

# In the Father's House

«As we have been united  
in the profession of the faith,  
so let us keep ourselves united  
in suffrage and intercession».  
(Fr Alberione)



At 4:00 PM (local time) on Sunday, 14 April 2024, he died in the Kochi infirmary (Kerala, India) due to cardiac arrest

## **FATHER PAUL VARGHESE VECHOOR**

**89 years, 71 of Pauline life, 69 of profession, 61 of priesthood**

Father Paul Varghese Vechoor was born on 6 November 1934 in Paika, in the diocese of Palai, Kerala, to parents Mathew Vechoor and Theresa, the fourth of 6 brothers and 3 sisters. His younger brother, the late Father Leo Vechoor, was also a Pauline priest. The young Varghese entered the Congregation on 22 January 1953, began the novitiate on 19 October of the same year and made his First Profession, taking the name Paul, on 20 October 1954.

After completing the philosophy course in the community of Allahabad, Father Paul left for Rome to continue his theological studies in the Pauline International College. During his third year of theology, on 8 September 1959, he made his Perpetual Profession and was ordained a priest on 1 July 1962. Father Paul, together with his companion, the late Father Albert Rego, was one of the first two Indian Paulines to be ordained priests.

Immediately after his ordination he returned to India and received the task of working in the field of formation. He spent almost 18 years as Master of various groups: of Novices for 14 years in four different periods both in Allahabad (1962-1967) and in Bangalore (1978-80, 1994-96, 1999-2004); of the Aspirants in Mumbai (1967-1968); of the Clerics in Bangalore (1990-1991) and of the Postulants in Bangalore (1993-1994). Father Paul was deeply convinced that the most effective method of Pauline formation was to bear witness with one's own life to the values that one wants to transmit to young people. One of his former novices testified thus: "As a novice, what I admired in Father Paul and what touched me most was his simplicity and kindness, his availability and accessibility."

During his stay in New Delhi (1968-1978), he was superior of the Community for six years, Chief Editor of the Catholic Directory of India and collaborator at the New Delhi Book Center.

From 1980 to 1986 he served the Congregation as General Councilor and from 1986 to 1990 he served as Superior of the Province of India. He was also Superior of the community of Allahabad from 1991 to 1992, a position which he was unable to complete due to his health problems.

Another area of ministry of Father Paul was at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy and St. Luke's Parish, Annanagar, Chennai, where he served for two terms (2004-2007 and 2011-2014). At the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy, he became a much sought-after confessor and counsellor, and the faithful of the parish and pilgrims from outside began to frequent him for spiritual direction.

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He was Superior in the communities of New Delhi (1972-1976), Allahabad (1991-1992) and delegate in Kozhikode (1996-1997). Father Paul participated in two General Chapters of the Congregation (1980 and 1986). He served the community of Vijayawada from 2007 to 2010 as bursar and the community of Bangalore from 2015 to 2019. During this period, he was also at the famous Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health in Vailankanni, Tamil Nadu, where he served as confessor and spiritual animator of pilgrims (2015-2017). In 2019, he was shifted to the Kochi community for treatment of various age-related ailments. He had memory problems and was bedridden for almost a year, until he breathed his last.

Being one of the pioneers of the Province, Father Paul lived with faith and courage the joys and sufferings that are part of every beginning. The younger Paulines are inspired by him and remember him with love and esteem for his dedication to the Pauline vocation.

May the Lord welcome this dear brother of ours who has given himself so generously for the Congregation and grant him the eternal reward. We ask Father Paul to intercede for numerous and holy vocations in our Congregation and in the entire Pauline Family.

*Rome, 15 April 2024*

*Father Vito Spagnolo, ssp*

*On Tuesday 16 April, at 6:00 AM, a memorial Mass will be celebrated in the community of Kochi, while the funeral will take place in the afternoon at 2:30 PM at the church of St. Joseph, in Paika, his hometown, and his body will be buried in the parish cemetery.*

**The Circumscription Superiors should inform their communities for the prescribed suffrages (Const. 65 and 65.1).**