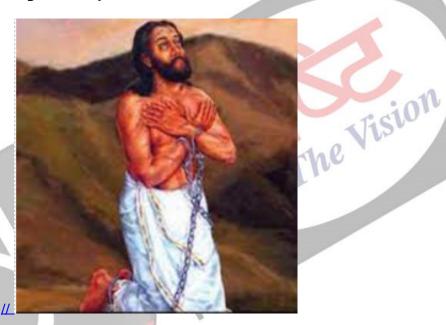


Devasahayam Pillai

Why in News?

Recently, <u>Devasahayam Pillai</u> was declared **Saint by Pope Francis (Catholic Church) at The Vatican.**

He had converted to Christianity in the 18th century in the then Kingdom of Travancore. Devasahayam had become the first Indian layman to get sainthood for what The Vatican calls 'enduring increasing hardships'.



Who was Devasahayam Pillai?

- Devasahayam was born on 23th April 23, 1712 in Nattalam village in Kanyakumari district.
- He was baptized in 1745, and assumed the name 'Lazarus', meaning 'God is my help'.
 - Baptism is a Christian sacrament marked by ritual use of water and admitting the recipient to the Christian community.
- His conversion did not go well with the heads of his native religion. False charges of treason and espionage were brought against him and he was divested of his post in the royal administration.
- He went on to fight against Caste discrimination prevalent in the country and was persecuted and then killed.
- On 14th January, 1752, Devasahayam was shot dead in the Aralvaimozhy forest. He is widely considered a martyr, and his mortal remains were interred inside what is now Saint Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Kottar, Nagercoil.
- The Vatican in 2012 recognised his martyrdom after a rigorous process.

Why Devasahayam Pillai has been declared sainthood?

- Saint Devasahayam Pillai stood for equality and fought against the evils of society such as Casteism and Communalism.
- His sainthood also comes at a time in India when the country is facing a surge in communalism.
- Devasahayam Pillai being declared a saint is also a great opportunity for the Church to stand against the prevailing communal poison.
 - Communalism is blind allegiance to one's own religious community in our culture. It is
 defined as a tool for or against mobilising people by appealing for communal services.
 Communalism is related to dogmatism and religious fundamentalism.

Source: IE

