



Rev. Father Anthony



Father Anthony is from Eraniel, in the district of Cape Komarin in Tamil Nadu at the very southern tip of India where he was ordained in 2005 after years of study in St. Joseph's Minor Seminary and a further 4 years in St. Charles Seminary, Nagpur.

Fr Anthony has come to Europe to undertake further ecclesiastical studies and has completed a Master's in Theology in the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. At the moment he is in the middle of his doctoral studies in the Catholic University of Tilburg, Netherlands.

Fr Anthony's 'real' name is Manoj Prabu Mariadhasan Baby and he was with us during the month of July 2013.

A note from Fr Anthony to the Parishioners of St Patrick's, Kilsyth - 8th July 2013.

First of all my sincere thanks to each and everyone of you for giving me such a great importance and welcome to serve you and your people in St. Patrick's Kilsyth for a short term. A special word of thanks to Fr. James Tracey for his confidence in me in spite of the limited knowledge I have in your mother tongue 'English', which I love and worked very hard to learn in the Seminary.

My real name, forgive me, is a collaboration of 4 names – "Manoj Prabu Mariadhasan Baby". I was born in September, 1977 in a remote little fishing village named Eraniel, in the district of Cape Komarin – Tamil Nadu at the very southern tip of India where the three massive oceans – the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabic Ocean clash. The beauty of my place is, one can see the sun rising from the sea in the East and setting in the same Ocean in the West. Since India is divided by caste system, fishermen are considered to be low caste people and hence our village is surrounded by a huge wall of fence to avoid interacting with those of the high caste people, mostly the Hindus.

My father's name is Mariadhasan [servant of Mary] and my mother's name is Baby. Both of them were fish mongers who with a heavy load of fish on their head walked on bare foot from village to village to sell the fish to earn the daily bread for their family of 8 children [3 died at a very early age and Anthony being their first born baby]. I have 4 sisters, Catherine [Kala], Christina [Latha], Cecilia [Jaya] and Mary Axila and me their only son, named after their first Son Anthony. My Father died at the age of 72 after suffering a paralytic attack for 9 years, putting a greater responsibility on my mother to work even at the age of 70.

I studied in our village School at Eraniel run by the Government. Having completed my 10th standard, I responded to my Vocation to Priesthood at the age of 15. Although, initially I did not want to become a priest, my real vocation as I remember came only while I was in the third year of my seminary studies. I travelled from my place to a mission diocese in the extreme North of India. It takes a breath-taking 3 days journey in the same train to reach my diocese named "Shimla Chandigarh" at the foothills of the Himalayas. The diocese is totally a mission diocese and the Catholics are only 15, 000 belonging to very low caste community and are very poor, mostly slaves to rich land lords.

Being in a new place demanded 3 languages to learn, namely English, Hindi and Punjabi. It was that I learned these 3 languages for 3 full years and really worked hard. Then I did my philosophical course for 3 years at Holy Trinity Major Seminary in Jalandhar – Punjab. In 1999, having completed my philosophical course, I was sent to the mission stations to learn how missionaries work with evangelization. After 2 years of practice in two different mission stations, I was sent for my theological study for 4 years in St. Charles Seminary, Nagpur. Having completed my 12 years seminary studies, I was ordained in my home village in the year 2005. I worked as assistant priest in 3 different mission stations before being promoted to pursue my higher ecclesiastical studies in Europe. I did my Master's in Theology in the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. At the moment, I am doing my doctoral studies in the Catholic University of Tilburg, Netherlands. My topic is Sacramental studies and specialization in sacrificial concept of the Eucharist.

I am hoping to complete my studies by June 2015 [Two more years] and go back to my country, hoping to be a priest in a mission station cum professor for Sacramental Studies, [Eucharist, Baptism and Ministry] at the Theological Faculty in Jalandhar where I studied.

Kindly remember me and my people in your daily prayers.

Thanks. Fr. Anthony

A note from Fr Anthony to the Parishioners of St Patrick's, Kilsyth - 28th July 2013.

My Dear Parish Family,

Today I put pen to paper to express thanks for accepting me as a visiting priest and appreciating my priestly ministry over the last 25 days. I have been honoured and humbled by the many expressions of gratitude received from each one of you since the very first day.

I leave St. Patrick's, Kilsyth with very mixed thoughts. I will be separated from many wonderful people here. I will be in a new situation, [Dunfermline and Peebles] starting over with new people, although I know some over there from my previous ministry, for one more month, before getting back to the Netherlands to continue my studies and then returning back to India eventually to serve those poor people. Again, my profound thanks to all for your many good deeds and prayers. Kindly keep me and my people back in India in your thoughts. I leave after the 10.00 am Mass on Wednesday, July 31st, 2013.