

**JESUIT CAMPUS MINISTRY (JESCAM) COLLOQUIUM:
16-17 OCTOBER 2010**

Pope John Paul II speaking about Catholic Universities, described pastoral ministry as “that activity of the university which offers the members of the university-community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with academic and non-academic activities, thus integrating faith with life.”

In the last General Body Meeting of the Spirituality and Dialogue Commission held on 25th July 2010, it was suggested that we organize a colloquium for the Campus Ministers of our institutions. Fr Jerry Rosario volunteered to organize this meet.

As a follow-up, the Dhyana Ashram Community, Chennai, hosted this Colloquium on 16th and 17th October. Twenty-five Campus Ministers participated in the meeting. It was very heartening to see that eight lay collaborators enthusiastically participated in this path-breaking meeting.

Fr Jerry was assisted by Frs Emma and A.J.Thamburaj.

The main goal and purpose and objective of organizing such a colloquium were:

- 1) To share the experiences of our Campus Ministers.
- 2) To evolve a way of proceeding in Campus Ministry.
- 3) To acquire basic counselling skills.
- 4) To enrich and enhance the spirituality in our campuses.
- 5) To come up with creative action plans.

Fr. A.J.Thamburaj welcomed the gathering with a word of appreciation for the enthusiasm evinced by some of the participants prior to the meeting through letters and telephonic conversation saying that they looked forward to this meeting to learn and acquire a certain clarity regarding the work of Campus Ministry. He also gave a short introduction and explanation about some documents supplied to them in the dossier which would trigger off their imagination for creative planning of programmes. A CD was gifted to each member which contained about 1554 images of St Ignatius and other relevant materials pertaining to the life of St Ignatius.

Fr Jerry gave a stirring talk on the dynamics of the colloquium in his own inimitable style.

After a short self-introductory session, the participants listened to Fr Emma who focused on counselling skills, developmental needs, problems of our youth and the process of growth in the personality of the youth. Through a question and answer interaction a brain-storming session emerged on what exactly were the core make-up and content of Campus Ministry.

At this juncture Fr Jerry intervened and clarified the subject in a quick and short session expatiating on the following line of thought.

CREATIVITY	HANDS	OTHERS/LEAST ONES	(6)
		GOD/DIVINE	(5)
CAMPUS MINISTRY	HEART	SPIRITUALITY	(4)
		COUNSELLING	(3)

CONTENT	HEAD	WISDOM	(2)
		EDUCATION	(1)

Campus Ministry starts with education and ends with integrating all the above elements. In other words, whatever is done by the Campus Ministry should create a harmony among the staff and students making use of hands, heart and head, contribute to the integral formation and mould the members who are being prepared to become men and women for others and further steps should be taken, namely, the staff and students should move out of the Campus and become responsible members of faith to both Christians and others.

This short input was followed by sharing of joys and sorrows and challenges of Campus Ministry by the participants and also by highlighting special campus spiritual services rendered so far.

SPIRITUALITY OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

In the light of all this Fr A.J.Thamburaj presented two Powerpoint programmes on the characteristics of Ignatian Spirituality applicable to our Campus Ministry. He also gave a soul-stirring sketch of the spiritual journey of the life of St Ignatius. He underlined the fact that as a lay person St Ignatius was engaged in spiritual ministry sharing his experiences in the form of Spiritual Exercises in the university campuses of Alcala, Salamanca and Paris. Similarly our Campus Ministry could ignite fires in the campuses, thus we ourselves becoming a “fire that enkindles other fires” (GC 35 D 2).

He emphasized that the spirituality of the whole campus is more important than the spirituality of the Campus Ministers. Starting from the Rectors, Headmasters, staff, and non-teaching staff should be involved in this ministry. Campus Ministry is not an appendage or another extra-curricular activity; rather it is the very soul of all our activities in the campus.

Campus Ministry should aim at the integral formation of the youth by helping them to become emotionally mature, spiritually oriented men and women of character. We should also teach our wards how to use their freedom judiciously. They should become agents of social change in the country.

He further expatiated upon the “four pillars” mentioned by Chris Lowney in his book *Jesuit Leadership Lessons for Corporate World*; namely self-awareness, ingenuity, love and heroism.

Fr Thamburaj impressed upon the participants that whatever we do in our campuses should have a Jesuit stamp, Jesuit ethos, Jesuit brand, and a Jesuit benchmark inspired by Ignatian Magis.

This was followed by a mixed group discussion and Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr Francis Sales focusing on “Youth Today, Strength and Concerns”.

THE SECOND DAY: 17th OCTOBER 2010

There was a Sunday-special Eucharist with the neighbourhood people and friends of Dhyana Ashram, presided over by Fr Gerlin and a relevant homily preached by Fr Bastin Maria Durai. At the end of the Eucharist “MALAI MOTTUGAL” a joint venture of Dhyana Ashram and Bon Secours Sisters was launched. Sr Rajam FBS, the Superior and Fr Jerry explained the details regarding this Dhyana Ashram-cum-neighborhood ministry.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Fr Joseph Berchmans SDB, Miss Amula, a teacher and counsellor from Rosary Matriculation School and S Karuniya AC, a teacher in Christ the King School, Tambaram were the panellists. They explained their way of proceeding in Campus Ministry in the light of Salesian, Franciscan and Carmelite spirituality. It was an eye-opener to our participants and it paved the way for a further input cum discussion by Fr Emma on the bio-psycho-somatic spiritual needs of the youth in the campus. He touched upon the need of Campus Ministers with certain qualities of conviction, competence and compassion.

FRUITS OF THE COLLOQUIUM

The final session was very successful and exciting because the participants were engaged in fruit-gathering of the two-day sessions.

01. The Salient Elements that would make up the Vision of our Campus Ministry:

- A) Giving integrated formation to our students in such a way that they become “men and women” for others ignited by the Ignatian spirit.
- B) Word of God-centred life.
- C) Developing personal love for Christ.
- D) Eucharist-centred life.
- E) Reading the signs of the times and be sensitive to that and developing a creative critical attitude to challenges and problems of life.
- F) Environmental awareness-eco-spirituality.
- G) All the heads of the institutions will be included, involved and inducted into the Campus Ministry.
- H) Becoming agents of social change.
- I) Taking care of non-Christians as well and offering them relevant programmes for integral formation.

02. List of our present Campus Ministries that could be further enhanced and developed in a better way:

- A) Holy Spirit Mass-Inaugural prayer service. Non-Christians also should be welcomed to these programmes.
- B) The feast day celebrations of St Ignatius.
- C) Annual retreat for students, staff and non-teaching staff.
- D) Full-time counsellors in our campuses.
- E) Special prayer services for our non-Catholic staff and students.
- F) Candlelight procession, Corpus Christi procession.
- G) Exhibition on Catechism, life of St Ignatius and other Jesuit saints

- H) Friday Mass
- I) Offering attractive spiritual programmes through cultural events. GRACE programmes.
- J) Spiritual magazines and Gospel value-centred programmes made available using communication media.
- K) Prayer cells and intercessory prayer groups.
- L) Staff and student pilgrimages.
- M) Manresa Brothers' programmes.
- N) Visiting Catholic students and their parents at their respective parishes on Sundays at least once a year.
- O) Catholic parents' meet.
- P) Retreat for parents of our students...

03. Creative Campus Ministries which could be introduced in our Province:

- A) A special room in the campus-HERITAGE ROOM- wherein an exhibition of the Life of St Ignatius will be available and other media projections regarding Ignatian Spirituality.
- B) A separate room should be available for Campus Minister.
- C) Spiritual magazines made available to students in the Campus Ministry room.
- D) Reading out the lives of Jesuit saints during Catechism classes.
- E) Leaflets on Ignatian Spirituality to be distributed to students.
- F) Personal counselling to be looked into for students facing disciplinary actions.

04. Plan of action:

Each Campus Minister then indicated one or two special initiatives which they would take up in their respective institutions as a result of this colloquium which will be reviewed in the next colloquium.

The programme came to a happy end with a positive evaluation of the colloquium. The follow-up programme was passed on to Fr Thamburaj and his Spirituality and Dialogue Commission. Accordingly, Fr. Thamburaj finally exhorted the participants to carry on the Campus Ministry with greater zeal and commitment. He thanked every one of the participants for having contributed to the success of the colloquium with creative suggestions and for having attended all the sessions with great fidelity. He thanked Fr Jerry in a special way for having undertaken to organize this colloquium and the hard work he put in for its success.

Could there have been a better end than by singing together the prayer of St Ignatius?
 “எடுத்ததுக் கொள் ளும் ஆண்டவரே...” (Take and Receive...).

Fr. A.J. Thamburaj, S.J.