



## The Pastor's Page



My dear people of St. Matthew's,

As most of you already know, Fr. Jesudas Mapa died unexpectedly in his room in the rectory last Sunday, March 29, 2009. Fr. Mapa came to assist us here at St. Matthew's in January of 2008. As you will remember, Fr. Mapa had triple-bypass coronary surgery the week before Christmas last year. Although the surgery was successful, his condition was a serious one, and it seems to have been the cause of his death. He died just four days short of his twentieth anniversary of ordination. He is survived by a brother and two sisters, all of whom live with their families in India.

A priest of the diocese of Kottar, India, Fr. Mapa held a Ph.D. in Communications, and had previously served as Director of Communications for his home diocese. For more than six years he worked as a broadcaster for the Vatican Radio Service. An accomplished musician and composer of religious music, he was also the author of thirteen books. At the time of his death he was in the process of completing a manuscript which related to his experiences broadcasting the death and funeral of Pope John Paul II.

This past week, Fr. Mapa was waked for two days in our parish church. Bishop Murphy, along with many priests, celebrated a Mass of Transferral on Wednesday evening. At the request of Fr. Mapa's diocesan bishop, the Most Rev. Peter Remigius, his body has been sent back to India for a diocesan funeral and burial.

Fr. Mapa was a dedicated and holy priest. He was a brother to the priests in the rectory and a true friend. I think it is obvious to all who knew him how much he loved God, his Catholic faith, his priesthood, and the people of St. Matthew's.

Recently, Fr. Mapa spoke at all the Masses to raise money for his charity, "The Pope John Paul II Charitable Trust." As he wrote to us in the bulletin, he created this charity to care for children orphaned by the tsunami of 2004. Many of these children have mental and other disabilities. Each and every one of them was truly his child. His main concern was that this important work continue. I am happy to report that you, the people of St. Matthew's, have given to date more than \$28,000, to help the Missionaries of Charity care for these children. In fact, Fr. Mapa was planning on a trip home next week, so that he could see the children, and begin the building project of a new orphanage. For those of you who may still wish to make a donation, please make checks payable to St. Matthew's, with a note that it is for the "Pope John Paul II Charitable Trust," and we will make sure all the money gets to the children.

Bishop Murphy met with me and a number of Fr. Mapa's priest friends from India the other day. In that meeting he offered his condolences and said something very beautiful and meaningful. He said that it seems to us that Fr. Mapa, dying so young, had so much left to do. "But that is wrong," the Bishop said, "for God to take him now means that his work must have been complete." The task remains for the rest of us to take up the work which still must be done, because it is no longer his, but ours.

Let us give thanks to God for the gift that Fr. Mapa was to us, and let us remember to pray for his soul. I would like to share with you a beautiful prayer composed by the Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman which is most appropriate for Fr. Mapa:

May He support us all the day long, till the shadows lengthen,  
and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed,  
and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.  
Then in His mercy, may He give us a safe lodging,  
and a holy rest, and peace at least.

—Fr. McCartney

