

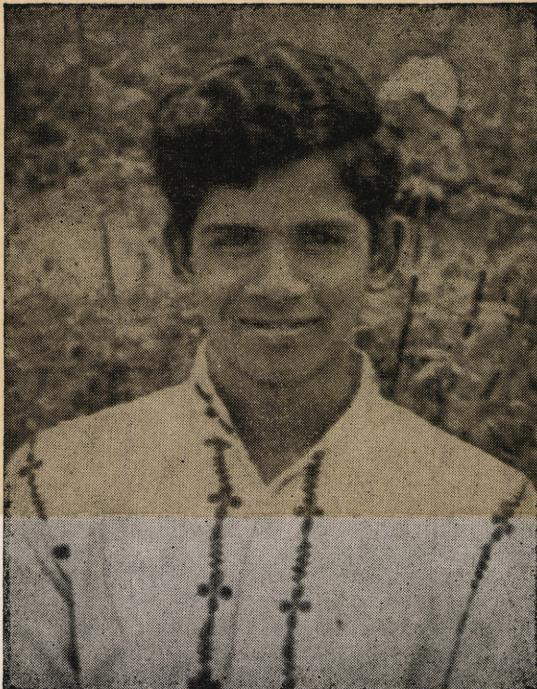
SALESIAN NEWS

CALCUTTA



Provincial House - 52 Radhanath Chowdhury Road - Calcutta 700 015 (India)

SPECIAL ISSUE



BRO. PINTO JACOB, S.D.B.

Bro. Pinto Jacob Karaparambil of Bangalore Province who joined the Community of Salesian College, Sonada, on 28th May 1985, was called by the Master in a 'tragic' way on 16th August 1985. This special issue of SNC carries the details of his death as well as a brief life-sketch. May he rest in peace !

Born at Paravatty : 12 February 1967

Professed at Kotagiri : 24 May 1985

Vestition at Sonada : 8 August 1985

Died at Siliguri : 16 August 1985

The Last Day of Br. Pinto Jacob

Since three years, the First-year students of Sonada used to go to Siliguri on 16th August --Don Bosco's Birthday. Most of them had done their novitiate there. This year too, the First-years organized their outing to Siliguri.

On 16th morning, Pinto along with the others got up early. After a short time for prayer and snacks they set out to Siliguri. During the journey, Pinto was good company. He lent his towel to one, the umbrella to another to be a sort of pillow, and he shared his rain-coat with another, to sit on. He joined in singing the songs, among them was one Syrian rite funeral song.

On reaching the Novitiate they had a hearty welcome from Fr. Master and the Novices. They had a good breakfast. Since Pinto and a few others were new to the place, they went around the house and exchanged many pleasantries. After some time, many of the Sonadians and few novices went to the pond for a swim. Pinto who scarcely knew how to swim declined the first invitations and even offered his shorts to others who wanted a swim. Later, when he saw the others swimming and a few learning how to swim, he too changed into his shorts and joined the learners in the shallow part of the pond. For some time he was helped by the more skilled ones.

Some time later, those on the bank noticed someone going down, waving his hands. Some took it for a joke. But those who realized that it was Pinto who had moved to the deep water, summoned the good swimmers. They made several unsuccessful attempts to dive deep and reach him. Fr. Master and others too were called. Many of them dived frantically. Finally Br. Bimal Hembrom located Pinto, some 15 feet away from the place where he was seen sinking. He was soon taken out of the pond.

Immediately efforts were made to evacuate any water he had drunk, but there was very little. Artificial respiration was given but he did not seem to revive. In the meantime Fr. Master had the Sister nurses summoned. They tested the pulse and gave an injection. He was rushed to the Doctor along with two Sisters and two Brothers, all along not stopping the artificial respiration and the heart massage. The doctor, along with two colleagues tried to revive him with injection and further heart massage. By 11.15 a.m. the doctors gave up hope and declared Pinto dead.

Pinto's body was brought to the Novitiate and laid out in the parlour. The police were summoned and they filed a report after due investigation. As the news spread, the confreres, teachers and children from Don Bosco, Savio centre and Auxilium came along to share the grief and offer prayers. His companions, however, kept on hoping against hope and tried to revive him till 1.00 p.m. Soon Fr. Rector (Fr. N. Lo Groi) who had gone to the University on business, returned and Fr. Thomas Polackal, the Vice Provincial broke the tragic news, which shocked him immensely.

Post mortem and the Vigil

At the suggestion of the Doctor and the Police, his body was taken to the Medical College Hospital for the Post Mortem. When it was finished, they agreed to keep the body in the deep freeze, till the next day.

In the meantime, efforts were made to contact the Provincial Houses of Bangalore and Calcutta. Mannuthy being the closest house to Br. Pinto's home, every effort was made to contact them. After long and frustrating attempts, Fr. TV George was sent to Calcutta. Only around 10.00 p.m. could Mannuthy and Calcutta be contacted. Relying on the Doctor's verdict that the body would be in no fit condition to be kept beyond saturday, information was sent around among friends and well-wishers that the funeral rites would be held on 17th (saturday) evening.

According to the agreement, Pinto's body was removed from the Medical College by 11.00 a.m. The body was prepared and laid in the coffin and brought to the Novitiate. In the meantime, communication arrived from Bangalore that Fr. Provincial and possibly few relatives would be arriving for the funeral rites. Since it was not advisable to keep the body in Siliguri, it was decided to take the body up the cool Sonada and await the arrival of Fr. Provincial and the others.

On reaching Sonada around 3.00 p.m., the waiting confreres neighbours and friends flocked to pay their respects and offer prayers. Holy Mass was celebrated at 4.30 p.m. All were informed that the burial would be on the following day when his dear ones would be present. His confreres and the SMI sisters of Mirik took every possible care to preserve the body in good condition. The Brothers kept a round-the-clock prayerful vigil.

On 18th (sunday), the Parish Mass was offered around the mortal remains of Br. Pinto. By evening a large congregation had gathered, among whom, Rt. Rev. Eric Benjamin, Bishop of Darjeeling, members of the Clergy and the representatives from various Religious communities. As it was getting late, His Lordship presided over the Concelebration with 14 priests. In his homily, Bishop Eric focussed on the paschal aspect of Christian death. Fr. Rector and different Brothers expressed words of farewell recalling the many human and spiritual qualities of Br. Pinto. After Mass, the body was kept awaiting the arrival of his dear ones. At 9.00 p.m. Rev. Fr. TJ Joseph, the Provincial of Bangalore arrived with Fr. TV George. He paid his homage to Pinto and offered the Holy Eucharist.

Final rites

On the 19th (Monday) after Concelebrated Holy Mass for the dear departed, the body of Br. Pinto was taken to the graveyard. Rev. Fr. TJ Joseph presided over the funeral rites. He bade him goodbye in the name of the confreres of Bangalore province.

R.I.P.

A brief life-sketch

Pinto was born on the 2nd of February 1967 at Paravatty in Kerala. As an aspirant, he spent many happy years at Mannuthy and Alwaye. He was a novice at Kotagiri and made his first Profession on 24th May 1985. Soon he set out for Sonada for his Philosophical studies, reaching Sonada along with five companions on 28th May '85. He received his cassock (vestiture) just ~~eight~~ days before his death. May his soul rest in peace!

