



CONNECTIONS

Educate, Empower & Transform



JESUIT WORLDWIDE LEARNING
HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE MARGINS

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Loyola Campus Graduation : A Reflection

Graduation season is ending, just as graduation is the closing of one chapter and the opening of a completely new one. Graduations are special because they are much-needed reflections in the busy and hectic continuum of our lives at LC-JWL sites. Graduations can be cliché and redundant, but they instruct you on the greatest lessons of life, which is to appreciate and cherish every moment of your life.

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I am hopeful that students graduating from LC-JWL sites, regardless of what they have studied, do feel empowered and that their capacity for inquiry, compromise and reflection has been enhanced by their studies at LC-JWL sites. Empowerment is the best good that is expected from Loyola education today. People had to earn a living and that a truly pragmatic education would not just prepare someone to fit into an existing occupational slot. A true education would increase one's abilities to act purposefully as a citizen, a neighbour and a family member as well as an economic provider. Inquiry, compromise and reflection are essential ingredients for the development of these abilities.

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When education is successful, students desire to search for better ideas and find meaning in the pursuit of ways of living that will be in accord with the higher values of life. When they find their own values to be in conflict with those held by others, their education leads them to inquiry, compromise and reflection either to resolve those conflicts or to learn how to live in peace with them. In this regard, the Loyola campus is an oasis, not where students are coddled, but where they develop skills to deal with the differences among people that beyond the campus are usually met by cynical disregard or avoided through economic and cultural segregation.

One does not need to believe in an absolute Truth in order to commit oneself to inquiry, compromise and reflection, although many of our students surely do have such beliefs. One does need to consider the possibility that one might be wrong, that one might be blind to other possibilities, other ways of living. If you think you might be wrong, you need other people with ideas different from your own in order to consider a range of alternatives. That is one of the reasons diversity, including intellectual diversity, is so important. Listening seriously to others and trying to understand why they hold the views they do without immediately judging those views, is at the core of pragmatic liberal education.

One of the reasons the Loyola Campus-JWL sites have become popular, is that all learn so much from the enthusiasm, convictions, and reasoned arguments of our students – be they addressing the racist evils of mass incarceration or the persistent poison of sexual violence. Religious students have shown us what it means to integrate faith and inquiry, and conservative students have taught us to be mindful that even well intentioned policies can undermine individual freedom and group identity. Loyola Campus is the place to explore differences, to have one's ways of thinking tested – not just protected.

In this time of rampant cynicism and flamboyant government corruption, students across the country are refusing to retreat from the public sphere. They refuse the dismissal of norms for telling the truth or the labeling of anything one does not like as “fake.” They refuse stifling limitations on speech and action by creatively responding to changing community norms. They refuse the caricature of political correctness by listening carefully to those with whom they disagree, prepared to broaden their thinking rather than merely reinforcing their pre-conceived notions. The wisest words that one can think of given our national context are ones our students already know well: inquiry, compromise and reflection. The students are turning these words into action around the country. Having learned to work across differences, they are finding ways to go beyond cynicism to build a better future. Wise beyond their years.

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These are the students that we watched grow; these are the people whose unique personalities, quirks, sense of humour and learning habits, we have come to know, appreciate, and sometimes get annoyed by. These are the children of Loyola that we have helped mould and shape, much like their parents, we watch them on graduation night transform.

On the other hand, graduation is always bitter-sweet for teachers at Loyola. There is the knowledge that another group of students have learned and grown with you and acknowledgment that you have learned and grown with them as well. This is a satisfying and wonderful feeling that I believe only teachers can understand in its entirety. There is, however, a little bit of sadness with the understanding that many of the students

that you taught will be very different when they move out of campus. They will mature physically and mentally, ready for new challenges. So much change in them, but very little change in us! A Jesuit whom I worked with, once told me that this was the beauty of being a teacher. “You get old and they stay the same age but we both keep learning” he said, “isn’t that amazing!”

This is why, Loyola graduations are filled with happiness and joy; excitement and tears. It is a collective sigh of relief and a new beginning. It truly is a magical evening and I relish each graduation that I have been privileged to be a part of. Still, the teacher in me prefers the firing of starter’s pistol and the work that will get us to the finish line.

Milroy Fernando SJ
- Country Director



Mannar

We are Universal

November brought with it many blessings to our Campus. We welcomed Mr Celestine Dias and Ms Sinduja Vidyasagar as our staff members. Their arrival energizes us to handle classes now and in the future. Hindu students with the support of the students of other religions organized Vani villa (Saraswathi Puja). We thank Mr Manni and Rajevan, his son for conducting the service and all others for supporting to make the event meaningful.

Three staff meetings were held within the month to re-arrange the timetable, discuss about the visitation of Fr Francis P Xavier, SJ and Dr Selvanayagam and the graduation ceremony. The great dedication and sacrifice of students and staff were evident. Their unending support is a strength to the Campus.



In the morning of 29 November, Fr Francis, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research and Dr Selvanayagam, Academic Coordinator for South Asia JWL interacted with the students. This interaction was an enriching experience to the students because they were made to speak with the guests without fear and shyness. Also, the guests broadened the knowledge of the students by sharing their experience and expectation of Jesuit Worldwide Learning. In the afternoon, we had the graduation ceremony for more than 100 students. Fr Francis was the chief guest and Dr Selvanayagam was the guest of honour. Other invited clergies, religious priests and nuns, who were part of the ceremony, highly appreciated our efforts.

We gave a week's break to the kids of the evening class because of their 3rd term exam and for the preparation for the graduation ceremony. We missed the evening noise for a week and now we hear it again. Only this month is left to cover the syllabus and the requirements. It seems that the staff is bit strict with the students and at the same time the students also are busy fulfilling class requirements. Finally, we like to especially thank Fr Francis Xavier, SJ, and Dr Selvanayagam for coming and spending time with us.

Vavuniya

Opening New Avenues

November was a silent month even though we had some major activities during the month. We had the joy of beginning the month with a parents meeting. Fr Roy, our Country Director was kind enough to grace the occasion and enlighten the parents about our mission here and also the future opportunities which await the students at the successful completion of the courses. It was a blessed moment for all of us to meet the parents and to listen to their side of the story about their children. The programme came to an end by giving the parents a moment to talk with the respective facilitators over a cup of tea and refreshments.

Among the student activities for this month, the pre-intermediate students put up a social drama. It was well rehearsed and the students did an excellent job in showing their acting talents. They also gave the audience an opportunity to actively involve with their performance. The elementary students and the pre-intermediate students took an extra effort to decorate their classrooms with banners and wall papers which carry the message of ecological awareness.



On 17 November, we had a picnic to Trincomalee with the students. Almost all the students participated with the facilitators, co-workers and the Director. It was a welcome change for all of us away from our mundane classroom environment. We left the campus by 7 a.m. The first stop of our journey was at Loyola Campus, Trincomalee. The students got an opportunity to see their sister campus. Then after visiting the Koneshwaram temple, we went to the Marble's beach where we spent the whole afternoon amidst lots of fun and laughter. We returned to the campus by 7 p.m. after a memorable time together. These type of moments strengthen our mission among the young and also refocus us to the joys of living a one family.

Rev Fr Francis Xavier, Vice President for Academics and Research Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) Geneva, Switzerland and Dr Selvanayagam, Academic Coordinator for South Asia JWL visited the site on 28 November, accompanied by Rev Fr Roy. It was a joyful moment to meet them and to have a fruitful interaction with the students and the facilitators. These moments intensify the international feeling that we share as a campus. I am sure that these types of meetings will open new avenues for our students.

Puthukkuduyiruppu

Peer Pressure and Overnight Results

In November we organized outreach programmes at Thaddayanmalai, Oddusuddan. The Director met the Grama Niladari as well as the Divisional Secretary and handed over the request letter. In the meantime the centre is also busy preparing banners and leaflets for the next intake. The admission for the new batch will begin on 01 January, 2019 and the classes will start on 07 January, 2019.



Outcome of the discussion with the Divisional Secretary

The Director of LC-PTK along with the Grama Niladari of Thaddayanmalai met the Divisional Secretary, Oddusuddan and discussed about the outreach programme of LC, at Thaddayanmalai area. He advised us that it is not allowed to have private classes in a private house. But he did mention that it is very much appropriate to conduct classes in a common or a public place. Further he also insisted that the institute should give him a written letter about the programme.

Challenges

One of the big challenges that the centre faces is that the contemporary students do not value the importance of English education. They want to learn the language overnight. The teachers have lots of difficulty to teach such students.

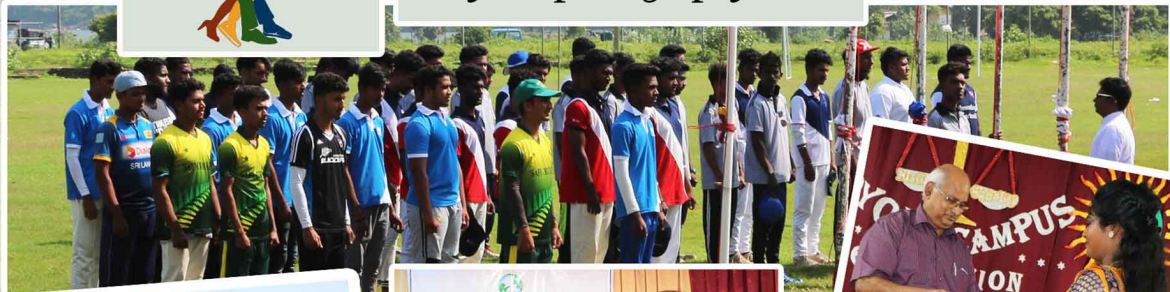
Another challenge would be the peer pressure which at times dominate over all other activities. Many drop out because of peer pressure. Hope that the outreach programme which we have planned to begin at Thaddayanmalai, Oddusuddan may bring lots of children to strengthen our new venture.

Thanks to our guests

The Director and the staff of LC-PTK extend their gratitude and love to Fr Francis, sj, Dr Selvam and Fr Milroy, sj for visiting us. The discussion which we had was very good and fruitful and also a source of strength and encouragement to us.



<loyola_photography.com>



Batticaloa

Leave Lasting Memories

As the conclusion of 2018 nears, the untiring effort of both staff and students have to bear much fruit. Students have now become more acquainted with each other and with their teachers, and seem to have less fear and difficulty in using their new language skills with one another. Loyola Campus, Batticaloa is now in full swing as we all prepare for the final exams.



Assessment tests have been provided and an insight into where the students and teachers need to work is evident. With a desire to help our students to achieve a better understanding of their new language, an additional one-hour optional class has been offered to those students who need extra help. The teachers are committed to help students achieve proficiency in those areas they are weak in.

It was also in November that our Loyola Campus gave a moving farewell to our dear Xavier Rickard, a young volunteer from Australia who had shared with joy and simplicity his knowledge with us for almost six months. The students showed their appreciation and admiration for this brave 19-year-old boy who left his comforts to serve as a volunteer in Sri Lanka. Testimonies like these inspire and leave lasting memories in our students.

And finally, on November 25, our Loyola Campus celebrated both Oli Vizha and the Graduation simultaneously, counting the presence of great personalities who witnessed the creativity, joy and hope that our youth in Loyola Campus have within. His Lordship Rt Rev Dr Joseph Ponniah, *Bishop of Batticaloa*, Fr Francis P Xavier SJ, *Academic Vice President of JWJ*, Dr Selvanayagam Mariyadoss, *JWJ Coordinator for South Asia*, and Fr Milroy Fernando SJ, Country Director JWJ and other distinguished guests watched with amazement and enjoyed the program which the students and staff had prepared with great effort. On the next day, 26 November, our two distinguished guests from India met our students, sharing their ideas about the JWJ program and listening patiently to students' experiences and requests. In conclusion, this has been an exhausting but fulfilling month which we all have enjoyed.

Hatton

Sharing 'Love and Life'

November was filled with joy for all the staff and students of CSC Loyola Campus with various activities and many people visiting the Campus.

Skill training to the students: The month began with half a day session on Personality Development to the students by Fr Prem. He mainly focused on self awareness, inner potentials and goal setting. At the end of the session the students were all happy because they were able to realize their hidden potentials and share the same with others. On 16 November, three students volunteered themselves to conduct a session on 'Love and Life'. It was well received by the other students as it engaged them in a lot of group activities and sharing of their own understanding of love and life in a deeper manner.

Staff training: On 22 November, Fr Bujji Babu SJ (AND) made a short visit to the campus after REGAE, a Jesuit workshop and delivered a short talk on being an 'Efficient Teacher' to our staff. Though it was very short, our staff were inspired by that.

Visit of Fr Francis Xavier SJ and Dr Selvanayagam: The Vice President of JWL Fr Francis Xavier along with Dr Selvanayagam, the Academic Operations Director of JWL, Asia, and Fr Milroy, the Country Director visited the centre on 23, 24 November. They were impressed by the way the students interacted with them and gave students some tips on pursuing higher studies. The staff were also happy to have interacted with them and to receive more clarity on the various courses offered by JWL.



Graduation Day: The Graduation Day for two batches i.e. January-April and May-August was held on 24 November. Mrs Chandralekha Kingsly, Principal, Teacher Training College, Kotagala was the chief guest and Fr Francis Xavier SJ and Dr Selvanayagam were the guests of honour. We were also happy to have with us local officials in Education and principals of various schools. There were about 60 students who received their certificates both in English and IT. The programme went on well. All the speakers of the day spoke about the need of higher education and persuaded the students not to stop learning. Presently, we are preparing the students of the Dickoya Fine Arts College for the Graduation to be held on 30 November.

Computer Programme: Our joy doubled when we heard that all students who had written the NVQ exam for Computer Application Assistant passed. They are now awaiting the External Assessment for the same but the process is rather slow because of the volatile political situation prevailing in the country.

Trincomalee

Oozing Enthusiasm

Month of November was joyful and exciting. Loyola Campus Trincomalee cherished those moments deeply. Indeed it was our pleasure to share our happiness with each and every one of you.

To create awareness among our students about the current problems among youth, especially about drugs, an orientation was conducted. A short session on paper craft was also included in it.

This month centred on the preparations for the Loyola Big Bash-2018 cricket tournament, conducted on 10 November. Plans for conducting Loyola Big Bash started with enthusiasm and expectation. We had five neighbouring campuses, which participated in the cricket match and exhibited their sportsmanship. The final match was between Loyola campus and Royal International College. It was a nail biting final. The final run scored by Mr Arun of Loyola Campus-Trinco brought us the winner's trophy. The man of the series trophy went to Mr Arun Piriyan and the Man of the Match trophy was given to Mr Pavithran of our campus. The much awaited day came to an end by lowering the flag and singing of the National anthem. There were about 300 students who turned up as spectators. Neighbouring campuses cooperated very well therefore we were successful in hosting Loyola Big Bash-2018. The name Loyolites and Loyola Campus were much spoken by the people of Trincomalee. We have become one of the much sought after institutions in Trincomalee. It is all because of the discipline of the students and hardwork of the staff.



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An awareness dance on the topic “NO SMOKING” was staged by our Loyola Western Dance Team on the day of the Loyola Big Bash. They are also practicing Symbolic Dance, under the guidance of Rev Fr Jayaratnam. This is an initiative to protect this endangered dance and drama form of art. This will be staged on various occasions, as the theme is related to the present Christmas preparations. To celebrate the victory and the birthday of Mr Indrasuryan, our staff, we had assembly on 12 November. Applications for the diploma course were filled and sent for further procedures.

Our students are showing more interest towards learning English and much progress is perceivable. We witness their improvement in all the four skills of the language, especially in speaking skill. The students, learning Computer Application Assistance have completed their MS Word practical and started with Excel projects. New efforts and activities conducted in basic Sinhala class is also yielding results. Practices for handwriting and also short on-the-spot dramas are helping our students to understand more, and they also tend to use the language on a day to day base.

Rev Fr Francis Xavier, Vice President for Academics and Research, Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) and Dr Selvanayagam, Academic Coordinator for South Asia JWL paid a visit to our campus and interacted with our students. Our students were very genuine in giving feedback and they talked to them in English without any hesitation. They were very happy about the improvement of the students and the involvement of the staff.

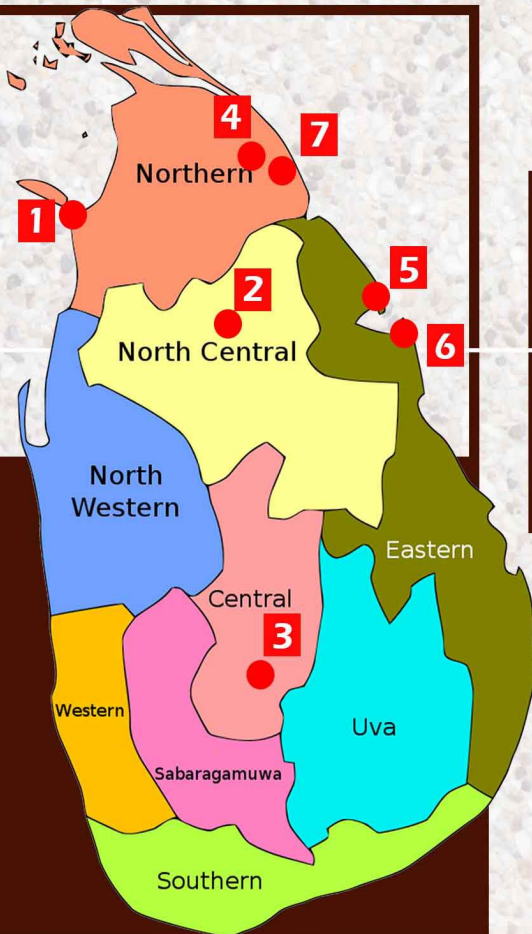


“forming young women and men who perceive the current conditions and are able to think beyond the limits of their socio-economic, religious and cultural horizons in actively creating spaces of peace, justice and reconciliation”

“a shared community of learners who journey together in companionship with one another, nature and the Divine”



Loyola Campus



1. Mannar
2. Vavuniya
3. Hatton
4. Puthukkudiyiruppu
5. Trincomalee
6. Batticaloa
7. Mullativu