

FR. EDWIN A. SUMIT MENEZES, S.J. (68/47)

Died in Bodhgaya, India, on the 18th December 2019.



Bio-Data

Born : 16-04-1951
Entered the SJ : 12-01-1972

Ordained : 03.05.1987
Final Vows : 21.11.1993

Family: 31, Wellington Street, Dhobitalao, Mumbai-3.

Father : Late Mr. Salvador Aleixo Menezes.

Mother: Late Mrs. Catherine Menezes

Edwin was the fifth child in a family of nine children.

Formation

Candidacy : Xavier Hall, Patna, June, 1970

Novitiate : XTTI, Patna – 1972-1974

Juniorate : XTTI, Patna -- 1974-1975

Philosophy : S.H. College, Shembaganur, 1978-1980

Regency 1 : CHSI, Ara – 1980-81

Theology : RTC, Danapur & VJ, Delhi; 1984-1987

Diaconate : Delhi, 28.02.1987

Ordination : Mumbai, 03.05.1987

Tertiaship : Sitagarha, Hazaribag1991-1992

Final Vows : Sasaram, 21.11.1993

Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:

Pastoral Year, Catholic Church, Darbhanga, 1987

Asst. Pastor, Catholic Church, Khagaul, 1988-1990

Father in charge, Siwan 1990 (6months)

Asst. Parish Priest, Gaya, 1991

Non-Formal Education, Sasaram, 1992

Social Work, Pioneering in Bodhgaya, Nov., 1994

Province Coordinator of Dialogue, 1995

Co-pastor, Khagaul, 2004

Assist. Director, Prabhat, Madhubani, Dec, 2007

Acting Director, Sakri- Dadarwara, 2008

Asst. Director, Jan Shiksha Kendra, Gaunaha, 2010

Co-pastor, Catholic Church, Latonah, 2012

Director, SVS, Aurangabad, 2013-2019

Social Work, Jeevan Sangham, Bodhgaya, 2019 –

“Go set the world on fire.” These are the famous words of Saint Ignatius to St. Francis Xavier when Ignatius sent Francis as a missionary to India. These very words brought Fr. Edwin Sumit to Bihar in 1971 when he was just twenty years old. He said goodbye to his home in Mumbai, his parents and his eight siblings.

Fr. Sumit Edwin was on fire to set free the oppressed, the core of the mission of Jesus in Bihar. What stood out in the life of Fr. Sumit was his passionate love for Jesus whom he encountered in the poorest of the poor, the dalits, especially the Manjhis and the Bhuias of the districts of Gaya, Rohtas, Patna, Madhubani, West Champaran and Aurangabad. He was deeply attached to the poor and did not seek power, position, comforts, status and prestige. He identified with the little ones of this world and enjoyed the company of the least and the last of society. They brought out his creative best in the work of non-formal education, conscientization and the establishment of self-help groups. The poor people remember Fr. Sumit Edwin with love and warmth.

Fr. Sumit spent his last days working in Jeevan Sangham, Bodh Gaya. The centre was very close to his heart. He was the pioneer of this centre in 1994. On many occasions Sumit told me that a number of Jesuits wanted him to start an English medium school. However, Edwin stood firm in his preferential option for the poor and established a centre with the help of other Jesuits that would serve the poor of the area, especially the dalits. He also wanted to establish a dialogue centre since Bodh Gaya was an important religious centre for the Buddhists and Gaya for the Hindus. While the dream of a dialogue centre has yet to be actualized, the work of dialogue has become a reality and is being done in the area.

During the last five years of his life which he spent in Aurangabad district, Fr. Sumit found the going tough. He had back trouble. He was also asthmatic. And so, he had difficulty in breathing. However, despite his health problems he did his level best to go to the villages to be with his people and supervise the educational programme.

It is significant that Edwin had just completed the project with DK Austria in Aurangabad. However, the good Lord had other plans. Hence, he called Sumit to be with him forever sharing eternal life on the 18th December 2019 at around 5.00 p.m.

Edwin Sumit, our bother and friend with mixed feelings of sorrow and joy in our hearts we say goodbye. Sleep forever in peace with your Creator and Saviour Lord for you have gone many miles and more in the faithful service of your God and his people.

Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha, SJ