**A NEW DAWN**

“GOD’S NO IS NOT A REJECTION. IT’S A REDIRECTION.”

It was the sunny afternoon of 1993. Month of May, the blazing sun was overhead. I had come down to my hometown for the summer holidays.

I was at the Panaji bus stop waiting for my bus to go home to see my parents. There were several other people waiting there to reach their destination. The back waters of river Mandovi glistened under the sun. The overgrown water weeds were gently swaying in it.

He came and stood a few yards away from me. I just saw a glance and recognised him immediately. A mixed feeling of fear and sadness came upon me.

He was sober and well dressed. He had an office bag in his hand. He must be surely employed somewhere. I gathered that much. Yes, he was Timothy…Timothy D’cruz. Once upon a time, my very loyal student.

Let’s journey ten years back and be in the twelfth commerce class.

. A bunch of thirty- three brats… But Timothy was unlike the rest; very disciplined , honest ,sincere ,calm and God -fearing. He was a seminarian aspiring to be a priest. Seeing all his wonderful virtues, I had complimented him several times in front of the whole class.

“ You won’t find a boy like Timothy , he is one in millions. “

“Teacher, I too will be the only one in the second million “replied young Gregory.

“Surely , why not?”

But anything beyond it’s limits is dangerous even goodness .

Timothy was slowly growing more and more religious. He was aspiring not only to be a priest but a saint one day. He had mentally visualized himself to be one. And that started taking a toll on his mental health.

. He was no more attentive in the classroom. He used to be lost in a make belief world. St. Francis Xavier was his role model. He wanted to be like him one day; dedicated to the service of God and society.

But slowly his behavior was becoming strange and abnormal . It was my class. Suddenly he stood up and shouted at the top of his voice. “ I am saint Xavier, I am saint Xavier…I can perform miracles, do you want to see?

I was stunned. Something was terribly going wrong with him.

Next day I happened to meet Fr. Pimento , the Rector of the junior seminary. “ Father, have you observed Timothy these days? His behavior is very strange. “He too had observed him and knew about the problem he was going through.

They had consulted an Psychiatrist. He was suffering from a psychological Disorder , a subtype of Religious OCD-meaning Religious Obsessive compulsive Disorder

He was kept under observation. That was Timothy’s last day in school. I never saw him again. He had to leave the school and the seminary. .He was sent home for treatment.

After a month, it was the Feast of All Saints Day, all the saints were taken in procession from the church and back to the church.

And there was my Timothy in that procession.. not as a part of the congregation but as a part of the saints…he was walking along with the statues of the saints. He had placed lighted candles in between his fingers, and was slowly moving with the procession. His both palms were covered with the hot melted wax but nothing seemed to affect him. He had risen above the pain. I was too horrified to see the scene. A chill ran down my spine.

The volunteers stopped him and took him aside.

That was the last time I saw him or heard about him. I tried to contact my other students but no one knew about him.

And today I saw him after ten long years. I was so happy for him to see him back to normal. But couldn’t master courage to go and meet him. The horrifying experiences were still fresh in my memory.

I stood there looking at the deep waters of the river struggling to merge with its mainstream; he too had a mission in life to accomplish; but couldn’t fulfill it. I wondered why God had redirected His plans. I said a small earnest prayer from the bottom of my heart…wishing him all the beautiful things life could give him.

The bus came and halted, I took a seat. Switched on my mobile and tried to read all the messages I had received from morning; the first one was from my father, ”God has a reason for allowing things to happen. We may never understand His wisdom; but we have to trust His will.”

**Curie Pereira**