

## **St. Aloysius College**

### **Alumni and Alma Mater, Partners in Progress**

#### **Introduction**

I spent four months at St. Aloysius College from the end of November 2006 to the end of March 2007. My visit was coming after almost 35 years. (In those 35 years I was mostly in Canada, but, maintained constant contact with St. Aloysius through correspondence and other available means). It gives me great joy to record my impressions.

#### **Our Great Institution, Marching Forward**

I think, it is needless for me to explain, St. Aloysius is one of the foremost educational institutions in India, known for quality education, high academic standards and discipline. It is, however, worth noting that this high quality of standards has been maintained and constantly improved even as the institution has greatly expanded in recent years with increasing number of students and number of courses offered. Quantity has never lowered the quality (which is not always the case in many comparable institutions). Those of us who have followed the growth of St. Aloysius in the last 25 years know that the institution has not only increased the capacity of the College, but also has opened satellite schools to meet the growing needs of local people and India's growing economy. They include Evening High School and Evening Colleges, both geared to raise the competitiveness of those who work during day time and could spend some of their evening hours to develop their talents. Then there is Technical Training Institute, which is dedicated to develop marketable skills of the working youth in a variety of technical trades like tailoring, carpentry, plumbing, welding, electronic mechanics, motor mechanics, refrigeration & air-conditioning, computer operation & programming assistance, etc, all needed for India's economy. The School of Social Work is doing commendable job in training social workers to help in developing the quality of life in the country. The Aloysian Institute of Computer Science (AICS) and the connected Aloysian Institute of Business Administration (AIBA) have made tremendous stride since the opening of the Information Technology Centre in 2003. Several courses (computer applications, computer aided design, bioinformatics, to name a few) of practical value are offered and are in great demand. It is envisaged, the AICS and AIBA will move to a new campus in Beeri (near Ullal) in the next few years. That will make room for further expansion of the Central College library, and Science, Commerce and Journalism.

The Science departments of the College have also expanded into new domains in the last 25 years. Several of them, like Chemistry and Mathematics organize seminars on recent advances in the subject for college teachers and students. Applied Biology department has made great strides in fields of vast practical application like vermitechnology (making compost out of organic waste by the application of microbes) and tissue culture techniques for the large scale multiplication of economically important indigenous plants.

In the last few years, St. Aloysius has opened branches in towns like Harihar and Mundgod in Karnataka. They are meeting the special needs of people in those regions.

These are only some of the recent accomplishments at St. Aloysius; all in all, ours is a dynamic institution, constantly endeavoring to expand to develop the young minds to become productive, responsible citizens of the world making best use of every possible technological innovations and to develop the spirit to “explore, discover and innovate”. Above all, St. Aloysius constantly upholds high ethical values to be applied in day to day life and strives to inculcate them in the minds of the youth.

## **Personal Impressions**

In the four months I spent in the campus, I visited every component of St. Aloysius including satellite schools, met and interacted with a good number of the faculty, staff and students and discussed their day to day activities at St. Aloysius. That was a special part, indeed the main purpose of my stay. Those meetings provided deeper insight on the working of the institution. I have been greatly impressed by the interest and enthusiasm of so many, both staff and students. I participated in several college functions enthusiastically conducted by hundreds of students, guided by their teachers. The campus, which now includes so many buildings named after outstanding Jesuit missionaries is bustling with activities even in late evenings and even on Sundays! Every building space is very well used. I have no doubt in my mind, St. Aloysius continues to be a vibrant place not only for one’s education but also to make friends, to develop one’s all round personality and for healthy excitement and adventures of life.

Even with several new buildings, St. Aloysius has adequate playgrounds (one of the few institutions in Mangalore with such facilities) for sport and physical fitness of the youth. It was a delight watching students playing basket ball and volley ball in late evenings under electric powered light.

I also visited Aloysian Boys Home, capably managed by dedicated nuns of the Sisters of Charity. I was greatly impressed by the eagerness of the children (originally destitute) to learn and live harmoniously. The visit to the branch institution in Harihar made a similar impression. The students in that part of the country, though coming from poor background, are well motivated to work hard and progress.

I can summarize the mission of St. Aloysius in two parts. First is to develop the intellect and character of young men and women, train them to be the best persons that each one can be, and by their personal examples in lives, lead others to higher quality life. The second is to reach out to those men and women who have so far missed the opportunity for modern education and help to increase the number of suitably trained persons enabling them to become an asset (instead of liability) to the community. The first objective is being accomplished through the many academic and technical programs some of which I have described. The second objective is being accomplished by St. Aloysius outreaches including the branch institutions in Harihar and Mundgod, Evening School and Colleges, Technical Training Institute and Aloysian Boys’ Home in Ullal. (These satellite institutions also serve to fulfill the first objective). In many ways, the two objectives are inter-related as, for example, increase in the number of skilled, more productive citizens also lead to healthier human relationships.

## **Vision for the Future**

While we can be happy and take legitimate pride in the accomplishments of St. Aloysius, our Alma Mater, there is no room for complacency. We shall never rest content on what has been accomplished, but constantly look for new opportunities, to scale still greater heights. For a dynamic, vibrant institution, there are no limits to growth.

## **Alumni Participation**

It does not require stating, great accomplishments also demand resources, both in terms of persons' dedication and enthusiasm, but also material resources, for which the partnership of the alumni is vital. In fact, St. Aloysius has grown in large measure by the constant input and participation by the alumni. The last 127 years history of St. Aloysius is replete with examples of handsome role of members of the alumni in initiating new programs, making possible construction of needed buildings, installing equipment, etc. That should continue.

In that context, the Aloysians in north America, through APNA have an important ongoing role, that is, to strongly connect with the Alma Mater, be partners in progress and experience the excitement of accomplishments. APNA members can do so in several ways:

1. Enlisting the support of some of the American foundations for the development of our new campus and for further developing some of our satellite schools and branches. (Donations of the magnitude \$100,000 or more.) This will require explaining the mission and recent accomplishments of St. Aloysius to convince them of worthiness of the cause.
2. Regular individual contributions to APNA. U.S. tax exemption status which APNA has been able to secure is an added impetus. If each member contributes \$500 (not a big amount for residents of "the most powerful nation on earth"!), assuming there are 100 members, it will make a total of \$50,000, which will be converted into about Rs. 22 lakhs (2.2 million), a handsome gift to the Alma Mater, which she will greatly appreciate. The amount may be designated for a specific project (for which finances are needed) selected by APNA Board of Trustees, or left to the discretion of Fr. Rector.
3. Members who are in happy situations to be able to make contributions of larger magnitude (\$1000 or more) (I hope, there are many!) may designate this for any project of his or her interest or let Fr. Rector determine the allocation. St. Aloysius has a policy of giving appropriate recognition to such contributors.

APNA has done well in getting so many Aloysians together in events like APNAfest and connecting the members through internet. The much awaited tax exemption status has been secured. Now is the time to strengthen our bonds with Alma Mater, join in the excitement of Aloysian adventures, be active partners in the never ending progress of our great institution that is St. Aloysius.

## **An Invitation**

Finally, I am asked by the Rector to communicate an important message to all members of APNA and AJAP:

“St. Aloysius College is ever eager to receive you as her honored son/daughter whenever you visit. Please come and feel the warmth of your Alma Mater.”

Based on my experience, I can say with confidence, you will receive more than that; it will be a happy memorable experience.

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