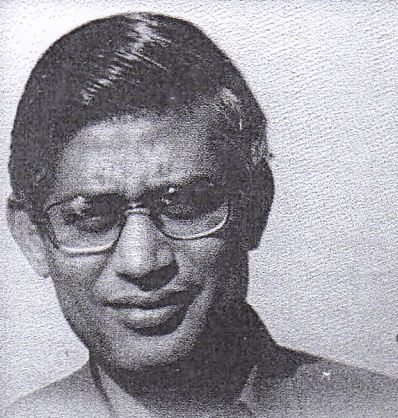
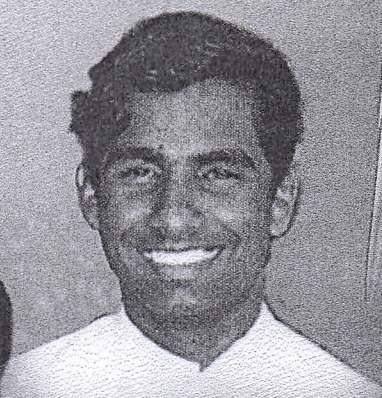




Fr. Raphael Paliakara



Fr. Andreas Kindo



Cl. Shinu Joseph

Born : April
10, 1955
Professed :
May 24,
1976
Ordained :
December
29, 1984
Died : May
15, 2001

Born :
December 2,
1969
Professed :
April 27, 1990
Ordained :
April 25, 2000
Died : May
15, 2001

Born : March
27, 1978
Professed :
May 24, 1997
Died : May
15, 2001

15th May 2002

My dear Confreres and Friends,

A year has passed since the tragic events of 15th May 2001. The memory of our three beloved confreres: Fr. Raphael Paliakara, Fr. Kindo Andreas and Bro. Shinu Valliparambil and their heroic death is still fresh in our minds. Our tears are not yet dry. We keenly feel their absence. It is difficult to stop asking: why should such youthful and promising souls be snatched away so mercilessly from our midst?

But standing in the light of Easter we are able to see events from a different perspective. Having followed closely what has been happening these last months, I can say with confidence that their death has not been in vain. Their lives have been noble and pure. They have been acceptable victims before the Lord bringing upon our province and us the blessings of the Lord. They are obtaining for us the gift of greater fidelity to God, a deeper trust in Him and a greater missionary enthusiasm.

Today we are witnessing a bountiful harvest in Arunachal. Is it not the fruit of the blood shed by Frs. Krick and Bourry of the Paris Foreign Mission Society (MEP) in the mid 19th century? Will not the Lord do as much or more for our people especially of the Manipur valley through the blood of our three confreres? The Lord's plans are mysterious; but one thing is sure: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him". Rm 8, 28. We trust in the Lord and his merciful designs. Today we remember our three martyrs with great affection and we continue to pray for Them; but we also turn to them, confident of their powerful intercession for us. I am happy to present to you our tribute of love and gratitude for our fallen heroes. I thank Fr. Sebastian Jose for the dedication and love with which he has prepared this souvenir.

Yours affectionately

Thomas Mulayinkal

Fr. Thomas Mulayinkal SDB
(Provincial)

To the memory of our valiant martyrs

Then in dreams I went back to the days of yore
When my dear and great slain heroes Raphael,
Andreas and Shinu

Were part of our mother Earth

They were so vibrant and green

But how quickly have they been nipped in the
bud!

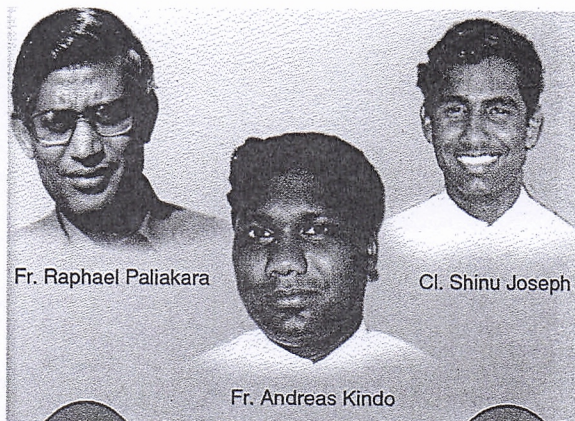
In the quiet evening of many a day

As I sat beside the 3 martyrs fallen asleep

There arose in my heart both serene and silent
thoughts

Of the magnificence of their by gone years

When they were one among us.



Fr. Raphael Paliakara

Cl. Shinu Joseph

Fr. Andreas Kindo

Here beneath this hallowed land dwell
Benign and daring martyrs of our family so well
Though aching pains linger in my heart
I salute their indomitable spirit.
Oft have I peeped in through the windows of my room
To the mansions of the blest,
Out there in the College cemetery
Where our martyrs lie in eternal peace.
No guns, no threats, no power on earth shall ever
harm them
They have fought a good fight and won it too
They gave their lives in defense of their novices
They shall lie in state till the last bugle call.

I have known them and lived with them all
'Raphy,' that's how we lovingly called him
A fine gem, simple and polished son
Always caring, concerned, at the same time
Praying much, always precise and meticulous.
'Kindoji,' lovingly we called Andreas
Truly a man without guile, frank and friendly
Hardworking indeed and a linguist
He had endeared himself to the boys wherever he worked.
Shinu, a 'Country-cousin' if I may call him
Intelligent, generous and daring
Industrious, smart and able
At the prime of his Salesian experience
But he too walked into the gates of death
Hoping to lend a helping hand
To the already fallen valiant confreres.

They are now entombed in the bosom of the earth
Unwearied by mundane cares they rest
Call of duty led them to the altars of martyrdom
Never would they give in to sullen cowardice
Their lives in this planet moved on love's hinge
This earth needs more such souls to inspire courage
Must we dwell long at life's intermittent sorrow?
Our human hearts keep mourning
But heaven will transport them to life beyond
They now outlive every tempest
Their martyrdom is but a shining example
Of the stirring moments of their epic struggle.



Fr. Raphael with his classmates at Kent

The memory of those loving souls in me doth breed
Perennial trust as in a creed
They rendered yeoman service in joy and devotion best
They did live with ease and grace
And never sought for trophies to their crest.
Here do I behold the planet of human becoming
Where we work and move on till the final reckoning
Into that Heaven where Raphy, Andreas and Shinu are,
One day shall we all arrive,
If only we firmly and serenely keep rowing
Till we land on Eden's labyrinth of bright corridors.

Sebastian Jose SDB.

MAY 15, 2001

In the morning of that fateful day, May 15, 2001, two men came to the Salesian Staff Training Centre at Ngarian, apparently for a visit. Bro. Shinu accompanied them around the house. They left soon after that. It is alleged that the same men returned in the evening of the same day fully armed at about 6.45 p.m accompanied by a third man in a white Maruti Van. One of them stood guard at the main gate while the other two went behind the house and asked for the Father in charge. On being informed, Fr. Raphael interrupted his conference for the 12 Second year novices and went out with Fr. Andreas (who was posted there since three weeks) to meet the gunmen in the volleyball court.

Fr. Raphael returned within few minutes and told the novices that the day's talk was over and sent them to their study hall asking them not to leave the place at all costs. The novices saw him going to the Chapel to pray, then to his office and again into the volleyball court. It appears that Fr. Raphael took some money from his office for payment. The gunmen were heard saying that the sum was not sufficient. Fr. Andreas went into the house again. Some of the novices saw Fr. Andreas taking money from his room and returning to the volleyball court.

For the next 45 minutes the four of them were engaged in a discussion. The gunmen were overheard asking Fr. Raphael to bring out all the novices and separate the Nagas from the non-Nagas. Fr. Raphael told them: "they are young boys; why call them out? You tell me what you want of them and I will inform them." After a while the gunmen asked Bro. Shinu to come out of the house. He came out and the conversation continued further for about ten minutes.

At 7.50 p.m the novices who were in the chapel for their personal prayer, heard the sound of a gun shot from the road. Immediately after this signal, one of the two gunmen sprayed bullets into Fr. Raphael from an AK 47 rifle. No sooner had Fr. Andreas bent forward to help Fr. Raphael than the gunmen opened indiscriminate fire at him. Bro. Shinu, At this juncture began to cry. The gunmen pumped bullets into him too. After a few minutes the killers slipped away under cover of darkness. These brave sons of Don Bosco laid down their lives for the sake of their flock. They shed their blood working for God and fellowmen.

BLOSSOM IN HEAVEN

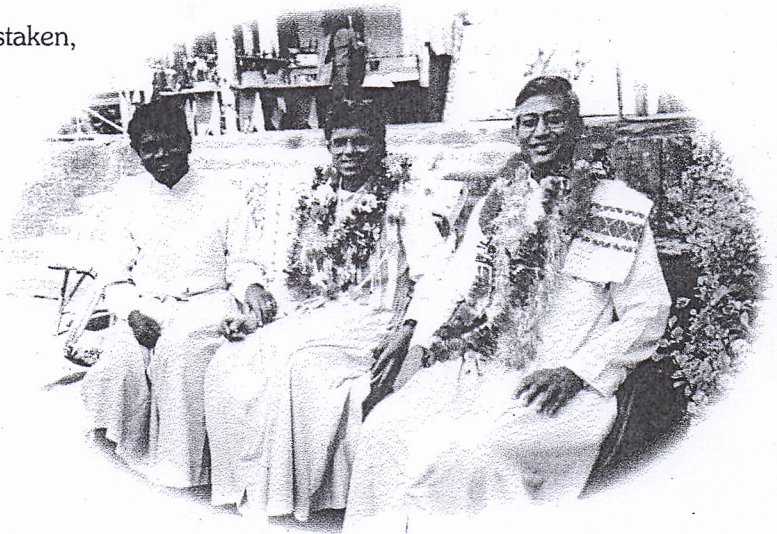
He is no more, he is no more!
In the calmness of the midnight
Heard the ringing bell
Parish Priest on the door
His lips whispered
'He is no more.'

My heart sunk into sadness
Oh God! Somebody may be mistaken,
May it not be true
Gradually back to my sense
I realized he was gone

No, he was not dead
From your beautiful garden
As early you pick that blossom
But fragrance is still around.
The blossom is in your hands,
Wonderfully safe in your hands.
No one can harm that blossom
Blooming more and more
That his memory shall live on.

Oh Jesus! Oh my Jesus!
In your eternal world,
Let that blossom be more fragrant
For he is no more with us
He goes on whispering in my heart,
It's quite unbelievable
Yet he is living still
Living ever in my heart.

(A tribute to Fr. Raphael by Lucy John)



Fr. Raphael at Golaghat Parish Feast

FR. RAPHAEL PALIAKARA

HIS EARLY LIFE

Fr. Raphael was born on 10 April 1955 at Chiyaram – Ollur, in the Trichur district of Kerala to P.V. Varunny and Mary of Paliakara family. Raphy had a great desire to be a missionary priest and was given all the encouragement in his early life by his parents and other family members. He joined Don Bosco Vaduthala in 1969 and in the year 1970 he arrived at Shillong to pursue his High School and pre-university studies at Savio Juniorate Mawlai.

SALESIAN LIFE

He entered the Salesian Novitiate at Sunnyside (Upper Shillong) in 1975. On 24th May 1976 he made his first profession and became a member of the Salesian Congregation. He proceeded to Salesian College, Sonada (Darjeeling) for his post-novitiate training as well as graduation that he

completed in 1979. He spent his years of Practical training at Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh. He pronounced his final vows on 24th May 1982 and later proceeded to Sacred Heart College Mawlai, for his theological studies and was ordained a priest on 29th December 1984. He was appointed Administrator and counselor at Rua Home Jorhat in 1985. In 1991 he was transferred to Don Bosco Dibrugarh as Assistant Headmaster and Counselor of the aspirants. In 1993 he was appointed Headmaster of Don Bosco High School, Dibrugarh. From 1996 to 1999 he specialized in formation pedagogy at the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome and later he went to Kent, England for training in Human growth and development. On his return to India in October 1999, he was appointed Lecturer and librarian in Salesian College, Dimapur. In July 2000 he was appointed Novice Master at Ngarian, Imphal.

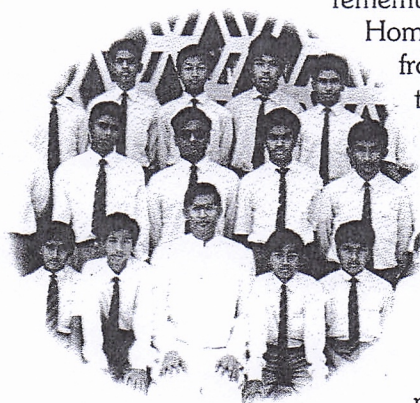
THE PRIEST

Raphy was a convinced and dedicated priest. Amidst tensions and vicissitudes of life he remained calm and collected. Young and old found it comfortable to approach him at any time. He made a gift of himself to everyone without frontiers. He was a good counselor and was in touch with human situations and realities. He had a genuine missionary heart and whenever opportunities came, he would grab them to be out in the mission centers of the Province. He was a generous priest. I remember how he generously shared with the Salesian College community, the money he had received from his benefactors in England towards the purchase of the washing machine and a computer for the brothers. Raphy was a man of prayer. Whether in the College or in the Novitiate, the brothers and Novices were witnesses to his spending long time in communion with Jesus in the Tabernacle. His communion with God gave way to communion and harmony with his fellow confreres. His priestly life carried with it great conviction and quality. He was a rare gem in the Salesian garden.



Fr. Raphael with confreres abroad

‘Fr. Raphael is no more but he lives on in my heart,’ said **Fr. C.T. Varghese** a close friend and long time associate of Fr. Raphael. Fr. C.T. Varghese reminisces “I came to be associated with Fr. Raphael from the year 1970. We studied together. We made the novitiate together and we lived the Salesian life together for many years. As a boy I admired many qualities in him. He was calm, intelligent and very unassuming. These qualities were once again outstanding when he began to live his Salesian life. This became clearer when he became a priest. I can enumerate many good qualities in Raphy but what I admired most in him was the quality of being a good listener. I always found in him a calm and a listening friend. Often at the end of a sharing session, his words would invariably be “calm down man! There are many more things we can do, why worry about these small things?” I



*Fr. Raphael with
his students*

remember an incident that happened in 1987. Fr. Raphael was in Rua Home as Counselor. I was in Jorhat parish. One day I got a phone call from the then Provincial Fr. Scaria saying that he would like to come to Jorhat; but as the Deopani bridge was damaged he would like to be picked up from the other end of the bridge. I passed on this information to Fr. A.P. Thomas, the then parish priest. Fr. A.P. Thomas told me that it would be better that Rua Home fathers go and pick up Fr. Scaria. I informed Fr. C.M. Jose and at the same time inquired whether Fr. Raphael was at home. I was told that Raphy had gone out. I went ahead with my Mass in one of the villages. Fr. C.M. Jose requested Fr. Raphael to fetch Fr. Provincial from the Deopani Bridge. Raphy came straight to Jorhat parish to look for me to take me along with him. He discovered that I had gone for Mass to the village so he went alone to the damaged bridge. It would have taken about 2 hours. But when he reached the bridge Fr. Provincial was not there. He had come to the

bridge and found no one and so he had gone back. Raphy reversed his Jeep and returned to Jorhat. He came straight to the parish and told me what had happened. 'What did you do? You could have helped to fetch the Provincial. I expected you to come with me.' Soon he calmed down and narrated how he had reached the bridge and found no one there. Raphy then told me thus: "CT, we are all young priests and we have offended our superior; what shall I do?" I consoled him saying that it was no mistake of his. You have done your part. I suggested that he rings up to the Provincial. I made a call to Dimapur and got Fr. Scaria on the line. Raphy explained the episode to Fr. Scaria and he consoled Fr. Raphael. Before Raphy left the Parish for Rua Home, he told me in my ear "we have to listen and obey because we are religious." That was my dear friend Raphy, a good listener and an excellent religious.

ANDREAS KINDO

HIS EARLY LIFE

Fr. Andreas Kindo was born on 2 December 1969 to Mr. Albinus Kindo and Mrs. Mariam Lakra at Charry Munda in Kurdeg parish belonging to the diocese of Simdega in Jharkhand. He passed the Bihar secondary school examination in the second division in 1985 from Nirmala High School Khalijore. He had expressed his great longing to be a priest from boyhood days. He hailed from a very pious Christian family and he was privileged to have parents who were very religious. The seed of vocation was already planted in him by his own family members, his mother in



Fr. Kindo in a Seminar

particular. He wrote thus in his application to first Profession: "I have been longing to become a priest from my boyhood days, but more especially after joining the Salesian Pre-novitiate house at Jorhat, I have come to know much more about Salesian life and Don Bosco." In July 1985 he joined the Pre-novitiate house at Rua Home Jorhat. He completed his Pre-University exams in February 1989.

SALESIAN LIFE

He began the Novitiate on 3 April 1989 and professed as a member of the Salesian Society on 27 April 1990. Kindo proceeded to Salesian College Dimapur for his post-novitiate training in May 1990. He completed his graduation and philosophical formation in 1993. Practical Training took him to Don Bosco Chingmeirong in April 1993 as Assistant and Teacher. Towards the end of 1994 he was transferred to the Novitiate at Ngarian as Assistant and teacher to the novices. Kindo left for his theological studies in 1997 at Sacred Heart College Shillong and was ordained a priest on 25 April 2000.



*Fr. Kindo being
ordained a Deacon*

In May 2000 Fr. Kindo was appointed Assistant Headmaster, counselor and Assistant Parish Priest at Don Bosco, Chingmeirong Imphal. He was very dynamic both in the school as well as in the parish apostolate. Here he endeared himself to the staff and students with his gentle manners and pleasant smile. He loved the people for whom he worked. His knowledge of Manipuri language is a witness to his great interest in the people and culture of Manipur. It is worthwhile to note that a Meitei family christened one of their sons 'Kindo.' Fr. Kindo had to move out of the school due to many problems faced by the school from the insurgent groups. He was transferred to the Salesian Novitiate at Ngarian in April 2001. Incidentally as Heaven would have it, this was his last earthly assignment.

THE PRIEST

Kindo was a symbol of joy and happiness. He was a man of few words but he believed in dedicated action. He carried out his chores with much simplicity without seeking popular acclaim



Fr. Kindo among youth

or official recognition. He loved his priestly vocation in the Salesian Society. He was a zealous missionary who understood the needs of the people and tried to redress their sufferings in ways that were in his limits. He enjoyed being in the countryside especially his visits to the remote villages to administer sacraments to the faithful during Easter and Christmas. He was a priest who loved children. In his ministry he was cheerful and optimistic. He stood by his collaborators and was ready to help those in need. Kindo was

DON BOSCO PROVINCIAL HOUSE, DIMAPUR

a grateful priest. His letters to his companions and superiors reveal his attitude of gratitude. He had a note of 'thanks' to everyone who went out of their way to help him in little and big ways. He gave up his own life as he went forward to help Fr. Raphael who was shot at by the assailants. Kindo was simple and very transparent in his relationships. Wherever he worked he showed a special interest in the youngsters. He dealt with people and particularly youngsters in a jovial and friendly way and won their admiration.

Fr. Roy George reminisces the bygone days spent in the company of his friend and classmate Fr. Kindo.

A man's destination is not his destiny
Every country is a home to a man
And a place of martyrdom to another.
Where a man dies bravely
For a noble cause of saving his friends.

Sketching the profile of you my dear
Andreas
Leaves us with memories of your
outstanding personality
Rules and strict adherence to religious life
And priestly observance made you a gem
among us.



Fr. Kindo with Fr. Sebastian Jose

Your understanding and magnanimous heart
Had always a place for everyone.
You were simple, forthright, caring and loving in your life with us.
Quick to forgive and never allowed
The Sun to go down on your anger.

Love for your priestly and religious calling was remarkable.
Your constant presence among the boys,
Manifested your love for the young.
You thus carried the spirit of Don Bosco wherever you went.

But this earth was not to be your land for long,
As you were crowned with the honour of martyrdom on the hills of Ngarian.
May your missionary life crowned in blood be for us a perennial inspiration
May your earthly life be our example, consolation and strength
We pray you, intercede for us from your place in Heaven.
You shall continue to be in our memories and thoughts
And we shall tell others of your heroic life.

SHINU JOSEPH

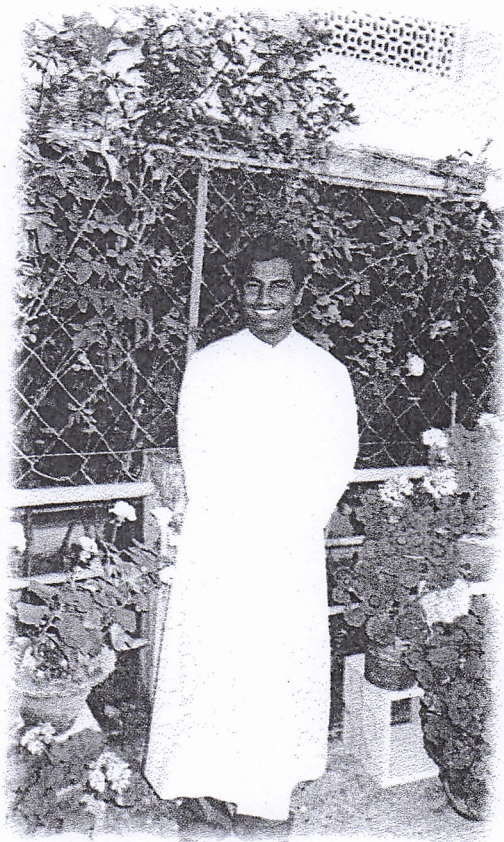
HIS EARLY LIFE

Bro. Shinu Joseph was born on 27 March 1978 at Chakkittapara, Kayanna, in Calicut district of Kerala to Mr. Chacko and Mrs. Thresia of Valliparambil family. Theirs was a pious and closely-knit family. Shinu had always expressed his desire to become a missionary priest. This is evident from a letter he wrote to the vocation promoter while he was still in Class 7. The letter is dated 29/03/1990. He wrote thus: "Respected Vocation Director – I am at present preparing for my Cl.7 exams. I have a great desire to join the Don Bosco society and serve the church as a missionary priest. To this end may I request you to help me with the detailed information about the vocation camp. I eagerly await your reply." After his SSLC examinations he joined the Salesian aspirantate at Rua Home, Jorhat in July 1993.

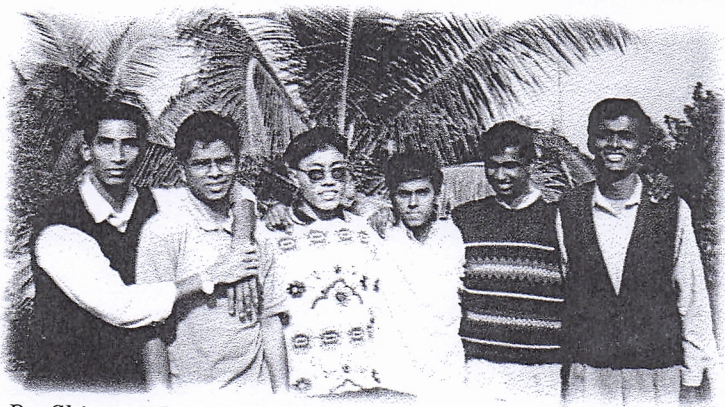
SALESIAN LIFE

Shinu entered the Salesian Novitiate at Ngarian in 1996. He pronounced his first vows as a Salesian on 24th May 1997. He proceeded to Salesian College of Higher Education, Dimapur for his graduation and philosophical studies. He completed his post-Novitiate formation in April 2000 and was appointed Assistant and Teacher at our novitiate in Ngarian in June 2000.

He was a young and promising Salesian ready for action. He was intelligent, dynamic and had a pleasant way of going about his chores assigned to him. Heaven plucked away this beautiful



Br. Shinu at Ngarian Novitiate



Br. Shinu with companions

Salesian bud early in life. His Salesian life was characterized by cheerfulness, enthusiasm, creativity and dynamism. He was outstanding in studies, games and extracurricular activities. His Sunday apostolate was characterized by a sense of mission and interest in the all-round development of the boys and girls entrusted to his care.

Sr. Jessy Sailo MSMHC, a classmate of Shinu reminisces her college days



Br. Shinu with his classmates at Salesian College Dimapur

into contact with him. His disciplined life, sensitivity, generosity and a sense of harmonious living made himself acceptable to others.

Br. Shinu would fulfill all the tasks entrusted to him with great perfection. His total commitment to God, joyous and gentle demeanor, spirit of sacrifice and love for others endeared him to one and all. Shinu, as I know was a God-fearing person who would spend a lot of time in prayer. As life is not a bed of roses he did feel bored at times with life and he would turn to the Lord as he had written: "I am trying to spend sometime with the Lord and days are passing swiftly." At his young age Br. Shinu had already discovered the joy of being with his beloved Master.

His obedience to the Superiors is something remarkable. When Fr. Provincial asked him to go to the Novitiate at Ngarian he was rather reluctant but soon came to terms with the appointment. He wrote to me later and said, "Let God's will be done as I had always prayed. I ask Lord to place me where he wants and where I can be most useful," and he continued, "I do believe this (Novitiate) is the place where I can do most good, learning to accept God's will through my superiors." Shinu lived a life of obedience and died in obedience. He was a man of principles and convictions. He lived his Salesian call to the full. He was full of zeal and enthusiasm. Before his death he had written this to me: "If I ever become a priest I would like to take the following as my motto, "Be my witness before all people." He was not a priest yet he had already lived his motto and witnessed to Christ in his life.

Having experienced the life of Bro. Shinu, I can truly say that his mind was filled with things that were good, true, noble, pure, lovely, honorable and things that deserve praise. He has inspired me in many ways. He spoke well of all and he proved himself genuine and sincere in all his dealings. Like other saints, Shinu was wise enough to gather so many treasures for Heaven. By his 25 years of sojourn in this vast and beautiful world he taught us that length of days is not what makes

and experiences with Bro. Shinu.

"One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more" (John Keats)

I was closely associated with Shinu during our years of graduation in Salesian College Dimapur. To begin with, I consider myself fortunate to have known Shinu from close quarters. For me Br. Shinu was a 'Saint.' His life was extraordinary, beautiful and bestowed with numerous talents. His life was a gift to be explored and celebrated. His outgoing, vivacious and affectionate nature made him a treasure for all those who came



Br. Shinu engaged in a Seminar work

age honorable nor number of years but a life lived with genuine dedication and loyalty. Who could ever imagine that his vibrant life would ebb away all too soon. I feel deeply pained to realize that he is no more with us. He was too good to be with us sinners that the Lord transplanted him to His own Heavenly garden. Today we can be proud of having another saint in Heaven who would intercede for us poor sinners.

I thank God for the beautiful gift of Bro. Shinu and his inspiring life that I have experienced. Today he is no more but the memory of him can never be erased from my life. May the saintly life of Shinu inspire all of us to go on living our lives in total commitment as we walk this pilgrim path.

Jose George, a close friend and classmate of Shinu, speaks about their years of journey together:

It was in the year 1993 that I came into contact with Br. Shinu. We met for the first time during the vocation camp at Mannuthy, Trichur. Since then we were together towards our journey to priesthood but now I walk my way to the altar on my own. Shinu has already gone beyond, to the heavenly altar.

It didn't take much time for Shinu to emerge as the leader among us. He had a very fine way of dealing with people; as a result he captured our attention and respect. He was outstanding in our batch both in studies as well as co-curricular activities. He has truly inspired me to do things in the best way possible.

Shinu was a very hard working colleague. He had his aims very clear and he worked hard to achieve the same. In everything he had the desire to excel. One remarkable quality that I have observed in him was his readiness to extend any help to others. He was



Br. Shinu with his Batchmates

very much interested in learning musical instruments and he tried his best to learn at least something. He started his practice with Clarinet, then moved on to Congo; but the result was not better than the first. His next effort was to learn Harmonium; here too the result was not that satisfactory. Finally he decided to learn guitar. In fact he managed to learn something. When we were in the Novitiate we practiced a musical piece for over a week and performed it during the Birthday gathering for Fr. Master. I still remember him playing the lead guitar for the occasion. Perhaps this must have been the only time when he performed a musical piece. However I was edified by his determination to learn as many things as possible. Situations and circumstances never defeated him. His hard work is the answer to all his achievements.

Shinu was a person who could easily adjust to people and situations. He was loved by all of us. He used to be a source of inspiration and joy for us. He had a fine collection of stories, jokes and party games for academies and other gatherings.

He was known for his confidentiality. We have shared a lot of things. I could easily share with him anything and he kept them confidential and made himself available. Whenever he received any news, be it from his parents or friends, he used to share them with me.

During our stay together in the Philosophate, I experienced the spiritual depth that had. He was

very regular with his personal prayer. Towards the end of our Second year I was impressed to see that he had stretched the time of his personal prayer to half an hour. In fact he never missed it. This interior holiness was expressed through his words and actions. Perhaps it was his union with God that kept him always cheerful and enthusiastic.

At this juncture I like to recall to mind our last meeting during the recollection in the month of February 2001. It was soon after his holidays. In the evening we spent a lot of time reflecting on our experiences. He shared with me news of his father who was seriously sick, about his sister and brothers. In the course of our conversation he told me that his parents wanted him to get a transfer from Imphal since the area is not very safe. I was quite taken aback by the answer he gave them. He told them, "I am not afraid to be in Imphal. What is there, after all they may fire some bullets at me. They cannot do anything more than that." Never, even in my wildest dreams, did I imagine that his words would come true so soon.

My beloved nephew, Shinu – As I knew him

Shinu was born to our family after one year of his paternal grand father's demise. He was almost a replica of his grand father especially in his colour and facial features. Therefore from his young days, he was affectionately called '**Appan**' (grand father). He won the heart of everyone by his characteristic smile. From early childhood onward he used to get up early in the morning, run to the church to be on time for Holy Mass – to serve as an alter boy – so much so every one nicknamed him as "**Kochachen**" (young priest). After I lost both my brothers he was the constant support for my parents and he stayed at my house up to 1991, the year I lost my parents. His extraordinary obedience, willingness to do any type of work impressed all my family members. From Class VIII onwards he was contacting the Salesians. All of us insisted with him to join the Southern Province – but he chose to work in Dimapur Province. When I asked him why he chose Dimapur he told me thus: "If I ever become a priest I would like to go to China to preach the Word of God." As a boy of fifteen he had this answer to my question. I had thought he would join Calcutta Province as his brother Binu and myself were already in Calcutta. From the time he joined till his death I don't think he ever wavered in his vocation. We communicated often and shared ideas. He appreciated many of the senior Salesians, especially their spirit of hard work. Last year when he came to see me for the last time I found him a little upset – may be thinking about the problems that the Province was going through. When I suggested that he could still change the Province he told me very firmly: "No – If all the others can live there, I too will live there and die there." While on a visit to my community, he made this comment, "If anyone of you like to become a martyr come with me to Imphal." Never did I imagine that those words would come true so quickly. On February 13, 2001 at 8 p.m. he wished me goodbye for the last time at the railway station and his eyes were filled with tears. The last sentence he told me was: "I will remain a Salesian and I will not leave my Province." So he is there in Dimapur forever with no more transfers nor change of Province. Till memory fades and life departs he will forever live in my heart. I will miss his visits, letters and sweet smile. May this innocent and happy giver intercede for his bereaved family and for the Province.

Sr. Lydia Kettupurackal SMI

(Aunt to Shinu)

IN MEMORIAM OF OUR BELOVED SUPERIORS

Fr. RAPHAEL : A Model of the Good Shepherd

Fr. Raphael has left an indelible mark in the hearts of his young flock. Though months have passed after his glorious martyrdom, the memory of him still remains vivid in our minds and thoughts. We find it difficult to believe the fact for we were in communion with Fr. Raphael in all his endeavors. Each one of us personally experienced the priest, the Salesian, the formator and friend in our dearest Fr. Raphael. Even today we find it difficult to call him by name, for he's still our dearest 'PAPA.'

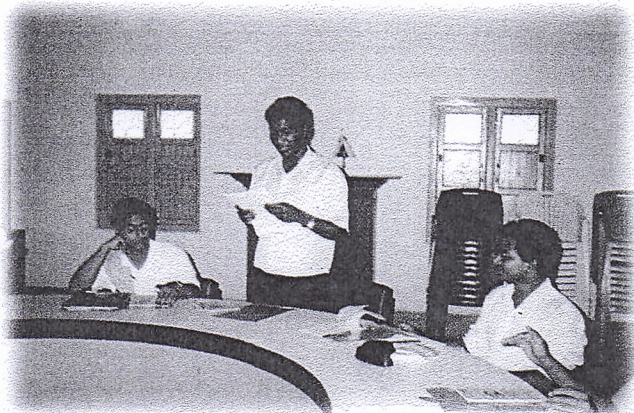
From our common analysis we affirm that Fr. Raphael had a charming face that beamed with unfading smiles. He was a dynamic and cheerful person. He was cordial, simple, friendly, enthusiastic, jovial, optimistic and jovial in his dealings with us. In fact, his own fine qualities of optimism and frankness have captured our reserved and timid hearts to pour out onto him. He formed us with patience and tolerance till he left us. His welcoming attitude and nobility of character are very much cherished by us. He was quick in understanding our heartfelt desires and wishes.



Fr. Raphael with teachers at DBHS Dibrugarh

Fr. Raphael truly relived the life of Don Bosco, our Father and Founder. Time and again we have seen Fr. Raphael fully immersed in prayer, spending extra time with the Lord in the Church. He was a true Salesian, a contemplative in action. As a learned priest, Fr. Raphael was indeed a genuine formator. He was a very friendly spiritual director. We can rightly say that Fr. Raphael was an efficient, noble and dedicated Salesian. Moreover, he was an experienced counselor, healing our physical, mental and spiritual brokenness on many occasions. He was gifted with the quality of paternal affection.

In conclusion, we are more than sure that Fr. Raphael was truly a 'good shepherd' after the heart of Christ, who laid down his life for us. He protected our lives by giving up his life for a noble cause. Because of the self-offering of 'His yesterday' we are fortunate to be living 'our today.' We believe that we have one more martyr in the 'Kingdom of light and peace' to intercede for us. He was a true shepherd in his imitation of Christ; he was available day in and day out for our growth and well-being in salesianity. He was really a man of few words but a man of exemplary religious convictions. We owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Raphael for his love that took him all the way to the altar of martyrdom, his genuine interest in our well-being and the great enthusiasm he manifested in our formation.



Fr. Kindo in a workshop

Fr. ANDREAS KINDO : A Fully Dedicated Salesian

We recall our experiences with Fr. Andreas as pleasant and enriching though we were together with him only for about a month. With much conviction we can say that he was a true missionary of the Father. He was a man of smiles, a man of faith and more especially a man of God. Though a priest for a short time, he had the finesse and the Oratorian heart of a Salesian. We do appreciate his glittering qualities of gentleness, patience, tolerance, cheerfulness and simplicity.

We admire his sense of sacrifice, creativity and above all his outgoing spirit. Living with Fr. Andreas, we could truly say that we were very much edified by his good example, his life of poverty, availability and understanding. It is no exaggeration to say that in Fr. Andreas, we have lost a great and loyal son of our Father Don Bosco.

Bro. SHINU: An Exemplary Assistant

Having lived with him about a year, we recall the nostalgic and enriching experiences that we had with him. He was a real brother to us with whom we rubbed our shoulders. His friendly and jovial approach made us feel at ease on many occasions. Hence, more than an assistant, he was a good companion who trusted us and shared everything candidly.

Bro. Shinu was a very loving and caring person. His love and spirit of sacrifice coupled with the missionary zeal enabled him to give up his very life for us. At his young age, he was already in the boots of the good shepherd who won over his sheep with gentle and humble ways. He was generous, sharing with us whatever he knew from his past experiences. He spared no energy for our welfare. We were very edified by the kind of prayer life that he led.

He was a practical, intelligent and efficient assistant. Like Don Bosco, he spent his time with us. His presence was not merely a physical presence, but also one that was animating and encouraging. He was dedicated, happy and cheerful. We admire his sense of hard work and optimism. He was a simple and approachable person. We always loved to be in his jolly company. Yes, he was well gifted in teaching, both in theoretical knowledge and practical aspects of life. Bro. Shinu, as an exemplary Salesian assistant, has lived his religious life as a faithful son of Don Bosco. May the angels keep him company in the heavenly places and may we who are left behind emulate him in ways more than one, so that the crown of unending glory will be our inheritance as well at the end of this earthly sojourn. Adieu our dearest elder brothers till we meet at Jesus' feet.

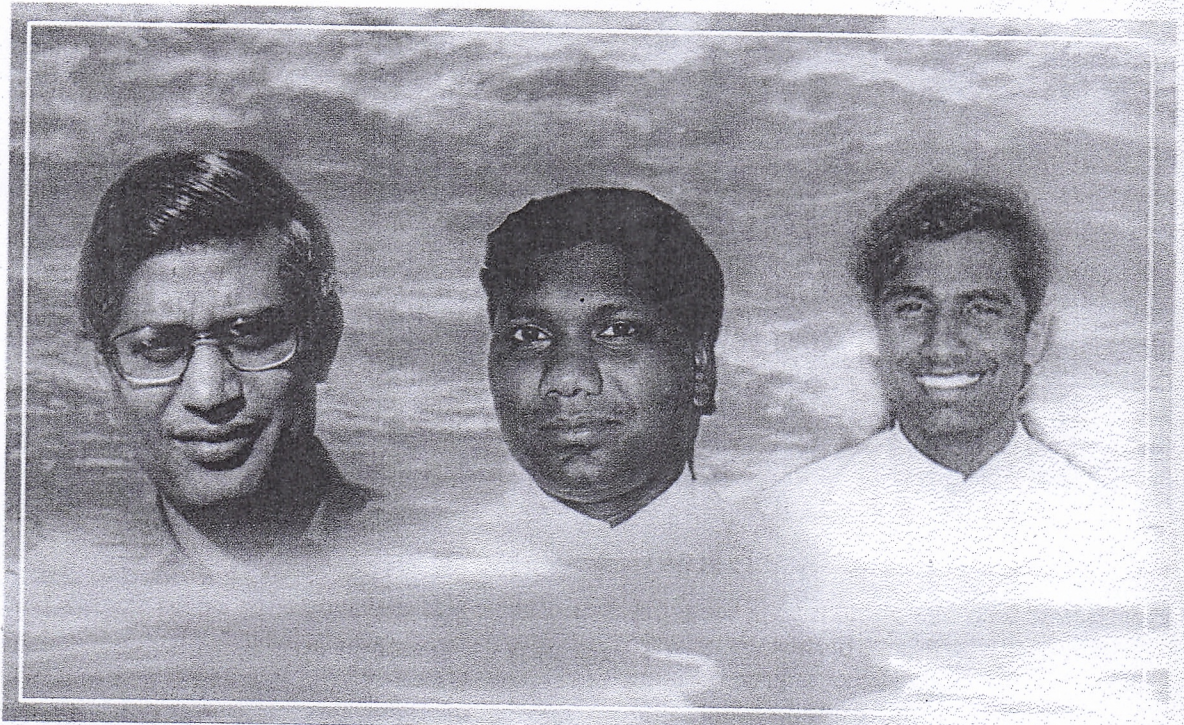
Bro. Athishu and companions (Novices of Imphal 2000-2001).

15.5.2002

Fr. Sebastian Jose SDB.

Salesian Provincial Community, Dimapur.

DON BOSCO PROVINCIAL HOUSE, DIMAPUR



Data for Necrology

Fr. Raphael Paliakara,

Born on April 10, 1955 in Chiyaram, Trichur

Died at Ngarian, Imphal, May 15, 2001.

Fr. Andreas Kindo

Born on December 2, 1969 in Charry Munda, Simdega

Died at Ngarian, Imphal, May 15, 2001.

Cl. Shinu Joseph

Born on March 27, 1978 in Chakkittapara, Calicut

Died at Ngarian, Imphal, May 15, 2001.

