



Montfortian Mission in S. Pudur Parish

S. PUDUR, India - From the first book of Genesis to the last book of Revelation, the Bible begins and ends with the mission. Mission is the human association with the one who is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. Therefore, mission includes always God in which people are associated with God's plan. Bible and the mission are closely connected. In S. Pudur, the faith of the people existed in this region for 400 years. It is a part of Kumbakonam Diocese. Previously, this parish belonged to Vadagari which is our neighbouring parish. From that main parish, S. Pudur was bifurcated. Before S. Pudur was raised to a parish, people had to go all the way to Vadagari parish which is about 14 km from the main parish for their spiritual, economical, pastoral and psychological needs. To meet the present day needs of these believers, S. Pudur was separated from the mother parish and erected to the status as parish on 16th July 1998, by *Emeritus* Rt. Rev Peter Remigius, the Bishop of Kumbakonam. After which, this parish was entrusted to our congregation.

Activities of the main parish:

Our main parish is situated in Annai Nagar and it is dedicated to "**Our Lady of Good Health**". I took up this parish on September 18, 2021 as parish priest and I have a Regent (brother) who assists me in the pastoral activities. I am inspired by the words of St. Montfort to do my pastoral work in this parish. I recall the words of our Founder (RM no. 56), that is "*To renew the spirit of Christianity among the faithful.*" This renewal helps the people to have the inner transformation and to lead a pious life. I would like to share some of the activities of the parish which I have started five months since my arrival.

1. Catechism for the children on Sundays
2. Legion of Mary: Initiating them to attend the meeting in the diocesan level
3. Parish council
4. Youth formation: Taking the youths frequently for the awareness program to the Diocese
5. Tuition center
6. Women organization
7. Altar boys association
8. Montfortian lay association
9. Vincent de Paul
10. Administering the Sacraments
11. Small Christian community (SCC) and visits to the families, etc.

Population:

In and around S. Pudur parish, roughly there are about 10,000 people. All these people belong to different religions and denominations. But among them, the Catholics are around 2,500. This parish has 13 substations and all over the substations, we have 600 Catholic families. Every day in the morning, Mass is celebrated in the main parish and in the evening, three to four times in a week, the Masses are celebrated in the substations between 7:00 to 8:30 pm. We always begin the Mass with the praying of the Holy Rosary.

Evangelization is an essential aspect of the church's mission. Everyone needs to be catechized and evangelized and I am happy to continue the mission of St. Montfort. Though this Parish is situated among the religious groups, I could see the religious harmony among the people who belong to different religions and denominations. This parish has produced few priests and nuns. We have Fr. Amal who is a Montfortian priest, one Montfortian sister, one religious priest and one diocesan priest. There are also few candidates who are in the different stages of formation.

Chapels in the substations:

Among the thirteen substations, only twelve substations have chapels. However, in one substation that has no chapel, I celebrate Mass in the open area. Among the thirteen chapels, one is dedicated to our Founder and that substation is called **Montfort Nagar**.

Some of the events

1. Suppose Christmas

We had in the parish suppose Christmas celebration on December 19, 2021. People from eight substations participated. They put up dances from the devotional hymns and a skit from the Holy Bible. On this auspicious day, we gave to the poor some gifts and Christmas cake.

2. Journeying together: Synod 2021-2023

On February 8, 2022, Fr. Eugene had come from the diocese of Kumbakonam to our parish to inaugurate the Synod 2021-2023 at the parish level and to speak about the synodal journey, meaning and understanding. The faithful had benefitted.

3. Youth Meeting

We had invited Fr. John Bosco, the Youth Director of the Kumbakonam diocese on March 11, 2022 to our parish to celebrate Mass and to address and empower the youths.

4. Parish Lenten Retreat

I had organized a retreat for my parishioners on March 20, 2022. People came all over the substations and also from our neighboring parishes. We started in the morning with a talk, followed by tea break, then talk, penitential rite, Mass, and finally all the participants were blessed with the Holy Oil. The faithful were very happy and they all renewed their spiritual life in this season of lent.

Montfortian mission today

1. Giving the mission of hope to the hopeless
2. Mission through presence and personal example. "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers" (*EN no. 41*)
 - Washing the feet of the disciples (*Jn 13:15*)
 - Mahatma Gandhi, father of our Nation said "My life is my message."
3. Mission is not the word that counts but the meaning that lies behind.

St. Louis-Marie de Montfort was a very talented person. In his mission, he used all his talents. His love for the poor and for the children was remarkable. He spread devotion to Mary and renewed the baptismal vows among the people and he wrote many books. He died at the very young age but he accomplished much. He wants his disciples to be daring, dynamic and zealous. He faced so many challenges, yet he was happy to carry out his mission. Challenges are there in the mission. Let us draw the inspiration from the missionary saints. They are Robert de Nobilee, William Carey, Francis Xavier, John de Britto, Leonardo Chinnami and our Founder.

Church exists by mission as fire exist by burning - Emil Bruner.

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