

## About Our Parish Priest: Fr. Antony Megalan Sellam

### A Calling Heard Early

Fr. Antony Megalan Sellam, born in 1972 in southern India, felt a call to the priesthood as early as third grade. This vocation only strengthened after facing persecution for his faith twice during his youth. The youngest of five children, Fr. Antony has a large extended family, including nine nieces and nephews and eight great nieces and nephews. Sadly, his father passed away in 2009, just after celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary with Fr. Antony's mother.

### Academic & Pastoral Journey

Following his sociology degree, Fr. Antony entered St. Aloysius Seminary and later completed his Philosophy and Theology studies at St. Joseph's Seminary in Mangalore. He holds a Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degree affiliated with the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Kamarai University.

Upon ordination, Fr. Antony served under Fr. Edwin, a pioneer of the Basic Christian Communities movement in Asia. The following year, he became the parish priest of two churches and the Diocesan Youth Chaplain. Before coming to the UK in 2009, he served as the vice-rector of St. Xavier's Cathedral, Kottar.

### Ministry in the UK

Fr. Antony's first UK parish was St. Mary's, where he served for six years. There, he initiated several programs, including a Bible Class for all ages, a Holy Family association for newly married couples, youth groups, and fellowships to welcome various nationalities and language groups. In October 2015, he was appointed parish priest of St. John Fisher Church, Rochester.

### Responding to Challenges

The pandemic presented unique challenges. Fr. Antony ensured continued connection with parishioners by sending recorded prayers and Masses every day, making regular visits, and even cooking meals for those in need. He also used this time to undertake necessary building projects.

### Building a Vibrant Community

In October 2018, Fr. Antony became the parish priest of Holy Cross, Catford. During his tenure, he has gotten to know most parishioners by name, fostering a strong sense of community. He encourages parishioners to actively participate through the "One Person One Mission" policy. Since the pandemic, the parish has continued to thrive under Fr. Antony's leadership. He established three councils – **St. Mary's** (Liturgy & Worship), **St. Paul's** (Catechises & Formation), and **St. Joseph's** (Evangelization & Outreach) – in collaboration with the Finance Committee and Building & Hartley Hall Committee. Additionally, he started the "**9 PM Monastery**" virtual prayer initiative in 2020, which continues to bring people together for the Night Prayer of the Church.



**Fr Antony's Cat:** Fr. Antony's feline friend is Raja, a lovely and friendly cat he adopted during the pandemic. He enjoys teaching Raja tricks, including the sign of the Cross, though it's a playful challenge for the furry friend!

### A Welcoming Presence

Fr. Antony finds great joy in serving the Holy Cross community, which he describes as lovely, vibrant, and spiritual.