



JUNE 2012

(For Private Circulation)

Message from the Provincial

A New Era: Call for Greater Generosity

The Province is at the crossroads at this juncture of its history. One more era has ended and history is beckoning us to step into the next era. Actually, we are already in the new era.

The Society of Jesus began its ministries in our soil from its very birth. Thus, our soil is blessed with, and privileged to have, the presence St. Francis Xavier and others who followed him, including Blessed Antony Criminali, Robert de Nobili, Beschi, St. John de Britto and many other stalwarts. For more than 200 years Jesuit missionaries came into our land and evangelized our people. That was the First Era, lasting more than 200 years. Unfortunately, this era came to an abrupt end with the suppression of the Society in 1773.

For 41 years, there was darkness as far as the presence and ministries of the Jesuits were concerned. Even after the restoration of the Society in 1814, no Jesuit came to this part of the world immediately. We had to wait another 23 years — a total of 64 years — when the first batch of Jesuits from the Toulouse Province (France) landed in Tamilnadu coast in 1837 to begin their mission. That was the beginning of the new Madurai Mission or the Second Era of Jesuit ministries to the people of Tamilnadu. The French missionaries came in big number and they established missions and developed them into full-fledged dioceses and in course of time handed them over to the diocesan clergy magnanimously. They also established various institutions and acquired estates, farms and lands. The French Jesuits toiled in our soil for exactly 175 years and their presence ended on May 30, 2012, with the death of the last French missionary, Fr. Pierre Ceyrac – one of the tallest stalwarts among the French missionaries. With his death, the Second Era of the Jesuit mission in Tamilnadu has ended.

After the inspiring, impressive and highly productive First Era and the Second Era, we are stepping into the Third Era, which will be totally in the hands of the sons of the soil. However, this era has a special call. This call is not merely for the service to the people of Tamilnadu alone. There is a call to be global and universal in our attitude, approach and availability. Yes, we have come of age and we should respond generously and magnanimously to the needs of the universal Society in all aspects, in addition to intensifying our presence and ministries to our people. There was a time when the missionaries came to our soil with human resources and financial resources to build our mission centres, institutions, seminaries, dioceses, etc. Now that we have come of age, it is the opportune time for us to do the same for the universal Society, particularly by moving anywhere in the world, where our services are required.

We should be happy that we are already in the universal mode of thinking and acting. We have been responding to the universal call and needs rather generously during past several years. These have further intensified in the recent years. But the Society of Jesuit expects even more generosity from our province and we should be ready for that. Henceforth, our joy should be in giving and not in receiving. Let us rise up to the call of history. Let us respond generously and courageously.

God has blessed us with many resources. Let us share these with the rest of the Society. This will and should be the hallmark of the Third Era of the Jesuit mission in Madurai Province.

Fraternally,

Sebasti L. Raj, SJ

Provincial

Transfer List IV

Name	From	To	Ministry/Designation
Fr. Amalraj Santhanam	JIS, Ooty	LTI, Madurai	Staff and Principal
Fr. Arokiaraj Pushpanathan	St. Mary's, Madurai	Pondicherry	Chaplain: Gonzaga Sisters
Br. Arulanandam Kokudi	St. Mary's, Madurai	LAAS	House Administrator
Fr. Donatus Jeyaraj	Beschi Illam	St. Peter's Seminary, Madurai	Spiritual Father
Fr. Fernandes Jesuadimai	Manalur Estate	Palamalai Estate	—
Fr. Gunasekaran Rajaiah	PP Ongur	Sendarapatti, Salem Diocese	PP
Br. Ignacy Augustine	LTI, Madurai	JIS, Ooty	Staff and Principal
Fr. Ignatius Sebastian	Ayyampalayam	Xaveriana, Tuticorin	—
Fr. Irudaya Raj A	Kalanganai	Bishop's House, Salem	Ph.D/ Pastoral Ministry
Sch James Raja P.	St. Mary's, Dindigul	SXC, Palayamkottai	LASAC
Fr. Leolin Arockia Dass A.	SUPAM	Palliagaram	PP
Fr. Pannoor C. Joseph	Palamalai Estate	Manalur Estate	—
Fr. Rajarathinam Rathinam	DACA	LTI, Madurai	—
Fr. Stephen Martin	IDEAS	St. Mary's, Dindigul	Director: Vaigarai

*** Fr. General has appointed:**

Fr. Peter Bisson Provincial of English Canada

Provincial's Programme
June

09-10	JAAT Convention — Loyola, Chennai	12	Meeting: Campus Treasurers/Treasurers — Beschi Illam
13	GBM: Pastoral Commission — Beschi Illam	13	GBM: Finance Commission — Beschi Illam
14	Meeting: Ministers/Guest Masters — Beschi Illam	14	Meeting: Principals and Secretaries — St. Joseph's, Trichy
16	Meeting: New Superiors/Team Leaders — AAC, Karumathur	15-16	Chengleput: Bp's Jubilee — Informal Visit: Vallam, Kuppayanallur
17	Meeting: HMs and Correspondents — St. Joseph's, Trichy	17	Meeting: Directors of Technical and Vocational Schools — LTI, Madurai
18	Meeting: Directors of Spiritual Ministries — Beschi Illam	18	Consult — Dindigul
19	GBM: Communication Commission — Beschi Illam	20	GBM: Brothers Commission — Dhyana Ashram, Chennai
21	First Vows — Beschi Illam	21-22	GBM: Spirituality and Dialogue Commission: IGFA — Dhyana Ashram, Chennai
22	Informal Visit: Vettavalam and AHAL	23	GBM: TVET Commission — Dhyana Ashram, Chennai
23	TNPCRI Meeting — Tindivanam	24	Informal Visit: Ranipet
24	GBM: Higher Education Commission — AAC, Karumathur	28-29	GBM and Visitation, ISI Bangalore
25	Consult — Dindigul	31	Feast of St Ignatius — Vadampakkam
26	Meeting: Directors of Social Action Ministries — IDEAS, Madurai		
27	GBM: Social Action Commission — IDEAS, Madurai		
28-29	Informal Visit: Thozhamai Illam, Carmel and Xaveriana		
30	GBM: Secondary School Commission — SXC, P'Kottai		

July

01	GBM: Youth Commission — St Mary's, Madurai
02	Meeting: Managers of Estates and Farms — St. Mary's, Madurai
04	Meeting: Hostel Wardens (Colleges) — Dhyana Ashram, Chennai
05	GBM: Formation Commission — Dhyana Ashram, Chennai

*** Province Curia to be Shifted to Beschi Illam**

Fr. General has approved the proposal of the Province to shift the Province Curia to Beschi Illam, Dindigul. While approving the proposal, Fr. General writes to Fr Provincial as follows: ***"I commend you for the good process of consultation you conducted. The reasons for remaining in Dindigul, while moving from St Mary's to Beschi, rather than to Madurai, seem cogent. Further, the proposal seems well supported by the Province as a whole"***. According to the reports sent from different communities, 261 members were in favour of shifting the Province Curia to Beschi Illam, 77 members wanted to be located somewhere in Madurai and 21 members were for other places.

This is a big step forward for the entire province, since we have been discussing this matter for the past 30 years and have been struggling to take a decision all these years. With this final decision of the Province and its approval by Fr. General, we will now work out the details of the shifting and will relocate the Province Curia in Beschi Illam in course of time.

* **Attention: Functionaries**

Functionaries are requested to take note of the date and the venue of their respective meeting. There are some changes in the date and venue of some of the meetings announced in the last MNL. Some new meetings have been announced now. Please note all these and make sure that you participate in your respective group meeting.

* **Attention: LS/TL and CC**

The joint meeting of the Local Superiors/Team Leaders (LS/TL) and Commission Coordinators (CC) has been scheduled for August 4. Moreover, the Commission Coordinators will have their own meeting on August 3 and the Local Superiors/Team Leaders will have their own meeting on August 5. All the meetings will be held in Beschi Illam. Kindly keep yourself free to participate in these meetings.

* **Loyola Academy, Vadampakkam** has got the affiliation from CBSE board, Delhi. The affiliation number is 1930356. Congrats to Frs. Mark, Kennedy and the team.

* **New e-mail ids and Cell Nos.:**

Fr. Sebastian Anand: anandsj_54@yahoo.com

Fr. Antony Samy: antonysamy.fr@gmail.com

Fr. Raj Irudaya: pcfmdu2012@gmail.com

Fr. Arulanandam Arockiam: 82812-93596

Fr. Maria Singarayar: 94434-53322

* **Change of Address:**

Sch. V. Benedict Santosh SJ, 22 Sect. 1, Hsin Hai Rd., Taipei, Taiwan 10089

* **Health:**

Fr. Jeyaraj Maria has been hospitalized in a Madurai hospital, after he fell and fractured his hip.

* **Left the Society:**

Sch. Manicka Jothi A. on 31.08.2010

Sch. Novice Vincin Pradheep C. on 23.05.2012

Sch. Novice Arockia Vallapa Raj A. on 5.06.2012

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

Beschi Illam

First year novices had their **Ashram Experiment** from 31 April to 10 May in order to imbibe a real taste for Indian spirituality and second year novices had their home visit from 8 to 16 May.

Brothers' Seminar cum GBM

Date: 18-20 July

Venue: Dhyana Ashram, Chennai

Resource Person: **Fr Raj Irudaya** & Arul Kadal staff

Theme: Biblical Spirituality (Theology)

"Challenges to Pastoral ministry Today-Renewal & Retreat"

Place : Dhyana Ashram , Chennai

Arrival: 3 August 2012 (by 9 a.m)

Departure : 10 August 2012 (by 8 p.m)

Charges per person: Rs 3000/-

Participation to be confirmation latest by : 10 July

Contact Person : George Anthony

Email: georgetps62@gmail.com

Cell no: 09431962257

TWO MORE RETREATS

1. Dates: **24 Sept eve - 2 Oct noon**

Place: Thozhamai Illam, Kanyakumari

Preacher: **Fr. Thomas Madathiparambil, SJ**

Kerala Province

This retreat, meant for personal renewal, will be in total silence. Different prayer methods will be taught during the retreat

which the retreatant could practice during the retreat and later teach others.

2) Dates: **2 Nov eve - 10 Nov noon**

Place: Dhyana Ashram, Chennai

Preacher: **Fr. D. Jeyaraj, SJ**

Those who wish to attend these retreats should write to the PCF, Arul Kadal, 136, Santhome High Road, Chennai - 600 028.

Email: pcfmdu2012@gmail.com.

Cell phone: 94444-53217

Novices gave farewell to **Frs. Dominic Savio** and **Dorairaj** and thanked them for their services.

Beschi community hosted a farewell dinner on 21 May for the Jesuits who are leaving Beschi this year.

From 10 to 18 May, **Fr. Ilanko Xavier** directed a retreat which the Servite Novices made to prepare for their first vows.

From 15 to 22 May, **Fr. Britto Peter** directed the retreat made by three Tertian Sisters of Congregation of St. Peter Claver.

Two groups of scholastics had their Annual Retreat at Beschi under the guidance of **Frs. Dhanaraj and Dominic Royce**.

Jubilee celebrations:

The Province celebrated the **Jubilees** of 26 Jesuits on 29 May at Beschi. **Fr. Sebastia L. Raj**, the Provincial, was the main celebrant of the concelebrated Thanksgiving Mass and **Fr John Britto Bonaventure** preached the homily. **Fr. Raj Irudaya** felicitated those who had completed 50 years, **Fr. Victor Arulappan** those who had completed 60 years in the Society and **Fr. Louie Albert** those who had completed 50, 60 years in the priesthood and 70 years in the Society. Novices gave a dance performance.

Fr. John Wilson, the new Socius to the Novice Master, has joined the community.

Joseph Alexander. R

LOYOLA INSTITUTES, KUPPAYANALLUR

On 6 May, a large number of Catholics thronged the Ongur parish church to celebrate the First Holy Communion of 46 children. **Fr Guna** made the event a grand success. **Fr. Joe Mike** directed an eight day retreat for a group of Servite Sisters at Thozhamai Illam, Kanniyakumari.

Fr. Alphonse William is busy organizing special coaching classes for the 10th and 12th std students. Fifteen of our school children attended LASAC State Level Summer Camp at St. Xavier's, Palayamkottai. Our students got the first place and an award for the best performance in the variety show. The summer camp, organized by the Scholastics for the slow learners of 6th, 7th and 8th standards, was well appreciated by their parents.

The three week De-addiction Camp of JMAADD – its 34th - conducted successfully here at our Loyola Illam has kicked off the lifelong sobriety journey for 34 Recovering Alcoholics, who have begun to abstain from alcohol and live a serene, happy and useful life. Their wives and children too had special sessions on alcoholism – a family disease – and learnt how they could contribute to the Recovery Program of the whole family.

The Alcoholics recovering since last summer camp had their one year celebration with their families and the inmates of the present camp. The interactions and sharing among themselves have intensified their efforts towards recovery. Thanks to **Fr. F. Jeyapathy, SJ**, and his JMAADD team for their selfless and efficient service.

Joseph Arockiasamy

LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI

Visitors from all over the country and abroad are not new to Loyola throughout the year. Besides the wave of new faces, we witnessed, this summer, another wave of 'packers and movers' among scholastics and priests who have been missioned to new places. Chennai has been experiencing another wave as well – heat wave, with temperatures above 40 degrees, forcing us to find protection in air-conditioned rooms. The news of **Fr. Ceyrac's** death produced another wave of memories of a legend and a hero of the poor.

LICET has obtained ISO 9001:2008 certification. In collaboration with the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers, LICET organized a two-day national conference on 'Expanding Horizons in Computer, Information Technology, Telecommunication and Electronics'.

Loyola College (arts & sciences) has introduced Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to enhance the way it manages works, human resources, and finance and accounting. ERP systems integrate internal and external management information across the entire college, embracing admission, teaching, learning, human resources (staff), finance and accounting. They automate this with an integrated software application. The sole purpose is to facilitate the flow of information between all units and inside the boundaries of the college and manage the connections to all the stakeholders - management, teachers, students, parents, government offices and vendors. The College uses computer hardware and network configurations, employing a database as repository for information. **Fr. Joe Arun**, the former Secretary of the College, who worked hard for this new venture in the college, said that this would bring in quality in management, transparency in transactions and would make every user accountable to all stakeholders.

Fr. Wenisch, besides his regular classes at Anna University and Minister's job at AICUF, has engaged in a flurry of research activities and presented papers in international conferences and published articles in renowned academic journals. *Springer* has published his article, "Adaptation of Cognitive Psychological Framework as Knowledge Explication Strategy;" His paper, "Multidimensional approach to sustainability constraints through a sustainability logic" has been published in *Models and Methods in Applied Sciences*. Fr. Wenisch was a reviewer of many scientific articles for international conferences publications by the World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) and the International Journal on Soft Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Applications (IJSCAI).

On the invitation of the Religious Conference of Hong Kong, **Fr Francis P. Xavier** directed a retreat and conducted a workshop on time management.

Emma

ST. JOSEPH'S, TIRUCHI

During the month of May, St Joseph's campus was filled with smiling children and energetic youth. It was a month of camps. The 17th Summer Orientation Camp for the Dalit Catholics came to a meaningful completion with 80 higher secondary students having been trained in Spoken English and Personality Development. **Fr. Britto Bonaventure**, the Rector, in his valedictory address, exhorted the students and their parents to swim across the lake of challenges boldly.

There was a 15-day camp for the Gypsy students. **Frs. Arockiasamy Antony** and **Innaci John**, the chief coordinators of the camp, were happily surprised that over 150 gypsy students attended the camp, which was conducted at two levels - one for the school-going and the other for the drop-outs and the youth. **Schs. Sebastian Crossian, Pon Ruban** and **Jeyaraj** deserve our appreciation for their committed work for the students.

"80 students fine-tune skills in realm of scientific thoughts during 20-day Student Scientists Programme" was the headline in *The Hindu*, the national daily on 22 May. 80 prospective young scientists, drawn from rural schools in Tiruchi and Karur districts, spent 20 days at St. Joseph's for the Young Student Scientists Programme (YSSP), sponsored by Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology. They learnt the theoretical and practical dimensions of prime science subjects from our college faculty and other experts. Their learning was supplemented by exposure field visits to Anna Science Centre Planetarium, College Museum and Herbarium, Upper Anicut, Rock Fort and Sugar Factory at Pettavaithalai. Our special thanks go to **Dr. Devadoss Manoharan**, the Vice-Chancellor of Anna University of Technology, Tiruchi, Chief Guest for the inauguration. He helped the 'young scientists' view an exhibition featuring 144 models that described innovative concepts which could be adapted for benefit of the society. Fr. Rector, in his presidential address, urged the students to sustain the scientific temper all through their lives. After giving away prizes to winners of various competitions, the Principal General Manager of BSNL, Tiruchi, **V. Raju**, the Chief Guest for the valedictory function, emphasized that indigenous technology was the basis for turning India into a developed nation. Kudos to the Extension Department, SHEPHERD, which under the leadership of **Fr. Aruldoss**, successfully organized the YSSP-2012.

Northern Indian Jesuit Provinces had their fruitful vocation camps in our campus.

Sebastian Anand

ICRDCE, CHENNAI

Fr. M.S. Jacob visited the East African countries and South Africa in April to study the African Community Colleges. He found 10 Community Colleges functioning well, serving a sizeable number of disadvantaged young men and women. Life-coping skills are taught in the local language in all the South African Skills Development Centres. The Minister for Human Resources Development has appointed a high level committee consisting of Education Ministers of 9 States to introduce the community college system in the country. **Fr. Xavier Alphonse** has been invited as an expert to help this committee at its first meeting.

The ICRDCE Team visited Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the third week of May. The country has 10 parallel stream community colleges, serving 3,000 students with an employment rate of 85%. Another 10 colleges are coming up during this year, 2012 – 13. Twenty two teachers from PNG are coming to Chennai for training during the second week of June.

Fr. Xavier Alphonse has been appointed a member of the standing committee of the National Monitoring Committee for Minority Educational Institutions by the Indian Union Ministry for Human Resources Development. He has also been made the Chairman of National Sub-committee on Vocational Education and Skill Development.

The first batch of Mahatma Gandhi Community College, started in nine central prisons, has been a big success. 216 prisoners took the TNOU diploma exams and 175 of them got first class! Twenty of them have obtained first class with distinction!

Xavier Alphonse

IDEAS, MADURAI

The summer heat notwithstanding, the IDEAS campus had the usual training programmes – six in April for 141 participants and seven in May for 195 participants. The two highlights of April were the Video production workshop-2012 organized by **Fr. Michaelraj** for 6 selected NGO animators and movement cadres, and the Social Analysis training organized by **Fr. Sahayaraj** for 18 Jesuit scholastics and Sisters. The two special programmes in May were the Leadership Training organized for 23 Dalit women belonging to women's movements and NGOs, and the Media Education Camp organized by **Fr. Stephen Martin** and his team for 27 participants from various movements, communication centres, and like-minded NGOs.

Fr. Michaelraj conducted a workshop for 15 students from three colleges on Video Film Making for Social Change at Loyola College, Vettavalam from 26 May - 09 June. Fr. Stephen Martin spoke on 'Dalits in Tamil Cinema' on two occasions at Aruppe Illam, Mettupalyam and IDEAS and on 'Media and Youth' at Ashirvad, Bangalore on 29 April.

On 25-26 April, **Fr. Aloy** spoke to the Sisters of St Joseph of Lyons involved in social action ministry on 'Basic Concepts of Social Analysis and Action'. Away in New Delhi on 17-18 May, he participated in a National Consultation on Enforcement of SCs/STs (PoA) Act 1989. The gathering of around 100 rights activists from 19 States planned to launch a national and state level campaign in order to bring pressure on the Parliament through the Central Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to amend the PoA Act, so as to enlarge its scope, make its implementation effective and incorporate stringent penalty measures. On this occasion, his co-authored publication, *People's Report on Implementation of SCs & STs (PoA) Act 1989 & Rules 1995: 2009- 2011*, was released by K. G. Balakrishnan, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of India and Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at the Constitution Club, New Delhi in the presence of 20 MPs and rights activists attending the Consultation.

Aloysius Irudayam

TN/JRS

TN/JRS conducted four summer camps at the zonal level all over Tamil Nadu at four institutions, three of which are ours. 650 students with 56 volunteers participated and learnt to make their studies joyful and easy. 14 Jesuit scholastics handled the classes in all the four zones and they launched into Dharapuram and Mullaikudi Girihini to take classes on basic computer skills and English on 12 -15 May. Memorizing lessons through songs was the special feature this year. **Bishop Singarayan** of Salem graced the valedictory function of Kovai zone Summer Camp and encouraged the students to perform better in studies and develop their character. **Fr. Louie SJ** visited all the summer camps and interacted with the students and the staff. We sincerely thank the Carmel community, Nagercoil, St. Mary's community, Dindigul and Ranipet community for their solicitous care, exquisite hospitality and support. The credit goes mainly to **Sch. Raja SJ**, who worked for the Summer Camp.

Kovai zone had their Annual Teachers' Training on 20-26 May for 35 teachers at St. Joseph's Teachers' Training Institution, Paakalpatti, Salem. On 30 May **Fr. Britto Peter SJ** stepped into JRS as an interim director for the next six months in the absence of Fr.

Louie SJ, who has gone for his tertianship. We wish him a great journey along with Christ.

Raja

LETTER FROM GUYANA

I am indeed very excited to send you this mail, soon after I heard the happy news that my students did well at the national level Caribbean Board exam. It was an Integrated Science paper (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) which I handled for the secondary students. Happy was I to know that the exam paper was easy and that almost everyone of the students has done his/her best; however, they will have to appear for the second part of the exam on 7 June. Therefore, I am with the students, pushing them hard.

I am enjoying my regency here. I am at present stationed at Georgetown, residing at the Regional Headquarters and we are 8 in the community: two British, one Portugese-Guyanese, two Guyanese, one Brazilian, one Filipino scholastic and I. We scholastics teach English and Science at Marian Academy. Others are involved in various pastoral ministries in the diocese.

In addition to my teaching ministry, I've been appointed the Regional Assistant Treasurer, to assist an 84 year-old British Jesuit in handling the accounts. And along with a deacon, I am also involved in youth ministry in the diocese, where I am part of the planning and organizing committee.

I was recently given permission to work with a national Catholic newspaper and hence I will soon be joining the editorial board. I am editing the regional newsletter too. Since this and assisting the Treasurer and the work load at the school and youth programmes take up all my time, I am unable to go for any parish ministries, as I did earlier.

As there are plenty of opportunities here for Jesuit scholastics, I encourage our scholastics to opt for this region for their regency.

I gratefully look back at our Province, thanking God for all the formators that I had, the innumerable opportunities that were provided for me, the excellent training that I went through, the leadership qualities that I acquired during the formation and so on. I am who I am now because of the incomparable training and formation that I had back in the Province. I am thankful to each and every member of the Province. I assure you that I will carry out my mission in such a manner that our Province will feel proud of me.

During the Easter holidays, I had a chance to visit a Brazilian Jesuit community where **Sch. Lawrence** was for his regency. I had a wonderful feeling of being in a very welcoming community where I met a Japanese

Jesuit and a German origin-Jamaican Jesuit. Both were very friendly and they invited me to visit them again. So I will be going to Brazil for my annual retreat and summer holidays. The universal outlook, the ever-broadening vision and the homely atmosphere at the Jesuit communities I visit form me in our way of proceeding and in Jesuitness.

My regards to all the scholastics in the province. I miss the Province. I miss the Scholastics' Meet and I miss my four (+1, **Santosh** in Taiwan) companions and I miss my pre-novitiate batch companions who later joined other provinces and dioceses.

Maria Gohil

ABIDE WITH THE LORD

Fr. John F Guidera (JAM), 87/69, on 16 May 2012.

Fr. Tharigopula Innaiah SJ, (AND) 72/47, on 20 May 2012.

Fr. Willy Delputte (RAN) 87/69, on 26 May

Dr. John Sebastian Maliyakal, brother of Fr. Maliyakal Joseph, Berchmans Illam, Loyola, Chennai on 25 May.

Mrs. Mariaselvam Mudiappsamy (93), mother of Fr. Devadoss Mudiappasamy on 26 May.

Fr. Pierre Ceyrac SJ (1914 – 2012)

Everyone thought he would hit a rare century. So all were disappointed when the news came that the Umpire declared he was out just when he needed two more for a century. But it did not diminish in any way his glorious innings.

Born on 4 Feb 1914 in Limozane, France, Pierre Ceyrac was inspired by his uncle, Fr. Charles Ceyrac, SJ to join the Society of Jesus on 10 Oct 1931. Destined for India, he studied Sanskrit at the University of Paris and left for Chennai in 1937. After completing his B.A. in Tamil at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, he was ordained a priest on 21 Nov 1945. South India Catholic University Federation (SICUF) was rechristened as All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) in 1949. After its founder, **Fr. Carty, SJ**, left, **Fr. Louis Leguen SJ** succeeded him as the National Director. Fr. P. Ceyrac SJ joined him as his assistant in 1951 and the next year he was appointed the National Director, a mission that he continued for 15 years until 1967. It was an active period for the whole movement. He engaged the student community at the national level with many



innovative 'leadership programmes' 'work camps' and 'National Congresses'. It was in his tenure that the National Secretariate of AICUF was shifted to Chennai from Trichy and a piece of land was bought for AICUF's National Secretariat close to Loyola College. Since then Pierre Ceyrac came to be known as 'AICUF Ceyrac.'

After 1967 Fr Ceyrac worked for the poor and the marginalised in and around Ramanathapuram district, then a barren land. As a pioneer in social work in that area, he launched the 'Thousand wells scheme' that came as a big boon to the local people. Meanwhile, his pet project of Manamadurai farm developed in full swing and he planned to use the profit for the people in the farm.

In 1980 he volunteered to work for the refugees in Thailand. Commenting on his work there, **Fr. Mark Raper** said, "In 1980 Fr. Ceyrac went to Thailand with a Caritas India team to assist the Cambodian refugees who had come in great numbers across the border as the Vietnamese army did battle with the Khmer Rouge. Pierre and several Jesuit companions, notably **John Bingham** and **Noel Oliver**, stayed on to be the founding members of a Jesuit Refugee Service program for Asia Pacific. They accompanied the Cambodian refugees until their return in 1993. After he came back to India, Fr. Ceyrac was deeply involved in North and South Tamilnadu. In the north, he started 'Anbukarantal (Hands of Love)' – homes for children who are orphaned and poor. Thousands of children benefitted out of this mission. In the south, he supported the emerging mission for and among the Dalits. He kept in touch with social movements all over Tamil Nadu, inspiring them.

By the year 2011, he started losing his memory and often fell down, unable to support himself. As he needed nursing care due to varicose veins, the Loyola community put him up at the Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor, Chetpet from the end of 2011. He spent his time in prayer and conversations with the numerous guests both from India and abroad. In the beginning of May 2012, he had boils on his face due to scorching heat and he was admitted at K.S. hospital. On 9 May, he was taken back to the Home. On 27 May, **Fr. K. Amal** concelebrated Sunday Mass with Fr. Ceyrac and found him very bright and cheerful. On 29 May, after supper he went peacefully to sleep. Around 3.30 am, seeing his discomfort the maids called the Sisters for help, but he breathed his last due to severe cardiac arrest. He was taken to Ramachandra Hospital for embalming, as his relatives in France wanted to participate in the funeral.

He was brought to the Loyola campus on 2 June at 10 am and kept for public homage at Saulier Hall. Many of his friends came to pay their last tributes to the saintly person who loved the poor ardently, truly making himself a man of God and a man for others. After a prayer at 4 pm by **Fr. A. Victor**, he was taken

in procession to Christ the King Church, Loyola for the funeral Mass. The Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, **Dr. A.M.Chinnappa**, SDB presided over the Eucharist along with Fr. Sebasti L Raj, Provincial and a contingent of Jesuits and others. **Fr. V. Henry Jerome**, preaching the homily in Tamil, outlined the good qualities of Fr. Ceyrac as a Jesuit, social activist and human being. Fr. Provincial, in his sermon in English, recalled the beautiful memories of the missionaries from France to the Jesuit Madurai Province. Fr. Ceyrac was the last one, and he said, the French connection seemed to end in the death of this great man. He warmly thanked the French province for the commitment and generosity with which it ensured the growth of the Madurai Province. At the end of the Mass, **Mr. Pierre Fournier**, the Consul General of France who represented the French Government, read out the farewell note by the French Ambassador, **Prof. Packiaraj**, a long time associate of Fr. Ceyrac, **Fr. Antony Raj, SJ**, who was closely accompanied by Fr. Ceyrac at the initial days of DACA, Vanishree, a little girl from Fr. Ceyrac Children's Home for the Girls, Singanur, **Mr. Henri Tiphange**, a passionate Ex-AICUFer, and Ms. Veronique Ponchet, in charge of the Association of Pere Ceyrac, France and the niece of Fr. Ceyrac offered an emotional farewell. Fr. K. Amal, Rector, Loyola thanked everyone who played an important role in the life of Fr. Ceyrac, especially during the last part of life. He made a special mention of the Little Sisters of the Poor and **Mr. Palani**, who took care of Fr. Ceyrac with love and devotion in the last two years.

Fr. Oliver SJ, the representative of French Province, said the final commendation in the church and at the gravesite, Fr Provincial prayed the rite of committal. Fr. Ceyrac was laid to rest, while the poor children of his Homes sobbed.

May his optimism get rooted in us. May his soul rest in peace, in Our Lord!

K. Amal SJ & Henry Jerome SJ

Fr V.M. Gnanapragasam, SJ

(1922-2012)

A well-known Tamil scholar who served God, His Church and the ancient language of Tamil for many long years was found dead at 10.30 p.m on Sunday, 3 June '12 in his room at St Mary's, Madurai. A few days earlier, he had been taken to the hospital from the Archbishop's House, Madurai, where he had lived for nearly 21 years. From the hospital he was brought to St Mary's.



As a young Jesuit priest, Fr Gnana did his M.A. in Tamil at Pachiappa College, Chennai. He did his Ph.D. on the writings of the famous Tamil poet and the Italian Jesuit missionary, Constantine Beschi, who is loved and revered in Tamil Nadu as 'Veeramamunivar.' The renowned Tamil savant, Doctor Mu.Va. (Mu. Varadharasanaar) was his doctoral guide. Later he served the Tamil Department of Loyola, Chennai for 10 years. He was also the Superior of Berchmans Hall, Loyola during that time. He worked at St Xavier's, Palalyamkottai for a year and then moved to Arul Anandar College, Karumathur to become its Principal. Later he went back To St Xavier's where he worked till his retirement.

After retirement he was called to shepherd a new initiative of the Church in Tamil Nadu - the Chair on Christianity at the Madurai Kamaraj University. Archbishop Arockiasamy of Madurai, who played a key role in establishing this, supported him generously and offered him a room at the Archbishop's House. He held this post for 16 years. He started, with the help of interested Catholic laity, 'Veeramamunvar Aaivu Kazhagam'. After he retired in 2004, he served as the Spiritual Director for the priests of the Madurai archdiocese and the Chaplain for the CIC novices. A calm, serene person with a benign smile, he was always ready to guide and help anyone who went to him.

The funeral Mass, held at 4.00 p.m on 4 June at St Mary's Cathedral, was presided by Archbishop Peter Fernando of Madurai. Three individuals, who were closely associated with Fr Gnanapragasam, paid him tributes. Fr Provincial blessed and prayed the final commendation, before Fr Gnanapragasam was laid to rest. May he rest in peace!