

FR. BRAZ FALEIRO S.J

A Builder and an Apostle of the Underprivileged and the Disorganised

Fr. Braz Conceicao Faleiro was born on 8 December 1936, in Navelim, Salcette - Goa. He entered the Jesuit Novitiate at the age of 18 in Andheri, Mumbai, where he completed his novitiate and Juniorate. He did his licentiate in Philosophy in Braga, Portugal (1958-1961) and Theology in Innsbruck, Austria (1964-1968). He was ordained a priest in Zug, Switzerland on 30 July 1967. He did his Tertianship in Sitagarha, then part of Bihar in March 1970, and pronounced his final vows in 1973. Fr. Braz received a master's in human resources from the University of Manchester, U.K.



Fr. Braz held a number of responsibilities in the Goa-Poona Province, (which later was divided into the Goa and Pune Provinces), such as Director of Workers Association (1971-72), Socius to the Provincial (1974-76), District Superior of Goa District (1984), Superior of Jesuit House, Panjim (1989), and Superior / Treasurer of Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Porvorim (2006-07).

He trained himself in the construction work and was asked to supervise the construction of Jesuit House, Panjim; the repairs and renovation of the Baga Retreat House, and the construction of the Pedro Arrupe Institute, Raia. He also supervised the construction of the Institute of Management at Bhubaneswar in Odisha.

One can aptly state that Fr. Braz was an apostle to the underprivileged and the unorganized. He was one of the first to enter into the social struggle in Goa. He got a taste for this while he was a regent at Our Lady of Grace High school, Bicholim, which was then under the Jesuit Management. Here, 'the guiding hand of God took him among the mine workers who were exploited with overwork and paltry work' (Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Superior General on the occasion of Fr Braz's 50 years in the Society of Jesus, 23.6.2004).

As the Province Coordinator of Social Action in Goa, Fr. Braz supported the struggles of various groups of 'the socially or economically marginalised people.' Along with late Mr. Mathany Saldanha, he involved himself personally in the struggle of the *Ramponkars*, the traditional country boat owners, against the mechanized trawlers. Here, he played a prominent role; he met the fishermen regularly, heard their grievances, held *morchas* and spoke boldly against the injustice done to them, which led to his imprisonment in 1983. His friends in Europe appreciated his social apostolate and liberally supported it with affection and funds.

Though Fr. Braz was offered a sabbatical, rest and self-renewal for a year after his active ministry, he offered his services for the JRS in East Timor. Though these were accepted locally, the higher superiors thought otherwise. But this did not affect his zeal for the love of souls. He took up the apostolate of 'building the faith of fellow Christians.' He took up spiritual ministries, first at the Retreat house in Baga and then at Xavier Residence Porvorim. He was also associated with the 'Jesus Centre', a Catholic Charismatic renewal centre in Panjim, where he became a Spiritual Guide. While at Porvorim, he continued to reach out to those in need.

As a person, Fr. Braz was a good and dedicated religious man of deep prayer and faith in God. He was unassuming, simple and sincere in his lifestyle, a good leader, bold speaker, good organiser, hard worker, had a great love for workers, filled with the spirit of sacrifice, and one who lived up to his commitments.

He became an inmate of the newly opened Goa Jesuit Province Health Care Centre at the Xavier Residence in Porvorim. Due to poor health since 2019, he spent the remainder of his life at the centre. He left for his Father's home on 14th May 2023. The funeral service was held at Our Lady of Snows, church in Raia on 16 May 2023 at 4.00 pm.

May God reward him for his generous services!

Fr. Apollo Cardozo SJ

