

Obituary of Fr. Sanjay Francis

The Priests, Religious and the Faithful of Meerut diocese are in deep sorrow over the sad and sudden demise of Fr. Sanjay Francis due to Covid-19. He was admitted in St. Joseph's Hospital, Mariamnagar, Ghaziabad on April 13, with fever. There he was tested positive for Covid-19 and was treated. With the good treatment and the loving care of the MSJ sisters he was fast improving and was to be discharged on April 17, Saturday. Since he complained of weakness and fatigue he was kept for observation. On April 19, Monday he felt uncomfortable to breath and so he was helped with oxygen. But gradually his condition began to be critical. The doctor suggested that he needs the administration of Remdesivir injections since Covid-19 affected his lungs badly. On April 20, Tuesday I requested Fr. George the director of Holy Family Hospital for Remdesivir injections since it was not available anywhere. Fr. George knowing our critical situation spared for us the injections kept for the patients of his hospital. By noon his condition began to deteriorate and he was placed on Ventilator support and the injections were administered. I hoped that by evening I would get the news of his improvement. But Sr. Ally MSJ informed that his condition was very critical. At 11.15 P.M. Sr. Ally called me and told that Fr. Sanjay Francis is gasping. By 11.30 P.M. I was informed that Fr. Sanjay Francis breathed his last. On April 21, Wednesday at 6.30 A.M. following the protocols we brought the sealed body of Fr. Sanjay Francis by a special Ambulance straight to the Cemetery in Saket, Meerut and conducted the funeral prayers and buried his body. Since it was a severe case of Covid-19 we were advised not to have more people. So I, along with Fr. George Kolleril the Parish Priest of Indirapuram, Fr. Jesuamirtham, Fr. John Monteiro and some helpers wearing PPE kit officiated the funeral service. After the burial we offered the Holy Mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Sanjay Francis in St. Luke's Church, Saket at 8.30 A.M.

Fr. Sanjay Francis was born on January 15, 1986 in Sadkada village of St. Pius parish, Bachraun in the diocese of Meerut, as the first child to Mr. Ompal Nathaniel and Mrs. Jasveeri Magdalene. He has three brothers and no sisters. The whole family, the parents and the children were baptized on June 19, 1994. After completing Intermediate he joined St. John's Minor Seminary, Sardhana on June

30, 2004. After completing two years of Minor Seminary formation he was sent to St. Francis Xavier's Regional Seminary in Etmadpur, Agra for Spiritual Orientation course and Philosophy. He did his two years of Regency in St. Mary's Parish, Milak Khanam and Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Rataul. Then he was sent to St. Joseph's Regional Seminary, Allahabad for Theology. After completing his formation he was ordained a Priest on May 3, 2016. His first appointment was to assist in St. Joseph's Cathedral parish from June 16, 2016. After two years of his faithful service in the Cathedral Parish he was transferred to Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Rataul as co-pastor on May 3, 2018. From there on July 26, 2020 he was transferred to Vailankanni Matha Shrine Parish, Indirapuram where he served till his last breath.

Fr. Sanjay Francis was a person of strong faith and deep conviction. He was very docile, respectful and obliging. He was very gentle and soft spoken. He was unassuming and had a heart for the poor. He was very pastoral and was always ready for any service. He was prayerful and readily available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation anytime. The diocese will always miss Fr. Sanjay Francis, a young, committed, holy and faithful priest. May the Risen Lord be merciful to him and grant him eternal reward. I sincerely thank the doctors, Nurses and the MSJ Sisters of St. Joseph's Hospital, Mariamnagar for their dedicated nursing care to Fr. Sanjay Francis. May his soul rest in peace.

+Francis Kalist
Bishop of Meerut
April 21, 2021