

# FR. DIONYSIUS RASQUINHA, S.J. (65/44)

Died at Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, India, on 24 September 2020

Born : 13-10-1954

Ordained : 26.04.1986

Entered the SJ : 02-01-1976

Final Vows : 31.05.1996



## Formation & Studies:

Secondary Education: St. Stanislaus School, Mumbai, 1971

Graduation: Sydenham College of Commerce, Mumbai, 1975

Novitiate: XTTI, Digha Ghat, P.O., Patna, 1976-1978

Juniorate: XTTI, Digha Ghat, P.O., Patna, 1978

Regency: Catholic High School, Ara, 1979 (Jan-June)

Philosophy Yr 1: S. H. College, Shembaganur, 1979-80

Philosophy Yr 2: Satya Nilayam, Chennai, 1980-81

Regency: St. Xavier's School, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 1981-83

Theology: RTC, Danapur (1983-84) &  
Vidyajyoti, Delhi, (1984-1986)

Tertiarity: Vinayalaya, Mumbai; 1973

Diaconate: New Delhi, 15.02.1986, Bp Angelo Fernandes

Ordination: Mumbai, 26.04.1986; Bp. Ferdinand Fonseca

Bible Studies, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 1988-89

M. Th., Vidyajyoti, Delhi, 1989-1992

Final Vows: St. Xavier's, Patna, 31.05.1996

## Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:

Pastoral Yr & Co-Pastor, Barbigha Parish, 1986-1988

Acting Director, RTC, Danapur, 1992-93

Teacher, St. Stanislaus High School, Mumbai, 1998-99

Vice Principal, St. Xavier's, Patna, 1999-2001

Theology Professor, Gyanoday, RTC, Patna, 2001-2011  
(Sabbatical, 2009-2010)

Theology Professor & Theological Research,  
Navjyoti Niketan, 2011-2015

Asst. Treasurer, PJS, St. Xavier's, Patna 2015-2020

Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha, SJ, affectionately called Fr. Dion, was a scholar, teacher, guide and mentor, writer, musician, vibrant Jesuit, dedicated priest and above all, a lover of life. Love for the poor, especially Dalits, permeated his research, teaching and writing, along with a commitment to promote integral cosmic wellbeing. He was a perfectionist who wanted to excel in all that he did and in all that was entrusted to his care; for this he applied himself fully into all that he undertook, not counting the cost. His zest for life and desire for perfection sprang from his faith and love for his Master and Lord Jesus, whom he always endeavoured to follow ever more closely; love for the Church and joy in his vocation as a Jesuit priest were integral aspects of his love for Jesus.

A major part of Fr. Dion's life as a Jesuit priest was dedicated to theological research, teaching-guiding-mentoring theology students and writing. He was one of the stalwarts of Regional Theology and he promoted theological reflections on contemporary issues. He demanded the best from his students and closely accompanied them for achieving it; hence many of his students, who are serving as priests today, are not only grateful to him but have fond memories of him because he knew how to bring the best out of them. In as much as he was a 'hard task master' on the intellectual front, he was an affectionate companion who accompanied them with immense love. The annual seminars in Regional Theology Centre (RTC) in which Fr. Dion participated and/or guided the students invariably had the stamp of academic rigour.

Besides many articles in theological journals, Fr. Dion's two books bear testimony to his intellectual caliber and spirituality: 1) Towards Wholeness from Brokenness: The Dalit Quest - A Historical Analysis and Theological Response (2013) and 2) Prayer Services in the Indian Context (2014). In community or Ministry Commission and Province level meetings/gatherings, Fr. Dion always insisted on intellectual analysis and theological response to any topic or issue that was discussed; his persuasive arguments invited and enabled the participants to perceive reality at a deeper level and respond to it from a faith perspective, not just follow the crowd or be satisfied with mediocrity. His knowledge was encyclopedic which made him a good teacher, guide and an interesting conversationalist.

After he had spent nearly a quarter-of-a-century in theological pursuits, Fr. Dion was assigned to be the Assistant Treasurer of Patna Province / Patna Jesuit Society. He had done graduation in Commerce before he joined the Society; so, he had to refresh as well as update himself with accounts and book-keeping, become familiar with all the relevant laws of the land and guidelines of the government, get to know the system of accounting and documenting which the funding agencies prescribe, and keep track of the financial status of the Province institutions, centres and projects. He laboured for long hours and soon he was on the saddle; for the next five years, till his death, he assisted the Treasurer efficiently. This showed the typical Jesuit spirit of availability of Fr. Dion, not counting the cost.

Fr. Dion celebrated life in many ways: music, food, companionship, animated discussions and jokes - heartfelt outbursts of laughter with his whole body shaking, was his trademark. There were no half measures in his work or celebration of life, there was only fullness and abundance. Even serious health setbacks could not dampen his spirit because his source was Jesus, who came to give us life, and life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

Eternal rest grant unto Fr. Dion O lord and may perpetual light shine upon him. Goodbye Fr. Dion till we meet again.

*[All the members of Patna Province are to offer one Mass intention for Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha.*

*Members of St. Xavier's community will offer one additional Mass intention.] -*

*Fr. Susai Raj, SJ*