

## Rev. Fr. Lucian Fernando



Rev. Fr. Lucian Fernando passed away peacefully at the Home for Elders in Colombo on November 9, 2013. It was Mr. C. Pathmanathan a classmate of Fr. Lucian who telephoned in the wee hours from Batticaloa to share the sad news with me domiciled in Canada.

Fr. Lucian was a member of the 1953 - SSC 'Arts Class' which has carved a niche in the annals of St. Benedict's College, Colombo, the premier educational institution of the De La Salle Brothers in Sri Lanka.

It was in February this year when I was invited by C. Pathmanathan, a member of the '53 class and a former Benedictine teacher, to join in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the group, as a honorary member having been in the 1954 - SSC 'Arts' class. The celebrations which marked a milestone in this group of alumni was held at the Home for Elders where Fr. Lucian was an inmate well cared for by the ministering Nuns and support staff. The reunion was attended by eight former classmates and myself with the organizing aspects well handled by legal luminary Elmo Perera and C. Pathmanathan the latter now spending the evening of his life at the Home for Elders run by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Batticaloa.

In a moment of nostalgia I reminisce of the celebrations where the festive air was very much evident. Fr. Lucian perched on a wheel chair was in his usual jovial mood teaming up with his erstwhile classmates unmindful of his physical handicap. I recount Fr. Lucian singing 'Dilhani' and other perennial favourites and entertaining us in his unassuming manner interspersed with slots of good humour and camaraderie.

Fr. Lucian and his younger brother late Fr. Terrence were ordained to the Sacred Priesthood by their maternal uncle Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris, the first Bishop of Chilaw at the Cathedral in 1963 and the Golden Jubilee celebrations were due this year. However Fr. Terrence, a Professor attached to the National Seminary in Kandy succumbed to a fatal heart attack a few years ago which left elder brother Fr. Lucian in a state of shock and deep dismay from which he never recovered and later on was rescued from a serious medical mishap in the nick of time and taken care of very well by the ministering Nuns in the salubrious environs of the Home for Elders where he was loved by the staff and inmates.

Fr. Lucian and his brothers Hervin, Merrill, Russel and late Fr. Terrence were boarders at St. Benedict's during the 1940's and 50's. It was an unparalleled joy for the devout parents when two of their sons joined the Priesthood to serve the Lord which ministry they fulfilled with dedication and commitment. Fr. Lucian served as the Vicar General of the Diocese of Kurunegala under Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Peiris at the time of his sudden illness.

All plans were in place for the Golden Jubilee Mass of Fr. Lucian on December 21,2013 but the Lord had in His own design decided to call him to eternal glory. The members of the '53 class and I were awaiting this milestone celebrations but have to be content in conforming to God's divine plans which surpasseth human understanding.

The anniversary celebrations in February concluded with Bede Perumal intoning an emotional melody which we never envisioned would be a farewell to our well loved Fr. Lucian who is now in God's Heavenly abode in perfect peace.

I am reminded of the quote "*It is not what you gather but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived*". In this backdrop Fr.Lucian was blessed with a cheerful disposition who radiated love and caring to all those around him during his sojourn on earth.

Farewell Fr. Lucian until we meet beyond the sunset!

Eric Motha