**A PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS**

” Mam, why do you always write sad stories? “

“Yes mam, all your stories have a sad ending”

“ Mam why do you write tragedies?”

I was completely taken aback . What a topic my students had chosen to debate.

“Oh, it’s easy to write tragedies. It’s as simple as that. “

But they didn’t seem to be quite convinced with my answer.

“But Mam, Is life always so shattering?”

These were my students, all from twelvth standard .Young, fresh minds, zealous, sharp and vibrant.

All of them were seminarians, aspiring to be priests in the near future.

May be that’s why they had an edge over the other students.

”Fine tomorrow I shall give you all a challenging task. All of you have to write a one short story. The story should be original, your very own , and of course not a tragedy.

“ Yes. We are all ready for the challenge .“I could literally see the excitement in their eyes.

Everyone attempted to write something. Some of their writings looked more like essays than a story. But what captured my attention was a short story written by Arthur.

Arthur was also one of my student, an orphan boy brought up by the missionary priests. I knew about his journey but never had attempted to walk in his shoes. His entire story was written into inverted comas.

“Slowly, I reached the top of the long winding road up the small hill. The hill was not very high but steep. When I reached the top, I stood there in the hazy midday sun. I looked down, looked around. The green swaying paddy fields, the calm Zuari back waters and the distant vast blue Arabian sea. I was just 12 years old; I had left behind everything,my home, my companions, and even my destiny. It was a new journey unseen, unknown, from my Home for Street children.

I looked up at Fr. Allen. He was the Rector of the Minor Seminary. I held his hand. His hold was firm but warm .I looked up at him with gratitude.

“So young man , how do you feel?”

“Good, good, Father. I feel life is quite beautiful.”

“ Yes Arthur, God still loves the world, therefore He makes it beautiful.”

I know my life had always been a roller coaster ride. But nothing shattered me. I saw a new hope, a new dream and a new purpose for life.

I just stood there and gazed at the infinity. Fr. Allen held my hand again and said “Great people are like the rivers, we don’t see their origin, but look at their vastness, their depth and their flow”.

I was too small then, to understand the depth and gravity of his words but yet it gave me a great boost.

And here I am today with seven wonderful years added to my turbulent life .My journey is long and the road is not smooth, but I know, life is going to be beautiful because you become what you believe.”

Arthur’s story ended here. It was short but intense. “God still loves the world”

Arthur had fully understood the meaning of Fr. Allen’s words.

If a boy like Arthur could write a happy story why couldn’t I ?

**Curie Pereira**