

# Devasahayam Pillai

November 15, 2021

**In news**– Devasahayam Pillai, a Hindu man who converted to Christianity is set to be first non-ordained conferred sainthood by the Roman Catholic Church in early 2022.

## **About Devasahayam Pillai**–

- He was **born on April 23, 1712 in the village of Nattalam, Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu.**
- He went on to **serve in the court of Travancore's Maharaja Marthanda Varma.**
- It was here that he **met a Dutch naval commander, who taught him about the Catholic faith.**
- In 1745, soon after he was baptised, **he assumed the name "Lazarus" or "Devasahayam" in Malayalam, translated to "God is my help".**
- But he then faced the wrath of the Travancore state, which was against his conversion.
- **In 1752, just seven years after he became a Catholic, Devasahayam was shot dead** in the Aralvaimozhy forest.
- Since then, he has **widely been considered a martyr by the Catholic community in South India.**
- His body is now at Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral in the Diocese of Kottar, Tamil Nadu.
- In 2004, the diocese of Kottar in Kanyakumari, along with the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council (TNBC) and the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) recommended Devasahayam for beatification to the Vatican.
- **He was declared blessed by the Kottar diocese in 2012,** 300 years after his birth.
- In remarks that day during the midday 'Angelus' prayer in the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI recalled Devasahayam as 'faithful layman'.
- In February 2020, he was first approved for sainthood

for “enduring increasing hardships” after he decided to embrace Christianity.