



LIFE OF

REV. DR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA

1946 - 2023

THIS COLLECTION PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF REV. DR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA, A RESPECTED SRI LANKAN CATHOLIC PRIEST. THE BIOGRAPHIES WERE EITHER PENNED BY FR. EDWIN HIMSELF OR TRANSCRIBED FROM HIS HANDWRITTEN NOTES TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, OFFERING A GLIMPSE INTO HIS REMARKABLE JOURNEY.

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JOURNEY TO THE FATHER

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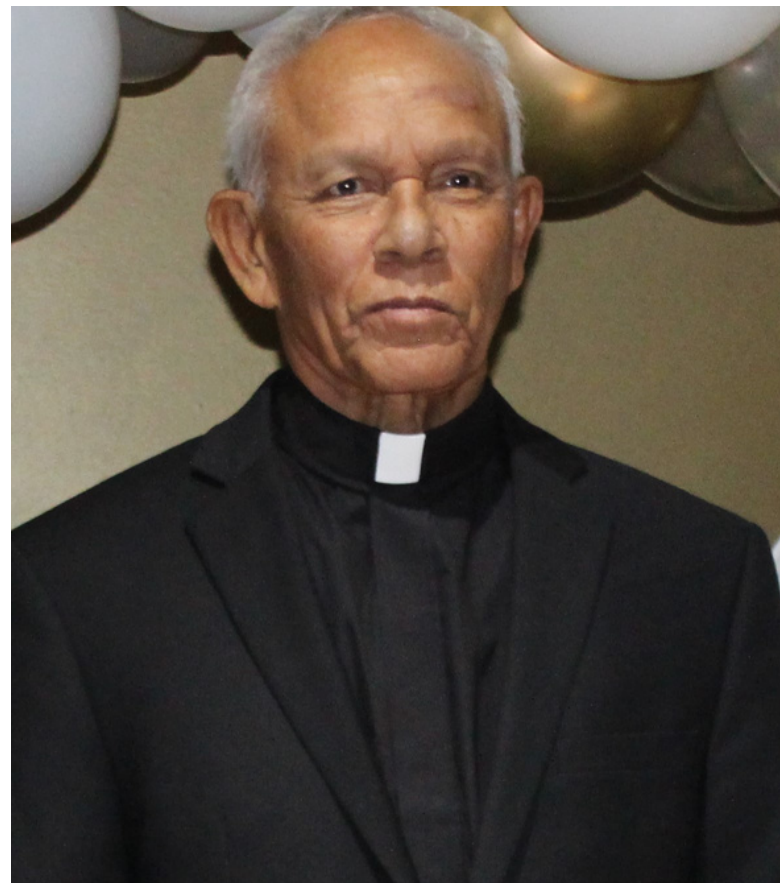
January 2024

REV. FR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA



A JOURNEY TO THE JUBILEE





On 19th of October 2022 we, the priests, Reverend Fathers T. E. Thevarajan, J. Nicholas and Edwin celebrate the completion of fifty years of our priestly ordination. On this significant day, we wholeheartedly register our profound gratitude to the Almighty for the abundant blessings we received during our pastoral ministry. On this eventful day, we proclaim the goodness of the Good Lord who guided our faltering steps in the past. All of us had passed through the valley of darkness witnessing the death and the sufferings during the thirty years of war in our homeland. The Good Lord saved us from the many perils that came our way.

Five of us from Sri Lanka studied together at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai (Madras), India along with many candidates from many parts of India and completed our formation in the year 1972. Only three of us are left while two of our Sri Lankan companions are no more with us. Fr. Marshal Christie Fernando was from the Diocese of Batticaloa. He had met with a very unfortunate and violent end at the hands of assailants just for political motives. Fr. Anthony Wilfred Thevathasan from Myliddy died of a natural cause in a foreign land.

With a deep appreciation for the Powerful Divine Providence, I record the plentiful blessings in my life. Glad and delighted to ascend the Altar of the Lord at the completion of 50 years of priestly ministry. We were five at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai. I am from the village of Kulamankal which has a beautiful church of Saint Francis Xavier. I happened to be the third priest from the village. I was preceded by Fr. Francis Joseph and his own uncle Fr. Michael Saverimuththu, OMI.

Both had decorated the annals of the Sri Lankan church through their dedicated ministry. The first priest succumbed to natural death while the second one was made to disappear at the end of the civil strife in 2009. There is no trace of him after he voluntarily surrendered to the security forces. His loss is still felt by the community at Kulamankal.



My Own Vocation

I was born as the youngest in a Catholic family in the year 1946. During that time Rev. Fr. B. A. Abraham was the parish priest at Saint Francis Xavier's Church, Kulamankal. He served the parish for seventeen years till his death. I attended the parochial school till I joined the Saint Martin's Minor Seminary, Jaffna in 1960. The parish priest, the parish church and the school provided the needed shelter to embrace a priestly vocation.

My mother was very strong in her faith in spite of many material wants and needs. She made it a point to visit Fr. B. A. Thomas, a saintly priest, and the founder of the Rosarian Congregation at Tholagatty on the first of January every year. His personal blessing on the new year's day was very important for her.

It was Bishop Emilianuspillai who interviewed me for admission to the minor seminary and Fr. Philip Ponniah was the Director of Saint Martin's Seminary. After joining the minor seminary, I continued my studies at Saint Patrick's College in Jaffna. The transition from the parochial school to the college was a challenge. Despite the struggle, I completed my studies to be able to join the Major seminary. In June 1964, Fr. J. Nicholas and I took the train along with a few others to go to the National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Within a few days, Fr. J. Nicholas and I were asked to return to Jaffna, it was a Sunday that we reached Jaffna and on Monday four of us flew to Chennai to join the Sacred Heart Seminary at Poonamallee to be trained by the Salesians of Don Bosco. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be trained in India by the Salesians of Don Bosco who are specialized in the ministry of forming the youth all over the world. Personally, I realized how the cultural clutches fell off from me as I was transplanted in an altogether different milieu to be bloomed to serve God in the Church of Christ. We enjoyed the friendship of all the seminarians who came from almost every part of India and from Rathpuri, Thailand. We did not come back to Sri Lanka every year as the Indian students went home for their annual holidays. We enjoyed our summer holidays at Lady's Seat, a nice place in Yercaud in the district of Salem, India. Bishop Emilianuspillai allowed us to join the Seminary community to travel to Bombay to see His Holiness Pope Paul VI as he came for the Eucharistic Congress in Matunga, Bombay. We enjoyed the train trip spending over 24 hours on a special train going from Chennai.



Ordinations and Other Parish Ministries

We were ordained deacons in India and our only guests were Rev. Fr. Emmanuel, OMI and Fr. Stan Philip, OMI from Sri Lanka. We appreciate their support and help as they began to establish the congregation of the Oblates in India. After eight years of formation, we returned to Jaffna to be ordained. On the 19th of October, 1972, four of us were ordained in the Jaffna Cathedral by His Lordship Bishop L. R. Anthony as Bishop Emil had passed away just a few months prior to our ordination.



Father and mother of Fr. Edwin at Mass of Thanksgiving

Time came for my Ordination. I was assigned to Saint Theresa's Church, Kilinochchi under Rev. Fr. Bastiampillai for my diaconate ministry. In fact, it was from Kilinochchi I was driven to Jaffna for my priestly Ordination. After my ordination, I continued to serve at Kilinochchi before being assigned to the Cathedral, a good training ground for all the newly ordained. I served under Fr. Joy Chrysostom. Among other things, the 'After School Programme' was arranged for the children of the neighbourhood. Another social service was also put into motion. That was called 'JAFFNA CATHEDRAL SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRE'. The resources for these projects were from the ordination gifts. They were all well appreciated by the beneficiaries.

While in the Cathedral, Bishop Deogupillai asked me to go to Vidathaltheevu to celebrate the feast of Saint James. It was all new for me. I did not even know where that parish was. That celebration of the feast went well, and I continued to serve the parish for a few more months after the feast. During the short period of time, I was able to deepen the pond that provided water for the people of Vidathaltheevu. It was a 'food for work' programme provided by the Mannar Kachcheri. There were Muslims, Hindus and Catholics in Vidathaltheevu. All the communities benefitted from that programme.

From there I was sent to the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu to assist Fr. Bastiampillai with whom I served at Kilinochchi and to be the parish priest of Pandivirichchan. The parish of Pandivirichchan had very many outstations on all sides. Madhu Road, Periyakunchukulam, Periyamurippu and Kallikulam along and beyond Aruviaru, Periyathampanai, Sinnapandivirichchan, Palampiddy were the outstations of the Pandivirichchan Parish. Helping out at the Shrine and taking care of these communities flung apart were challenging tasks. I got involved in doing some social work at Periyakunchukulam. A farm was initiated for the youth of the parish with the help of the Assistant Government Agent from Nanattan. I am happy to note that the Kunchukulam parish community continues to benefit from this project. We collected tamarind fruits and honey to be marketed besides.

As my companion Fr. A.W. Thevathasan who was serving at Adampan left for studies in the Philippines, I was sent to replace him. That parish also had many substations. Manthai, Periyanaivatkulam, Siriyanavatkulam, Pappamodai, Thenudaiyan, Nedunkandal, Alkattiveli, Parappukadanthan, Palaikuli, Chalampan, Kannaddy and Palaiyadi Puthukulam

Higher Studies

Bishop Deogupillai decided to send me to Rome, Italy to study philosophy to work in the new major seminary that he himself started in Jaffna amidst much opposition from many quarters.

A new diocese of Mannar was carved out of Jaffna under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Savundranayagam who returned from Rome after his studies. In fact, I occupied the same room that he did at the Collegio San Paolo in Rome where Bishop Rayappu Joseph was specializing in Cannon Law.

After my Licenciati, I returned to the major seminary to work with Fr. Philip Ponniah, the pioneer, my first director at the Martin's Seminary. I was given the freedom to organize the Department of Philosophy. I saw Fr. S.J. Emmanuel succeeding Fr. Ponniah. I worked under the second rector with more members of the staff.

Again, Bishop Deogupillai asked me to get my doctorate in Philosophy at the Gregorian University under Fr. Dhavamony, who happened to be his classmate and friend in Rome. I came back to work under the second Rector after completing my doctoral studies.

The civil strife was in full swing. The Jaffna peninsula was to be invaded by the Sri Lankan army to dislodge the Tamil rebels who controlled the area. The Tamil militants decided to evacuate the people from Jaffna. It was in the month of November 1995, the Jaffna exodus took place. The seminary was also vacated on the first day itself. All the staff members of the seminary left the premises except Fr. Adrian, OMI, a senior priest and myself.

The reason why I decided to stay behind was that the Holy Cross Sisters who had a Home for the Elders at Colombuthurai and the Medical Facility on the Beach Road at Colombuthurai. The seminary staff was doing chaplaincy service for them. They could not and did not want to move from there for the reason of logistics. They had quite a few bed-ridden patients and it was difficult to find a comfortable place. So, I thought we should continue the service of the chaplaincy even at this difficult time.



Bishop Thomas Savundranayagam also wanted me to stay behind. In fact, he sent me a personal note through a priest. That letter was delivered to me at Chavakachcheri. So, I decided to stay in the seminary. The following day, Fr. Adrian was picked up by the oblates from the seminary.

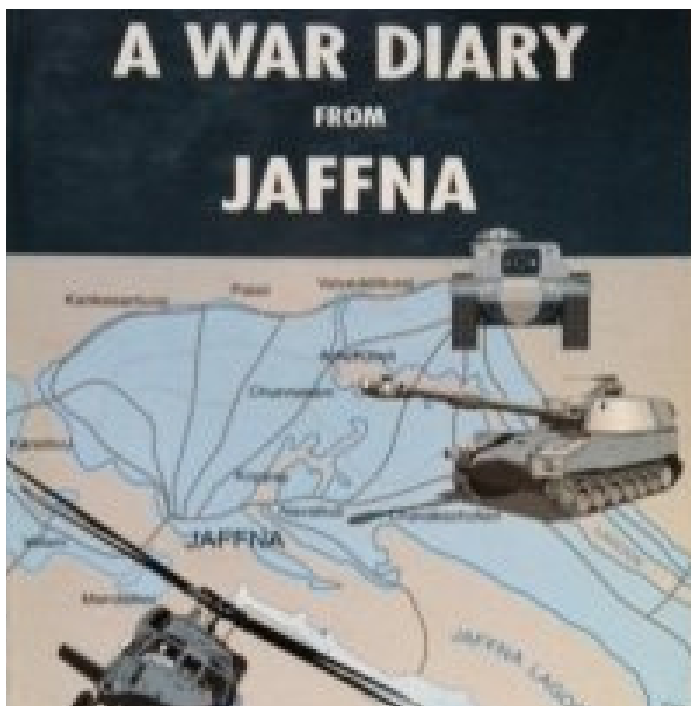
On the next day, a lot of shells began to explode in the vicinity of the seminary and the home for the elders at Colombuthurai. As the sisters could not shelter the elders from the bombs and shells any longer, they too decided to evacuate the inmates completely. The entire Jaffna was fully vacated except for a few families and the animals. Jaffna looked like a ghost town.

I went to see the Bishop at the Bishop's House the following day. He was heavily burdened with sadness over the exodus of the people and the current pathetic situation. He asked me to move into the Bishop's house while he had to rush to Colombo to help our Fathers Pius and Hillary Jebanesan who were taken into custody on their way to Jaffna from Colombo. He promised to return as soon as the work was over in Colombo. But he could not return to Jaffna as promised because of the all-out bombings and shelling that had started in Jaffna.

Forty-seven Days of Fighting

It was an OFFENSIVE ATTACK to take control of the city of Jaffna. The war lasted for 47 days. I had the opportunity to record all the events that took place from the first day till the last day when guns were silenced in a book named "A War Diary from Jaffna" that I personally authored. It is from my own personal experience of the war on Jaffna in the year 1995.

At the Bishop's House, three major seminarians, Rev. Brothers. Rex Saundara, Ananthakumar and George, Fr. J. P. Selvarajah and two Holy Family sisters and I took residence. Fr. Jeyaseelan with his helpers stayed in his ashram. A few people took shelter at Saint Patrick's College and in the convent. Day in and day out, bombings and shelling were causing great damage to the lives and properties of the people. The deafening noise emanating from the bombings and shelling became unbearable as the war was prolonging. On the 47th day, the guns were silenced as the Government soldiers saw some white flags from the buildings of Saint Patrick's College occupied by some war-displaced families. It seems that the soldiers had received orders to blast the college buildings on suspicion that they were occupied by the Tamil fighters. Fortunately, it did not happen.



Many elders died during the 47 days of war, both young and old. I myself had buried about twenty people during this period. A classical case is Meena, on November 23rd, 1995, which is recorded in the War Diary on page 35. On that fateful day, she was taking shelter along with her family in one of the classrooms of Saint Patrick's College, which was targeted around 8:00 pm. A dozen mortar shells flew across the refectory at the bishop's house and hit a corner classroom where some displaced people took shelter. It was a great disaster. We heard a huge cry. Two brothers and I rushed to the college with a hurricane lamp (no electricity at all!) to the scene. There were two lifeless bodies floating in a pool of blood. The father and son had passed away on the spot, and a young mother was holding a child who stopped talking after a metal piece had hit her head. The mother was pleading for help. All others, along with Meena, who lost the capacity to talk, were wounded. After the burial of Leo and Bernard, we moved the family to the Holy Family Convent, and Meena succumbed to her wounds and died on the 4th day. The time had come for the burial of Meena. We got the coffin and we had to take the coffin to the cemetery on the Beach Road. The Sri Lankan army was continuously shelling and nobody volunteered to carry the coffin. I joined three other people to carry the body to the cemetery at an opportune moment when shells were not exploding.

As I was lifting the body, the mother of Meena was profusely crying. Very unconsolable, indeed! Her son, about 12 years old, could not bear his mother crying. I saw with my own eyes, HE WIPED THE TEARS OF HER MOTHER AND TOLD HER: "PLEASE DO NOT CRY. I AM WITH YOU!!"

I was really touched by the reaction of the little 12-year-old boy, who could not bear his mother crying. This is only a HUMAN RESPONSE to a HUMAN SUFFERING.



Under Surveillance

The guns were silenced on the 47th day. The few people who survived the war came under the close surveillance of the Sri Lankan military. All of us were photographed and a special identity card was given. At the end of the war, more than 80% of the buildings were destroyed. Many churches and temples were greatly damaged. At the church of Passaiyoor, one could find walls all rumbles not longer than two feet. The major seminary, the chapel and the library at the Bishop's house and the cathedral too were damaged significantly. We did not go out of the Bishop's house without any serious reason, but the soldiers were in and out checking on us.

After ten days or so, I had to go to Ilavalai. We had to travel with the police to Ilavalai to meet with some priests and brothers. At Saint Henry's College, as I was waiting for a ride to return to Jaffna, some senior army officers came there and began to discuss how gloriously they had overcome their enemy, the Tamil militants. 'How is the situation now?' a question that came from their perspective that 'everything is perfect and there is no more problem of terrorism. They expected me to corroborate their perspective. Honestly, I shared with them what I personally experienced during the 47 days of war. My sharing was contrary to their perspectives. Many innocent civilians were killed and I myself had buried with my own hands about twenty people in the 47 days of the battle. They were not very happy about my perspective of the military operation to recapture Jaffna. I was asked to report myself to the commanding officer and I was accompanied by another priest. Unfortunately, the officer was not available on that day. From that day I was being watched by them very closely. But I did not have anything to hide from them except my own convictions. Thus I became a noted person. Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam could return to Jaffna only after the 15th of January 1996. He came with the sad news of the death of Fr. John Loret, a young priest who did not see the first anniversary of his ordination. Since the military operations started, we did not have Mass in the Cathedral. Bishop had a Sunday Mass with a few people. He thanked the priests and brothers for holding on during the difficult time.

He invited me to go back to the Major seminary, now located at Madhu Church to continue with my teaching. There is no way to go directly to Madhu from Jaffna because of the closure of the Elephant Pass route. We had to go to Colombo and travel to Madhu through Vavuniya. The military did not even allow me to go to Colombo. After many days of delay, I was taken to Colombo in a military helicopter. At that time, I was busy printing my Doctoral Thesis and I made use of that time to do that. I was monitored by the security forces. I was not allowed to travel to Madhu to join the Seminary staff. Bishop Tom tried to get permission. It was not that easy. He tried through the Bishop's Conference. Finally, the bishop urged me to go to Vavuniya against the mandate of the Ministry of Defence. I was caught between the church and the state. But I decided to obey the church and I started my northward journey on a small motorcycle to join the staff at Madhu Church, though some senior priests discouraged me.

I was arrested at the checkpoint at Pampermadhu on the way to Madhu Church on the ground that there was no clearance from the Ministry of Defence. I was kept under house arrest for three months at the Vavuniya Church. I managed to get a travel pass to go to Colombo. With the help of Fr. N. M. Saveri, I got my doctoral thesis published in Colombo. I was invited to a Seminar in Kathmandu, Nepal on Peace. As some priests came to know my plight, I was invited to come to Papua New Guinea to teach Philosophy at Good Shepherd College, Fatima, Banz in the Western Highland Province. It was a new experience to live and serve the church in PNG. The college was administered by the SVD (Society of Divine Word). Fr. Cornelius Van der Geese was the Rector, a very strong man in body and mind. I enjoyed the simple life of the people and that of the college.

After a few years, I got an offer to teach at the University of Saint Thomas, in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. I joined the teaching staff and enjoyed working in a well-organized educational system. From that teaching experience, I was able to come up with a philosophy book under the title '**The Philosophy of Form and the Human Person**'. This is a textbook for university students. Later, I had developed some serious health issues connected with my heart. I had to submit myself to an open chest surgery to do five by-passes. Unfortunately, all five by-passes were blocked after eight weeks of surgery. My heart and liver were seriously handicapped. I was advised to retire from active ministry and to seek medical care. So, I decided to return to the Diocese of Jaffna.

Beauties of Meadows



On returning to the diocese, I wanted to express my sincere gratitude to the priests (both Christian and Catholic) who were slain during the war starting in 1984. The first victim was a Methodist pastor from Murunkan. His name was Jeyarajasingham. He was killed in his vehicle along with his driver and a few others. The second victim was Rev. Fr. Bastian who was brutally murdered at his Vankalai parish house. The last one was Rev. Fr. Francis Joseph, the former Rector of Saint Patrick's College. He surrendered to the security forces at the end of the war. His whereabouts are still a mystery. A shrine has been set up to remember them as the 'Beauties of Meadows' at the English Language Campus.

English Language Campus

Another specialized ministry was initiated to promote English education. Many rural children are deprived of quality English education and thus their educational career is ruined. Owing to the poverty of the parents, the poor children are condemned to their schools despite the poor quality of English education. Thus, an opportunity for Equality in English education is denied to the poor sector of the community. In order to offset this imbalance, a programme was set up to promote the knowledge of the English language in rural areas. We had a lot of meetings in different places, especially with the priests of the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts. It was deemed worthy to begin such a programme for rural children in Vanni. During that time, Lebara Library with four spacious classrooms, was being built in the Annai Illam Complex. We were invited to make use of them to conduct a residential Teacher Training Programme. We managed to find an abandoned house just the opposite of the Library of Annai Illam.



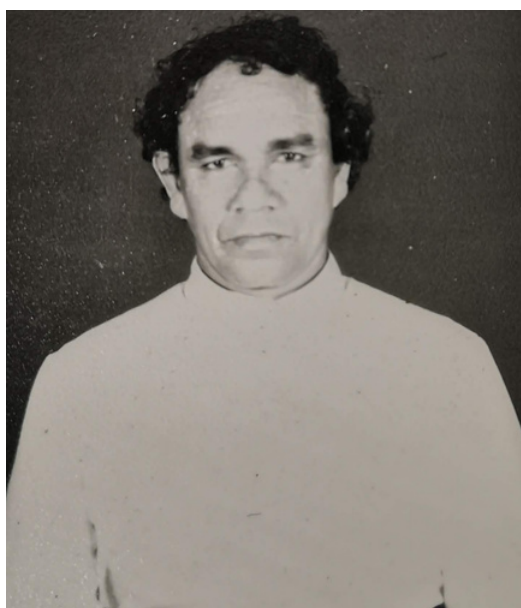
On June 6, 2013, we opened the English Language Campus, and it was blessed by the then Provincial of the Oblates in Jaffna. We continued to do a residential programme - An English Teacher Training Programme for the next five years. The shortage of water resources and other logistical challenges, we had to move to a better place at Punnaineeravi, Viswamadhu. This place has plenty of water and plenty of space for development. Additionally, the campus acquired an additional three acres of land, enabling the construction of a dedicated playground for the students attending the English Language Campus. To further support the language learning journey of the students, an in-house English Library was also established within the premises. We continue to serve the students as much as we can to promote English Education in Vanni. This ministry is not without challenges, but it is worth trying as it is beneficial for our children of various rural areas.

REV. FR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA

A JOURNEY TO THE ALTAR

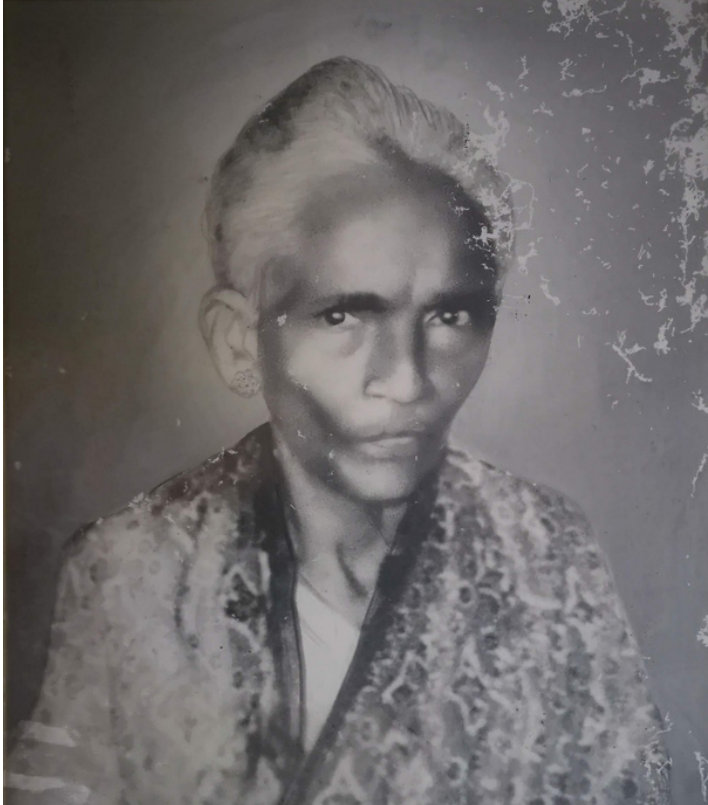


Rev. Fr. Edwin Savundra, second from the left



● REV. FR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA

I was told that I was born on October 12, 1946. However, there is a discrepancy between my birth certificate and the Baptismal Certificate. My Baptismal Certificate has October 12 as my birthday, while my Civil Birth Certificate states October 11. I did not encounter any issues until the Diocese of Jaffna was trying to get the passport for me to travel to India for my ecclesiastical studies. It was Fr. Kutty Xavier, who happened to be the Bishop's Secretary, who sorted out the discrepancy issue and got my birthday marked as October 12.



Sebamalai Packiyam, mother of Fr. Edwin

My mother was working to feed us. I was very close to my mother, as she was the oldest sister to a younger sister and a younger brother. Her sister was not with us as she was married and living in another place. My grandparents - my mother's parents - were kind to me and my brother. I developed a good rapport with my brother although I would not allow him to share the maternal love beyond a certain limit. One day, my uncle shouted that my sister and her children should not live in the house. Consequently, my mother decided to leave, taking shelter in an abandoned and dilapidated house. I spent a sleepless night and, the following day found refuge in a house where my mother worked. After a few days, my mother's sister and her husband took us to their house, and we stayed there till my mother was able to put up a small house

and my brother and I grew up there going to the church and school from that house. My father did not join us, but he lived on his property on the way to the church and the school. Thus, we see him often and we have some relationship with him. As moves were mooted to send me to the minor seminary, the then parish priest, Rev. Fr. B.A. Abraham made use of the opportunity to invite my father to join the family. He returned home to live with my mother.

When I think of my early childhood reminiscences, the local church and the school played a great role. The priest though aged, was very active and concerned about the people. He had a soft corner for me and for my brother as we were going to the church for daily Masses before going to school. Both of us were enrolled as altar boys and members of the Junior Legion of Mary. The parish house was a good place to be around as there were a lot of indoor games provided by the parish priest. The school children would run to the parish house to play indoor games during the interval times from the school. The youth of the parish was well taken care of by the parish priest. He bought them materials for cricket. Almost all the young people would play cricket under the supervision of the parish priest.

As a little boy, we used to play round race which is like an American baseball played with a soft ball. We play in the church compound before the church services. It was a fun time. We had also rapport with our teachers from the local school. It was a parochial school, run by the Catholic Church. The parish priest was the local manager of the school and as a result, the teachers were very obedient to the parish priest. There was a lot of discipline in the school so much so lot of Hindu students from the neighbouring villages came to our school. The teachers had to be serious about their work. The parish priest would supervise as the teachers and the students enter the school through the church gate.

Katherine was the Grade One teacher, and she was very good with the kids, and I personally liked her very much. Overall, the teachers were good. It was the same principal Mr. Paramsothy for my entire school career. Some of the teachers attended my Reception which was held in the school soon after my Priestly Ordination in the year 1972 in October. It was a very moving moment when the teachers who taught me wished me a fruitful ministry in the church. I thank them for their contribution to my formation before joining the seminary. I owe a special thanks to Rev. Fr. B. A. Abraham who baptized me and guided me.



A JOURNEY OF SERVICES



The Kindness of Fr. Philip Ponniah

I came to know Fr. Philip Ponniah in the year 1960. On receiving my application for admission to Saint Martin's Seminary, Jaffna, I was asked to face an interview with the Bishop of Jaffna, Jerome Emilianuspillai. It was the first time that I was meeting with the church dignitaries in Jaffna. I might have been nervous, but I do not remember that aspect of the interview. What I remember is that the Bishop looking at my report card issued by my school at Kulamankal, read out the remarks of my class teacher about my learning. Although I had got a third rank in the term, the teacher had mentioned that my application for education was not that great. The Bishop was perplexed about the remarks of my class teacher on the report card. The Bishop called Fr. Ponniah in front of me. He circled the remark and was seeking some explanation.

Fr. Philip Ponniah opted to go to the school to meet with my class teacher. I left the seminary with my cousin brother, Mr. M. T. Arulanantham. I went to the school, Fr. Philip Ponniah was at the school to meet my class teacher who happened to be absent from the school. Fr. Philip Ponniah was the manager of the Catholic Schools in the diocese, and he had some say in the management of the Catholic schools in the diocese. In the absence of my class teacher, Mr. Joseph from Soorawaththai, Mr. Paramsothy from Mallakam had to clarify the question posed by the bishop at the interview. The Manager of the Catholic schools came to the school to clarify the remarks of the class teacher made an impact on my educational qualifications. Mr. Joseph, my class teacher was back to school and had come to know about the visit of Fr. Philip Ponniah. I heard some negative remarks, however, they were negligible. In the third term, my rank jumped to 1 from 3 and everything was sorted out automatically. I was admitted to the Saint Martin's Seminary in the year 1960 when Fr. B. A. Abraham was the parish priest for the longest time till his death. He baptized me and arranged for my confirmation. He invited me to join the seminary to become a priest. It was very kind of Rev. Fr. Philip Ponniah who visited my village school and facilitated my admission to the seminary. I began my minor seminary life with Rev. Fr. Philip Ponniah.

My First Experience at Saint Patrick's College, Jaffna. I began my education at Saint Patrick's College in January 1964. It was all new and a new experience of boarding life at Saint Martin's Seminary. Both the boarding life and the new school were a big challenge for me. I did not have good friends at the seminary who I would encourage. But I began to get used to the routine of life in both places at Saint Martin's Seminary and at Saint Patrick's College. The most discouraging thing was the English Class at Patrick's College. I could not make head or tail at the English class. For my bad luck, it was a Rev. Father who does not speak Tamil at all was the English teacher. I hated to be in the class. But to my advantage, the father fell ill and was moved out of the college. Some other teachers came and I began to pick up little by little, and I managed to pass the English exam at the G.C.E (Ordinary Level) and I qualified to seek admission to the Major seminary.

About fifteen years after my priestly ordination, I was assigned to the major seminary by Bishop Deogupillai who founded the seminary because of the historical need given the political climate in the country. At that time, Rev. Fr. Philip Ponniah who confronted my class teacher Mr. Joseph at the Roman Catholic School, Kulamankal, was the Rector of the seminary and Rev. Fr. J. E. Jeyaceelan was the vice-rector. I was assigned to head the Department of Philosophy. The Rector was the main person to make all decisions, but I was given the freedom to organize the department of philosophy. He did not interfere very much. However, his style of administration was not conducive to the smooth running of the department. I would not say that he was malicious in any way, but his way of running the educational institute might not have been the best sometimes. Being the first rector, some shortcomings could not be avoided.

Sensing the difficult situation, Bishop Deogupillai suggested that I could stay at the Minor seminary and work at the major seminary. But I did not buy his suggestion and I told him that my change of residence would send a wrong signal both to the staff and the students. Fr. Jeyaceelan did not contribute much to the smooth administration of the seminary, though he was the vice-rector. He had his own programme with the lay people. Once I was very much touched by a simple action of the rector. I was to travel to Colombo in the afternoon. After my classes, I went to my room to get ready for my travel. He met me in the corridor handing me a plastic shopping bag to take my lunch to be had on the train. His compassion blew me off. This is Fr. Philip Ponniah, who was said to be an iron-hearted individual but has turned out to be soft-hearted. It was very difficult for me to delete this.



My Pastoral Ministries

I should begin recording the pastoral ministry as a student in 1968. We returned from India after completing the Philosophy course. We were assigned to different parishes to get experience in pastoral ministry. I was assigned to Puthukudiyiruppu with Fr. R.M. Gorgonius Nesanayagam. I was asked to go to Iranapalai to teach Catechism to the children. I used to bicycle to Iranapalai from Puthukudiyiruppu and I was met by a lady Singapore Achchi who was very curious about the personal details of any visitor to their church. But she took care of the priests, brothers and other church workers with a lot of interest.

Diaconate Pastoral Ministry

Upon completing the priestly studies, we received the Order of Diaconate in India which was attended by the two Oblate Fathers, Emmanuel and Stanley Philip. On returning to the diocese, I had been assigned to different parishes. Saint Antony's Church, Manipay was the first place. It was at that time, a new church was built and opened. This event took place when Fr. S. J. Emmanuel was the parish priest. The opening ceremony was a grand one.

I also had the opportunity to work at Allaipiddy, where the parish priest was elderly. It wasn't particularly interesting. Additionally, I served at Mullikulam under Fr. Mahendran, the brother of Fr. Anton Rajanayagam.

The most exciting ministry was at Saint Theresas Church, Kilinochchi under Rev. Fr. J. E. Bastiampillai who was very active and outspoken. We had a lot of outstations to cover besides the main church at Kilinochchi. It was from here, I was driven to the Jaffna Cathedral for my Priestly Ordination on October 1972 conferred on by His Excellency, Rt. Reverend L. R. Antony who was the administrator of the Diocese after the sudden death of Bishop Emilianuspillai, OMI.

Pastoral Ministry after My Priestly Ordination

After all the celebrations of the First Masses, I came back to Kilinochchi to continue my pastoral ministry with Fr. J. E. Bastiampillai. Though he was a short-tempered person, he appreciated my work and took care of me with personal attention.

I had a memorable First Christmas in 1972. We shared the Masses for Christmas. Following the midnight Mass, the parish priest celebrated the Masses at Vaddakachchi and Ramanathapuram. Around five in the morning, I went to Tharmapuram and Murasumoddai. After all the Masses, we were returning to Kilinochchi to join the 7:00 a.m. main parish Mass. It had rained during the night and the roads were wet. As we passed Paranthan and were heading towards Kilinochchi, the jeep in which we, a Holy Family Sister, Mr. Arokianathar, a catechist and myself, slid off the road and turned turtle running in between the two huge trees. The driver, whom we call with love Rasannai, was bitterly crying, though it was not his mistake for having dumped us into the dirty water after skidding on the wet road covered by some beautiful yellow flowers. But we all escaped with some minor injuries and the vehicle also did not get much damage. I still have the scars of the wounds on my hand.

After a few months, I was asked to go to Saint Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna to work with Fr. Joy Chrysostom. It was supposed to be the Training Parish for all the new priests. With great enthusiasm, I began my ministry succeeding my own classmate Fr. T. E. Thevarajan who was moved to Murunkan. The Cathedral had a variety of pastoral ministries. Though we worked in the cathedral, we used to go to the Bishop's House for all the meals. All the activities of the priests are monitored by the Headquarters and we used to get remarks about the pastoral ministries at the table.

I was asked to take care of the Prison Ministry, Hospital Ministry besides the regular pastoral ministries in the Cathedral Church. Every Sunday, I was going to the Prison on my bicycle which was my Ordination Gift from my village with an Altar boy, A. Lawrence who is now a priest in the Jaffna Diocese. At that time, you could not go double in on a push bike, but I used to take the altar boy on my bike into the fort for Sunday Masses. I met a lot of good people in the prison from Nedunkandal who became my parishioners later in Mannar. It was about Socrates who met a lot of good people at his prison. I took a lot of interest in the Hospital Ministry. I met with the provincials of the various congregations in Jaffna. We divided the wards among them. The sisters would visit the wards and get the details of the patients who sought.

JOURNEY TO THE FATHER



The contents herein are transcribed from the personal handwritten diary of Fr. Edwin, where he meticulously recounts the events of his journey. With the utmost care, we present this transcription, and we kindly ask for your understanding in the event of any inadvertent errors. Thank You.

On Friday, June 10th 2022, I left the English Language Campus in Viswamadhu for Colombo. Despite encountering a road accident along the way, I managed to reach Colombo on Saturday. The flight to Toronto was on June 14th. Albert drove me to the airport. Everything went well, and the flight included a layover in London. I reached London, and Sabina's husband picked me up after an hour. On the 15th morning, the flight to Toronto arrived around 3:00 p.m., Mervyn and Mathu came to pick me up.

Andrea got attained, and there was a celebration. I poured water for the girl. I spent the night at Darwin's place and met everyone there. I distributed the gifts that I brought for them. That was easy and quick. All the Thevathasans (my brother's children and their kids) were there.

The baptism for Leah was on June 26th. On June 28th, I stayed at Stella's place in Kitchener, ON. I left on the 29th for Minnesota (MN) in my car and arrived on the 30th. I came to the Byrne Residence in St. Paul, MN, where I met with Mary Beth. I celebrated masses at Rush City and Marysburg, Cleveland. I came to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN during the first week of July. Dr. Ash ordered some tests, and I left on Friday back to St. Paul. He called me and asked me to return for some more tests. I was asked to return for the third week of July. They found some cancerous cells in my right lung. I was asked to come on the fourth week of July for a treatment plan. All my relatives, my nephews, niece, and their kids were sad, and my brother was also sad.

I met with Dr. DO, an oncologist. Since I was still active, they could do aggressive treatment. After prayerful consideration, I agreed to submit myself to treatment. It was decided on Friday, July 29th, 2022.

Jeeva booked a flight to Arizona for the visit, and I did not want to miss it. I flew out of Minnesota on July 15th; the flight was late by 3 hours. Fr. Morris provided the transport to the airport. I returned home after a productive and successful visit. It was Tuesday, July 19th, at 11:00 am. when the Delta flight landed at the Airport. Fr. Morris was at the arrival door to take me to Byrne Residence.

I celebrated Sunday masses on July 24th at Rush City and on July 31st at Marysburg, Minnesota. On August 9th, I got ready and drove around 7 p.m. from Byrne Residence in St Paul to Rochester. I reached Dr. Ash's house in 90 minutes. The treatment began on Wednesday, Aug 10th at 12:45 p.m., **a new path to walk.**



Wednesday, August 10, 2022

I met Christy, the wife of Dr. Ash, at the Gonda building. She escorted me to the Jacobson building, and there I met Adams and Carmens. They were very sympathetic and compassionate. She shared that she also had surgery for valve replacement. I had my first radiation treatment on this day.

Thursday, August 11, 2022

In the morning, I had a lab test and drove myself to the appointment. I met with the practical nurse, who explained the procedure of chemotherapy and provided details of the medication. Another nurse came in to offer additional practical suggestions. Dr. Ash and I visited the Hope Lodge, where I was going to stay during my treatment. It was conveniently located within the Mayo Clinic, and we promised to return for occupancy soon. Had my second radiation session at 8:45 am, with a different team of nurses. They were all good. Drove home by myself to Dr. Ash's house (Weatherhill).

Friday, August 12, 2022

My alarm woke me from my sleep, and Christy took me to Gonda Building to 10E, where I checked in. The nurse explained the procedure and the medication for the chemo. The premeds made me feel dizzy, and it was over by 11:00 am. The premeds are infused to minimize the side effects of chemo. I received three of them, the first one was okay, and the second and the third noticeably affected me. The second one made me feel warm in my body, and the third one made me shaky. Christy took me to her home, and I felt tired. Around 6:00 pm, Dr. Ash and I came to look at Hope Lodge, get the keys to the room, and have a tour of the home. It was very satisfactory with great service, and we went back home. Then again at 8:00 pm, Dr. Ash and I came to the hospital for the third radiation. I went to the Hope Lodge to put a few things and returned to Dr. Ash's house to sleep. However, I couldn't sleep at all, and I was awake and sent a letter to Fr. Jeb. & Fr. Eug. about the possibility of having a Martyrs Garden in the land given to Father Francis Joseph by his uncle Fr. Saverimuttu, OMI.



Saturday, August 13, 2022

I had breakfast and coffee, then came to sleep, not much though. Christy took me to get some food and stuff for me. After that, I came to Hope Lodge, and on my way, I dropped in to see the old tractor that still works, a steam tractor that needed firewood and water. Mervyn called me on that day. Christy called me to come for dinner. I had rice and dhal. I came back to Hope Lodge and identified the church for Mass tomorrow. I felt peaceful.

Sunday, August 14, 2022

The eve of the assumption was the first night at Hope Lodge to sleep. The independence I enjoy brings me peace of mind. Dr. Ash and his family were too gracious toward me; God bless them. I felt sorry as Megan fell ill yesterday and had to go to the hospital. Happy to see her smiling. God bless. I got up at 8:00 am, and going for a mass was my first thing to do. Christy called me to say that they too were coming to attend the mass. My brother called me from Sri Lanka; he had made a deal for me for 10 more years of life, which was good. I prepared myself for an evening walk and dinner around the lake with Dr. Ash. He picked me up from Hope Lodge. I was in high spirits, and I decided to go for a long walk. I walked till 10:30 pm. I did not get any sleep, but I experienced the pain of discomfort of chemo till 5:00 am. It was a very painful experience with body aches and a feeling of warmth all over the body.

Monday, August 15, 2022

I had a cup of coffee, but I felt a little dizzy around 7:00 am. It was the Assumption of Our Lady of Madhu. I went to church for the noon Mass. I felt okay.

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

Appointment with the cancer oncologist. The topics discussed included my concerns with treatment, assurance of healing, side effects, the road map of the treatment, pain, risk, etc. Radiation side effects included more fatigue, heartburn or chest burning, cough, shortness of breath, pain, or difficulty swallowing. Fr. Franklin and I drove to Dr. Ash's place for dinner and had a good conversation about various things.

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Went for chemo. I was asked to meet Lisa, the pharmacist. My Blood Sugar was high. I had a blood test and radiation. Stella promised to come to see me in Rochester.

Thursday, August 18, 2022

Diabetic education: Levemir - long-acting insulin; NovoLog - short-acting insulin. This morning I met with Dr. SK, and he suggested taking both Levemir and NovoLog 30 minutes before bedtime - five units. I was picked up after the treatment of radiation. Chemo experience, half dosage and slow diffusion were helpful. I did not feel many challenges, though I was a little dizzy and sleepy. I was wheelchaired to the Jacobson building. My thoughts today: Does vulnerability enhance humanity? The awareness of vulnerability brings about behavioral change, and the time of treatment at the Mayo Clinic was a period of formation as that of the major Seminary for my 'future ministry'.

Friday, August 19, 2022

I went for Mass. Self-prepared lunch. Talking to GT, he showed me the MRI images of his head at the factory. Treatment was at 5:30 p.m. and went to Dr. Ash's place after.

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Yesterday, GT helped me set up a Zoom meeting for the English Language Campus, thanks. Morning Zoom Meeting. The Purpose of ELC: uplift the life of Vanni, quality of life, residential life, life experiences, eating together, talking together, and relaxing moments. Zoom Session 2. Be positive and inspire, Fr. Longinus' story puppy.

Sunday, August 21, 2022

Disturbance in heartburn barred me from going to mass in the church. I watched the Mass on TV instead. We had some useful discussions. I stayed at Weatherhill.

Monday, August 22, 2022

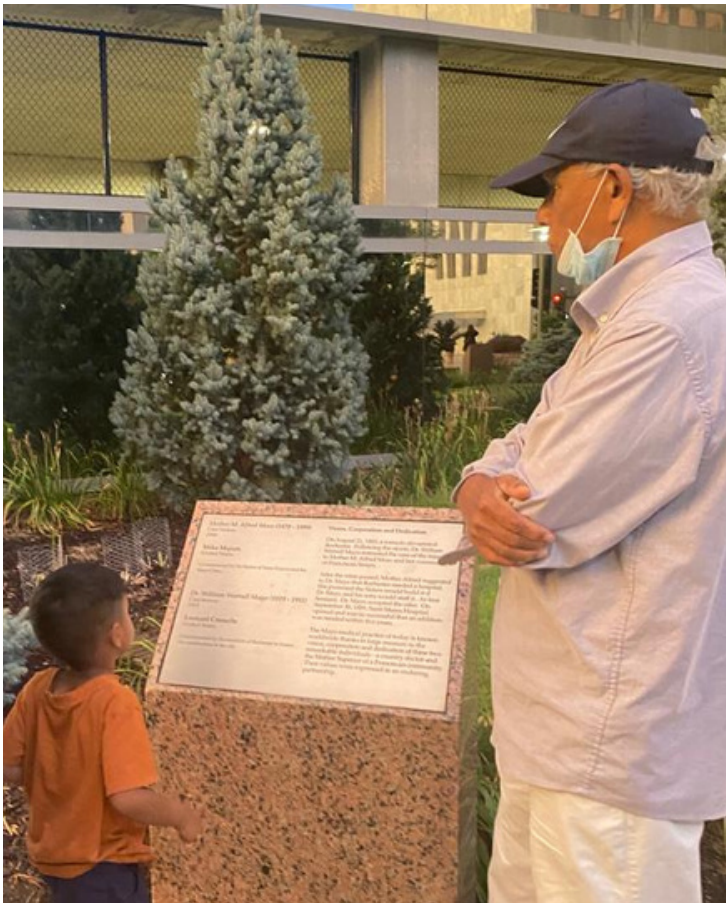
Dr. DO asked me to come around 2:30 p.m. to the Jacobson building for an assessment. I got the meds from the pharmacy.

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

I felt healthy, so I went for a short walk to the chapel. "Goodness must be made manifest in my today's life". A philosophical question, who or what determines the relationship between cause and effect? The treatment was good. I went to Dr Ash's place for dinner. Angela and Catherine are at home. I joined them for dinner. Gilbert is already in Wisconsin in a water park; he promised to come to Rochester tomorrow. The doctor booked the place for two nights for them to stay.

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Gilbert and Arthe came from Toronto. We have got a hotel booked - Fairfield good price. I too went into the hotel and spent two nights with them. It was a nice gesture.



Thursday, August 25, 2022

Last evening, Gilbert came from Toronto. Appointment with Dr. DO is at 3:30 pm. Things to discuss: Dicom images, pain in my left hand, chemo diffusion. The food swallowing situation has improved. Joined the mass at the altar. Gave the letter of good standing to the Church office. Gilbert's family & Keogh came for the mass. Fr. Jerry welcomed me & prayed for Sri Lanka during the mass. After radiation, we went to the park close to the hotel and watched a volleyball game. We cooked chicken curry and had it with the bread in the park.

Friday, August 26, 2022

Dr. Ashwin, a resident - a very young man met with me and listened to my heartbeat and other complaints. And Dr. TD was very professional. Things are stable, continue the Journey of treatment. Appointment with Dr. DO: She gave me an appointment around 1:30 p.m. to get to know GT's request, and she promised to send him a copy of Dicom images of my chest. We drove ourselves to Dr Ash's place; he was going out to go to a tennis game. Christy was at home. Arthe and Christy made some food. Gilbert, Arthe, Ashana, Ajan, and Ashan came from Toronto to visit me. I am now at radiation 13. On finishing the treatment, we drove to Madison Lake. We visited Peter and Mary; then we went to Jim & Anne Losinski's place, they were very hospitable to us.

Saturday, August 27, 2022

We had lunch at Glen and Sandy's place. The kids enjoyed themselves very much. We had Saturday evening mass at Marysburg Church. Anne organized an evening meal, inviting Peter and Mary.

Sunday, August 28, 2022

Gilbert left around 7:30 a.m. for Toronto. I went to Peter's house for lunch, and I worked on the circuit board. I went to Le Center to attend the farewell party and wished the priest well and I continued my journey to Rochester. I had dinner at Christy's place and came to the Hope Lodge for the night.

Monday, August 29, 2022

Radiation at 9:00 am. I had a walk to the chapel. I went for Mass, and Franklin was the priest; purity of intention in our action today was the message. Dinner with Dr. Ash & Christy, walk, useful sharing.

Tuesday, August 30, 2022

Got up tired and went for a walk to the chapel. Appointment with Dr. DO, and she told me that I had lost 1 kg of weight, and she suggested taking two Ensure. I felt pain in my chest, and I felt tired. I went to the doctor's place for dinner; so caring is Christy. I concelebrated the noon Mass. I have the 15th radiation. Hairs from my head were falling. I spoke to Albert and my brother.

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

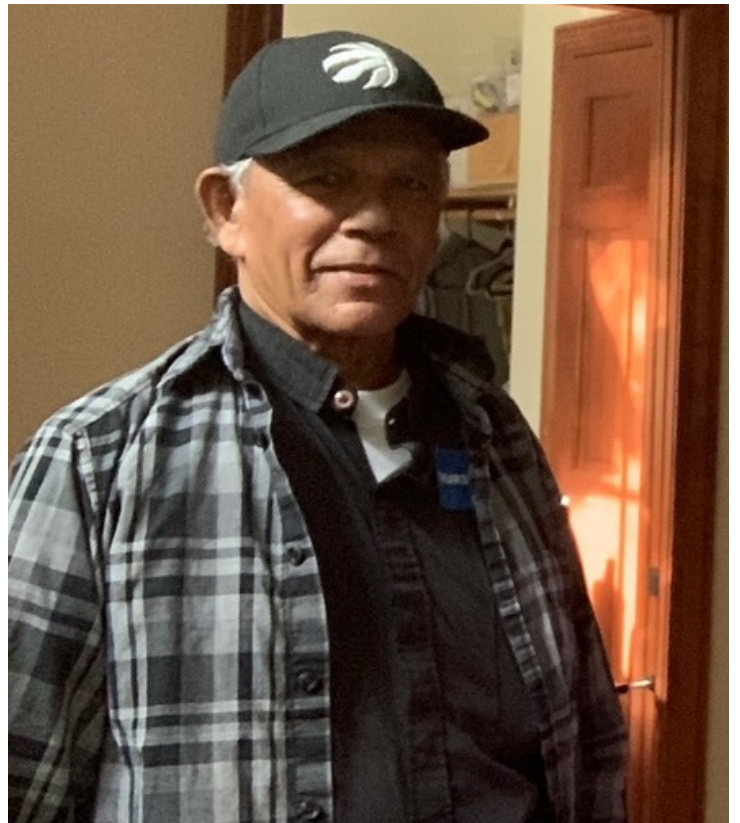
Last day of the month. I slept better. I had a blood test and radiation. I went for Mass, and the pastor prayed for my healing; very kind of him. I went to the doctor's place for dinner. I still experience difficulties in swallowing. So, I took liquid food. Christy is kind. We had a short walk - Dr. Ash & me. We discussed the first breath, a miracle.

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Today is my 4th Chemo and 17th Radiation. Today my weight is 59.9 kg. I felt strong this morning; I had a good enough night's sleep. This morning I visited Keogh; they are leaving tomorrow. God bless them. "Awareness of our vulnerability" has great impetus to deal with human relationships. CC & JB came to my mind; I decided to 'FORGIVE' them. I am struggling to break my silence on the issue connected with them. God help me.

Paola and Anne talked to me for more than an hour. Both checked my body and vital signs; they were very gracious. Paola was very personal. They had a CT scan two days in a row; they did not know the reason. Food swallowing causes considerable discomfort. I am told that it will still increase, and the peak will be after the treatments. It took a long haul.

I had the 17th Radiation; it went well, it was uneventful. I am hoping for a smooth infusion. I hope that it will not worsen my general health. A senior nurse administered the infusion. I went in at 2:15 p.m. and came out by 6:00 pm. I had sufficient energy to walk back to the Hope Lodge. I rested a while before driving to Dr. Ash's house. Dr. Ash was there to get ready for my liquid and soft food. I had a Zoom session with Andrea for the Vanni spelling competition that we are planning. She had graciously agreed to prepare the words for the list of words for Level One and Level Two, 400 + 40 and 500 + 50. I can ask Rohan to help me with the Level Three list.



Friday, September 2, 2022

I got up with great energy at the doctor's place. Then I wanted to have a Zoom session with Jasmine, Andrea in Canada, and Lakshaniya in Colombo. We went through the Vanni spelling competition layout. They did not have any objection. We need to come up with a one-page pamphlet to be given to each student through the principal. I went to Church, and there was a communion service. This morning Dr. Ash met me before he left for his work. He held my hands and said, "I felt an uplifting and consoling spirit of healing" and Assurance Touch. A great touch of healing. 'Touch can bring about healing.' I called Fr. Moris at the Byrne Residence to reserve dinner he agreed. I still require soft and liquid food. I reached St. Paul around 6:00 pm. Fr. Moris came down to open the door; he got my dinner. I visited with him for some time before leaving for Rush City and reached Larry's[ST1] Place around 8:00 pm.

Saturday, September 3, 2022

Slept in late; I was in a Zoom meeting. Went fishing with Larry, but it was not a successful one, except for some pictures.

Sunday, September 4, 2022

Swallowing food had become a challenging pain around the throat area. Went for Mass and concelebrated with Fr. Matt. Met with some people. Larry gave me a copper wire.



Monday, September 5, 2022

Appointment with Dr. DO. -pain and swallowing food even liquid -it pains the other times when not swallowing. Lindsay met with me; she got all my info very empathetically. I could observe the body language. Dr. DO came to see me; she suggested putting me on some liquid pain medicine, and she gave me Ensure. She asked me to take a wheelchair ride. I need to pack up some pain medication at Gonda Subway. I went to the pharmacy to collect meds; it was not ready then I went again to the pharmacy which was closed in the evening. I went to the doctor's place, had dinner, and rested a while before returning to the Hope Lodge.

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

I went to bed at 10:15 pm. I never had a wink of sleep; heartburn was missing yet no sleep. I got up from my bed at 7:00 am.

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

I managed to finish an Ensure, had a shower, and then drove my car to St. John's Catholic Church within Mayo Campus. Walk to the hospital entrance and asked for a wheelchair to Jacobson and collected my medicine then I drove to the airport. Stella came out and was happy to see her. We stopped at Walmart to get some milk. We signed Stella up as a caregiver at Hope Lodge. We went to the room. I was in pain, and I slept in the afternoon. At 7:00 p.m. we went to Dr. Ash's place for dinner. It was hurting. I slept on the couch which was a relief. I came home- Hope Lodge. I was able to pick up some sleep. Stella is a very caring person and very thoughtful.

Thursday, September 8, 2022

I got up at 7:00 am. Walked down to the Radiation. Appointment with Dr. DO at Carlton Building. Last week they did the CT scan two days in a row. Dinner -Royal Garden, take away. Still in pain. Went to bed early to go for an appointment at 7:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Friday, September 9, 2022

Last night, I had a good sleep. Got up refreshed but had chest pain. Drove to the church parking lot and walked to the Mayo for the blood test. The thought of chemo was very intimidating, radiation breaks the cells and kills the cells. The first Chemo was on Friday, August 10th. It was also my first experience. I was well-informed about the way it was going to be infused. Before the infusion of Chemo there, the pre-meds are to be infused to minimize the side effects, but the side effects are noticeably significant. The side effects of premeds are greater than the side effects of chemo for me. The side effects of chemo must be significantly huge. Today is a Threshold in my life treatment of Chemo.

Radiation delay: The computer issue with radiation equipment, had to be on the table for a longer time. The computer experts were called out to sort out the problem. An appointment with Dr. TD. On the last visit things looked stable, let's continue the journey.

Met with Dr. TD, and he told me that I could be treated on a pill as my malignancies are of the type of mutations, and he would recommend that path of treatment. He tells me that I have one more chemo and one more radiation in addition to today's treatment.

Chemotherapy treatment session 5. The nurse had great difficulty locating the vein and started bleeding. She left the place, and some senior nurse came and did the IV connection it was okay. Stella was there till I finished the Chemo. We went into the radiation; she had a similar difficulty in locating the vein, but it was done by 5:00 pm. Stella was taken to the airport by Christy, her visit boosted my morale and sense of security and safety. I rested for a while and went to Dr. Ash's house and Christie prepared 'Rice Kanji'. It tasted well. I had a Zoom session with Andrea and Lakshi, and Andrea acted with smartness. I watched the US Open tennis. Spain young boys versus US players, the US players did play better but were not consistent in this play. The Spanish young boys won the game.

Saturday, September 10, 2022

When to bed. Had slept well. I was awake in the morning with some pain. I slept in late. Had breakfast around 10:00 am. My FBS (fasting blood sugar) was at 127. I took regular five units of NovoLog. I had a Zoom session. Dr. Ash joined in, and he spoke with Andrea. He was impressed with the responses.

Sunday, September 11, 2022

The low blood sugar episode at Dr. Ash's house was very difficult. Christy was helpful. Missed the 9:30 am mass. Had Hydration treatment. Evening mass at 5:00 pm. Returned to Whetherhill for the night.

Monday, September 12, 2022

Appointment with Matt. He checked the black spots-hyperpigmentation on the front and back, oxygen level of 99. Appointment with Dr. DO - Recommended hydration treatment for this week, for chest pain, she recommended liquid food.

EGFR mutation - Pills, very good news. I also asked about my cancer cells. Radiation and hydration treatment at 2:45 pm. I wanted to go to church for Mass. I went down to eat a real breakfast. The chest pain hurt so I decided to go take a rest. I went to the Doctor's house for dinner and after dinner, I shared about Fr. Augustine's reactions to D.B.S Jeyaraj's article on Bishop Joseph. I am back at Hope Lodge.

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

Today Radiation at 9:15 & hydration treatment at 10:30 am. No sleep last night. Set my alarm at 7:30 am and delay to 8:00 am. I went for radiation and hydration treatment. I went for Mass, good feeling to attend Mass. I am reading the book recommended by Fr. David Cap from Mullaitivu Deanery. Good reflection and touching stories. Chest pain persists. Dinner at the doctor's place, still liquid food, he rehearsed his speech. Came to Hope Lodge to sleep. Took all medication except the Plavix, not much sleep though I went to bed by midnight.

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

At 1:25 pm, had an appointment with the oncology department on the 10th floor of Gonda. Hydration treatment at 2:45 pm. The hydration treatment was good. Went to the Doctor's house for dinner. It was hurting so much that I could not finish my meal. I rested a while before returning home - Hope Lodge.



Thursday, September 15, 2022

My Last chemo is at 11:00 am today, Happy to know. Looking forward to recovering from the treatment. I came out around 3:00 pm. Just in time to go for the next appointment with Dr. SN.

I contacted Fr. Jude Amalathas for bamboo raffles; he responded positively. He forwarded Fr. Sarathjeevan foundation brochure, and it looks great. Transparency & Accountability, lots of donors are involved. As I scanned my thoughts flashed back to BEAS, which was set up 35 years ago. I am so sorry that it has gone under the control of HUDEC Caritas as a dormant charity. I pleaded with the diocese to reactivate it as an active charity. I am planning to make a fresh appeal to the diocese through the VG as a jubilee request.

Letter to VG: Dear VG, in a month, I will mark the completion of my 50 active years of Priestly Ministry in the Catholic Church. I thankfully accept the power of God behind half a century of service to the people of God through the instrumentality of the church. Owing to my protracted and prolonged treatment of some of my health issues, I may not be able to join any extended celebration on the day of the Jubilee. Let's it so be. But I like to make a jubilee request to the diocese - a request regarding the Bastion Educational Assistance Scheme - BEAS initiated and established about 35 years ago with the blessing and approval of the diocese under the leadership of Bishop Deogupillai. With that, we were able to reach out to the many needy rural children well appreciated. This being my brainchild I would like to move it and make it an active charity.

Friday, September 16, 2022

Chest pain, swallowing food last night was much better, this morning I had slept better no pain. Come to the Doctor's house for a night's rest. He told me about Dinaly's visit.

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Ash and Christy left the house to see Megan. I got up late and I felt Hypogly after 2:30 am, I took some glucose pills. Note: My energy level is not so good. With the intake of some food, I may gain energy. I had no appointment today, except the one in the church at 4:30 pm. I didn't join the concelebration as my energy level was not that encouraging. Appointment with God, he knows all my needs even before I open my mouth, I returned to Hope Lodge and slept, no I rested no sleep came.

Sunday, September 18, 2022

I slept in bed till late; I had a light breakfast. I had a hydration treatment at 1:40 pm. I drove to Weatherhill around 8:00 pm. I started taking the medication under the short supervision of Christy who is very concerned about me and compassionate. I vomited at night.

Monday, September 19, 2022

Radiation at 7:45 am. Christy dropped me off, but security would not allow me through the staff entrance. She herself wheeled me to the main entrance. I met with Dr. DO; she wanted me to go to the emergency. She was concerned about my constant chest pain. She wanted to make sure that the chest pain was not connected with my heart. The ambulance picked me up and took me to the Emergency Department (ED) about a mile away. They took good care of me right from the time they picked me up, and I left at 2:30 pm. They did an ECG, CT, blood test, and chest x-ray. They determined that the pain was caused by radiation - good news! Christy picked me up. Christy monitored my pain and other medication. I was able to sleep/rest with that much discomfort.

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Appointment with Dr. DO. Ash and Christy were present. Great support was their presence at that session. Glad that the chest pain was not connected with my heart ailment. She typed a whole page of a care plan for the next 2 weeks. She tells me that the tumor is shrinking - Good News! Immunotherapy - Pill type, more details will be on Oct 6th. I came for the hydration treatment at 1:40 pm, picked up by Christy.

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

The thought - this radiation being the last is a very consoling experience. The experience of being the last gives me a good feeling and a boost in my energy level. To celebrate the last radiation, Mayo let the patient ring a bell three times in front of the public. In my case, Ash and Christy were there. Dr. Ash told me that he was going to put on a festive suit to attend the event. He celebrated for me. What a noble thought. Yesterday I shared this news with the priest of the Mullaitivu Deanery, and more priests than on August 10th responded compassionately. I did share with the family too, and they responded. My brother called me when I was at the ED.

Jo Vans from Iowa met and volunteered to clean my fridge cabinet. A kind-hearted lady and her husband David. She promised to be there when I checked out at 10:00 a.m. to ring another bell at Hope Lodge the next day. Last radiation: I thanked the girls at the radiation. They have been very great. I thanked Tere & Justin at the reception, very kind-hearted people, they gave me a pin and a card. As I rang the Bell, my heartfelt thanks to the Almighty. Before my turn, a little boy rang the bell. So happy, delightful, and energetic. He wanted each group of nurses to have a picture taken. I intend to go to church to attend a mass - An act of thanksgiving. Christy will pick me up around 1:30 pm. I will have to come back for hydration treatment. The message at the mass of St. Matthew; Face-Faces-Gaze; We too look at different faces in our day-to-day experience. At Mayo, the receptionist asks for the names and date of birth of every patient clinic. You can see the mercy and compassion on their faces. Not everyone can handle that.



Thursday, September 22, 2022

Appointment with Lindsay for skin, and constipation. Though busy, Dr. DO walked into the room to encourage me. For peeling of the skin, Lindsay suggested some treatment. Christy was at the visit. Then I went for hydration. I was picked up by Dr. Ash.

Farewell at Hope Lodge, Jo Vans gathered a lot of people to celebrate the ringing of the bell. Took pictures and videos. Hope Lodge is great for cancer patients, a sign of solidarity, human solidarity.

Friday, September 23, 2022

Better blood sugar control is in place, so I am able to sleep better. This morning I got up with a good energy level. I took all the meds. I plan to drive myself to the clinic. I called - and talked to Albert about the spelling competition printout for the program. Albert agreed to help. Jasmine arranged a Zoom class at MNS. I slept before the Zoom class. I got up to have the class - 19 students attended on the smart board. It worked well. I introduced the list of words for the Vanni Spelling Competition (VSC), level one. The children participated well. Jasmine, you are an amazing person. I went to bed after taking all the medication - quite a few.

Saturday, September 24, 2022

I got up late around 10:00 am. My energy level was good, and so Blood Sugar. It contributes to the well-being of the body. Christy came down to check on me, very gracious indeed. Last night I promised to work on VSC - a list of words and an introduction.

Fr. Dilan SBD sent me a message about the passing away of Fr. Rayappu Joseph of Mannar. Saddened by the news, he was a good priest. At 2:30 p.m. I am at the clinic for hydration treatment. I plan to attend the evening Mass and then return to Weatherhill. Mass on Saturday, a religious priest the celebrant - God is good, God is good always - Prophet Amos.

Sunday, September 25, 2022

I slept in after the Zoom class. I got ready to go to the hospital for hydration treatment. I went to the church; it was locked. It was so windy and returned home. I worked on the letter for Fr. Jeb. I took Magnesia for constipation.



Monday, September 26, 2022

I got up with low blood sugar. I took care of it. My energy level is better than yesterday. I took all the meds and went to the clinic for treatment. I worked on Vanni Spelling project. Had an appointment with Dr. DO at 2:45 pm. The visit was assuring. Christy was kind enough to be with me. Skincare was highlighted, and I promise to keep the area moisturized. Came for the treatment. Eric was my nurse, as he knows me, he was very gracious. The weather was windy. It was cold to walk to the car.

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

Though I was up by 6:30 am, I stayed in bed until 9:45 am. I had breakfast - 2 eggs, rice, and a boost. I worked on the project. The file was missing, tried to contact Gilbert and succeeded in the evening from the hospital. He asked me to look for the file in Google Drive. I'm writing this at the clinic; I will drive to Weatherhill. God is Good, All the time!

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Last night - A night of discomfort - no sleep - nauseating feeling & chest pain (minor scale). Appointment with Dr. DO and Nurse Lindsay. Christy came in before the end of the session. I walked down to the church for mass and rosary, seated all the time - general fatigue. Returned to the clinic and rested in the resting room, waiting for the treatment. Lindsay tells me that I am still to hit the worst before it comes down; however, it is not absolute, it can vary. Talked to my brother.

Thursday, September 29, 2022

I had a bowel movement with a black stool a second time. I drove to the clinic for the hydrating treatment. I went home safe. Struggling with my pain.

Friday, September 30, 2022

Last day of the month. Hope the end of the month ends the misery. I got up tired in the morning. I had my breakfast and rested till 1:00 pm. I got ready to move to the clinic. I was so fatigued. As I put on my sandals, I collapsed on the floor, got up, came down to the garage, and fell while standing again. I waited and gained consciousness. I came out of the garage and closed the door. Got into my car. Hydration and blood tests were ordered by Dr. Ash. Christy took me to the Emergency.

Saturday, October 1, 2022

Yesterday, I came here around 5:30 pm. They had quite a few tests till midnight and admitted me to the hospital. I was bleeding internally from ulcers from the Radiated location and the intestine. They took me for an Endoscopy to stop the bleeding. They were so kind at the procedure. They stopped the bleeding - remaining stable. They moved me to solid food from liquid meals. Walked inside the hospital, and the nurses were so wonderful.

Sunday, October 2, 2022

Last night no sleep, fatigued. Watched Mass on the TV. I was under observation. The doctor was very kind. Dr. Ash came to see me. I watched some EWTN, a quality program. No sleep but good rest. They promised to discharge me tomorrow.

Monday, October 3, 2022

Dr. Ash came to see me at 7:30 a.m. and blessed him. The blood test showed positive development and stable condition. Everyone called and talked to me about hospitalization. I had been to the Emergency three times during the cancer treatment period 1. Pain in stomach 2. Chest pain - Dr. DO sent me from her room - ruled out heart problem 3. Internal bleeding, reasons - radiation - painkillers.

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

I slept on the couch upstairs. I did not get good sleep, most of the time awake. Christy prepared breakfast, and I made scrambled eggs. I took all the medication as instructed by her. I had a bowel movement black as expected. I drove to the hydration treatment, general fatigue. Walked to the entrance and sought a wheelchair. I have been scheduled to visit Lindsay and Dr. DO.

Appointment with Doctor and Lindsay. Dr. DO showed me the monitor where the size of my cancer was reduced from 3.7 to 2.7. Very Happy News. I shared it with my family, Domi, Jasmine, and others. Very Happy. Rejoice with me at the joy of healing.

Dr. Ash & Christy went to see a movie on Mother Teresa. I am with Andrea on a Zoom meeting on the Level One list. They returned impressed with the movie. I slept on the couch.

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

I plan to attend Mass before the blood test, feeling fatigued. I prepared my breakfast and got ready for the clinic. I spoke to Darwin and discussed possible travel plans to Canada, returning to Rochester - Colombo around November 15.

I attended Mass, feeling tired, and then went to the church office. They were happy to accommodate me for the weekend. I walked to the main entrance of the Charlton building and used a wheelchair. After the blood test, I had hydration treatment at 2:30 pm.





Thursday, October 6, 2022

Assessment - Care Plan - 2nd Phase.

I came to the Clinic, and Christy visited briefly. Dr. and I posed for a picture at the Bell Sound of Hope. People clapped, and someone mentioned that I was the Catholic priest and I looked much better than on Tuesday.

Appointment with Dr. AM. The EGFR (Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor) Tagrisso stops mutated cell growth. Care plan - Mayo would like to monitor me every two weeks from the time I commence the pill. - The pill is costly, but insurance will probably cover it - They must put in a special order, and it takes 1 - 1 ½ weeks. There may be some side effects, such as inflammation of the lungs, pimples on the face, nails, skin, and pain. Visits: - Every two weeks, blood test - After that, every two months - They will plan further assessments based on the situation.

My immediate plan: Tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 am, leave for St. Paul to meet with Fr. Hoang at St. Columba Church. On October 11th, travel to Toronto. Rest until the end of the month to begin the 2nd phase.

Friday, October 7, 2022

I left Rochester. Originally, I was planning to leave in the morning, but my energy level was low. I could only leave around 4:00 pm. Fortunately, Christy was back from work, and she helped me pack my things to leave Rochester. I arrived in St. Paul at Byrne Residence. Once again, Fr. Moris provided me with dinner. Bp. Sevair opened the door for me. Later, I went to St. Columba, but I was confused about locating the entrance. Augustine and Joseph were very helpful. During Zoom classes, there were issues with the sound, and we had to stop the class. Jesmin took over the class. I went to bed, but I didn't sleep much. I also had a conversation with Jasmine.

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Got up around 10:30 a.m. for breakfast, and Fr. Hoang prepared lunch. Took some rest. He provided Pho soup for dinner. Slept a bit.

Sunday, October 9, 2022

The Vietnamese Mass is very uplifting, with liturgy and a lot of people. After brunch with Nicholas, I took some time to rest. Dr. Ash came with medication and a card from the Mayo Chapel. He met with Fr. Hoang, took some pictures, and visited me, spending quality time together. Later, I had dinner with the Vietnamese priests, nuns, and laypeople, fostering good solidarity and community building. Talked to Fr. Anton Stephen from Marai Alai TV Jaffna, and he congratulated me. Talked about Jubilee Mass for Fr. T. E. Thevarajan and Rev. Fr. J. Nicholas. I need to send pictures and data of myself and my ministry to him.

Monday, October 10, 2022

I got up around 6:30 am. I reached Cleveland around 9:30 am. After a visit to the bank, I went to Peter's house, but no one was at home. I decided to make a scrambled egg, and then I rested until Mary and Peter arrived. Mary prepared shrimp curry with rice. Following this, I returned to St. Columba.

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Had a haircut and got ready to go to the airport. I left by 12:30 p.m. and mailed the check to the bank for \$170. I visited Fr. Ray M, who was a good and helpful man. Fr. Hoang drove me to the airport and arranged for a wheelchair. They moved me to first class, and the lady was very kind. Mervyn and Mathu picked me up from Toronto airport. The wheelchair service was good. Reached Darwin's home safe and sound. Received many birthday wishes and enjoyed the whole night. Fr. Nixon called me at 1:14 am, and most of the priests sent messages.



Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Celebrated my 76th birthday - Gift of Life. Thankful for God sharing his breath with me. Expressed gratitude for the gift and breath received.

Attended mass at St. Barnabas in Toronto, and quite a few people attended the mass. Had breakfast at Cora's - pancake. Returned home to take insulin. Went to Manresa Retreat Center in Pickering, Ontario, to book my retreat and arrange mass for my Golden Jubilee on the 19th. Visited Home Depot but got tired, returned home, and slept. The birthday party was good and simple. God bless them.

Thursday, October 13, 2022

I slept in, completed work on the flyer, talked to Jasmine, had breakfast, did Sudoku, had soup and rested. Also, worked on the project.

Friday, October 14, 2022

My energy level was low. Attended evening Mass at St. Aidan's. Fr. Steven shared some good thoughts.

Saturday, October 15, 2022

The morning went smoothly, but the energy level was low. Darwin brought a clerical shirt, etc. Spoke to Albert, Jasmine, and Gilbert. Soosai came to see me.

Sunday, October 16, 2022

Got up and bathed. Attended Mass at 10:30 am. at St. Aidan's with Darwin, Vathana, and Nicholas. Priya, her husband, and Leela came to see me, bringing food. Getting ready to go to the Retreat Center.

Around 7:00 pm, Darwin, Vathana, Mervyn & Kids came to the retreat center. They left behind the food bag & computer. They had to go back to get them.

Monday, October 17, 2022

Got up for breakfast and spent time in the church. Lunch, rest, bath, and dinner. I talked to Gunaseelan.

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Got up with more energy, bathed, had breakfast, and rested. Lunch - rest - dinner. Wrote the announcement and sent it to Gilbert.

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Jubilee Day Celebration

Received many messages from Sri Lanka and other places. Fr. Henk set the altar for the Liturgy. Prayed for my companion and others. Mass went well, about 50 people came. Sintasa & Soosai came. Mrs. Sinnarasa lit an oil lamp for Fr. A.W Thevathasan, and Mr. Sinnarasa lit in honor of Fr. Marshal Christie Fernando. Fellowship dinner was at Darwin's place after the Jubilee mass. Left for Gilbert's house in Brampton after the dinner.



● REV. FR. EDWIN SAVUNDRA

Thursday, October 20-22, 2022

Rested in Brampton. Sudoku with Ashana and Ajan, energy level low.

Worked on the Vanni Spelling Competition.

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Attended Mass at a church near Mervyn's place, followed by brunch and rest at Stella's place. Visited Mervyn and returned to Gilbert's place.

Monday, October 24, 2022

Worked on the Vanni Spelling Competition.

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Darwin and Vathana came to Gilbert's place to drive me to the airport. We got the wheelchair service, but I missed my computer. I realized that I lost it only at St. Paul. Called and sent a picture of my boarding pass. Fr. Moris came to pick me up. I had dinner at Byrne Residence. Fr. Moris drove me to Columba.

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

I got up and went to PC for People; I got a laptop for \$130, and a mouse & keyboard for \$3 each. I am in Rochester. Had dinner. Gilbert helped me set up my computer.

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Blood test at 9:30 am. I went to the chapel and walked to the Mayo in the basement. I found it difficult to walk as my energy level was down. Ashley, the pharmacist, checked the list of meds that I needed to take. Tagrisso shipment will arrive on Monday. Side effect: Ashley mentioned that most patients manage their routine life well. The side effects will not be as bad as radiation and chemo. The doctor will see me in 2 weeks for a month or so. The possible side effects include diarrhea, fatigue, inflammation of the lungs, and heart issues. The doctors will monitor the development. After a month of observation, I may get a window of 8 to 12 weeks.

Friday, October 28, 2022

I left Weatherhill around 9:10 am. My energy level was low. I stopped at Little Caesars for some extra food. Went to Unity Bank, and Kristine was helping. Talked to Gilbert. I went to Larry's place and rested a while before I drove to Cleveland. Mary and Peter were cooking dinner. We played Scrabble.

Saturday, October 29, 2022

I slept better last night. Had breakfast. Trying to get in touch with Fr. Schneider.



Sunday, October 30, 2022

I went to All Saints at Madison Lake for mass and concelebrated. He welcomed me. We had coffee and rolls. I was with Fr. Schneider. I thanked him for that. We had brunch at Peter's house. We played Scrabble, two games.

Monday, October 31, 2022

Got up at 7:00 am. Got ready and went to the bank in Cleveland, and I reached Mayo at 11:25 am.

Tagrisso Guidelines -One pill 80 mg per day -Before bedtime -With food or without - With water, glassful - Don't lie down for an hour -Don't miss the turns, but if you miss once no big deal. -Keep the pill at room temperature -Keep it away from kids and pregnant women -Wash your hands before and after touching the pill -Wash your clothes twice -If I get dry skin & rashes, get Cerave -If I get diarrhea and lasts for two days, I should go see a doctor; Call Care Team -I feel dizzy sort of breath, I need to go to ER -If legs swell, Call Care Team.

I had lunch at the cafeteria at Mayo. Afterward, I went to the resting room there and I slept till 5:30 pm. I came to Weatherhill for the night, Christy was here to welcome me. My lost laptop came from FedEx.

The second phase - Tagrisso pill 80 mg. Ashley: The next appointment is November 14th, and the second appointment is November 28th to monitor the side effects of Tagrisso. Usually, they do a scan after 2 months, and the 2-month window falls on Christmas weekend. I need to plan my trip next year. Took the first Tagrisso before going to bed.

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

The second day of Tagrisso. I went to church for Mass - Feast of All Saints. I wanted to meet with Dr. DO, and she obliged me with an appointment at 1:30 pm. Worked on level words for Vanni Spelling Competition - Birds of the Air. Verbs 7, nouns 35, Adjectives 20.

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

The third day of Tagrisso. Mass at noon, All Souls Day. I walked to the Gonda building and sat by the piano, but I couldn't walk anymore. Bill stepped in and helped. Came back to rest.

Thursday, November 3, 2022

The fourth day of Tagrisso. Bp Barron came for Mass. Lunch was served, and I went for dinner, but I could not eat well. Rested for the entire afternoon.

Friday, November 4, 2022

I did not go to church as there was no mass. I worked on the project.

Saturday, November 5, 2022

I worked on the project. Christy and I went to the 4:00 pm. mass.

Sunday, November 6, 2022

I rested. Christy went to Minneapolis. I worked on the project. Vathana told me about her dad.

Monday, November 7, 2022

I went to church for mass, then I went to see a blood pressure pump at the pharmacy. They sent me to the store. I returned home. I had lunch and rested in the afternoon. I am working on the project. I experienced pain in my stomach.

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

I went to church. I went to the Pharmacy to get blood sugar strips. I took the shuttle to go to St Mary's Campus (about a mile away) to pray and get rosaries. I could not walk back. I asked for a wheelchair. I returned home, rested, and worked on the project. Jasmine was waiting to meet my brother at the GS office. After some time, they met each other. My stomach pain persisted.



Wednesday, November 9, 2022

I got up and Worked on the Vanni Spelling Competition.

Thursday, November 10, 2022

Diarrhea - Stomach pain. I did not leave the house as I felt more tired. Christy brought me for a blood test. Went to bed early.

Friday, November 11, 2022

Dr. Ash brought me for an echocardiogram test. Appointment with Dr. CH, compassionate doctor! -blood test negative -Put Tagrisso on hold for a week. Think of reducing the volume of the dose.

On Tagrisso from October 31st to November 9th and no Tagrisso from November 10th.

Saturday, November 12, 2022

First snow day, flurries appeared. All the squirrels are very active in collecting Walnuts. They must have been surprised to see snow.

Sunday, November 13, 2022

I left Rochester after lunch to visit Peter and Mary in Madison Lake. It started snowing, and I also experienced neck pain. I went to visit Glen; However, the car couldn't ascend due to the icy conditions, but Glen updated me on his recovery, mentioning his dedicated 6-hour exercise routine with the machine. I had my car tires changed.



Wednesday, November 23, 2022
After spending days in Madison Lake from Nov 13-22, I returned to Rochester. I had a blood test appointment at 10:40 a.m. and an appointment at the Department of Oncology at 2:05 pm. The topics discussed include the resumption of Tagrisso. I've been feeling a little discomfort in the stomach, but there is no acute pain. I'm gaining strength. Discussed 40mg vs. 80mg dose. Take 80mg every other day until November 28th.

Monday, November 28, 2022
I met with Dr. KP, a young doctor, around 3:30 pm. He cleared my travel to Panama City and instructed me to take Tagrisso 80mg every other day. He advised me to avoid direct sunlight and extended sun exposure. Additionally, he mentioned that arrangements would be made to reduce the Tagrisso dosage from 80mg to 40 mg.
We tried to communicate with Mel from Panama. I asked for a place in a rectory to facilitate Mass attendance and prayers. Some regular life, etc. He asked for a letter of suitability; I forwarded the latest letter. Fr. Moris helped me with a suitcase. I kept my computer box in his room.

Saturday, December 3, 2022
Feast of St. Francis Xavier, Mel from Panama sent me a voicemail to remind me that he will pick me up at the airport and to clarify some dietary restrictions. I'm getting ready for my journey to Panama.

Sunday, December 4, 2022
I got up early to get ready for the trip. Fr. David brought me to the airport. Reached Newark, New Jersey. Fr. Anton Roc promised to be at the airport. After half an hour I met him outside the airport. We went to a McDonald's and had some breakfast. Came back to the airport. He gave me 100 dollars and I brought some things to take to Panama. Reached Panama City around 8:15 pm. Mel was at the airport. Came to his house and spent the night. Good Rest.

Monday, December 5, 2022
Mel brought me to Vincentian Seminary in Panama City. Fr. Greg, the superior, welcomed me. Seminarians were there. Saint Mary's Parish is next to the Seminary.

Tuesday, December 6, 2022
I got up around 7:30 am. Watched the World Cup match - Spain and Morocco, 0-0 result.

Wednesday, December 7, 2022
Holiday, festive lunch.

Thursday, December 8, 2022
Feast of the Immaculate Conception - two masses. I attended both Masses. Fr. John introduced me to the congregation. I concelebrated.

Friday, December 9, 2022
I shared my pain with Dr. BR. He prescribed some meds to reduce the pain.

Saturday, December 10, 2022
Fatigue continues.



Sunday, December 11, 2022

Santa Clara beach home, about 2 hours away from Panama City. Heavy traffic on the way. I went with Fr. John, a good human. I was tired. I participated in the Liturgical celebration. Another Vincentian priest preached at the retreat.

Monday, December 12, 2022

Retreat. I could not be active; fatigued.

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Last day of the retreat. I watched the match between Argentina and Croatia. The game was played at 2:00 p.m. in Panama Time. I watched the game at the Beach House of the Vincentians in Santa Clara. The game was interesting. The Argentinian team shot three goals. The first goal was a penalty goal shot by the popular player Messi. The other two goals were regular shots heavily supported by Messi.

The Final Game will be played on Sunday, December 18, 2022. One of the teams will be Argentina. The other team will be decided tomorrow, December 14, 2022.

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

After the mass, we had breakfast. We went for a day out and drove to the mountain. The zoo there was informative. Lots of kids came to visit the zoo. Then, we went to a Mexican hotel for lunch. It took a lot of time to get the food to the table. I rested in a recliner. Reached home safely in the evening after dinner. I am tired.

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Feeling fatigued, Dr. BR prescribed a blood test.

Friday, December 16, 2022

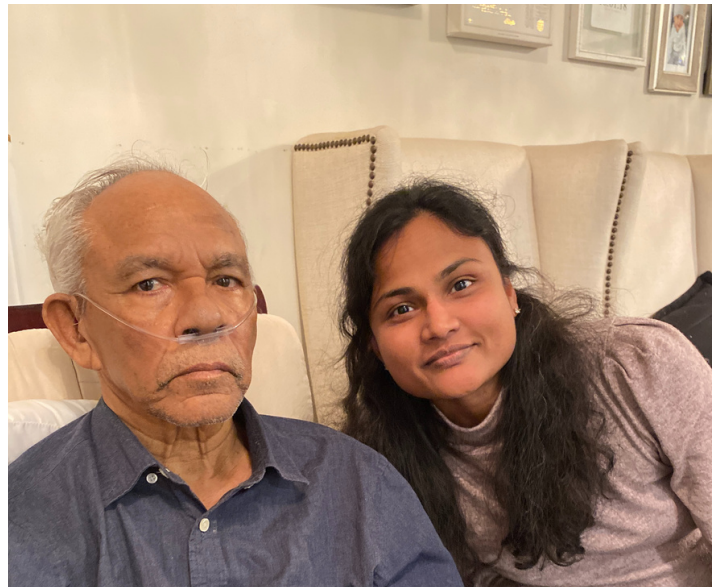
Based on the result of the blood test, Dr. BR prescribed a chest test. They were very kind.

Saturday, December 17, 2022

Croatia vs Morocco, World Cup. Third place. Croatia won. Fr. Greg and Orlando drove around to get the inhaler. The stores were closed.

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Got up and had breakfast. I did not watch the game. I got the news. Argentina vs France. Argentina was leading with 2/0, but in the final 10 minutes. France shot two, 2:2. Extension of 15 min. Argentina shot one, but at the final moment, France equalled the goals. They had to go for the shootout, and France lost.



Monday, December 19, 2022

My body is tired. Nebulization 3 times. I was put on an Oxygen Concentrator.

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

Same condition, Christmas is getting close. More tired than yesterday.

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

With Oxygen Concentrator, I felt better. Without it, my body complains.

Thursday, December 22, 2022

Same condition. The Portable Oxygen Concentrator (POC) was shipped from Canada to Panama, for my flight back.

Friday, December 23, 2022

The doctor came. I wanted to try walking. I climbed a few stairs and walked for 10ft but got tired. Fr. John and the doctor were discussing my exit plan. It looks like I'll be moving from here as early as possible. Gilbert suggests Toronto.

Saturday, December 24, 2022

This evening is the Christmas midnight mass.

Sunday, December 25, 2022

Christmas Day. Monday is a holiday. Gilbert flying to Panama tomorrow.

Monday, December 26, 2022

Gilbert is here with me in Panama.

Tuesday, December 27, 2022

Waiting for the Portable Oxygen Concentrator to arrive by mail for the flight to Toronto.

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

Received POC and tested, and the doctor gave the okay to fly.

Thursday, December 29, 2022

The flight to Toronto was from Ria Hato, which was 2 hours from Panama City, Panama. Gilbert and I drove to the airport, and on our way, we had lunch at a Chinese restaurant. We reached Toronto. Arthe picked us up from the airport and took us to Gilbert's place. All my family came to see me.

Monday, January 2, 2023

Gilbert drove to me to Buffalo Mercy Hospital, and I was admitted to the hospital.

Wednesday, January 4, 2023

Talked to my brother's family about providing a financial contribution towards building a set of toilets for the benefit of the pilgrims who came to Divine Mercy Church of Punnaineeravi in Viswamadhu, Sri Lanka, in view of my 50th Jubilee Celebration.

Wrote a Letter to the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: January 04, 2023, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, Catholic Health. The Most Rev. Dr. Bernard Hebda, Dear Archbishop, I'm getting treatment at Mercy Hospital for my lung complications. I do not know how long it would take. I'm deeply grateful for your care. I'm thankful to the Archdioceses, the priests, and the people of the Archdiocese for the support that I received during the ministry. In case, I happen to pass away in the US or Canada, please allow me to be buried at St. Marysburg Cemetery where I served. I'm ever thankful to my only brother Mr. Thevathasan and his children and their families for the support I received during my priestly ministry. My Hope and wish are that the education project initiated at Visvamadhu, Sri Lanka as an English Language Campus be continued by my nephews and niece. I'm thankful to God for all the Mercy and Blessings that I received. I seek God's Pardon and Mercy as I forgive all. Yours sincerely, Fr. Edwin Savundra.

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Mervyn has been with me since January 5th, and Stella joined him on January 10th to stay with me. Today, Fr. Sunnyston came to see me at Mercy Hospital Buffalo.



(The following events were recorded by the family)

Thursday, January 12, 2023

In the early morning, Fr. Edwin was transferred to the ICU, with Stella steadfastly by his side, offering support and comfort. Gilbert also joined them during this challenging time. Fr. Baskaran facilitated a video call with Fr. Edwin's brother, while Dr. Ash provided words of comfort through a video call, and Dr. DO offered support over the phone. Archbishop Hebda reached out, sharing words of comfort with Fr. Edwin. Darwin and Albert's family had a heartfelt conversation with him via a video call.

In the midst of these challenging circumstances, Fr. Edwin expressed a thoughtful gesture, requesting that we send \$200 to Bro. Dominic from Indonesia in appreciation of his service at ELC.

Fr. Edwin handwrote a letter to Bishop JB from the ICU bed, expressing gratitude for their friendship and offering insightful suggestions.

Reflecting on his journey, Fr. Edwin expressed, "I am very happy with the gift of life received from God." He conveyed his readiness to embrace the next chapter, saying, **"I'm going to my Father."**

With Fr. Edwin's consent, he was transitioned to comfort care. At 6 pm, the family visited Fr. Edwin. Amidst their company, he peacefully enjoyed a bowl of salad. Later in the evening, at 7:30 pm, Fr. Edwin engaged in a conversation with Nicholas regarding the LED project. Around 11:00 pm, Mervyn, Mathu, and the kids arrived, receiving Fr. Edwin's words and blessings.

Friday, January 13, 2023

Fr. Sam, the Chaplain of Mercy Hospital, came to see Fr. Edwin around 11:00 am. He held Fr. Edwin's hand and said the Chaplet of Divine Mercy prayer; just as the prayers ended, **Fr. Edwin took his last breath peacefully.**

Thursday, January 19, 2023

A funeral viewing was held for Fr. Edwin Savundra at Chapel Ridge Funeral Home, Markham, ON, Canada from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM. It was well attended by families and friends.

Saturday, January 21, 2023

The Tamil Mass was held at Our Lady of Good Health Tamil Parish, Toronto, Canada, at 11:00 AM, and was once again well-attended by families, friends, and fellow priests.

Thursday, January 26, 2023

The funeral mass took place at the Church of the Nativity in Cleveland, Minnesota, officiated by His Excellency, The Most Reverend Bernard Hebda, Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. This was followed by burial at Marysburg Cemetery, MN, USA. The Requiem Mass was also conducted at Francis Xavier Church, Kulamankal, Mallakam in Sri Lanka on January 28, 2023.

Prayer vigils were held at the English Language Campus, Viswamadhu, Sri Lanka, on Feb 12, 2023, in commemoration of his 1-month anniversary celebration.



Thank You Note:

The family of Fr. Edwin Savundra would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended the funeral celebrations. We appreciate the flower arrangements, condolence cards, and messages sent from the bottom of our hearts.

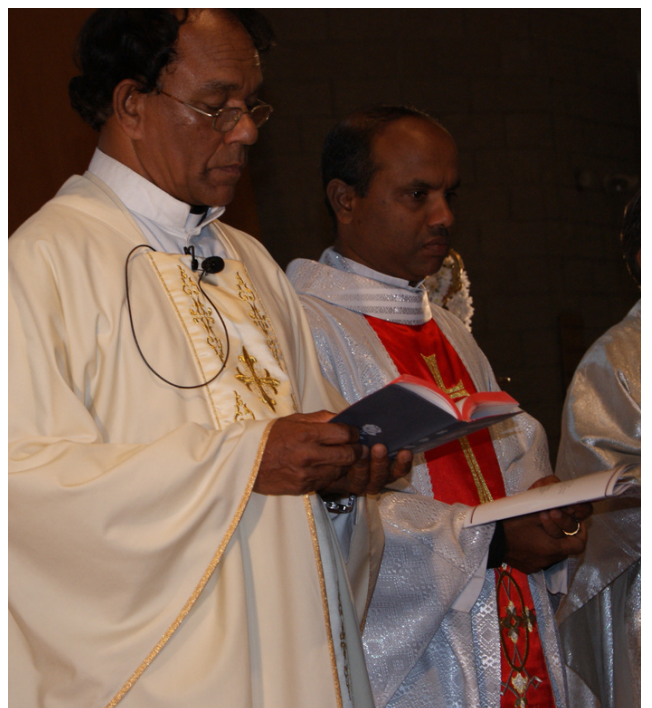
Thank you to the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Archbishop Hebda, and the people of the Church of the Nativity and Marysburg Immaculate Conception for accommodating Fr. Edwin's request to be buried in Marysburg Cemetery and for the luncheon after the burial. Special thanks to all the priests from Toronto, Sri Lanka, and Minnesota for their support in special ways.

Additionally, we express our gratitude to all the doctors who supported us on this journey, with special thanks to Dr. Ash and Christy, who took care of him for months like a family member, and Dr. DO and her Cancer care team. Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to Dr. BR, the priests, seminarians, and Mel from Panama. Thank you!





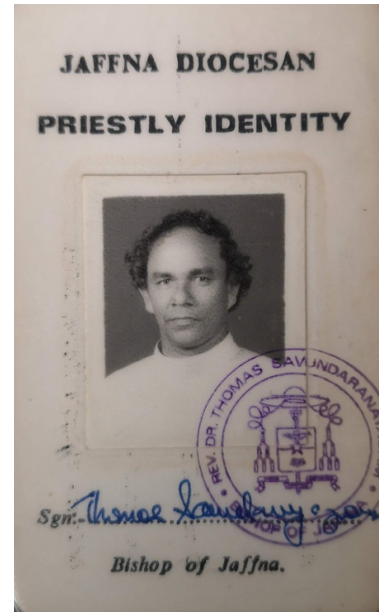


















Publications by Rev. Dr. Edwin Savundra

- Structures to Behold - Doctoral Thesis
- A War Diary from Jaffna - An Eye Witness
- Antha Irul Padintha Nadkal - (War Diary in Tamil)
- Philosophy of Form and the Human Person - Anthropological Expose for tertiary institution

