

MGA Snippets - September 2020

September 15, 2020

Abstract

MGA stands for Montfort Global Associates. MGAs are sprouts, offshoots from the trunk of Montfort - evolved into trees in Montfortean Garden of Spirituality and Forests of Social Action - transplanted across the globe consistently over the last ten decades to take paths untravelled with out the protection and boundaries of the walls of a community.

Special to this edition, the reader can join the experiential journey of Emmanuel Pathil while the "Random Remembrances" Joe Pathyil from Canada takes everyone through the timeline a century back. A rare picture of 1961 shared by PD Wilson is a special feature to this snippet evoking memories of yore. The Poet in BO Sebastian found fountains of Tribute to the Teacher with touching words to weave a stream of emotive expressions in lyric on the Teachers' Day - 5th September.

Zoom Call on 12th September 2020 kept up the connectivity visually and digitally with an active participation of 18 MGAs.

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1 Those MGAs Who Zoom Met

MGAs from different places kept up their promise to hold their pre-decided Zoom Meeting on 12th September 2020. There were 19 participants 25 percent lesser than earlier meet in August.

The Participants included Jo Pathiyil, Fr Abraham (Avarachan), PD Wilson, Antony Moreli, Jeyamani, Jimmy Mathew, Dharma Raj, Cherian Panikulam, Jose M, George PM (Parayannilam), Emmanuel Pathil, Abraham Chalil, Shaji Thomas Dominic Chackonal, Thomas Kappen, BO Sebastian, Sebastian Vattakunnel, Jacob Kavungal, Jacob MG (Mathecken) and the Zoom Host George Nellimattathil. They all Zoomed in at the scheduled time from different continents and countries.

2 Remembrances

2.1 Farewell to Our MGA Sunil Soreng 10 Sept 20

Before we continue, Our prayers and farewell to our MGA Sunil Soreng who succumbed to COVID 19 on 10th September 2020. Late MGA Sunil Soreng belonged to Delhi Province; and was working in Navodaya School Agartala, Tripura after his second call. He got married last year. As we pray for the bereaved family particularly the Mrs Soreng, we pray God Almighty to take Sunil Soreng to His bosom. Photo of Late MGA Sunil Soreng is placed at the end.

2.2 Anniversaries Br Donald, Br Jose Vetticaud 18 Sept

Rarely two people died on the same date and on the same day. For us 18th September brings to memories Late Brothers Donald and Jose Vetticaud. Both died on a Sunday - on the day of the Lord to take their eternal rest.

Br Donald passed away on 18th September in 1994 in Bhopal.

Br Joseph Vetticatt who left us 18th September in 2005.

Our prayers of gratitude to the Almighty for their noble deeds.

Today we attach tributes to them along with this News Snippet.

3 Keeping Connected

Everyone who were present expressed the need to be regular touch and suggested that regular Zoom Meeting takes place and would continue with the "Each One bring One MGA" movement in all forthcoming meetings.

An expression of appreciation was accorded to PD Wilson and George Nellimattathil who hosted the Zoom Meet.

4 Tribute To The Teacher - A Poem by BO Sebastian

"Acharyadevo bhava," - Teachers' Day Celebrated on 5th September, the Birthday of Late President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. MGA BO Sebastian penned a poem of Tribute to the Teacher.

According to BO Sebastian, the well-known author James A Michener who had been invited to the White house, wrote this elegant regret to Dwight D. Eisenhower *"Dear Mr. President, I received your invitation three days after. I had agreed to speak a few words at a dinner honouring the wonderful high school teacher who taught me to write. I know you will not miss me at your dinner but she might at hers."*

The President's gracious reply was, *" In a life time a man can live under fifteen or sixteen Presidents, but a really fine teacher comes into his life but rarely."*

Dear Teachers, Namaste!

With all the power of my arms, intelligence of my mind,
Love of my heart, I pay respect to the divine within you.
Thank you for the yeoman service to the nation, the world;
I join your students wishing you "Happy Teachers' day".

Take pride in being a teacher, you are elevated next to God,
For, the whole world bows down to your selfless service;
You are the reason; students dream for the extraordinary;
You are no less a hero, inspiration, role model, Mentor.

You are a candle consuming yourself leading the way,
A lamp lighter illuminating the way for others to follow;
Your course is traced by the lights you leave burning;
These lights will shine back to cheer you in later years.

Envied by all for the love and respect you obtain,
For what you are and are making of your students;
You are a companion, friend, educator, philosopher,
While to the whole world you are just a teacher.

You are King /Queen of yourself, servant of mankind,
Yours, the noblest of all professions affecting eternity.
Can your invaluable service be ever equated;
With the rewards and awards bestowed on you?

You open their minds, intellect, hearts, personality,
And instill, imbue self-esteem and self-confidence.
As a catalyst your presence flourishes knowledge,

Diminishes sorrow, wells up joy without any reason.

Aren't you awakening interest, kindling enthusiasm,
Inspiring hope, igniting imagination, instilling learning;
Guiding, assisting child's self-discovery of the world;
Where abundance dawns and dormant talents manifest?

Whether it be Endemic, Epidemic or this Pandemic,
You are living warriors in the field of education,
Weathering the storm, rising up to students' trust;
You awaken the indolent, encourage the eager.

Do forge ahead teachers with greater zest,
Gently but firmly, to empower your students;
To see the invisible, feel the intangible,
Achieve the impossible and reach the unreachable.

Wear Change! Share Change! Sing Change! Bring Change!
Be convinced that this Change too will Change.

..... Do leave footprints on sands time..... (B.O.Sebastian)

5 Next MGA GLOBAL MEET

George Nellimattathil proposed the idea of next Global Meet which could be held in 2022. Arising out the discussions which followed, members present mentioned that the venue could be Thailand, South Africa, USA or India. George Nellimattathil suggested Thailand as a realistic venue on consideration of factors such as logistics, economy, accessibility and ease of travel provided the MGAs in Thailand were willing to host the event. Members expressed the view to float this matter of holding the next Global Meet among the MGAs and await the feedback

6 Formalization of MGA as a Registered Body

In response to a query on the formalization of MGA as a Registered Body, members were informed that there could be some hindrances for those MGAs who do not come under the domicile in India and hence the matter needs more application of thought.

Some of the alternatives that emerged during the discussions were to get the MGA registered like the Rotary International or the Knights of Columbus and in a place where there are no hassles of time and bureaucratic delay or obstacles.

MGAs Cyriac, George and Dominic volunteered to render their help in this task.

Jo Pathil, intervening during the discussions, expressed the desirability of initiating steps to work on a well drawn up Byelaws for the MGAS that would be applicable globally irrespective of the location of its Registration.

Sample byelaws of Rotary International and Knights of Columbus were emailed to PD Wilson for information, study and perusal.

7 Experience Sharing - Emmanuel Pathil in His Own Words

” Emmanuel with a Mission ”- Greetings from Samajik Seva Sadan (SSS)!

I had come to know about the Montfortian Ex-Brothers Global Association from Mr. T.D. Joseph in early this year. I was inducted into this Association by Wilson/T. D. Joseph. I am very glad and grateful to all the Associates. From the time I came to know about the get together of MGA Global Summit, I was eager to attend it,” We propose and God disposes it”. This is what happened to me Veronica my wife. We do pray for the success of this meet.

7.1 Caring for My Grand Parents

At the age of 12, I was left in my Grandparents house to look after them.

Myself and one of my cousin elder sister and Grandparents constituted our family. Our daily time table was to get up at 5 AM and recite prayers with them, morning cores, breakfast and to school, 2 Km away at 9.00 AM. Return at lunch break and serve food for the grandparents, eat our food and run to school. Evening again return and apply medicine in my Grandfather’s eyes, eat something and then sit with the Gran parents for 2 hours, praying and every day reading the life of a Saint from a book which describes the terrible suffering they endured to save the people from sin and instill in them Love of Christ.

I also learned in North India several missionaries lived in very poor condition and suffered a lot in serving Jesus, by perching, teaching, doing health care trying to improve the life condition of poor people. This had tremendous effect in me that by when I passed Class 7, I decided to become a Missionary to serve the poorest of the poor in North India and become a Saint. I informed this to both the Grandparents and my father mother. They told that you are too young to understand what you are planning for!

In the May in 1964 one Brother (Uppachan of Thareil, as we called him he is from Kaipuzha, my village) came to recruit boys at Kaipuzha Parish Church which was pre arranged but by chance I went to meet the Brother at Parish Priests Residence. There were 4 boys with their parents.

After talking to them, the Brother asked me "Where is your father?" I told him my story and said that they are not interested that I become a missionary. The brother was from Kaipuzha my village and he knew our family. The Brother came to my Grand Parents house where both my father and mother were present, persuaded them to agree to my joining the order.

7.2 Tryst with Gabrielism and Montfortan Spirituality

My time line began in 1964 to 1968 in Ranchi completing Matriculation. Next destination was Yercaud in April 1968 for my Vestition in December 1968 and then Sitagarha for Novitiate till 1970 when I took the first vows followed by post novitiate in Tindivanam

After my Mechanist training in 1973 in Don Bosco School, I was in Loyola ITI and High School till 1975 and then in Pauta Hazaribagh.

My period in Pauta was the best part of my mission followed by my service in Rewar. This is the work that I had the desire to do in my mind when I left home.

Following a year of stint in CRI Institute Bangalore, I returned to Dhenkanal on 3rd July 1983, worked in Montfort School and took over the Social Service work that Bro Albert had started at Juanga village 5 Km away from School at Banjhikusum.

From 1983 the scope of my work expanded from one village to 10 villages having 8 Non Formal schools by 1985. With the permission and approval from Bro. C. M. Joseph the then Provincial and from the then Rev. Bishop of Sambalpur to get the Organization registered as "Samajik Seva Sadan", I proceeded for registration of the Seva Sadan when and troubles began for me.

Rev. Bishop Chenath was transferred from Sambalpur to Bhubaneswar as the Arch Bishop and Father Scaria became the Administrator in Sambalpur Diocese. I Applied for registration of SSS on 13th November 1985. The ADM wanted me to produce a letter from the Diocese that they have no objection because I had written in my letter that this activity was started in 1982 by the Montfort Brothers under Sambalpur Diocese. When I went to Sambalpur Bishop House, Fr. Scaria strongly opposed the idea and called Bro C. M. Joseph and told him to transfer me from Dhenkanal because they don't want me in their diocese, "This is a work of the Diocese and he wants to take it out from our hands".

After lot of pleading to allow me to work for 1 year at Banjhikusum, Brother did not heed. He under the Vow of Obedience asked me to go with him to Patna first and then to where ever I wanted to go and work for the poor. I appealed to the Superior General through my hand written 12 pages of request to serve the poor. The Superior General responded to me 20 days with the words "If you think God has called to serve the poor and you can do it better by staying outside the congregation then you can apply for your Dispensation". He also wrote that it can be a call within the call, but it also can be a game of the

Deceiver and advised to pray, meditate and take a final call after interceding to St. Montfort to show me the way.

I did pray to St Montfort for 5 days as counselled by Bro Superior General and then wrote a letter to Holy See for Dispensation through the Congregation in the first week of June. On 26th June 1988, I got the Dispensation letter and on 3rd July 1986 (St. Thomas's feast day) I took my box with a few sets of cloth and walked to Village Banjhikusum 5 Km away from Montfort school. Bro. Kuriakos my then Superior asked me to take the bike and go because it is for your work, but I refused and told him that it belonged to the Brothers/dioceses and I have become an Ex- Brother. I was never attached to any thing as a Brother, and I had continued keeping this one Vow that I had made to GOD, for I have left the Congregation only to fulfill the will of GOD to serve the poor which was resolved at the age of 14.

7.3 The Exodus - A Journey Most Unlikely

On 12/12/1985 the then Collector (a strong RSS supporter) called me and gave me the Societies Registration Certificate of "SAMAJIK SEVA SADAN".

I wrote this good piece of news to Bro. C M Joseph and also to the Administrator when my problems began to accumulate.

Thanks to this letter, my exodus from the Congregation began with the roadblock of denial funds by Fr. Scaria the Administrator of the Diocese.

(To Be Continued in the next MGA Snippet) .

8 Random Rememberances - Joe Pathyil

8.1 Bro. Eleazar :A dominant influence (nee Louis Bureau)

Readers would have glanced through the growth of the Montfortan institutions during the first half of last century. Let me take you further to the enormous growth of the Congregation under the able stewardship of Brother Eleazar.

I joined the Juniorate of the Brothers of St. Gabriel in Coonoor, The Nilgiris, in May 1947. The Brothers belonging to the French Province had been in India since 1903. They had started in Pondicherry and subsequently expanded their educational institutions to Tindivanam, Yercaud, Coonoor, and Ooty all in the present Tamil Nadu, and a couple of schools in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Apart from a few local recruits, the Brothers in India were mostly missionaries

sent from France. However in the thirties the Brothers started actively recruiting youngsters in India.

Bro. John of God, a Tamilian of great vision and boldness went to Travancore to recruit young men of all ages to join the society. They came to Coonoor to study, to train, and eventually to make their choices. The Brothers in India, however, remained directly under the French Province, with a “District Director” with limited authority. Bro. Eugene Mary was the District Director until his death in 1946 when he went to France to attend the general chapter. The authorities decided during that chapter that India would be given the status of a province.

8.2 The Institution Builder On the Move

In March 1947 India was declared a province and Bro. Eleazar was named the first Provincial Superior.

Bro. Eleazar (born on August 6, 1908) had come to India from France at the age of eighteen, studied in Montfort School, Yercaud, and was sent to Loyola College, Madras where he completed his B.A. (Hons), which was equivalent to an M.A. He became the headmaster of Montfort School in 1936. When, at the age of 39 Titch (as he was fondly known in Montfort) was appointed the Provincial Superior, some of the senior members were doubtful about the choice.

Here was a young man who had a sarcastic tongue, a defiant attitude, a self-confidence beyond his years, and untraditional views. But they were willing to give Bro. Eleazar all the support in the hope that he would surpass their limited expectations. Besides, India was becoming an independent country in August of 1947, and the old missionaries were rather confused about their future.

A few days after I arrived in Coonoor, Bro. Eleazar visited the place. He met with the new recruits and spoke to us. But he spoke much too fast for me to fully comprehend him, though I was fascinated by his English, his demeanor, his cigar, his winning smile, and his general bearing. He would continue to visit Coonoor periodically and spend a few minutes with each one, inquiring about our well-being. It was always a feast when he visited.

Bro. Michael (popularly known as Thatha), a French missionary, who had been in Thailand until the Japanese army occupied that country during WWII, was the superior of the Juniors, of the Novices, and of the scholastics. In fact he was a confidant and adviser to Bro. Eugene Mary. In 1948 the scholastics were transferred to other places, and Bro. Charles was given the charge of the juniors. Thatha would continue to be a strong influence, as he was in charge of the Novitiate for many years. Thatha would be the person most loved by the youngsters. But Bro. Eleazar wielded his authority, gently, firmly, and confidently to direct the affairs of the province.

In 1952 I was selected to go to Loyola College, where Bro. Eleazar himself had studied. It was from that time that he took a particular, a fatherly, interest in me. Those sent to Loyola were the most precious future prospects of the society. Bro. Eleazar came quite frequently to visit us in Loyola. On his constant travels he had to pass through Madras, and he would take a cab, to visit us for at least a couple of hours. He took interest in each of us in a different way. He had the uncanny ability to understand us and see through an individual.

8.3 The Wizard of Discernment in Conflict Management

While he upheld the traditional virtues and attitudes, he also had the wisdom to allow for differences. A prime example of his unique judgment happened in 1953. Two of our confreres got into a nasty fight, knife was drawn by one, and some of us had to physically restrain the combatants. Within twenty four hours Bro. Eleazar arrived, met with us individually, and decided to send away to Hyderabad, not the one who threatened, but the one who provoked. When I told him about my surprise that justice was not meted out, he reassured me that he had done the right thing by keeping the attacker. His judgment was proven to be correct subsequently.

Bro. Eleazar was pleased at my success in my studies and encouraged me to read widely beyond the University requirements. He himself was a voracious reader and would recommend books. In March of 1953, Montfort School needed a person to help out as they were short, and Bro. Eleazar got special dispensation for me to skip the final examinations and join the staff of Montfort school for over three months. I continued to go to Montfort School to help, during all the holidays for the next four years. Since The Provincial headquarters was also in Montfort School, Bro. Eleazar saw me at close quarters. And I too grew in my admiration of the man.

(To Be Continued in the next MGA Snippet) .

9 A 1961 Picture And Memories of Yore..MG Jacob

9.1 The Journey to the Desert of Deccan

June17: On this day in 2018, Br John Vaniapura passed away —silently while being taken for medical tests. THE TRAIN JOURNEY THAT BONDED US THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.....

As I recall Late Vaniapura, I remember that our journey began on Friday 12th May in 1961 from Alwaye Station...

While nearly 40 youngsters were selected to study in Coonoor, 7 of us were selected for a longer travel....a journey that took two days. Most of us were in their teens - I being the youngest at 11 years, KM Joseph being a year older. We were 7 of us (Chandy Thottiyil from Uzhavoor, Joseph KM(Karimpanil from Palai), PP Joseph (Puthiyadam from Parippu), PJ Joseph(Paliyath) and MV Paulose(Mekkunnel), John VV (Vaniapura from Thodupuzha (Nagapuzha and nearby Kodikulam) and I, Jacob MG (Mathecken) from Arakuzha Muvat-tupuzha) - The Magnificent Seven.

Our parents/wards (grandfather in my case - as my Father had gave me already absolute freedom when he left for his eternal abode when I was eight months old) placed under the care of Late Br Stanislaus. We were to board the train to Madras (now Chennai) around 10 am in the morning. The train was jam packed in all the boggies. Our parents and wards and Br Stanislaus lifted us and pushed us through the windows (those days, there were no grills on windows) while our luggages were not lucky for any entry into the compartment as the train moved away.

After an hour or so, the parents and wards were wating at trichur station to hand over our luggage..They had hired a taxi. All of us were spellbound by their explosive first train entry thru the windows. All six except me were travelling for the first time in a train while at the age of 11, I claimed to be an expert train traveller - having travelled between Alwaye and Calcutta from the age of 6 months and could remember five travels with my maternal grandmother and my mother between the age of four and ten- Godavary rail bridge and Madras central Station and waiting room at the left corner being the most prominent among my memories..

The seven of us reached Chennai on morning of 13th May and we were takent to neary by San Thome HS and sight seeing nearby and by evening we boarded the New Delhi Train. On 14th May,1961 we stepped into the Kazipet Rly station and our leap into life began there on - the seven of us - the magnificent Seven....to be welcomed by Late Br Paul of the Cross, Br Celestine and Br Jacob Mathalikunnel, then a Junior in Kazipet Juniorate.

9.2 The Kazipet Days....Life Beautiful..Then.. Now...

The years in Kazipet were full of life, fast paced activities and purposeful. The weekdays would be full with furious pace of academics – both teaching and learning. One could still visualize the teachers in their fast paced hobbles to keep pace with the stride of the principal to reach their classes before the students could get in. One could still recall the echo of laughter in a class followed by a period of pindrop silence.

Like the nightingales sing in the dark, the voice of serious teachings from two

dozen rooms; only to be followed by the interval gong when the entire school erupts into a volcano of laughter and fun.

When Bro.Sylvanus turns on the Murphy radio during the interval, the entire office corridor would be thronged by the cricket hungry kids to get the latest on the test matches between India and England, India and Australia and India and West Indies. Soon they would be back to the classes for serious learning.

The lunch break would be too short for a game of cricket but sufficient for others which the kids would play in teams – chasing one another by throwing a tennis ball. Other games included table tennis with tennis ball on the school corridor. The evenings were even better.

Post tea, the games in the three soccer grounds were full paced. First round belonged to the boarders. Then the juniors but the icing on the cake was the soccer games of the brothers which were of high quality and truly exhilarating. The entire atmosphere was one of a carnival of a different kind – While the nearby theatres belted out the latest hindi songs and one could sing along with the great Rafi, Mukesh or Lata, the extra curricular activities brought out the best of kids in one way or another.

There was a purpose in every stride of a student – to become somebody, to achieve something and daring to go for it. There was purpose in the steps and words of every teacher – to give their best so that no kid lags behind. It was work and play at its optimum.

The weekends were even more attractive. One would look forward to the weekends – that began on Friday night – notwithstanding the half day school on Saturday. One would race with study time to complete the homework and assignments to greet the weekend in full measure of time. There was week end movies. The principal would preface the movie show with an outline of the story that begins weave in moving images. There were games – friendly soccer matches between the Brothers and the School Team which were fiercely played to exciting finish till the final whistle. There were picnics to nearby forest grooves like Parkkal and Ramappa.

The great rowing expedition on a long log of wood in Ramappa Lake has etched a memory of heroism courage and inspiration – it was the Olympics for young kids like me in Kazipet. What Kazipet under Joseph Pathiyil and others gave us was a good launching pad to – to dare to do and dare to do without fear and inhibition; to live life to the full with its ups and downs and yet to reach the goal. To take pleasure in every activity one is engaged in. Thanks to gems like Late Bro John of God, Brother Donald, Joseph Pathiyil, Bro. Dominic, Bro.John Bosco, Jaganmohan Reddy, Patrick, Tarcisius, and the list goes on.. They gave roots to grow and wings to fly.No wonder Life is Beautiful- then and now.

What we lost, Canada gained : Joseph Pathiyil:
an epitome of grace,poise,personality,elegance and substance,empathy and fairness.

10 MGA News

MGA News Snippet in August saw contritubtions - Random Remembrances from the Vetran Jo Pathyil and Experience Sharing from Sebastian Vattakunnel

Several suggestions emerged during the discussions were such as standardizing the content, format, design, sourcing literary and experiential contributions from all MGAs etc. Some of the names to pursue these during the meeting and during earlier meetings were Jacob Kavunkal, Jeyaraj, Lawrence Alwa, Suresh Reddy, Jebamalai Dass, Sebastian Vattakunnel, Sebastian BO, Abraham Areeparambil and others from other Provinces abroad.

MGA Sebastian Vattakunnel suggested that the MGA News Letter should be a regular monthly feature. It was suggested that the above mentioned MGAs could galvanize the rest of the MGAs to provide content for the MGA News Letter.

Jo Pathyil expressed the desire that the MGA News letter may be shared through Email and this was agreed to.

The members were informed that continous improvements are attempted at with each edition to the form and format, content and relevance to optimize the readers' interest.Improvements and innovations would continue by taking into account the feedback from our members.

Members may come up with new names for MGA News Letter Snippets - modern crisp attractive

11 Action Plan

- To work on a global byelaws for MGA and its registration
- To work on the Next MGA Global Meet proposed to be held in 2022
- To hold the Next MGA Zoom Meeting on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Next MGA Zoom Meet on Saturday,10 October 2020.
- Members may contribute with their experiences, memories to MGA News Letter
- To get connected to those who are yet not in our group.
- "Each One bring One MGA " to next Zoom Meeting.
- To source inputs for MGA News
- To send suggestions ideas for action on the above

12 Seeking Your Response

Kindly send your response with inputs for improvement

Kindly send the salient Experiential slice of your lives to share your joys and sorrows with fellow MGAs - to inspire, relish and cherish

Kindly send your suggestions for the Next MGA Global Meet, MGA Registration etc Your Sincerely.

PD WILSON AND TEAM

13 Looking Ahead

Looking forward to those wonder poems collections with musical notations from Late Br Charles Garnier circulated in Coonnoor and Yercaud in the 1950 thru 1970s ...

Inviting more Experience Sharing ...from MGAs to inspire and be inspired from...

Thank You...The Story Telling to continue ...

Bye till we Zoom Next on Saturday 10 October 2020. God Bless You all.

Tip from a MBA Batchmate Shaji from Nagarcoil - *Sip a Cocktail of Lemon Rasam and Vodka - it is good to taste and relish*

End



LIST OF NAMES ST.GABRIEL'S KAZIPET 1961-62

Seating/Standing Order:

T -4th Row[L-R]: 1KV Joy, 2(Br)Vincent Kereketta, 3(Br) Late Thomas Madappilly, 4(Br) CT Paul, 5(Br) Jacob Mathalikunnel, 6 PP Jacob, 7 KT Mathai, Fidelis Toppo, 8AJ Poonoose
T -3th Row[L-R]: 1PP Joseph(PPJ61), 2 PV Scaria 3.Showraiah 4.TP George 5.KP George, 6.(Br)MM Francis, 7.PJ Joseph(PJJ61) 8(Br) Paulose Mekkunnel(MVP61) 9 VM Kuruvilla
T -2nd Row[L-R]: 1(Br) Late Sylvanius 2.(Br) Stanislaus Joseph 3(Br) Late John Of God 4 Late Thampi Raja (Ggeory)
B -1st Row[L-R]: 1 Emmanuel Thomas, 2(Br)Sebastian Kuruvanmakkai(KMS), 3.MM Joseph, 4 K C Reddy, 5 Jacob Mathecken(MGJ61) 6.(Br)Joseph Kaimpanil (KMJ61)
7.(Br) John Vanipura(VVU61), 9.(Br) Chandy Thottiyil(KMC-61)

Figure 1: Br Sylvanius, Br Stanislaus, Br John of God, Br Donald, Br Thampiraja with Juniors

Figure 2: MGA Sunil Soreng Tripura Died 10SEPT20



Figure 3: Late Br J Vetticaut DOD 18Sept with Br Showreddy



Figure 4: Late Br Donald

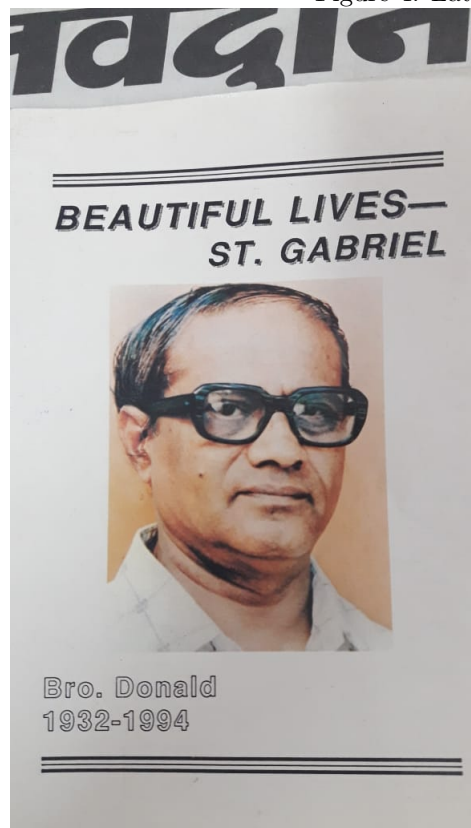


Figure 5: Br Eleazar



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Bro. Jose Vetticattil, S.G. (1956 2005)

Funeral Service at Boys Town, Hyderabad 21 September, 2005



Your Grace, Most Rev. Marampudi Joji, Archbishop of Hyderabad, the dear mother, brothers, sisters, dear and near ones of Bro. Jose, my dear Brothers of St. Gabriel, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, members of the Boys Town, the Prajwala and the FVTRS families, friends and well wishers,

We have come in such large numbers from every corner of this country to pay homage to our Brother, and to walk with him on his final journey. The last three days that Bro. Jose was laid in state here at Boys Town, I have watched in awe, the hundreds of men, women and children, from every walk of life irrespective of caste, colour or creed, coming to have a last glimpse of the mortal remains of Bro. Jose, and break down in sorrow at the sight of him lie so motionless. I have received a continuous stream of condolence messages, from all over this country and abroad.

Bro. Jose touched our lives profoundly, and thousands of others like us everywhere. For those of us who knew him, it is still unbelievable that Bro. Jose is no more, that his eloquent words will never be heard again, that we shall not have the soothing comfort of his inner strength and his towering personal charisma, to guide us.

Bro. Jose Vetticattil went to his eternal reward on Sunday, 18 September. He had suffered a massive heart attack earlier in the morning, but had carried on until noon by sheer will power. But then suspecting something was amiss, he came to St. Ann's hospital from where he was rushed to be given specialized care. After hours of struggle by the medical team accompanied by the incessant prayers of Brothers, Sisters and friends who had gathered there and elsewhere, Bro. Jose commended his spirit to the Father at 6:15 in the evening. He had run the race. He had fought the good fight. It was now time for him to rest in the bosom of the Father in whom he always trusted, in whose name and glory, Bro. Jose toiled without rest or respite all his life. We who have been touched and blessed by his life, mourn his death. But we also raise our hearts in thanksgiving for a life so intense such as his. For such a life is but one in a million.

We the Brothers of St. Gabriel of the Province of Central India are grateful to you all for standing by us, as we accompany one of the most beloved and gifted of our Brothers on his last journey. We are

particularly grateful to Most Rev. Marampudi Joji, Archbishop of Hyderabad, for being here to preside at this Eucharist, and for his touching sentiments of comfort.

Born on 23 March, 1956, to Late Mr. Varkey Joseph and Mrs. Aley Kutty at Karimanoor in Kothamangalam Diocese of Kerala, Bro. Jose was the fourth child and the eldest of the sons among four brothers and seven sisters. An extremely bright student, he felt a strong call to a missionary vocation when still very young. Inspired by Bro. Stanislaus Joseph of revered memory, young Jose left home and his kindred to join the large family of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, at Kazipet, when he was only twelve.

His father who had ambitions of his own for the eldest of his sons, but never one to stand in the way of the decisions his children made, however young they are, bid Jose farewell with tears in his eyes, and the words of the Gospel on his lips: "My son", he said, "once you put your hands on the plough, do not look back". Bro. Jose never looked back. He forged ahead in his Religious vocation to be a "Brother" with conviction, with fidelity, with passion, and with inner joy, to the very last. His late dear father with the rest of his family most of whom are here, can truly be proud of this son and brother of theirs.

After his initial formation at Kazipet, Yercaud and Tindivanam, Bro. Jose took his First Vows in the Congregation on 14 April, 1974. The Superiors looking for bright young Brothers who could give a new impetus to our mission among the vulnerable youth providing them vocational education, sent him for his Mechanical Engineering, which he completed with distinction. He straight away plunged himself into his mission of training the youth at Boys Town in skills that could provide them a decent living and self respect. The leadership, innovation, and inspiration he provided in the field of Technical Education in the Congregation, the Church in India, and among his peers will continue to be one of the enduring contributions of Bro. Jose to the society at large.

Bro. Jose continued to discern the prompting of the Spirit in his own life and prepared himself for his final Commitment in the Congregation. He did so on 20 May, 1980 at Coonoor. He enrolled himself for his theological studies first at Vidyadeep College and then at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, where he completed a Masters Degree in Theology (M. Th.) in 1987. Intellectual work and easy articulation of profound theological insights came naturally to him. Both his professors and fellow students looked on him with respect and admiration. They predicted a great future for him as a professional theologian, if only he applied himself to the task with greater inner discipline.

He was soon called to be the Principal of Vidyadeep College for Religious Studies, Bangalore, his Alma Mater. During the four years he spent as the head of the Institute, he created a great deal of intellectual ferment and deep convictions among students in their call to Religious life as Brothers. He made the Institute financially self-reliant by building a new commercial complex in the campus. As so typical of Bro. Jose, his ways were unorthodox. And not every one looked kindly at it. Such responses were the price he had to pay right through his life for being a habitual non-conformist. But his non-conformism was the source of his God given creative spirit. He would not sacrifice it at any cost.

It was while he was at Montfort ITI, Ballarsha, that the call came to Bro. Jose to take over as the co-ordinator of the relief and rehabilitation work organized by CHAI, Forum of Religious for Justice and Peace and other organizations, for victims of the devastating earthquake that hit Latur in Maharashtra, in 1993. After the initial phase of relief in the area, I personally had the privilege of handing over charge

of the task to Bro. Jose in the summer of 1994. I also had the opportunity to watch him operate on my frequent visits there with others who formed the co-ordinating committee.

He instilled courage and confidence among the victims to start life all over again; he re-equipped artisans and craftsmen; he restored the educational process in the affected villages; he built up the necessary infrastructure for a dispensary, Banjara Arts and Crafts Centre and a Community Centre.... All within the one year he spent there. Above all he formed loving bonds with his team and the people, giving them faith in themselves and in others.

The experience at Latur touched him at the core of his heart as few others would. It changed him profoundly. In his own words he puts it this way: "It was a turning point in my life. Until that time I never knew I had the capacity to be really with people and that I could develop rapport with them. That was the time that I discovered within me the ability to lead people. I really met God within me while walking those lonely paths and coming face to face with untold human suffering". Bro. Jose came out of the experience a radically changed person, focused, centered in God, with a fire in his heart to reach out to the suffering humanity fully ablaze.

The last ten years of his life, he spent in and around Boys Town. He systematically re-vamped the Institution and modernized or started new courses. New and spacious buildings replaced the old ones. The number of inmates in the hostel multiplied to almost 600. The training center opened upto women trainees. A uniquely new programme of integrated training for deaf youth with the normal ones was opened at Boys Town in collaboration with the Government of India. A first of the kind co-management of the State Juvenile Homes was started. An elaborate network with major industrial houses to ensure employment to the Trainees at Boys Town was initiated.

Bro. Jose had a great dream for Boys Town. Neither the lack of resources nor the many administrative road blocks that came in the way, could stop this dream from taking concrete shape. Along with his Brothers and collaborators, Bro. Jose accomplished at Boys Town, what others of lesser caliber would fear to think possible. It is thanks to Bro. Jose, as much as to those before him, that Boys Town is today what it was always meant to be a splendid parable in human solidarity to offer a new future for children and youth in desperate need.

But the walls of Boys Town could not satiate Bro. Jose's thirst to serve the most vulnerable of God's children. He literally took the words of our founder Montfort to his heart: "Those whom the world rejects must move you the most". Equally so the words from our Rule of Life: "You are free and totally available; you can therefore be bold and dynamic and rush where God beckons to meet the urgency of human needs" (RL 10). He became the spirit and the anchor behind two organizations at the service of those most risk Prajwala in Hyderabad, and Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS) in Bangalore. As the founder president of Prajwala, Bro. Jose became a father and a brother to the hundreds of children and women victims of trafficking in Hyderabad and elsewhere. He became the voice of their silent cry, and their advocate before powers that be.

Three interventions of Prajwala which are considered International Best Practices are Bro. Jose's brain child. The Co-Management of government homes, the community based care and support of HIV positive child survivors of trafficking and most importantly the largest collective enterprise for survivors

of trafficking. Infact Prajwala Enterprises which is the largest economic empowerment unit in South Asia was conceptualized, planned and implemented by Bro. Jose.

As the Chairman of the FVTRS, an organization supported by the CBCI, CRI, MISEREOR and others, Bro. Jose forged a new national network to provide technical skills to youth. At the time of his death, the FVTRS under the leadership of Bro. Jose was carrying out a massive programme for youth affected by the recent Tsunami in the southern states of India and the Andamans.

The National Council of the Brothers of St. Gabriel in India recently appointed him the National Secretary for Justice and Peace. He was one of the four Brothers elected from the Province of Central India, to the 30th General Chapter of the Congregation in Rome, in December this year. We shall miss his sharp intelligence, passion and experience as the Congregation deliberates at the Chapter on our way forward in the years ahead, in a globalizing world.

He had great dreams for his Brothers and for the Congregation he loved dearly. Asked about his work among the victims of HIV/AIDS he had recently confessed, "(Combating) HIV/AIDS is an area where people are looking for leadership. The Brothers have given leadership in the field of Education, especially revolutionizing care and support for the differently abled in the context of 19th Century Europe. Faced with a new challenge today, I have chosen to lead our Brothers to respond to the crisis of HIV/AIDS". The Centenary project of the Province for victims of HIV/AIDS remain one of his unfulfilled dreams. But God who put this dream in his heart and that which we all share, shall certainly be brought to fruition in His own time, for sure.

For me personally, Bro. Jose was a pillar of strength. He was a member of my Council in my first term as Provincial. He was forth-right and honest in his opinions. His loyalty to the Church, to the Congregation and to his Brothers was impeccable. It was such love and loyalty that made him impatient when change was painfully slow, as also when commitment was not sufficiently forth coming. Rather than getting bogged down by these, he chose to set pace himself. But he was always concerned that the others are taken along.

I shall miss Bro. Jose, his wisdom, courage and quite affection. So shall so many of you who had the fortune of encountering him in life. He shall not be with us physically any more. But his shall be a presence that is even more real and reassuring than it has ever been before.

This is a thanksgiving Eucharist that we shall celebrate, for his life that has been. And the new life that is not for Bro. Jose alone, but for all of us, because we believe that in him we, especially the poor, have a powerful intercessor before God.

May our Brother Jose Vetticattil rest in peace.

Bro. Varghese Theckanath, s.g

Sd/- Provincial Superior.



My dear Betty Chettai,

Layola H. School,
Kangri.

27-2-95

Affectionate greetings from your father!

In moment of joy and sorrow you have been with me. I have taken all my freedom to be free with you - you have allowed me to be so, if you like. It is persons of your sort that makes me marvel about life. The purpose, sense and meaning of LIFE are unfolding itself to me through persons of your kind. You seem to be saying always to me that the limits of possibilities are beyond the horizon. It is the silent supportive presence of you and some others, that envelopes my drooping spirit. No, you needn't get surprised about what this father is blabbing about you. It is a very frank expression from my deep self of appreciation for it, simply that. And what makes me do so, and why now? Frankly, I don't know, myself. But I know this much that you deserve it and it was long due to you. The anti for being an understanding chettai. There are very few who have dared to walk beside me, holding my hand, in my life's journey. If I do not come up to your expectations, pardon me. If I collapse on the path do not regret, please.

Now, let me be a bit selfish. I'm somewhat fine. Health is not really all that sweet. Since September '94 - from the time of sports preparation I wasn't well. Then came the exams, Silver Jubilee and so on. There were all kinds of tensions - wanted and unwanted. Jan '95 I took some medicines - which reacted and had such a bad stomach that I had to be in the toilet for hours - 15-20 times a day. Still I had to go to school even on those days!! No, I don't intend to commit suicide. But only aware that God has given me the capacity to endure. Health is the only cup tea that God has not given me. Every thing else I'm provided ^{with} in plenty. So no complaints what so ever.

By the way, did I write you a letter in May/June '94? I had a lot to share with you

Br Donald-A Companion Remembers

Jo Pathyil Canada

September 15, 2020

Abstract

Abstract by Jacob Mathecken: Today Recalling Late Br Donald - Antony Thekkel - whose feast day used to be celebrated on 15 July every year. The write up by Jo Pathyil is so experiential with deep insight of empathy and endearment. No wonder the writer Jo Pathyil remains the tallest in demeanour, dignity and graciousness. Jo Pathyil needs no further introduction. He is a household name in every community and continent.

1 1950s and 1960s Walking Together

Antony came to the junior ate a few days before I did -in 1947.

He was admitted to Form 111 while I was in Form 1V. He was short, bright faced, smiling, and talented.

He had brought a flute that he played for any occasion. He also could play bull-bull and mouth organ. (Later in life he learned to play the violin and organ. He could play most wind and string instruments.)

He sang melodiously and would learn songs in Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi after hearing them once.

He acted in plays as a hero most times. In some of the plays I too had supporting roles. Antony was an average student, who worked hard at his studies. He was not by any means one of the top students in his group. With the overshadowing presence of Mani Mezhukanal and N.M. Joseph who were both near geniuses, others were at best very good.

Antony joined the novitiate in 1951 and a year later he assumed the name of Bro. Donald. In 1953 when the aforementioned two brilliant companions of his joined me in Loyola College, Madras, Bro. Donald went for teachers' training in Tindivanam. In 1955 he was posted to Coonoor where he became assistant to Bro. Charles to look after the juniors in addition to his duties as a full time teacher.

In 1957 I joined the community as headmaster of St. Antony's. Bro. Donald and I became fast friends and confidants. He had his moods and his quirks. But he detected every emotion in my face and anticipated my wishes and expectations. He was a true friend who corrected me gently, prodded me vehemently; encouraged me greatly, and filled me with self confidence.

In spite of his very busy day, he would find time almost every day, to sit with me in my room, and over a cigarette, discuss the events of the day, and occasionally open up his soul. I must say it was mutual. I would think out loud about various events for the school. He would listen patiently, ask probing questions, and give his frank opinions on all matters.

Occasionally he would get in to his moods and say “ I am not going to do anything for the Sports Day; find someone else”. I pretended as if I did not hear it, because I knew that when the time came he would get the juniors to decorate the grounds, plan every detail, and make sure the function was a success.

When Parents Day came along, he would write original plays in Tamil, find actors, rehearse and prepare thoroughly with lights, sound, music and the works.

During the four years that he was with me, dozens of events took place. People obviously praised the principal for his leadership, little realizing that the real credit should have gone to Bro. Donald and such loyal helpers. But he would not want me to mention his name in public.

In 1958 I took eight teachers and twenty three students on an all India tour. Bro. Donald accompanied me and that made all the difference to the trip. I was worry free as he was with me to share responsibilities.

Bro. Donald was an excellent teacher. Students literally adored him, and figuratively ate out of his hands. He could teach the most complicated things in his own inimitable ways. Since his qualifications confined him to middle school classes, senior classes could not get the benefit of his pedagogical talents. I encouraged him to pursue higher studies. He could appear for college exams privately. I bought books for him, secured application forms and admissions. But he was too busy doing other things too important to the juniors, to the community and to the school.

2 1960s The Journy Continues

In 1961 Bro. Donald was transferred to Kazipet and was asked to look after the juniors there. Bro. John of God did not want to give him full freedom to look after the youngsters. The restraint brought him in to conflict with his superiors.

In 1962 when I took over the stewardship of Kazipet, his cup of joy was full. The Provincial Superior advised me to strictly oversee Bro. Donald and to give at least one talk a week to the youngsters. But I knew my man. I gave him full freedom to deal with the juniors, knowing that he would not let them or me down. He managed to be fully involved in the activities of the community. He too did not miss any of the after dinner celebrations and imbibings that I arranged for special occasions such as a feast or a birthday of the members of the community.

During the long, hot summer vacations he brought the juniors to Ramappa and Pakal and had memorable times. In Kazipet too Bro. Donald was a sure spearhead of all activities of the school. We also continued to have long chats during which sessions he would warn me about some teachers and caution me about my own activities. But always gently, always charitably, always out of

genuine affection and admiration.

When he was transferred to the new school in Roorkee to be with my friend Bro. Julian, I lost a soul mate. In May 1965 I visited Roorkee while in Delhi and spent a few precious hours with Bro. Donald.

3 1967 onwards - Jouney thru Memories

A year or two later when he was in Ranchi, he fell out with his director who wrote to me asking how to handle Donald. I told him to trust him and give him autonomy to do what he wanted and that he would not let anyone down.

Years later, in 1979 when I visited India with my wife and two sons we visited Montfort School Delhi in order to meet Bro. Donald. He told me that he was teaching in senior classes and enjoying it. He was solicitous about everything to do with me. He took the boys around to show the school. When I bade him good-bye I did not know that we would not meet again.

A few years later I learned of his untimely passing. I mourn his loss. With all the shortcomings of a human being, he was genuine as genuine comes. Farewell, my friend who passed away on 18, September 1994.

But 15 July his feast day will never fade from memories; for just three days later on 18th July, year after year Br Donald would come up with events for festive celebrations for the likes of me in Coonoor and Kazipet. (October 2014)
- Jo Pathyil Canada



His Parents

Adoration

BEAUTIFUL LIVES— ST. GABRIEL



Bro. Donald
1932-1994

FORWARD

Dear Friends,

Through this booklet we are putting on record the life and inspiration of yet another 'unique flower from the garden of St. Gabriel' which has been plucked by the Lord to adorn the altar of our Heavenly Father in Heaven.

He had been to many of us a father and mother, specially during our formative years in the Juniorate as candidates. At that impressionable age, he had been a hero to most of us, who embodied all that was worth having, a superman who knew everything, could do everything; a man of prayer, someone who loved the congregation much, a dedicated worker, a good teacher, a good actor, a good musician, a good painter, someone who inspired us to be the best, one we wanted to be like.....

It is the life of this man that we want to immortalize through this little booklet. It is true that he is no more with us to read and to experience our sentiments for him. But then, this booklet is not for him, but for us, for us to tell him what we did not/ could not tell him while he was with us. It is for our inspiration and imitation of whatever was good and praiseworthy in his life and has left behind as a legacy for us.

During the last few years of his life, he was quite upset about the way we lived our religious life. His understanding of religious life did not match with the way many of us live. May his life and death, and now the life with the Father in heaven, enable us to examine the quality and the depth of our Religious commitment and take us along the path of revitalization as exhorted by our 28th General Chapter.

BHOPAL

15.3.95

Sd/-
Bro. Philip Thadathil
Provincial Superior

Another Unique Flower
from the Garden of St. Gabriel



Bro. Donald
1932-1994

Bro. Donald

When I was appointed Provincial in 1983, I wanted a new Secretary cum Bursar who would work according to my requirements. Some one suggested Bro. Donald. I had not lived with Bro. Donald but I had heard that he was talented and efficient. I was also warned that it is difficult to control him. That, I felt I could take care of. So I wrote to him. Those whom he consulted warned him that he would not last one month with me. But he too felt that he could take care of that. In other words both of us were prepared to take a risk. So he came. That was a decision which both of us never regretted. From a relationship of Provincial and Secretary, we became friends, a relationship which grew stronger after we parted company after six years at the end of my term.

Bro. Donald was certainly a very complex and difficult character. He was pig-headed and ruthless outwardly, but very vulnerable at the core. He was a consummate actor not only on the stage but in real life too. As we lived and worked together, we discovered each other's strong and weak points and we exploited these discoveries to mutual advantages. That was probably the secret of the success of our relationship. Our apprehension for each other gradually grew into appreciation and then into admiration in course of time.

He was a perfectionist in his works. He could never

tolerate slipshod works. After typing a full page on a stencil, if he discovered one serious mistake, he would re-type the whole thing. He could never sleep until he finished a given task. Circulars were often despatched before the due dates. He never complained about the quantity of works. Often he would tell me that compared to what he had done in the school, what he was doing as Secretary was 'grass'. In fact he always estimated his own worth in terms of work. Recently he told me more than once that he dreaded to live after his retirement as he feared that he will be considered a useless burden to others.

In spite of his occasional vitriolic outbursts against individuals and structures, he had great love for the Congregation. Decline in religious discipline hurt him very much.

In recent times, practically every letter of his contained an invitation to me for his funeral. But when it actually happened, I came to know of it only after ten days. In Bro. Donald's departure, we have lost a very colourful personality.

(Bro. C.M. Joseph s.g.)



With late Bro. Paul of the Cross



With Bro. Mathias

THE DIFFERENT FACES OF BRO. DONALD



With the Community at Patna



With his father and niece,
now Sr. Teresa

HIS LAST JOURNEY



मुख्यमंत्री स्ट्रीट वैंडर्स योजना (ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों के लिए)



Remembering Bro Donald:
THOUGH YOU ARE GONE YOUR
MEMORIES LINGER ON..

Bro. Jacob Panjikaran

Many great Brothers came into my life. They guided and formed me. Many have left their imprints on me and they are always a source of strength and consolation in my life. Bro. Donald is one of those brothers who has influenced me much and guided me and directed me. I can not forget this great GURU of mine. He was my initial formator (juniorate master at Noatoli). I grew in his guidance during the years 1965-69.

He came from Kazipet and took charge of the juniorate at Noatoli in 1965. A man of short stature, handsome and always cheerful. He reorganised the juniorate with a lot of artistic taste. He set the house and juniors in order. He made a beautiful garden in front of the juniorate. He furnished the house and made it a home to live in. He had a vision for the future of the congregation and he prepared young men towards that vision.

Bro. Donald was a simple and honest religious. He was strict with us [the juniors] yet he loved us much by his word



and deed. He was highly committed to his duties. He was an excellent teacher. Though he knew little Hindi, he could teach in high school classes in Hindi medium. His students followed his classes and they admired and loved him dearly. He always had a fun on his lips to make others happy and cheerful.

He was an all-rounder. He was intelligent and shrewd. A singer and composer, he could play many instruments. He was a good dramatist and a good footballer too. He encouraged and supported the juniors to take part in all extra-curricular activities of the school. He also took personal care to teach and coach us. He taught us to do things neatly and perfectly. He introduced sports and games (indoors and outdoors) to spend the holidays in useful and meaningful way. He introduced the daily hand-writing practice with the idea that we Brother-teachers should have a clean handwriting.

The life and teachings of Bro. Donald was lying dormant in me until I became a teacher and a juniorate master. He taught me to live a simple, honest and committed life. He contributed much in my growth. I admire him. I owe him much.

The sad news of his passing away shocked me at first but after regaining courage, I thanked God and His will for him, for He called him to His abode without much suffering.

".....He has risen,.....He is going before you to Galilee, you will see him there....."