

PRINCIPAL'S ANNUAL REPORT, 2012-2013

Mr. Bhiswajit and Mrs. Mithu Ghose, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Staff Members and Students of St. Mary's,

It is indeed for me an undiluted pleasure to welcome all of you to our 149th Awards Day this evening and to present to you the Annual Report of the School for the year 2012-2013. My tenure at St. Mary's has not been very long thus far; but ever since I walked in, there has been nothing but excitement and challenge. St. Mary's continues to tread the path of rich traditions that has been handed down over the years. Staff members and Principals may come and go, but the heritage of this glorious institution will carry on forever.

To help us continue St. Mary's traditions, the Management has promoted Mr. Wilfred Noronha to the Vice Principal's position, Mr. Elias Coelho to the office of Supervisor, and Ms Nirmala Fernandes as the Acting Primary Supervisor. (Please give them a very big hand!)

The theme chosen for this year's Awards Day is, "To Dream the Impossible Dream". This choice is partly because we wanted to pursue this year's Immaculata theme of, "Dare to Dream". But it is also because the Jesuit Society which Manages this school, also has a dream, just like the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola, had one. This dream is well spelt out in the Credo and Objectives of St. Mary's, both of which can be found in the school calendar. But speaking briefly, "The Jesuit school aims at the integral personal formation of its students...", and so "efforts are made to encourage them continually to strive after excellence in every field" and not only in academics or sports. In fact we are planning to choose as our motto for our 150th anniversary, the words, "Beyond Academics towards Human Excellence". This implies that we want to develop students to become "spiritually-oriented men of character" and "unselfish in their service of others". It is a tall order in the present scenario of corruption, money and pleasure-seeking – all pure selfishness, where the only goal seems to be "my happiness at all costs"! That is why we have selected for our theme today, "To Dream the Impossible Dream", taking the words from the famous **Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote**. But enough of philosophy and vision! I am to give you our school annual report!

Pre-Primary and Primary Sections

A great education begins with an outstanding Pre-Primary and Primary Section at a reputed school. Here, both our curriculum and our ethos are student-centred. Tremendous value is put on excellence without being overly competitive.

The Preparatory 'Olympics' is a noteworthy annual feature: our five-year-olds can dive through a hoop, turn somersaults, run relays, navigate through an obstacle course, carefully carry a glass of water without spilling a drop – a useful accomplishment about one's home.

At 'An Afternoon of Music', the Prep students enjoyed singing and enacting all the songs they had learnt through the year. Every student participated in the event. A few of the boys themselves took turns in being the Masters of Ceremony for the occasion.

The Primary Section runs with clockwork precision, encompassing a plethora of activities: meaningful assemblies, colourful notice boards, projects, field trips, quizzes, Plain Speaking programmes in English, Hindi and Marathi, Drama days, the display of art and craft work, the Sports Festival, and so on.

The students of Class Four get to be a part of the House System, the Inter-House Music Talent Contest and the School Sports Meet.

The Ignatian Football Festival, an annual feature was well-attended and much-appreciated.

Children's Day was full of fun, games and exciting prizes.

At the Festival of Plays, Classes 1 to 4 had plays ranging from a Christmas story to ones with definite environmental themes and moral values. Every student of each class was on stage.

The Primary Sports Festival is an exercise in coordination and a fine display of skill and colour. Lithe and agile students of Classes 1 to 4 participated enthusiastically in gymnastics and pyramid-formations. The message the boys carry home is that everyone is a winner.

The Annual Exhibition brought to the fore, the talents of every little Marian. Masks, kites, bags, wrapping paper, birds and fish made with paper plates, vied for space, transforming the classrooms and the Assembly Hall into the most

colourful area imaginable. The 'pottery' workshop, demonstrated and conducted by our Mumbai potters, attracted a captive audience.

Cubbing, as a preparation for Scouting, is essentially an 'out-of-doors' activity, a healthy, open-air life lived as close as possible to nature, with an intimate appreciation and knowledge of it. This is what we aim at imparting to our Cubs. Hence, this activity attracts a number of students of Classes 2 to 5.

The Cubs met regularly, on Fridays, after school. Songs, yells, jungle dances, play-acting, quizzes and art and craft activities were conducted. Various skills were perfected through relays like hopping, skipping, book-balancing, somersaulting, leap-frog, etc. 115 Cubs attended the East Bombay District Camporee, held on the grounds of St Mary's SSC. Cubbing has made our students independent, responsible and eventually good leaders. The Cubs are constantly reminded to do a 'good turn' to others and to live up to the Cub motto, 'Do your best'.

The Annual Exhibition, both of the Primary and Secondary, was a hit. Teachers and students strove might and main to prove to one and all that their knowledge was not just theoretical, but that they could apply it in practice, by employing both, their minds and hands.

SECONDARY SECTION

Our academic performance at the ICSE Board Examinations has been quite outstanding.

Number of boys getting above 90% = 41;

Number of boys getting between 81 and 90% = 43;

Number of boys getting between 71 and 80% = 22;

Number of boys getting between 61 and 70% = 4.

Actually, the boy with the lowest percentage had 65%.

And, the average percentage of the ICSE class was 85.45%.

98 out of 110 students got a distinction!

Our Rankers:

1. Bhargav Bhavesh Patel: 96.3
2. Udit Janak Sheth: 95.83
3. Neerav Jain: 95.33
4. Anirudh Bharat: 94.67
5. Upamanyu Ghose: 94.67

One of our boys, Divyansh Atman by name, was seriously ill during the entire academic year and, because of his low immunity, was medically advised not to attend school at all, owing to the risk of contagion. Nevertheless, he sat for the Board Exam and was still able to score 93.67%. A remarkable feat! Hence, with the financial help of a parent, in keeping with our philosophy of encouraging all, we are instituting a new award this year. It will be for the boy who had a severe handicap and yet did very well in academics, preferably at the ICSE Board Exam.

Besides the Board exam, there are several other state and national exams that some of our boys sit for and also fare well at. But I shall refrain from getting into details.

However, I must mention that at the National Computer Olympiad, Mustansir Kapasi obtained a rank of 100 in Class 7. We were winners at the Computer Project Competition and also the Computalk Competition. While Master Ahmed Adam was judged the Best Speaker of Computalk.

In the Maths Scholarship exam, we had the following merit holders:

Class 5. Ankit Bhattacharya : 10th out of 5206 students

Class 5: Kushank Thacker: 62nd out of 5206 students

Class 7: Neel Karia: 1st out of 3236 students

Class 8: Mannarth Chhowala: 44th out of 2385 students

I shall turn now to the co-curricular activities. As important a highlight for the year as our Sports Day and our Awards Day, is the day of the inter-house dramatics. Hours of planning and practice go into this competition. The honours for the day went to the Red House.

As usual we had the rounds of debates, quizzes, elocution - in all three languages – English, Hindi and Marathi.

Keeping to our goal of all round-development at St. Mary's, our heavy co-curricular programme extends also to other institutions, for we

participate in several inter-school programmes. Our performance at these inter-school competitions has been outstanding for we have walked away with many prizes. For example, we participated in ODYSEY, SANSKRITI, WE ARE THE WORLD, CHRYSALIS, OCTAVE and ROCHAK, among others. Let me single out for mention the Mr. VOGUE competition conducted by RCHR, a competition attended by 36 schools hailing from Pune, Lonavla and Mumbai, whereat Gaurav Hinduja of our school was the second all-round runner-up, having secured three titles for himself. Another event worth a mention is CASCADE, conducted by Jamnabai Narsee Alumni. We stood second in the total points tally, having been beaten only by the host school itself.

At the Model United Nations 2012 event, organized by RCJC, Rushabh Nandu and Ahmed Adam were awarded a special mention and Amman Merchant received a High Commendation. Similarly at the National Level Arithmetic Competition titled SIP PRODIGY 2012, held in Pune, Shreyansh Sharma won the 3rd Runner-up trophy and certificate.

A national Spelling Bee was conducted in this very auditorium by the renowned Siddharth Basu, the Producer of Kaun Banega Crorepati. Emulating Siddharth was Atman Mehta of Class 8 of our school, who almost single-handedly planned and executed St. Mary's School Spelling Bee, the very first of its kind here.

Our school band still functions well despite the change of bandmasters. The band boys look smart in their new, shining outfits and are a sight to behold.

Last, but very far from least, St. Mary's had its first edition of an inter-school cultural extravaganza on June 30 and July 1 of the year 2012, entitled IMMACULATA . 14 schools participated in the 28 events that were conducted. More than 1000 students from reputed schools like Lilavatibai Podar, Champion, Villa Theresa, Jamnabai Narsee, J B Petit and others were present. Immaculata was conceptualized, designed and executed, for the most part, by the boys of class 9 and 10, with the student council taking the major role. Parents, well-wishers and ex-students who visited, were in awe of the systematic presentation and organization of these young lads, including the security arrangements, the hospitality and logistics.

SPORTS AND GAMES

Let us now switch over to sports and games.

FOOTBALL

Our school sent up 11 teams to participate in different tournaments and age groups. The results are as follows:

- Runner up at the Steven Anderson Interschool Football Tournament
- Mumbai School Sports Association :
 - U 8: 3rd place
 - U 10: (1st Div.): Runner-up
 - U 12: (1st Div.): Runner-up
 - U 16; (2nd Div.): 3rd place

Milind Deora Challenge Tournament: U 8: Runner-up
U 10: Winners

Keith Rodrigues selected as “Best Player” and selected for coaching by Manchester United at the Cooperage.

Saran Sports Challenge Tournament: U 8: Silver Medal
U 10: Crowned Champions

Tanay Shah shortlisted for a training course with London’s Queen Park Rangers.

BADMINTON : U 14: Nihar Thacker won 3rd place at the State Level.

SWIMMING:

This year, a Swimming Gala was organized at an outside club, thanks to the initiative of Mr. Balmukund Tiwari and our parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hirani. We received an overwhelming response from about 50 boys and an almost equal number of parents who attended!

EQUESTRIAN EVENTS: Mohammed Shums participated in the Junior Nationals organized by the Japaloupe Equestrian Centre.

SAILING: Aman Hirani, aged 11, 3rd place in the Yachting Association of India Regatta.

KARATE: Shirazi Zayed, 1st place, U 8, for the National Championship.
In the Gojukul Championship, Jahan Elavia, U 12, struck gold.

CHESS: Ankit Bhattacharya (of Class 6): Won at the Premier League Inter School Championship. Recently received a FIDE Chess Rating: his ELO rating is over 1600 points. (It is interesting to know that World Champion Vishwanathan Anand’s ELO rating hovers around 2800 points.)

ROLLER SKATING: In the U12 Category, Rayaan Razmi secured the 3rd place in the All Bombay District Roller Skating Championship.

Our outstanding athletes of the year were Joshua Sinate (U 16), Aaryan Yugpurush (U 14) Neele Ujrekar, Aman Hirani, Jahan Elavia (U 12), Rudra Dutta (U 10) and Zayed Shirazi (U 8).

Besides the Inter-school tournaments, inter-house and inter-class tournaments were also held in nearly all disciplines, so as to give as many as possible the opportunity to build on their potential. All in all, our boys have worked very hard at their various games, attending regular coaching classes, even in Athletics, here at school or elsewhere, in their endeavour “to reach the unreachable star”, and have often, attained their goal.

SOCIAL AWARENESS was promoted by keeping up the tradition of our Canteen Days, so that we could help our twin, tribal school at Uplat, Talasari and also give some assistance to our maintenance staff. We also pushed the Terry Fox Cancer Care Foundation by participating in its Marathon and by contributing to its fund. Our Interact and our SUPW (Supervised productive work cell) went about their tasks of inculcating and imbibing the spirit of caring for and thinking of others, building relationships and a team spirit.

ST. MARY’S REVIEW: Last year, we once again published the “St. Mary’s Review”, after a short gap. Many boys were thus afforded an opportunity to show their writing abilities. The school was also able to display, through the many beautiful photographs inserted, how very many and diverse are the activities that we get involved in. Mr George Hilbert was mainly responsible for the editing and printing, which he executed wonderfully.

The **HINDUSTAN TIMES SURVEY** of the City’s Top Schools and the HT Scholarships Programme is, by now, well known in Mumbai. St. Mary’s was adjudged one of the Top Ten amongst the schools of prestigious South Mumbai. And at the HT Scholarships, Soham Vakil was a Class VI winner. While Hoshedar Chichgar was among the “Other Hundred Finalists”. Their merit may seem ordinary, until you know that there were 57,000 students from Mumbai in the fray for these scholarships, each of which was worth Rs.50,000/- HT, in a letter to the Principal, had this to say, and I quote, “Being chosen amongst the top 50 amongst thousands in Mumbai is an achievement that deserves recognition and due plaudits. It goes without saying that the students’ achievements are but a reflection of the kind of exposure and support they get from their schools. On behalf of HT, we

would like to congratulate your school for mentoring such fine young minds.”

Before I wind up, a word about our PTA, which has been functioning smoothly. Parents and teachers come together to understand one another's problems and to resolve them amicably. Apart from the PTA, several parents have been coming in and out of the school to help us out in our various activities, be it Teachers' Day, Children's Day, Christmas gifts' preparation, Immaculata, prayer dances and a host of other events.

As you are all probably aware, serious planning has begun for our upcoming **150th year celebrations**. Although the actual year is 2014, since the school was officially established in 1864, the inauguration of the celebrations will begin around the time of the school feast, which falls on 8th December. Events which are being planned are as follows: Inauguration and Thanksgiving Service, participation in the Standard Chartered Marathon, an educational seminar, an inter-school football tournament plus some football coaching for the poorer sections of boys in the city or in rural schools, a coffee table book, and mementos for the occasion, etc. More on this subject will be communicated to you by email. All these events are projected to cost a lot of money and other resources; and so we shall be approaching you for assistance.

At the end, I wish to tell you how grateful I am to my last year's administrative team, consisting of Fr. Leslie Rebelo, Ms Marie Martin, and Mr Wilfred Noronha, and now, Mr Elias Coelho and Ms Nirmala Fernandes. Their service to the school is truly invaluable. I am also truly blessed to have a well-qualified, experienced and talented staff. Without them St. Mary's would not be institution that it is. Thank you, dear staff members, both, teaching and non-teaching, for all your cheerful work and cooperation! And finally, we cannot forget God and our heavenly patron, the Immaculate Mother Mary, for her blessings, care and protection.

CONCLUSION

Nurturing our students to be balanced, principled and reflective human beings, men with a thought for others, that is the challenge before us - in a world of competition, where the fittest and fastest alone can survive ... That is our dream! Impossible? I do not think

so! God created the world, as we have been reminded this evening, through the “Genesis” dance. St. Ignatius dreamed big, when he founded the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits. The founder of this school began it with a dream. Can we all continue to dream big things for our children, and incidentally, for ourselves? St Ignatius, lead us on!

Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen!