

Mr. and Mrs. Jayaprakash, our “Guests of Honour” for this evening, Distinguished Guests, Staff Members, Ladies and Gentlemen and my dear Students of St. Mary’s,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Awards Day this evening and to present to you the Annual Report of St. Mary’s for the year 2011-2012. It has been just a few days over a year since I have taken over the reins of this reputed school from the capable hands of Mrs. Alice Carvalho. I owe a debt of gratitude to her and also to Fr. Evarist Newnes, her predecessor, for the legacy that they have passed on to me.

A few staff members have left us in 2011-2012 and I take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their services to this institution. They are: Ms. Anitha Sataluri, Ms. Noella Rebello, M Sarita Upadhayay and Ms Rupali Lamkhade.

A few too, have joined us in 2012, and I wish to welcome them to St. Mary’s. They are: Mr. Rushaad Dupetawala, Mr. Prakash Pitroda, Ms. Saathi Menon and Ms. Preeti Bhasin ,Ms. Tasneem Kapasi, Mr. Stevence Pereira and Mr. Aloysius Fernandes. Ms Vrushali Prabhu teaches here in a part-time capacity, while Ms. Ramubai Gohil has joined St. Mary’s school temporarily.

A warm “welcome aboard” to each one of you!

We have selected for our theme for this year, the **International Year of Cooperation**. Teamwork and cooperation are closely linked, and I think that if we at St. Mary’s have achieved anything this last year, it has been the result of tremendous cooperation on the part of everyone associated with this institution, but very especially the staff, who have strived might and main to mould the boys into future shining citizens of India.

Let me now begin my report with the activities of the Pre-Primary section, and then move on to the Primary and Secondary, although many of the school programmes integrate children of all three sections.

The **Pre-Primary**, tucked away in the oldest part of the school building is a perfect introduction to a school. The academic year began with an additional section of the Kindergarten Class. An orientation programme was conducted for the parents of the Preparatory, to help them get acquainted with the philosophy of Jesuit education and the class routine. All the skills gained through the year were displayed when the children confidently walked onto the stage for the first time of their lives, for the Plain Speaking event, and when, at the Annual Prep Sports, they turned somersaults, navigated through an obstacle course and danced to music.

The events of the Pre Primary and Primary sections are best described in pictures. So here's a good supply of them.... (Pictures shown.)

Primary: Educational excursions to various interesting places were made, such as a fire station, a post office, Kamala Nehru Park, MPT Gardens, Prince of Wales Museum, Taraporewala Aquarium, Nehru Science Centre, Mahalaxmi Race Course, Chowpatty Beach, and closer to home, Jijamata Udyan and Mazagon Hill, to name a few.

The Annual Exhibition showcased the talents of every little Marian. There was an obvious integration between art skills and the variety of concepts imbibed in class, drawing out the pupil's innate creative capacity. Kites, masks, t-shirts and bags painted by the students were proudly displayed. The Marian "potters" stole the show with their clay models.

The Junior Sports Festival is an exercise in coordination and a display of skill and colour, whether it be crossing barriers or traditional dances of India. The message the students carry home is that everyone is a winner.

Through the Festival of Plays, Classes 1 to 4 conveyed a Christmas message, environmental and social themes, and even one that incorporated the ever popular Cub Movement. And this leads me to say a few words about the **Cub Movement**.

You can set your watch by the three long blasts blown on a cub master's whistle, every Friday at 3.45 p.m. at Mary's. And stand aside, while more than

a hundred little cubs come scampering from all directions and assemble in neat rows, expectant faces upturned to Akela.

Equipped with a different plan each Friday, with traditional Indian games of team contact sports, silent games and other activities, the scout masters aim to refine each cub's team work, co-ordination and an all-round strengthening of not just the body, but his character and the Marian spirit, too!

The Cub camps are eagerly looked forward to. Last year, we took the boys for a weekend camp conducted by Magic Bus, at Raigad. An international organization, with trained staff, they deliver high-impact development programmes. Their large grounds rang with the excitement of our boys as they participated in a Treasure Hunt, rock climbing and other team based games. The scouters also organized Baden Powell exercises, quizzes, memory games, skits, tests to assess skills like skipping, leap-frog and hopping. The cubs also had a memorable trip to the Kanheri Caves. At all times, the cubs were encouraged to keep the Cub Law and Promise and to live up to their Motto, 'Do Your Best'.

All credit for the superb functioning of the Cub Movement in our school must be given to Ms. Marie Martin and to her assistant, Mr. Gabriel Tuscano. The teacher assistants, Ms N. Gonsalves, Ms N. Vaz, Ms N. Rakhangi and Ms N. Rebello, have also been outstanding.

The teachers of the Pre Primary and Primary have constantly been updating their teaching skills and have attended workshops conducted by EDUCOMP. This training was implemented in the classroom by those who attended the workshops.

I turn now to the **secondary section** of St. Mary's.

During my address last year, I spelt out my vision for St. Mary's. The purpose of our education is to build up the child in a holistic manner, so that he becomes a fully rounded personality, developed in all aspects – mind, body, heart and will. I shall now endeavour to show that we have been trying to develop the potential of our boys along these lines. I shall begin with the mind, which has to do with **academics**.

Our **ICSE Board examination results for 2011-12** have been about the best ever. Considering the “best of five subjects”, the performance can be summarized as follows: we sent up 105 boys, altogether. Of these,

49 boys got 90% and above (that is, nearly half our boys obtained more than 90% and above; that, I think, is a very extraordinary record!)

41 boys got between 80% and 90%

12 boys got between 70% and 80% and

3 boys got between 65% and 70%.

Our top scorer was Arunabh Mishra, who got 97.2%. He was followed by Siddhant Gandhi with 97%, and then, Aakash Dattani with 96.2%. However, if one considers the “Best Five” as English, plus four other subjects, then in third place is Zaid Merchant. In fifth place was Hitansh Shah with 95.8%.

Besides the ICSE exams, we have had boys shine in other exams. For example, Kushank V. Thacker obtained the seventh rank in the merit list of the All India Open Mathematics Scholarship Examination. Three lakhs plus was the number of students that sat for this examination. Kushank was in Class 4.1 last year.

I shall now turn to **some co-curricular activities** that we are engaged in. The inter-house dramatics competition continues to be one of the biggest attractions of the year. Our boys practice long and hard for this event. The honours for the last year went to the **White House** .

Then we have had the usual rounds of debates, quizzes, elocutions – in three languages – English, Hindi and Marathi, and so on.

The true test of a school’s **co-curricular programme**, is its participation and meritorious performance when it comes to inter-school activities. I am happy to report that St. Mary’s has participated in nearly a dozen such programmes: I shall rapidly run through the record of our performance. At ODYSSEY, conducted by the Gregorian Alumni, we stood first in Dramatics and in Tele Games, and third in Painting. At CASCADES, conducted by the Jannabai

Narsee Alumni, we had first places in Race against Time and in Comic Column, second places in Sports Quiz and Football, and third places in Middle School Dramatics and Tuning In. At SANSKRITI, conducted by the Villa Theresa PTA, we had the first place in Dramatics and the second place in Tele Games. At WE ARE THE WORLD, conducted by RCHR, we stood first in Football, and third in Choir, Dance, Treasure Hunt and Creative Writing. We also stood first in Paint Ball, in the OCTAVE competition, again conducted by RCHR. This competition was open to all kinds of groups for students up to the age of 30. At ROCHAK, conducted by Christ Church School, we claimed the first place in the Essay Competition, and third in the Debates, Hindi Elocution and Dramatics. ROCHAK is entirely a Hindi inter-school competition. In the “MAKING SCIENCE MAKE SENSE” competition, conducted by Bayer Pharmaceuticals, our school bagged the first place. Ahmed Adam of Class 6.1 was the star. And finally, in the prestigious VOGUE competition, conducted by RCHR, it was one of our boys, Hardik Doshi, who bagged three out of the five first places. He won the titles of Mr. Talented, Mr. Popular and, above all, Mr. Vogue. There were altogether 1500 competitors from about 50 different schools for the title of Mr. Vogue. There were four rounds of competition before the final round, when only six competitors were left in the fray. Hardik won, even though there were students from Classes 11 and 12 competing, and Hardik was only in Class 9. He was fortunate enough to have an eminent actor by the name of Amir Khan as one of the judges for the final round, an experience he will never forget. I should also mention Aryan Bhatia (of Class 7.1) who won laurels for himself and the school by being awarded the Pearl Padamsee Trophy 2011 for Excellence in Speech and Drama.

I now turn to the Social and Spiritual dimensions of a child’s growth.

We have been keeping up with our Value Education Classes as well as our Religious Education for Catholic students. The tradition of special liturgies in the Church on the first Friday of each month has been maintained. The Catholic boys of Classes 9 and 10 were also taken out for a couple of days for a prayerful recollection. But over and above these theoretical inputs, what is

more important is the ethical and moral atmosphere that we try to inculcate in all our boys, for as we know well, values are caught rather than taught.

To this end, we have been continuing the practice of running our **Canteen Days** to collect funds for the tribal school of Uplat, Talasari. We also hosted more than 100 boys and girls from that school here at St. Mary's for three days, during which time those children were taken around the normal tourist spots of Mumbai in our own school buses. Our "INTERACT" boys also got a chance to literally interact with these students. To get the boys to think of others rather than only about themselves is to make the boys "**men for others**". With this end in mind, our boys were invited to contribute old clothes and toys at the time of Christmas so that poor children could get some gifts at that festive season.

Probably, one of the most important activities of the Interactors was a camp they went for to Redstone Study Learning Resource Centre at Panchgani. There they developed a spirit of service, friendliness, discipline and teamwork. They also had the opportunity of coming close to nature. They easily mixed with the people, especially the children of the Bhole village. The villagers' simplicity, their talent for music and dance, were not lost upon our boys. This experience also gave our boys a feeling for the poor who had very little by way of clothes and shelter and recreational facilities. Surely both, the city and village folk, enriched each other for the better.

The SUPW (Socially Useful and Productive Work) boys of Class 9 prepared charts on current festivals and exhibited quotations on their class boards. They were also given the task of cooking and cleaning at home. This activity was video-taped.

To encourage the spirit of compassion, some of our boys visited the Shepherd Widow's Home. Also, our school ground was given to the society for the Education of the Crippled for their Annual Sports Day.

The fourth dimension of the human personality is the physical. I now turn to SPORTS AND GAMES.

The year 2011-2012 has been an eventful year for our students on the sports field. Regular coaching sessions in football, cricket and basket-ball were conducted before and after school hours. These sessions along with the inter-class and inter-house matches, helped our young sportsmen hone their talent and sharpen their skills.

Special coaching sessions in roller skating were conducted during the vacations. While there was an over-whelming response to these programmes, there remains much to be done in Athletics.

Below is a brief report of our success at various competitions.

Football: Our school sent up two teams in each of the five age groups for the inter-school tournaments: U/8, U/10, U/12, U/14 and U/16. There was much to cheer about:

Winners: Deryk D'Souza Memorial Invitational Tournament (U/16)

Winners: Late Fr. Tony Fonseca Inter Jesuit Soccer Festival (U/12)

Runners Up: Late Fr. Tony Fonseca Inter Jesuit Soccer Festival (U/10)

Runners Up: Steven Anderson Memorial Football Tournament (U/16)

Winners: Milind Deora South Mumbai Soccer Challenger (U/14)

Winners: Milind Deora South Mumbai Soccer Challenger (U/12)

Third Place in Div. II: Mumbai Schools Sports Association Tournament (U/16)

Winners: Divn. II: Mumbai School Sports Association Championship (U/12)

Winners: Divn. I: Mumbai Schools Sports Association Championship (U/10)

Runners Up: Champion School Inter Jesuit Football Tournament (U/10)

Some individual accolades....

The following boys received awards as Best Players: Aaryan Yugpurush, Cade Mascarenhas, Shazen Elalvia, Aayush Shah, Guard Kian, Arnav Jain, George Daniel, Zayed Shirazi.

Three of our boys went to Sweden for a week long tournament: they were Tanay Shah, Anas Vadgama and Aayush Shah. A SCHOOL football team went to Dubai for a week and also to Goa, for tournaments.

Last year, we not only had the usual Football Fiesta, but we also introduced “Football Fever”. The response from both, boys and parents, has been very encouraging.

Congratulations to Tanay Shah, who was shortlisted for a six-weeks training course in London with EPL team, Queen’s Park Rangers and to Anas Vadgama who represented and captained Maharashtra (U/14) at the Western India Football Association Tournament.

CRICKET :

In cricket, our U. 16 team reached the finals of the prestigious Harris Shield, and thus became eligible for the elite division. Raj Mehta, Dwij Adhvaryu and Nisha Gabhawala were the stars of the game.

In order to improve the standard of cricket, we have built up three professional cricket pitches and daily net practice was witnessed on the campus.

Turning to **some individual events**, in badminton, Ankush Tharaney and Nihar Thacker reached up to the semi-finals of the State level tournaments. Shanay Vora and Vikram Jhaveri played at the district level. Shreyash Parekh shone in Gymnastics; while in Karate, Urvaksh Raimalwala and Zayan Zhirazi were outstanding, the former going up to even the international level. For Judo, Frehan Z. Mehta won a gold medal. Zane Vazifdar did well in several swimming competitions. In Taekwondo, Rushabh Murli and Sharat Malil were outstanding , winning in their respective age groups. And in Artistic Gymnastics, Shreyash Parekh did well for himself. Carrom, Lawn Tennis and Basketball, with very encouraging results.

Our Annual **Athletics** Finals Competition was held at Bombay University Stadium and it went off very smoothly. Our four outstanding athletes were as follows: Moon Jain (for U. 8), Arnav Jain (for U. 10), Aryan Yugpurush (for U. 12) Joshua Sinate (for U. 14), Yusuf Lokhandwala (for U 16).

It is truly satisfying to see the huge response to sports and games at Mary's. The growing response augurs well for a healthier Marian Student Community, for that is the purpose of physical education. Such good health will have a positive ripple effect in other areas of the students' all round growth and development.

As the Duke of Wellington has famously said, "The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton."

We thank all our **coaches** of the various games for their immense contribution to the advancement of our teams. But, above all, we cannot fail to thank and congratulate Mr. Balmukund Tiwari, who has supervised and coordinated the entire department of sports and games so very efficiently and admirably.

Immaculata 2012 is still very fresh in the minds of one and all at St. Mary's. That event was a perfect example of what cooperation in an organization can achieve. Congratulations have poured in from all quarters, commending the school on the wonderful organization at the events; all the more so, since the planning and execution was done mainly by our own boys of Classes 9 and 10. The boys were very ably guided by Mr. Wilfred Noronha and Ms. Joan Dias, from beginning to end.

A word about, and to, the parents of our students: **Parents**, you have been simply fantastic in your cooperation and collaboration with the school in so many of its activities. Teachers' Day, Childrens' Day, Christmas Gifts' Preparation, Immaculata 2012, Prayer Dances, Gone Case, you name it, you parents have always been there, almost, as the song goes, just a call away. As for the PTA, in the beginning stages though it may be, it has done its bit to help in building up a favourable atmosphere in which parents and teachers can both work together towards a common goal – the welfare of the children. How appropriate in this International Year of Cooperation!

Very many thanks to Fr. Leslie Rebelo, our Treasurer and Campus Administrator, Ms. Marie Martin, Pre-Primary and Primary Supervisor, and Mr. Wilfred Noronha, Secondary Supervisor, for their invaluable guidance and assistance during the entire year. I sorely feel the need for them ever so often.

Finally, I can hardly tell you how blessed St. Mary's is to have such a wonderful, talented and cooperative staff. Without each one of my staff members, it would be impossible for me to guide this ship of St. Mary's to its destination. Thank you so much, dear staff members, teaching, non-teaching and maintenance personnel.

Truly, God and the Immaculate Mother, Mary, have been so kind and gracious to us!

“Yes, we canachieve” is the motto that we have chosen for this Awards Day, and I think that our Annual Report has shown that our boys have achieved a lot indeed. More, no doubt, can still be done... excellence in every field should be our goal! President Obama said “Yes, we can”, as part of his inaugural speech. I can safely say at the end of one year, not only “Yes, we **can....achieve**”, but “Yes, we **have** achieved.” **Thank You!**