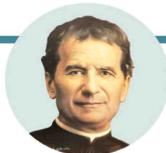




FUNERAL ORATION OF FR. PROVINCIAL

Salesian Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad



March, 2020

RIP - Bro Soosai Dennis SDB (1940-2020)
"He has given his all with a genuine heart"

Dear Confreres and friends,

With deep sorrow and gratitude in my heart I am writing this eulogy for our beloved Br Dennis from Valdocco, Turin - the cradle of our Salesian Charism. As soon as I got the news of passing away of our loving Br Dennis to eternal life on Friday evening around 8 pm, Italian time, I have communicated it to our Rector Major, Fr Angel Fernandez. He has offered his condolences to our Province and promised to pray in a special manner during the concluding Eucharist of the General Chapter on 14th morning at 7.00 am. Br Dennis is blessed to be remembered and prayed for by the Rector Major and all the members of the General Chapter 28.



Bro Soosai Dennis SDB (1940 - 2020)

Dear Br Dennis, I am unable to be present for your funeral, but thank you for giving me the opportunity to be close to you in a special way in the past two years in the Provincial House, Hyderabad. You have given your best to the poor with a genuine heart. You have left deep impression on us with your exemplary Salesian life.

Sooai Thainese, known to us only as Bro Soosai Dennis, the 6th child of Soosai Arul Pillai and Maria Arockiam was born on May 20, 1940 at Viruthampatti, in Tirupattur postal region in the district of Ramnad of Madras State. He was baptized on June 20, 1940 at Sattarasampatty. He received the sacrament of confirmation at Amalorpava Madha Kovil, Tirupattur on July 26, 1949.

He passed elementary classes at Don Bosco elementary school from the year 1946 to 1953. He entered the house of Don Bosco, Katpadi on June 29, 1958 and joined as an aspirant at Yercaud

on June 13, 1959 and continued his life as an aspirant till May 13, 1961. He began his novitiate at Yercaud on May 23, 1961. These were his words in his application requesting to be admitted to the Novitiate:

“I have a great desire to become a Salesian coadjutor, because I want to save my soul, to become a saint, and to save the souls of others. I was in the Salesian house for three years and in the aspirantate for two years, and I saw the Salesian work. I want to become a Salesian coadjutor. Please Rev. Fr. Rector admit me to the Salesian novitiate.”

He made his first profession for a three-year period on May 24, 1962 when Fr John Med was his provincial and Fr Casarotti Mauro was his director in the Salesian Province of St. Thomas, Madras. He renewed his religious profession for another three-year period on May 24, 1965 when Fr Di Fiore was his provincial and Fr Ittyachen Manjil was his director. He made his final profession on May 24, 1968 under the same Provincial. Let us recall his own words as he made a definitive decision to offer himself to the Lord:

“I have spent six years in the Society of St. Francis of Sales. And in different occupations that my superiors have given me I have done my duty happily for God’s glory. I have practiced my constitution and my vows as I was told in the novitiate. I think by the infinite mercy of God’s grace and with the help of Mary, I will be able to practice them still better till my death. I like to be a Salesian forever in order to save myself and many other souls.”

Bro Dennis worked as assistant administrator and teacher at Don Bosco Sagayathotam from 1968-69; at Don Bosco Tirupattur from 1969-71; at Don Bosco Guntur from 1971-77. He then studied printing technology from 1977 at SIGA and was awarded the diploma of printing technology from the State Board of Technical Education and Training, Tamil Nadu. He rendered his services as Press Manager at Don Bosco Press Guntur from 1981-89; at Don Bosco Kurnool from 1991 to 97. He then assumed the role of farm manager which he faithfully fulfilled at DB Manoharabad from 1997-98; at DB Punganur from 1998 to 2008 and at Don Bosco Guntupalli from 2008 to 2018.

Due to his failing health he had to give up active ministry, but he continued to give his moral and prayerful support to the community of Don Bosco Guntupalli from 2010 to 2018. As he required continuous medical assistance he was brought to Don Bosco Provincial House in October 2018. We have appointed a staff, by name BARTHU to assist him full time in his needs while he was being regularly treated at Vijay Marie Hospital. His treatment combined with Ayurvedic medicine immensely improved his health to such an extent that he was able to even walk with ease. His health worsened again from January 2020 showing signs of kidney failure coupled with high fever, breathlessness, erratic sugar and blood pressure levels and internal infection. He was last admitted to Vijay Marie Hospital on February 23, 2020 with high fever and was immediately taken to ICU from where he never returned to Provincial House.

Looking at his deteriorating health situation Br Dennis had to be kept on Mechanical Ventilator on March 4, 2020 while his treatment continued with multiple cycles of dialysis for almost 10 days. Finally we were informed of the passing away of Br Dennis on March 14, 2020 at 12.10 am while he was still on ventilator.

A man of God

Br Dennis was clear about his identity as a consecrated person. He was fully aware of the need for deep intimacy with the Lord. He was always faithful to moments of prayer and daily Eucharist despite the humdrum of daily life during his active years and later also during the years of sickness. He would never miss his daily Eucharist which sustained him in his pain and suffering. This was his way to sanctity. His style of prayer reminds us of article 12 of our constitutions: "He cultivates union with God, aware of the need to pray without ceasing in a simple heart-to-heart colloquy with the living Christ and with the Father, whom he feels close at hand."

Work and Temperance

All of us know him as a confrere who worked tirelessly in his life. This was his message to the young priests of our Province in 2019. "I have worked very hard in my life. These days I see that some people run away from work. You have to work very hard." He used to recall his good old days in Guntur, in the press and his time in Punganur. Br Dennis' life reflects article 18 of our Constitutions: "The salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation." In a time when religious life is challenged and influenced by the prevailing consumeristic culture, Br Dennis stands as a model of simplicity and austerity. He possessed nothing and lived a simple life. A great example for us to emulate.

A cheerful Salesian

'Here, holiness consists in being cheerful'. These words of Don Bosco were the guiding force of Br Dennis all his life. The spirit of resilience and good humour fuelled his passion to live his consecration to the full in spite of his pain and sickness. He was a happy and contented Salesian. I never heard him complain about anyone. He thought well of all, spoke well of all and did good to all.

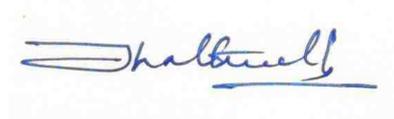
I would like to thank Fr Santiagu our vice provincial, Fr Androth, Fr Sudhakar, Fr Rajesh and Fr Chinnappa of the Provincial House Community who took special care of Br Dennis. My sincere thanks to Mr Bhartu who assisted Br Dennis and kept his spirit high. Br Dennis appreciated Mr Bhartu and had a great concern for him and his family. Dhanyavad Bhartu. We are grateful to you for looking after Br Dennis. I also would like to thank the sisters of Charity and the Vijay Marie hospital staff for their medical assistance and loving care.

God has shown His benevolence and bountifulness in and through the life of Br Dennis. He has also shown that there will always be troubles and suffering in our earthly life as Br Dennis himself had his own share and more. But the real good news is that our pain and suffering will have a deeper meaning when endured with faith and confidence in the Lord.

As we today recall our fond memories of Br Dennis who was indeed a great gift to the Church, to the Congregation and in a special way to our Province, let us emulate his faith and commitment and cheerful giving and accept the pain and sufferings of life with unfailing trust in the Lord. Let us ask him to implore the Lord for vocations to Salesian Brotherhood: "The Salesian Brother brings to every field of education and pastoral activity the specific qualities of lay status, which make him in a particular way a witness to God's kingdom in the World, close as he is to the young and to the realities of working life." (C.45)

May our heavenly Father grant Br Soosai Dennis eternal reward in His Kingdom in the company of all the angles and saints even as we continue to pray for his eternal repose: Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Fraternally in St. John Bosco,



Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB

Provincial

Valdocco, Turin

15 March 2020