

Dear Friends,

I am so grateful to you all for your kind prayers and blessings for me to have a good vacation back home with good health and sound body. I really felt your blessings by the protection of God the Father. I would like to share with you among the Basilica that I had visited in this vacation. All glory to God the father.

Our Lady of Lourdes Basilica, Poondi.

This Catholic pilgrimage center located in Tamil Nadu, South India, Poondi is a small village located near Thirukattupalli in Thiruvaiyaru Taluk (also spelled as Taluka), about 35 km away from Thanjavur. Poondi is usually associated with Alamelupuram village located besides the Basilica and so is called as Poondi-Alamelupuram, officially.



In the beginning of the 18th century, a great Italian Jesuit missionary Rev. Fr. Constantine Joseph Beschi S.J. popularly known as “Veeramamuniver”, built a church and named it as the church of “Mary Queen of Immaculate Conception”. It is in the dome of this church the statue of the miraculous Lady of Poondi is placed. This miraculous statue is one of the three statues that were made in France after the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes. Rev. Fr. Darres, MEP, brought these statues from France.

According to the available records in the Basilica archives, the French Missionary Fathers (MEP Fathers) were taking care of the Pastoral Mission in Kumbakonam Diocese in the beginning of 20th Century. Fr. Mette Louis Jules started a Catechetical School in Poondi around the year 1900 to train Catechists.

Rev. Fr. Lourdes Xavier after being appointed as Parish Priest of Poondi on 1 September 1955, paid immediate attention to improve the condition of the Church. The central roof of which was in a bad condition was feared that it might collapse at any moment causing great damage. So, he consulted an engineer. They wanted to demolish only the central roof without any damage to the front elevation, the dome, and the altar. Fr. Lourdes Xavier was worried as it would cost too much and it would be beyond his means to find the necessary funds to reconstruct the Church. Fr. Lourdes Xavier, a great devotee of Our Lady, trusted and prayed to Our Lady of Poondi to reveal to him a way out to this problem. **Inspired by an inner voice, he predicted that the central roof of the church would come down on a particular day and time and it did. This is vividly remembered and described by people even today.**

Simon Cardinal Lourdasamy declared the Shrine of our Lady of Poondi as a permanent pilgrimage center of our Lady of Immaculate Conception. On 03.08.1999, the shrine was declared as Minor Basilica by Pope John Paul II.

God bless,

Fr. Xavier Bazil
Parochial Vicar