



Tribute to a brilliant teacher M.A.N. Antony

by Anton X. Rajinthrakumar

Today around noon, I learnt about the demise of Anton Master with shock and deep sadness. It is with a heavy heart and profound sense of respect, I write this humble tribute to Mr. M.A.N. Antony, popularly and affectionately known as Anton Master, who was called to his eternal rest on March 26th, 2014 in Jaffna.

Anton Master touched the lives of so many Patricians and other students of Jaffna in very positive ways over the past several decades in Jaffna. First of all, he was a brilliant teacher and a gracious human being. Further, he was a proud Patrician, trustworthy colleague, a gentleman who had the courage to be honest even under extremely trying circumstances and an unassuming person in spite of his exceptional intelligence.

Down in my memory lane, I was one of the first year GCE Advanced Level students in grade 11 Math class in 1980 and had the privilege to have brilliant Anton Master as my Applied Mathematics teacher at St. Patrick's College Jaffna. From a very personal perspective, though getting tuition for each of the 4 AL subjects was one of the popular trends in Jaffna those days, I had no need to go for Applied Mathematics tuition, since Anton Master was my teacher at school. Likewise, very many of my classmates at SPC did not go for Applied Math tuition. Whether Anton Master taught Dynamics or Statics section in Applied Mathematics, his classes were lively and students got inspired by his teaching methods and witty ways of explaining even the most intriguing concept of the subject. He was a gifted teacher and sometimes uses very appealing voice levels to impart the subtle features of Applied Mathematics. Even after three decades, I can still remember how Anton Maser rearranged the equations of Vector cross product and dot product to distinguish the fact that the cross product is a vector and the dot is a scalar. Not a single student present in his class failed to understand what he was trying to drive into our brains.

As one of the true testimonies to Anton Master's brilliant teaching, a good number of 1982 AL batch at SPC was able to obtain credit pass or better for Applied Mathematics and secure university entrance at first attempt. I'm pretty sure there are many more compelling stories

in other OL and AL batches of SPC that bore witness to Anton Master's intelligence and knack for teaching. Even though the medium of instruction was Tamil, Anton Master always made a point to write down the English terms and phrases, which proved very useful later for us with our University Education and chosen careers. Anton Master was equally excellent in teaching Chemistry and his students are never hesitant to praise him for his dedication and art of teaching Chemistry. Anton Master was approachable and this led to a much better teacher-student rapport.

Anton Master was a proud Jaffna man and closely associated himself with our ancestral homeland regardless of the prevalent situation in the Island. He was an active and wisdom-filled son of Jaffna soil. He was a well-read man and one can engage in interesting and thought-provoking conversations on a wide range of topics including politics, philosophy and logic. Back in the early eighties, we as Advanced Level students enjoyed discussing topics and trends of the political arena of the then Jaffna in a very balanced and fair-minded manner. Anton Master treated his students with respect and dignity. He would ask very thought-provoking questions in a very simple and calm tone without hurting any one's feelings or sentiments.

Presently, hundreds of Anton Master's past pupils, both Patricians and students from other Jaffna schools are experts in their chosen career fields. He laid a solid foundation for many teachers, engineers, doctors, scientists and other professionals, who are serving humanity with commitment and competence across the globe.

Anton Master holds a very special place in the hearts of his students for the way he made Applied Mathematics and Chemistry come alive, and for the way he nurtured each student's self-esteem, love of learning, and will to pursue their dreams. He will be greatly missed especially by the student-community of Jaffna in particular and the extended Patrician family members, who are spread across the globe.

Anton Master left an indelible imprint on his students. The Patrician family will always cherish the memory of this brilliant teacher. We shall always remember him with deepest respect and affection.

Let us find solace in the Hebrew Proverb "Say not in grief 'he is no more' but live in thankfulness that he was". Thank you, Anton Master. You were a wonderful teacher and made a lasting impact in our lives.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep. He has kept his promises and earned his sleep. May the Merciful Lord Bless his soul and welcome him into HIS Kingdom and grant him eternal rest.

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