

ANDHRA LOYOLA COLLEGE, VIJAYAWADA

THE GERMINATION AND BLOSSOMING OF A DREAM

The genesis of Andhra Loyola College signaled the return of the Jesuits to the Telugu Land and eventually laid a firm and solid foundation for the flowering of the lull-fledged Andhra Jesuit Province. The circumstances leading to the decision of the then General of the Society of Jesus Rev. Fr. Jansens, in the wake of earnest and insistent pleas of Bishop Ignatius Mummadi made to him, to permit a new college to be started in Andhra by the Madurai province have been chronicled by Fr. D.Gordon, himself one of the key figures involved in the whole process with a wealth of fascinating details. Suffice it to say that the long-felt need and longing of the people of Andhra for a Jesuit institution of higher learning found fruition in December 1953 when the foundation stone was laid by the Governor Trivedi. The significance of the event together with the excitement and enthusiasm that it ignited could be gauged from the fact that as many as six thousand people attended the function at a time when access to the site as well as transport facilities available then were not as developed as they are today. The exploratory and preparatory phase in the starting of the College was inextricably bound up with the names of Fr. Karnam Devaiah and his two able collaborators, Mr. K. Raghuramaiah and Mr. Parvathaneni Bhushaiah and later, by Sri Ramachandra Rao who are rightly named as the founding fathers of the College. The single-minded devotion with which they went about mobilizing resources both financial and material, the care and farsightedness with which they selected the site for the present location of the College, the persistence with which they succeeded in making innumerable friends and enlisted their abundant support and cooperation deserve to be inscribed in letters of gold. The formation of Vijayawada Loyola Sahaya Sangam comprising some of the important and influential personalities, including Sri Gogineni S Naidu who were to offer invaluable assistance to Fr. Devaiah marked a crucial stage in the process of taking a step forward in realizing the dream of setting up a new Jesuit college.

It was fortunate that Br. Gian Davide, the Diocesan Architect was entrusted with the task of drawing up a master plan as well as the design for the main college premises which eventually on its completion would be a perennial source of admiration to all the visitors and students for their imposing dignity, artistic elegance and pleasing novelty.

A PANORAMA OF A CAMPUS FROM THE PADDY FIELDS

The future generations of students will find it difficult to visualize the original looks of the site before it was transformed into a magnificent and extensive campus dotted with innumerable trees, impressive buildings and enviably large playgrounds. Fr. Devaiah and Fr. Papaiah had to live in a hut when the building was in progress. All of us today are grateful to those pioneering

Jesuit community which consisted of Fr. Devaiah, Fr. B.J Coyle, Fr. T.A Mathias, Fr. Y. Papaiah, Fr. G. S. Subbaiah, Fr. G. Foreau and Br. I. Joseph. Each one of these stalwarts made a vital and memorable contribution to the initial growth of the institution. Fr. Subbaiah would later recall the daily encounter they used to have with scores of scorpions every night before they retired to bed.

INAUGURATION OF THE CLASSES

Once the formal visit of the Andhra University Inspection was over, everything was set for the inauguration of the classes. The choice of Fr. T.A. Mathias as the first principal of the College was a matter of momentous significance. He had the youthful energy, imagination and drive to give the fledgling college the much-needed direction and dynamism to introduce all the critical components for establishing a solid reputation for the College namely, academic excellence, discipline, orderliness and punctuality right from day one, when the college made an unobtrusive start on a rainy day on 22 July 1954, The College began to register a steady growth in terms of student strength, increase in the number of courses in the BA and B Sc stream, in the academic results achieved by the students, in the laurels brought by the Sports teams and in the expansion and augmentation of the various infra-structural facilities among which the phased construction of the hostels on campus was a prominent feature. Hostels since then have been an integral part of the uniqueness of the Andhra Loyola brand of education. In 1957 there were as many as 1477 students, 600 of whom were Hostellers. For these inmates and for thousands and thousands of alumni of successive generations who passed through the portals of the College, life in the hostel with its rich and varied learning experiences had been an inseparable part of their treasured recollections of the years spent in the College.

A DECADE OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION: 1957-1968

The year 1957 brought a number of significant changes in the academic and administrative landscape of Andhra Loyola. The outgoing senior batch of Intermediate students was replaced by the first batch of the Pre-University Course, leading to the inauguration of three-year degree course. In the sphere of administration, Fr. Devaiah, who had been rightly acclaimed as the founder of the College, was transferred to Dindigul and Fr. Balaiah succeeded him. Additional number of Jesuits came in the persons of Fr. Y. Papaiah and Fr. Anselm Miranda. The completion of the Gogineni hostel with the full complement of 300 rooms and the availability of adequate class rooms and laboratories, the provision of a Day scholars' Centre, a Canteen and a Common room projected the image of a well-established College, attracting an ever increasing number of students year by year. New Jesuit Staff such as Fr. M. DVarky and Fr. A. Theckemury kept coming to join the Jesuit Community. It is but natural that in a far-flung institution under the tutelage of the Madurai Jesuit Province, changes in the Jesuit personnel every year in one department or another would be an inevitable feature.

In 1959 the most important of such changes took place when Fr. Mathias the first Principal handed over the reins to Fr. Gordon, who had been closely associated with every stage of the evolution of the College as the Provincial Superior of the Madurai Province. During his ten year long tenure as Principal, the College continued to make impressive strides in the academic performance as well as the co-curricular activities of various departmental associations and in the arena of sports and games. As a member of the syndicate and other innumerable academic committees of the Andhra University, Andhra Loyola College was very much in the limelight in the academic circles. During these years, all the essentials of the infrastructural facilities were in place. A second hostel was added making it possible for more boys from rural areas to become residential students. The College Church built with an innovative design was blessed in January 1968. With the completion of a new Library, the College was able to boast of the largest collection of volumes in any affiliated college.

BUSTLING DECADE OF VARIED ACTIVITIES!- 1969-78

The academic year 1969 saw the appointment of the new Principal in the person of Fr. Varkey who had come to ALC for the third time. The student strength by this time touched the record number of 2000. The return of Fr. Anselm Miranda galvanized the campus life with Debaters' Club, Writers' Club, Quiz Club, Dramatic Club, Camera Club and a Cine forum. Sports and Games received remarkable fillip by the starting of the Devaiah Memorial Tournament. The year 1971 saw a noteworthy innovation as far as the academic side was concerned. The concept of certificate courses which now has come to be an indispensable part of the academic offering by a standing college was floated for the first time at ALC by the irrepressible Fr. James. He devised certificate courses in Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations and Typewriting. The Academic year was very much disrupted by a strike by the students against the compulsory Telugu Medium. By the end of 1972, the pattern of the college education was firmly established in the State: two year Intermediate Course followed by the three Year Degree Course. By now the familiar contours of Andhra Loyola as an institution of higher Learning began to manifest themselves with ever-greater clarity.

With 1800 students on the rolls and with 104 teaching staff including 7 Jesuits, the College was offering all the regular combination of courses. The availability of more than adequate facilities, enviable laboratories, a well-stocked Library containing 40,000 volumes, three Hostels and ample play grounds made the college irresistibly attractive to all academically inclined students and their aspiring and ambitious parents.

In 1972 June, another transition came about with Fr. G. Francis taking over as Principal from Fr. Varkey. Towards the end of the first term, the unleashing of Andhra Agitation brought all academic activity to a grinding halt. It was not until 9th April 1973 that the Colleges began to

stir again with tentative classes.

THE COLLEGE GEARS UP FOR AUTONOMY

Fr. Francis' administrative and academic impact on the life of the College was being unmistakably felt during his entire term in office. It was he who brought a kit of academic zest into the teaching of arts and sciences by taking advantage of the U.C.C sponsored schemes of COSIP AND COHIP. He was keenly and painfully conscious of the impediments to meaningful innovations as long as the shackles of the University affiliated system continued to afflict the College. Hence, he began to prepare the staff by numerous seminars and workshops to work towards the attainment of the autonomous status for the College. Though in his own administrative term he could not realize his dream of obtaining autonomy, he attuned the minds of the staff so adroitly and persistently towards this objective that when autonomy was finally granted in 1988, the staff was able to absorb the dynamics of the new system as ducks take to water. Thanks to the long-term vision Fr. Francis had and the indefatigable energy with which he pursued it vigorously in preparing the staff, the innovations of the autonomous system were easily executed. His systematic as well as imaginative mind revealed itself in other ways too. The numbering system he devised both for class rooms of different blocks and students remain to this day something unique to Loyola.

The identification code for each student instantaneously gives the year, class, course and number of each student. This is an excellent device to detect any intruder camouflaging himself as a student in the campus. He had a flair also for creating various student-friendly measures.

One of the events during this period which left a devastating impact not only in the Nagayalanka Region but also caused extensive damage in the Campus was the killer cyclone. The students, staff and the Jesuits of the College mobilized massive relief and rehabilitation work in collaboration with the Divi Seema Social Service Society created by the Vijayawada diocese. When the Silver Jubilee Year of 1978-79 started, student strength touched 1880 and the staff 107. The College retained its predominant image of being a Science College with nearly 1000 students pursuing several streams of Sciences.

MARCHING THROUGH SILVER JUBILEE

The Silver Jubilee celebrations spanning over three days in 1979 March, sewed to give to all the stakeholders of the College, namely, the founding fathers, benefactors, staff, students and the general public, a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that the College amply justified its

existence all through 25 years as one of the foremost institutions of higher learning in Andhra Pradesh.

THE COLLEGE GOES POSTGRADUATE

The academic year 1984 marked an important transition in the history of the College. The administration from the older, more experienced and wiser hands passed on to the young and energetic generation. Fr. T. Innaiah and Fr. P. S. Amalraj became Principal and Rector respectively. The College that hitherto remained basically as an undergraduate College began to take a momentous decision of introducing PG courses in English and Social Work. For nearly ten years these two courses which had been put in a sound academic footing accommodate quite a sizable number of Catholics and poor students as the fees were quite affordable. An impressive number of University ranks and gold medals were bagged by our students. Though these two courses were unhappily wound up nearly eleven years later, owing to some extraneous reasons, they not only attracted a large number of students and opened to them attractive avenues of immediate and gainful employment but also served to underline the necessity of opening more and more P.C courses if the College had to keep growing and retain at the same time its competitive edge. Fr. Amalraj after completing four years as Rector moved to different pastures and Fr. Amalanathan succeeded him. He will be particularly remembered for the zest and determination with which he mobilized the much needed resources to complete the Silver Jubilee project of the auditorium initiated by ALC alumni under the inspiration of Fr. Anselm Miranda but left pending for a considerable time. The Jesuit Community continued to have members of varied talents such as Fr P. Jojayya, an incessant and prolific writer on a wide variety of themes of value education and Scripture and Fr. P.F Jayabalan whose proficiency in Telugu would lead him to secure a Ph D degree. Mention must be also made of the singular and single handed achievement of Fr. Jojayya in bringing out a much-acclaimed translation of the Old Testament.

INTRODUCTION OF EMERGING SCIENCES

Since the combination of courses at the undergraduate level for the most part remained in the same traditional mould, the time also came to make room for some new courses in the then emerging areas. Thus B Sc Computer science and B Sc electronics Science were introduced in 1986 and 1987 respectively.

Fr. Innaiah who had been with the College from 1977 onwards except for a short break for his tertianship and had completed his seven years of his principalship was transferred to Hyderabad and Fr. Kuriakose, the controller of Examination since the introduction of autonomy, was appointed Principal with a special permission from the Higher Education Department, despite the age of superannuation. He handed over his charge to Fr. C.J. John in 1991.

ANDHRA LOYOLA ADOPTS PHASED CO-EDUCATION AT THE U.G LEVEL

At this juncture it may not be out of place to mention a couple of decision of the management in 1992 and 1994 which were to change significantly the complexion of the College. The undergraduate courses which from their inception were available to boys only, were partly thrown open to girls. It is not only owing to the declining number of boys in the biological sections but also to the college's commitment to the cause of women's empowerment. As a natural corollary to gradual emergence of co-education, for the first time in 1994 women were inducted into the undergraduate faculty. Now almost every undergraduate Department with the exception of Commerce has women representatives in them.

ANDHRA LOYOLA GOES HIGH-TECH

At a time when the rising tide of Information Technology was engulfing every area in life and holding an M.C.A degree seemed a sure passport to a lucrative job abroad, the College was grappling with the question of starting high tech courses in order to keep pace with the developments on the educational front. While on the one hand, it should not be left lamentably lagging behind in the matter of adopting modern courses, on the other, it has to remain faithful without deviation, to the Province's commitment to the marginalized and economically weaker sections. Making adequate provision for helping the deserving students, a number of new courses like M.C.A, B.Sc Microbiology, M.Sc (Elec) and M.B.A. new combinations like, Maths-Statistics- Computer Applications, B.Sc, Electronics- Computer Applications-Mathematics were introduced between 1995 and 2003.

TEAR OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

The academic year 2003-04 has been officially designated as the Golden Jubilee Year of the College. An impressive function on July 31st, 2003, on the feast of St. Ignatius was started the year long celebrations with the release of a special Postal Cover cum Cancellation. The presence of the Collector, Post Master General and the entire staff and student Community added to the solemnity of the event. The next major event was the Golden Jubilee Alumni Conferencemeticulously planned and impressively conducted on December 7, 2003 by the Alumni Director and his team of Vijayawada Chapter. The highlight of the function was the conferring of the prestigious Loyola Ratna awards on a glittering galaxy of 21 alumni drawn from the different hatches of ALC. The event which drew the elite of the town and received major coverage in all the print and electronic media had the Chief Secretary, Mr. Mohan Kanda IAS as the Chief Guest and Fr. T.A Mathias, the founder Principal as a special guest of honour.

A special commemorative function in the presence of the teaching and student community was held on 9 December 2003, the very day of the Foundation of the College. Fr. TA Mathias and Mr. Katragadda Narasaiah who had witnessed the foundation-stone laying ceremony fifty years ago spoke on the occasion. The L.C.D presentation of the history of the College, capturing some of the captivating moments in its evolution, gripped the attention of the students evoking in them sentiments of admiration for the way the College had progressed from the vast expanse of paddy fields to the present state of a prestigious institution of higher learning.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PRESENT SCENARIO AND FUTURE ORIENTATIONS

- a) Introduction of new courses
- b) Fillip to Research activities
- c) Preparation for Choice Based Credit System
- d) New impetus for Sports and Games
- e) Five pronged academic enrichment

In an attempt to give something of a cutting edge to our students in terms of an integrated education as well as the employability of our students, a five-point paradigm has been integrated into the existing academic pattern.

1. Streaming in English has been designed to impart communicative competence
 2. A course in fundamentals in Information Technology is made compulsory for all the first years so as to equip them with the requisite skills to face this computer-driven world.
 3. Value Education and Religious Instruction have been woven into the academic fabric. At least one certificate course on any skills-based area is made mandatory in the Second Year.
 4. Extension Programme (ALERT: Andhra Loyola Extension for Rural Transformation) has been also integrated into the curriculum.
 5. Project Work for the Third Years.
- g) A.L.C. with Potential for Excellence

DIMOND JUBILEE

9th December, 2013 was a historic day for ALC as it was on this day 60 years ago that ALC was founded. The occasion marked a devout religious celebration commencing with the Holy Eucharist concelebrated by Most Rev Dr Gali Bali, Bishop of Guntur and Chairman of APBC, Most Rev Dr Govindu Joji, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Vijayawada and Most Rev Dr MD Prakasam, Bishop of Nellore and an illustrious alumnus of the College. Rev Fr P Anthony, our Provincial and Rev Fr Gorantla Johannes, the Provincial of OCD and President of APCRI graced the

occasion at Fr Devaiah Memorial Auditorium. The Eucharist was well-attended by over a hundred priests, about 40 of whom were our alumni. This celebration was exclusively meant for the religious and the clergy alumni/ae of ALC along with the local diocesan clergy and the religious. Bishop MDPrakasam preached an inspiring homily during which he underlined the role of the divine Providence in shaping an institution like Loyola. As it was a thanksgiving Eucharist, rich tributes were paid to all the pioneering Jesuits, donors, well-wishers and all who were instrumental in founding the College and in bringing the College to such great heights. Fr BalaShowry with the scholastics from Sanjeevan Niwas and the College presented melodious singing during mass. The celebration was extremely devotional and heart touching. Meticulous arrangements were made by our community and the Christian staff. During the second part of the programme, the three bishops and the two provincials were felicitated. After a brief history of the College, 'Recapturing the Glorious Moments' by Fr G.A.P. Kishore, our illustrious alumni/ae, Frs Gorantla Johannes OCD, Fr Rayappa SDB, Fr Muvvala Prasad, Director of Social Service Centre, Diocese of Vijayawada, and Sr Lavanya FMM recollected with nostalgia their association with Loyola. All alumni including Jesuits who attended the celebration were felicitated with a shawl and a memento. Fr. Rex Angelo conducted the session with the theme "Remember, Relive, and Recommit and he also offered occasional tit-bits about the Founders and the History of the College. The College students presented two colourful dances about the College. The invitees along with our staff were treated to a delicious dinner at the end of the felicitation ceremony. In the afternoon, there was a special function for the staff and students of the College near the Foundation Stone and floral tributes were paid to the Foundation-Trio, Fr Devaiah, Fr Gordon, and Fr Theo Mathias. Former veteran Telugu lecturer, Metta Venkateswara Rao, the first batch student, Sri Bala Showraiah, an eye-witness of the original Foundation Ceremony, Fr Satyananda from Diocese of Guntur inspired the staff and students with their spontaneous and emotionally moving sharing. The Ceremony witnessed the releasing of 60 tri-color balloons and fireworks to mark the occasion. Our

staff and students presented a 'burrakatha' and a folk dance to entertain the audience. At the end of the day, all felt deeply indebted to God for His graciousness and loving guidance all through the history of the College. To add a spiritual dimension to the celebration, there was also a candle-light procession from the College Church to the Foundation Stone on the previous day.

