

# Merry Christmas



hristmas is the birth of Jesus, the 'one Greater Man', the manifestation of God's love for us. But today, Christmas has lost its true meaning. People spend endless hours shopping to exchange gifts. Giving and receiving gifts have lost their sentimental value and Christmas has become one big retailer's party. Nowadays people seem to know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

The Christmas season is more spiritual than commercial. We

should actually care about "Good Will" and give our time instead of our pocket book. Kindness means something more. The Christmas season turns the World into a happier place. Life is like a book—two pages are already composed by God. The first page is birth and the last page is death. Christmas is the time to fill the pages in between with love, smile and care.

Let the stress of day-to-day life not distract us from the magic of the season, and I pray we take the time to add some grace and goodwill to the lives of all fellow beings.

Christmas is about Jesus – His love. His love is in choosing to serve and to be with. His love is patient and kind; His love is deliberate; His love is pain and sacrifice. He sees the darkness in us and dispels it with light of his love.

Merry Christmas to you.

Fr. J Felix Raj, SJ



#### Jesuit Alumni/ae:

#### An Army without Arms, The Third Force as Lay Collaborators

referred to as an "Army without Arms". They form a regiment of competent and committed 'men and women for others', who are conscientiously and compassionately ready to respond to the call of the 'Order' in a disciplined manner, that they had learnt during their student days in the Jesuit institutions. Hence, they are armed with Jesuit values, principles and objectives.

During their school or college days, students do not have enough time to learn in detail about the Jesuit Order or its values and activities, since they remain busy with their studies and co-curricular activities. After passing out of their institutions. their priority remains in having a settled career and life. Now, a Jesuit alumnus/a comes back to his/her Alma Mater and sometimes continues to associate themselves for a longer period than that of their student days. He/she now becomes a part of what is known as the Alumni Movement.

The basic purpose of any Alumni/ae association is to catch up with old buddies and also support their Alma Mater. Yes. Jesuit Alumni/ae members do the both. While fellowship remains a regular phenomenon. Jesuit Alumni/ae always remember about their debt to their Alma Mater, as whatever they are today is primarily because of the Jesuit institution they had studied. So, obviously they try to support their Alma Mater in whatever way possible, not only with their resources but also by devoting their time. Moreover, they enjoy doing it in association with his/her old classmates, seniors and juniors, in a congenial atmosphere. One gets a social space here amidst old and new acquaintances, which is different from their working atmosphere or family situation.

By Snehasis Sur
Alumnus of St. Xavier's College
and Journalist, Doordarshan

parcel of the Jesuit family, which comprises of the Jesuit priests, present and past teachers, students and support staff.



This gives a different sense of satisfaction and enjoyment. To put it in simpler terms, who among us does not want to see our Alma Mater grow to serve more?

Apart from renewing old acquaintances, Alumni Associations give an opportunity for making new friends and knowing other people who are well established in various fields. This also sometimes becomes very helpful in one's life, especially for those settled in various parts of the country or in the world, where Xaverians are well connected.

Another reason for the growth of this Army is the sense of belonging one gets in the Alma Mater. Regular involvement ensures this sense of belonging to the institution, which one has left decades ago as a student. The Jesuit Fathers, who are at the helm, treat the Alumni/ae like insiders and make them feel comfortable in their campus. In St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, when the NAAC Team members wanted to meet the Alumni/ae as stakeholders, as they do in every institution they visit, we told them we are part and

Making the Alumni/ae partners of their mission is not an integral phenomenon in the Jesuit Order. The three Superior Generals, the present Rev. Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, his predecessor, Rev. Fr. Peter Kolvenbuck, SJ and prior to him Rev. Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, deliberated on the issue of Alumni/ae and highlighted their roles not only as supporters but also as collaborators.

The history of lay collaborators of the Jesuits dates back to the early days of its foundation. In the book "The Jesuits - A History from Ignatius to the Present" the author Fr. John O'Malley, SJ, describes "were all priests, within a few years the Jesuits, like the mendicants. made provision for non-ordained members. At times in the history of the Society these 'lay brothers' (or, better, temporal coadjutors, which is the Jesuits' official term for them) constituted about a third of the membership. They served the Society as cooks, buyers and treasurers and in other practical tasks. Some were highly skilled

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professionals - architects for instance, and artisans of various types...."

The other landmarks of lay collaboration come from the Vatican Council II and the General Congregations 31 and 35 of the Society of Jesus. The Vatican Council II (1962 - 65) reviewed its position and took decisions for future to remain contemporary and relevant. One such decision was its redefined role of the laities in the work of the church and the other was its approach to the non Christian religions. It said: "The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons. that though dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognise, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men."

The General Congregation (GC) is the assembly of the provincials and delegates of the Jesuit Order throughout the world, which is the highest body of the Order. It is generally convened on the death or resignation of the Superior General to elect his successor but can also be convened if situation demands. GC-31 (1965-66) which took place just after Vatican II was primarily convened to implement the recommendations of the latter, it gave the Society the mandate, for instance, to promote understanding and dialogue among people of all religious faiths. GC-32 and GC-34 also stressed on the Jesuit -Lay collaborations.

However, the one of the most important landmark in the topic of collaboration is the point 3 of the Decree:6 of the last General Congregation, GC-35, which clearly lays down the importance and passion of the lay collaboration. GC-35 Decree: 6.3 says:" We are humbled and grateful that so manyinspired as we have been by the vocation of Ignatius and the

tradition of the Society - have chosen both to work with us and to share our sense of mission and our passion to reach out to the men and women of our broken but loveable world. We are enriched by the members of our own faith but also by people from other religious tradition, those women and men of goodwill from all nations and cultures, with whom we labour in seeking a more just world. Rich is the harvest. In many countries, important Jesuit works depend largely on the generous, loyal, and skilled collaborations of women and men of diverse religious and humanistic convictions. As the Holy Father affirmed our ministries and mission, saying to us, 'the Church needs vou'. We must in turn look to our collaborators in mission and say, with gratitude and affection, that call we have received is a call shared by us together". These clearly explain the spiritual and administrative footings of the Jesuit - Lay collaborations".

However, we are really proud that Bengal Jesuit Mission (the earlier form of Calcutta Jesuit Province) had actually initiated inter religious dialogue, deliberations with the different faiths since long. The pioneers in this area include (from around 1900 AD) Fathers like Rev William Wallace, SJ, Rev. Pierre Johans, SJ, Rev. George Dandov, SJ. Rev. Pierre Fallon, SJ. Rev. Robert Antoine, SJ, Rev. Richard De Smet, SJ, Rev. Jules Bayrat, SJ, Rev. Charles Wincklemans, Rev. Jacques Dupuis, SJ, Rev. Victor Courtons, SJ, Rev. Moversoen, SJ, to name a few. All of them have had considerable deliberations and contributions in the Inter religious discourses either with Hinduism or with Islam. They were much ahead of the historic decision of the Vatican II. It is not only the studies of different religions and theologies of different faiths, it is also the practice followed by the Jesuits. Let me give an example from the recent past. Once in the regular weekly

meeting of the St. Xavier's College (Calcutta) Alumni Association. known as Friday Fellowship, where the members gather to meet together and which is often blessed by the President and Principal Fr. Felix Rai, SJ., a mobile phone of a member rang in the ring tone of the Gavatri Mantra. Father asked: how many of you can recite it and know its meaning and before anyone could open their mouth Father himself did the both. This was a great inspiration to many others. especially those belonging to different faiths and speaks of the Jesuit heritage of mutual understanding and respect.

In the light of Lav Collaborations, it is also to be taken into account the decrease in numbers of the Jesuit Priests and increase of its new frontiers and massive growth of its continuing educational apostolate. At present there are 387 Jesuit Institutions in India - 295 Schools, 50 Colleges etc. However, by 2010 the Jesuits were about half as many as they were at the peak of year 1965. India is the country which is seeing a growth in the number of Jesuits and started sending them to other countries in greater numbers than earlier

So, in a situation of growth in work and decrease in number, the call of the Order is more and more of lay collaborations. In the light of the Vatican II and GC 35, the trend is the Society's openness towards lay collaboration. This has been seen in many places around the world like Georgetown University, Loyola Marymount University to name a few. As usual our very own St. Xavier's College, Kolkata is also a pioneer in this field, which does not require examples to the readers of this newsletter.

But, what is more important is the preparation of the lay collaborators and their acceptance from the Jesuit Priests. While the latter is mandated and well perceived, the preparation for being a true collaborator requires rigorous orientation of

## Jesuit Education in St. Xavier's College

have undergone my college education in St. Xavier's College owned and managed by Jesuit priests of "Society of Jesus", the International Christian Religious Order founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Lovola and a small group of his friends who were fellow students from the University of Paris. St. Xavier's College was a part of the Bengal Mission which started with the arrival of the former Jesuit Vice-Provincial of Ireland Dr. Robert St. leger and six other Jesuits at Kolkata on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1834.

Today St. Xavier's College is one of the premier Indian educational institutions run by different local **By Biswajyoti Dasgupta**Alumnus and founder Member
S.X.C.C.A.A.

provinces of Society of Jesus. The college named after St. Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552). He was a native like St. Ignatius of the Basque Territory of Northern Spain. He became a close friend of Ignatius at the University of Paris, came to share Ignatius vision through missionary labors in India, the Indonesian Archipelago and Japan. He was the first Jesuit to go out to people of Non-European culture.

I have lasting memories of my days as a student of the largest department of the College, B.Com. The classes were held regularly, the department had a well stocked library and all

other infrastructural facilities. The students were always encouraged to undertake extra-curricular activities as well as co-curricular activities. The extra-curricular activities included different kind of meaningful social work. I fondly remember Father Gerard Becker's dedication to teaching and providing social service to disadvantaged and less privileged sections of the society. He was our inspirer for social work. Today the prime educational objective of Jesuit educational system is to 'form men and women for others'.

The St. Xavier's College which is now given the status of an Autonomous College has a long history of reaching out to the marginalized in the society, the economically and socially backward underprivileged people of our country. The 'College to Village and Village to College' project introduced a few years ago in St. Xavier's bears testimony to this endeavour.

That is how my Jesuit education in St. Xavier's has helped me grow into citizen, grow into a responsible human being ready to embrace responsibility.

Jesuit education inspires altruisitic love that we share and serve society with.

# Jesuit Educational Institutions in the World and in India: July 2014

Categories	World	India	India (Categories)	Numbers
Institutions (Schools/ Colleges etc)	3,897	387	Colleges	50
Teachers	1,34,303	11,225	Technical Institutes:	22
Students	29,28,806	3,24,538	Mgt/ Business Schools:	
			Eng. Colleges: Universities	04 01



SXC
Alumni
Association
Governing
Council
Members

## True lay collaborators of the Jesuits

By G. P. Gupta

Vice President, St. Xavier's College (Calcutta) Alumni Association. (SXCCAA) Governing Body Member, St. Lawrence Old Boys' Association. (SLOBA) Governing Council Member, Jesuit Alumni Association of India. (JAAI)

I didn't just grow up in a Jesuit school, I was taught to say 'please' and 'thank you', to have respect for my elders and to get up off my lazy butt and let the elder in the room have my chair. Say 'Yes Sir' and 'No Sir', lending a helping hand to those in need. Hold the door for the person behind me, say 'excuse me' when it's needed and to love people for who they are and not for what I can get from them. I was also taught to treat people the way I want to be treated.

As I grew up, I started recognizing that I am connected globally with the thousands of student of Jesuit institutions all over the world and that I was part of a heritage that goes back to the time of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In fact, I never left my school and my college after completing my studies. It was not so easy for me to end the association with Jesuit Fathers, my teachers and professors, the support staff. An enduring bond was always there, forever.

And a time came when I was professionally settled in life, a desire grew to do my bit for others and society. I was seeking an appropriate platform. I joined the Alumni Association of my school and college. I wanted to contribute something meaningful to the society more so to the downtrodden and marginalized. I started playing significant role and realized that I had become better and more humane. I saw everyone living in unity and harmony. The seeds of competence, conscience, compassion and commitment had already been planted in me. I started recognizing the difference in the choices and decisions I made. I made some right choices and started finding God in all things. The meaning of 'Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam' was crystal and clear. The core value of 'Magis' started to strive for something better and

The values of Jesuit education made an impact in my life. I got married and was blessed with a son. Having

been privileged to receive a good education in a Jesuit school. I always wanted to reach out to the less privileged. The desire to imbibe this spiritual sentiment further made me put my son in the same Jesuit School in which I had studied. He finished his schooling and joined the same Jesuit college. He finished his college too. Now what? I wanted to remain connected. He joined the Jesuit Business School. I was a proud father. My son from his primary to secondary to his masters was educated in a Jesuit institution Not only was I proud but satisfied that I saw my son being nurtured in perfect discipline, etiquette. behavior and become one of the 'men for others'. I was proud that the alumni badge, the alumni tie, the alumni coat which I used to wear with my head held high, I was successful in making my son too wear the alumni badge, the alumni tie and the alumni coat of a Jesuit institution. My dream is to see him emerge as a true lay collaborator of the Jesuits.

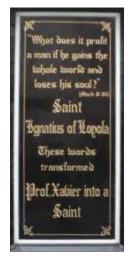


Number of Jesuits: January 2014				
Region	Jesuits	Percentage		
Africa	1,509	9%		
South Latin America	1,221	7%		
North Latin America	1,226	7%		
South Asia	4,016	23%		
Central and East Europe	1,641	10%		
South Europe	2,027	12%		
West Europe	1,541	9%		
North America	2,467	14%		
Total	17,287			

# Unveiling of a Marble Statue of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron Saint of St. Xavier's College







A full-sized marble statue of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron Saint of St. Xavier's College, was unveiled in the front courtyard of the Park Street Campus on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. The unveiling marked the 462nd death anniversary of the Saint. Among those who attended the programme were students and faculty members of both St. Xavier's College and St. Xavier's Collegiate School, including Rector Father Dominic Savio, Father Felix Raj, the Principal of the College and Father Benny Thomas, the Principal of the School. "This statue is the recognition of the Patron Saint of the College, so that he blesses everyone coming in and going out of the college gates. He has been guarding and supporting us for 154 years and I hope he continues to do it in the future as well," said Fr. Felix Raj.

Saint Francis Xavier spent only a decade in the country; but he left an indelible mark upon the academic and cultural canvas of India. The man lives on - in his manners and in our memory.



Another view of the Unveiling Ceremony

## mails & emails



- ❖It is a treasure trove for researchers and academicians interested in colonial Bengal. Dr. Runa Das Chaudhuri, Kolkata.
- ❖ A treasure for all, very rich books that need to be saved for the future. -**Paul Teia Gomes,** Monte De Caparica, Portugal.
- ❖Its my pleasure to be part of the esteemed Goethals Indian Library and Research Society. It is a wonderful place to learn and broaden our minds. A. Amrita Anandi, Jharkhand, India.
- A very well organized treasure house of knowledge. -Bonny Ghosh.
- ❖I wish to congratulate you on vour initiative to introduce two Credit Foundation Course on "Religious Studies and Social Harmony" from this Academic session. This has become now a world wide phenomena to develop Inter-faith and Inter-cultural dialogue among the people and work for peace and harmony. Pope Francis is the model of dialogue today with his spontaneous responses to various conflicting situations. His one of the major concerns is to develop the spirit of Dialogue among Christians and among the people of different faith communities and cultural backgrounds.

Kolkata has always been a centre for Dialogue. The Jesuits of contributed towards this area of concern in the past. Among the Jesuits of by gone years, Fr. Van Exem promoted dialogue with the Muslims in Kolkata, Fr. Antoine, Fr. Fallon, Fr. C. Detienne, Fr. Shillings, promoted dialogue among the upper middle class Hindus and intelligentsia. Fr. Johanns, Fr. Courtoir, Fr. Babu

Beckers also contributed to the dialogue among all sections of the society.

This initiative of yours will certainly inspire students to take this course and update themselves with our multi-religious realities.

The hand-out program that you have circulated through Goethals gives an understanding that you are focussing on Christian-Muslim Dialogue. I am sure you are aware of the reality of Kolkata that in our Metropolitan city, we have various categories of Muslim communities. who have very little dialogue among themselves. We have the Shia, Sunni, Sufi, Bohra, Ahmedia and others might be...From my own experience of Dialogue ministry in Kolkata. I have associated with all these groups at some time or other in the process. Hence, the scope for dialogue with Muslim community is big. I hope, the intellectual interactions among these communities can develop a sense of harmony among Muslims themselves and then to reach out to

Another observation, I would like to share is that at the partition, Bengal was divided on the basis of Hindu and Muslim majority as West Bengal and East Bengal. Since 1947 up to now this dividing line and

eventually creation of Bangladesh in 1971 has created further gulf between these two communities. The blood bath of 1946 in the city of Kolkata and subsequent killing in parts of Bangladesh are only the sad memories for the people of both communities. A large section of Hindu community were driven out of Bangladesh from Barisal. Mymensingh, Noakhali, Dhaka and other regions. If you read the book by Dr. Javanti Basu "Reconstructing the Bengal Partition" you will be enlightened with the facts and realities of Bengal.

There is more to this area of concern. It is very challenging venture to work for Dialogue. The Church has to take up this leadership in promoting Dialogue. I feel sad that not many are interested in this area of concern within the Church, though they may like to associate themselves. The lack of commitment in this important concern can dampen the spirit of dialogue.

I wish you all the best in your initiative and I hope the present generation for higher learning will understand the values inherent in all religions to promote peace and harmony.

Fr. Sunil Rosario

The Goethals Indian Library and Research Society
is planning to offer
a 1 credit Course on Ignatian Spirituality
Eligibility: Mainly for Lay people
Course Duration: Two months (February-March, 2015)
Class days: Saturdays
Class Time: 5-7 pm
Venue: Goethals Library
Those who are interested may contact the Goethals Library Office:
Phone: 033 22801919 Email: goethalscal@gmail.com

Credits will be given after the successful completion of the course.

### Researchers at Goethals



**A. Amrita Anandi** on Christian & Muslim Relations, Jharkhand.

Ankita Bachhawat & Aishani Gupta on Shakespeare's Quarter Centenary Celebratory Journals (1964)...Kolkata.

**Bonny Ghosh** on Contribution of Christian Missionaries of 19<sup>th</sup> Century towards development of Libraries, India.

**Dr. Runa Das Chaudhuri** on the Evolution of Theosophical Society in late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal, Kolkata.

**Dripta Piplai** on History of Education, Kolkata.

**Fr. Pradeep Perez, SJ** on Early Bengali Literature, Bangladesh.

Ishita Sarkar, Moumita Biswas & Padmini Khan on Shakespear's performances in St. Xavier's

College, Kolkata.

**Jeroen Van de Velde** on Ancient History, Belgium.

Mr. D. Bhattacharya & Mr. A. Gupta on History of Christian Brothers in Kolkata from 1890 onwards and History of St. Joseph's College, Bowbazar, Kolkata.

**Paulo Teia Gomes** on Photography, Monte De Caparica, Portugal.

**Priya Middey** on English Literature Folklore, Sociology and Culture Studies, Kolkata.

**Rahul Mukhopadhyay on** History of Education, Kolkata.

**Rick Hivner** on Christianity and Hinduism, Hyderabad.

**Sohail Hoda & Asmitabha Manna** on Pre-Independence Shakespeare Question Papers, Kolkata.

Jesuit Alumni/ae: (Continued from pg. 3)

understanding of the Jesuit history, values, priorities, objectives to serve the Society correctly and properly as Lay Collaborators. This preparation is the



need of the hour. Again our St. Xavier's College, Kolkata is pioneer as its Alumni Association has started orientation programmes for their members and college has started such programmes for their faculty members.

Let us wait for 'A Grace of Our Day and A Hope for the Future'. Let me conclude by the words of our beloved Guru Rev. Fr. Albert Huart, SJ, who once wrote, "The last word has not been said. Watch for the new dawn, and you may be joyfully surprised". Nihil Ultra.



- 1. Read the Christmas story in the NT and reflect on the birth of Jesus as a family. (Luke Chapters 1 and 2 as well as Mathew Chapters 1 and 2).
- 2. Invite Jesus to come and celebrate the day with you. Making Jesus a part of your family is vital.
- 3. Decorate your house to receive Jesus
- 4. Attend the Midnight Celebration in your Church with friends and parish community. Thank God for the gift of Jesus to the world.
- 5. Make a Christmas tree and create your own nativity scene Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus. Ask your children to help you, and gather around and exchange gifts
- 6. Organize a Christmas gettogether for family and friends in fellowship
- 7. Sing Carols, visit friends and share your joy.
- 8. Do a generous act help someone in need. Remember the gifts of the Magi to Jesus.
- 9. Spread the Christmas joy and peace around. Set aside a time for family prayer every day.
- 10. Keep Christ in your daily life. It is more about the way you live your life than the things you say. Let your love for Jesus and others shine forth through your actions. Become a messenger of Christ and an example of His Message.



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