

## Dr. Vinu Aram Receives Tagore Literary Prize: A Tribute to Compassionate Leadership

### Who is Dr. Vinu Aram?

Dr. Aram is a medical doctor and a global advocate for social justice and peace. As the Director of Shanti Ashram, she has spearheaded initiatives in health, education and poverty alleviation that have transformed countless lives, particularly in underserved communities. A dynamic leader and a powerful voice in interfaith dialogue, Dr. Aram has devoted her life to bridging divides and nurturing human dignity.

Her journey is deeply rooted in the values of service and spirituality. She comes from Coimbatore, India and was profoundly shaped by her parents, who were also deeply committed to fostering harmony and peace. Dr. Aram has carried forward this legacy with a unique blend of professional expertise and a deeply personal commitment to global unity.

### What is Shanti Ashram?

Founded in 1986 by Dr. Kezevino Aram's parents, Dr. M. Aram and Mrs. Leila Aram, Shanti Ashram is a Gandhian organization located in Coimbatore. The Ashram works on a broad spectrum of issues, including child welfare, education, women's empowerment and rural development, all grounded in the principles of nonviolence and compassion.

Dr. Aram has been instrumental in leading several pioneering initiatives, such as programs addressing malnutrition, HIV/AIDS awareness and youth leadership development. Through its grassroots approach, Shanti Ashram not only tackles pressing social challenges but also fosters a culture of peace and mutual respect.

### The Tagore Connection

The Tagore Literary Prize, inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of universal humanism, honours individuals and works that resonate with Tagore's vision of a harmonious world. Tagore, the first non-European Nobel laureate in literature, was a polymath whose works celebrated unity in diversity. The prize seeks to amplify voices that promote intercultural understanding, much like Tagore's own legacy.

Dr. Aram's work perfectly aligns with Tagore's ideals. Her tireless efforts to foster empathy and collaboration between cultures and religions reflect the same inclusive vision that Tagore cherished. Receiving this prize underlines her contributions to advancing a world where unity transcends boundaries.

### A Special Bond with Chiara Lubich and the Focolare Movement

Dr. Aram's leadership is also enriched by a lifelong association with the Focolare Movement. Her parents, Dr. M. Aram and Mrs. Leila Aram, shared a close friendship with Chiara Lubich. This connection fostered a deep exchange of ideas and ideals between the Aram family and

Focolare's global network.

Chiara Lubich's vision of "unity in diversity" resonated deeply with Dr. M. Aram, who was a key figure in interfaith dialogue and a former president of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. Together with Chiara Lubich, he worked tirelessly to promote peace and understanding across religious and cultural boundaries. This collaboration laid the foundation for Dr. Vinu Aram's lifelong commitment to these principles.

Dr. Aram has continued to nurture this relationship, actively participating in Focolare's initiatives, including those connected to the Economy of Francesco and global youth movements. Her work embodies the values of mutual respect and shared purpose that both Chiara Lubich and Rabindranath Tagore championed.

### **A Legacy of Hope and Action**

Dr. Vinu Aram's receipt of the Tagore Literary Prize is not just a recognition of her individual accomplishments but a testament to the enduring relevance of compassion, service and unity in today's world. Through her leadership at Shanti Ashram and her contributions to interfaith dialogue, she has exemplified the transformative power of love and action.

As the world grapples with challenges of inequality, division and conflict, Dr. Aram's work serves as a beacon of hope, echoing Tagore's timeless call:

**"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high... Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."**