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Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune: A Historical Retrospect on the Occasion of its Platinum Jubilee Isaac Padinjarekuttu

Abstract: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, or JDV as it is conveniently and fondly called, has a history spanning three centuries and two countries. Its origin goes back to the 19th century when the Papal Seminary was founded in Kandy, Sri Lanka, in 1893. The raising of the Papal Seminary to a Pontifical College in 1926 with the right to confer degrees in philosophy and theology up to the doctorate was in reality the birth of JDV, but it was still part of the Papal Seminary. The faculties were raised to the status of an Athenaeum (a university) in 1940 after new Statutes were drawn up and approved according to the norms laid down by the Apostolic Constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* of 1931. The Statutes spoke of a distinct academic set-up for the Athenaeum but it still continued to exist as part of the Papal Seminary. This was the case even after it was transferred from Kandy to Pune, in 1955, until 1994, when the two related institutions were declared *de facto* and *de jure* distinct. However, the process of separation could be said to have begun soon after its transfer to Pune, which called for new structures because of the changed situation in India. Thus in 1968 a separate Rector was appointed for the Athenaeum. In 1973 it adopted the Indian name Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth and registered itself as a Trust. JDV acknowledges its historical evolution from the Papal Seminary of Kandy and Pune which takes its history back to the 19th century. But the present Platinum Jubilee celebrations of JDV are based on the fact that its real history begins in 1926, when the Papal Seminary was raised to the status of a degree conferring Pontifical College. This short history will try to identify a few phases in the birth and growth of the Athenaeum and acknowledge its role as a premier academic institution in the Indian Church in the fields of philosophy and theology, and in the intellectual and pastoral formation of priests and Christian leaders for the past 75 years.

Keywords: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, *Deus Scientiarum Dominus*, Papal Seminary, Pune, Papal Athnaeum

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Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth
Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune
A Historical Retrospect on the Occasion of its Platinum Jubilee

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Introduction

Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, or JDV as it is conveniently and fondly called, has a history spanning three centuries and two countries. Its origin goes back to the 19th century when the Papal Seminary was founded in Kandy, Sri Lanka, in 1893. The raising of the Papal Seminary to a Pontifical College in 1926 with the right to confer degrees in philosophy and theology up to the doctorate was in reality the birth of JDV, but it was still part of the Papal Seminary. The faculties were raised to the status of an Athenaeum (a university) in 1940 after new Statutes were drawn up and approved according to the norms laid down by the Apostolic Constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* of 1931. The Statutes spoke of a distinct academic set-up for the Athenaeum but it still continued to exist as part of the Papal Seminary. This was the case even after it was transferred from Kandy to Pune, in 1955, until 1994, when the two related institutions were declared *de facto* and *de jure* distinct. However, the process of separation could be said to have begun soon after its transfer to

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The Founding of the Papal Seminary in Kandy

The origin of the Papal Seminary is intimately connected with the reor-

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ganization of the Catholic Church in India in 1886 by Pope Leo XIII and the establishment of the Indian Catholic hierarchy. This put an end, at least in principle, to the unfortunate inner-Church rivalry between Portugal and Rome regarding ecclesiastical patronage rights, which in Indian Church history came to be known as the *Padroado*-Propaganda conflict. One of the things that suffered most in the wake of this infamous squabble was the recruitment and training of local clergy, especially in the Latin Church in India. The recruitment and training of local clergy in India were enjoined upon the ecclesiastical authorities repeatedly, but it was seldom followed in practice. There were plenty of local clergy in some places: for example, in the Thomas Christian community and in Goa, but the overall situation was wholly unsatisfactory. This prompted Pope Leo XIII to found a National Seminary to train priests for India. The Pope insisted on the training of local clergy because of their better acquaintance with the country and its people, the small number of European missionaries, and, finally, the possibility that the latter could be expelled from the country any time. Therefore, he wanted a fully equipped institution of higher ecclesiastical studies in India, imparting a solid spiritual and intellectual formation comparable to any such institution anywhere in the world. This special concern of Pope Leo XIII for India found expression in the famous words attributed to him: "*Filii tui, India, administri tibi salutis*" (India, your sons are ministers of your salvation).

As a response to the Papal appeal for help toward the realization of this

project, in 1888 there came a generous gift of £ 32,000 from a wealthy Englishman, Mr. Woodhouse (?), for the express purpose of erecting a Seminary for Indian students. With this began the history of the Papal Seminary. Entrusted with the task of executing the project was Ladislaus Zaleski, a Papal diplomat, and later archbishop and Apostolic Delegate to the East. There was some problem about the location of the Seminary. Some suggested Rome itself, where it would be the "Indian College", similar to the other national ecclesiastical colleges already existing there; others preferred India or Sri Lanka where several cities were proposed: Poona (now Pune), Tranquebar, Bangalore, and Kandy. Rome was soon excluded as the site for a National Seminary for India! Among the four cities suggested in India and Sri Lanka, Poona and Tranquebar too were eliminated and the choice had to be made between Bangalore and Kandy. It ultimately fell on Kandy, probably because it was the residence of Zaleski who liked this little beautiful place and its climate immensely; but he alluded to several other reasons for not preferring an Indian city, like, the students being attracted to the National Movement, the caste system, freedom from the *Padroado*-Propaganda conflict, etc. The next question was who would run the Seminary. Regarding this, too, Zaleski had already made up his mind. Impressed by the work of the Belgian Jesuits in the Calcutta mission, he wished to entrust the Seminary to them and had the express approval of the Pope for it. It was first vehemently resisted by the superior of the mission himself, Fr. Sylvain

Grosjean, SJ; but the legendary Jesuit obedience prevailed, and what is more, he was asked to be the first Rector of the Seminary. It started functioning in May 1893 in a temporary building with three students from India, Dominic Swaminather of Tuticorin, Joseph Chereath of Trichur and William Smith of Agra. Thus the Papal Seminary of Kandy, a National Seminary for India for the higher theological and pastoral formation of the young clergy, came into existence. Both the Pope and his delegate were determined that it must be a first-rate institution which could rank with the best European ones. The staff and the students too were aware of this great task and responsibility from the beginning.

The Birth and early years of the Athenaeum

A new phase in the development of the Seminary and an event unique among the existing Institutes of priestly formation in India at that time was the raising of the Papal Seminary of Kandy to a *Collegium Pontificium* (Pontifical College) with the power of conferring the degrees of baccalaureate, licentiate and doctorate (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate) in philosophy and theology in 1926. It meant a new responsibility because it involved the reorganization of the curriculum to suit its new status. Stringent conditions had to be imposed on both the staff and the students as regards teaching and examinations. One of the courses added to the curriculum on account of this was the introduction to Indian philosophical traditions, quite an innovation at that time. Between 1926 and 1932 sixteen doctorates in the-

ology and twenty-six in philosophy were awarded! But a more complete and thorough reorganization of the curriculum was required after the publication of the Apostolic Constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* of Pius XI in 1931. It demanded the reorganization of studies in ecclesiastical faculties, with a view to promoting still higher standards of scholarship. It was Fr. Xavier L'Hoir, SJ who guided the institution during these years of transition. Finally, in 1940, the new course of studies and the Statutes raising the Pontifical College to the status of a Pontifical Athenaeum (Pontifical Athenaeum of Kandy) with two faculties of philosophy and theology were approved, another important milestone in the history of the Papal Seminary and of JDV. The degrees were now conferred by the Athenaeum and not the Seminary. It was Fr. John Ancot, SJ who steadily worked toward the realization of this dream. The Papal Seminary celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1946 (the Second World War made the celebration in 1943, the actual jubilee year, impossible). It was an occasion to review its successes and failures in the light of its original vision. It had by then sent out 494 priests to various dioceses in India, Ceylon, Burma and Mauritius.

The Kandyan Spirit

The older alumni of the institution often speak of the "Kandyan spirit". It is something that has distinguished this institution from the rest. It involved many things. First and foremost, it referred to the integral formation that was imparted to its students. While intellectual work was emphasized and a solid

spiritual life and discipline were cultivated, equally important was social and cultural life. The Language Academies, which have remained part and parcel of the Papal Seminary and later on of JDV, were started and nurtured with this vision. Freedom with responsibility was another hallmark of this institution, something revolutionary at that time. Students were given sufficient freedom and treated with respect and fairness. There was little supervision. They were expected to do the right thing from personal conviction and a sense of duty, not by compulsion from outside. This would be the best preparation for their future life of responsibility in the ministry when they would be left without the props of the Seminary environment. It would make them adapt themselves easily and spontaneously to changing situations. Another hallmark of this institution was the unity in diversity that existed there. The possibility of bringing together people from such diverse backgrounds was at first seriously doubted, but in the end it proved to be a successful experiment and the tradition continues even today, making JDV a unique institution in India. It has helped people to be broad-minded, tolerant, open and appreciative of diversity. The Kandyan spirit also included love for hard work and fidelity to duty, students sharing the responsibility in the administration of the house in various ways, the spirit of selfless and cheerful service, striving for excellence and frankness and sincerity in everything.

To the Queen of the Deccan - Transfer to Pune

The Second World War had just begun as the Athenaeum of Kandy came

into existence. The War years caused some disruptions, but it was the momentous political developments of the post-War years that affected the Institute and its future radically. India became independent in 1947 and Sri Lanka in 1948. Hence, it was quite anomalous to have the National Seminary for India outside its boundaries. It was necessary to transfer the Papal Seminary and the Pontifical Athenaeum to India. There were also other practical reasons for a change of place, like the need for travel documents and the long distance and time involved in travel, the cost of living in Kandy, and above all, the alienation from the context of mission. Already in 1921 the question had been discussed whether the Seminary should be transferred to India, but after considering the pros and cons, the project was abandoned. The issue came up once again in 1942 but the War made it impossible to undertake such a massive operation. In 1949 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India discussed the transfer proposal once again; but it was the Plenary Council of India the next year that finally decided to transfer the Papal Seminary and the Athenaeum to India. Thomas Pothacamury, the archbishop of Bangalore, and himself a Kandyan, strongly advocated that they should be brought to Bangalore, but the lot finally fell on Pune in Maharashtra. For the Jesuit superiors who were entrusted with the administration of the institution there were important reasons for this choice. In Pune there already existed a Jesuit Scholasticate, De Nobili College, from 1937 where there were also non-Jesuit students attending classes, like the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMIs)

and the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (Fransalians). It would be an excellent idea to make the services of the Athenaeum available to them, and later on to others as well who would choose to study there; secondly, the Jesuit staff of De Nobili College could be incorporated into the staff of the Athenaeum, another important consideration for the superiors, who had the responsibility of providing staff for both the institutions. Pune was also more or less in the central part of India and an ideal place for the National Seminary. The Queen of the Deccan, as it was known, Pune with its excellent climate had been the monsoon capital of the Bombay Presidency and an important cultural, educational and political centre. The Pontifical Athenaeum, it was hoped, would be able to add something to the life of this city, a dream that has largely remained unfulfilled. There started a feverish building activity in Ramwadi near the De Nobili College under the leadership of the then Jesuit Provincial Pius Geisel, SJ. But the real architects of the magnificent structures with their exquisite furnishings that we see on the campus today were three unassuming but highly talented Jesuit Brothers from Switzerland, Otto Widmar, Josef Pfiffner, and Anton Herbert!

Under the leadership of Fr. John Ancot, SJ, the then Rector, the staff (persons like Criem, Koelman, Rayanna, Starace, Uricchio, Grasso, Sabino etc., come to our mind) and the students of the Papal Seminary and the Athenaeum made the historic journey from Kandy to Pune in May 1955. One can only imagine the contrast between the lush green surroundings of Kandy and the arid rocky soil of Ramwadi 50 years

ago! The greenery that surrounds JDV today is the result of the efforts to recreate some semblance of Kandy in Pune, and this was done under the leadership of Peter Pou-Montfort, SJ, the then minister of the Papal Seminary, and successive generations of staff and students. Classes started with the meagre facilities available. The official inauguration of the buildings in Pune took place in 1957.

Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth of Pune

The transfer of the Papal Seminary and with it the Pontifical Athenaeum to Pune, and the Second Vatican Council could be considered the two most important events in the history of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth. The transfer to Pune put the Athenaeum on the map of the Indian Church and the world. It gave JDV a new identity. The other influence was the Second Vatican Council which began in Rome in 1962. Whether the staff and students of JDV were then aware of its implications for them and the whole Church is a moot question. They did what they could do best, namely, prayed for its success at a common prayer service organized for the occasion, and several times thereafter. The Athenaeum had also the privilege of sending one of its reputed professors, Fr. Josef Neuner, SJ, as a *peritus* to the Council. He was actively involved in three Commissions of the Council which drew up the decrees on the Missions, Priestly Ministry, and Non-Christian Religions. These events were to change the campus in manifold ways. Let us start with the administrative ones which were important as far as the future of the Athenaeum was concerned. Even after the transfer to Pune, the Ath-

enaeum had continued *de facto* to be one institution with the Papal Seminary, with the Rector of the Papal Seminary being its head. But it was now changed considering the new situation and the added responsibilities of the Athenaeum. In 1968 Fr. Julian Bayart, SJ, was appointed Rector of the Pontifical Athenaeum, while it still continued to remain attached to the Papal Seminary. The next task was the revision of the Statutes in line with the *Normae Quaedam* issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. According to the *Normae*, the study of theology is to contribute towards an advanced and deeper knowledge of Christian faith. It emphasized research which is existential and contextual so that the dissemination of the Christian message in contemporary society may be facilitated.

No. 25 of the *Normae* also advocated the setting up of a Students' Council, and it was decided to set this up in order to foster active dialogue with the students of the Athenaeum. Thus in 1968 the Athenaeum Students' Council was inaugurated, the first of its kind in the country. Its responsibility was confined only to academic matters, namely, to represent the academic concerns of the students in the Faculty Councils and the Seanate. All other activities were looked after by the "Athenaeum Amigos" (not a group of Mexican bandits!), but a students' organization of the various houses to foster the spirit of true friendship and genuine cooperation. The idea originated in 1963 under the leadership of Ferdinand Moraga, a Jesuit Scholastic. It looked after entertainment, sports, liturgy and

the *Inter Nos* (a publication for the organization). Today the Students' Council of JDV shoulders all these responsibilities.

In 1968 the Athenaeum conducted the "Priest in India Seminar", which for the first time, initiated a serious discussion on the context of the study of philosophy and theology. It was felt that we must know the India and Indians of today, and for that immediately begin with the Indianisation of our thinking, living and worship. This seminar was also a part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Papal Seminary from 1st - 3rd December 1968. The Athenaeum was also actively involved in the "All India Seminar of Bangalore" in 1969, and the revision of the training programmes in seminaries decided upon at the "Consultation of Seminary Professors" in Bangalore later that same year. A *Commissio Technica* for seminaries had already been set up in order to draw up a new programme of priestly training in India.

The Statutes and the new study programme prepared according to the *Normae Quaedam*, the *Ratio Fundamental* of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and the new "Programme of Priestly Training in India" came into force in 1970. As a result, a "Programme of Integrated Studies" was introduced in JDV in 1970-71. The Athenaeum was now officially open also to non-clerical students, both religious and lay, if they fulfilled the conditions for admission. Already from the academic year 1969-70, JDV had women students, another important innovation at that time. The next year

there was a layman studying theology. It set in motion the entry of hundreds of women religious and scores of lay men and women to the campus. Today women constitute almost 10% of the students and there are two women on its staff. However, the number of laymen and women studying philosophy and theology, unfortunately, is still very small.

An important change that was envisaged by the new Statutes was a new name for the Athenaeum. Given the post-Vatican II spirit of adaptation and inculturation, the nostalgic suggestion by some to give it the rather (to our present ears) atrocious name *Leonianum* was rejected. According to Fr. Neuner such names were meaningless for the Indian people who, he said, were still trying to figure out what De Nobili College actually meant. Therefore, an Indian name would be the most appropriate and thus in 1973 the Athenaeum officially adopted the name Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth: Institute of Philosophy and Religion. In the same year it was registered as a Trust. In 1975 it was admitted to the International Federation of Catholic Universities and thence to several other international organizations.

The academic year 1975-76 signalled a profoundly new beginning for JDV. It marked both the end of a critical phase of self-assessment and self-evaluation that had begun in 1972 and the start of a fresh orientation given to the institution. The emphasis of the Institute should be, it was decided, meaningful theological and philosophical formation rather than merely amassing information. The need was also felt to

provide for diversification in training to meet the personal talent, individual interest and specialized formation. It was felt that adequate facilities should be created for serious research. Departments were created with relative autonomy under the two faculties. The departments created under the Faculty of Theology were: Scriptural Studies, Theological Reflection, Moral and Pastoral Theology, Spirituality and Worship, and History and Development of Christianity. Under the Faculty of Philosophy there were the departments of General Philosophy and Psychology and Counselling. The departments of Indian and Oriental Studies and Applied Social Sciences were eventually to form a third faculty, the Faculty of Indian and Oriental Studies. The department of Preparatory Studies remained independent of any faculty. A large number of obligatory and optional courses were introduced and with it also the credit system. The departmental system has been successfully continued, but the Faculty of Indian and Oriental Studies has still remained an unfulfilled dream. Mention must be made of the department of Social Sciences which has brought to the campus a large measure of scientific temper. It also helped introduce the programme of Field Study (today Contextual Theology Project) into the theology curriculum from 1990. The revision of the study programme from 1968 onwards have always laid emphasis on Indian religions and human and social sciences.

The Statutes of the Vidyapeeth were further revised in the light of the Apostolic Constitution of Pope John Paul II, *Sapientia Christiana* on Eccle-

siastical Universities and Faculties and the accompanying *Ordinationes* of 1979. These were finally approved in 1989. Considering the growing need for more space and conveniences, JDV added a spacious administrative building block to its existing structures in 1993 under the leadership of the then Rector, Kurien Kunnumpuram, SJ. His two successors, Anthony da Silva, SJ and Noel Sheth, SJ, introduced many administrative reforms and initiated a landscaping and beautification project for JDV which has transformed it beyond recognition. The Library of JDV, one of the largest and most important ones in philosophy and theology in the whole country, built up by the singular devotion and untiring labour of Fr. Aloysius Schlegel, SJ, also underwent a thorough renovation in 1998 to make it more user friendly. The diversification and contextualization of learning took another step forward through the introduction of the Extension Centres of Theology (Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth, Pune, Sammeksha, Kalady and Gujarat Vidya Deep, Ahmedabad) which under the supervision of JDV offer to students a programme of contextualized study of theology, mostly in the language of the place itself.

The Community of JDV - Staff and Students and the Campus Houses

There were also other momentous changes that occurred in the academic and social environment of the JDV Campus. The Institute was now open to a large number of religious congregations, which compared to the Kandyian days, was enormous, where only a few Benedictines and T.O.C.D. students at-

tended classes. In Pune many more houses slowly joined the existing ones, like the Bethany Ashram, the Divine Word Seminary, the Holy Cross Seminary, etc. Today there are about 25 so-called "Campus Houses" around JDV which send students to it. Already in 1960 the total number of students had reached 460. This together with other significant factors like the availability of more staff from De Nobili College (like Neuner, Staffner, Lionel, Clausen, Miranda, Savarimuthu, Edamaram, Hambye, Kheres, Bowling, etc.) and many visiting teachers created a new intellectual dynamism which gave the Institute a totally new direction. The staff of JDV comprising the staff of the Papal Seminary and De Nobili College had some of the best minds in theology, philosophy and Indian Philosophy in the country at that time. Special mention should be made of Fr. Josef Neuner, who strode like a colossus the landscape of JDV for over three decades. The literary output of the Staff was enormous in the form of books and contributions to numerous periodicals. It continues unabated even today. From 1998, JDV began publication of its own scholarly journal: *Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies*.

The staff of JDV also established contact with many institutions, associations and movements, like Jean de Marneffe, SJ and Richard De Smet, SJ with the Pune University and the Indian Philosophical Association; Hans Staffner, SJ in the field of Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, etc. Several JDV staff were actively associated with the Indian Theological Association, the Biblical Association of India and the

Church History Association of India. Speaking of biblical studies, JDV produced perhaps the most influential biblical scholar of India in the past quarter of a century, George Soares-Prabhu, SJ. Similarly in the field of moral theology one cannot forget the well-known moral theologian George Lobo, SJ. The staff were active in consultations, conferences, retreats and courses throughout India. They also helped in reorienting and updating the Constitutions and the Rules of life of numerous religious congregations in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. JDV was also a confluence of influences from a number of visiting scholars. Going through the records of the visitors to the campus, one is amazed at the variety of influences that the campus was exposed to. Men and women of eminence from all walks of life, nationalities, cultures and religions debated and discussed various issues with the students and the staff.

Truly unique was the composition of the students of JDV who came from many parts of the world: from neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh; many countries of Europe, Africa, and East Asia, and literally, the whole of India. This cosmopolitan composition has been something that is unique to JDV till today. It has students from practically every State of the Indian Union, belonging to all social classes. I believe it is a unique experiment in national integration. The community of JDV has always transcended ritual barriers. This was manifested in the yearly celebration of the Oriental Day on July 3rd, (now a thing of the past) which was set aside to reflect on the ritual diversity of the Indian Church and

to appreciate its Oriental heritage. The students of JDV were known for their intellectual, cultural and social dynamism in a spirit of unity and cooperation. There was tremendous interaction between the students through the numerous groups on the campus. Another important characteristic of those years was the enormous publishing activity by the students. Most of the groups on the campus had their own publications, either in English or in regional languages. Each house, too, had its own publications, in English as well as in regional languages. The most important publication of the students was the *PATHS-MARGHA* (Pontifical Atheneum Students' Magazine) which commenced publication in 1963 and contained the research and writing attempts of the students. It was resurrected recently in the students' magazine, *Vidyankur*. In the academic year 1970-71 alone, the students of JDV published 56 articles in various national newspapers and journals in English, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarati, Hindi, and Konkani. Panel discussions and debates were frequent occurrences to which students used to look forward eagerly. In the early 1980s the Students' Council of JDV organized two important seminars and brought out two volumes containing the proceedings of these seminars. Cultural events organized by the students were galore. What caused this tremendous intellectual and cultural dynamism of those days? One reason may be the absence of the modern entertainment culture (the CAT - Cricket And Television - culture of today), and the other, the restricted scope for pastoral ministries those days.

Social Week was introduced on the campus from 1956 to study realistically the changing social conditions of India and the Church's response to it. This has been the secret behind the tremendous social action and the spirit of social awareness that characterized the Pune campus ever since, especially in the heady days of Liberation Theology. Not one lecture in JDV would pass off without reference to the "millions of people who are in the shackles of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and disease." It was manifested not only in theoretical reflection but also in a desire to experience the social reality. That was the reason for the readiness to live with the people outside in small groups sharing their lot, again an innovation in priestly training at that time. The awareness of the social reality was also shown through the active participation in social and relief works. The first such opportunity came in 1961, when the Khadakwasla Dam in Pune breached and the entire city was flooded, causing 500 deaths and making 84,000 people homeless. The students were actively engaged in the relief work foregoing their classes. They have participated in several such relief and rehabilitation work throughout the country. However, from the 1990s, there has been a marked decline in the spirit of social awareness on the campus. Opposition to Liberation Theology in the Church, economic liberalization and globalization, collapse of communism, increasing conservatism in the Church and the gradual disappearance from the scene of persons who actively espoused such ideas, etc. might have caused such a shift. Living outside in small groups has become a rarity. One hears a lot on

interreligious dialogue but little on poverty, injustice, etc.

Toward the Future

It is with a great sense of gratitude that I conclude this short history. Gratitude toward this institution which has taught me and thousands of others some great values in life: freedom to be oneself, openness to pluralism and diversity, justice and fairness in everything, etc. Gratitude for the personal examples of our teachers who showed us the value of hard work, simplicity, intellectual honesty, justice and fairness, and great faith. Some of them from the first years of JDV in Pune are still with us: Josef Neuner, Carlos D'Melo, Lionel Mascarenhas, Aloysius Schlegel, Felix Clausen, Paul Kehres, Theodore Bowling, etc. Gratitude to our numerous benefactors world wide who have contributed toward its material well being. Gratitude toward the thousands of priests, secular and religious, hundreds of religious women and lay men and women who have been educated in this institution. Many of them have achieved outstanding eminence in various fields. Some of them have left behind great personal examples, even of martyrdom. JDV produced the first two Cardinals of the Indian Church, Valerian Gracias and Joseph Parekkattil and several other outstanding ecclesiastical dignitaries. JDV can rightly feel proud of what it has achieved.

But I also feel a sense of disappointment. Disappointment for the lost opportunities to climb to further heights and provide intellectual and pastoral leadership to the small Christian community in India. Especially glaring is the failure to give leadership in the field of

inculturation, and in the attempt to create a truly Indian Church. But jubilees are always invitations. Today JDV has students from every Indian state, belonging to numerous tribes, castes and classes. They belong to fifty-five different religious congregations and sixty dioceses of India. The staff too come from a variety of backgrounds. With this unique composition, JDV is in a privileged position to play a leading role once again in the Indian Church in the spheres of intellectual leadership and pastoral methods. This it has to do, taking into account the totally changed composition of the staff and the students, which in a way, is a reflection of the changed realities of India itself. Everyone today complains of a decline in standards. Where do its roots lie? The tremendous activism that prevails on the campus in the name of pastoral ministry gives one the impression that JDV is being conceived merely as an institution for priestly formation. This would be to miss an important aspect of the original vision of JDV. The emphasis on local cultures and languages has led to the

unfortunate situation that many of its students fail to pass an elementary English test; all these should bring to our awareness the fact that there is something radically wrong with the preparation of Christian leaders for the 21st century. Added to that there is a chronic shortage of staff. The end result is that the professed mission of JDV, “to foster an integral understanding of the human person which mediates the vision of Jesus for India,” remains largely unrealized. One needs courage to read the signs of the time and venture into the unknown. We may need to leave the past behind, but, as this survey shows, the past can be a reminder to us of our original mission. One recent example of JDV trying to adapt itself to contemporary challenges has been the founding of the Association of Science, Society and Religion (ASSR) and the impact it has created nationwide. May many such ventures flourish. May JDV continue to inspire many more generations of students. And if this “his/her-story” has been a help in this, I am satisfied, because “this is true too: stories can save us” (Tim O’Brien).

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