



St Patrick's College Jaffna OBA

Melbourne, Australia

Established 1992

P.O.Box 551, Rosanna, Vic 3084



Our Objectives

Socialise and share the Patrician spirit with benevolence.

Support our Alma Mater in meaningful ways.

We were endowed with both body and soul, and we are both spiritual and material beings...Without the material, we die; without the spiritual, we stop being people. Jesus does not condemn the material, but condemns materialism. It is not money that is the problem, it is the love of money.

..... **Tomas Sedlacek**, Czech Economist in his book *'Economics of Good and Evil'*

President's Message

Dear Fellow Patricians

It is with great pleasure that I write my first message as the President of the Melbourne OBA for the July 2015 edition of our Newsletter. The well-attended 2015 AGM was held on the 21st of March. It was preceded by the St Patrick's Day Mass celebrated by Fr Anthony Gnanapragasam, and was followed by a sumptuous string-hopper dinner with curry prepared by many of our long-standing Committee and Panel members. At the AGM we elected a new Secretary and a new Treasurer, as well as a new Executive Committee and Advisory Panel – as guardians of the OBA well into the future. Photographs taken on the night are published on our website.

I would like to advise you of a few important items planned for the near future.

We have almost completed organising our major event, the "Patrician Nite" 2015. It will be held on the 29th August at Sacred Heart Church Hall, 21 Johnson Street, Oakleigh at 6.30PM. Therefore, please keep this date free for the event. Our committee has already started calling members in regards to purchasing tickets for this event. As a member of the College OBA, please come and participate in

support of our College. In addition, can I please request our members who haven't paid the Annual Membership Fees to pay during the function. Noel Rajiv, our newly elected young Treasurer, is ready to accept your membership fees.

In the last Committee Meeting held on 28th June, we broadly discussed ways and means of celebrating the 25th Anniversary of St. Patrick's College OBA Melbourne in 2017. As you may know, the OBA was established on 9th February 1992 at St Joseph's Parish Church Hall, Northcote, following the inaugural Mass celebrated by our former Rector, the late Rev Fr Mathuranayagam. We have selected a subcommittee consisting of Jeevaranjan, Ravindraraj, Vincent, Anandan and Jeyandra, who have been given the important task of inviting, considering and recommending to the next Executive Committee meeting – all ideas which have been put forward to celebrate the year and the occasion. One idea is the establishment of a Perpetual Fund funded by publishing and distributing a high quality souvenir with advertisements. Another idea is celebrating the occasion with a two-day event consisting of many activities for all Patricians, families and friends. It has also been suggested that we could organise a group tour to visit the College and conduct some events, including playing a cricket match with the College staff!

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Patrician Nite 2015 - the day for all Patricians, families and friends

Saturday, August 29 at Sacred Heart Church Hall, Oakleigh



A Patrician, the next Saint of Sri Lanka ?

Reverend Father B. A. Thomas OMI - Founder of the Rosarian Order of Monks, Tholagatty

*The process of the Canonization of Fr. Thomas was begun by the Diocese of Jaffna with the approval of the Holy See in 1986. He was recognized by the Holy See as Servant of God in 1996 - the first step towards the canonization. The Congregation of the Rosarian Order of monks - which he founded at Tholagatty - was raised to the Pontifical Status by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 2002. The Congregation for Causes of Saints in Rome gave the 'Nihil Obstat' to the cause (No obstacle to sainthood) of Fr Thomas on March 11, 2006. **Below is a brief history of a Rishi (Holy Monk), a man of God and a Sanyasi (Sage).***

Rev Fr Bastiampillai Anthony Thomas was born on March 7, 1886 in the little village of Pandianthazhvu near Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Ill health was his constant companion from his early childhood. In fact he was administered the "Anointing of the Sick" more than once prior to his ordination to priesthood in his 26th year. Finally, when he was ordained priest after overcoming almost insurmountable obstacles on January 6, 1912, his Bishop observed that the new priest was not likely to live for five years, and put him in St. Patrick's College, Jaffna under the care of its Rector at that Time, Rev Fr Charles Matthews OMI and requested him to take special care of the young priest's health. The Rector put him in charge of the boarding house for non-catholic students and got him to teach in the college for a couple of hours.

In this God-given work, Fr. Thomas got plenty of time to read. He read a good deal about monasticism and the great part played by the monks in the work of evangelisation. His close contact with the non-Christian students of the college provided his zeal with ample opportunities for evangelisation. There were a large number of conversions and some of the converts became priests as well. He exercised his mind towards spreading the Gospel in India and Sri Lanka and the need and importance of prayer and penance and began to dream of days when the length and breadth of India and Sri Lanka would be dotted with 'Contemplative Monasteries.' When in 1926, Pope Pius XI published his encyclical 'Rerum Ecclesiae' emphasizing the urgent need of contemplatives in mission lands, Bishop Guyomar of Jaffna who knew well Fr. Thomas and his aspirations asked him to start an institute of contemplatives in his diocese. Thus began the Congregation of the Rosarians, at Tholagatty, Vasaavilan (9 km from Jaffna Town centre) on February 2, 1928.

Thenceforth the life of Fr. Thomas was inextricably interwoven into the vicissitudes of this tiny congregation born out of his cherished dreams. It was indeed a journey into the dark. Fr. Thomas had no blueprint of what was going to be realised. At every turn he was led by his unflinching trust in Divine Providence and in the protection of our Blessed Mother. For thirty years, he struggled and laboured practically single-handed, undaunted by apparently insurmountable difficulties and obstacles that stood on the way of his venture. Even when unsympathetic observers, antagonistic outsiders and even his own co-workers seemed - unwittingly perhaps - to contrive together to bring about an untimely extinction of his cherished project, he still clung on with un-wavering trust in the goodness of God and in the protection of the Blessed Virgin. During his life time he had the satisfaction of seeing the Congregation spread into three dioceses in India. The contemplative congregation for women too was started by Fr. Thomas on September 8, 1948, the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. Within a decade, the sisters too spread out into two more dioceses in India and Sri Lanka. Besides the care and concern for these two incipient institutes struggling to come to their own, Fr. Thomas's time and energy was incessantly claimed by innumerable persons from all over the island of Sri Lanka who sought him for retreats and spiritual direction and by people for all sorts of needs who flocked to him for spiritual and material help.

Finally, worn out physically and mentally by assiduous labour, he was obliged into forced retirement in 1958. He spent his last 6 years at the Bishop's House and this period was veritable Calvary for him. Cut off, against his will, from his spiritual children and his cherished field of labour of over 30 years, he watched his life's dream spread to many parts of the world, but kept on with humble submission and patient acceptance of all that Divine Providence permitted, until death claimed him on January 26, 1964, at the age of 78. He who was not expected to live beyond five years as a priest, had spent more than fifty years of strenuous labour and heroic penance! .



Humility and simplicity are the hallmarks of the Rosarian life. The humble, hidden, laborious, contemplative life of the Holy Family of Nazareth is their model. Their daily life of habitual prayer is centred on the Holy Eucharist and is lived in close union with our Blessed Mother. Silence, frugality and manual labour form part of their penitential life. Their daily life is similar that of Carthusian monks. Father Thomas had a special devotion to Our Lady. He introduced, a 24 hours perpetual Rosary as a means for contemplation. He had profound faith, love and adoration toward the Eucharist and began the perpetual adoration. The last Encyclical and the Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father John Paul II, on the Eucharist and on the Most Holy Rosary (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia and Rosarium Virginis Mariae*) also have encouraged their dedicated life centred on the Eucharist and on Marian Contemplation. The aim of the Order is to support all apostolic works of the Church by prayer and sacrifices, although they do not engage in direct external apostolate outside the monastery precincts. The Rosarian Congregation has at present 17 monasteries in India, six monasteries in Sri Lanka and one monastery in Canada. The mother house in Tholagatty was fully destroyed during the ethnic war. Since his death, Fr Thomas has come to be acclaimed as a very holy man, a guru, a healer, a consoler, a comforter and even a miracle-worker by the faithful of Jaffna peninsula and beyond.

Extracted from an article written for TCNL by Fr. Francis Jeyaseelan CR, Rosarian Monastery, Merlin, Ontario, Canada.

Christian Giving

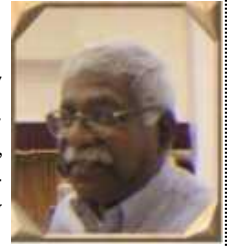
As the scripture says: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

St Paul's letter to Corinthians [2 Cor 8:15]

Many tributes from all over the world were published when Dr Charles Santiapillai passed away on 29 October 2014. Christy Rasaiya - Cricket Captain 1962-63 and Head Prefect - pens his own memoirs of Charles:

Tribute to a Patrician, my friend, Professor Charles Santiapillai

I first came to know Dr Charles Valentine Manoranjan Santiapillai (Professor of Zoology) nearly 57 years ago, when I met him at the portals of our Alma Mater, the evergreen and gold prominent educational institution, St Patrick's College - Jaffna, in July 1958. Our friendship never diminished, but grew with mutual respect and understanding between us, during our college days and continued thereafter. He liked to be called 'Charles' though his pet name was 'Ranjan'. He would jokingly say that one day "I will meet the real Prince Charles" which became a reality later on.



Our entire family was displaced as we were reluctantly compelled to leave Colombo in 1958. My brothers and sisters and I were born and raised in Colombo. The boys were studying St Benedict's Colombo, while the girls were attending the Good Shepherd's in Colombo. My brothers and sisters were in our teens. This great exodus, changed our lives forever, and with disorientated mindset we left Colombo, our neighbours, friends, and college- school mates into a new environment- Jaffna. I was 15 years old then and meeting Charles was one of the best things that happened in my personal life. He welcomed me with a charming smile, introducing his classmates one by one. I felt a great sense of relief at the exemplary kind way I was received at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. His mischievous innocent smile, unassuming manners, composure and resilience were the hallmark of Charles's character. These traits were the reflections of a rich upbringing by his father, the late Mr S. F. Santiapillai, a distinguished teacher of English and Latin languages and his mother the late Mrs Ranees Santipillai.

Charles was an innocent young lad with attitude, coupled with a photographic mind of his own. His thespian talents not only entertained his friends and colleagues but also his teachers. His comical jokes and catchy phrases often bemused us. He was a captivating personality with malice to no-one. We as colleagues admired his inborn natural creative talents, in the field of art, design, and music. He was a voracious reader, exceptionally good in writing articles, essays and poems. He had a penchant for art and music and blessed with a 'beautiful hand'. His writing was neat, orderly and artistic. I, for one admired and never ever saw such methodical, perfection and precision in the art of 'writing'. Charles also had the biggest accordion I had ever seen in the early 1960's. He mastered this instrument, all on his own, since he had the mental capacity to absorb an ambit of melodies. Whenever we went on excursion and trips, he never failed to bring his accordion. It was always fun, real pleasure and entertainment as we listened to the music he played. He also had a great liking for the cartoon series that appeared in the 'Ceylon Daily News' 'Bringing Up Father' which depicted the characters of "Jiggs and iViaggie". Quite often before the class commenced in the morning (at College), he would draw these caricatures on the black board with the day's humorous strip (cartoon) 'catchy snippets' to the absolute delight of our class. We admired how perfectly and exactly he depicted the drawings as printed in the newspaper. We looked at him with appreciation with the gentle taps on our desks, but there he is grinning away and the entire class erupts with laughter.

In 1963, Charles entered the University of Peradeniya and graduated in 1969 specialising in Zoology. For some years he lectured in zoology at the Faculty of Zoology in Peradeniya. Thereafter he proceeded to UK and obtained a PhD in Mammalogy in 1975, from the University of Southampton. In the early part of 1980's he was offered the post of senior scientific officer in the Asian program under the august World Wildlife Fund International and for a period of 10 years worked in Indonesia. During his stay in Indonesia his interests were mainly concerned with the behavioural pattern of the Asian elephants. These huge imposing animals are killed, especially for their priceless tusks. This phenomenon could be compared to yet another gigantic mammal - the whales. They are killed for their flesh, oil and medicinal values under the guise of research. In a few years' time these mammals will be extinct. Charles was well aware of this fact and was trying his best to educate people, by his lectures, articles and letters on how the man and the beast could co-exist harmoniously with mutual benefits and assistance to one another. After his furlough in Indonesia, he re-joined the University of Peradeniya in 1994, continued to work in the field of research of Asian elephants and published many an article on these great animals. He retired in 2010, as associate Professor of Zoology.

Charles won many accolades at international level. In recognition of his wildlife conservation program, Charles was awarded a gold medal and appointed the Knight of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernard, Netherlands in 1990. The dream and prediction, during his college days in the 1960's became a reality, when he had the privilege of meeting his namesake, the HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, on his royal yacht, who sought his expertise in the field of mammals, especially of the environment and habitat of the largest living land animals - the Elephants.

He would have moved with great men of learning and with the royals but still Charles was Charles, the unassuming, honest, kind, selfless, pious and lovable personality. There were no barriers for him to reach out to ensure the wellbeing of his family, relations and friends, despite his multi-faceted roles in life. Though he passed away peacefully, after a brief illness, his wonderful memories will continue to linger among his family, relatives, friends and colleagues and his tutelage, forever, despite leaving us. He is survived by his beloved wife, Mrs. Anoma Santiapillai (nee Alagoda) and his children, Praveen (Melbourne) and Shyama (USA). May his soul rest in eternal peace.

President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

Please keep the ideas coming and the subcommittee will consider the feasibility of all of them and make recommendations to the Executive Committee for final decision. Once the events are finalised, details will be communicated through future editions of the newsletter and on our website.

Please also remember if you have any thoughts on other upcoming events or ideas to execute, feel free to bring them forward to the committee members. I thank all of you for the opportunity you have given me to serve this organisation.

God Bless you,

Chrys Gunanayagam

President

P.S: Make sure you do not miss out on the Patrician Nite. Let's make this a memorable night!

OBA's Silver Jubilee will be in 2017. Ideas are invited on how best we can celebrate the year

SPC Jaffna OBA—Melbourne

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No. of Patricians to whom newsletter is posted —145

Annual subscription - \$20.00

WEBSITE: www.spcaustralia.com

EMAIL: secretary@spcaustralia.com



"If I send my prayer as a text message, will I get a faster reply?"

Notice Board

Patrician Nite 2015

Saturday, 29 August 2015

Venue: Sacred Heart Church / Primary School Hall

21, Johnson Street, Oakleigh (Mel 69 F8)

(Please note the correct address. Not to be confused with Sacred Heart Girls College in Warrigal Road, please.)

Start at 6.30 pm

Music: DJ's Entertainment

Smorgasbord: *Mango Tree*

Wine and Soft Drink provided for each table

BYO liquor

Raffle

Tickets - \$40 [Children (5 - 15yrs) - \$15]

The members and families attending the Patrician Nite have been increasing every year. The function is again held this year in a larger hall to accommodate all requesting tickets, and is open to all Patricians, their families and friends. Each table can seat 12 people. Members are welcome to invite their friends to come along and spend an enjoyable evening – dining and dancing as well as meeting other Patricians and make new friends. It is a once-a-year occasion for Patricians to celebrate and foster fellowship and network with others. A Committee/Advisory Panel Member will be in touch with you soon. If you have not been contacted, please call Anandan on 0431 571 066 to obtain the tickets.

Office Bearers, Committee & Panel Members for 2015/ 2016 Patrician Year

Chrys Gunanayagam - **President**

Rukshan Theophilus - **Secretary**

Noel Rajiv - **Treasurer** Philip Ravindraraj - **Asst. Treasurer**

Anandarajan James - **Social & Events Secretary**

Jeyandra Antonipillai - **Sports Secretary**

Committee members: - Angelo Fernando, William Nimalraj, James Joseph, Patrick Rajaratnam, Pillai Mariasekaram & Dr Sanjeev Alfred

Advisory & Support Panel - Alfred Reynald, Anton Newton, Dr. Anton Mariampillai, Antony Gratian, Edward Arulnesathan, Isidore Manoraj, Gunaratnam Arulanantham, James Premanandarajah, Jeevaranjan Fernando, Jerard Jogaratnam, Joseph Vijayaratham, Reg Cherubim, Parthipan Vivehanandan, Vincent Pius & William Rajendram