

## **Leyamma Mundakapadam Agathimandiram (1911-1943)**

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*"I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me."*

Leyamma was born on 25 October, 1911, to Puthuparampil house of Mundakappadam, a village near Kottayam. Cherian and Kuttியamma were her parents. Leyamma had three elder brothers. Her father, Cherian was a very kind hearted man who used to provide all sort of help for the poor plantation labourers. He used to take care of the sick labourers at his home and cared for them as a family member.

When Leyamma was 7 years old, her mother died. Being the only girl in the house she had to shoulder the responsibility of a home. After few years her father also died. Her elder brother took care of her then on. She could study only up to Std 7. In May, 1932, she joined the Vanitha Mandiram in Tiruvalla for a two year course. Miss Callaway, an Australian CMS missionary; was the Principal.

In 1934, Leyamma's elder brother P.C. George and his friends prayed for an opportunity to start an Agathimandiram for the sick, poor and neglected people living on the streets of Kottayam. Leyamma whole heartily welcomed their ideas and agreed to be the first Sevika. They started the Mandiram and Leyamma and her brother George were the first workers and leaders. During the next 10 years, like Mother Teresa she took care of hundreds of sick, old, bed ridden, paralyzed people. She washed their clothes and cooked for them. Day and night without rest she worked for the Mandiram. Many poor people on the verge of death were picked up from the streets given a place where death was dignified and with eternal hope, lying in her hands rather than on the streets.

Leyamma was faithful to her master till the very end of her life. On 17 July, 1943, there was a special meeting of the Sevika Sanghom in her home parish. Rt. Rev. Mathews Mar Athanasius was the chief guest. He had visited the Agathimandiram the same day and was very pleased with work going on in the Mandiram under the leadership of Leyamma and her brother. On Sunday (18 July, 1943) she became sick with cholera. In the early hours of Monday (2:45 am, 19 July, 1943) she passed away. The funeral service was conducted on the same day, by Rt. Rev. Mathews Mar Athanasius. Thousands attended her funeral.

Her tomb stone in the Chemarapally Bethel Mar Thoma Church Cemetery reads as follows:-

IN MEMORY OF LEYAMMA  
Born on 9th Thulam 1087  
Died on 2<sup>nd</sup> Karkadakam 1118  
Serving at the Poor Home,  
Mundakapadam

