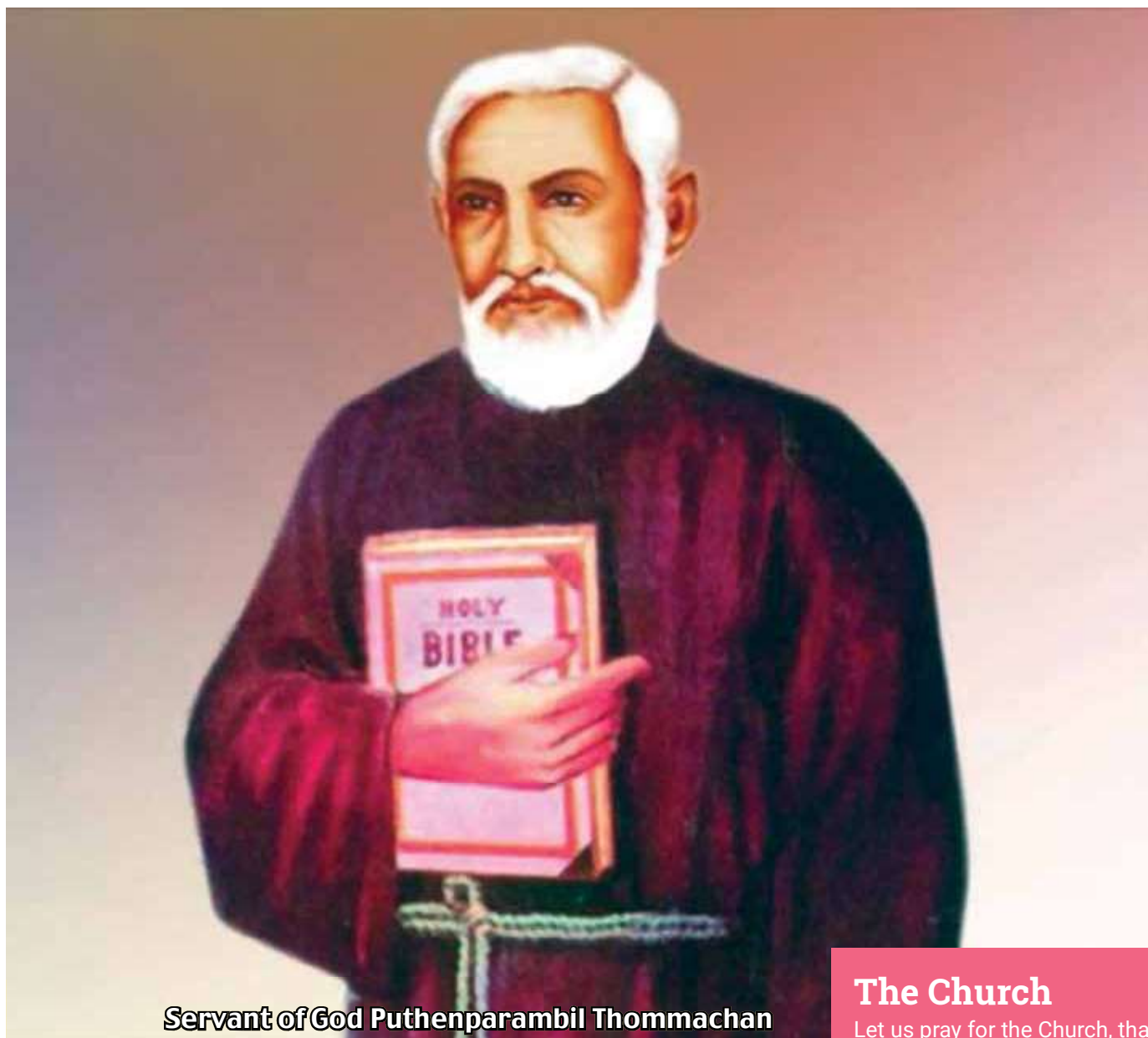


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Servant of God Puthenparambil Thommarchan



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Confirmation of Children
in St. Mary's Church Old
Delhi.



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Fr. Deepak Valerian Tauro,
new Auxiliary Bishop of
Archdiocese of Delhi.

The Church

Let us pray for the Church, that
She may receive from the Holy
Spirit the grace and strength
to reform herself in the light of
the Gospel.



FR. STAN SWAMY SJ: A MARTYR OF THE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

We pay our respectful homage to the memory of Fr. Stanislaus Lourduswamy SJ, popularly known as Stan Swamy. The Jesuit priest died on July 5 at the Holy Family Hospital, Bandra, Mumbai, where he had been receiving treatment since May 29 as per the orders of the Mumbai High Court. When the Court took up Stan Swamy's appeal for medical bail for hearing on July 5, the Director of the hospital informed it that the priest had died in the hospital an hour earlier. He was 84 years old.

The last eight months of Fr. Stan Swamy were spent in pre-trial detention, having been falsely accused of terror charges and booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). He was kept in the Taloja Jail in Navi Mumbai since his arrest on 8 October 2020 from his Jesuit residence Bagaicha in Namkum near Ranchi, Jharkhand by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The police claimed that Stan Swamy had links with the banned Maoists and that he was involved in the infamous Bhima Koregaon violence of 1 January 2018.

Stan Swamy was born in a village in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu. As a Jesuit, he lived and worked among the Adivasis of Jharkhand for several decades, championing the cause of their traditional and constitutional rights. He consistently defended their community rights over the natural resources in their territories. He spoke against all ideologies and policies that violated the Adivasis' special constitutional and legal rights. He had also carefully documented the huge profits made by big corporations at the cost of the Adivasi people who depended on the land and forests. His relentless research found that more than 3,000 Adivasi and Dalit youth, charged as Maoists, languished in the jails of Jharkhand for years as undertrials. He filed a petition in the Jharkhand High Court seeking their release.

Stan Swamy's fight against the many violations of the Adivasi rights by the government and corporate houses made things difficult for some companies. There were continuous efforts to silence him. According to People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUC), he was arrested because he had dared to expose the large-scale abuse of the anti-terror and sedition laws by the BJP-led Jharkhand government in power then.

The arrest of Stan Swamy in October 2020 led to a series of protests all across the country. In spite of the severe restrictions imposed on movement due to COVID-19, many citizens and leaders came forward to "Stand for Stan". They demanded the immediate release of all the arrested activists and for the repeal of draconian laws like the UAPA, which were repeatedly abused by the state to harass and silence



genuine human rights activists and political opponents and to suppress dissent. The Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Hemant Soren, was among the first persons to protest the arrest of Stan Swamy. He remarked that Stan Swamy had been working in Jharkhand for years, in the remote faraway villages, wandering in the jungles, just so that the Adivasis, Dalits, and minority populations there could be reached.



Fr. Stan Swamy always professed his commitment to the Constitution of India and peaceful means of expressing dissent. For him, love of the country and love of religion meant love of the country's poorest. His mantra was: to stand up and fight for justice and truth.

As soon as the news of Fr. Stan Swamy's death broke out, condolence messages began to flow in from across the world. Many world leaders expressed their shock and sadness. Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, the President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) paid rich tributes to him. Calling Fr. Stan Swamy the "martyr of the marginalized people", the Cardinal said that he had died as a true disciple of Christ. He "broke the bread of good news of human dignity and justice," especially among the Adivasi people. He "redefined his priesthood, extending his altar to the streets and hills of those obnoxious corners of injustice," said the Cardinal. He followed Gandhi's nonviolent path. As Cardinal Bo said, "He is the latest saint of modern India's poor." Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) also mourned the death of Stan Swamy. Expressing sadness over the death of the Jesuit priest, he said: "Father Stan worked tirelessly for the underprivileged and downtrodden, giving them a sense of dignity and upliftment." As we honour Fr. Stan Swamy, we are confident that the Indian Church will continue to stand by the marginalized people of the country, whatever the cost.