

Bishop Francis Kalist Appointed New Archbishop of Pondicherry

Bangalore 19 March 2022 (CCBI): His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed Most Rev. Francis Kalist (64) Bishop of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh as the new Metropolitan Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore in Tamilnadu. This provision was made public on Saturday 19 March, 2022.

Bishop Francis Kalist was born on 23 November, 1957 in Ratapuram, in the district of Kanyakumari, Diocese of Kottar. He attended elementary school in Ratapuram and then entered the minor seminary of St. John's, Sardhana, Meerut. He continued his training at St. Albert's major seminary, Ranchi, for philosophy and theology studies. He was ordained priest on 30 December 1982, in Meerut, and incardinated in the same Diocese.

After ordination he held the following positions: 1982-1984: Vicar, Sacred Heart Church, Roorkee; 1984-1986: Vicar, St. Pius Church , Bachraon; 1986-1989: Pastor, St. James Church , Sirsanal Village; 1989-1995: Pastor, St. Paul's Church , Christnagar; 1995-1999: Pastor, St. Francis Church , Swar; 1999-2002: Rector, St. John's Minor Seminary and Administrator of the Basilica Shrine of " Our Lady of Graces ", Sardhana; 2002-2008: Rector, St. Francis Xavier Regional Philosophate, Etmadpur, Archdiocese of Agra. From 1992 to 2002 he was also diocesan director of evangelization.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed him at the age of 51 as the third Bishop of Meerut on 3 December 2008 and was ordained Bishop on 8 February 2009. He is currently the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Women and the Episcopal Advisor of National Charismatic Service Team. Patron Bishop of the DMI & MMI Religious Congregations.

Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore became vacant on 27 January, 2021 by the resignation of late Archbishop Antony Anandarayar, who passed away on 4 May 2021 due to covid related illness. Bishop Peter Abir Antonysamy of Sultanpet, Kerala was appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese on 27 January 2021.

Archdiocese of Pondicherry has a history of more than 400 years. The "Sui Iuris" of Karnatic Mission (Pondicherry) was established in 1776 and in 1836 it became Vicariate Apostolic of Pondicherry. It was elevated to Archdiocese of Pondicherry in 1886 and the name was changed into Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore in 1953.

There are 3,99,461 Catholic faithful, 105 parishes, 187 diocesan clergy, 84 religious priests, 1,035 religious sisters and 311 educational institutions in the Archdiocese. Dioceses of Dharmapuri, Kumbakonam, Salem and Tanjore are the suffragan dioceses of Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore.