



FR. CRUZ M. HIERONYMUS

**BIOGRAPHY OF A VISIONARY**



## **Born at Alenchy:**

Fr. Cruz M. Hieronymus was born on 22nd September 1943 at Alenchy, a small village in the district of Kanyakumari in the State of Tamilnadu. The District of Kanyakumari lies at the southernmost tip of India.

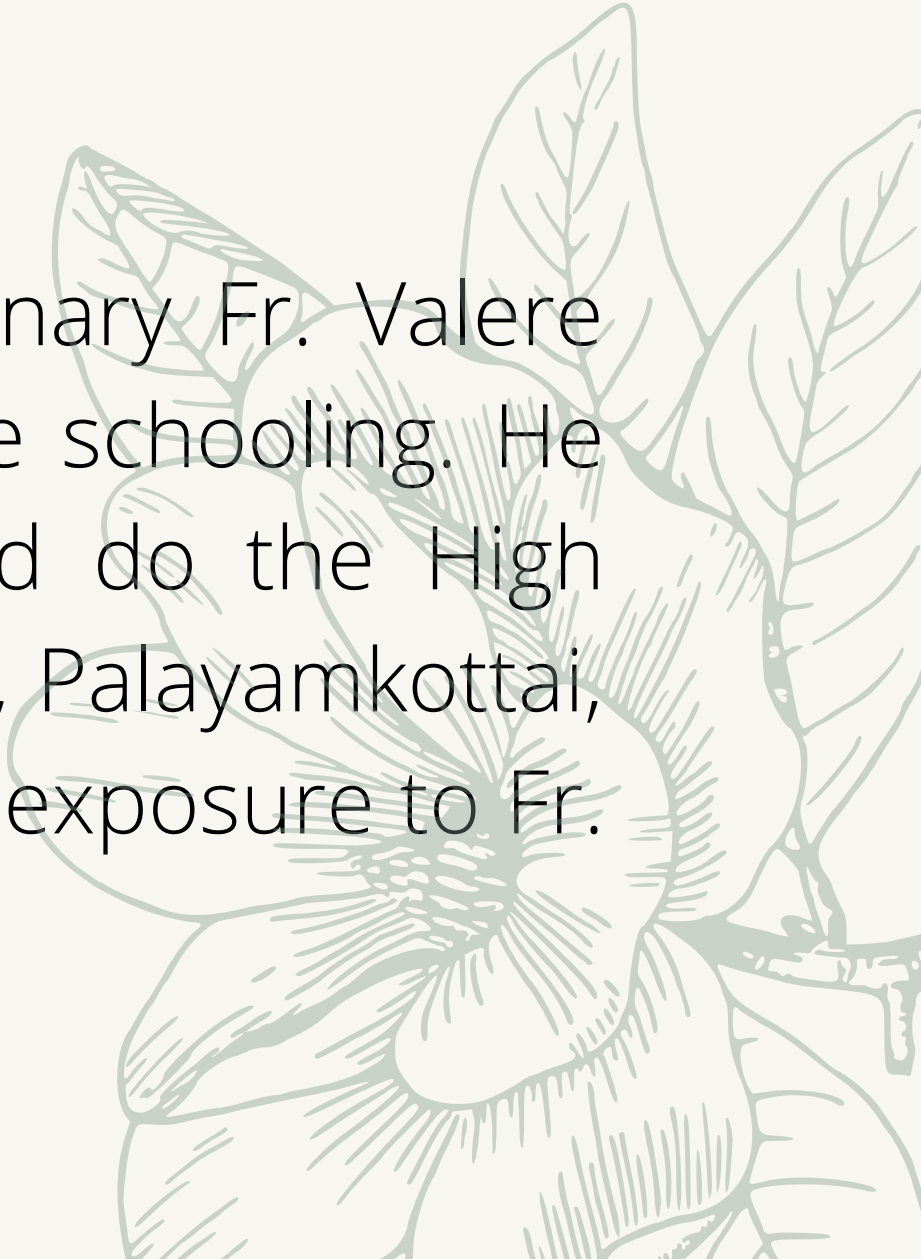
Alenchy has now a population of about 5000 people. Most of the people are daily laborers, masons, coolie workers etc. Quite a few of them have gone to the countries of the Middle East to work mainly as masons. With the in-flow of money from the Middle Eastern countries, the standard of life of the people has improved quite much in the last few years.

When Fr. Hieronymus was a boy the village was very underdeveloped. There was hardly any house with a concrete roofs. A few houses were tiled and the rest were thatched with palmaira leaves. But now the scenario has changed quite much. There are very few thatched houses anymore. Most houses are quite large and roofed with concrete. The village stands as an example of very fast economic growth.

## **Schooling:**

At the time Fr. Hieronymus went to school Alenchy had no school of its own. He had to walk 8 kms up and down every day to attend St. Aloysius' Middle School at Velliyavilai. He studied in that school up to 8th Standard from 1949-1957.

Having been a bright student a Belgian Missionary Fr. Valere Melard selected him to be helped for his future schooling. He made arrangements that Fr. Hieronymus could do the High School at the prestigious St. Xavier's High School, Palayamkottai, from 1957- 1960. This was a great experience of exposure to Fr. Hieronymus.





### **Minor Seminary – St. Aloysius’:**

Fr. Hieronymus completed the High School with high marks. At the inspiration of Fr. Melard, Fr. Hieronymus opted to join St. Aloysius’ Seminary of the Diocese of Kottar. He did Latin, Spirituality, Church History and English at St. Aloysius Minor Seminary from 1960-1962.

### **Major Seminary – St. Paul’s:**

After successfully completing the Minor Seminary Studies he was sent to St. Paul’s Major Seminary, Tiruchirapalli to do courses on Philosophy for three years (1962-1965) and Theology for four years (1965-1969).

Fr. Hieronymus has ordained as a Priest on 20th December 1968 during his fourth year of Theology.

### **ASSISTANT PARISH PRIEST:**

After completing his seminary days, he was appointed to help for two months in the parish of Mulagumoodu. In June 1969 he worked as Assistant Parish Priest in parish of Madathattuvilai and later in June 1970 he was appointed as Assistant parish priest at Kurusady.

Selected to Teach in St. Paul’s Seminary:

St. Paul’s Seminary at Tiruchirapalli where Fr. Hieronymus did his Philosophy and Theology was run by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. It was at this time the Jesuits of St. Paul’s Seminary decided to induct diocesan priests as members of the Staff. Fr. Hieronymus and a priest from the Diocese of Tanjore were the first diocesan priests to be selected to the staff at St. Paul’s Seminary. Fr. Hieronymus joined the seminary as a member of the staff in June 1971. He was prefect of the Philosophers and taught Logic to the students of Philosophy.

Study at the Biblical Institute, Rome:

At the end of one year of teaching at St. Paul’s Seminary, the superiors selected him to do higher studies in Sacred Scriptures. Hence he was sent to the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome to specialize in Sacred scriptures. Fr. Hieronymus began his biblical studies at the Biblical Institute in October 1972. He completed Licenciante in Sacred Scriptures at the Biblical Institute in the beginning of 1976.



## **Doctoral Research at the Gregorian University:**

Fr. Hieronymus was asked to continue his doctoral studies. He did his research in the Letters of St. Paul under the guidance of Prof. E. Rasco S.J. of the Pontifical Gregorian University. The theme of his doctoral research was the “Christological motivations in Pauline paraenesis”. The thesis was judged to be of very high quality and he was awarded the highest grade “SUMMA CUM LAUDE”. His thesis was published later as a book by the European University study series, Frankfurt, Germany.

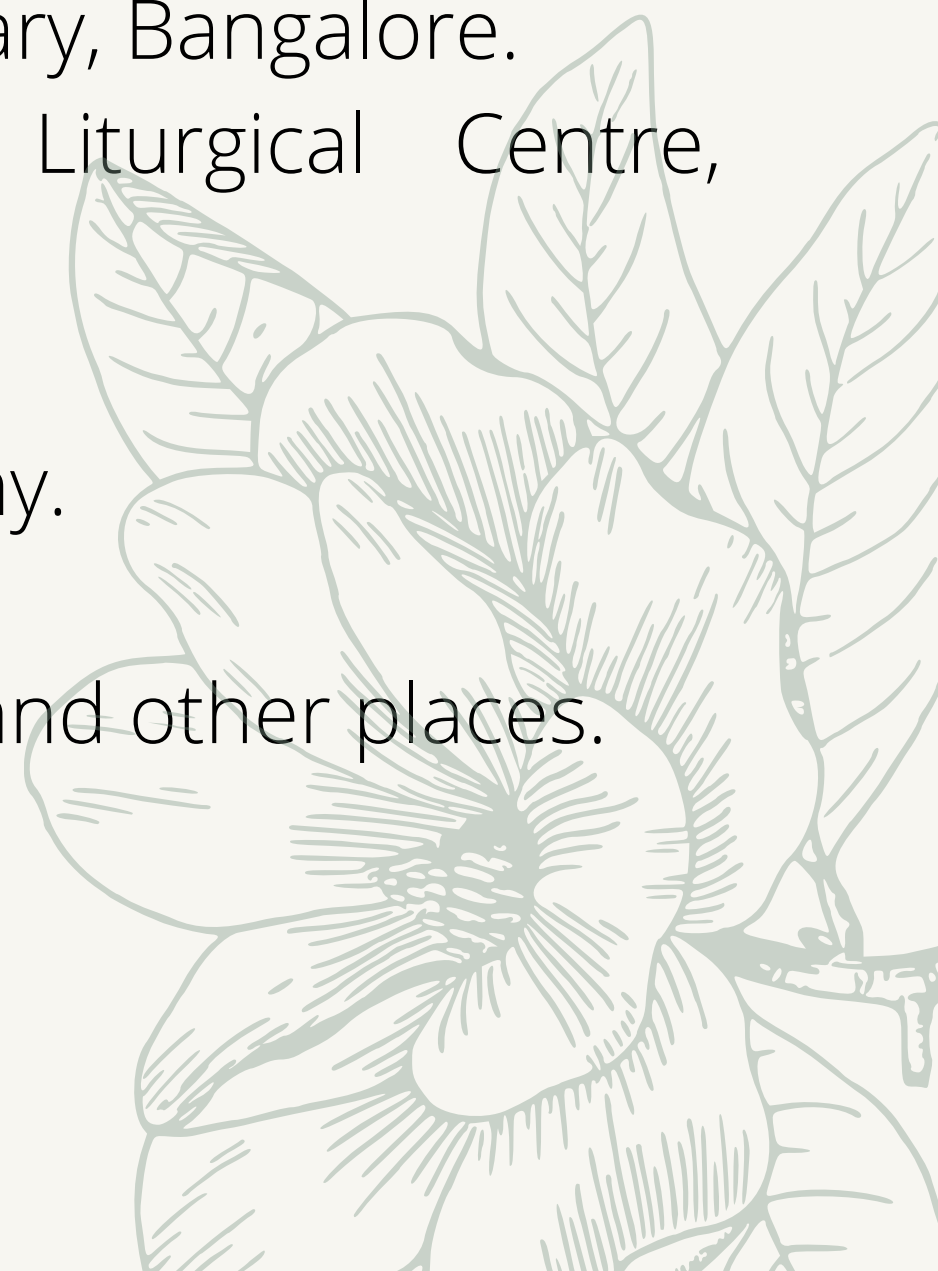
## **Priestly Formator and Biblical Teacher:**

Fr. Hieronymus returned to St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli after completing his doctoral programme in 1980. He was formator of students to Priesthood for over 20 years (1971-72; 1980-1995 (two years break bet. 1987-89 working as Parish Priest as at Puthenturai Parish of the diocese of Kottar) and 2000-2006). He was known for his humanness, friendliness and understanding as a formator. He taught most subjects of Sacred Scriptures, but very especially the Letters of St. Paul, Gospel of St. John, The Synoptic Gospels and the Pentateuch. He taught for over 22 years as a full time Professor, 9 years as a non-resident Professor and 5 years as part time Professor. He still continues teaching at St. Paul's Seminary and other places. He is a good teacher and students appreciate his classes.

## **Teaching career**

He was teaching Sacred Scriptures also in several other Institutes.

- Arulkadal - The Jesuit Theological College in Chennai
- Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai
- M.Th. Programme in St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore.
- National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre, Bangalore.
- Morning Star College in Culcutta.
- Caupchin Theological College Amalashram, Trichy.
- Lumen Institute, Tindivanam
- St. Paul's Bible Institute, Poonamallee, Chennai and other places.
- Arokia Niketan, Vailankanni



## **Vicar General:**

Fr. Hieronymus was appointed as Vicar General of the Diocese of Kottar in July 1995. He has been very active in promoting participatory structures, lay involvement, decentralization and primary and higher education. He placed special emphasis on the programme of self – reliance for the diocese of Kottar.

Year 2000 and Afterwards:

In the Diocese of Kottar, the term of Vicar General is fixed for five years. Hence at the expiry of his term as Vicar General Fr. Hieronymus has been called to work in St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli where he had been working since June 1980. Fr. Hieronymus joined the staff of St. Paul's Seminary once again from June 2000 and worked there till June, 2006.



## **PUBLICATIONS:**

### **A) Translations**

1.Fr. Hieronymus translated the Roman Document 'Eucharisticum Mysterium' published in May 1967, in Tamil.

2. Fr. Hieronymus, already during his Seminary days, was the organiser of the translation of the Documents of Second Vatican Council. He edited the Tamil Version of the II Vatican Council Documents in collaboration with several others in 1967. It was the first translation of the Council Documents in an Indian language. He is the co-editor along with V. Paul Leon and L. Anthuvan of the 2nd (1968), 3rd (1987), 4th (2000), and 5, th 6,th 7th (2013) and 8th (2014) editions (2012) of the Vatican Documents in Tamil.

3.He was involved in the Revision of the Catholic Tamil Bible, done by Bottero in 1904.

4.From 1989 to 1995 Fr. Hieronymus was involved in the translation of the Interconfessional Bible in Tamil. He translated the Book of Jeremiah along with Bishop J. Susaimanickam. He was also the coordinator for the New Testament. He himself translated the Gospel of St. John, 1,2,3 Letters of St. John and edited the Tamil translation of the New Testament in collaboration with Rev. Jeya Kumar. The Interconfessional Bible was published in November 1996.





## **A) Commentaries:**

1. Already when Fr. Hieronymus was Assistant Parish Priest at Madathattuvilai in the year 1969, he founded with his friends 'Arulvakku Mantram', Association for the of God. He was its Secretary till 1972 when he went for his higher studies in Rome. He was secretary again from 1980 upto 1987. He edited, along with the collaboration of others, 15 commentaries of the Books of the New Testament.

2. He himself wrote a commentary on the Gospel of St. John, for this series.

3. From 1993 Bible Scholars from Catholic and Protestant sides came together to prepare commentaries for the books of the Bible, based on the Tamil Common Bible. Fr. Hieronymus was appointed the Convenor of the group and was the head the editorial board. 26 Commentaries are already published and rest (20) are in preparation. Each Commentary volume contains 200-300 pages.





## A) **WRITINGS:**

1.He published a book on Religious Freedom along with Fr. A. Irudayam on the occasion of their priestly ordination in 1968.

2.In 1984 he prepared the synopsis of the four Gospels in Tamil in collaboration with Fr. R. Mary John.

3.In 1990, European University Study Series published his thesis 'Christological Motives and Motivated Actions' in Pauline Paraenesis (Frankfurt)

4.Fr. Hieronymus published a Book on 'Introduction to the common Bible' in 1995. This book gave the history of Bible translations, of interconfessional Bible translations, obstacles encountered in interconfessional bible translation and special features of this translation. It was received with great enthusiasm.

5.In 1996 Fr. Hieronymus published book on the Gospel of St. John in Tamil. This contains an introduction to John and his thought with focus on pastoral life. It was reprinted by St. Paul's Bible Institute in 1998.

6.In 1997 the book on St. John was enlarged and a new edition appeared with new articles.

7.The third (2005) and fourth (2008) enlarged editions of the book on John were published by Vaigarai publications, Dindugal

8.In 2010, a booklet on the thoughts of the Pauline letters, along with thoughts on priesthood by Fr. C. Amirtharaj (Nfhjik kzpfs;) was edited and published by Fr. J. Francis Xavier

9.Shortly to appear: A detailed Commentary on the Gospel of St. John in Tamil.

Besides these books and other publications, Fr. Hieronymus has contributed several articles for Tamil Biblical, Theological and other Journals. Apart from his articles in journals like Viviliya Virunthu, Thozhan, Then Oli etc. here below are listed a few of his other more recent articles.



1. தமிழில் பொது விவிலியம்: சில சிக்கல்களும் சிறப்புகளும், **மறை அருவி** (ஜூலை – செப்டம்பர் 1992) 104-124.
2. விவிலியத்தில் விடுதலை, **பாசறைப் பகிர்வுகள்** (திருச்சி 1994) 59-80.
3. A Biblical Perspective in relation to globalization, **Jeevadhara** (Jan – 1995) 65-71.
4. மரியாதைப் பன்மையும் இருபாலருக்கும் பொருந்தப் பேசலும், **திருவிவிலியம் - பொதுமொழிபெயர்ப்பு: நினைவுமலர்** (திண்டிவனம் 1995) 76-80.
5. இயேசுவின் ஆன்மீகம், **பாறையைப் பிளக்கும் வேர்கள்** (திருச்சி 1996) 60-80.
6. விவிலியப் பொருள்கோள் விளக்கம்: அதன் வரலாறும் சில சிறப்புக் கூறுகளும், **21-ஆம் நூற்றாண்டில் விவிலியம்** (சென்னை 1999, 27-44)
7. தொடக்கத் திருச்சபையில் பொது நிலையினர் பணி, **மறை அருவி** (ஜூலை – அக்டோபர் 2000) 171-184.
8. திருச்சபையில் தலைமை, **மறை அருவி** (ஜூலை – டிசம்பர் 2001) 143-171
9. சீடர்களின் இறை அனுபவம், **இறை அனுபவம்** (திருச்சி 2002) 158-169.
10. விவிலியத்தில் பண்பாட்டுமயமாக்கல், **மறை அருவி** (ஜனவரி – ஜூன் 2003) 21-30.
11. Wars in the Bible, **Vaiharai** (March – June 2003) 5-25.
12. Priestly Ministry, **பணியில் பவியாகும் பங்கேற்பு** (தூத்துக்குடி 2004) 16-23.
13. Preaching the Bible, **Vaiharai** (2004) 26-43.
14. Priestly Ministry – Biblical Basis, **Vaiharai** (March – June 2004) 26-35.
15. Jesus, the light of the World, **The Devine shepherd's Voice** (October – December 2004) 217 – 222.



16. குருத்துவப் பணி: ஒரு விவிலியப் பார்வை, **இறையாட்சிக்காக இறையாட்சியாக** (திண்டுக்கல் 2005, 42-55)
17. பவுல் காட்டும் வாழ்க்கை நெறி, **அறமே வாழ்வாக: அடிப்படை அறநெறி இறையியல்** (சென்னை 2005) 113-134.
18. விவிலிய மறு விளக்கம் - இயேசுவின் பாணியில், **மறை அருவி** (ஜனவரி - மார்ச் 2006) 29-39
19. Mary at the Cana Marriage, **Mary in the New Millennium** (Vailankanni 2007) 18-21.
20. தூய பவுலின் பணியும் வாழ்வும், **எல்லார்க்கும் எல்லாமாய்: பவுல் அன்றும் இன்றும்** (சென்னை 2009, 1-29.
21. திருத்தாதர் பவுலின் திருச்சபையியல் பார்வையில் இன்றைய திருச்சபை, **இரண்டாயிரத்தில் பவுல்** (திருச்சி 2009) 46-74.
22. தொடக்கத் திருச்சபையில் தலைமைப் பண்புகள், **தளிர்க்கும் இறையியல்கள்: அறுவதாம் அகவையில் பேராசிரியர் பெலிகஸ் வில்பிரட் அவர்களைச் சிறப்பிக்கும் நூல்** (சென்னை 2009) 211-219.
23. Public Morality in the letters of St. Paul, **Vaiharai** (January – December 2010) 96-112.
24. பவுலின் அறவியல், **பவுல்: சிந்தனைக் களஞ்சியம்** (திருச்சி 2011) 354-361.
25. விசுவாசம் - நம்பிக்கை - எதிர்நோக்கு, **நான் நம்புகிறேன்** (சென்னை 2013) 88-95.
26. "Thou shalt not be Corrupt: Biblical Perspectives on Corruption / Evil" in Corruption in Public Life: A Theological Response (Bangalore 2013) 89-110.
27. Lesson from the early church for church leadership of tomorrow, **Jeevadhara** (January 2014) 13-24.





## **SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT:**

### **1. Maanuda Thozhamai:**

In 1992 Fr. Hieronymus founded Maanuda Thozhamai (Human Fellowship) together with socially minded people of the town of Tiruchirapalli. Maanuda Thozhamai has as its main objective to work for the betterment of the poor people, especially those living in rural areas, particularly the Dalits. The members of Maanuda Thozhamai themselves contributed their mite to help people in need. Maanuda Thozhamai had adopted several villages near the city of Tiruchirapalli and worked there for the improvement of the rural poor people.

### **2. Fellowship Trust:**

Fr. Hieronymus also founded the fellowship trust in the year 1996. It aimed at helping poor people especially Cobblers, living at Dharmanathapuram, a suburb of Tiruchirapalli. The fellowship trust started a Footwear production unit which did not prove to be a success.

### **3. Becker Education Trust:**

Fr. Hieronymus is also the founder member of Becker Education Trust. This trust helps school children and students in the fisher villages of Kil and Mel Midalam to pursue their studies. Since these villages were identified as the poorest villages in Kanyakumari District, the Becker Education Trust concentrates its work in these two villages.



#### **4. Kanyakumari District Children Welfare Trust:**

Fr. Hieronymus is a Founder Member and President of the trust that runs children's homes in Midalam, Nallayanpuram and Vellamadam. With the help of German friends from the area of Lampertheim these homes are run. Mr. Axel Fischer and others are co-ordinating these efforts. Fr. Hieronymus along with Fr. Patrick Xavier and others together with the Parish Priests of these places and other lay people helps these homes to function effectively for a better future of poor children.

#### **5. St. Boniface Anbagam:**

Fr. Hieronymus is also a member and former President of St. Boniface Anbham Society. The society was founded by Msgr Albert Diedrich of Kassel, Germany. Anbhagam conducts children's home at Zionpuram in Kanyakumari, Vadampakkam near Chennai and in Nagamangalam near Trichy. Boys and girls are motivated and helped for their studies. Training and helps are also given for their future life.

**6.** Fr. Hieronymus is one of the Co. founders and the first Chairman cum Director of **Gerdi Gutperle Agasthiyar Muni Child Care Centre** at Vellamadam. This 100 bedded Children hospital gives quality health care accessible and affordable to the poor children of three southern districts, i.e. Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin.

