

REPORT OF THE THREE-DAY ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR THE NEWLY RECRUITED FACULTY OF JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Albert Einstein said that the supreme art of a teacher is to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge. Teachers are the ones who lead their flocks out of darkness into knowledge. Teaching is a calling from God. Therefore, it is a divine opportunity to be a teacher. With this background, the newly recruited faculty of Jesuit Higher Education Institutions participated in the three-day orientation program in response to the calling to equip themselves with the necessary preparation for the journey with the students. The residential three-day orientation program began at Thozhamai Illam, Kanyakumari, a picturesque and serene place, from the 5th of June, 2019 to the 7th of June, 2019.

FIRST DAY – 05-06-2019

The first day began with a warm welcome by Rev. Fr. Lawrence Benedict SJ, followed by a prayer by Rev. Fr. Thomas Alexander SJ, the Higher Education Coordinator of Jesuit Institutions, that impetrated the Almighty's blessings upon the participants who had embarked on a new journey. He then introduced the guest speaker for the inaugural session, Dr. Jebamalai Vinanchiarachi, Principal Advisor, Knowledge Management Associates, Austria. Dr. Jebamalai is an illustrious alumnus of both St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai and St. Joseph's College, Trichy. A person well known for his oration, Dr. Jebamalai elucidated very clearly on the role of a teacher in modern times. He said that teachers today are required to be learning teachers who have to constantly keep up-dating, innovating and preparing themselves. Since we are living in an era of creative destruction the teachers need to equip themselves to enable students discover the non-obvious so as to create intellectually trained, morally upright, spiritually inspired and socially committed students. He went on to explain the ideal combination of a teacher's characteristics viz., teachers should be 30 per cent logical thinkers, 30 per cent aggressive achievers and 40 per cent gentle helpers. Along with helping students learn, teachers also need to keep learning, publishing quality articles with atleast one article in the Institute of Scientific Information Journal. He concluded the session by requesting the participants to ensure the implementation of functional literacy among the students.

Rev. Fr. Sahayaraj SJ, the Superior of Thomazhai Illam, stressed on the emphatic role of a teacher in the life of a student. He said that the importance of the call to be a teacher is a gift from God and as the chosen ones teachers had a great responsibility to handle.

Rev. Fr. Lawrence Benedict SJ then facilitated the introduction of the participants to each other. The participants were asked to sit in a circle and first introduce themselves and then introduce the neighbour sitting on their left. In this manner, the 35 participants from St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, ST. Joseph's College, Trichy and Arulanandar College, Karumathur got to know each other.

The pre-noon as well as the post lunch sessions were handled by Rev. Fr. Pushparaj SJ, Secretary, St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai. He meticulously detailed the historical perspective of Jesuits and Jesuit Education. He beautifully carved out the history of the Jesuits and their contributions right from the Founder of the Society of Jesus – St. Ignatius – through to the current day Jesuits including Pope Francis who is also a Jesuit. Jesuits have and are still contributing to all walks of life including seismology, astronomy, medicine, spiritual education, mathematics and so on. Jesuits are a diverse fraternity who help others find God in their lives. Therefore, teachers who work in Jesuit educational institutions are collaborators called upon to revere, serve and respect God through imparting knowledge with love and kindness. A teacher has to be a model – an outstanding person in terms of the subject, character and relationships. He explained the characteristics of Jesuits in higher education such as self-awareness, ingenuity, love and heroism along with a detailing of the ten features of Ignatian spirituality which gave the participants a feel of the kind of contribution that is expected of them in their career as a teacher. Further he elaborated upon the part played by Jesuit education in empowering the student community towards social transformation through the works of former Generals like Fr. Aruppe, Fr. Kolvenbach and Fr. Nicholas. He concluded the session with an advice to the participants that they document their activities on a day to day basis so that it would serve several purposes including self- assessment and self-evaluation.

Rev. Fr. V. Joseph Xavier SJ took over the last session for the day and he vividly spoke on how teachers should accompany students in the context of the hi-tech era. He explained the concept of mentoring and the seven roles of a mentor. He also dealt with the basic characteristics of the Gen Z generation. Personality patterns of the current student generation were discussed. The session came to an end with a summarization of role of a teacher in mentoring and accompanying the students.

SECOND DAY - 06-06-2019

The second day began with the celebration of Holy Mass by Rev. Fr. Thomas Alexander SJ at the Chapel in the premises of the Thozhamai Illam at 6:30 am. The first technical session for the day took off with a prayer invoking the blessings of God on the participants as they were preparing themselves to take on their new assignments.

Rev. Fr. V. Joseph Xavier SJ clearly characterised the profile of an effective teacher as he emphasised the importance of self-confidence and team work in the teaching process. He underlined the fact that self-confidence is of utmost importance in a teacher if he or she has to create an impact on students. Team work also played a reinforcing role in enhancing the teachers' confidence in students and vice versa. As a teacher in a Jesuit educational institution these virtues need to be nurtured and strengthened to provide for the holistic development of the students. Therefore teachers should continue to learn simultaneously enabling learning among students. He explained how Jesuit educational institutions are different from other institutions and why teachers of the Jesuit institutions need to lead by example. The teachers of Jesuit educational institutions are a different set of teachers because they belong to an organisational system that is looked upon by others. Hence they need to enhance their quality,

calibre and skills to stay on top, in their profession. He concluded the session with a few directions to the participants on their role as teachers in Jesuit educational institutions.

The pre-noon and post lunch sessions were conducted by Dr. John Peter, JIM, SJC, Trichy. Through his articulative narration of the methods of the teaching-learning process, he was able to convince the participants of their role as teachers in handling the Gen Z generation. A detailed explanation of the 'Learning Eco System' was presented by him wherein he described the learning process in the context of learner characteristics, curriculum, learning methods, course plan and session plan, learning environment and learning outcome. He further detailed on the learning domains – Knowledge, Skills and Attitude (KSA) – and how these domains can be manipulated to make teaching interesting to the students. The learning process included Experience (learning by doing), Reflection (learning by realising), Analysis (learning by examining methodically in detail) and Application (learning by practical application). In the post lunch session, Dr. John Peter presented an in-depth analysis of multiple-intelligence by explaining the 7 types of intelligence propounded by Howard Gardener. He further explained the types of learners – Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists. The participants were provided with the 'Multiple intelligence Survey' instrument which was worked out by them for a hands-on experience of analysing multiple intelligence. He emphasised on the need for teachers to equip themselves with ICT in the teaching-learning process which included several strategies that could be utilised for effective teaching. He concluded the session by illustrating how effective teaching strategies were implemented for students of JIM, SJC, Tricy.

In the last session of the day, Rev. Fr. V. Joseph Xavier SJ spoke on the Ignatian Pedagogy Program (IPP). He said that IPP was a method of learning and teaching taken from the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. It consists of three main elements – Experience, Reflection and Action. The pre-learning element – the Context and the post-learning element – Evaluation are also included in bringing about a holistic view of education. The real circumstances of a student's life which includes family, peers, social situations, the educational institution, politics, economics, culture, the church, media and so on is the context in which the learner finds himself or herself. Learning experience will provide an experience beyond rote learning and lead to the development of learning skills of understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Through reflection, the student makes the learning experience his or her own and obtains the meaning of the experience itself. Action relates to the learner's internal state – attitudes, priorities, commitments, habits, values, ideals and growth flowing into actions for others. Jesuit education is not meant to end in mere personal satisfaction but meant to move the learner to act. Evaluation is very essential to help in the growth of the learner. It is necessary to assess and produce an awareness of the real needs yet unmet along with gaining an understanding of the learner's own personal and moral growth. He concluded the session by establishing a link between the current education system and the Ignation pedagogy, stressing upon the fact that it is this relationship that is the main distinction between Jesuit educational institutions and other educational institutions.

THIRD DAY – 07-06-2019

The third day also took off with the celebration of Holy Mass by Rev. Fr. Thomas Alexander SJ. The morning session on 'Development of Higher Education in India' started with prayers for the participants. The session was handled by Rev. Fr. Xavier Alphonse SJ, former member of UGC and Director of ICRDCE. He began with the concept of 'perspective' that included the perspectives of a teacher, perspective of students and their perspective of teachers in the context of Jesuit system of education. He then landscaped through the history of education in India right from the 'Gurukul' system, mass education system introduced by Lord Macaulay during the British rule in India, evolution of education system after Independence up to the current times. He explained how the Indian system of education is still sailing through without any appreciable structural changes inspite of modernisation. Except for some tinkering done here and there in the system there is no progress being made in making the system efficient to cater to the changing needs of the student community. He made a mention of several Committees on education right from the Radhakrishnan Committee up to the current Kasturi Rangan Committee. He explained the autonomous system of education in India and gave various statistical details related to the existing situation of education in the country.

In the pre-noon session he explained in great detail the achievements and contributions of Jesuit institutions in the evolution of the Indian education system. He dealt with in depth on the various programs and services provided by the Jesuit educational institutions to the student and teaching communities. The prime goals of Jesuit educational institutions is to uphold ethical values, personality development and imparting communication skills, student counselling services, incubation and the holistic development of the students. He asked the participants to identify various characteristics of Christian-Jesuit higher education that made it distinctively different from other educational institutions. A brief note on the existing defects in our educational system, APJ Abdul Kalam's Vision on education, the Catholic Education Policy 2017, the uniqueness of Jesuit institutions and the Pope's views on education was presented. He concluded the session by explaining the 4 C's that are highly essential for a teacher in a Jesuit educational institution. They are – Consciousness, Compassion, Competence and Commitment.

The last session of the day was a panel discussion on the Expectations of Parents, Students, Staff and Jesuits. It was a very practical session moderated by Rev. Fr, Henry Jerome SJ, Rector, SXC, Palayamkottai. In this session, Mr. Vallinayagam and Mrs, Kavitha Vallinayagam presented their expectations as parents followed by the expectations of students presented by their daughter Miss. Archana Rani a student of SXC, Palayamkottai. The participatory session progressed in an interactive manner with the parents, student, staff and Jesuits, exchanging ideas, posing questions and clarifying their doubts. This session which was very productive came to an end with an excellent summary of the expectations of all the stakeholders presented very vividly by the moderator.

The valediction of the three-day orientation program highlighted the role of teachers, their impact on students, expectations of stakeholders, the distinctive features and characteristics of the Jesuit education system etc. The participants felt that they had gained a lot of insight on their role as teachers and also as instruments of social transformation. Rev. Fr. Thomas Alexander SJ concluded the valedictory function with a few words of advice to the newly

recruited faculty members focusing on the examination of conscience and reflecting on Ignatian Spirituality. He made a special concluding prayer of gratitude and beseeched the Lord for His grace and guidance for all the newly recruited faculty members. The orientation program thus came to a joyful end.