

PROFILE

MOST REV. DR. OSWALD GOMIS **Archbishop Emeritus of Colombo**

His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis was

- Born on 12th December 1932 at Kelaniya.
- He received his primary education at St. Benedict's College, Colombo and transferred to St. Paul's School, Waragoda (Branch of St. Joseph's College) during the war years. Then continued collegiate studies at St. Joseph's College, Colombo.

He joined the Minor Seminary of St. Aloysius, Borella on 16th January 1950 and was promoted to the Major Seminary of St. Bernard, Borella and received the religious habit (dress) on 31st August 1951). He completed his theological studies at the National Seminary in Kandy and was ordained a priest at St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena on 3rd February 1958 by His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray (then Archbishop).

Nominated on 9th April 1968 he received Episcopal Ordination on 17th July 1968 as the Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo and Titular Bishop of Mulia..

He holds a M.A (Educ) from the Adamson University in the Philippines and was conferred a PhD by the Fu Jen University in recognition of services rendered in the field of Social Communications and Education in Asia.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPOINTMENTS AS PRIEST

1958-1960 – Tutorial staff and Bursar of St. Aloysius' Seminary, Borella.

1960 – 1961 – Director, Colombo Catholic Press, Colombo.

1961 – 1968 – Director, Colombo Catholic Press cum Editor, Gnanartha Pradipaya – Sri Lanka's Catholic weekly and "Duthaya", Catholic monthly.

1963 -1965 – Additional duties as Secretary to Auxiliary Bishop Anthony de Saram.

1965 – 1968 – Additional duties as Secretary to Auxiliary Bishop Frank Marcus Fernando.

1965 – 1968 – Notary, Marriage Tribunal.

1965 – 1968 - Censor of Books.

1959 – 1964 – Additional duties as Chaplain to the Leprosy Hospital, Hendela.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPOINTMENTS AS BISHOP

National Level

Auxiliary Bishop of Colombo – 1968 - 1996

Bishop of Anuradhapura – 15.01.1996

Archbishop of Colombo – appointed on 06.07.2002

- o Installed as the Archbishop of Colombo - on 27.07.2002

Secretary, Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka (1968-1975)
Secretary General, Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka (1975-1983), (1989-1995)
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka (1998 - 2005)

- Also served terms as Chairman of the Catholic National Commissions for Education, Culture, Liturgy, Justice and Peace, Catechesis, Bible Translation, Social Communications, Tourism and Migration, Health Care and Prisons, at different intervals.
- Designed the Catholic Flag for the Church in Sri Lanka – 2000

Archdiocesan Level

- Established the religious Congregation of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate – 2004.
- Invited the Religious Sisters - Franciscan Missionaries of Christ the King to the Archdiocese
- Invited the Religious Sisters - Congregation of the Daughters of St. Camillus to serve the aged and sick in the Archdiocese.
- Invited the Reverend Fathers - OFM Conventuals to serve the Archdiocese – 2006.

International Level

- Chairman – FABC Committee for Social Communications (1971-1982)
- Member, Board of Directors (PREIC) Radio Veritas, Philippines.
- Member, Pontifical Commission for Non-Christian Religions, Rome.
- Member, Board of Directors, International Catholic Film Organization (OCIC) Brussels (First Asian to be elected to the post)
- Member, Standing Committee, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (Hong Kong)
- Member, Central Committee, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (Hong Kong)
- Member, Royal Asiatic Society presently
- Member of the Board of Directors of the International Catholic Committee for Migrants – ICMC (1993-1999)
- Secretary General, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (1996-2000)
- Re-elected as the Secretary General, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (2000 – 2004)
- Appointed a Synodal Father on 08.09.2005 by Pope John Paul II.
- Member Synod of Bishop in Rome – 2001
- Led Sri Lankan Delegation to Asian Synod in Rome – 1998
- Attended 11th Synod Meeting in Rome – 2nd to 23rd October 2006

EDUCATIONAL WORK

- Founded – St. Peter’s College, Gampaha Branch
- Founded – St. Peter's College, Udugampola Branch
- Founded – Holy Cross College, Paiyagala Branch.
- Founded – St. Joseph’s College, Enderamulla Branch.
- Founded – St. Joseph's College, Kadolkele Branch
- Founded – Loyola College, Bopitiya Branch
- Founded – Christ the King College, Weliveriya Branch
- Founded – St. Jude’s College, Negombo.
- Founded – Maris Stella College, Bolawalana Branch
- Co-Founded – St. Nicholas’ International College, Colombo
- Founded – St. Nicholas’ International College, Negombo.
- Founded – School of Hope, Paiyagala
- Founded – Our Lady of Victories – Willowarawatte Branch
- Founded – Don Bosco Technical Institute – Nochchiyagama
- Founded – St. Thomas Catholic International College – Seeduwa.

SOCIAL WORK

- Donated Medical Centre to the people of Kelaniya.
- Donated 14 acre land for Home for the Aged in Kelaniya (Home being constructed).
- Involved in housing schemes for the poor.
- Initiated Relief and Rehabilitation work of the Tsunami in 2004
- Construction of houses for Tsunami victims and supplying of livelihood
- Construction of schools for children
- Starting a Scholarship Program for the Tsunami affected children
- Relief Work for the Vanni / North Displaced people
- Starting " Archbishop Scholarships Scheme " - 2009

CIVIL APPOINTMENTS

- Member, University Council - University of Colombo (1977-2001)
- Member, University Legislation Committee – University of Colombo (1977-2001)
- Member, Committee to set up Chair for Christian Civilization – University of Kelaniya.
- Catholic Correspondent to the National Press Commission.
- Chairman, Roman Catholic religious Affairs Advisory Board (1968-1977)
- Member of Committee to Investigate, Illicit Importation of Newsprint – 1964
- Member of Committee to report on Impact of Tourism on Culture (Ministry of Cultural Affairs – 1980)
- Headed the Christian Team to the All Party Conference (on Ethnic Issue) 1984
- Chairman, Catholic Advisory Board, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.
- Member, Catholic Advisory Board, Rupavahini Corporation.
- Member National Committee for the Restoration of the Jaffna Library and Public Libraries in Sri Lanka (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Chancellor of the University of Colombo (2001 – to date)
- Member of the Advisory Committee of National Institute of Education

- Chairman Advisory Committee of "Kithunu Upadeshaka Sabawa" SLBC and Rupavahini – (2002 to 2009)
- Organized a Christmas Fellowship lunch for the Buddhist monks on 28.12.2006 at the Archbishop's House, to foster solidarity and understanding.

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ATTENDED

- Attended 6 Plenary Assemblies of FABC held in Manila (1970), Taipei(1974), Calcutta (1978), Bangkok (1982), Bangkok (1996) and Seoul (2000).
- AECD “Ecumenical Conference on Development and Peace” – 1970 May – Tokyo. Sacred Heart University.
- Also attended several other FABC Formation Institutes (BIRA, BIMA, BISA etc) and Social Communications Meetings (UNDA, OCIC and UCIP) in the Asian Region.
- Led Sri Lankan bishops to the Ad Limina Visit to Pope Benedict XVI – October 2006.

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS CHAIRED

- International Population Conference – Baguio City, Philippines.
- Seminar on Inter-religious Dialogue – organized by the Secretariat for Dialogue, Rome (Paris 1971)
- Konrad – Adenauer - Foundation – Mass Media Conference – May 7th to 17th 1972 – Tokyo – Manila.
- International Seminar on Film OCIC (Petropolis, Brazil 1975)
- Pan Asian Meeting on Social Communications – organised by the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications (Tokyo 1974)

BOOKS PUBLISHED

- ❖ Mahopadeshaya (complete Catechism for the family in Sinhala) - 1986
- ❖ Mahopadeshaya in Tamil - 2006
- ❖ Lama Bibalaya (Bible stories for children)
- ❖ Sinhalaye Kithunu Urumaya (Christian contribution in Sri Lanka)
- ❖ Maga Hondata Thibenam (a reply to Christian Fundamentalists)
- ❖ Santhana Siritha (life of St. Anne)
- ❖ Yovun Bibalaya (a Bible for Youth)
- ❖ Devidhano Daruwan Amathannaha (the Bible Stories for children)
- ❖ Jesu Samidun Bharathaye (Jesus in India – A Response)
- ❖ Reminiscences of Tewatta – 27.08.2006
- ❖ "Thewatte Mathaka Satahan" – 27.08.2006
- ❖ Some Christian Contributions in Sri Lanka (English)– 06.04.2009
- ❖ “Sri Lankawe Kithunu Dayakathwaya” Sinhala – 06.07.2009
- ❖ The Catholic Family Catechism – December 2010..

As a journalist he has also contributed articles to reputed newspapers such as the Daily News, Sunday Observer, Dinamina, Silumina, Daily Mirror, Lankadipa, Messenger, Dawasa and other journals.

Presently he is contributing a regular feature on Sri Lankan Catholic Church history to the Catholic Sinhala weekly Gnanartha Pradipaya. So far he has contributed 81 articles.

AWARDS RECEIVED

- Josephian Honours for Excellence – 11th Feb. 1994 (for outstanding and distinguished service to public life)
- Eminent past pupil – Diamond Jubilee Award 01.06.1995 (for outstanding service to public life)
- All Ceylon Muslim Educational Conference - Award “in appreciation of the distinguished and invaluable service in the field of Education in general and Religious and Cultural Education in particular”.- 28th January 1995.
- Sebastianite Award of Excellence – 2007
- Sri Lanka – United Nations Friendship Organisation (SUNFO) “Goodwill Ambassador” Award for “invaluable services and immense contribution to society.”
- “Life Fellow” Award of the International Institute of Management – “As an exemplary professional manager.”

COUNTRIES VISITED

India, Pakistan, Burma, Nepal, Maldives, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Peoples Republic of China, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, Oman, Kuwait, U.A.E, Qatar, Japan, Indonesia, Kenya, Republic of South Africa, Italy, U.K. France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Luxembourg, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Malta, Cyprus, Israel, United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil.

Rev. Fr. Sunil de Silva
Secretary – Administration.