



**AS I REMEMBER REV. FR. Timothy M. F. LONG OMI - THE IRISHMAN WHO  
WAS PROUD TO BE A JAFFNAMAN**

**By: W.P.S. Jeevaratnam**

Fr. Long was an Irishman, who was delighted and proud to be identified with the Jaffna man. He came to Jaffna in 1921, as a young priest, 26 years of age, at the invitation of the then Rector of St. Patrick's College – Rev. Fr. Charles S. Mathews OMI.

After being in the Teaching Staff of the College for over a decade, Fr. Long who had a Master's Degree from Cambridge took over the reins in 1936. His period as Rector of the College lasted until 1954 – a golden era of 18 years. Those years were years of vast changes in political, social and religious fields for Jaffna and Sri Lanka.

---

***Written By: W. P. S.  
Jeevaratnam (Jeeva Master),  
Toronto, Canada***

***The writer is the brother of  
late Mr. W.J.P. Gnanaratnam  
[Teacher at St. Patrick's  
College for over 50 years]***

---

Through all those years of rapid changes, the indomitable Fr. Long labored with guts and determination, to realize the dreams of his predecessor Rev. Fr. Mathews OMI, to give the Jaffna man the best in educational opportunities. He was to construct imposing building for the College, equip it with an up-to-date Science Laboratory, a well-stocked and magnificent Library, a spacious playground etc. and succeeded in building up St. Patrick's to be a leading Educational Institution not only in the Island but also in the British Commonwealth. In fact, SPC attracted

students from faraway lands in Africa.

Fr. Long's metallic and penetrating voice continues to ring in my ears. "Only the best is good for St. Patrick's" was his ideology. That was the man of determination striving to bring out the best in everyone and for everyone for the benefit of the College and the community at large. Truly it can be said that Fr. Mathews laid the foundation and Fr. Long built up the College, which nursed us Patricians during most part of twentieth century.

Discipline was the infrastructure on which Fr. Long built the sterner stuff that every Patrician was expected to be in life. At assembly time, under the shade of the hardy mahogany trees that lined the quadrangle, Fr. Long would imbue us with what was called, "The Patrician Spirit" representing the qualities of Unity, Courage, Loyalty and Fearlessness. This spirit enjoined us to



strive, to seek and not to yield. In our time, St. Patrick's College's performance was outstanding not only in studies but also in the field of sports.

We went on for three consecutive years to win what Fr. Long called "The Triple Crown", the championship in Cricket, Football and in Athletics among the schools in the Northern Province.

As an Educationist, Fr. Long was held in very high esteem by local and national officials and politicians. I recall him proudly displaying in his office a cartoon by Collette in which he figured prominently, following a trip to Colombo for high level discussions on education policy matters. Collette's cartoon titled "He comes from Jaffna" showing Fr. Long Turbaned and carrying drumsticks in his hands is still fresh in my memory. Fr. Long was admired, loved and respected by people of all background and religious persuasions. As a final demonstration of his love for the people of Jaffna, he started the fund for establishing the famous Jaffna Public Library. To honour the immense contribution of Fr. Long, a full-size statue of Fr. Long was erected in front of the famous Jaffna Public Library. It was indeed a very sad occasion when Fr. Long who dedicated his life to St. Patrick's and Jaffna, left in 1954. He spent his last years establishing a school in Brisbane, Australia and died in the UK in 1961.

The Government of Sri Lanka issued a postage stamp to commemorate him, a rare and well deserved honor indeed, at the national level, for a truly great man. It was also cause for joy and pride for all Patricians and people of Jaffna, especially those who had the privilege of being there during his time and knowing him. Patricians and people of Jaffna will always cherish the memory of Fr. Long and he truly belongs to the history of Jaffna.

---