

FR. JOHN J. KENEALY, S. J. (90/72)

Died in Chicago, USA, on 2nd July 2017.

Bio-Data:

Born: 17.06.1927

Entered the SJ: 15.06.1945

Ordained: 24.03.1958

Final Vows: 15.08.1962

Formation:

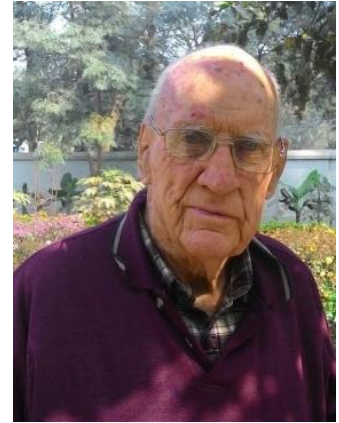
Novitiate, Milford, Chicago, USA; 1945-1947

Juniorate, Milford; 1947-1949

Philosophy, Shembaganur; 1950-1953

Regency, KR Bettiah; 1953-1955

Theology, Kurseong; 1955-1959 (Ordained in Pro-Cathedral, Bankipur)



Apostolic Assignments:

Asst. Pastor, Jamalpur (Basuni); 1960-1962

Teacher, St. Xavier's, Jaipur; 1962-63

Asst. Pastor, Shahpur; 1963-1965

" , Jamalpur (Bariarpur); 1965-66

Asst. & Pastor, Shahpur; 1966-1980

Patna Diocesan Treasurer, Patna; 1980-97

Administrator & Treasurer, Ara; 1997-98

Patna Diocesan Treasurer, Patna; 1999-2004

Patna Diocesan Archives, Patna; 2003-10

Asst. Treasurer, PJS, Patna; 2011-15

Judge of Patna diocesan marriage tribunal; 1976-99; 2001-2003

Fr. John Joseph Kenealy, SJ (Fr. Jack, as he was affectionately called), was a true and great missionary in the classical sense of the word. The basis of his life and the source of his strength was Jesus Christ. This message was loud and clear to anyone who met Fr. Jack, be they ordinary people or officials or companions. The daily Eucharist and the hours he spent in prayer were the sources of his daily union with the Lord. His life and ministry flowed from this inner fountain.

He loved the people of Bihar whom he was sent to serve and as an expression of his commitment to them he adopted a very simple life style which he maintained to the very end. Not only did he learn Hindi well but was completely at ease with the rural people and spoke with rural idioms in his conversations; in turn, they were very comfortable with him and experienced his love and care for them.

As a missionary Fr. Jack was indeed a 'jack' of all trades - he could be a pastor for the rural folk in an interior part of Bihar, he could be a treasurer handling finances of the diocese which called for meticulous desk work, he could spend days, months and years cataloging documents in a library and he could be riding his motorcycle for hours to reach a guest at his / her destination on time; as the judge of the Patna diocesan marriage tribunal, he could listen to intricate interpersonal issues for hours and he would run around the police offices for days and weeks to sort out the registration matters of the American Fathers. He did all of these with utmost dedication. He enjoyed the innocent pleasures of life like doing the 'Cross Word' puzzle in the daily newspapers and holding long conversations.

As a friend of Lord Jesus, Fr. Jack was a friend of the orphans. He adopted the orphans of Shapur as his own children and that adoption became his lifelong commitment. In economically helping them, he did not want them to be at the subsistence level but to live a dignified life; hence he helped them in full measure. When any of them or their children was sick, he spared no effort to provide the best medical care for them. When they visited him he made sure to feed them well. He spent himself for them.

Even at 90 he had no major health issues and was riding his 45 year old motorcycle. So, after celebrating his 90th birthday on 17 June 2017 when he left for a visit to USA there was no doubt in anyone's mind about his return; Fr. Provincial was his travel companion and they left Delhi on 22nd June. But the Lord seems to have had other plans. Fr. Jack was staying with his sister in Chicago. He was unwell on 1st of July and so was admitted in a hospital. He was undergoing a series of tests and seemed cheerful. But in the early hours of 2nd July his health condition took a turn for the worse and he died peacefully at 6.00 am (16.30 IST).

No doubt, with St. Paul he can boldly say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful." (2 Tim 4:7) and in turn the Lord is sure to answer him with, "Well done, good and faithful servant! ... Come and share your master's happiness!" (Mt 25:21).

Thank you Fr. Jack for the great inspiration that you have been and will continue to be for all of us on this earth; do intercede for us with the Lord of the harvest so that He may send many more laborers like you into His vineyard (Mt 9:38)..