

# Ektha-UNITY

THE SAVE A FAMILY PLAN NEWSLETTER



**SAVE A FAMILY PLAN**

IN INDIA SINCE 1965

# Celebrating 60 years!

This is the first in a two-part series looking back on the history of Save A Family Plan. Our goal is not simply to reminisce, but rather to illustrate how our mission to “partner with the poor” first began with a plea, which then sparked a plan, and then evolved into a movement that we hope you are proud to be a part of!

## INTRODUCTION

Save A Family Plan is a registered charity in Canada and the USA, with donors across the globe, and operations in southern India. Although not funded by the Catholic Church, Save A Family Plan has its roots deep in the teachings and traditions of social justice, compassion, and acts of charity.

Working with grass-roots partners, we identify impoverished families to join our development programs. They are enrolled based on their needs, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or political affiliation.

Working together, we break the cycle of poverty through income initiatives, education, improved health, and more.

## THE INSPIRATION BEHIND SAFP

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Save A Family Plan in 2025, a plaque has been installed at the door of the Save A Family Plan Canadian headquarters. It proudly reads: “The

Msgr. Augustine Kandathil Centre - Dedicated to love in action.” It is a constant reminder of our origins and mission.

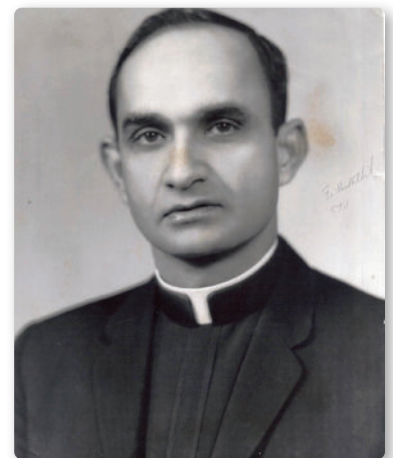
The story of Save A Family Plan begins with Msgr. Augustine Kandathil, affectionately called “Father Gus” by everyone who knew him. Born in 1920 in India, he was ordained in 1947, and earned a PhD in Chemistry in 1960 at Notre Dame University in the USA. In 1963 he moved to New Brunswick, Canada, to teach. In December 1964, he traveled to

Mumbai (then called “Bombay”) to attend the International Eucharistic Congress. It was at that time that the world learned from Pope St. Paul VI about the desperate poverty that Fr. Gus already knew firsthand; when he was a child, his mother would receive local beggars at their family home and helped them to meet their needs. “My mother encouraged my desire to bring good to them.”

During his time in India, Pope St. Paul VI was appalled by the widespread poverty and famine



*Pope St. Paul VI*



*Msgr. Augustine “Fr. Gus” Kandathil*

he witnessed in India. He called attention to the starvation and suffering, calling on the world to take notice, and to take action: "May this our anguished cry go forth to all nations and governments of the world and may God inspire them to undertake this peaceful battle against the sufferings of our less fortunate brethren."

**CALL TO ACTION**

The word Pontiff literally means "bridge-maker" and this was certainly so when the pope inspired Fr. Gus and his colleague, Dr. Leo Ferrari, to commit themselves for the cause of those in dire need. Following the pope's example of creating awareness and raising funds, they created Save A Family Plan to bridge the great chasms of distance and inequality by linking generous North American families with impoverished Indian families.

The connection was not just a vague notion; the idea of linking the families was seen as integral to the concepts of charity and social justice. It was caring at a personal level, with affection and correspondence from both sides, realized through correspondence by letters, cards, and photographs. 60 years later, we continue to hear from partner families that the compassion and encouragement of faraway strangers is inspiring to them; donors tell us that their experience is humbling and profoundly moving.

**LAYING DOWN ROOTS**

At the beginning, Save A Family



Plan started with five families and operated out of office space provided by St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. What began as a "charity" model later evolved into programs promoting sustainable development.

In 1972, Fr. Gus had a heart attack and worried that the work of Save A Family Plan might die with him. In 1973, after an exhaustive search for a long-term base of operations, he moved Save A Family Plan to St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario. We remain there to this day, more than half a century later.

SAFP was incorporated in Ontario in 1977 and then federally in 1986. A U.S. branch office of SAFP operated in Dayton, Ohio in the 1960s and 70s. We are currently a registered nonprofit in both Canada and the United States of America.

See our newsletters at [www.safp.org/news-and-info](http://www.safp.org/news-and-info)

*Celebrating 60 years!*

**Save A Family Plan 1965 - 2025: Celebrating 60 years!**

*Thank you!*

Since 1965, generous donors like you have worked together with impoverished people and communities in India as partners against poverty.

Dear donors: effective April 1, 2024, we are asking you to increase your support from \$22 to \$25 per month per family. For the people we serve, this small difference will have a huge impact! Read more at [www.safp.org/increase-of-support](http://www.safp.org/increase-of-support).



**Poverty is Complex. Our plan is simple.**

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