

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

# SOUTHERN VANI

A News Bulletin of Southern Indian Province Vol: 23. No: 2. July 2023



*In loving memory of*

**REV. FR. MATHEW KURUPPACHERY CM**

7 NOVEMBER 1947



25 JUNE 2023



*In loving Memory of*



**Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM**



In loving memory of



2023  
DEATH: 25th June

Fr. Mathew  
Kuruppachery CM

1947  
BIRTH: 7th November





Southern Vani



July 2023

# SOUTHERN VANI

A News Bulletin of the Southern Indian Province  
Congregation of the Mission

**July 2023**

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**In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM**

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**CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION (CM-VINCENTIANS)  
SOUTHERN INDIAN PROVINCE**

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Dear Confreres and Seminarians,

On 25th June, our beloved Fr. Mathew Joseph Kuruppachery was called for the Eternal Reward. The end came at the Medical ICU of Little Flower Hospital Angamaly at 04:45 PM on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery was born on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1947 at Kayalpuram, Pulincunnoo Alleppey, Kerala, as the fourth child of late Mr. Francis and Cicily Kuruppachery. At his baptism he was named after St. Mathew the Apostle.

Having completed his primary and high school education from St Joseph's School, Kayalpuram, St Joseph's School, Pulincunnoo (Alapuzha) respectively, he joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1965.

Fr. Mathew had his initial formation at St. Peter's Minor Seminary, Benjanagar, Odisha. He completed his internal seminary formation (Novitiate) in Stella Maris, Gopalpur on Sea, Odisha and was formally admitted into the Congregation of



**In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM**



the Mission on 28th June 1969. His philosophical Studies were in Odisha at Aquinas College, Gopalpur on Sea. After having completed his philosophical studies he was sent to St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha for his theological studies.

On 17<sup>th</sup> April 1977 he was ordained a Deacon by his Excellency Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Thiruthalil CM, the then bishop of Berhampur Diocese.

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1977, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery was ordained a priest by His Excellency Rt. Rev. Bishop Thomas Thiruthalil CM, the then bishop of Behampur. After the ordination Fr. Mathew was

appointed as at Jaleswar mission, Orissa and he worked in that mission for four years. In the year 1982 he was transferred to Muniguda Mission. After serving there for 2 years he was appointed Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Parish, Oragadam (Tamil Nadu/ Madras Mylapore Archdiocese, now Chengalpet diocese) in the year 1984. After long 5 years of service at Oragadam, Fr. Mathew was appointed Parish Priest of Queen of the Mission Church Kallal (Tamil Nadu) in 1989 and served there for another five years.

From Kallal Fr. Mathew was transferred to Aminjikkarai, Madras as the Parish Priest of Ascension Church in the year 1994.





Later he was appointed as the Local Superior of the Madras Canonical house for a period of three years and after completing the term he was reappointed for another three years.

After completing long seven years of service at Chennai, on 15th June 2001 he was appointed as the rector of our major seminary, St. Vincent's Mission House, Alwaye.

When serving as the Rector of St. Vincent's Mission House, he also had the privilege of looking after our sick confreres especially Fr. Joseph Keezharam, Fr. Louis Vadakkepambil and Fr. Joseph Palatty, before this new Priests' Home at Belwadi was constructed


(and the elderly confreres were transferred to Belwadi).

On 22nd June 2003 he was transferred from Alwaye and was appointed Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church, Koithurkonam in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. Having served there for 3 years, on 5th August 2006 he was again sent back to Tamil Nadu as the Parish Priest of Queen of the Missions Church, Kallal.

Fr. Mathew also served as Parish Priest of St. Rita's Church Nanthirickal and St. Thomas Church, Vempuzha (2009-2010) in the Diocese of Kollam. Fr. Mathew worked as Parish Priest of St. George Church Calvary near Nedumangad in Neyyantikara diocese.







In 2011 he was appointed the first Parish Priest of the newly erected St. Joseph's Church, Vazhavila in Neyyattinkara diocese. As he was completing more than five years in this mission in this newly erected parish, from the beginning of 2016 he began to experience health issues. In February 2016 he was asked to move to Keralapuram Community to take rest as he was struggling with his ill health. For a short period of time Fr. Mathew also worked as the hostel warden of De Paul Degree College, Mysore, and then he was transferred to Karunalaya Priests' Home Belwady in September 2016. Meanwhile he also served as the Spiritual Director of the De Paul Minor Seminary, Belwady.

**He always had the heart of a zealous pastor and an**

enthusiastic missionary who wanted to be with the people of God rather than being in institutions (not even he liked the idea of retirement and rest) and therefore at his request he was sent to Mary Rani Church and Keralapuram community as a member. He remained there for one year and upon finding his health declining, on 20th December 2017 he was transferred to Priest's Home, Angamaly for better treatment and rest. During the past six years Fr. Mathew was undergoing medication and treatment for various illnesses. In 2022 Fr. Mathew had a mild stroke and from there his health further began to deteriorate and he slowly began to lose his capacity to walk and talk and was admitted in the hospital frequently.



A full-time care taker was also appointed to take care of him. During the past one year he accepted a lot of pain and suffering without any complaints.

On 15th June 2023 he was admitted Little Flower Hospital Angamaly, as he was very weak and was not able to eat or drink. On 18th June he was shifted to the Medical ICU as he developed chest congestion and difficulty in breathing, the Oxygen level was dropping, and a mild pneumonia was slowly taking control of his body. He continued breathing with the help of Oxygen Mask.

On 25th June at 2:30 PM he received the Anointing of the Sick with full consciousness and at 4:45 PM our beloved confrere Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery left this world to meet the Lord and to receive the reward of his long 45 years of Priestly Ministry in the Vineyard of the Lord. To his companions and collaborators Fr. Mathew always came across above all as a zealous and hard-working pastor all through his life. His Vincentian Spirit and conviction that he was sent to evangelize the poor following the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul gave him the energy to extend God's blessings to 1000 and 1000s of people in different dioceses in Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.





Without any hesitation we can say that as a true Vincentian Fr. Mathew had special interest and a genuine love for the poor and the needy and he did everything possible to help them spiritually and materially. Fr. Mathew also leaves behind for us the legacy of an exemplary Simple Vincentian Life Style ... Brothers and Sisters...

We are bidding farewell to this simple missionary (simple in the sight of the world but truly a great and a faithful servant in the sight of God). May the Lord grant him Eternal Rest.

Fr. Anil Thomas Karackavayalil CM  
Provincial Superior  
Southern Indian Province,  
Congregation of the Mission





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Rome,  
June 26, 2023.

Adios Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery

I cherish my fond memories of living with Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery for a year. After having completed the theology studies, as a deacon, I was appointed to the Ascension church community at Chennai. I reached the community in June 1997. Six months I lived with him as a deacon and six months as a new priest. Fr. Mathew was good to me and took good care of me. I had to learn Tamil language and I remember how he was encouraging me to learn Tamil. He gave chances to read and practice the new language. He corrected me when I made mistakes. He was really a fatherly figure to me. Moreover, he was always loving and caring for the community members. He was a pastor par excellence. He loved the people entrusted to his care. He was there for the people even late in the evenings, visiting them and attending the *anbiam* (basic community meeting). He had no complaints. Whenever I asked him, how are you? His spontaneous reply was “quite in the well” meaning he is always fine. His simple life style was very evident. As a Vincentian, he loved the poor and tried to help them to come up in life. He was very vibrant and energetic to the spiritual needs of the people. He also reached out to the sick and elderly in the parish. I admire his pastoral care and availability to the people. May the good Lord who called him to priesthood grant him eternal reward. He finished his race well. May he enjoy the heavenly bliss in the company of St. Vincent de Paul and other Vincentian Saints and Blessed. *Adios* Fr. Mathew.

Fr. Paul Parackal, C.M.  
Econome General



**In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM**



# Mission Tours With Late Fr. Mathew Kuruppacherry

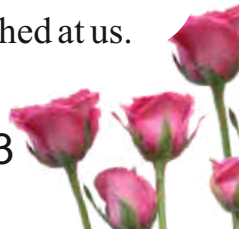
Fr. Thomas Moolan CM

*And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits' (Mark 6:7)*

I had the privilege to make a number of mission tours with simple and holy Vincentian missionary, late Fr. Mathew into different places. I would like to pen down two of the charming and challenging mission trips, which I had made along with him. One was to Muniguda and another was to Gangaduda in Odisha.

We had a great time at Mninguda, one of the largest mission stations of the undivided province. When we were together at Muniguda, we used to go for a long mission tour for a couple of weeks. I would like to recall, one of the

mission tours, I had made together with him through the forest. We went for a mission tour to a village (Muniguda), which was on the top of the mountain. When we reached the village, the people told us that we should not go further through the forest to another mission community, because on the way, a wild elephant has delivered a baby. However, moved by the Vincentian spirit and zeal Fr. Mathew told me, we shall go ahead and God will protect us. When we further proceeded, we heard the trumpet of the wild elephants and we sensed the alarming situation. We accepted our defeat and we ran back for lives and the people laughed at us.





nevertheless Fr. Mathew had never given up his Vincentian mission and

spirit because the fruit of his zeal and spirit, we could make a number of other mission tours through the deep forest, which could build up gradually the Christian communities in different places in Odisha.

We could experience God's protection, blessings and care. All these mission tours were possible, because of the zeal and interest of Fr. Mathew. When I look back now, I could make those mission tours, because the Vincentian mission spirit of Fr. Mathew. I could see God's hand through the mission and zeal of Fr. Mathew.

I would again like to narrate one more mission tour

alone with late Fr. Mathew. It was a village called Gangaduda. The people of this particular village were afraid of evil spirit. When we visited for the first time to this village, the people were sharing of it and even some had talked about various happenings that took place in this village. The people were about to leave the village and started to migrate to another place. At this moment, God intervened through the mission and zeal the Vincentian spirit of late Fr. Mathew. We could go to this particular village and sprinkle the Holy water and Holy fire, especially to a tree, which was considered as abode of the evil spirit, under the leadership of Fr. Mathew.





Thus Fr Mathew took initiative to uproot this particular tree. The tree, unfortunately fell upon another tree and the ordinary people were getting frightened. However, it was a blessing and Fr Mathew could convince the people that the spirit has already left the village and even he could arrange a celebration for that. As result of this, we could gain many souls for Christ.

I would say that, when I think of those mission experiences, I am really proud of him and thank God for giving that opportunity to work with late Fr Mathew. His mission spirit and zeal is an example for everyone in general and to all the Vincentians in particular.

I hope we will meet soon...

Eternal life grant unto him, O Lord and let your perpetual light shines upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen





## Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery in my knowledge

Fr. Philip Ettyamparampil

**F**r. Mathew Kuruppachery was born on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1947, in Kayalpuram, Kuttanad, and was baptized on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1947, at St Joseph's Church, Kayalpuram, Changanacherry Diocese. After his Preliminary studies, he joined the Minor Seminary at Bhanjanagar, Orissa in the year 1967. He did his Novitiate in the year 1969-1971, at Stella Maris, Gopalpur-on-Sea. He had his Philosophical studies from 1971 to 1974, at Aquinas College. He did his Theological studies from 1974 to 1977 at St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha, Aluva. He was ordained on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1977, at St Joseph's Church, Kayalpuram. His First appointment was in Jaleswar,

Balasore Diocese, Orissa, towards the end of January, 1978. After a year, he was transferred to Oragadam in the Diocese of Madras-Maylapur while Fr. Antony Netikatt was the provincial (1979 to 1985). After being there for two years, he was appointed as a parish priest in Kallal in the diocese of Sivagangai in the year 1981. He was transferred to Ascension Church, Aminjikkarai, Madras - Maylapur Arch Diocese, Tamil Nadu in the year 1987. After the division of the province of South India, he was appointed at Vazhavila. When he was taking rest at Keralapuram for two years, he used to help the children of the cook with the money he got from some confreres abroad.







He was in Aluva study house for some time. He came to Vincentian Sadan, Angamaly before Covid- 19 pandemic, in the year 2017.

When I think of Fr. Mathew, the first thought comes to my mind is that he was so social. He used to bring poor children in and around Vincentian Bhavan and even take them to the refectory and feed them with cakes. He also used to give them gifts on occasions like Christmas and New Year, etc. He used to have contacts outside the institution. It shows how much charitable he was to the poor!

Through our spirit of hospitality, the Church has given us the mandate to prolong Christ's mission of charity to convey to the elderly, in the concrete realities of everyday life, the

kindness and love of God for them, his eldest children. Consecrated hospitality is a witness to the mercy and compassionate love of the heart of Jesus. It is based on the words of Christ himself: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7). "I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... sick and you visited me.... Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:35-40).

The second thought comes to my mind about Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery is his service to the poor according to the founder, St Vincent de Paul: Whenever you go to the poor you encounter Jesus in him.





When I go through his life, before he came to a minor seminary in Bhanjanagar he was taking milk to the convent (Clarist Convent). He was also taking milk to other poor families too.

Before coming to the Seminary, the Reverend Sisters (Visitation Sisters) noticed in him his generosity to the poor. So, he had really got spirit of generosity to the poor. During his first appointment in Jaleswar, I heard from the Visitation Sisters there, that he was very generous to the poor tribal people.

Whenever poor patients come to the dispensary, he used to help these poor to buy medicine and for the TB

patients vitamin tablets, and nourishing food for them.

In his last days with him, I noticed he never complained of his suffering. He was suffering without complaints. He had back pain. Though he suffered constipation for five days he never complained. He had lastly Parkinson's disease. The caretaker, Irudayaraj, who was with him for 8 months while taking him to the hospital said that, he had no complaints of pain. His silent endurance of suffering is really praiseworthy. Now his suffering is over and he is near the crucified Lord. Eternal life grant unto him O Lord and let Your perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.





## Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM - An Amiable Vincentian Father Who Had **A HEART AND CONSCIENCE**

1. Having granted a Grand Farewell to Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery from this earthly abode through the Requiem Mass, I pray that “his spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and wish him the “crown of righteousness” to which he had been longing for (2 Tim 4:7).

2. Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery, as I have known him is an affable father who **had always a soft corner for the poor and the underprivileged.** He loved the poor from the

core of his heart that he visited them often through the **house visits** and touched their hearts with **tangible supports.** For example, when he was the Parish Priest of Kallal, he had projects (i) for the education of poor children and (ii) for the welfare of the deprived families of the parish. However, he had a simple way of living as a Vincentian Priest and approached the people kindly that they respected his camaraderie. Indeed, house visits and doing charity were his favourite pastoral ministries.





Hence, it was less likely that he had cultural or language barriers hindering him to commit and dedicate his life for the care of the people.

3. Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery was **conscientious**. He had an orderly life. He prioritized things accordingly. He planned out well and executed the pastoral programmes together with the people. He assessed and acknowledged his pastoral plans. He admired the goodness of others and appreciated. He was free, frank and open in sharing and relating with others. Above all, being **led by the Spirit of God and St. Vincent de Paul**, he has responded to his priestly call for forty-five

years positively and meaningfully in word and deed with a great conviction and consistency.



4. As 1 John 3:21 states, “if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God,” we commend the departed soul of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery into the hands of the heavenly Father in order to be welcomed by Him with the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter into the joy of your master” (Mt 25:23).

Fr. Francis Borgia CM  
Jallipalayam

**In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM 20**



**Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery**

## **A Light To Lead Many to God**

*“No wonder my heart is glad, and my tongue shouts His praises! My body rests in hope.” Acts2:26.*

“Today June 25, 2023 the heavens rejoice in welcoming a gentle soul, Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM.

Here, we are saddened in his departure and say good bye to his fragile pilgrim life with us. I remember him with a sense of gratitude and with the thoughts of his heavenly bliss. In his pilgrimage in this world, he fulfilled his priestly ministry and service to the people of God, in various parishes and formation houses, in total faithfulness and commitment to the task and mission entrusted to him.

I had the privilege to be with him at Vincentian Sadan, Mattoor, Angamaly for two years and plus. Mostly he was in a state of support and care. He was never sad and disappointed but lived in faith, patience and hope. At the time he was a man of conviction and few words. I am satisfied and thankful to God that as long as I was with him the Lord sustained him in health.

Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery was very much loved by his family members. Their continuous visits and moral support sustained and strengthened his life.





He enjoyed their company and visits. I also had the opportunity to visit his family members together with him and their support really was encouraging and enriching.

He had a friendly and brotherly approach with his bystander Mr. Irudayaraj who assisted, served and supported him.



We believe, hope and pray that the Merciful God through His loving Son Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctify and accept Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery to the eternal presence, peace, joy and bliss”.

Fr. Devassia Puduserry CM  
SVMH Always



# Inspiring Reminiscence

**F**ebruary 1998 enroute to Kallal (The place of my first appointment after the ordination) I visited Ascension Church, Chennai. That was the first time I met Fr. Mathew Kurupachery, the then superior and Parish priest. Exceptionally calm and a welcoming personality that was my first impression. Later, in the month of June I joined the same community as I pursued my studies in Loyola college. I lived with him for three years and would like to place on record my experience with him.

Fr. Mathew was incredibly tranquil in nature. The serene disposition was personified in his words, deeds and interaction with others, be it community or anyone from outside. Perhaps, the distinctiveness of Fr. Mathew or the legacy that he has left behind is calm

and peaceful personality. The wisdom of the age and lessons from experience have molded him to be peaceable. I found him exceedingly comfortable to move with the young and old alike. He was remarkably good in animating the community and parish. In times of community rows he would never resort to annoyance or disagreements.

Fr. Mathew was an unassuming Vincentian Missionary who loved the poor. I personally know him facilitating several in need either with monetary or other required assistance. He was cautious not to trumpet his charity or to seek any recognition for the same. The principle he observed probably was St. Mathew 6:4 (but when you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing).





Missionary zeal of Fr. Mathew is laudable. He made several attempts to open new centers in and around Chennai but administration did not find it feasible. March 2001 the then provincial administration decided to open a new centre in Nalgonda diocese in a place named Kethepally. The provincial team requested Fr. Mathew to do the pilot study of the proposal and it was with him that I visited Kethepally before taking up the new request of Bishop of Nalgonda. Four decade of his priestly ministry, except for the last three years, spent for the mission work in the province and congregation

As a young priest in the province I constantly enjoyed Fr. Mathew's encouragement and appreciation. I do consider my first three years of priestly life with him in the community was motivating and inspirational through his instrumentality. I always treasure his confidence and support to me as a priest student in the college.

Not many know that Fr. Mathew Kurupachery had an elegant handwriting. Some of us do get upset with our own art of writing. Several years of practice and conscious effort has gone behind the ability of beautiful hand writing. English letters would drip from his pen or pencil like water drops. The pen in his hand was calm as he was serene in nature. I was sometime envious of his rare skill.

May the Good Lord grant him eternal rest and may his soul rest in peace. Amen

Fr. Vincent Edakkarot CM  
Enikepadu, AP







# A Zealous Missionary

2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2023 is the memorable and gloomy day for the people of Sacred Heart Church, Oragadam. On that day, we remembered in the Lord our late Rev. Fr. Matthew Kurappachery CM, who was a Pioneer missionary of our parish church, Oragadam. A layman named Ambrose, who knew Fr. Matthew very well shared his imperishable moments about Fr. Matthew, as a noteworthy person. At his time, there were conflicts, calamities, religious disputes and above all poverty. People passed their lives with meagre meals and income.

In this world of Netizens, the religious men and women would like to plant themselves where they can bloom instead of blooming where they are planted. When the Provincial Superior told him to take up the new venture, he took it up willingly in the words, "I am ready to go even to the ends of the earth". He took up the new mission in the year 1984. Fr. Matthew was a model of simplicity and humility in the Words of Jesus, to say, "Learn from me for I am meek and humble in heart".

Fr. Matthew's relationship with the parishners was like as if he was talking to his best friend. He transformed the lives of many by his exemplary life. He had a special care and concern for the downtrodden, marginalised and the people who were rejected by the society. It is during his time, the parish of Oragadam flourished and cherished. He also gave significant importance to women empowerment.





Fr. Matthew was a man of energy and enthusiasm. Under the parish of Oragadam, there were 13 substations and he never failed to celebrate Holy Mass in all 13 substations.

Being a zealous missionary, he invited the sisters of Daughters of Charity to make the work of the Lord more vibrant and effective and it is to be noted. It is by his unquenchable effect, a dispensary was opened and people were able to avail immediate medical care. Another layman Amal Raj, who was close to heart of Fr. Matthew was invited to speak a few words said, “I feel it as a blessing to travel with the prominent figure Fr. Matthew”.

In those days, the church was in pathetic condition and the works of renovation were undertaken by Fr. Matthew”. In those days there was water scarcity. Father could not bear, people suffering without water. He immediately jumped into action, dug a pond, cleansed the pond and built steps, so that people could go down and fetch water. He was proud to say, it was Fr. Matthew’s time many were baptized and were given First Holy Communion. It was during his time a grotto was built and even today people never fail to visit the grotto to make their prayers. If we go on write about this unique personality, ink and paper will not be sufficient. May the Almighty God grant him eternal reward.

Fr. Saji Ayppenparambil CM  
Oragadam



## **Simplicity and Hard work, Hallmarks of a true Pastor, Remembering a**

### **Humble and Simple Vincentian**

**K**indness, simplicity, and hard work are the three apt words to speak about the person of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery, C.M. Two years of close association with him, at the beginning of my theology, gave me valuable lessons on these qualities every priest should possess. As our Rector, I could see in him as a kind-hearted and caring person, who had a listening heart.

Though he had not much experience in the field of formation, he was a perfect guide in our journey towards the altar of the Lord. His simple way of life witnessed in every aspect of his words and deeds, has made an impeccable impact on us his students.

I would very specially remember him for all the encouragement and support he had given to me in undertaking different initiatives in the community and in the catechism department that we were taking care of. A lot of new programs saw the light and became successful because he was ready to uphold any new project. I cannot also forget the enormous efforts he put forth to give a new look to the seminary building, the community chapel, the kitchen, etc. What made me even more astonished about him was his untiring spirit to be at the service of the people entrusted to his care. Years back, when we were taking care of the little church that was adjacent to our





seminary in Aluva, I could see in him a hardworking pastor, toiling day and night to bring about a lot of improvements in the faith of the people.

His tireless efforts made possible a lot of renovations in the church too. Within a few months, with the collaboration and contribution of the faithful, he was able to gather a good sum of money to do the ceiling of the church. This was followed by other needed renovations. I could over and again experience this pastoral excellence during my holiday ministries in the parish where he worked. He was very much approachable to the people, especially the poor. Without a doubt, I can say that his availability and readiness to serve others made him more acceptable among his parishioners.

He was truly a Vincentian, who practiced the virtues of simplicity and humility and used every chance to serve the poor around him. Many people used to come to the seminary to get help because they were sure of getting some aid from him.

As I remember this humble confrere, I pray to the Almighty God that He may grant Fr. Mathew the eternal life promised to everyone who leaves behind houses, brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children for the sake of His name.

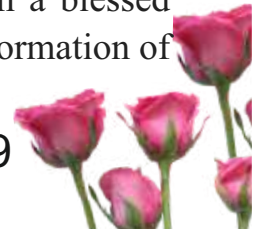
Adieu Fr. Mathew...

Fr. Mathew Kochuparambil CM  
Yerupppalem



## A Vincentian Priest from Kayalpuram

**F**ather Mathew Kuruppachery C.M, who began his priestly life on the solemnity of immaculate conception of the blessed virgin Mary on December 8, 1977, had an exuberant spirit of Vincentian simplicity, besides having many pastoral as well as evangelical virtues as a caretaker of Nithya Sahaya Matha church, and as a mentor of students of theology and philosophy in St. Vincent Mission House at Aluva. I was privileged to have his guidance from June 2001-June 2003. He endeavoured to provide the best service to the students of both philosophy and theology as well as he used to spearhead many dialogues on various subjects like furnishing the library, repairing the house, painting the kitchen, utilizing daily work time, play time etc. Whatever he did during his tenure, has been executed successfully after a discussion with the students. His idea of cleanliness was a magnanimity in his heart, that made him to convince provincial administration to paint the seminary after a long time, bravely observed the students whether they regularly cleaned their toilets and their personal rooms, and seriously guided the general house cleaning on Thursdays as per the portfolios given to each member. Fr. Mathew was interested to know the expectations of the parents of the seminarians, so he called all of them for a meeting which gave them a blessed experience of discussing with the rector about the formation of their children.





He respected the formation of students with enthusiasm that he arranged one day an outing for us to his native parish, then he explained to us where he learned catechism, narrated the story of his first holy communion, described his experience as a minister of altar during his school days and how he used to attend regularly novena of our lady on Saturdays, elucidated the way paddy is harvested, enlightened us about the problem of farmers of his native place, and showed the students where he used to catch the fish. Thereby he also gave testimony of how he experienced a miraculous blessing of our lady. Once, on a school-off day he went with the other boys to play in the water, alas something happened, he was not able to swim, he was in trouble, his Marian devotion was deep at his heart, then he cried out “ente mathave” (blessed mother Mary). After a while he found himself at the edge of the canal. But he didn't know how.

His love towards the poor was exemplary that although the seminary had a communitarian understanding of giving five-rupee arms, Fr. Mathew often spent a lot of time with them, and sometimes I could see him sitting in the parlour with the poor, seriously listening to their agony. His sympathy towards the poor was a charisma in his personality, which invited many parishioners to our parlour. Although he was neither a gifted nor a trained singer, on Saturdays the choir members came to him to





discuss the songs for the Sunday mass, they just wanted to engage in dialogue with him, and he was attentive to their suggestions. Each activity of the church was discussed with the faithful, and in return, all the people including the members of the local Vincent de Paul Society, gave him a stalwart support and appreciation.

The celebration of the Jubilee of his priesthood on the solemnity of immaculate conception of the blessed virgin Mary on December 8, 2002 invited us all to turn to the love of God, the deepest root and foundation of priestly life, the focus of our affective seminary formation. Fr. Mathew loved to celebrate his jubilee together with his philosophy and theology students and with those people who were regularly visiting our church. His authentic conviction affirmed, let his relatives come to Nithya Sahaya Matha Church. We expected a maximum of 500 public excluding the priests, sisters and relatives. As his heart was filled with the formation of brothers, he wanted to celebrate his Jubilee together with brothers. For the Eucharistic celebration, the choir was led by the brothers, and Fr. Mathew asked me to organize the tea and snacks for the public and meals for the priests, sisters and relatives. He said, that he has 10 thousand rupee for the budget.





We calculated accordingly, to make 500 packets of snacks, each costing Rs 12.50. With the rest of the money, we did the shopping for the dinner for the priests, sisters and relatives. During the discussion and planning, the calculation of 500 public was an over estimated idea. To our great surprise the calculation of the public went out of hand, there were more than 1200 people. I did not know what to do. The arranged 500 packets were too less. On one hand we did not have money, and on the other hand within a short time to arrange more than 500 packets was not possible. My theology batchmate Mathew Kochuparambil asked me, Jaysmon, what shall we do? people are flocking, there is a multitude of people. I just gazed. We knew it was going to be a huge problem. I told Kochhuparambil: please tell our brothers to entrust the distribution of the packets to the youths, we cannot help the situation, we shall withdraw from the scene. The Jubilee Mass got over at 6 pm. I did not come out of the kitchen, I requested my batchmate brothers Mathew, Siju, Shalby and Thankachan, please be in the refectory and receive the special guests. I did not come out of the kitchen, just remained there. The brothers had given their rooms to their parents, and after the dinner my father Chacko Ambadan was sleeping in my room. Around 9 pm I came out of the kitchen, took a bath and went to the TV room and slept in that room. It was totally unusual that I did not mingle with the guests.







I did not want to face Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery, the Jubilarian. Around 10 pm Mathew Kochhuparabil explained to me how things were taking place. The youth team led by Binu knew the packets were getting over.

He conveyed the message to other youths; the message came to many members of Vincent de Paul society and many good people. They ran to the UC College Junction. They purchased whatever snacks available in each shop. The shortage of snacks packets turned to tears of joy.

The shops in UC College junction did not have any more snacks. As I heard all that brother Mathew was explaining, in my ears I heard the recurring sound “ente mathave”, the prayer of agony, which the little boy Mathew Kuruppachery cried to the heavens. Providence of God on the solemnity of immaculate conception of the blessed virgin Mary on December 8, 2002 was seen in the act of feeding the multitude on his Jubilee.

The community was blessed by the presence of many residential priests who had half an hour discussion on each evening, after the supper in the room of Fr. Palatty who was bedridden, together with



Fr. Joseph Keezharam, Fr. Louis Vadakkeparambil and Fr. Raju Karickal. They might have also discussed about the problem of shortage of snacks packets. The only question Fr. Mathew asked me was “What happened with the snacks packets?” I said, I am sorry, 500 snacks packets were too short.

Sometimes brothers make comments about staff and rectors during holidays or at times during recreation time. Someone made a comment about his purchasing of plastic chairs for the corridor, it was often sarcastically repeated.

I still believe, sarcastically repeated comments pained him silently and he, who almost in every provincial level meeting argued for the brothers in the seminary, resigned from duty in the seminary.

When I met him after 18 years on November 23, 2019 in our priest's home at Angamaly, his body was very weak. The contemplating heart touched by the memory of the joy of privilege to serve the Lord, in spite of sickness, took me around the house, described me a lot about the house and surrounding, then the heart of the good shepherd as well as the heart of Vincentian priest consoled me profoundly, because my heart was mourning over my deceased father Chacko Ambadan. The heart of the Good Shepherd tells us that his love is limitless; it is never exhausted and it never gives up.



There we see his infinite and boundless self-giving; there we find the source of that faithful and meek love which sets free and makes others free; there we constantly discover anew, that Jesus loves us even to the end, without ever imposing. A blessed heart consoles others, does not set aside times and spaces as private, and neither demands nor worries about protecting his own self, but rather, sees the providence of God.

Christ loves and knows his sheep. He gives his life for them, and no one is a stranger to him. His flock is his family and his life. He is not a boss to be feared by his flock, but a shepherd who walks alongside them and calls them by name. I pray: lord, you have called Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery to know you, to love you and to adore you through his priestly life. Kindly remember thousands of his good works, and bless him with eternal life, that he adores you face to face forever. Eternal rest, grant unto him o lord.



Dr. Jaison Ambadan C.M





## A Loving Tribute To My Regency Mentor

**A**s a Regent Brother, I met Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery, in our Ascension Church, Chennai. It was the first time that I saw him. I was surprised to see Fr. Mathew, a Malayali Priest, short and lean in structure, managing a big Parish in Tamil Nadu. As the days moved on I began to discover Fr. Mathew; his life, thinking, way of interacting with others etc. When I think of my one year Regency life with him and with the community in Chennai, there are a few striking memories about Fr. Mathew that I carry even today.

### A Simple Pastor

There is no doubt that Fr. Mathew was a simple Parish Priest. He had a very good contact with the Parishioners and they really loved him. The main reasons for this cordial relationship between Parishioners and him were: he was really approachable and as well as he was available for them around the Clock. He was very much particular about Family Unit Prayers and he would visit families very often. As a Regent, I had to accompany him and I could sense the happiness of the people as he entered their homes. Fr. Mathew was really a simple Vincentian Priest. He certainly knew his flock and that is why he could serve as Parish Priest in most of our main Parishes in Tamil Nadu.



## A Caring Person

As an elderly Priest, Fr. Mathew was like a fatherly figure in the community. All the community members were young Priests except Fr. Mathew. And I felt that he was really caring us as a father cares for his children. The community members also felt the same those days. I would like to share a concrete example with you all. We used to count offertory collections on every second or third week of the Month. Those days there used to be more coins than currency notes. Counting coins were not an easy task and Fr. Mathew knew that it is also difficult for the community members as they have their own other works to do. One day Fr. Mathew announced that while counting the money, if you come across a 500 Currency, then we shall purchase ice cream. 500 Currency note was rare those days in offertory box and we get only once a while. Hearing these encouraging words from Fr. Mathew, we began to help him counting money and we were lucky most of the time that we could enjoy ice cream. He was really a caring person in the community.

## Balanced Soul

Fr. Mathew was really a balanced person and therefore the community in Ascension Church was really good. As an elderly Priest he could easily join with the young Priests in the community. He never gave us a chance to think that he was an imbalanced person. I too sensed the same in the Parish. Occasionally, there were unnecessary situations in the Parish and I found Fr. Mathew was not at all affected by them.





He remained calm and quiet. He faced every such situation as an experienced Priest and that is why he could easily win over the hearts of his Parishioners.

### **Encouraging Mentality**

I experienced Fr. Mathew as a person who motivates and encourages others. As a Regent I had lots of free time in the afternoon and he wanted that I should spend that time for some valuable studies. Thus he enrolled my name for a computer course in Loyola College. As a Parish Priest he welcomed varieties of activities that can improve the faith of the people and therefore he motivated the youth of the Parish and encouraged them to introduce new faith- based activities in the Parish. And for the first time in the history of the Chennai Parish, there was Way of the Cross procession through the road, enacting main Stations of the Cross on the busy roads in Chennai. It captured the attention of many who passed by and later continued it as a tradition in the Parish. There are several such innovations done by Fr. Mathew through his encouragement mentality.

We really lost a genuine soul. Fr. Mathew was truly a simple Vincentian Priest who generously dedicated his entire life for the People of God. May the Lord grant him eternal life and admit him into the company of all the Saints.

Fr. Saju Parappuram CM  
Singannagudem



## A RECTOR: who really cared

*"In everything set them an example by doing what is good".  
Titus 2: 7-8.*

"When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure." It was very hard to believe that Fr. Mathew Kuruppchery is no more with us. In fact the prolonged illness continued to disturb him, we all thought for sure that he would overcome his uneasiness...

But he responded to the final call of his master to be with him in heaven. We, the Vincentian family miss him and there are no words to express it. My association with Fr. Mathew began from St. Vincent's Mission House, Aluva in 2000.

When Fr. Sebastian Anthikad was on transfer, we the students were anxious to know who would be the next rector of Aluva Study House. Beyond all our speculations and guess, it was very much surprising to learn that Rev. Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery was the new rector of the house. A simple and humble priest who spent more than half of his priestly life in parishes suddenly turned out to be a formator. But to everyone's surprise, he at once became a good formator. He always extended his sincere and selfless service to the formation of young and vibrant Vincentian priests.





He was very particular and benevolent to understand the mind and vision of young Vincentians in its seriousness, in the matter of formation.

Still his longing for good soul continued. His short term ministry as father in charge of perpetual help church at UC College was appreciated by many. He had great concern and benign considerations to all the hapless poor and the needy. He fervently exhorted the seminarians not to become mere priests but to be a Vincentian priest who always cherish the vocation by catering to the needs of the poor and pacifying the sufferings.

He was not an orator, a writer, or a singer but he always won the heart of many with his extraordinary human concern. A good pastor who always had the smell of his sheep. Whatever parishes he worked, the people were after him fondly and lovingly called him "Kuruppachan". His sad demise made the deepest shock among the co- priests of Vincentian Congregation. Actually his departure is an irreparable loss to the congregation which in no way can be soon filled up. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Fr. Thankachan Chirayath CM  
Keralapuram







## **REMEMBERING 'MITTAYI PAPAN'**

**T**he departure of our beloved Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM has indeed left a void that can never be filled. In remembering Fr Matthew, I am filled with mixed emotions. First, with a deep sense of sadness because he is no longer physically present. Second, I am grateful for the opportunity to have lived with him for a period of four years during my initial priesthood. It was with him that I began my new chapter of life as a priest. He has undoubtedly been an inspiration to many. The privilege of being one of them is a blessing to me. I would like to recall just a few of the many virtues he possessed.

### **His Unwavering Dedication**

He literally dedicated his time and energy to transforming the lives of people who were entrusted to his care. With his dedicated service, he strove to foster deep faith in God, a sense of belonging to the church, unity, and inclusive among the people. The fact that he had health issues did not prevent him from being preoccupied with the constant thought of improving and developing the environment and the lives of the people around him. Fr. Mathew has been a classroom in which I learned how a priest can have a significant impact on the lives of people.





Even though, at times he had been physically weakened due to the constant variation in BP and sugar level, his dedication and commitment to the pastoral care of the people was steady. One of his habitual activities that impressed me was early evening hours he used to visit different families without prior notice to participate in their evening prayers and rosary. The reason he would surprise them during their family prayer was that he did not want them to prepare anything special to welcome him.

After the prayer, he would spend time with them to resolve their family issues. He would happily cherish anything they used to set before him at the dining table. His dedication was not merely limited when he was in ministry places. Even during his vacation back at home he inspired his friends and neighbours to contribute generously to the mission.

I have heard many times from his close relatives that he always brought something back to his appointed place after visiting his hometown. It was only a packet of ordinary chocolates he brought with him whenever he visited his home town. He would personally distribute it to neighbours, especially children. That is why among his close family and friends, he was affectionately known as 'Mittayi Papan' (The Candy Father).

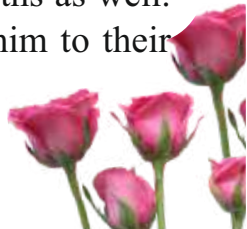


## His Pastoral Care beyond Barriers

It was evident in his actions how dedicated he was to emulating St. Vincent de Paul, the father of the poor, in whatever small ways he could. In numerous ways, he inspired those around him to engage in charitable activities, outreach programs, and visit the sick both in hospitals and at home.

In my experience, I have never seen him fail to visit someone ill when he became aware of their ill health. Through his wealth of knowledge, experience, and spirituality, he spent hours guiding the lives of those who sought his advice. His direct evangelization reached people of all faiths, regardless of their creed, caste, or religion. He learned once that a sick elderly person who was completely bedridden in a particular family had been severely ill treated by its members. The sick person was thrown into a cowshed and did not even receive basic care and needs.

In spite of the fact that they were from different religions, Fr Matthew went into the home and advised the family to treat the person with respect and dignity. In addition, he could assert that, if the situation did not change, he would proceed legally. Whenever the news of 'so and so passed away' reaches his ears, he personally would visit the family to share in their loss and sorrow, regardless of their faith. There is no doubt that he was an exceptional priest in the eyes of people of other faiths as well. Perhaps that is the reason why they would invite him to their various family functions.





Not only for his own, but for everyone, he had been a source of strength, hope, encouragement, compassion, and consolation. He extended his generosity and charity beyond the walls of his church and community.

## **His Attitude of Never Enough**

No matter how tired and sick he was, he longed to serve the congregation more in whatever way he could. He was passionate about his pastoral ministry, and I never saw that passion fade from his face. Whenever we were about to conclude a programme or project in the parish that had been running for weeks or months, he was getting ready to raise the curtain for the next. “What shall we do next?” or “what program for the coming month?” were the type of questions that I repeatedly heard from him. Fr Matthew often shared his dreams of doing something more for the Lord in our personal conversations, sometimes even in hospitals.

May the lessons of unwavering dedication, service beyond barriers and an attitude of doing something more for the Lord which Fr. Mathew imparted to us inspire us. May his soul find eternal peace in the loving presence of the Lord, and may his prayers continue to accompany us in our journeys.

Fr. Rajeev Peter CM  
Rome

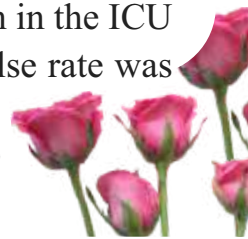


## The last days of Fr Mathew Kuruppachery

*'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even if he dies; will live. (John 11: 25)*

**W**hen I think of late Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery, the first thought comes to my mind is the day I came to Vincentian Sadan, Angamaly as the temporary director. I went to his room to visit him, he received me with a loving smile and silent greeting. Since he was sick he was finding difficulty for talking. After a couple of days, we found that he was finding difficulty for taking food and breath properly. We then shifted him to the Little Flower Hospital, Angamaly. He was admitted in the hospital. His health condition gradually was quite alarming and he was shifted to the ICU for a number of days, during which very Rev Fr. Provincial, confreres, relatives and well-wishers could visit him.

Meanwhile, the doctors confirmed that he is affected with a mild pneumonia. Since Fr. Mathew was developing breathing difficulty and chest congestion, the doctors kept him in the ICU with ventilator. During his fatal illness, we could give him the best and possible treatment available. However, his situation was alarming. Immediately the family members and the concerned authority of the province were alerted about the gravity of the situation. On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023 when I visited him in the ICU in the afternoon, the doctor informed me that his pulse rate was going down.





By 3:30 PM, I received an information that the condition of Fr. Mathew is getting worse.

I rushed to the ICU and administered the last Sacrament around 4:15 PM. Then the inevitable happened on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June, at 4: 47 PM the noble and holy soul of our beloved Fr. Mathew winged its way into his Father's Everlasting Home to join the Vincentian family to praise and adore his Master and the Lord forever.

Vincentian Sadan also witnessed a solemn farewell to the mortal of Fr. Mathew, where he spent his later days. As a simple, determined Vincentian missionary, he could win the heart of many, wherever he was sent. In my opinion, that could be one of the reasons his farewell service was witnessed by many priests, religious, family members and well wishes from different parts of the country. It was really heart touching and inspiring for many.

My encounter with Fr. Mathew taught me a few lessons. Fr. Mathew was a man who silently suffered his sickness and pain. As Friedrich Schiller says, 'Great souls suffer in silence', is a phrase that remains extremely relevant to late Fr. Mathew Kuruppacherry. It is also true that suffering is inevitable in the lives of all human beings.





However, suffering in silence has more value especially in the evening of human life. I could notice, late Fr. Mathew never complained of his suffering. Though he had back pain, Parkinson disease and constipation, yet he had never complained about them. It is a remarkable quality we could follow.

Fr. Mathew also followed a life of simplicity all throughout his life. Simplicity is openness of the heart to others. It helped him to keep a simple life style and a simple style of talk. His simple way of communication and action helped him to attract simple people and enter into their realm of life. He enriched their life in all realms. It is very much evident from the people who came for the farewell service.

They narrated that he was a loving and caring foster father for many, and was ever ready to help them both spiritually and materially, wherever he was. Some said that he was very simple in his life style, humble, friendly and emphatic in his dealings,





honest and trustworthy in his words, generous and kind in his action, ardent and zealous as a Vincentian missionary.

The virtue of meekness was Fr. Mathew's life partner. This virtue of meekness is the ability to blend together firmness and gentleness in our interpersonal relationship. It is the ability to express anger in a gentle and firm manner without hurting oneself or others to achieve something good. Fr. Mathew manifested amazing capacity to remain calm and composed in the midst of provocations. This ability could be one of the reasons that he could win over the hearts of many. At the demise of Fr. Mathew, the poor lost a great friend and Vincentians lost a great missionary.

Therefore, I personally believe that his life and works will ever remain a source of inspiration for me and for the coming generations of Vincentian missionaries. Fr. Mathew is a role model for all of us. Let us all nurture and cherish the good qualities that he had left as a legacy. He will always remain in our loving memory.

May his soul rest in peace and intercede for all of us from heavenly abode!

Fr. Biju Nellanattu CM  
Vincentian Sadan  
Angamaly





## ONE MORE

*"How good and delightful to see kindred living together in unity!" Ps 133: 1*

The sun was seeking the horizon and the moon peeping in, there I stood before the church door with my heavy bags. There comes a gentle, squat father whom I have never seen before. While we both stood gazing each other, came an array of questions, "Who are you? where are you from? why are you here?"

I replied that I am a brother who came for my regency. Having a sigh of relief, I could see a beaming face. Then comes an unexpected, uncanny question which took me by surprise. "Do you know to ride a bike?"

And when I said yes, his face grew even more sunny. That sigh was not because he did not know how to ride a bike but he was happy that he got one companion to ride with! A thought struck me, "One more". That beaming face reminded me the soul of a religious life in itself is companionship.

From his manner I understood that he was longing for a companion to accompany him through his walks of life. To go with him or take him on a bike, to walk with him in the evenings, to chit chat on a cup of coffee and to laugh on jokes shared, to force him to have a little more at the dinner, to talk about the current affairs and of course, to share his responsibilities like a friend, like a brother.





**A** religious life is decorated and pillared with community life. In modern style we call it a Living together. Living together, not out of law but out of pure love and concern. Two people or more than two people born in two edges of the society having no blood relation live under a roof and spend the life and time for each other. When Moses was asked to redeem Israelites, he looked for a companion. He was given Aaron to accompany him. Religious life is the same as Aaron for Moses, Jonathan to David, Elisha to Elijah, Ruth to Naomi, Timothy to Paul, and Apostles with Jesus. Its all about ‘One More with Me.’

**O**ne more does not mean the other one is incapable, less talented, feeble, but its togetherness. It is giving one’s time for another, sharing one’s love for another. It means, I really care for you.

**Fr.** Mathew was a community-oriented person. He enjoyed companionship, dining together, kneeling for prayer together and riding together. He enjoyed the freedom of expression of opinions. He enjoyed the fatherly figure of an advisor. He enjoyed shoulder to shoulder friendship. His absence leaves a great silence in my heart. I pray and hope he enjoys eternal abode, second living together with the Lord.

Amen

Fr. Pravees Mathias CM





# Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery An Epitome of Simplicity



I recall with a sense of admiration and gratitude the commencement of my priestly ministry with Fr. Mathew Kurupusserry. It was in the year 1999, I was appointed as the assistant parish priest, at Ascension Church Aminjikarai, Chennai. Eventhough, the place and the priests in the community were unfamiliar to me.

I was made to feel at home by the fatherly approach of Fr. Mathew Kurupussery, the then Superior and Parish Priest of Chennai Community. To be more effective in my priestly ministry I had to learn the language of the place and Fr. Mathew being aware of this need presented me with a set of Tamil books and a tutor to equip me with the language. After having acquired the basics of the language I was introduced to the liturgy and other pastoral activities of the Parish. His guidance and direction gave me a plethora of experience in preaching and administering the sacraments.





Fr. Mathew was very affable and sympathetic towards people and there was no restriction for the people approaching him at any time. Tamil was not his mother tongue, yet I found him preaching, teaching, and interacting with the people with ease and comfort. His availability and concern for the people made him an exemplary priest. The generosity of Fr. Mathew ignited a radiant smile on the faces of poor people. Even in his retired life I found him reaching out to the needy with his little financial resources. The last day when I met him at priest home, he had asked me about the students whom he had financially supported for their education. Fr. Mathew, a simple pastor who lived to unfold the unfathomable love of his Master through his iconic priestly ministry is entitled to receive the promised eternal life.

May the good Lord crown him with the glory of Heaven!

Fr. Davis Kachappilly CM  
Keralapuram



**In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM** 52



Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery  
A week before his his death



## A Faithful



## Steward



## Memories of Oragadam Parishners



In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM



# Father



## Mathew

## Kuruppachery



## Rest in Peace



In loving memory of Fr. Mathew Kuruppachery CM



**BIRTH: 7th November 1947**  
**DEATH: 25th June 2023**



**REST IN PEACE**



