



REV.FR.PHILIP JESUNESAN OMI - The Vice Rector who won the respect and admiration of everyone in the College.

By: Anton Xavier Rajinthrakumar

My recollections of Fr. Jesunesan are always of the warmth of a teacher, who taught and led us in his own unassuming ways. He was one of the great Vice Rectors of St.Patrick's College Jaffna. He had a tremendous sense of dedication to whatever job he was called upon to do and he is someone who lived life to the full and lived it in a very Christian way. He touched the lives of so many people in a very caring and exemplary ways over several decades of his varied and illustrious career – as humble priest, dedicated teacher, wisdom-filled Vice Rector, mentoring friend, resourceful counsellor and the list goes on. More importantly, he was unique in many ways to his students at SPC and for the other members of the greater Patrician family.

The dawn of the eighties witnessed the induction of a young and energetic Vice Rector – Fr. P Jesunesan OMI, at St.Patrick's College, Jaffna. I was one of the first year Advanced Level students in the 11M class. Like many of his students, I consider it was a privilege to have known this humble servant of God. It has been a rewarding experience to study under this extremely capable Vice Rector until I left the portals of St.Patrick's College Jaffna in 1983.

As I turn the Kaleidoscope of Fr.Fesunesan's life to the early eighties, this new Vice Rector to the Colleges was caring, fair-minded and humble. In one of his initial assembly speeches he mentioned that if he had known that one day he would be appointed the Vice Rector of the College he would have studied more. He was in his early forties but his counseling depth and philosophical outlook of education was unique. He challenged us to realize our full potential with words of encouragement and real –life inspirational stories. Well, this was St. Patrick's College Jaffna, famous for giving new teachers new names and soon this wisdom-filled Vice Rector earned a new name PAPA appropriately so for his sound counseling and PAPA- style walk and talk.

Fr. Jesunesan had the virtues of a true servant of God: sincerity, serenity and integrity. Many of his students will also describe him as a man of humility, compassion, wisdom and courage. He always put the well being of the College first without the slightest deviation towards nepotism or prejudice. He treated his students with respect and dignity. Whenever students encountered issues whether it was related to sports, social functions or academic matters, Fr. Jesunesan was approachable and gave a patient hearing with an open mind. He stressed the importance of honing & fine-tuning our soft skills, in order to face the real world in a better manner in our chosen careers.

Fr.Jesunesan was a fluent orator in both English and Tamil and his English classes were very lively and students showed lots of enthusiasm and interest. He was a well-read man and one can engage in interesting and thought-provoking conversation with him on any topic under the sun. Fr. Jesunesan believed in us and he was confident and made us feel at home.

Fr. Jesunesan bore his final illness with a courage, dignity and acceptance which were typical of the man we knew, loved and respected. He was called to eternal rest in August 2009.

He made an immeasurable contribution to both the College and the pupils' development and was one of the mainstays of the school during his tenure at St' Patrick's College. We need to remember that he touched so many people's lives, so positively. He believed so much in the power of education and of our noble school. He left an amazing legacy behind. The Patrician family will always cherish the memory of this outstanding Vice Rector.

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Head Prefect -1982
