



JESUIT EDUCATION INSTILLS LEADERSHIP THROUGH MORALS AND INTELLECT

In the 19th century, the Jesuit Order flourished, giving rise to many schools and colleges in South Asia

REV. DR JOHN FELIX RAJ, SJ

Education is for transformation to be able to think by oneself, to be able to relate to others meaningfully and to understand the world and society clearly. Without education one cannot discern what is good or bad? The purpose of education is therefore, to make human beings capable, competent and wise to meet the challenges of life. Educational involvement has been synonymous with the mission of the Society of Jesus right from its inception. The origin of the Society itself was in an

academic milieu at the renowned University of Paris in 1535. At that time, Europe was a web of kingdoms and Paris was one of the great centres of learning. Instead of pursuing fame and fortune in the service of kings and rulers, Ignatius of Loyola and his fellow students like Francis Xavier, chose to be 'Companions of Jesus' for the Greater Glory of God (AMDG). As a fruit of the collective commitment, we have the Jesuit Order.

The Society of Jesus has been perhaps the only organisation that has lived and worked practically for nearly half a millennium continu-



It is the conquest of Francis Xavier, undoubtedly the greatest

missionary, for the greater glory of God that has continued uninterrupted for over 475 years.

The Indian mission of the Jesuits lies at the very origin of their Order. It is to India that Ignatius of Loyola, the Founder of the Society of Jesus, sent his greatest son, Francis Xavier in 1542, and to him and his collaborators, that he gave that inspiration and those directives, which became the foundation of the Jesuit mission and method. Xavier was a zealous 'missionary on the move'. He worked in India for 10 years, from 1542 to 1552, which is called the Xavierian decade.

The 19th century was a period of

growth for the Jesuit Order. It saw the foundation of many schools and colleges in South Asia. Let me present here five of the first institutions founded by the Jesuits after St Paul's Goa (1542) in India:

- » St Xavier's College, Calcutta - First phase (1834 to 1846) and second phase (1860 to date)
- » St Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli in 1844
- » St Mary's High School, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu in 1850
- » St Xavier's College, Bombay in January 1869
- » North Point St Joseph's,

Darjeeling in 1888

No Jesuit education is complete without attention to the development of the moral and intellectual qualities of leadership: love for the country, integrity, human relations, understanding, hard work, organisational ability, cooperation and teamwork and the power of expression in speech and writing.

The author is a Jesuit priest of the Calcutta Province of the Society of Jesus. He is also the founder, Vice-Chancellor of St Xavier's University, Kolkata and former Rector and Principal of St Xavier's College, Kolkata