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Issue on SXUK Completes Four Years

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## SXUK Completes Four Years The Dream that Counts



*Editorial*

*Dr. J. Felix Raj, SJ*

History is not a mere collection of some chronological events; it is a chronicle of the defining moments that go on to shape the future; and these defining moments are always unassuming in their contemporary perspectives. One such defining moment was the dream to take the institution to newer heights, and the

wheels were set in motion for establishing St. Xavier's University, Kolkata.

Like Rome was not built in a day, so also, the University did not come into existence on one fine moment. It was the culmination of numerous momentous events that served as milestones in the path of the establishment of this Jesuit Higher Education Institution.

St. Xavier's University was conceived in 2011, when Father Felix Raj, SJ, the then principal of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, along with the members of the St. Xavier's College Alumni Association envisaged 'SXC Vision 2020', which encompassed the establishment of St. Xavier's University. It was established with a desire to deepen human understanding and create an excellent institution for teaching - learning, scholarship, research, innovation and outreach and thus form young men and women of competence, commitment, conscience and compassion who will be sensitive citizens and selfless leaders of the future.

In January 2012, when the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, graced the Convocation of St. Xavier's College, she proposed to Fr. Felix Raj that St. Xavier's College be upgraded to the status of a University or a separate University be established under the Jesuit banner. The Government of West Bengal extended its valuable support to the Jesuits by granting 17 acres of land for the St. Xavier's University Campus to be built in New Town, Rajarhat. And we heard the ancient voice of history beckoning us.

The seed of a University had been embedded in St. Xavier's College since its inception in 1860. History reveals that the College was in a mode of expansion in many ways. The hallmark of the College, as stated in the almanacs of 1880 and onwards, observes that 'the course of study embraces all subjects and transcends the standards of post-graduation.

Again the Rector's Report of 1906 refers to an inspection by a body of members appointed by the Senate of the Calcutta University. The observations made by the members found St. Xavier's with the ability of expansion into further spheres of education, appreciating the prospect and proposal of upgradation into the status of a University.

Subsequently, as the Principal of the College, Fr. Felix Raj appointed a committee to prepare a DPR (Detailed Project Report). The committee had many meetings and prepared a draft of the St. Xavier's University, Kolkata Bill 2016. It also had several meetings with the Higher Education Department of the State Government to take this proposal forward.

With the support of the Alumni Association the 'Vision 2020' project began. The Alumni Association and some individual alumni participated whole-heartedly and actively in this 'Vision 2020'. It has been a hard task and the perseverance has borne fruit by the blessings of the Almighty.



SXUK Campus Plan

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee laid the Foundation Stone on December 27, 2013, blessed by His Grace, Most Rev. Archbishop Thomas D'Souza in the presence of Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, S.J., Provincial, Fr. Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J., Principal, Rev. Dr. Dominic Savio, S.J., Rector and many other distinguished guests and alumni.

The St. Xavier's University, Kolkata Act 2016 was unanimously passed by the West Bengal Assembly on December 15, 2016. The Hon'ble Governor, Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi gave his consent to the Act on January 16, 2017 and the West Bengal Government notified February 8, 2017 (Foundation Day) as the date of effect for the provisions of the St. Xavier's University, Kolkata Act 2016 to come into force. The Government of West Bengal, particularly the Department of Higher Education was extremely cooperative. Mr. Vivek Kumar, the Principal Secretary of the H.E. Dept deserves our gratitude for his generous advice and wholehearted support to our new venture.

Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, the President of the sponsoring trust and ex-officio Chancellor of the University appointed Fr. Felix Raj, S.J. as the first Vice-Chancellor of the University on January 15, 2017 along with Prof. Ashis Mitra as the first Registrar of the University. He took over the mantle immediately and formed the first Governing Board which had its first meeting on April 27, 2017. Britto House, which is the Jesuit residence, was inaugurated on the same day.

St. Xavier's University, Kolkata was inaugurated on July 7, 2017 by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, in the presence of Mr. Lakshmi Niwas Mittal, the Chairman and CEO of Arcelor Mittal, Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, S.J., the Jesuit Provincial and several other dignitaries.



*SXUK at dusk*

The Hon'ble Chief Minister expressed her firm belief that 'St. Xavier's University will soon be of global significance, like the Harvard and the Oxford. The Jesuit principles of faith and service would enable St. Xavier's University to become one of the foremost educational institutions in the country, promoting excellence in education and research". Mr. Mittal observed, "Today is a great day for Xavier's Fr. Felix Raj and I have been dreaming of this day for some years now, since we met in London in 2017. The dream has now become a reality.'

The Academic Block was named, 'Lakshmi and Usha Mittal Foundation Building', as a token of gratitude for the generous support of Mr. L.N. Mittal and family towards the construction of the building.

The first Academic session began on July 10, 2017 with two undergraduate courses in B.Com and B.M.S. and four postgraduate Courses in M.A. English, M.Com, M.A. Mass Communication, and MSW with a total strength of 400 students selected from among 3,500 applicants.

Xavier Business School (XBS) was inaugurated with the AICTE-approved fully-residential MBA course on August 7, 2018. With the approval of the Bar Council of India (BCI) SXUK started the Xavier Law School (XLS) on July 6, 2019. The University offers eight undergraduate courses, seven postgraduate courses and five Ph.D. programmes. It plans to open a Faculty of Science with Computer Science and Statistics and a course in Philosophy from 2022.

Infrastructure plays an important role in the education sector. Buildings, good classrooms, libraries, auditoriums, laboratories, green-clean campuses, ICT facilities, residential facilities on campus etc. are crucial for a learning environment and to improve the performance of students. We believe that high-quality

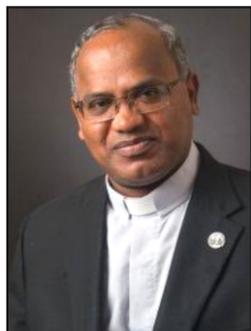


*Builders of SXUK campus*

*Continued on Pg.- 8..*

# SXUK - A Long-Cherished Dream!

Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, SJ



## Education – Jesuit pathway to serve God and humanity

Evangelization, education and health services have been the three main strands of the mission of the church in India right from the first century when St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus landed on the

Malabar Coast, Kerala, South India. Preaching and teaching, sharing and serving, healing and empowering comprised the main activities of Christian missionaries down the centuries.

Later in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of Jesuit Missionaries in 1542 in Goa, spearheaded by St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary cum educationist, Jesuit Educational system was introduced in India both in the Portuguese territories and in the territories of various Indian kingdoms. Their first college, St. Paul's College, was thus established in 1548 in Goa and similarly a St. Paul's College in the Portuguese settlement of Hugli, in 1614 in Bengal.

## A Jesuit University in India - A long held dream!

The idea of a Catholic University or a Jesuit University in India appeared way back in 1915 in the Catholic Herald of Bengal. It read thus:

Why not a Catholic University?

'Speaking of St. Joseph's College Trichinopoly, I may mention of the magnificent work of the late Father Sewell, SJ who was practically the architect of that institution. The college was at first located at Nagapattinam, and its students who numbered about 300, mostly belonged to the French settlement of Karikal and Pondicherry. Trichinopoly on the other hand possessed a flourishing Mission College of the S.P.G. When Father Sewell

transferred the college from Nagapattinam to Trichinopoly, he met with overwhelming opposition from the rival institution as well as from the orthodox Hindu population. Today, the same institution has more than 2000 students, of whom 600 are Catholics. The Orthodox Hindus send their boys to the institution in preference to any other Mission College, while poor Catholic boys have always found its doors open to them. There is a proposal to erect a memorial for Father Sewell, but in what form, it is not yet decided. Why should it not be a Catholic University?' (Catholicus)

This long cherished dream would see the light of day, not before nearly a century would since roll by. Thus, 2013 saw the first Jesuit University, Xavier University Bhubaneswar (now XIM University) established in Odisha, though it was not the first Catholic University in India. The Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati and the Christ (deemed to be) University Bangalore, were already set up by the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco, and the Congregation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, respectively, in 2008.

## St Xavier's University Kolkata – an incredible institution

“The truth is that divine inspiration and human collaboration have met and commissioned the creation of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, as it gets ready to impart quality education irrespective of caste, creed or community.” I recall I had penned down these lines in an article in *The Telegraph* on July 7, 2017, the day St. Xavier's University Kolkata was inaugurated. Today, as SXUK completes its first four crucial years, it is once again more and more evident that whatever has been achieved in this short span of four years, namely the robust infrastructures, 8 UG courses, 7 PG courses, 5 Ph.D courses, MBA (Xavier Business School) and XLS (Xavier Law School), hostel facilities for over 600 men and



Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony at SXUK on December 27, 2013

women, the current strength of 3100 students, 103 competent and dedicated faculty, 69 support staff, and so on has been achieved thanks to the unfailing divine hand blessing SXUK and the many generous hands supporting the university.

### **SXUK – Founded on 160 years old legacy of SXCK**

'St. Xavier's is our second home.' 'St. Xavier's is our pride.' 'SXC is a temple of learning' - these words of appreciation express a deep love and attachment every Xaverian feels towards his or her Alma Mater: St. Xavier's College Kolkata, the 161 years old Jesuit Institution at 30, Mother Teresa Sarani, Kolkata. Behind these compliments of gratitude lie the legacy and memories of generations of committed Jesuit Fathers, dedicated faculty, and the ever helpful support staff. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to state that St. Xavier's University Kolkata, is founded on this legacy, great tradition of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. The St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association (SXCAA) – is the living and shining testimony of that legacy of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata.

### **A leading educationist – with vision, passion and compassion**

Behind this fast emerging Jesuit university, there stands a small statured personality, a Jesuit priest, whose vision, passion and compassion have infact propelled this four years young, fledgling University into what it is today: a fast growing institution of higher education, learning and research in the country. This is none other than Rev Father Dr. John Felix Raj, SJ, former Principal of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata and the Founder Vice-Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. Father Felix Raj is personally known to innumerable students, youth and alumni/ae in Kolkata city and beyond. As an outstanding Jesuit educationist with the Ignatian Magis at heart, it has long been his vision and passion to make the best quality education both accessible and affordable to more and more students of all strata of society. Out of this vision and passion to serve greater number of youth was born SXUK.

### **SXUK – a mission of inter-provincial collaboration**

Though SXUK is a project of and by the Calcutta Jesuit



**Outreach programme by Xaverians in Action (XIA)**



**An Aerial view of SXUK**

Province, it must gratefully be acknowledged here that Dumka-Raiganj and Madurai Jesuit Provinces have generously come forward to support SXUK by assigning two competent and committed Jesuit personnel to SXUK: Dr. Soosai Nayagam, SJ as Dean and Dr. Sebastia L Raj, SJ as Pro-Vice-Chancellor respectively from the very beginning. Recently Dr. A. Arockiasamy, SJ joined as Professor of Maths from Madurai Jesuit Province. Therefore, their service and contribution deserve to be gratefully acknowledged and placed on record at this important juncture, when SXUK completes four years of incredible growth and service in the city of Kolkata. Needless to state that the Jesuit community is the backbone of SXUK life and mission. Another new dimension of SXUK is that two experienced diocesan priests are inducted to teach at SXUK: Dr. John Romus and Dr. S Francis, in addition to Fr. J. R. Dejus, a Professor at St. Xavier's College, who also teaches a multi-media course at SXUK. Equally valuable service is rendered by the Sisters of St. Anne's Chennai in looking after the girls' hostels.

### **SXUK: Urban to rural, university to village educational model**

At St. Xavier's University, students, who are future leaders, are not only equipped with the best quality education along with related academic excellence and technological competencies but are also given meaningful exposures and experiences of India's rural life with a view to instil appreciation and respect for what rural India contributes to the urban life and the nation building. On St. Xavier's College's model of 'College to Village, Village to College' educational approach, SXUK too has well designed projects and programs to take students from University to villages and bring students from villages to the University campus, for mutual teaching-learning experiences, for greater personal enrichment and social transformation.

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Former Jesuit General, had once said, "Every Jesuit academy of higher learning is called to live in a social reality...and to live for that social reality, to shed university intelligence upon it and to use university influence to transform it."



## Experience of a learner

*Dr. Indra Kanta Maitra*



The Men of God arrive periodically on the earth to liberate the humanity from misery and suffering. We observe this similarity among all major religious beliefs. They were more of an educator than spiritual persona. They taught us by their living and sermons. Gautama Buddha rejected the worldly pleasures and its materialistic desires urged by a fascinating inner call to find a way out of sorrow for the whole of humanity. Jesus Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of humanity. Swami Vivekananda, following his mentor, Sri Ramakrishna, uttered again and again that he would be ready to come repeatedly to free humanity from sorrow. The primary cause of misery is ignorance, called 'avidya' in the Vedanta philosophy. This is an age-old discovery made by all the great men of God, the Saviours of humanity. Those, whose ignorance has been destroyed by the awakening of knowledge, have their knowledge shining as bright as the light of the Sun.

Education is the most powerful mechanism with which we can transform the world. It is the passport to the prospect. The Society of Jesus and later the Ramakrishna Mission have been working relentlessly to spread the light of knowledge to dispel the darkness of thousands of years. The knowledge with realm of spirituality can be more powerful to spread the light. Both the organisations have been doing the same with utter humility and absolute dedication. The knowledge is considered very sacred, therefore, it is also very important to prepare the domain of how to acquire the knowledge. The Society of Jesus and Ramakrishna Mission are masters in building the array learners who acquire



*MBA students at the library*

knowledge from competent teachers through their dedication to service.

I consider myself as fortunate one because I have completed my schooling from Ramakrishna Mission and accomplished my post-graduation under the realm of the Society of Jesus. In my schooling days, the teachers not only looked after scholarly activities but also concentrated in overall development to build a good human being. Therefore, they gave full attention to co-curricular and



*Students testing their Basketball skills*

extra-curricular activities alongwith academics. They never compromised the quality of education by giving full emphasis in simplicity, regularity and discipline. I felt the same essence during my graduation days at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Nowadays, professional ethics, value added education, outcome based learning are part of the education system. We have experienced and practiced those values during our school and college days. It proves that the value based education system that the missionaries are providing is much ahead of time. The faculty members always taught us what would be our limits, responsibilities and duties towards the society.

St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) was established in 2017 with the spirit of 'NIHIL ULTRA' (Nothing Beyond) and it is always in the process to inspire and challenge all segments of the University to raise the realm of good from great to greater. The vision of the University is to form men and women for others. SXUK, as a Centre of Excellence, strives to promote a society based on love, freedom, liberty, justice, equality and fraternity. For the last twenty years, I have been working with many government and non-government academic institutions within and outside the country. But I got highly satisfied when I became a part the

SXUK fraternity in 2019. This opportunity came to me as a blessing. At the same time, it is also a biggest challenge in my life. As an alumnus of the Jesuit institute, I can understand the gravity of responsibility that is entrusted to me. Our beloved Vice-Chancellor always says that it is the University of God and he is always present here with us. I sense his belief whenever I face any challenge. Whatever it may be in shape and size, it is deciphered easily. It is only because of the blessings of God.

When I was given the charge as Controller of Examinations of this esteemed institution just before a fortnight of the first convocation, I was apprehensive and took refuge to our guardian Father Vice-Chancellor. He told me not to worry and inspired me with his sweet words of trust and instilled confidence in me. Now I am proud of my trivial contribution for the successful accomplishment of that event. It empowered me to take up the challenges of higher magnitude later. The COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact is a catastrophe for the higher education sector. Under these unprecedented circumstances, the major objective of the University is to ensure the health, safety and security of its different stakeholders and to continue quality academic activities in professional manner.

When all other institutions of repute were struggling with their regular undertakings, our founder Vice-Chancellor proved that every obstacle could be converted to an opportunity. During these extraordinary situation, the university has not only been accomplishing its consistent activities related to academics in different arrangement and alternative platforms, but also has been reaching the neighbourhood with a healing touch. It has shown its responsive attitude and accomplishment of commitment towards the society. For us the vision and mission are not



Second Convocation, 2021

only few beautiful words written on the walls, but a promise to act.

During the pandemic, the university never compromised with the interest of its primary stakeholder - the students. Although the main objective is to protect their physical and mental wellbeing, the university has been continuing regular teaching learning processes, admission, examinations, placements and even convocation for final year students. It is being taken place either be in online or in blended platform as per requirement. A missionary institute can only orchestrate this kind of an exemplary achievement.

I am amazed to see the vision and leadership of Father Vice-Chancellor and his fellow Jesuit Fathers, honest implementation of the rules dictated by the administration under the leadership of the Registrar and dedication of faculty members towards the university. It is my pleasure that every day I am learning from my superiors, colleagues and associates here. Now, I truly understand the influence of missionaries in my life, they have made me a true learner to learn the process of acquiring knowledge for life long.



*“Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God”*

*St. Ignatius of Loyola*



A Smart Classroom at SXUK

## “Walk along with me in the journey of SXUK”

Mr. G.P. Gupta



February 28, 2017- a 58 year old highly placed PSU employee was returning home after his farewell party looking forward to a happily retired life after 34 years of hard-work, when he suddenly received a phone call.

March 1, 2017 – The retired PSU employee was happily appointed as the first Liaison Officer of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata.

Many of those who have interacted with me in the last five years, know about my association with St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK). But my association with SXUK goes back even further. I had the privilege of serving as the Senior Vice President of St. Xavier's College (Calcutta) Alumni Association for many years and it was during this time that SXCAA under the leadership of Rev. Fr. John Felix Raj, SJ, conceived the dream of setting up St. Xavier's University, Kolkata.

During the Convocation at St. Xavier's College in 2012 the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee floated the idea of setting up a University or upgrading the college to a University. Subsequently, a think tank was formed under the able leadership of Rev. Fr. John Felix Raj, SJ, the then Principal of St. Xavier's College which started working to make this dream a reality.

It was on December 27, 2013 that the Foundation Stone was laid for the University campus at Rajarhat. I remember that I had spent three nights along with some friends from the SXCAA (the army without arms) at the land in Rajarhat to ensure that it is ready for the ceremony. The land where the SXUK campus stands now, was then a 17-acre jungle.

For the next few months, we met on every Tuesday in Room 15 of St. Xavier's College under the leadership of



Fr. Vice-Chancellor inaugurating Xavrun

Rev. Fr. Felix Raj to brainstorm and discuss the way ahead for making the dream of St. Xavier's University a reality. This was also the time when SXCAA put all its resources together to help realise the dream of the University.

On December 16, 2016, when the St. Xavier's University Kolkata Bill was passed in the West Bengal Assembly, it was a significant moment for us all. The dream was gradually meeting the light of day. I hardly knew then that my association with the University would grow stronger in the days to come.

Like a satisfied old man, I was looking forward to a relaxed and leisurely retired life free from all worries and hectic activities. I had turned fifty-eight and February 28, 2017



Lakshmi and Usha Mittal Foundation Building (Academic Block)

was my last working day at Air India. I was returning home after a farewell party organised by my colleagues. Sitting in the car, I was thinking about where my next holiday trip would be. Just then, I received a call from Rev. Fr. John Felix Raj, who told me,

*“GP, meet me tomorrow. I want you to walk with me in the journey of making St. Xavier's University.”*

I was happy to receive the call. I was already a part of the SXUK journey. The very next day when I went to meet father, he appointed me as the first Liaison Officer of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. His words still resonates in my ears. I am not capable enough to walk 'along' with a great man like Father, but feel privileged that he has considered me worthy enough of serving this institution. I was wondering how much a tired and retired man would contribute, but I readily agreed. The army without arms is always ready in the service of the institution.

The next few years have been a wonderful journey. It is indeed a special feeling to be associated continuously with an institution which I have seen being built brick-by-brick. It is a great feeling to see the bare land gradually turning



University Foundation Day celebration

into a bedecked building. In the last four and half years, I have also witnessed the growth of the University – not only in terms of infrastructure, but also the vibrancy of its students and alumni.

Another honour bestowed on me by Rev. Fr. John Felix Raj, SJ, was when he asked me to advise and guide the establishment of 'St. Xavier's University Kolkata Alumni Association' (SXUKAA). The Association, established in 2020 presently has 1200 members. It is emerging gradually as one of the most vibrant and active Alumni Associations of the Jesuits. I am now happy, not only to be associated with SXUK as its Liaison Officer, but also a Founding Governing Body Member of St. Xavier's University Kolkata Alumni Association.

The establishment and the subsequent growth of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, could not have been possible without the leadership of Rev. Fr. John Felix Raj – a visionary and a personality par excellence. St. Xavier's University is history in the making; and I feel proud to have been closely associated with the same.



## SXUK Completes Four Years

infrastructure offers a satisfactory environment, facilitates better teaching-learning, and improves student outcomes among other benefits

Today, four years after its beginning, SXUK has 3,100 students on the rolls. It is widely recognized as an important centre and destination for the young citizens of India eager to learn and advance in wisdom, and for faculty and researchers committed to the values of scholarship and innovation. Our focus now is on 'SXUK Vision 2025.'

SXUK is a Jesuit institution with one history but many stories; one fire with many sparks that kindles other fires. It

is built on a long-standing Jesuit heritage and timeless tradition. We attest our motto of 'Nihil Ultra' upholding our Jesuit legacy, leadership and high standards, and our commitment to the onerous task of providing quality opportunities.

NIHIL ULTRA means nothing beyond, an endless journey in search of knowledge and wisdom. The spirit of Nihil Ultra, which mean without limit, infinite, unending, reflects the spirit of our lives, the rhythm of our universe, the vision of our minds, the depth of our hearts; Nihil Ultra also means development, advancement, betterment, because only these are without limit.



Xaverian Smiles

## Down the memory lane with XBS and SXUK

*Dr. Manodip Ray Chaudhuri*



It was since those days when I had read the news, in the newspapers and the social media about St. Xavier's University, Kolkata being proposed to come up in New Town in Kolkata in 2017, that I had a longing to be a part of this University. Being in academics in the field of Business Management

for nearly two decades then, my elatedness grew more when I came to know that the University would start a business school as well. My penchant desire since then was to be on board with the system to contribute to the best of my knowledge and abilities in the days to come.

The cheerful dawn appeared in July 2018, when I joined as a visiting faculty and thereafter in August 2018 as a regular full time Associate Professor in Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior in Xavier Business School (XBS). Today I am nearing 3 years 6 months at the business school here with memories galore in my mind.

Xavier Business School (XBS) commenced its journey as an academic department of St. Xavier's University on August 7, 2018 with its first batch flagging off its speculative voyage at the school. We were only four full-time faculty members then serving the school, including the then Dean of the school. Challenges were there, but we were all pretty much enthusiastic and passionate about

building the business school and the community within. New students, new faculty members and the new business school shared finesse and a relationship of discretion and sensitivity that one can hardly experience in real life.

The bonding with the first batch was intense, concentrated and essentially penetrating in all respects. Right from regular academic work to all co-curricular and extracurricular initiatives on campus, the entire faculty team and the students were enthusiastic enough to take the business school actions and events forward. All our plans, propositions and intentions were set intensely keeping in mind the *Jesuit pedagogy* and the *Ignatian charism* of building men and women for others. The XBS runs a residential MBA program. Thus, we had put in our full effort to hold on to the reigns of the curriculum in such a manner that the delivery was both in the day and in the evening. Intricate and convoluted carving of the syllabi and drafting an innovative pedagogy in consultation with the stakeholders, viz. students and nominated experts from the industry were significant during the initial days of the school.

As we moved on to 2019, our dedication of faculty and students took us far and wide, beyond the four walls of the university towards nurturing young minds by way of fostering and initiating holistic learning in the true sense of the term. Management education should never be confined indoors; one needs to experience the business world around to get a feel of what it takes to be a manager in



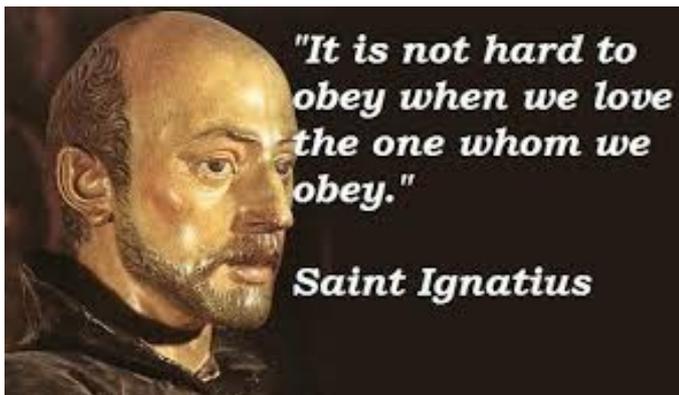
Celebration of World Day of Justice



Virtual inauguration of MBA Batch 2020-22

practice. Keeping this in mind we had organized industrial visits to organizations both within and outside Kolkata. The trips outside Kolkata had a deeper intention in mind to allow for unwinding and distressing one's mind and body for better handling of complex situations. The trips served as enjoyable and fun-filled excursions as well where students could genuinely unwind themselves with faculty members and share a familial feeling to harness a true spirit of camaraderie within the business school community.

The second batch joined the XBS in August 2019 and from then we grew in leaps and bounds. The memorable moments of entwining and interweaving of the two batches were pleasurable, delightful and congenial to witness. The faculty team grew as well by then from four to around nine. Ideas were more focused; the initiatives more enterprising; and the outlook more engrossed and absorbed. The XBS gradually became more and more entrepreneurial. As the university took a firmer shape, so did the business school. The support, encouragement and leadership of our respected Father Vice Chancellor has been our primary source of



confidence and assurance all through, both during the initial years and during the times of growth of the school.

The sudden blow was in March 2020 with the spread of the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic that plagued the world with fear, anxiety, disease and death. Classes in the offline regular mode were stalled and we began to operate in the online mode in what came to be called as the 'new normal'. Despite the challenges, we at XBS-SXUK held the gears, fastened our seatbelts and moved ahead; across the tides of uncertainty.

By June 2020, the first batch rolled out in style and our students were placed in various reputable brands across the country. By the time the third batch of our MBA students

joined on board in August 2020, there were the XBS-SXUK alumni in the industry who had kept no stones unturned to see their XBS shine with glitter in the outside world. The placements of 2021 for the second batch were



Section of MBA students at SXUK

healthy too with many students securing pre-placement offers post their internships and few even secured offers from abroad.

Currently, the XBS runs its fourth batch who are again ready to prove themselves as worthy Xaverians like their predecessors. The faculty team is in full strength now. As for me, it is a moment of pleasure, contentment and pride to be part of XBS. I seek the blessings of the Almighty in all our motives and honest endeavors to serve the business school in the days to come. By spirit, I mean, 'once a Xaverian, always a Xaverian'.



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## SXUK - an abode of learning

*Mr. Mario Martin Louis*



My humble association with St. Xavier's College, Kolkata commenced, when I had enrolled for my Bachelor of Commerce course at the Park Street campus. Those three years transformed me in totality and empowered me to shoulder the challenges ahead in different areas of my life diligently.

After successfully spending a couple of years with leading healthcare service providers in the City of Joy like Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals, B.P. Poddar Hospital, C.K. Birla Hospitals, I was ordained as Placement & Training Officer of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata on July 1, 2017. There was yet another surprise for me to meet Prof. Ashis Mitra, first Registrar of the university, who taught me during my graduation at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta.

The association filled me with immense joy and satisfaction to partner in the Ignatian pedagogy of forming “men and women for others” who are competent, committed, compassionate and service-oriented leaders. I was literally swayed to the world of academics flanked by young minds and eminent faculty members. Initially, we had limited number of students and faculty members. But with the passage of time the number of students vis-à-vis faculty members showed an exponential growth. The provisions for classrooms and other amenities were added. The university kept on filling the knowledge basket with the introduction of new courses to help the students to get the best of education here rather than travelling far and wide. I also witnessed that new buildings were being constructed to keep pace with the demand.

The ambience of the university is no less than any leading university abroad. The entire campus is spick-and-span flooded with trees and variegated flowers. I also get the opportunity of seeing different kinds of birds and listening to their melodious songs. The winter at this newly christened university is always a class of its own. The summer here is hot but breezy. The individuals residing in this vicinity are blessed to inhale good quality oxygen for better living. This is an ideal epitome of a pollution free environment.

Jesuit Fathers, Sisters, faculty members, staff members take personal care of each and every student. The students appreciate the efforts undertaken by all of us. The first batch of students were exposed to a battery of soft skills and other traits necessary for cracking the recruitment process. Industry experts were invited to share their experiences with the students and provide

them with tips for making a difference in the corporate world. A good number of students made us proud by bagging offers from some of the leading companies.

During their brief association at the university, the students were encouraged to take up Internship Project to understand the push and pull in the job market. This exercise not only enhanced their confidence level for bagging offers from various corporates but also ensured admissions in some of the leading universities abroad for further studies. Academic vis-à-vis Industry interface is a buzzword in most of the academic institutions. St. Xavier's University, Kolkata had the privilege of hosting this colloquium in collaboration with National Human Resource Development (NHRD). Industry leaders from premier organisations participated in this event and the students had a wonderful opportunity to interact with them and clear their doubts. This exercise is still in vogue towards enriching the students with the corporate need.

A host of events were organised and individuals across all verticals are encouraged to participate to hone their skills in an effort to create an atmosphere of staff members conversing good in English with our students and visitors. Rev. Dr. John Felix Raj, initiated Spoken English classes for the staff members under the guidance and support of qualified teachers. Many of our staff members benefitted immensely through this venture.

The staff members and faculty members always feel the warmth of a home away from home. They have the privilege of meeting the Vice Chancellor, Registrar and other important officials to mitigate their problems, if any. The Vice Chancellor always encourages the faculty members and staff members for an open door discussion. The problems, if any, are always addressed instantly with a human touch. Fr. Felix Raj, SJ, always encouraged the staff



Academic Block

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members and the faculty members to widen their knowledge spectrum through research, writing articles in the journal and enhancing academic qualification. I was touched by his deliberation, “the students are like your brothers and sisters, treat them with love and compassion.” He is very particular about every nitty-gritty before the events were on streams. I was shocked to see him getting involved at the grass root level to understand various things.

The humble experiences, I gained during my brief tenure at the healthcare sector helped me to set up a basic medical facility at the university manned by trained nursing personnel. The Infirmary Unit caters to the basic medical need of our students, faculty members and other staff members of the university. However, moving a step further, during COVID-19 pandemic, our university was the only academic institution to launch a SAFE HOME for the poor and needy, free of cost in collaboration with Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal and Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital, Rajarhat. We had provisions for 40 beds manned by doctors, nurses and paramedical staff. People from different strata of our society applauded this noble endeavour.

I am moved by various outreach initiatives undertaken by the university to spread the light of academics to the children hailing from low-income group. I would also like to compliment the students of our university for actively participating in this venture. I was amazed to see these young children from nearby villages coming in bicycle,

parking their bicycle in a designated area, greeting their mentors and standing in a queue to be called by their respective mentors.

I have personally experienced the humane face of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata during the COVID-19 pandemic era, when we reached out with a bouquet of projects for members of our neighbourhoods by distributing daily rations, blankets, masks etc. The university also organised a successful vaccination drive for students, faculty members, staff members, construction etc. More than 700 members were vaccinated with the first and second dose of the vaccine. All of us having been reading or hearing about heart breaking news like retrenchment, pay-cuts, closure of factories, etc. But St. Xavier University has always focussed on the safety and well-being of all members. The members were asked to work from their remote locations and their salaries were credited to their respective banks on time without any deductions. All the Fathers, constantly kept in touch with all the members of the university enquiring about the health of all employees and their family members. This was a great source of motivation for being a part of this heritage institution.

I would like to conclude with a famous quote of Robert Frost, “The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.”



Parasmani, Centre for Research & Social Outreach, Santiniketan

## My journey as a Xaverian

*Prof. Sayani Saha*



Education is the quintessence of a nation and Jesuit education embodies that expansive formation of “men and women for others” for the entire human community. As a part of the Xaverian family since 2018, I feel exceptionally privileged to absorb, learn and in turn contribute in my way to the great legacy of Jesuit education. I have gained the mighty insight of the value-oriented Jesuit education which has enabled me to transmit the same to my student community, the benefits of which is the life-long openness to growth, delight in learning and the desire to make a difference to the world. I was honored with great opportunities to learn, unlearn, and relearn. This helps me as an individual to not only flourish in the professional front but also gave me the platform to understand and embrace great values of kindness and compassion for others which is the bedrock of Jesuit education.

My affable association with St. Xavier's University, Kolkata is a cherished dream, a wish that many employees seek at their place of employment. My institution has created a feeling of worship in me to keep going from strength to strength not only for my individual growth but also for enhancing the quality of higher education in West Bengal as people from all strata of the society look up to St. Xavier's University, Kolkata as a 'Model University'.



Students celebrating Second Convocation, 2021

My experience at St. Xavier's University, Kolkata is incomplete and rightfully so, without the mention of a great visionary, a stalwart, a luminary-Rev. Fr. Dr. John Felix Raj, a name that is and will be revered and reminisced for his humble, prodigious and phenomenal leadership in steering Jesuit education in a direction that Bengal has never witnessed before. “A family needs a father to anchor it” and for me, Fr. John Felix Raj is the dynamic and compelling anchor who never lets his family fail.



Father Vice-Chancellor ensures that the institution has a harmonious atmosphere which is an extension of his amicable and fraternal personality making everyone feel inclusive and important. The quote “The quality of a father can be seen in the goals, dreams and aspirations he sets not only for himself, but for his family” is apt for Father Felix

Raj's magnanimous, charitable and enterprising personality. I am greatly blessed to not only find wings to my professional dreams through such an esteemed and acclaimed brand but also grasp much more for my own extensive development.

My journey with St. Xavier's University, Kolkata is just three and a half years, but the pearls of wisdom and knowledge gained out of this engagement is exceptionally gratifying to my soul. I am blessed to be a part of this beautiful Xaverian family and thankful to the Almighty for decorating my path with St. Xavier's University, Kolkata.



## SXUK – A home away from home



I joined SXUK on June 12, 2017. I didn't realise then that four years would elapse so soon. I was never a student of St. Xavier's school or college, but I am grateful to have received the opportunity to serve SXUK. It is not only a workplace for me, but also my second home

where I have discovered a lot of new things. I am privileged to get an opportunity to work under the leadership and guidance of Rev. Father Dr. John Felix Raj, S.J.; he has taught me some of the most crucial lessons in life which transcends the limits of a professional relationship.

I got three more guardians at SXUK along with Father Felix Raj; they are Prof. Ashis Mitra, Registrar; Mr. Gopal Prasad Gupta (GP Sir), Liaison Officer and Mr. Aritra Das, Executive Assistant to Vice-Chancellor; who helped me to build up my confidence. I learned a lot about office management and administration from them. These four years at SXUK have been a vibrant journey of self-realisation and self-development.

It is also an achievement for me that our Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor is pleased to nominate me as the In-charge of the University Social Media at UGC (SMC) and the member of the SXUK Website Monitoring Committee respectively since 2019.

Besides teaching-learning and its day-to-day administrative activities, SXUK focuses a great deal on cultural programmes, celebrations and staff welfare. The birthday of each university member is celebrated to make them feel happy. Father Vice-Chancellor personally wishes and blesses the SXUK family members personally

*Mr. Subhashis Majumdar*

on their birthdays. Many cultural programs are also organised in the university throughout the year, e.g., Shisu Mela, Sports' Day, Teachers' Day, Aagomoni (Pre-Puja celebration), Christmas celebration, etc.

During the global pandemic, when the COVID-19 virus left a severe impact on all aspects of human life, the University has fulfilled its commitments towards all its stakeholders. SXUK has conducted health awareness programmes for employee and students, vaccination drives for students, employees and their parents and



spouses. The University has also started bus service for its employees during the pandemic for their safety.

SXUK had set up a Safe Home for COVID-19 patients on the Ground Floor of Arrupe Building. We reached out to the neighbourhood villages to distribute necessary food items, masks, sanitizers, etc.

I am thankful to St. Xavier's University, Kolkata for providing me the immense exposure to work and learn till date.



COVID-19 Vaccination drive at SXUK



## Christmas Message

### Jesus Christ in the eyes of Tagore

During this Christmas season I want to reflect upon Tagore's poem on Jesus Christ. Tagore has written a considerable amount on Jesus Christ and has made numerous references in his speeches and writings to Christ and to Christianity.

That the Birth of Jesus made a deep and lasting impression on Tagore is evident from his poem, '*The Child*'. It is the only major poem Tagore composed in English in July 1930 after his return from the village of Oberammergau in Munich, Germany to watch the traditional passion play held every ten years.

The poem was later translated into Bengali as *Sishutirtha* (Pilgrimage to Childhood) in *Punashca* where he hails the Birth of Jesus. This impression on Tagore's mind is further borne out by his translation of TS Eliot's '*Journey of the Magi*' (Tirtho Jatri) in search of the Divine Infant. Tagore had acknowledged the impact of Eliot's poem (1927), the obvious reason being that the scene of the Nativity seems to have deeply moved him. Tagore was profoundly influenced and deeply inspired by Ave Maria (Hail Mary) composed by Franz Schubert in 1825.

*The Child* is a recurrent metaphor in Tagore's poems. The passion plays coalesced in the poet's imagination, he conceived the Child in the harmony of creative impulse in the course of a night. Tagore finds humanity striving to transcend the burden of

frustration and failure, breaking, yet refusing to be defeated and persevering with the quest. Man contains in himself the spirit of his redemption and one day, the Newborn; the divine Child shall triumph towards glorious fulfillment.

*The Child* is in ten sections and the actions pause and heave like the eternal waves of the sea. The poem blends the cultural contexts of the East and the West, of impressionistic descriptions and profound prophecies. Let us take a glimpse at Nos 9 and 10:

*"The first flush of dawn glistens on the dew-dripping leaves of the forest.*

*The man who reads the sky cries: 'Friends, we have come...'*

*The assembled crowd feels in their blood the primeval chant of creation:*

*'Mother, open the gate!' The gate opens.*

*The mother is seated on a straw bed with the babe on her lap...*

*They kneel down, the king and the beggar, the saint and the sinner, the wise and the fool, and cry: 'Victory to Man, the New-Born, the Ever-Living!'*

*The old man from the East murmurs to himself: 'I have seen!'*

*by Fr. J. Felix Raj, SJ*

## Numerical strength of SXUK as of December 20, 2021

Teaching and non-teaching	Number	Students	Number
Administrative Officers	06	UG students	2310
Other Officers	11	PG students	576
Faculty (Regular + Contractual)	101	Ph. D.	86
Support Staff	69	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2972</b>



We  
wish you  
a  
Merry  
Christmas  
and  
a  
joyful  
New Year  
2022

## Article Contributors

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**Dr. Indra Kanta Maitra** is the Controller of Examinations of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. An alumnus of the University of Calcutta, he is associated with a research project of national importance funded by Govt. of India in the field of Biomedical Image Analysis and CAD. He has published around 50 research papers in refereed national and international journals and conference proceedings since 2009.

**Dr. Manodip Ray Chaudhuri** is an Associate Professor in Management and Dean, Xavier Business School at St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. A recipient of 'Outstanding Educator and Scholar Award – 2014' from NFED,

Coimbatore, he has published two books on Strategic HRM and Sustainable Business.

**Mr. Gopal Prasad Gupta** is at St. Xavier's University, Kolkata since 2017 as the Liaison Officer. An alumnus of the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, he has been associated with various academic and non-academic activities with the Xaverian family.

**Mr. Mario Martin Louis** is the Placement Officer of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. An alumnus of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, Mario has served several noted organisations in different relationship management categories.

**Prof. Sayani Saha** is an Assistant Professor of Management in St. Xavier's University, Kolkata. Her research articles have been published in various refereed journals and conference proceedings.

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