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## 'GENTLEMAN' CAPUCHIN FRIAR BR FELIX D'SOUZA IS NO MORE

*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful - Psalm 116: 15*



The death of a priest is unlike the death of any other: we feel it differently, deeply. We sense that in losing him, we have lost not only the man but also his unique way of manifesting God. The voice that spoke of God has been silenced; hands that once blessed are still. Since a priest is one who takes on the person of Christ, his absence is somewhat of a loss in our very communication with the Lord. No one will ever again exemplify Christ for us in the singular way that this priest, our beloved Friar Felix D'Souza has done.

Our Lord Himself indicated the special relationship He enjoyed with His priests when, at the Last Supper, He poured out from His Sacred Heart His own priestly prayer: "Father, I pray for those you have given Me; keep them in Your name; they are not of the world; sanctify them in truth; may the love with which You loved Me be in them, and I in them".

It was this union with Christ that guided and shaped the life of Br Felix D'Souza. Always dignified, well-mannered, intelligent, quite aesthetic, humble and truly Franciscan he seemed to inhabit in a different world than ours - certainly different from ambition, greed, lust and all the vices to which so many have succumbed in our day.

Br Felix Dsouza was born on 11 September, 1949 to the devout family of Mary D'Mello and Martin D'Souza at Murukaveri in the parish of Our Lady of Remedies, Kirem. Of the 8 siblings two were sisters and six brothers. Br Felix was the seventh child to his parents.

Br Jossy Fernandes, his batchmate and friend writes, *"Br Felix was the son of a highly disciplined teacher, Modthin Mesthri who taught hundreds of students which include Bishops Henry of Bellary and Peter Paul Saldanha of Mangalore. Fr Felix was brought up in a rather strict way and learnt holiness more from his Mother."*

Br Felix was gifted with a sharp brain and had a good grasping power. He was studious and serious about learning, jovial but never playful. He liked playing though he was not a sportsman as such. He was friendly by nature and maintained healthy relationship with his companions. He was quite prayerful, sincere in observing the rules and regulations of the house. He completed his initial studies in Pompei Primary School Kirem from 1957-1964 and high school studies and PUC at St Aloysius from 1964-1968. He then was sent to Bharananganam, Kerala for II and III year of Seraphic Seminary with Br Symporian as the Rector who was later the Bishop of Jalandhar. His philosophical studies were done at Calvary Ashram, Trichur which lasted from 1971-1973 after which he had entered the Novitiate directly. It happened when Felix was in the novitiate that his Novice Master Br Titus Noronha and a companion novice Br Bonaventure of Maharastra got drowned in river Netravathi February 1974. Br Felix pronounced the temporary vows at St Fidelis Friary on 27 May 1974 and proceeded to St Joseph's Friary, Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu for his theological studies and later committed himself perpetually in the Capuchin Order on 27 May, 1977. He was ordained to the Priesthood on 29 May 1977 at St Joseph's Church Bajpe.

He was a great gardener and took keen interest in growing an exceptionally beautiful rose garden in the seminary campus, a hobby which he continued as a priest and professor at Deena Seva Ashram and later at Kripalaya, Mysore. He did not give it up even during his stay at St Anne's Friary, Mangaluru.

Br Felix was also an artist - knew to draw and paint beautifully, a hobby he cultivated even from his high school days and developed during his seminary years. The grotto at St Francis' Church, Kengeri Satellite Town was designed and built under his leadership.

Br Felix could take down notes very fast. He had a lovely hand-writing too. After his priestly ordination, Br Vincent Lobo (Aba) who was the then the provincial minister sent Br Felix to Jnanadeepa Vidyapeetha in Pune for his Master's in Philosophy. He obtained the master's degree with high marks. He also obtained a MA in Philosophy from Dharwad University. For his doctoral studies Br Felix was sent to Leuven, Belgium from 1985-1989, where he acquired the doctor's degree with flying colours. He specialized himself in Alfred North Whitehead.

Br Felix taught Philosophy at Calvary Ashram, Trichur from 1977-1979 and at Deena Seva Ashram, Bangalore from 1981-1985. Again for 18 years he served in

DSA as a professor, prefect of the studies, vice rector and rector from 1989 to 2007. He then moved to Kripalaya, Bogadi to teach philosophy which he did up to 2011.

Br Denis Veigas, a Capuchin and a professor of Philosophy himself recalls that Br Felix lived a highly organized life. One could immediately notice it in the way he dressed, arranged his books and his gadgets in his room. The same was evident in his personal lecture-notes that he carried to the classroom. Everything that he had to say was there clearly written: nothing extra, nothing less. That indicated his insistence that there was no room for any loose-talk in philosophy. It meant clear thinking, clear reasoning and a clear logic. And when that was the principle of Br Felix as a philosophy professor, he would expect the same of the students during their exams, and in their "scientific" papers. The answers had to be delivered clearly to the point. That made the students to take philosophy subjects quite seriously. Br Felix would put his 100% in the responsibilities assigned to him or the ones he would volunteer. There were no excuses, delays, forgetfulness, and sorry's. Whether the assignment was as simple as arranging a dining table for the guests, or as great as making a grotto for Our Lady, Br Felix would deliver it with all precision and decorum.

Br Chetan Lobo, Capuchin a well known journalist writes, *"the secret of Br Felix's resourcefulness, intelligence and simplicity came from the knowledge he acquired from the books and articles he read and shared with his students. He was a Gentleman Friar, who never interfered in the affairs of others. His serene and dignified behaviour was exemplary. It is often said that Capuchins are good Labourers but poor Managers. This is proved wrong in the case of Br Felix. He had the capacity to make things work as a manager and also to get involved in manual labour when it needed. He never hesitated to soil his hands with earth."*

Fr Albert Lewis, a professor of theology remembers his seminary days and says that Br Felix had no craving for power and position. He had a special concern towards seminarians whose families were poor.

After teaching philosophy for 34 years i.e. from 1977-2011 he resigned from this active ministry due to his poor health and he continued to live at St Anne's Friary, the Provincial Infirmary of Karnataka Capuchin Province.

It's remarkable that this man who was rather a private person with a small number of friends did not call attention to himself or accomplish feats that would be regarded as great by the world. He had lasting and true family friendships built even from the time of his novitiate at Farangipet (Marybai and Koshabai family in particular) and later as a priest. He also had a few friends in Germany. His best friend was Mr Alex Menezes from Loreto, who had settled down in Brussels. Mr Oswald Colaco of Westen

Ghat Pharmaceuticals was another of his friends. He was often visited by his brother Lancy during his years at St Anne's Friary.

At St Anne's Friary for last 9 years he lived in simplicity and holiness. He was faithful to his Divine Office and prayer life. He celebrated Eucharist and shared well prepared reflections on Word of God everyday for the senior friars. He spent his time reading Spiritual books and novels. He did the proof reading of the Capuchin Ordo, Capuchin Supplements and other literary works of the friars. He beautified the St Ann's garden; he took care of the guests especially by neatly arranging the dining table. He greatly loved every friar of the community. If there was any friar absent or late for the food, he would keep their share. He had special concern and love for the kitchen staff.

Br Felix suffered a massive stroke on 1 November 2019 that damaged the functioning of his brain and body after which he was hospitalized at Fr Muller's for a month. He was later brought to the friary where he silently suffered. Whenever someone visited him, he held their hands tightly, looked into their eyes and silently blessed them. He breathed his last on 12 February 2020. Br Paul Melwyn, the guardian who couldn't be there for the funeral due to his other commitments writes, "Br Felix, You were a noble and self-sacrificial soul. You were a hungry scholar and profound thinker. You astonished us with your outstanding memory. Gladly you would learn and gladly you would teach. Joyfully you would pray and joyfully you would inspire. For me you were a person of high principles and discipline. You believed in high thinking and simple living. As distinguished teacher you played an extraordinary role in the lives of young Capuchins, in equipping them with knowledge and moulding their lives. Before embracing sister death you embraced sister sufferings and offered them to God. We remain ever grateful to you. Bless us from heaven and pray for us in heaven."

Dear Br Felix, bless us from heaven especially the friars, brothers and staff who helped you to ease your suffering during your last moments of life. Bless Br Lancy Rebello who was with you all through, bless Clara Bai our Nurse, bless Rony, bless Cliffy Maam, bless George Stephen, bless the doctors and nurses of Fr Muller's and bless us all.

We will all miss Br Felix here, but we will rely on his continued help from the next life. In the meantime, we will remember Br Felix in our prayers.

*Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.*

**- Br Jawahar Jerry Cutinho, Capuchin**

*(Eulogy delivered at the Funeral Service on 14th Feb 2020.)*



## BR SATHISH FERNANDES CAPUCHIN RECEIVED MAKKALA MANIKYA STATE AWARD 2019-2020



Recognizing the dedicated and valuable service and initiative for inspiring action aimed at Social transformation and volunteerism Br Satish Fernandes was conferred with Makkala Manikya State Award at Children Kannada Literary organized on 23 January 2020 at Jambaldinni Rangamandira, Raichur. The award was given in recognition of the undeterred and relentless work towards children and youth at risk.

## MELODIES OF SHANTHI NIVAS

### Bidding Adieu



A day was set apart to look back and be grateful. It was not a day to bid farewell but to cherish all the beautiful memories shared together. Prof. Sakina Qassim Zaidi, Principal, Orchids International School, Mysore Road was the Chief Guest. The I PU students organized a variety of cultural items for their dear Seniors. Some of the II PU pupils shared a part of their wonderful reminiscence from among the vast substantial experience in the campus.

### Industrial Visit



In order to merge theoretical learning with practical skills, Darshan College organized an Industrial Visit for the students to Heritage Winery, Ramanagara and Toy Industry, Channapatna. The Toy World enlightened the students. This traditional craft is protected as a geographical indication under the World Trade Organization, administered by the Government of Karnataka.