

## Fr. George Hilarion Thakur, S.J. (1955-2023)

Fr. George Hilarion Thakur, SJ was born on 23rd July 1955, in Bettiah to Mr. Hilarion Thakur and Mrs. Monica Hilarion. He was the 7<sup>th</sup> among eight siblings. His parents and one sister are already in their heavenly abode. After completing his matriculation studies from K. R. High School, Bettiah, and Higher Secondary Education (I.A.) from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, he joined the Society of Jesus on 2nd January 1975 at XTTI, Patna. He was ordained a priest on 28th May 1988 at the Church of Nativity of the BVM, Bettiah. Fr. George took his Final Vows on 22nd April, 1995. He died at Asha Deep Community, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India, on 16th December, 2023.



STUDIES & FORMATION		APOSTOLIC ASSIGNMENTS	
<b>Graduation:</b>	B.A. Patna College, Patna	<b>Co-Paster:</b>	Sacred Heart Parish, Latonah (1988)
<b>Post-Graduate:</b>	B.Ed. St. Xavier's College, Kolkata	<b>Parish Priest:</b>	Latonah (1989-1992)
<b>Novitiate:</b>	X.T.T.I (1975-1976)	<b>Hostel Supt.:</b>	K.R. Hostel, Bettiah (1993-1997)
<b>Juniorate:</b>	X.T.T.I (1977)	<b>Headmaster:</b>	Sacred Heart School, Latonah (1998-2009)
<b>Philosophy:</b>	Pune (1981-1983)	<b>Fr. In-charge:</b>	Dadarwara (2010)
<b>Regency:</b>	Catholic High School, Ara (1983-1984)	<b>Asst. Director:</b>	Prabhat, Sakri (2010-2013)
<b>Theology:</b>	R.T.C, Danapur, Delhi (1985-1988)	<b>Administrator:</b>	St. Michael's School, Patna (2014-2021)
<b>Ordination:</b>	Catholic Church, Bettiah (1988)	<b>Administrator:</b>	Asha Deep, Muzaffarpur (2022-2023)
<b>Tertiaship:</b>	St. Stanislaus College, Sitagarha, Hazaribagh (1992-1993)		
<b>Final Vows:</b>	K.R. School, Bettiah (22/04/1995)		

The funeral mass at XTTI chapel was attended by a large number of people. His family members, relatives, people from Bettiah, Patna and elsewhere, were present to pay their last homage to Fr. George. The main celebrant, Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, offered the mass, assisted by Archbishop Emeritus, Most Rev. William D'Souza, SJ, and a large number of priests. At the beginning of the mass, Fr. Donald Miranda, the provincial, welcomed the people for the funeral mass and gave a brief introduction of Fr. George Hilarion Thakur.

During the homily Fr. Victor Osta, SJ, spoke about Fr. George as he knew him from his childhood. Sharing some aspects of Fr. George's life, he said:

Fr. George was a person of **simplicity**, straightforward and led an uncomplicated life. He had a 'Down-to-Earth' attitude, being humble and approachable, treating others with kindness and respect, regardless of their status. He lived with only the essentials, avoiding unnecessary material possessions. He prioritized needs over wants. Truly, he lived with the spirit of poverty.

Being a true disciple of the Lord, he did not boast about his achievements or about himself. He never showed off or desired to present himself as extraordinary. Instead, in humility, he served the people with respect and understanding. He found happiness in simple living, in meeting ordinary people and in simple outdoor activities. He was not very much preoccupied with the past or overly anxious about the future. George was often seen as genuine and easy to approach.

George was a person of '**great hospitality**'. This was evident when he was the minister and the administrator of St. Michael's Jesuit Community. In the spirit of the Jesuit charism, he was always approachable, attentive to the needs of others and ready to welcome people with a smiling gesture. He was warm and friendly towards guests and visitors. He created an environment where people felt valued, respected, comfortable and well accepted.

George cherished his **priestly life**, not only for himself but also to a certain extent as a spiritual guide to his fellow Jesuit priests. His meaningful priestly life was manifested in his conversation with his fellow Jesuits. Often in his conversations, he would share the personal stories of his vocation and his call to priesthood in an inspiring way, and spoke of the Jesuit fathers who nurtured his vocation. His sharing of priestly spiritual journey provided many with the words of comfort and source of spiritual guidance.

**Devotion to our Lady** was yet another key aspect of his life which was quite visible during my diaconate and pastoral ministry at Latonah parish. I observed that never would a day pass by without him reciting the Rosary in the parish or with a small group of families. Marian devotion had become deeply personal for him and often served as a source of spiritual guidance for the parish community.

During my stay with him at different times and places, George came across to me as a person **faithful to his pastoral ministry**. At Latonah parish, I could see him actively involved with a deep sense of commitment in serving the people, creating a positive impact and nurturing spiritual environment in the lives of individuals and the parish community as a whole.

I could recall very well some key aspects of his pastoral ministry, such as giving spiritual guidance, support to poor families, family visits and prayers, visiting and providing emotional and spiritual support to the old and sick, catechism to children, teaching and preaching, sacramental ministry, providing leadership to the youth, and so on. He was seen as a role model for others as a faithful pastor. I believe, God had given him a big heart, divine strength and ability to serve his people in a loving way.

Another area which was commendable was his honesty, sense of duty and sensitivity towards his **co-workers**. He maintained cordial relationship with them. He was kind, empathetic and caring, and had concern for the well-being of the workers. He maintained and fostered a healthy work-life balance by treating all workers fairly and without bias. He acknowledged and appreciated their efforts and hard work and expressed gratitude to them enhancing their morale and motivation. The co-workers liked and appreciated George as he kept up good relationship with their families too during their joys and sorrows, marriage and at the time of suffering and death. George was extraordinarily caring and compassionate towards his co-workers.

**George was honest and loyal to the Society of Jesus, and loyal to the Lord.** Wherever he was assigned, he gave his best joyfully and to the full. He has actively contributed to the institution's positive environment and success, and kept up his personal loyalty to the workplace as a true religious.

One could never forget his **love for music**. Music had been part and parcel of his life. He loved singing and playing Tabla on various occasions. People appreciated this quality which brought joy and comfort, enriching the community life in praising and glorifying the Lord.

Above all, people who were fond of him used to call him '**Raja Saheb**' because he acted as king Herod in the play called "*Chautha Jyothisi* (The Fourth Magi)". It is appropriate for us to bid him farewell as '**Raja Saheb**' who served his people generously.

**May His Soul Rest in Peace!**

- Fr. Victor Osta, SJ