

A Gentleman and a Scholar - Retired Consultant Dr. Anton Joseph, MRCP



Dr. A.E.Arulraj Joseph passed away in London after a short illness on 30 June 2023 surrounded by his wife Dr.Theresa Joseph and family.

Dr. Arulraj Joseph hailed from an illustrious Catholic family in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. His uncle **Mr. Arulpragasam**, was Inspector of Education, Northern Province.

A Past student of St. Patrick's College, the premier secondary educational institution at Jaffna, under the tutelage of Late Very Rev. Fr. T.M.F. Long, O.M.I, Rector.

Arulraj was a Senior Prefect of the College, a Chorister, an Altar Boy, a member of the Sacred Heart Confraternity, a School Cadet and a College Cricketer and tennis sportsman.

Arulraj entered University at Peradeniya in the early fifties (**1954**) and later trained at Medical College, Colombo where he passed out as a Physician, obtaining his MRCP.

Despite entering a medical education, Arulraj always yearned to join the priesthood. Those of us knew him, will recall how he loved chanting the Latin rite of the Holy Mass, as if he was a Deacon. But, we will hardly know why he choose a different profession. His mission was to serve the people.

He came to England to pursue further study in **1968** to complete Post Graduate studies He later joined St, George's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Tooting, London SW17 0QT. He was admitted at a Consultant Radiologist at this hospital and retired as Senior Lecturer in Radiology in 2001. He was a strict disciplinarian according to one of his students Mr. Sukpal Singh, now Consultant Oesophageal Surgeon, Frimley Park NHS Trust Hospital, Frimley, Surrey,

His interest in research, in particular helped him to produce after trials a “**Scope**” for which he received a monetary award from the manufacturer of medical evaluation instruments. This award he donated to College. He will also be remembered for his other generous commitments,

He retired from St. George’s NHS Teaching Hospital in 2003. He spent most of his retirement as an Honorary Senior Visiting Lecturer at St. George’s and at University of London.

He has to his credit Radiology Research Papers and Citations. One among them was his Case Report: “Percutaneous Biopsy of a Right Atrial Angio-sarcoma under Ultra Sound Guidance” working with Prof. Consultant Radiologist, Susan Deirdre Heenan at St. George’s NHS Foundation Trust, Tooting, London SW17, where many Sri Lankans **reside.**

He was always a devoted researcher, a reserved gentleman and a scholar.

He was elected President St, Patrick’s Alumni Association, UK and did much to promote Patrician “Can do” spirit inculcated by Fr. Long.

In his retirement he was not alone. He spent time at his age of 80 to do a Master’s degree in Theology at St. Mary’s University, Twickenham, Surrey, his lifelong ambition.

He will be remembered by his College, by his Hospital, by his colleagues for his steadfast Discipline and devotion to duty.

It is the hope that that the Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Gnanapragasam, Bishop of Jaffna, who is currently in London, will pay his respects and perform his last rites before burial. The Jaffna Bishop was a Past Rector, St. Patrick’s College.

Funeral details: [Anton Joseph \(myportfolio.com\)](http://AntonJoseph(myportfolio.com))

May he chant the Credo in Latin in Heaven as we’ll miss him dearly on Earth.

May a thousand flowers bloom in his heart.

May the soul of dear Arulraj, rest in peace.

Victor Cherubim

A Brief History of Catholic Education in Sri Lanka under foreign rule and the Birth of St. Patricks College

Dr.Arulraj Joseph

The accidental washing ashore of a Portuguese trading mission on the Southern coast of the island of Ceylon in 1505 led to the arrival of Christianity in Sri Lanka. At the time the Portuguese landed in Sri Lanka there were three independent kingdoms: the kingdom of Kotte, in the South Western part, the kingdom of Jaffna in the North and the kingdom of Kandy. The consequence of the loss of recognition of these three zones is now another chapter in the history of Sri Lanka.

Christianisation of the Kingdom of Jaffna by the Portuguese was so extensive that the missionaries reported that 'almost the whole kingdom is Christian'. The extent and rate of the establishment of Christianity caused such fear and concern to Sankili, King of Jaffna that he ordered the massacre of over six hundred Christians fearing that with the support of the Catholics he might be overthrown.

The Popes of the time had entrusted the King of Portugal and the Spanish king to spread the Christian faith in the colonies they established. The missionaries despatched by the kings believed that they too had to fulfil the command handed down to them by Jesus: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations'.

The Dutch arrived in Sri Lanka in 1658, it would appear at the invitation of King Rajasinghe II of Kandy, to help him ward off the repeated Portuguese invasion of his kingdom. They set about the propagation of the Dutch Reformed faith. The Dutch set out to extirpate the people from the 'misguided faith' and impart their 'true Reformed religion' expelling catholic missionaries and setting about bringing all schools under government control, a process to be later repeated by the government of Sri Lanka granting the majority of schools government school status. The catholic schools which opted out were the responsibility of the bishops of the respective diocese. St. Patrick's college and Holy Family Convent Jaffna were in this group among others. To further promote the process of indoctrination, catholic children were forced to attend Protestant schools.

The next phase was the arrival of the British in 1796. The Western culture as evident today in Sri Lanka is virtually British. Though now free of persecution it is recorded that significant developments only followed the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 by which Catholics were granted the freedom to join 'the country's main stream of life and contribute their share to the development of the country'. Despite this the Catholics began to recognise that they were falling behind in education. Their appeal to Rome asking for European missionaries grew stronger when it was recognised that due to the inability of the Oratorian fathers to preach or teach in the English language the Catholics were at a distinct disadvantage in competing with the Protestants for the plum jobs in administration. It is documented that due to the lack of knowledge of English among the clergy the Catholic military men had to make their confessions through an interpreter!

In the search for missionaries Bishop de Mazenod of Marseilles was approached. This led to the extensive and well recognised role of the association of the religious order of the OMI priests in the country particularly in Jaffna. The missionaries were confronted with

the situation where the Protestant missions had established English schools twenty five years prior to their arrival. Catholic students were attending the Protestant schools for want of any other means of English education. Many Catholics however felt compelled not to send their children to these schools. The Catholics made representation to the Governor of Ceylon to provide funding for the pre-existing Catholic schools in Jaffna. The school which subsequently received recognition seems to have evolved into the Jaffna Boys Catholic English School and was given this name and recognition in 1850. It was said to have been located in the building which became the administration block of St. Patrick's College. Due to an acute shortage of missionaries Mr. Patrick Foy an Irish Catholic layman was appointed the first Principal of the school, followed by Mr. Arthur Fletcher also a protestant who was later converted to Catholicism.

The above account is common to many commentaries but there is a difference of opinion regarding the time and the sequence of events that led to the establishment of St. Patrick's College. I have therefore relied on what I believe is the most likely scenario as documented by the Rt. Rev Bishop Deogupillai. Bishop Semeria was appointed Vicar apostolic of Jaffna and his influence on Catholic education and on St. Patrick's college is worthy of admiration and acknowledgment. He was responsible for the establishment of the Jaffna boys Catholic English School which consisted of eighty one day scholars and fourteen boarders from St. Mary's and five orphans

The next major development was in 1861 when the School Commission and the Catholic mission in Jaffna agreed to name the English Schools the Jaffna Boys Seminary and the Jaffna Female Seminary. Although the term seminary as we understand it today refers to an institution preparing students for ordination as clergy, in the context referred to here it seems to be a term denoting educational institutions secular or religious. These schools were reported to have made great strides leading to a demand for the school to be engaged in higher education. In 1880 Bishop Bonjean responded by amalgamating the Preparatory Ecclesiastical Seminary and the Jaffna Boys Seminary under the title of St. Patrick's College granting it registration as a High School. The school was inaugurated as St. Patrick's College on 10th January 1881. Fr. J. R. Smythe was appointed the first principal. On 4th December of that year the foundation stone for the large hall for the college was laid by Bishop Bonjean. Mr. William Blair Inspector of Schools wrote: 'The institution promises to rival in efficiency St. Benedict's, Wesley and St. Thomas College in Colombo. He also added that it might be the only institution in the Province to provide for the Cambridge Local Examinations.

I found reviewing the history of the creation of St. Patrick's College a wonderful experience. I am grateful for what St. Patrick's College has meant to me and to all who have had the opportunity to be students in that great institution. We acknowledge gratefully the inspiration, the dedicated religious and secular education we received and of course the legendary discipline for which the school has been widely recognised. Above all it laid down the foundation for us all to continue to be loyal to our alma mater. Little wonder that our alumni associations all over the world have gathered in yet another global reunion to celebrate what the school has meant to us. Unity in loyalty might be a motto for our alumni associations. This review has helped me to see the past greatness ever present in the school we fondly call our alma mater: a kind mother who nourished us in our youth and inspired us to live a life true to the education we received.

Acknowledgments

I claim to be no historian and have relied heavily on reading around the subject in preparing for this article. I gratefully acknowledge the information that I have gathered from 'The catholic education in Sri Lanka during the first century as a British colony', the subject of a thesis by Bishop Gnanapragasam submitted for the requirements for his Ph.D in 1988. For details of the birth of St. Patrick's college I relied on the account provided in the writings of late Bishop Deogupillai, former Bishop of Jaffna. (Thanks Prabha Swampillai for sending this article)

UNITY IN LOYALTY

The Patrician alumni gathered at the Isle of Wight from all over the world were delighted and overwhelmed by the Patrician loyalty displayed in their generosity with donations to the Technology Institute which far exceeded any expectation. The Technology Institute will become a reality far sooner than might have been anticipated, thanks to the inspired generosity of the loyal past pupils.

The reunion was the most attended of any Patrician global reunions ever held. The occasion was greatly enhanced by the presence of His Lordship Dr. Justin Gnanapragasam and Rev. Fr. Jero Selvanayagam. The reunion laid the foundation for greater things to come.

The ambitions and the work outlined for the future requires the cooperation of the alumni associations all over the world. Could this be better served and coordinated by the formation of a Federation of SPC Alumni Associations.

Another thought that was strongly recommended by His Lordship and welcomed by the rector was the formation of a Board of Governors to support the bishop and the rector, feeding the management with ideas to improve the standard of the school in all its activities, and to assist the fund raising efforts by the alumni associations. It was the clear understanding that this body will not participate in the direct management of the school. To make this distinction even clearer may I suggest the formation of an 'SPC Alumni Advisory Council.' A board of governors tend to imply greater participation in the administration. The membership of the council should represent the global membership of the alumni association: the precise membership and the method of appointment to be decided by the associations in conjunction with the bishop and the rector.

All this participation has as its foundation Loyalty to our alma mater. I see loyalty as the bond between the school and its alumni just as fidelity is to marriage. Many of us are who had the opportunity to take part in the reunion celebrations would recognise how privileged we were to have had the opportunity to be part of the reunion. Many of us have had their dreams come true. Tragically many students now can only dream of a future. Many perhaps do not even know what to dream of. I see the creation of an Institute of Technology as a nidus for their dreams. Equipped with technical skills and expertise their future is far more hopeful and brighter.

May I have the audacity to put forward what might be more controversial than what I have expressed so far.

The school motto, Fide et Labore inspired us all in our days at school. As past pupils we may benefit from a motto that inspires greater loyalty to our alma mater. It is loyalty that is the adhesive that binds the past pupils to our alma mater. If there is a consensus to form a federation, may I humbly suggest that the motto for the federation be:

Unity in Loyalty

May the Patricians all over the globe unite to give the youth a dream.

Arulraj Joseph

... It is a sad moment for our College actually, the passing away of Dr Arulraj Joseph, affectionately known to many as Dr. Joe.

Probably the only Patrician I can think of who lived and breathed helping the Alma Mater for over 40 years.

He founded the OBA in London in 1983 and was unanimously elected President. His passion has since inspired many old boys to follow him and help our Alma Mater from the UK. Today the UK OBA has earned the name of one of the leading Alumni of our College in the world.

He attended almost all the Executive Council meetings until his deteriorating health made him housebound in the last few years.

As one of the past Presidents of the UK Alumni, I have seen him many times getting advice and help with many projects. He never hesitated to donate when it comes to college affairs.

May his dream of seeing Greater St. Patrick's College Jaffna live forever and many Patricians around the world will follow his vision.

May our good Lord grant him Eternal Rest *Prabha Swampillai*

The Patricians community is saddened at the passing away of the great Gentleman of all time Dr Anton Emmanuel Arulraj Joseph. He was our first president and served in the committee until his health let him down. His generosity has no limits. He will be missed by all.

Please see the attached link for funeral arrangements and to post your tributes:

,,, Very sad. Dr. Joseph's death marks the end of a great human being and ardent Patrician. My deepest sympathies to Theresa, his wife, and all family members. May God grant him Eternal Life.

It is with great sadness I am writing this message bidding farewell to one of the greatest Sri Lankan I have ever known. A true legend in every aspect. As a Patrician I admired his commitment to our Alma Mater.

He was our founder President of the Alumni Association UK and supported the Ex Co right the way through till his last breath. He has also supported the college financially over the years along with support to other favourite charities.

As a fellow medic I appreciated the contribution he has made to Radiology in the UK as a Clinician, Researcher and a Teacher at Prestigious St. George's University Hospital in South London. He was a pioneer in Ultra Sound Technology as a diagnostic tool. He was extremely well respected by the Medical Fraternity not only in the UK but around the globe.

His writings and singing are legendary. After all he was a Chorister. His carol singing at our SPC dinners were amazing and will ring in our ears for years to come. We will miss him this year and beyond.

He loved satire and always encouraged me with my stand- up routines. I kept in touch with him daily via whatsapp and kept him entertained. He appreciated that. He represented the school in Cricket and Tennis and is a true all- rounder. It is rare to find multi-talented and erudite people like him nowadays. He was a rare very precious gem!

Dr Joe as I always fondly called him and his enormous intellect will be sorely missed by all. He is a great loss to all of us let alone Theresa acca, his children and his immediate family.

RIP my friend and Mentor. I will miss you!! The Patrician community around the globe will miss you. But I will always remember you in my quiet moments. You have left an indelible mark in my heart!!
Prof ChitraMohan

Dr Anton Emmanuel Arulraj Joseph



It is with deep sadness that we announce that Dr Anton Emmanuel Arulraj Joseph, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and esteemed Consultant Radiologist passed away on Friday 30 June 2023. His indomitable spirit and enthusiasm meant he enjoyed a full and rich life for his 86 years. He died at St Helier Hospital in Carshalton peacefully and without pain.

He was a loyal and generous husband to Theresa (Sushila Rayappu) for 62 years, supporting her in her wish to bring her brothers and sisters from Sri Lanka to England and to other parts of the world where they went on to thrive. He became a patient and understanding husband in his later years, caring for her as Theresa suffered with her own health challenges. He is the beloved father of Manik and Rukshi and took pride and pleasure in his four grandchildren Maya, Stefan, Jess and Ben.

Eldest son of Pedropillai and Cecil Joseph, brother of the late Terence Joseph and loving brother of Mary (Jegasothy) and Annet Rajes (Toronto).

A dedicated old boy of St Patrick's College in Jaffna. He became a consultant Radiologist at St George's Hospital, London for 24 years. He was recognised by his colleagues for his passion for teaching, his special contribution to the field of ultrasound and his extensive academic research. His enthusiasm for and expertise in teaching drew him back to medicine to pass on his skills at Croydon University Hospital to a new generation of radiologists where he continued to work until the age of 80. After retirement he spent 2 years at St Mary's University, Twickenham where he earned a master's degree in theology and became the eldest masters student at the establishment.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, previous colleagues, church community and former students and the broader communities he supported charitably in Jaffna and in London. We are comforted in the knowledge that he will be joining his beloved father, mother and brother with God in Heaven.

Funeral arrangements to follow.