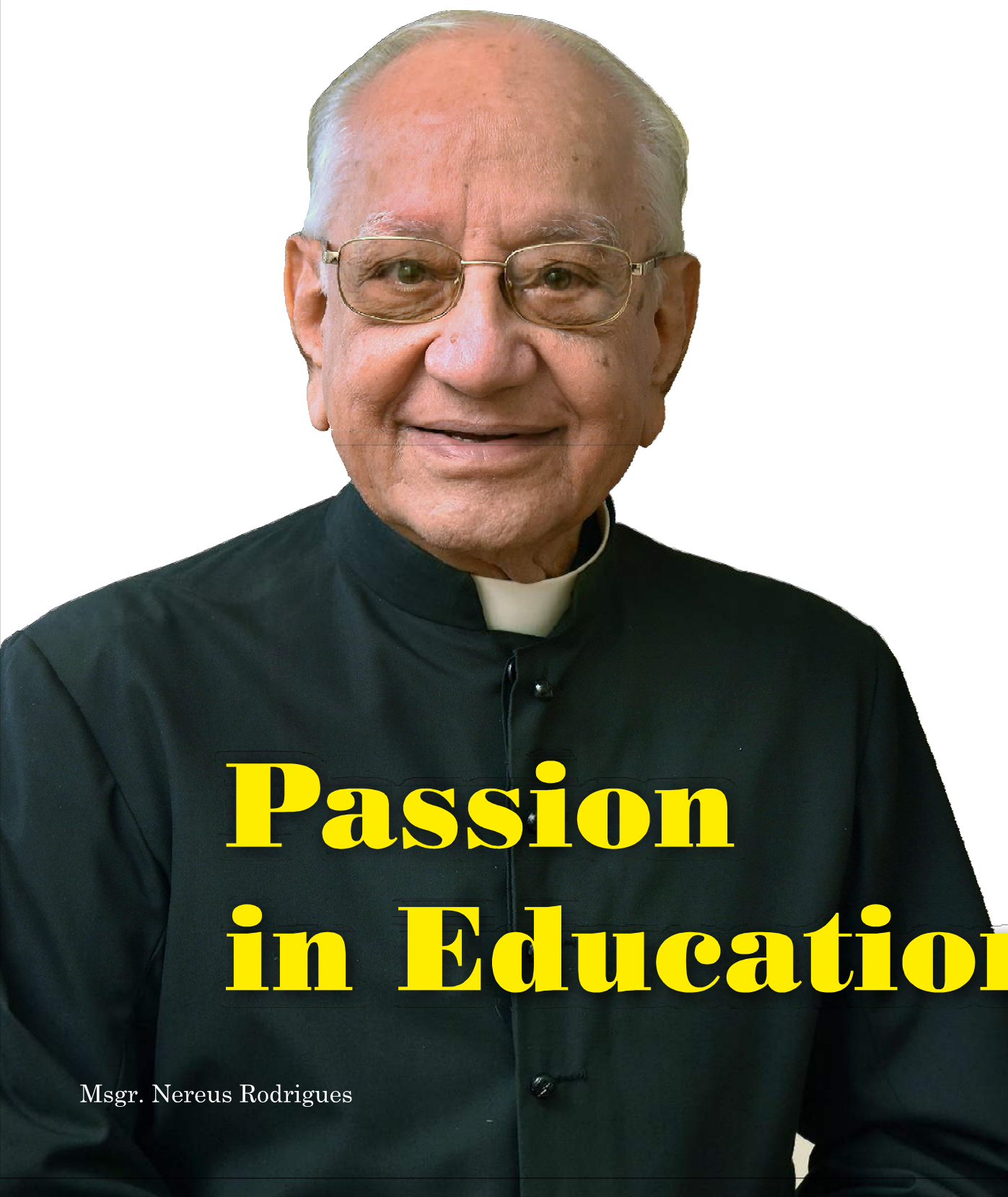


EduFOCUS



Issue 2 July 2018 Private Circulation Only



Passion in Education

Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues



©Oswald Cardinal Gracias releases the first issue of Edufocus on 29th June, 2017

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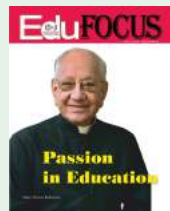
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AN APOLOGY

As you are aware, this second issue of EduFocus has been inordinately delayed. As Editor of this magazine, I sincerely apologise for not keeping to the deadlines in publishing this issue.

Personally, the academic year 2017-18 has been “annus horribilis”. Despite overseeing every single detail of the ABE Family Day held on 29th June, 2017, I was unable to attend the same. I was recovering from the H1N1 virus and the doctors would not allow me out of the hospital. A relapse of the virus enforced three months of bed rest before I was allowed to return to my responsibilities. My father died in the month of September. As his “beloved son”, I was overwhelmed by his loss. In the midst of my own health issues and grief, I had to contend with my mother and sister being hospitalised as well. Looking ahead, I hope and pray that this year is kinder to me.

I would like to appeal to each one of you to contribute news, celebrations, good practices, etc. in your Institution. As I would not like to depend on the internet and newspapers for content, may I recommend that each institute officially appoint an 'ABE Reporter' who connects with the ABE Family? This would make EduFocus the ABE Family newsletter.

Please do send in your suggestions and contributions to:

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With your positive support, I am looking forward to "annus mirabilis".

- Editor

Editorial

Can there be education without passion?

The passion of the educators of our 'miniscule' community has put us in the forefront of education. Despite being a minority, our contribution to education and nation-building cannot be ignored. One must remember Georg Wilhelm Hegel's words: “Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion”.

Passion and commitment are inseparable. In fact, commitment energizes passion. Power-packed with commitment, our passionate educators have never thrown in the towel in the face of insurmountable obstacles but have persisted with determination. Their selflessness and resilience have prevailed in the face of every challenge that has come their way. As a result, our education eco-systems have survived numerous hijack attempts by vested interests.

“Man is only great when he acts from passion.” – Benjamin Disraeli. In this issue of EduFocus, we showcase one such great educator. Even at the age of ninety-five, Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues continues to be passionate about education. St. Andrew's College, pioneered by him, was recently awarded the “Best College” by Mumbai University. The Award is a testimony to his pioneering vision and dynamic mission.

Due to the zealous efforts of our passionate educators, our community has reached out to the lost, the last and the least. Hats off to them! Dilkhush Special School is one such institution that reaches out to children with intellectual disabilities. Through the pages of this issue, discover the vision and journey of the Sisters of Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Passion in education is contagious. We have often witnessed the magic brought into the classrooms by passionate educators. Their electrifying persona galvanizes their students to excellence and a bold future. If you are a passionate educator, there is a strong likelihood that you were impacted by an educator infected with joyous passion.

This passion in education also leads to innovation. Nothing can stop passionate educators from cutting a path through the dense jungles of ignorance. They focus all their energies on solutions. No problem is too big for them. By constantly challenging themselves and celebrating failures, they creatively triumph over problems. Take, for example, the problem of fake news that has confused the learner's mind. We have published, in our pages, a revolutionary innovation – an app called 'KidzByte', that tackles misinformation in the social media.

I have taken the liberty of sharing my award-winning project, Mission Sunshine, which was launched when the education scenario was badly shaken by numerous student suicides.

Passionate educators are risk-takers and embrace change. They take on a courageous “what-next” approach. It is their love for education that keeps their passion alive. During my B.Ed training, a Jesuit professor told us that if we had no love for education, we should leave the course. He strongly recommended choosing another career rather than giving the field of education a bad name. It is only when you love what you do that you find your true calling. An educator without passion is like a doctor without ethics. Passion in education is crucial.

Re-ignite your passion! Let the “fire in your belly”... your passion, lead you to greatness!

ABE News

Dear Managers, Principals, Heads of various sections and students,

The first issue of 'EduFocus', the ABE magazine released by His Eminence, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, on 29th June, 2017 at St. Andrew's Auditorium, was much appreciated by all for its content, layout and finesse. It was the result of the effort and energy put in by the editorial team led by Fr. Magi Murzello.

The full-day event commenced with a prayer service conducted by the Sisters and students of Mount Mary Convent High School, Bandra. A tribute to the late Ivan Cardinal Dias was also part of the prayer service. His Eminence, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, then spoke on the Church's 'zero-tolerance' stance against child sexual abuse. This was followed by the play, 'If My Darkness is Light to Some Soul', based on Mother Teresa's spiritual darkness, and a performance by the boys of St. Andrew's High School. His Eminence then released the first issue of EduFocus.



We now present to you the second issue of EduFocus. I hope to communicate with you what has happened around the ABE in the intervening period.

The Marian Pilgrimage: There was an excellent response from the ABE schools for this venture to honour Our Blessed Mother and pray for her intercession. On 14th September, 2017, around one thousand five hundred students and teachers came together for the Pilgrim Walk and the Eucharist that followed at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount, Bandra. We now look forward to this year's pilgrimage scheduled for 13th September, 2018.



Cerebration – Primary In-service Training Programme: This ten-day programme of seventy hours is an attempt to revitalize our Primary schools. The seventh group of seventy-three teachers had their valedictory function on 13th December, 2017. The eighth group of seventy-four teachers began their programme on 6th June, 2018 at Dadar. This is a unique group as there are thirty Physical Training (P.T.) teachers too. These teachers attend some sessions separately that are specially designed for them. With this, we would have helped renew and reawaken the enthusiasm of five hundred and four ABE teachers from one hundred and forty-two schools.

Celebrations: December – January is a time for Annual Day celebrations and Sports Days. These are important features in school education. The respective school's management and staff put in much effort and planning to ensure that these are conducted flawlessly because they showcase the talents of the students and the overall discipline of the school. Most parents are unable to see the daily functioning of the classroom but they are keen to observe the standards set by the institution on these important days. I have been very impressed at these events whenever I have had the opportunity to visit an ABE school.

Mentorship Programme: On 16th December, 2017, Take Charge, in association with the ABE, hosted a programme at Antonio da Silva Auditorium, Dadar to encourage our Catholic students to join the Indian Armed Forces. His Eminence, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, presided over the occasion along with Major General (Retd.) Ian Cardozo, Commodore ML Mathew, Air Vice Marshal Michael Fernandez and Major General Christopher Fernandes. About four hundred senior students from ABE schools attended the programme and were very happy to interact with the dignitaries.



Christmas: In Mumbai, we have the unique privilege of ushering in our Christmas celebrations with the birthday of His Eminence, Cardinal Oswald. Four hundred and twenty-five representatives from ABE schools, teachers as well as students, greeted His Eminence at the Eucharistic Celebration held on 20th December, 2017 at the Cathedral of the Holy Name, Colaba. The choir of St Pius X High School, Mulund led the student community in praise with their melodious singing. His Eminence expressed his joy at meeting the children and gave them a beautiful insight into the meaning of Christmas. He emphasized the specialness of Christmas and the significance of Christ's birth. After the Mass, the choir sang in unison to the sound of music to wish His Eminence on this special occasion. The cutting of the birthday cake was followed by each of the students and teachers conveying their wishes to him personally.



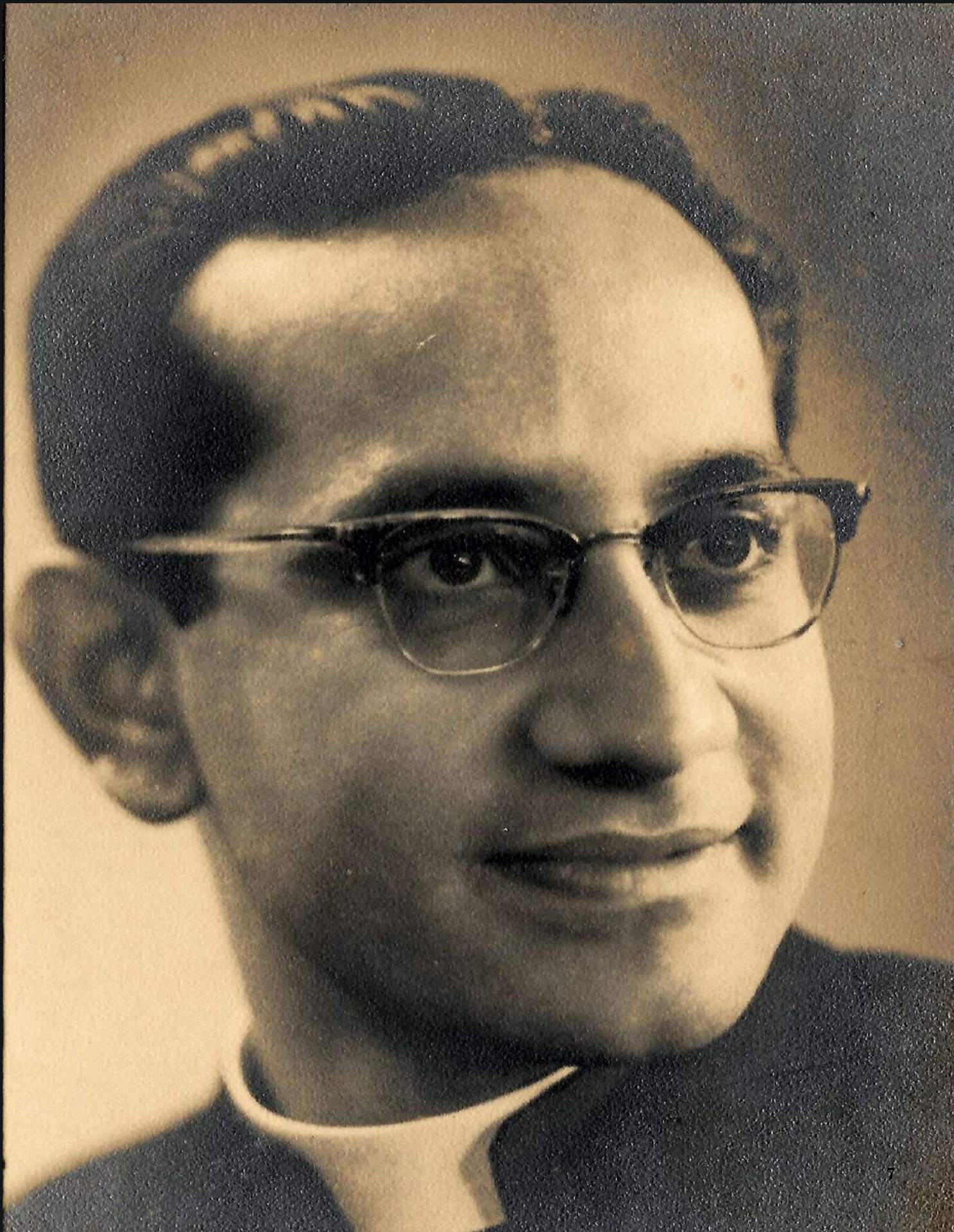
The new Academic Year 2018-19: The year began with the wonderful news of very good SSC and HSC results for ABE schools. The personal attention given to weaker students enabled many schools to achieve even a cent per cent pass result. We congratulate the students, parents, Principals and staff for their untiring efforts.

We look forward to a beautiful year ahead,

a year of **cooperation**,
a year of **encouragement**,
a year of **positive strokes**
and a year of **joy** in working together in the school.

God bless you!

Fr. George Athaide,
Secretary, Archdiocesan Board of Education,
Mumbai.



Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues

Celebrating 60 years in the Education Apostolate

- Nirmala Carvalho

The year 2018 marks the Diamond Jubilee of the deep commitment of Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues to the field of education in the Archdiocese of Bombay. EduFocus pays tribute to the living legend who helped set the template for church-run education across the country.

Appointed Principal of St Andrew's High School in 1958 (and currently a Trustee of St. Andrew's College), 2018 marks the Diamond Jubilee of Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues in the service of education to the Archdiocese of Bombay. To mark this momentous occasion, Oswald Cardinal Gracias, the Archbishop of Bombay, announced the presentation of a **'Lifetime Achievement Award'** to honour Msgr. Nereus' pioneering service in the field of education to the Archdiocese of Bombay and the Church in India. He added that a new award, the **'Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues Educator Award'**, would be instituted which would be conferred on the "best educator" in the Archdiocese of Bombay. These awards were announced on 5th April, 2018 - Msgr. Nereus' ninety-fifth birthday.

Msgr. Nereus is convinced that education is an area where the Catholic Church has made a key contribution. He

passionately and consistently championed the 'felt need' for a Catholic college in the suburbs, and set the stage for the successful actualization of the prestigious St. Andrew's College in the year 1983. Msgr. Nereus was the Founding Trustee and first Principal of St. Andrew's Degree College with the faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce, continuing as Rector until the year 2011.

Msgr. Nereus strongly articulates the core purpose of the Catholic college:

- Academic excellence
- Catholic identity and faith formation
- Artistic and creative pursuits
- Sports

The College is dedicated to the highest academic standards fostered through a rigorous and innovative environment for academics. As Rector, with his outstanding commitment and leadership, St. Andrew's



College was able to offer eight Degrees besides a Certificate in Hospitality. The accreditation with an 'A' Grade by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) and the Maharashtra Board reflects the commitment to academic excellence.

St Andrew's Auditorium, a state-of-the-art auditorium, was built in the College by Msgr. Nereus for the promotion of creativity in art, music and literature.

Encouraging sports and athletics is also core to the College vision of “holistic and high-quality education that empowers students to achieve their potential”.



Being a minority educational institution, more than 80% of the student population is Catholic. For effectively maintaining the religious integrity of the College, Msgr. Nereus had a chapel built at the entrance of the College where Mass is now celebrated daily during the academic year. The Chapel is also open to students and teachers of all faiths who need a place of solitude and silence.

Recognising the role Catholic education could play in India's pluralistic yet deeply religious society, Msgr. Nereus initiated the Vatican's Cardinal Paul Poupard Foundation's chair for 'Inter-religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue' at St Andrew's College; thus, seeking ways to promote peace, understanding and dialogue between

religions and cultures. He also instituted the highly appreciated Value Education classes at the College.

Msgr. Nereus has a Post-graduate degree in Education from London University, and later earned a Fulbright scholarship to the University of Southern California where he did studies on the American School Administration. With a Doctorate in Canon Law from Urbana University, Rome, he taught Canon Law at St. Pius X College (Archdiocesan Seminary).

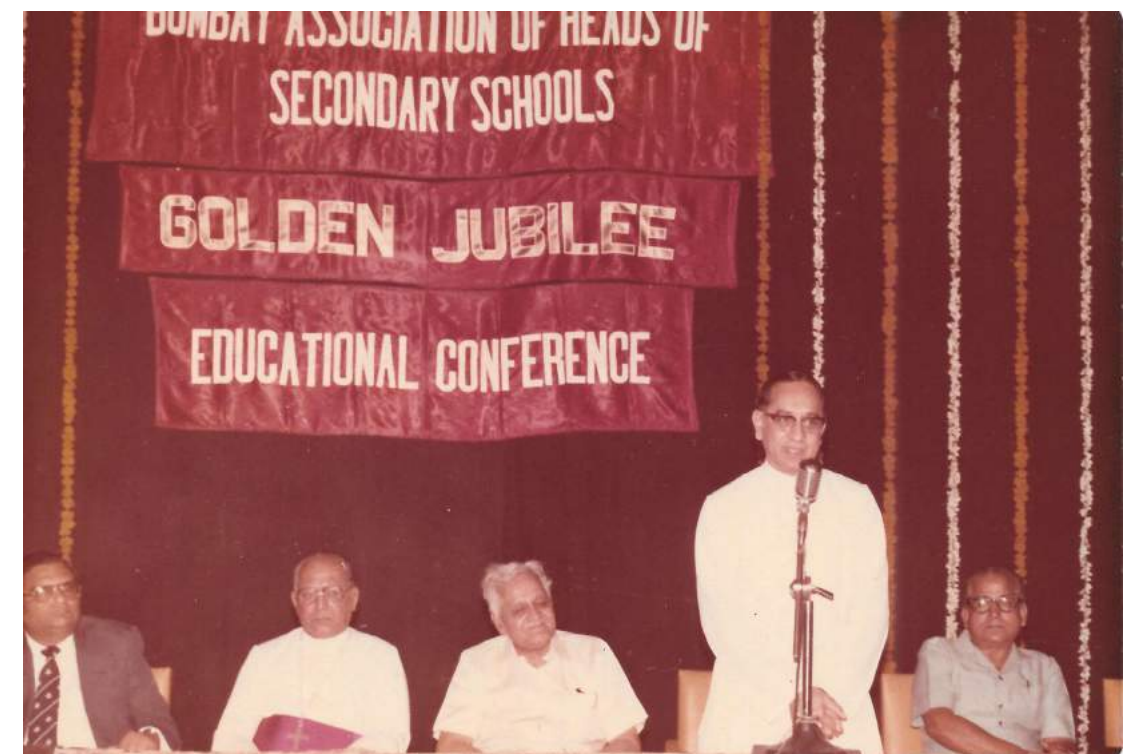
In the mid-1960s, Msgr. Nereus was appointed President of the All India Association of Catholic Schools (AINACS) where he was one of the pioneers of audio-

visual education and multimedia-based education. With his knowledge of rules and uncompromising insistence on quality, he helped many an institution raise their benchmark and go beyond what was expected.

Awarded the State's Best Teacher Award in 1974-75, he has also had the rare distinction, for a Catholic priest, of serving as the leader of the prestigious and secular Headmasters' Association.

Valerian Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay,

appointed Msgr. Nereus In-charge of Education in the Archdiocese of Bombay (currently known as Archdiocesan Board of Education or ABE). The Archdiocese then included Vasai and Thane districts as well. Later, he was appointed Inspector of Catholic Schools, a position he held for twenty years. Of this stint, he says, “Inspection was a means to evaluate the academic teaching, administration, curriculum and time-tables as well as fidelity to the teaching of religion and morals. The inspection report became a very useful document in the hands of the respective school, the Inspector, as well as the Archbishop. There came about a growing sense of accountability in the implementation of the



recommendations following the inspection. Regulations were strictly enforced and the schools functioned at optimum levels.”

“Christianity has changed the moral culture of the people in India. Christian values have played an important part in influencing culture and society through the charitable works of education and healthcare apostolates across the country - in urban townships, in cities and the remotest rural areas. The Catholic presence has played a vital role in spreading the value system of Jesus and has brought about a transformation in the lives of people and society,” Msgr. Nereus said.

“In Bombay, as it was known in those days, there were many neighbourhoods where poorer sections of Catholics lived and we welcomed their children, who were first-generation learners, into the schools,” Msgr. Nereus said. “They were treated on par with the students from 'well-to-do' families. There was no distinction and all our students were given the same opportunities. These children flourished with both, intellectual and religious knowledge, and could later take up jobs and become self-sufficient and empowered.”

Not only did that commitment to equality set an example for the broader society still struggling to get past the burdens of the ancient caste system, it also had a positive effect on the life of the Church. “It is also a matter of great pride that many vocations flourished,” he said. “Today, many of our priests and sisters are serving the Church, both in India and abroad. They are global missionaries, all thanks to Catholic education.”

Given the make-up of Indian society, Msgr. Nereus has inevitably forged deep relationships with followers of other faiths. “My work has had a deep impact on people I've met – people of diverse backgrounds, who recognised and acknowledged our education apostolate.”

In the late-1970s, a building was being vacated in Vashi and was offered to any Trust that could run a school in it. The Deputy Director of Education, Govt. of Maharashtra, offered Msgr. Nereus and the Archdiocese the chance to bid for it. But the Archdiocese could not match the bids. Later, there was an empty plot being offered by CIDCO for building a school. The same officer contacted the Monsignor again and this time the bid was successful. That is how Sacred Heart High School, Vashi came to be.



In the year 1979, Catholic educators from the Archdiocese were invited to deliberate on the need for a college in the suburbs to cater to its growing Catholic community, and to serve the poor and the weaker sections of society. The idea, which had germinated as early as 1940 when Valerian Cardinal Gracias envisioned a diocesan college, crystallised only during the tenure of Archbishop Simon Pimenta when Msgr. Nereus was Chairperson of the Education Board and Inspector of Catholic schools.

In the year 1981, entrusted with the responsibility of establishing St. Andrew's College at Bandra and ably assisted by Fr. Rodney Esperance, Msgr. Nereus began his mission. After two years of relentless efforts and assistance from the likes of Mr. Ahmed Zakaria, MLA, the required permissions were granted by the Government of Maharashtra and the University of Bombay. And on 9th July, 1983, St Andrew's College was inaugurated – a great day in the Archdiocese of Bombay.

“Education, we need to realise, makes a great contribution in sowing hope to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true,” explains Msgr. Nereus. “Through our schools and colleges, Catholic education is responsible for positively changing and transforming the face of society.”

When asked about his remarkable life, however, Msgr. Nereus merely smiles shyly. “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty,”

he said, adding that his life's work has been about “service carried out with love”.



Nirmala Carvalho has been a Crux correspondent since 2004, and, in 2006, won the Communications Award from the Catholic Bishops Conference of India for “exceptional sensitivity to the Church and minority-related issues”. She holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and a master's degree in Sociology, both from the University of Mumbai.



Congratulations!

St. Andrew's College recently received the Best College Award. This is a prestigious award as the University of Mumbai has over seven hundred affiliated colleges. The Award was presented on 26th January, 2018 at the University Campus, Kalina. It was presented to the Rector, Fr. Magi Murzello, and the Principal, Dr. Marie Fernandes, along with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. It also carried a cheque for fifty thousand rupees.

“The award is meant for the colleges which perform the best and impart quality education. It takes time to bring excellence to maturity and yours is one such college,” says a letter from the University to the Principal. It commended the teaching and non-teaching staff for their hard work to take the Institution to its present height.

Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues said the Award is an acknowledgement of “our high standard of academic excellence, our value system and our holistic integral human development of the students.”

The College offers eight degree courses – B.A., B.Com., B.M.S., B.M.M., B.Com. (Accounts and Finance), B.Com. (Banking and Insurance), B.Sc. (I.T.) and B.Sc. (Hospitality Studies). It also has an M.Com. course as well as a Ph.D. centre in English. The latest offering is a 'Culinary Cookery Course', a six-month certified diploma in food and beverage production for adults with developmental disabilities.



The Training Programme in Counselling for ABE Teachers

– A report

- Sr. Ann Henrietta Mascarenhas FC

In the year 2004, when the ABE decided upon a course for teachers in counselling, they chose to entrust the task to Prafula Psychological Services, Andheri of which Fr. Godfrey D'Sa SDB was the Director. I had recently returned from a three-year training in Counselling at the Institute of St. Anselm, Kent, UK and was offered the opportunity to form a team to plan a course for the teachers in the diocese. Fr. Godfrey, Ms. Shalu Mehrotra, also of Prafula, and I got together to draw up a hundred-hour programme to train teachers in the basic skills of counselling.

The Programme included information on the art of counselling. The teachers were also introduced to the various developmental stages of growth. They were given practical training in various counselling skills like attending, listening, concreteness in communication and attitudes. Various types of emotions were also dealt with as the teachers had to identify these in the course of the

counselling session. Empathy was also introduced. How do I content paraphrase, make a self-disclosure, and use probes effectively – These skills were taught with examples and the teachers were made to go through the process under supervision. How do I challenge – This skill was also taught so that teachers could challenge their students skilfully. Throughout the duration of the course, we ensured that we used the skills consciously and effectively. Handouts were given at every stage so that the teachers had reference material.

To demonstrate the interaction between counsellor and client, we, as trainers, modelled the process as a group. For the purpose of supervision, the whole group was divided into four smaller groups. Each participant took turns at being both, client and counsellor, with the group while the supervisor gave feedback. Three such sessions were held during the course.

There were also supervised sessions. Each teacher had to



counsel two clients recommended by the Principal or Supervisor of the school for twelve sessions. After every third session, the teacher would record an account of the sessions according to the guidelines given. This would be followed by the supervised session wherein each teacher would talk about difficulties or successes in the sessions and receive guidance from other participants as well as the group supervisor. The written sessions were then handed over and checked by the respective supervisors. There were four such sessions held. In the final supervised session, the teacher would record the change that had taken place in her client and her learning from this process. Clients were encouraged to formulate goals for the future and teachers were given instructions on how to terminate their sessions.

Training in life skills was also included in the course. Sometimes, there are common problems which can be dealt with as a group; for example, anger management, inculcating healthy eating habits, sibling rivalry, sex education, etc. The teachers were encouraged to pick a topic of their choice and, as a group, present their chosen life skills topic to the class. Later, they were asked to conduct it in their respective schools and, finally, present it in writing to the entire group. This was a supervised

activity at the end of course.

Apart from training in counselling and life skills, the course also included relevant topics presented by additional resource persons. Fr. Godfrey presented sessions on child sexual abuse, suicide, depression and enhancing EQ in schools. Learning disabilities was presented by Ms. Mimansa Popat. Dr. Ruksheda, a psychiatrist, dealt with issues like autism, attention deficit disorders and other mental health disorders in children. Dr. Payal Ubale, an occupational therapist, spoke on sensory processing disorders in children and the need for sensory integration. All were much appreciated by the teacher-counsellors.

At the end of the course, we had a few general revision sessions – applying the skills learnt as well as case studies where they could apply the theories taught.

There are now nineteen groups of teachers who have completed the course. Altogether, six hundred and eighty-five teachers have gone through the above process. Their feedback has been very positive. They have learnt much during this programme and have become better people for their families as well as colleagues and children in their respective schools. I have



been a part of all nineteen training programmes; from its inception in 2004 to date. I have found the teachers very eager to learn, responsive and co-operative. I feel a sense of pride that six hundred and eighty-five teachers have passed through my hands. I have loved every moment of every course.

However, the lone drawback has been the demands their school places on these teachers. This compels them to stay back in school and miss some sessions. This year, in particular, there were several times when teachers were absent because their Principals refused to send them stating that school was a priority. How do these teachers make up for the sessions they have missed? The baseline tests have been a block too! Teachers are forced to stay back and conduct these tests; thereby, missing some important classes. I encourage the Principals of our ABE schools to undergo the course themselves, enjoy it and then send your teachers willingly for it. They will be an asset to your school and to the children entrusted to your care. Help them keep to their commitment.

To end, on a more positive note: Teachers, in their feedback, said that they found the training not only helpful in school, but also an asset at home in dealing with their own families. They have also found improved

relationships with their colleagues in school. Above all, it has brought about a great change in their own attitudes and behaviour.

Both, Ms. Shalu Mehrotra and I are grateful for this valuable opportunity offered to us. We have gained a lot by interacting with such a huge and varied group of teachers. Thank you also to the Secretary of the ABE; formerly, Fr. Gregory Lobo, and now, Fr. George Athaide, who have supported us in this venture. Above all, thank you to the Director of Prafula, Fr. Godfrey D'Sa SDB, who has been a pillar of encouragement and hope all these years.





Dilkhush

- Sr. Bindu Michael ACI



In the year 1971, Dilkhush Special School opened its doors with just fifteen students on its rolls. Set up by the Sisters of Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the School, as you see it today, would not have been possible without the generosity of our first four Sisters, viz; Srs. Celia Garcia, Maria Dolores Tena, Josefa Queralt and Catherine Hanley, who came to India from Spain and Ireland on 6th October, 1968 to work for the disabled.

Dilkhush has grown dramatically since its inception. What started out as a small school with a teachers' training centre, now includes a sheltered workshop as well. In addition, it also draws on larger local, regional, national and international networks to provide a vibrant environment that facilitates learning.

Dilkhush Special School

The aim of the school is to help children with intellectual disability gain the type of education that will enable them to develop their abilities and talents to the optimum level. We also pay much attention to social development and try, wherever possible, to prepare students for a job; be it in the sheltered workshop or in open employment. The School is open to people from all walks of life; the only criterion for admission being the availability of a seat in the appropriate age group (with the minimum age for admission being five years) and an IQ level between thirty-five and seventy.

Dilkhush Special School's educational programmes are based on the following principles:

1. Functional academics: basic reading, writing and math; and its application to daily living.
2. Self-care skills: personal hygiene and grooming.
3. Pre-vocational skills: skills training in art and craft, cooking, needlework and bead-work.
4. Extra-curricular activities: yoga, music, dance, sport and drama.
5. Independence and social skills: Ability to independently interact and communicate with others in different situations and contexts.

To make this possible, an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) is drawn up for each child. This is evaluated periodically during the academic year. The skills taught depend on the ability and needs of the student. Some may be able to learn only basic self-care skills; while others of a slightly higher ability could learn skills allowing them to be placed in a sheltered workshop. A student with mild intellectual disability could be placed in open employment.

Thus, educating children with special needs is very different from the type of education imparted in other schools where each child has to do their best to understand and follow what is being done in class. Children with special needs must have a tailor-made programme.

Dilkhush Teachers' Training Centre

Dilkhush Teachers' Training Centre (Dilkhush TTC) was started in 1971 alongside the School with the specific purpose of imparting quality training to individuals interested in teaching children with special needs. It is one of the pioneering institutions in the field of special education and its alumni currently work in institutions across India and the globe. At our Teachers' Training Centre, the trainees acquire hands-on experience as it is not easy to break down basic skills; it is not easy to teach a child who cannot speak. However, the trainees learn well and really experience joy when they manage to teach a child. The two-year diploma course prepares teachers to teach children with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism and multiple disabilities. The graduates of this programme work as special educators in special schools, as remedial teachers in other schools, as shadow teachers and as teachers in primary schools.



Dilkhush Special Workshop

Dilkhush Sheltered Workshop is a place where intellectually-disabled adults develop their skills and talents to produce or create various products. Today, the workshop includes fifty adults. The aim of the workshop is to offer adults a sheltered atmosphere to learn skills, and explore, develop and channel talents into practical tasks. As of now, the workshop has four sections: wood work, arts and crafts, home science and needle work. Today, the workshop produces articles for sale and also takes orders. They make gift articles and also teaching aids, much of which is bought by schools. If you want to see all that is done by the workshop, then do visit our annual sale held in December; the proceeds of which are paid to the student as stipend. But you are also most welcome visit us during regular working hours to purchase a gift or two.



Open Employment

Not all students who graduate from our school go to the workshop. Some are placed in jobs which involve simple repetitive tasks. The School checks the exact job description and tries to train the child for the job at the School itself. On the job, the School monitors progress and steps in to mediate whenever necessary - maybe a step needs to be explained to a child or an employer needs to understand the child better. The students are good workers. At first, they may be a bit slow to pick up, but once they have mastered a task, they can work as well as any able-bodied person. At present, our alumni are employed at JW Marriott Hotel, Juhu, Hotel Leela, Andheri, Titan Quartz, BKC, etc.

The School is keen for its students to participate in programmes that help create awareness and understanding of children with disabilities. Dilkhush also encourages social integration with age peers in general education. The School is open to visits from college and school students every Wednesday.

Our vision calls us to dedicate ourselves to the service of the marginalized through education by nurturing life, building communion, fostering peace and reconciliation. At Dilkhush, we believe that every person, disabled or otherwise, has a right to appropriate education and to employment and to a full and satisfying life. "The only disability in life is a bad attitude" - Scott Hamilton. So, let us know them for their abilities, not for their disabilities.



Enhancing the Quality of Education in India

- Fr. Jeevan Mendonsa SJ

It is heart-warming to see the increasing universalization of education in India. Of course, more needs to be done but what has been done till now is definitely commendable. For example, the gross enrolment ratio in schools increased from 81.6% in 2000-01 to 96.9% in 2014 - 15.¹

Efforts are also being made to increase the quality of education. However, unfortunately, things have not improved as expected in this area. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) repeatedly points out this anomaly. It is a given that with just quantity and low or no quality education would hardly be valuable; not just for individuals but for society. Both, quantity and quality, need to go hand in hand.

There are several aspects of quality in education. It would be beyond the scope of this article to dwell on all of those. Therefore, I would like to dwell on only three of these aspects:

Re-thinking of children's literature and the library: In many schools, library activity is often restricted to a thirty-five minute-ritual on a weekly basis; in which the students are given books to read selected by the teacher. The students cannot freely choose to read a book of their choice as they are considered incapable of making right choices for themselves. Most schools do not have a lending library for fear of losing their books; showing lack of trust in children. Such an insecure, restricted approach defeats the purpose of the library and negatively affects the quality of education. Besides, this

¹ (http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/ESG2016_0.pdf).

privilege of thirty-five minutes is usually restricted to students of Standard Five and above. Students at the Primary level are not even considered worthy of entering the library. It is also interesting to realize the image that most of us have about a library; namely, a sombre room having plenty of books but locked in cupboards, large tables and chairs where one can read and study, but maintenance of silence is sacrosanct. Obviously, in such an atmosphere, noise-makers like children cannot be entertained. This is unfortunate as a children's library does not have to be, in any way, like an adults' library. On the contrary, it can be a child-friendly space where children can have an enjoyable time. The noise level, of course, would have to be moderated but strict silence need not be observed as in a library for adults.

Prominent educationists strongly advocate reading and its profound impact on learning in children. Multiple research studies have shown the positive effect that reading children's literature has had on learning among children. Books act as triggers for children's creativity as children get exposed to new worlds and experiences through books. Books ignite their fertile imagination. All this, directly and indirectly, affects learning. Thus, looking upon children's literature as an indispensable part of education would greatly enhance its quality.

Re-thinking of the student-teacher relationship: The student-teacher relationship has undergone noticeable changes in the last few decades. For example, the teacher's authoritarian monologue has been replaced by the discussion mode between the teacher and students in a number of schools. However, there is still a long way to go. Noted educationist, Krishna Kumar, says that in most schools, teacher-questioning and student-answering is the norm. The answers too are 'fixed' and the basis for the same is the textbook. The student dare not think beyond the textbook. Also, though student-questioning and teacher-answering is allowed and even encouraged in some situations, the questioning is more a clarification of doubt. There is a limit beyond which the student cannot question and this is subtly communicated to him/her. This limit is, of course, decided by the teacher.

Such a relationship needs to be radically re-thought if we aim to enhance the quality of education. In the new relationship, the student becomes the protagonist of his/her own learning and the teacher is a facilitator, a guide, a companion. The student is not a passive recipient of knowledge but rather constructs his/her own knowledge. S/he is encouraged to ask questions without prescribed limits and to express his/her **opinion even though it might be different from that of the teacher or what is given in the textbook.**

Re-thinking of assessment and evaluation: The current methods of assessment and evaluation are mainly final examination-oriented. These are largely memory-based and create unnecessary anxiety among students. The approach is outcome-based which reflects the industrial and post-industrial society we live in - one that focuses on the product rather than the process. Unfortunately, many teachers too are comfortable with this approach since it is uncomplicated and places no onus on them. However, such a mechanical approach strikes at the very purpose of learning which is envisaged as a process of self-discovery and an experience of knowledge. The British educationist, Stenhouse, rightly says that the outcomes-approach to the assessment of quality forces us to take an instrumental and necessarily trivializing view of knowledge. Therefore, for enhancing quality of education, we need to replace current methods of assessment and evaluation with creative and relevant methods. These methods should be challenging and enjoyable rather than threatening and boring. They should consider the diversity of intelligence present among children rather than focus on one or few types of intelligences. In fact, most of the exams are largely a test of memory skills; and a sizeable number of experts in education say that memory is not a strong indicator of intelligence. A position paper of the National Focus Group on Aims of Education published by the National Council of

Educational Research and Training (NCERT) succinctly expresses this point about evaluation: "It is children's responsiveness to what is taught rather than just their capacity to retain it that should be the focus of evaluation. Such responsiveness includes their ability to connect their learning to various other experiences in their life, their capacity to frame questions about the content of their learning in novel ways, and, particularly, their capacity to see deviations in their 'lessons' from the idea of the right and the good that the school might be trying to inculcate in them."

As mentioned earlier, this article aimed to dwell on only some aspects about enhancing the quality of education. There would be questions about how practically implementable these aspects would be. However, as the saying goes, "Where there's a will, there's a way". For example, one could explore creative methods of assessment and evaluation in the classes where detention is not allowed. These methods would be widely welcomed by the students who are, otherwise, usually subjected to the boring process of mechanical rote-learning and exams are reduced to a mere test of memory skills. Similarly, offering a more prominent place to children's literature in education is also possible and there are schools who have effectively shown the same. It is when efforts such as these are made, can we hope to achieve quality in education along with quantity.

GreenLine

Creating Greener People

- Fr. Savio Silveira SDB

GreenLine, founded in 2010, is a Don Bosco environmental organization based in Mumbai. GreenLine does not focus on any single environmental problem; rather, it focuses on the source of the problem – people! While its vision is 'Greener People, Greener World', its mission is 'Getting people informed, interested and involved in environmental issues'. To fulfil this vision and mission, GreenLine presently runs three flagship programmes in the city of Mumbai.

The first programme, **Green Schools Campaign**, is focused on educating young minds on their responsibility towards the environment. The Green Schools Campaign is an exciting hands-on programme open to all schools in Mumbai, which offers students the opportunity to actually be involved in relevant environmental projects in the city. This Campaign took off in the year 2010 with twelve participating schools and that number has now grown to over fifty schools. The Campaign takes up a specific theme for each academic year. The theme for the Eighth Edition (2017-2018) of the Campaign was 'Go Trash-less'.



Our second programme, called **Green Lead Volunteers**, is a programme for college or university students and works towards building future environmental leaders. Many young people today have the enthusiasm to play a leading role in addressing present environmental issues as well as the potential to grow into future environmental leaders of our society. What is often missing is the right opportunity to invest this enthusiasm or the relevant platform to exercise this leadership potential. Green Lead offers youngsters the perfect opportunity and platform by involving them in a variety of relevant on-going environmental issues.



The third programme promoted by GreenLine is the **Green Lifestyle Initiative**. With environmental consciousness growing, individuals, families, housing societies and locality groups are increasingly looking for ways in which they can contribute towards the green movement. But the question they often ask is: what can we do, given the many constraints of our hectic city lives? The Green Lifestyle Initiative seeks precisely to answer this question by offering

citizens practical ways in which they can adopt a lifestyle that reduces environmental damage and gets them actively involved in environmental protection. Some of the lifestyle features we are presently focusing on are: healthy foods and healthy living, growing your own vegetables on your windowsill or balcony, managing your waste efficiently, home composting your wet waste, eco-friendly products and home decor. These ideas are promoted through weekend workshops, chat sessions and neighbourhood nature walks.

It has been rewarding, over these past eight years, to see a steady build-up of interest and commitment towards the



environment among the people that GreenLine has been working with. Yes, these may only be slow and small steps; but mindset, attitude and lifestyle changes don't happen in a hurry. But then again, changing people is the only way to change the present situation... it's only when we have greener people, will we have a greener world. And that, as I said earlier, is the vision of Greenline!

KidzByte - Daily News for Children

- Chetan D'Souza

READ

kid-friendly news across 8 categories

WATCH

engaging and interactive animated videos

LISTEN

to the audio for news on the go

PLAY

fun quizzes to test your knowledge

LEARN

new words and improve your vocabulary

EARN

points and win prizes every week!

SHARE

your favourite stories with your friends

PARTICIPATE

in interesting activities with parents and teachers

Some wisecrack remarked that “NEWS” is the abbreviation for North-East-West-South. Though this is highly improbable, he has made a valid point. Probably as old as civilisation itself, news encompasses the entire universe and attracts the attention of every person.

Children too are consumers of news. This gives rise to a pertinent question – How do we disseminate news to this important but impressionable category of consumers? Mainstream newspapers do not use child-friendly language. Their medium – a broadsheet – is too wide; making it difficult for children to hold. News magazines can be too text-heavy and the images too graphic for such young minds to view.

This left us pondering – How do we transmit news to children? Our ruminations led to the conception of **KidzByte** - an exclusive mobile news app. Launched in July 2018, KidzByte presents real-time news and happenings around the world through the convenience of a mobile phone. This medium is practical and easy-to-read, with a dash of intelligence. It is inviting and enthralling to the young reader. Wouldn't it be “cool” if children read about current affairs on the phone instead of browsing social networking sites or playing games?

Being a unique combination of well-edited content and technology, KidzByte leads to a learning experience that is efficient and smart. We hope it will spark interesting discussions in the home as well as in the classroom. Children will learn to form opinions and, voice and debate their point of view effectively.

KidzByte App – Available on Google Play Store

Because the world of education is constantly changing, we want to offer the most relevant resources to your child and you for an optimal learning experience. Do send in your ideas, feedback, or suggestions to us at admin@kidzbyte.com and we will be sure to give them due consideration.



Founder of KidzByte app, **Chetan D'Souza** is a media, marketing and corporate communications professional with over 14 years of work experience in brand management, event management, content marketing, media relations, digital marketing and internal communications. You can reach him directly at chetan.dsouza81@gmail.com

The Journey of Staging

'If My Darkness is Light to Some Soul'

-Dr. Omkar Bhatkar





On 29th June, 2017, at approximately 1 p.m., the curtains came down in St. Andrew's Auditorium, bringing Metamorphosis Theatre Inc.'s production, 'If My Darkness is Light to Some Soul', a play based on Mother Teresa's spiritual darkness, to a sombre and solemn end. The highlight of the entire endeavour was not the overwhelming response from the audience nor the random strangers who flocked backstage in appreciation of the play thereafter nor even the various messages, texts or emails which we received. This was one play where the journey was, by itself, an integral part of the destination.

Just a month earlier, when I was asked by Fr. Magi Murzello to put up a play on Mother Teresa, I could only think of her godly love and deep service to humankind. This truth, however, is known to the world. I wanted to do something beyond the known, to possibly try and reach into the lesser known or unknown journey of Mother Teresa.

I agreed to take up this mammoth task of staging a play in less than a month. After I left Fr. Magi's office, the first thing I did was to order about a dozen books on her. Reading about Mother Teresa, one always comes across her altruistic deeds. However, while researching her biographies, I stumbled upon letters that she had written to her confidants. These letters were not the usual letters but letters of pain, agony and the darkness that enveloped her.

Kind, caring, loving and generous are words that come to a person's mind while reflecting on the pious life of this holy saint, Mother Teresa; now known as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. What lies obscured from this world is the void - the loneliness and the emptiness that crept into Mother Teresa's heart to a point where she cried out, "Pray for me that I may not turn a Judas to Jesus in this painful darkness." This profound statement made me dive more deeply into the cause of this angst. How can a person, who is revered as a saint in this world, pass through a

period so dark that the very foundations of her faith are shaken? This story somehow had to be told and I took it upon myself to script a suitable play.

At various points in her life, Mother Teresa would feel that the Almighty had "turned his face away from her"; something which she expressed through letters written to different priests over a span of forty years. This play revolved around her feelings while she was going through this spiritual darkness.

This unforgettable journey began with cast rehearsals that initially started in an upbeat mood in the AV room of St. Andrew's College. As the play evolved, the actors, musicians and every individual who put their heart and soul into the making of the play slowly began to realise that this was no ordinary play. The dialogues and the physical theatre, along with the Syrian-Aramaic hymns that were used in the play, developed an atmosphere of tranquillity and positivity and gave each one a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction. Every time we entered the AV room, it seemed like we were inhaling an aroma of peace hitherto not experienced by any of us. There was

something in that room; something indescribable yet divine which seemed to make its presence felt all throughout our working on the play.

Before the rehearsals, each one of us would meditate to help focus our minds on the positivity in the room. Every time the hymns played, our souls seem to be transported to a different time and place. We would often lose track of our real identities and become one with the play. It was almost as if the world inside our four walls existed on a totally different plane. The result of such a powerful play was felt in the personal lives of nearly all of us, the cast. It was as if our hearts had carried our own crosses and had emerged much purer and filled with love to the brim.

Sharmila Velaskar Kadne, who played Mother Teresa, expressed this same feeling in her own words. "When I was younger, I used to be extremely self-centred. As I grew up, I changed and became more concerned with the feelings of people around me and found myself doing things for others. Now, as an evolved adult, I knew I still had a long way to go. I considered myself to be a very spiritual person until Omkar Bhatkar (the Director)



decided to cast me into the divine role of Saint Teresa of Calcutta or Mother Teresa as we fondly call her. Initially, I was extremely sceptical about doing it because I knew I was nowhere close to her selflessness. The more I discovered about her, the more the sheer magnitude of her selflessness enveloped me like a cloak. To walk in her profound footsteps, even for those few moments on stage, made me look at myself in a completely different way. I consider myself blessed that I was given the divine opportunity to change myself and grow spiritually. I may take this lifetime and more to even get close to the divinity and compassion of Mother Teresa. All I can say is that I have become calmer and quieter. I am allowing stillness to encompass my entire being. I feel her presence guiding me at every moment. I can now see the triviality of so many things on which I had been wasting so much time. I am also grateful to Omkar for giving me this life-changing role.”

It was not only Sharmila but almost the entire crew who were transformed. They felt goodness, peace and happiness all round them as if the play had altered their world view. One of the key awakenings in all of us was the fact that if such a great soul like Mother Teresa could encounter a phase of spiritual darkness in her life, it is but natural that petty little souls, such as us, could also face similar trials in our lives; and in such times, it

is only our faith, belief and patience that will lead us out of this spiritual darkness into the light.

Ms. Nitya Narasimhan, an assistant in the play, like the others also felt a presence in her heart. She says, “The force that I felt in my heart was so strong that it changed me from an atheist to a theist. From the beginning of the play, I would always feel a spirit guiding me in my heart and, till date, I believe this to be the Holy Spirit. Clearly, if not for the play, I would have still been an ignorant atheist.” Whilst working on the play, my life wasn't the same either. Occasionally, I felt serendipitous connections with the play and everyday living – strange coincidences and dreams never dreamt before. I still remember, in one of the dreams I saw St. Michael the Archangel and, in another one, I vividly remember Mother Mary kneeling at the Cross praying to the heavens above. I don't know how religious I am but I know I am a believer and do have my own personal connect with Mother Mary.

I couldn't overlook the parallels between Mother Teresa and Mother Mary; as even Virgin Mary, the angelic mother that she was, cried out to God and questioned His existence when her own son, the son that she held in her arms, the boy whose blood ran through her own veins was dying on the Cross. She watched helplessly when the nails were



driven through his flesh. She heard his screams, the laments of the very son to whom she had given birth and whose fragile body she had once held in her bosom. She wondered if God was really seeing His son die; if God was seeing her cry. The spiritual darkness that Mother Teresa felt was not much different from the anguish felt by Mother Mary. And this is how, while writing the play, Mother Mary too became an integral part of this biopic.

Ruth Sequeira, who played Mother Mary, has an interesting tale to narrate. “It is so easy to lose focus of what is important. We concentrate so much on our jobs and studies that we don't spend any time thanking God for all He's done. This is exactly what happened to me. Despite my parents constantly telling me to put God first, I would continue doing everything else and not have my quiet time. When we started working on 'If my darkness is light to some soul', I found that I just couldn't get into character. I struggled to feel the pain Mary felt. Omkar sensed this and suggested that I start spending time in the Chapel just sitting quietly and asking God to help me. What started out as simple advice ended up being the only advice I really needed. I started spending time in the Chapel every day with the aim of getting into my character, not knowing that something else was actually happening. Omkar even suggested that I start reading the Bible first thing in the morning. Now this was surprising since that sounded exactly like what my dad used to say to me – “Seek first

the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”. I started reading the Bible regularly. I was so nervous on opening day as this was my first play. I, once again, prayed for strength and for the Holy Spirit to help me. A friend, who was in the audience, said she could feel the Holy Spirit around me when I started to speak. This wasn't just an ordinary play for me. I doubt I will ever be cast in such a role again. It helped change so many people's lives and it wasn't just by chance that I got to be a part of it. It was all part of God's plan.”

The play touched the lives of so many people; onstage as well as offstage. Furthermore, as far as the aesthetic sense of the play was concerned, everything exuded divinity; be it the carefully chosen hues of blues or the holy Cross or the sacred benches and the sacred stools borrowed from St. Andrew Church Museum. This play was the spark that kindled the spiritual power in the hearts of the people involved that will hold them in good stead for the rest of their lives. This magical dream wouldn't have been possible without the faith of St. Andrew's Management and Fr. Magi's support. It was this faith and support that allowed us mortal artists to do something that could change people's perceptions of life.

As the crowd stood up to leave on the afternoon of 29th June, 2017 amidst the cloudy, confusing day of Mumbai, one thing was sure – for many of us who were part of the play, our lives would never be the same again.





- Verus Ferreira

Fr. Magi Murzello is a priest who wears many hats: Principal of St. Andrew's High School, Bandra, Rector of St. Andrew's College, Bandra and, most recently, Senate member of the University of Mumbai. This last appointment, bearing a five-year term, commenced in September 2017.

As Principal of the School, Fr. Magi has changed the way youngsters attend school. He has brought in a new concept, 'Mission Sunshine', which aims at transforming criticism into appreciation and encouragement. Verus Ferreira met Fr. Magi Murzello at his tastefully decorated office to learn more about Mission Sunshine and how he encourages sunshine into the students' lives.

The Concept

Fr. Magi is a man on a mission; a mission to drape his school in sunshine. From the school lobby to its corridors and, more importantly, his office (his yellow desk, yellow walls, most books with yellow-coloured covers), all are bathed in sunshine; transforming darkness into light. Every Friday, students are encouraged to wear their Mission Sunshine T-shirts instead of the school uniform. Thus, a very friendly and family-like atmosphere exists at St. Andrew's High School; something never attempted or done before. According to him, "Appreciation has to be inculcated as a



School Lobby

life skill. Mission Sunshine strives to remind constantly that everyone is hungry for praise and starving for honest appreciation. Mission Sunshine seeks to instil the attitude of appreciation in the stakeholders of the School."

Mission Sunshine was the outcome of a personal experience Fr. Magi had in the year 2009. "It was my nephew's first day at school. He thoroughly enjoyed himself; but the next day, he sulked and just refused to go. I found out the reason and tried to do something about it. Around the same time, the movie '3 Idiots' released. The song "Give me some sunshine..." became a rage with film-goers. But, actually, it is a tragic song sung by an unappreciated student who commits suicide in the movie. The end-result was that the student had, in fact, fared well in his examinations but circumstances drove him to take this extreme step. It was with this thought in mind that I developed the idea of Mission Sunshine."

With a lot of planning and hard work, Mission Sunshine saw the light of day on 31st July, 2010. It found favour with Honourable Member of Parliament, Ms. Priya Dutt, who inaugurated the concept at the School. Fr. Magi handed over to each

student a Mission Sunshine goodie bag containing a diary, badge, sunshine ball, T-shirt and other merchandise developed around the theme.

The concept of Mission Sunshine applies to all students; from Nursery to Standard X. Prior to implementation, Fr. Magi explained the concept to

all parents and received positive feedback from them.

"Many welcomed such a novel concept and gave me their support,"

says an elated Fr. Magi, who also began a makeover of the School by installing CCTV cameras all over the campus, high-end projectors in each classroom and painting the Mission Sunshine theme in public areas of the School.



Solarium



Staff of St. Andrew's High School with Ms. Priya Dutt

Fr. Magi started out with a solarium – a 'coun-solar' to appreciate and encourage the students. "Many youngsters are wary of meeting a counsellor. Their first thought is that they are being reprimanded and advised in a very stern manner. The coun-solar has two priests from the Parish who attend to students' needs on a one-to-one basis without parental



Implementation

Fr. Magi has now revamped the goodie bag into an easy-to-carry attractive school wallet which has a lot of the Mission Sunshine goodies in it. The black-zippered carry case has a stylish handle and can double up as an iPad cover. And talking of iPad, one of the items in the case is a Thank Pad – a gratitude journal. The Pad also doubles as a diary for 2018 and has space to list all the good

interference. They instil positive thoughts and appreciation for the student before solving their problems that may range from personal issues to family pressure.” The School also boasts of a Mission Sunshine multiplex - a film-based learning module which aims to influence young minds through value-based films.

For those who wish to spend a few quiet moments in meditation, Fr. Magi has given them space in the 'Gratitude Chapel' that spells out the word 'thank you' in multiple languages. There is also an Appreciation Bank in every classroom reserved for classmates' interaction and appreciation within the same class. Fr. Magi hasn't forgotten his teachers and has created a Pat Book for them. But what about the lower rung - the peons and ayahs who help mop the school floor? "Taking a cue from the movie 'Munnabhai MBBS', we also have a page for them in our 'Book of Revolution' that tracks the deeds of these people through a simple formula - 'Appreciation equals Acknowledgement and Personal Action'. This page is for the support staff to appreciate one another." informs Fr. Magi.

deeds done each day as well as the ones planned for the next day. Don't miss out on some beautiful and thought-provoking quotes by famous personalities, at the top of each page, that make you ponder life's realities. One such touching quote goes, "Gratitude is a duty which ought to be paid, but none have a right to expect." - Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Pad also helps develop the practice of recalling the people who cross your path everyday and to whom you must be thankful for each and every day. Says Fr. Magi, "Any work done out of goodwill for the other is a good act and should be appreciated but very often it goes unnoticed. This book reminds us to appreciate others." At the end of the book are eight TanQ notes to be filled in with a personal message and given to someone who has meant a lot to you.

Ever thought you'd handle a cheque book at school? The 'Wow Bank' issues a cheque book from which you can actually tear out and gift your friends and teachers a Cheque of Appreciation. And to keep a track of the cheques you also have a PAT Book - a Passbook which holds entries of all the Positive Attitude Transactions you have carried out. To



brighten up each Monday morning of the year, you have the blue-coloured message board tags to pin up near your study table to show how special you are in the eyes of God. 'Exquisite, Phenomenal, Stunning, Beautiful, Super duper' are just some of the many inspiring words that best describe who you are even if you think you are not. Be positive and feel the Wow Magic engulf you throughout the day with these little one-word thoughts! Lastly, the kit contains a smart pen which has an eye-catching message that reveals itself as the pen is used.

Fr. Magi's publicity material is catchy and speaks volumes about the concept. He explains, "The Mission Sunshine logo has a black background resembling a blackboard with the inscription in chalk because appreciation has to be learnt and imbibed by everyone. The '@' sign is adopted as the symbol of appreciation. It is artistically designed to shine like

the sun. Every time a participant comes across @, he/she is reminded of Mission Sunshine's objectives. The red smile in the word 'Sunshine' is the smile that appreciation generates. The 'Wow' aspect extols wonderment - the willingness to be surprised by life. It is from wonderment that appreciation springs. Mission Sunshine exhorts: the 'WOW' MAGIC...spread it!" smiles the fifty-year old Salesian product who has spent the last seventeen years of his twenty years of priestly life in the role of education.

But doing good work doesn't come easy. Initially, Fr. Magi found it difficult to start but everything fell into place when he received help from every door he knocked on. Surely, the 'WOW Magic' that has 'Magi' in it worked for him. Fr. Murzello is confident that the concept will work not only in the School but also in the students' homes. "If you instil

something good in a child in school, the same will be replicated at home. We cannot have appreciation on one track; it has to be two-fold. Appreciation has to be 'dil se'... from the heart... otherwise it's just not appreciation."

Feedback

Fr. Magi is wary of too much sunshine reflected on his students. As an Arab proverb rightly states, "Sunshine all the time makes a desert". Keeping this in mind, Fr. Magi has prepared Sun Signs and Sun Spots; wherein, the former acknowledges good behaviour and, the latter, negative behaviour. Fr. Murzello, with the help of the teachers, personally checks students' Mission Sunshine books regularly to stay abreast of how the concept is working with his students.

While he is doing his bit to spread the sunshine around, he strongly feels that the current educational system does not focus on "emotional literacy". "Every classroom must become a heart-centered classroom. Social media needs to be harnessed by schools. We are moving from analog classrooms to digital ones. Hence prudent use of social media is the need of the times."

The Accolades

Fr. Magi has taken the Mission Sunshine concept to schools in Mumbai, Meerut, Jodhpur, Delhi, Goa, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh, Jaipur, Ajmer and Jammu. It is no wonder that his efforts won him the 'Educator Innovator – 2011' award and cash prize at the Fifth International Roundtable Conference whose theme was 'Metamorphosis in Education'.

In March 2008, he was awarded the prestigious Rev. A Sologran Prize by the Management of St. Xavier's Institute of Education for Innovations in Education. Later, in May 2010, he was the main resource person for a three-day national seminar held in Goa, speaking on the topic of 'Innovations in the Education Spectrum'.

In September 2013, Fr. Magi was felicitated by His Lordship, Bishop Oswald Lewis, at St. Xavier's College, Jaipur for making a difference in the field of education. Later, he also conducted a full-day workshop for forty-four School Principals from Mangalore.

In May 2017, on his visit to France, he visited L'Arche International, an international federation



Mission Sunshine goes to Arunachal Pradesh – January 2018



Mission Sunshine in Jammu – July 2018

dedicated to the creation and growth of homes, programs, and support networks with people who have intellectual disabilities, and returned with many valuable insights that he felt could be implemented in India.

The successes of the previous years have turned him into a more resilient person, building upon what he has done, with the results showing in numerous ways. He has his hands full with work and is all set

to take on whatever the Lord sends his way.

We cannot forget the golden words of St. Teresa of Calcutta who once said, "There is more hunger for love and appreciation in the world, than for bread." Mission Sunshine seeks to remind that everyone wants a day in the sun – to get attention and be appreciated. It seeks to make a difference... make appreciation 'dil se'.



Educating Punjab on Mission Sunshine – September 2015

Verus Ferreira is a freelance journalist/ photojournalist/ author with over twenty-five years of experience in entertainment journalism with the Indian media and has contributed to a variety of leading newspapers and magazines in Mumbai. He is the author of 'The Great Music Quiz Book' and 'The Great Rock Music Quiz Book'. He presently writes for The Teenager Today, Afternoon Despatch and Courier and is also the founder of the music portal www.musicunplugged.in



Memoirs

OF AN EX-STUDENT



- Sanjiv Ferreira

I often reminisce about my student life. Life in school was really a time that I just cannot forget - friends, games and recess breaks; it was the centre of my universe.

NOSTALGIA

I excelled in mathematics by memorizing the rules of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication; never once pausing to appreciate the qualities of each of the numbers themselves or the unique roles the operators played in their rhythmic dance.

Long hours spent vocalizing and writing the alphabet gave me enough mastery over the languages; so much so that I was even awarded scholarships in some of them.

Geography was simply the memorisation of the names and natures of different locations around the globe. Just dreaming of actually exploring the world's rich diversity one day made geography thrilling.

Art and craft were, by far, the most enjoyable. It was the only time I could freely express myself without fear of judgment. But, surreptitiously, the lure of the competition soon arrived. I learnt that art which couldn't win prizes was no art at all. I therefore hypothesised that as compared to other highly remunerative professions like medicine, law, engineering or research, artists were condemned to live relatively frugal lives. Thereafter, I resolved to give art only so much attention as was available after pursuing my core career goals. It was the death of the artist in me.

So, even though I loved art and sport, they were to be ignored. But that too was okay. It was obvious that to be successful, there were so many less risky and better paying choices. I'm sure you will agree that success is worth pursuing.

I had mastered the art of scoring high grades in school. Just three simple steps were to be followed: memorizing, processing and presenting information. That is what I was instructed. That is what I did. And, for that, I was rewarded. Everyone called it Education. I could actually become successful by engaging only my cerebral faculty. My heart was left to discern what needed to be pursued for the pleasure of my body. Just by sharpening my mind, I

could get anything my heart desired for the pleasure of my body.

This is how I succeeded.

EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA

But somewhere a nagging question began to surface; one that just wouldn't go away. A new fear began to arise because computers were becoming super-intelligent. Computers could beat us at chess. They could drive our cars and they could manipulate our elections. All these capabilities were because of their prodigious capacity to acquire, store, process and present data like never before.

But wait! Something was very wrong here!

Weren't those the very same 'cramming' skills that I painstakingly acquired from sixteen long years of education? Only now, the process used by the computer had a new syntax; namely 'garbage in - garbage-out'. However, there was still one subtle difference. As against 'cramming', a computer was smarter because it also disposed of unwanted knowledge. So, over a period, with cramming, while I was losing efficiency and passion, the computer was not. If computers thought faster and more efficiently, then what was I to do? What would happen to my job, my livelihood and my life?

Because,

Clinics are being replaced by tele-medicine,
Cashiers are being replaced by teller machines,
Get-togethers are being replaced by WhatsApp,
Call-centre employees are being replaced by IVR,
Accountants are being replaced by software programmes,
Marketing teams are being downsized by data analytics.

Not a day passes without the list getting longer. Being middle-aged myself, I could just make it through. Life would get a little hollow but who cares? At this point, survival is far more important.

But can I say the same for our children?

Can we continue to train them in skills that simple computer algorithms have long mastered? Do we really want them to compete with computers? We all agree that we cannot surpass the computing capabilities of technology. But do we actually believe that we can even keep up? If some of us still believe there is hope in continuing with the existing system, it's time to revisit Moore's law which claims that the number of transistors on a chip doubles every twenty-four months. Can our educational system, which promotes information acquisition, storage, processing and retrieval, possibly evolve faster than that?

Following the industrial revolution, with machines getting more powerful, fulfilment no longer depended solely on one's physical capabilities. This neutralised gender inequality and, incidentally, was also the bedrock from which the entire computing revolution catapulted itself.

However, although machines are very powerful now, post the industrial revolution, humanity has not ignored the need to maintain physical fitness. The change now is only in the amount of emphasis society lays on developing physical strength and endurance. As a result, physical training occupies a relatively minor part in the existing educational curriculum.

Recognizing this trend, shouldn't we correspondingly decrease the emphasis we place on information acquisition, storage, processing and presenting data? Doesn't it seem like the most practical way to move forward? But then, as always, dismantling the old to rebuild anew initially appears as the easier way out. It is only with this resolute faith can I remain confident that answers, however difficult, can be found. I know that everything begins by asking the right questions.

A NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Each subject is a combination of elements possessing far subtler qualities than are being appreciated within the existing educational system. From this perspective, it now appears that the process of education was designed to facilitate appreciation of the qualities of individual objects of study as they manifest in relation to other identities forming part of their unique families. Appreciation through the act of experientially relating to these qualities and identities would result in effortless memorizing.

It is a simple exercise. But by consistently repeating it across different subjects, in time, students get equipped to

harmoniously relate with the multitude of qualities in the world at large. A little further introspection would reveal that an individual's ability to appreciate the qualities of things versus just quantities (win-lose mindset) would permit a far greater latitude in dealing with situations and, hence, expand the space for self-expression. Operating from wider latitude of response also resonates with the fundamental physiology and neurology of the human body. The human form has evolved from a primitive reptilian two-three mode (win-lose/ fight-flight-freeze) response system to a multi-modal mammalian operating system. Isn't this, in essence, the evolution of a reptilian life? Reptiles were condemned to a world of dualities so that mammalian life could explore infinite possibilities.

Appreciating this, a few dedicated teachers, in their own little way, continue to share, nurture and care for their students. They believe that their unique bonding creates a healthy, happy and trusting environment to learn joyfully. However, this dwindling tribe, more than ever before, needs our continuing support.

Can we embrace a deeper, holistic interpretation of learning itself through the simple act of appreciation of qualities of all concept and things? This would naturally result in appreciating qualities in others which would finally lead to developing qualities within ourselves. Shouldn't the objective of education align with a child's innate ability to appreciate, feel and interpret life experiences?

Now, making progress in the cognitive and conative domains was easy because measurability was never a problem. By devising units for distance, temperature, weight, etc., we could measure our natural work easily through the use of quantitative units. Operating in the world of qualities possesses its own unique challenges. We cannot use the same quantitative frameworks and units that we used for developing cognitive and conative skills. If, and when, we begin without a framework for measurement, how can progress be even measured?

Let us scroll back the pages of time and find out how this problem was addressed while creating measures for quantities in our physical world. Let us look at some of the earliest measures for distance, time and temperature as starting points. Was not the famed Egyptian cubit a measure of a forearm, or the Imperial measure of a “foot” derived from the human foot? Could the temporal measure of a “year” be related to man's own experience

of the cycle of seasons, or a month to a woman's experience of her menstrual cycle? Could Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit have possibly used the average temperature of the human body as an initial reference for pegging his unit of temperature?

Here, we are reminded of the wisdom of Protagoras, a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, who is noted to have said, “Man is the measure of all things”. This statement underlines the nature of individual relativity and, hence, the possibility of creative and original self-expression. This ancient view has, once again, been resurrected through some of the discoveries of the greatest scientific minds of our times – Einstein's general and special Theory of Relativity, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and Max Planck's Quantum Theory of Possibilities. Since most of our recent technological advances are based on these principles, this reality cannot be avoided any further. The seventeenth-century Newtonian worldview of just quantitative measurement served us well until the industrial revolution. However, going forward in the present era, we would need to recalibrate the framework in light of these twentieth-century discoveries as they point towards appreciating the world of qualities, states and possibilities.

If, indeed, man is to continue to be the measure of all things, then should not the process of his appreciation of qualities in all things be anchored in his feelings of the qualities within himself. Could it possibly be that this was the reason why man was endowed with the unique ability to feel an entire spectrum of emotions?

Having travelled so far, we are now ready to address the primal question. Which faculty of the human being has since been neglected and, hence, needs to be developed in place of the cognitive and conative facilities being developed? Maybe it's time to turn our attention towards our affective function. It has been neglected for far too long. Through this learning, we would align with the most natural human process of integrating body, heart and mind together.


Maybe, it's clear that parents and teachers have to be the agents of this change not only in classrooms but also in the confines of our very homes, offices and communities. Of what use is education if its benefits are not experienced in all places and at all times?

Such interactions are only possible through inductive experiential learning engaging sensory, affective and mental faculties. For transference of experience through the inductive process, engaging of emotional faculties is a pre-requisite. For inductive learning, students and

educators should be able to freely feel and express the entire spectrum of emotions. Feelings are important because it is only through them that we can truly appreciate the qualities of all things. Given India's rich cultural heritage, it is not surprising that this perspective was not only widely accepted but it had a special word coined in the Devnagiri script to represent it - 'Sambhavna'. It is constructed of two parts: 'sam' – to become one with, and 'bhavna' derived from the word Bhava meaning an emotion, sentiment, state of body or mind, or a disposition. In English, it can be simply translated as 'possibilities' arising from acceptance of all states of emotion.

Educators are required to appreciate, react to and record the unique emotional signatures of each student as they develop, not only during a single academic year but also throughout the student's journey in school. Only by embracing their emotions arising from experiences can students develop their emotional faculty to appreciate the qualities and infinite possibilities of the world around. This would unleash the potential of every child through the act of creative self-expression. Only through holistic, inductive and experiential education can the art of learning be rediscovered in the computing era.

And by the way, through it all, our children will naturally become more aware, accepting, passionate and empathetic human beings; not only towards themselves but also to all those around them. Now, wouldn't that just be reason enough to make a beginning?



Sanjiv Ferreira, Founder and Design Mentor at Resonant Ventures, has a deep interest in the domains of natural sciences, health, emotions, cognitive sciences and consciousness. This has led him to a fascinating journey of exploration over the last few years. Sanjiv has dedicated his efforts towards developing an integrated understanding of the science and art of cognition, emotions and consciousness. He has filed for an international patent in the area of temporal-spatial modeling of emotional states.

Through Resonant Ventures, he works with institutions, on developing innovative ways to harness the emotional field of their constituents for creative self-expression. He is also currently launching a mobile app called 'Samai' for emotional wellbeing.

To explore how education can be revitalized, please feel free to visit the website www.embracemotions.com, email sanjiv@resoven.com or contact; +91 9167239592.

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“True education
enables us to love life
and opens us
to the fullness of life.”



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