

ranks, after having been deeply impressed by what we are and what we do.

BRO. M.P. ANTONY

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our school magazines - Ed.)*

V I) OBITUARY ON BRO. CHARLIEGARNIER

(Roland Joseph Albert La Douceur 1915 - 1998)

Born on 15 the December 1915 at Montreal, Canada to Joseph Ladouceur and Marie Carrieres baptised and Christened Roland Joseph Albert Ladouceur had his early education in Orphelhinat St. Arsene. Bro. Blaise recruited him and he joined the Juniorate at Brune on 26.02.29. He did his Novitiate at Sault au Recollets and received his religious habit on 15.08.1931 taking the religious name Charles Garnier, a name dear to his native town. He made his first profession on 15.08.32 and his perpetual vows at Tindivanam (India) on 03-01-39.

He arrived in India as a Religious Missionary Brother in March 1936 when he was hardly 20 years old. Posted to teach at St. Patrick H.School, Secunderabad, he exercised his missionary zeal for seven long years from 1936 to 1943. From 1943 to 1964. He was incharge of the Juniorate at Coonoor a mission he performed beautifully, and later when it was transferred to Palakurichi, it was an ordeal for him considering the change of climate & lack of even the bare minimum facilities. From 1965 to 73 he was appointed Novice Master & Local Superior. So for all the thirty years Bro. Charles Garnier contributed to the growth and nurture of the Indian & Thailand Provinces as a formator, a mission he performed quite admirably considering the tremendous changes that took place during post war and post Vatican periods. He was able to absorb most of the shocks himself and protect and safe guard his Juniors / Novices from much of the damning effects of shifting value systems.

The Indian Provinces were facing acute developmental problems and the administration recognized the need to give spiritual values and culture as demanded by the shifting value system. Bro. Charles was the man chosen to shoulder the responsibility of animating the Provinces. His personal interaction with majority of the Brothers (most of whom were either his Juniors or Novices) and his totally integrated personality commanded respect and reverence and the mission was comparatively successful.

He joined the Better World Movement, later took to the mission of Basic Christian Community and for the last few years he was involved in the Renew 2000. It was while he was working with the B.W. that he christened himself Charlie Darling, a change which was apt as he was a Darling to any one who came in contact with him and also it was the English translation of his Canadian name "GARNIER"

Charlie Darling enjoyed fairly fine health all through. Even after his retirement from active mission, he would participate in meetings & seminars. It was about two months back that he complained of some urinary problem as well as pain in the chest. The diagnosis revealed that there was a malignant tumour in his bladder and he was put on radiotherapy. On Monday 21st September at about 11.30 a.m. he experienced severe chest pain and Bro. A.V. Thomas on being informed, rushed him to the hospital. The doctors on examining him expressed the opinion that his case was quite serious. Early in the dawn at 5 a.m. Charlie had a massive Cardiac Infarction, and despite the best efforts of the physicians at the hospital, he could not be revived and our dear Charliedarling breathed his last at 5.20 a.m. On Tuesday 22nd September 1998 3 months ahead of his 83rd birthday and four days ahead of his Patronal Feast.

His body was embalmed and brought to SanThome Hr. Sec. School for the Brothers, Teachers, students and numerous friends to pay their tearful, prayerful and respectful homage to him. A well attended funeral service was organised and over a dozen

Priests headed by the Vicar General of the Arch Diocese Concelebrated the Holy mass for the dear departed. The mortal remains of Charlie Darling was then taken in an ambulance to Eachinkadu at Yercaud for burial.

There was a concelebrated Mass offered in the Novitiate Chapel attended by a number of Brothers, Sisters, a sprinkling of Yercaud public. The coffin was lowered into the grave at 11.15 a.m.

Charlie Darling was an integrated person; always at ease with himself and with others. He was able to be so because he was a man of God. As a Formator, the National Animator of our Brothers in India, a member of the Better World Movement, later as Basic Christian Community and Renew 2000, a retreat preacher, Charlie's contribution to the community, the congregation and the church was unique and Tremendous. He made us Brothers proud of our calling. He understood his vocation, dedicated himself fully to the mission and on his deathbed he could say "All is accomplished" His is a life that inspires us with hope and confidence. As we pray for him in charity, let us pray to him to intercede for us that we may follow the wonderful example he set before us, joy in the spirit of being "A MAN OF GOD".

Bro. Mathew Pannathanath
(Provincial superior, Yercaud Province)



*Slept in
the Lord 22-9-1998*

V 2) BROTHER CHARLES GARNIER THE DARLING

He was my French teacher one hour a day from 2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m., while I was making my novitiate (1948-50). It was very pleasant to meet the young Brother with golden hair, and "Tomato - fruit" colour face, smiling always. Then from 1956 - 1967, I was one of his Juniorate assistants and teacher in St. Antony's H. School, Coonoor, where he was Director, Manager & Correspondent.

Bro. Charles was a model of regularity, humility, simplicity, and untiring devotion to his duties as Juniorate master, Director, manager and correspondent of St. Antony's H.S. Coonoor. He never allowed the Juniors or servants to clean his room or his office. Everyday between 2 and 3 p.m. I could see him sweeping his office carrying the dust and waste paper basket to the pit near the cow shed 100 yards away !! During those 12 years I have never seen him getting angry with anybody. He was very good at the piano and taught the Juniors, religious hymns. If he sees something wrong with the conduct of the juniors he would give long discourses to them during the daily evening conference; sometimes lasting for more than an hour.

He would take the Juniors for Sunday walks. During the hot season he used to put on a GANDHI CAP. Once the chaplain scolded him for SCANDALISING the people by putting on a Gandhi cap and going about; just before the morning Holy Mass. He listened patiently and when the chaplain - turned to the Altar, he quietly left the Chapel asking the Juniors to follow. They went straight to the Coonoor parish church attended Holy Mass and returned. And that was the end of his chaplain - ship !!! He was very faithful in keeping the "ancient Rule of not smoking. He never had drinks in private or in company. He never went for cinemas or to meet a lady friend, either religious or secular. He did not ask for western diet. He

travelled 3rd or 2nd class in the trains. He did not go to Canada for home - leave as often as the foreign missionaries were allowed to do.

He truly was a saintly Brother.

Bro. Benedict.

V 3) BRO. CHARLIEDARLING, A GUIDING SHINING STAR

I had the unique privilege of knowing Bro. Charlie Darling from the year 1941 on wards. In 1941 Charlie Darling was working in St. Patrick's High School, Secunderabad. He and some of our other Non- Indian Brothers used to go to Coonoor for their summer holidays. From 1942-43 onwards Charlie was working as the Assistant Juniorate Master in Coonoor. Bro. Michael was then both the Master of Novices and the Juniorate Master as well. Charliedarling also was the socius of the Novitiate in Coonoor though he did not handle many subjects. Later Bro. Victrice joined the staff of the Novitiate. The Latter taught us French early morning immediately after the Morning Prayer and meditation. In those days the Novices used to get up at 4.30 a.m. That was the rule for all the Brothers of the Congregation.

When I met Charlie for the first time he was just a 26 - year-old man very handsome, full of youthfulness and enthusiasm. He liked the climate in Coonoor and actively participated in all the activities of the juniors. When the Juniors and Novices went for walks and outings he never missed to join them. As Junior and Novice I used to enjoy his company. His understanding, sympathy and simlicity made a great impact on me. Later when the Novitiate was shifted to Eachinkadu Charlie became the Juniorate master. For almost 24 hours of the day and night Charlie was with juniors. All the Brothers who passed through the loving care of Charlie cannot forget the happy days they spent with him. In those days the summer

Beautiful Lives

holidays at home were limited to two weeks. The rest of the time Bro. Charles had to keep the juniors usefully occupied with various activities like competitions in speeches in English, out-door and indoor games, debates etc. These occupations in speeches in English, out door and in door games, debates etc. were very educative indeed. The Brothers who were in the congregation and those who left are eternally grateful for all that they received through these activities for their spiritual, intellectual and physical growth.

Charlie loved Coonoor for its salubrious climate, scenic beauty, its hills and valleys where the youngsters enjoyed going for walks and picnics in the company of Charlie. During this period of his mission in Coonoor Charlie was appointed Correspondent of the School as well.

He took the trouble of keeping the school accounts and getting them audited by the departmental auditors. In my opinion his life in Coonoor was quite contented and happy.

But the then Provincial administration for reasons of its own decided to transfer the Juniorate to Palakurichy. Palakurichy is a very hot place. The buildings put up there were of tiled roofing which made the rooms hotter. Charlie with his characteristic religious discipline accepted this decision and shifted to this inhospitable place with cheerful resignation. It was indeed a pioneering job to set up the entire necessary infrastructure for the running of the juniorate. The rooms were so hot that he built an open hut where he used to go to sleep. Life in Palakurichy was a continuous penance for Charlie. What is remarkable was that he accepted everything with exemplary cheerfulness. I could never hear a word of complaint from the lips of Charlie.

Bro. Stephen was then the Novice Master. Fortunately or unfortunately he was appointed Provincial and good Charlie was appointed Novice Master. I am sure that Charlie was ripe for this responsible and important mission.



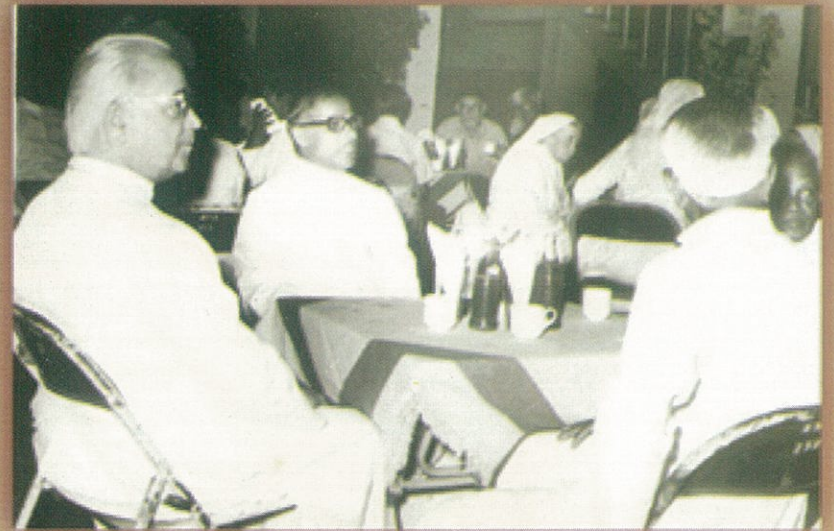
THE SPIRITUAL COLOSSUS CELEBRATES HIS
GOLDEN JUBILEE OF RELIGIOUS
PROFESSION IN 1982



TAKE, O LORD ALL THAT I AM AND ALL
I HAVE GOLDEN JUBILEE



GOLDEN JUBILEE ! CONGRATULATIONS
CHARLIEDARLING



GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION AT ITS
SIMPLICITY BEST



THE KIND OF COMPANY CHARLIEDARLING
WAS AT HIS INNOCENT BEST



CHARLIEDARLING HAPPIEST WHEN
AMONG HIS BROTHERS WHOM HE FORMED



THE LONGEST SERVING JUNIORATE MASTER
AT THE SILVER JUBILEE OF PALAKURICHI
JUNIORATE 1989



EIGHTIETH BIRTH DAY 1995 IN
SAN THOME COMMUNITY

The Novices formed under him will bear testimony to the efficient and successful way he carried out this job. His exemplary life was an inspiration to all the Novices. His exemplary life was more than sufficient to train the Novices to become matured religious. He put his heart and soul to his task. After six years as novice Master he was given a break. I am not sure whether he asked for it. My hunch is that it was thrust on him. At this stage of Charlie's life I happen to be the so-called Super Provincial. By chance I could sense that good Bro. Charlie was passing through period of crisis. He must have been wondering within himself what kind of future mission he could take up at this crucial period of his life. He was staying in Eachinkadu. Hardly anybody realized that good Bro. Charlie was passing through a period of crisis. It so happened that during those days a retreat was organised for boys of Montfort School, Yercaud. It was preached by two Jesuits, one of whom was in charge of the Movement for Better World (MBW) in India. He was an Anglo-Indian from Jabbalpore- his name does not come to my mind. The other one was a Goan. In the evenings they used to come to my room for a chat and casually they asked the help of a Brother in the better World movement which at that time was very popular all over the world. I called Charlie and asked him whether he would be interested in joining the team. He was delighted about it and without much delay he joined their team and went to different parts of the country and slowly started to preach to all categories of groups in the country. This mission gave him a lot of fulfillment.

In one of the Provincial Chapters it was decided that Charlie could go and stay in our communities of all the Regions (Provinces) and animate the Brothers of the community. He was very happy about this decision not only because he could meet his former juniors and Novices but because he loved the Brothers and the Brothers loved him. He was welcome to any community. Because he had to undertake long journeys he made San Thome as his base. He was an example and inspiration not only to the Brothers of the community, but to those who used to visit SanThome.

During these years of hectic activities and long journeys he was enjoying good health.

There was later a decline in the popularity of the Better World Movement. Building Basic Christian Community was slowly getting momentum and Charlie took an interest in this apostolate. His activities were confined to the city of Chennai and the near by places. As a transparently holy person the priests, religious and the laity as well as the student population appreciated Charlie and loved him.

Age was telling on him. His eyes were operated upon for cataract. His BP and sugar had to be kept under control. A thorough check up revealed that he had cancerous malignancy. He had to undergo radiation therapy every alternative week. For the last time when he was taken for therapy he was feeling weaker than usual.

In the hospital though he was suffering from cancer only, he developed chest pain which turned to be a massive heart attack. All the doctors did their best to save him, but he succumbed to it and slept in the Lord peacefully on 22-9-98.

Charlie will go down in the history of the Provinces of India as a most committed missionary of the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. He will continue to be a shining guiding star for generation of Brothers in India.

Bro. Antony Francisco

**V 4) Bro. CHARLIEDARLING
A SILENT MISSIONARY, FOR 62 YEARS, IN INDIA
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Bro. Charles, Canadian, was greatly influenced by Blessed Bro. Andrew of Holy Cross congregation, connected with St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. That was his inspiration to be a Missionary.

Bro. Charles landed on Indian soil in 1936. St. Patrick's High School, Secunderabad was his first field of apostolate. Early in 1944 he was appointed socius to Bro. Michael, Master of the houses of Formation, i.e. scholasticate, Novitiate and Juniorate at Coonoor. In 1945 he became the Director of the Juniorate which post he held for 20 years upto 1965, when he was appointed Master of Novices at Eachinkadu. In 1973 he joined the Better World Movement and later became spiritual animator of the Indian provinces, at the same time advocating for Basic Christian communities. Thus he worked in four different fields of Missionary activity-teacher, Formator, Renovator and spiritual animator.

I have very little idea about his teaching Mission at Secunderabad. I have a clear vision of his Mission from 1944 to 19th July 1998, when I met him in Santhome school along with Bro. Jacob Pynadath. He was seated in his room, with bright white cassock on. We spent together 45 minutes. As I took leave, he said that we could talk for hours about the past. Those were the last words I heard from him and it makes me to recall my association with him as a junior and Novice. I have experienced his immense love and concern. He was one with us everywhere - games, manual works like watering and cleaning up in flower and vegetable gardens, roads and play ground, cutting down marmosa trees for the sake of its bark, which had good price during those days of second world war. It was edifying to see him handling a watercan or carrying head load of mud or other materials or handling different tools. In those days the life style of the Brothers was very simple and the materials possessions were bare minimum. The community and spiritual life were admirable. "Peace and charity". motto of the congregation was faithfully and visibly observed. Those were strengthening factors to us, youngsters.

As a formator for nearly 30 years, a good number of Brothers (within and outside the fold) have passed through his hands under his direction and guidance. Those are the monuments he has left behind.

After Coonoor I have not lived with him in any community. We have met on several occasions between 1948 and 1998 and had long sharing sessions about our congregation and community life and other topics on religious life. That greatly helped me in my practical life. Never any criticism. He had always the spiritual growth and prosperity of the congregation at heart. He wished that all the Brothers to be faithful and devoted children of Montfort. His exhortations and writings were centered on this point.

As a Member of the Better World Movement, he came in contact with many Bishops, Priests, Nuns and lay people, through retreats and seminars. He was very happy and content with that stage of his life. I have heard appreciative words from some of them.

Bro. Charles was not much satisfied with his Mission as spiritual animator. He expected all the communities to invite him to spend few days with him. He liked to talk and talk with the hope that some benefits will be derived by the listeners. But they were few. "No man is a prophet in his own country".

Brother was not at all happy with the happenings in southern province from June 1992. I quote from his letter to me dated 09-03-1998. "The present political situation is anything but reassuring. For everyone it is "just wait and see." For how long they make us wait!. And our "New Provinces" the situation is not much better (in my opinion). There has been no revitalization going on. There is no sign of it just now. If Revitalization means going back to a good beginning (1903), it cannot take place because our beginning in India has been anything but good. I see only one way of action a fresh start, by a small group a la Montfort. Would that be possible? For the moment I can only pray..." This idea of his appeared in our News Magazine. And he carried on with his prayers till 22-09-1998, wishing for a better future.

A man who dared and risked his life for Jesus Christ in the footsteps of Montfort. Shall we lag behind?

Now the question is whether anything can be done for revitalization?

Let us pray and live in hope that situations will turn for the better in the third Millennium.

Bro. Thomas of Tolentino.

V 5) THE CLEAN SHAVED MOOPPACHAN I MET IN COONOR. - CHARLIE DARLING

On 5th June 1944 I reached Coonoor Railway Station accompanied by K.P. George (Ex. Bro. James of Padua) and escorted by Bro. Augustinus. An old Mooppachan with long beard (Bro. Michael) was there to receive us. Having had no dinner the previous night and no breakfast in the morning, with empty stomachs we had to carry our steel trunks and walk up to St. Antony's High School, Coonoor, with Mooppachan and Bro. Augustinus. Everything was a dizzy affair. In the evening I saw a clean shaved young Mooppachan in the study room - fully red and shaking his ears. He had a smile on him. A few days later I learnt that he was Bro. Charles, a Canadian, one of the assistants of the old Mooppachan, to look after us. We used to see him only in the study. Occasionally, he used to join us in the football field where he used to take the ball himself to the opposite goal post without passing it to his team mates. On Saturday & Sunday we used to see him working in the flower garden. Till I left the Juniorate I didn't have much contacts with him excepting wishing a good morning or a hallow here and there. In fact, those days, Bro. Michael was everything for the Juniorate.

In 1948 May, after I left the Juniorate, Bro. Charles became the Juniorate Master. I remember him and some of the Juniors having beards then - may be for a very short period. Though Charlie was the Juniorate Master, he used to take French for one hour every day for the Postulants. Whatever French I learnt from him, I used to try them on to him and very patiently he

corrected me whenever I went wrong. The novices learnt French from Bro. Victrice. Hence from 1949 I did not have much contact with Charlie except that we greeted each other when we met.

I had my Profession on May 10, 1950 and proceeded to Tindi for the teachers' training. 1954, I came back to Coonoor as the Headmaster of St. Antony's Elementary School. Charlie was to give meditation points to the Juniors to help them to meditate. I did that in Tamil as per Charlie's wish. In 1955 Bro. Provincial wanted to transfer me and appoint me as the Director of a Middle School at Kanchanapally, in Warangal Diocese, Andhra. Bro. Provincial had also appointed Brothers Denis and Vitalis as my assistants. Charlie was against my transfer. Somehow, the proposal fell through and I continued in Coonoor. In the month of July 1955 I had to go to Govt. Basic Training School, Avinashi, for Basic retraining. During my absence, Bro. Patrick (K.O. Joseph) left the Community and went home without telling anyone. I think, Charlie thought that I influenced Patrick to leave and hence, when I returned after my basic retraining Charlie called me to his room and offered me money to go home. I said that he had no authority to send me home. Only the Provincial can ask me to leave the congregation. The episode ended with that. That year when I was leaving to Tindivanam for retreat he told me to pack my things and take with me as I was not likely to go back to Coonoor. He also told me that he had informed the Provincial about it. When I asked the reason, he told me that the parish priest would tell me. I went to the Parish Priest and asked him why I should leave the School! He told me that he did not want me to leave St. Antony's Elementary School at all, but it was my Director who wanted me to go. Till today it is a mystery for me why I had to leave that school? The Provincial, as well as Rev. Bro. Rambert, the Asst. General, told me that Charlie had no business to pack me off from Coonoor. Later in 1959, when I, was in pondur, Charlie made amends by pleading forgiveness through a long letter, though without giving the reason.

Once I got the letter of apology, I started being friendly with him, the same way as when I was with him in Coonoor.

Later in Santhome, we had more contacts. Though at that time Charlie was not a member of Santhome Community, Santhome was his base from where he would go to different places to give seminars and retreats on better world movement, Basic Christian Community etc., I used to arrange for his travel, the food packets for the travels etc., We used to have discussions and conversations about his seminars and about his view points regarding the Congregation. After having left Santhome, Whenever I went to Madras, I used to meet him in Santhome and spent sometime talking with him. He was happy and it was pleasure speaking with him.

May His Soul Rest in Peace.

(Bro. Abraham Pralel.)

VI. AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF BRO.CHARLES GARNIER (DARLING)

At 10.00 a.m. on 23rd September 1998

For nearly two months Bro. Charles was suffering due to some urinary problems as well as chest pain. He was getting treatment for both. He was very cheerful inspite of his illness. About a month ago, the doctors found out that there was a lump in his bladder which was malignant, and he was put on radiotherapy five times a week for about three weeks. On 21st September, at about 11.30 a.m. he informed Bro. A.V. Thomas that he was having severe chest pain. He was immediately rushed to the hospital and doctors informed that his condition is not very good. At about 5 a.m. on the 22nd, he suffered a massive heart attack. Whatever the doctors did to receive him failed, and he breathed his last at 5.20 a.m. His body was embalmed and taken to San Thome Hr. Sec. School for the Brothers, teachers and students and the public to pay their homage to him. After a very meaningful Eucharistic service, the funeral rites was officiated by the VG of Madras Archdiocese and was attended by many priests, religious, teachers, students and public. At about 1.15 p.m. Bro. Charles was taken on his last journey to Eachinkadu novitiate at Yercaud. We reached Yercaud by 1.30 a.m. to day.

The majority of the Brothers of all the Indian Provinces owe a debt of gratitude to the person of Bro. Charles Garnier (affectionately known as Charliedarling) for being what they are today. Bro. Charles was responsible for their initial formation, and thus he is very dear to all of us. As I think of him, I see him as an ideal Brother, and a real role model to us, Brothers in India. He lived his full life. He showed us by his life how a Brother of St. Gabriel should be: he also made us feel proud as a Brother of St. Gabriel. As Director of the Juniorate, he not only trained the minds of the Juniors, but he also trained them to have good hand writing. A gifted musician with very good

voice for music, he trained the Juniors and novices to pray through the medium of singing as he used to say, "once singing is twice praying".

He was gentle and peaceful even in his physical appearance and movements; this speaks well of his internal dispositions and the way he related to people and to God. He radiated always that glow and grace of a holy person and we all have been witnesses to that. Noticing this, I used to see many children of San Thome Hr. Sec. School, coming to get his blessing. They will quietly come into his room, kneel before him and Charles will put his hand on their head, and they will get up and go away; no words were exchanged except "thank you Brother" as they left. He made us feel proud as a Brother of St. Gabriel by his fulfilled and contented life as a Brother. He did not miss anything as a Brother, and he could do all that he wanted by reaching out to everyone with love, compassion as well as grace and inner joy which he always possessed.

He was an integrated person; always at ease with himself, with others and surrounding and with God without Whom, he was sure, he could not do anything. He was always seen reading and updating himself with the latest that was happening in the church and in the world around. As a well - read person, he could dialogue with anyone on many matters. As national Animator of our Brothers in India, a team member of the MBV and Basic Christian Community, and retreat preacher, Bro. Charles contributed tremendously for the renewal of the church in India.

He showed how Brothers' life can be made very meaningful and what contribution can be made to the church and the society at large. It was always a joy to be in the company of Bro. Charles. May we continue to cherish this joy in spirit. Let us allow ourselves to be inspired by the simple yet very committed and very fruitful life of our Bro. Charles.

Bro. Provincial (Mathew Pannthanath)