

## **REV. FR. GEORGE KUTTICKAL MCBS (1950 - 2017)**

One of the greatest characters in the book of our Congregation's life has passed on...

Rev. Fr. George Kuttickal mcbcs passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017. He was born on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1950 as the second son of late P. C. Joseph and Thresiamma at Karuvatta in the district of Alappuzha. He was baptized on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1950 in the Holy Cross Church Purackadu and was christened Varkey. He has two brothers and four sisters.

The missionary zeal of Fr. George Kuttickal was fired and energized under Mons. Jacob Vellarigattu when he joined the Mission Home at Palai after his high school education. Influenced by the saintly and pious life of his parents and particularly of his uncle Emmanuel Kuttickal and the brotherly guidance of Fr. Francis Kuttickal, Fr. Kuttickal joined the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and started his priestly formation in the Lisieux Seminary, Athirampuzha on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1967. Under the competent and holy guidance of Fr. Mathew Kanippallil, the then Novice Master, Fr. Kuttickal made his first profession on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1970. An ardent devotee of Holy Eucharist, Fr. George was always eager to sustain his love and passion for the Eucharistic Jesus during his philosophical and theological studies which he successfully completed in the prestigious St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary Aluva. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1975 Fr. Kuttickal made his final profession and became a fulltime Eucharistic missionary. He was ordained priest by the late Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikkary on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1977.

Being a zealous and resourceful priest, Fr. Kuttickal was entrusted with various ministries such as assistant parish priest in St. Raphael's Cathedral Church Palakkadu, Vocation Promoter, Procurator and Eucharistic retreat preacher in the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Kuttickal was also one of the pioneers of the Eucharistic retreat in the history of Kerala Catholic Church.

The journey to bird sanctuary at Bharatpur in Rajasthan changed his life altogether. The birds that have no specific abode here on earth were accommodated and carefully tendered there. This impressive sight of divine providence inspired him to found the famous FBA (Friends of Birds of the Air) on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1993, one of the greatest humanitarian as well as charitable organization which gives shelter today to millions of abandoned people on the streets of India.

Fr. Kuttickal's unusual spiritual aura and compassionate bent of mind, was crystallized in various merciful and prophetic deeds. The first centre of FBA was started at Chennaipara, Thrissur on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1994 and was inaugurated by St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It was the humble beginning of the hundreds of rehabilitation centres that he started for the poor and destitute people throughout India. To look after these people Fr. Kuttickal founded the Eucharistic Covenant Community (ECC) on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1997. This community consists of both men and women who dedicate their lives entirely for the service of the people housed in these various FBA centres. Fr. Kuttickal is also the founder of DOB (Dial before you Die) an initiative to help the persons prone with suicide tendency.

Fr. Kuttickal's eventful life, tireless journey in search of the poor and the destitute and his unflinching dedication to them and their rehabilitation weakened his health and subsequently he was diagnosed with liver Cirrhosis. For the last few years he was under treatment for it during his stay at Mar Vallah Ashram, Malayattoor where his life has abruptly come to an end on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 1.50 a.m. He was surrounded by his confreres of the Congregation and the members of his Eucharistic Covenant Community which he founded. Fr Kuttickal was a true eucharistic missionary in spirit and life.