



**Fr. Tom (captured and held by Yemen ISIS for 557 days)  
to visit Santa Maria Parish**

You may recall that Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil, a Salesian priest from Kerala, India, was serving as Chaplain to the Missionaries of Charity Sisters in Yemen. On March 4, 2016, a group of unidentified gunmen barged into the care home for the elderly, run by the Sisters, killing 16 persons including four Sisters. Fr. Tom was abducted. What followed was 557 days in rather lonely captivity in some unknown locations until he was released on September 12, 2017.

Since the release of Fr. Tom, never has anyone heard from him a word of anger or rancor. Even though he was living in the shadow of death, the thought of death did not worry him. Being blindfolded and tied in captivity meant that he had lost the sense of time and count of days. But Fr. Tom did not just survive it, he positively described the loneliness he was subjected to as “time he got to pray and reflect.” Instead of being grumpy and complaining, he preferred to focus totally on graces and blessings he was receiving.

Fr. Tom will visit our parish on September 29<sup>nd</sup>. He will celebrate 5:00 p.m. Mass followed by a reception in our Parish Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Fr. Tom’s testimony will be inspirational as he narrates his life as a hostage and his God-experiences--even in the midst of blood and gunfire around. His autobiography “*By The Grace of God*” is a classic testimonial to the truth that the Lord hears our prayers and answers them in His own good time. He will also sign copies of his book at the reception.