

Sir,

I had the good fortune of staying with Fr. Wavreil sj off and on in Durgapur. Whenever I went there, he had made me feel welcome. He was the Superior there. That too, even when I had spoken unpalatably of the Jesuits to him. He just smiled and made me feel at home. In these times of Catholic persecution; here was a man who never tried to convert anyone at all. And I vouch for it. Such heinous lies are being spread against Christians that I cannot rest cozily in my secured academic niche. I have long had many clerical friends and not once has anyone asked me to eschew my religion at all.

All Father did was to silently witness Jesus in his daily life. He reminded me of the Little Flower of Jesus every time we met. In fact, he took the trouble of sending me photocopied pages of theologians whom he felt I should read. But for him I would never have had access to such materials. Though I never liked Lonergan, he sort of forced me to read him so that we could debate. I had often taken long walks with him in the St. Xavier's grounds in Durgapur. We prayed together. He said the Holy Rosary; I muttered the Gayatri Mantra. He loved to paint and listen to both Eastern and Western classical music. He had once lent me his whole collection. He believed that none could ever study theology without a sense of classical music.

The small things reveal a great soul. Each and every time I stayed with him, without failure he had dropped me to Durgapur Bus-stand near the station on his scooter at 5.30 am. Not once did he allow me to go alone to the bus-stand. When I heard that this great man had died; I felt a real

loss. He had wanted to visit Bishnupur and stay a night with me visiting the terracotta temples and my college. Sadly, I had postponed his visit to this winter and now he is no more.

Apart from a personal loss, Bengal has lost a man who had become Bengali and truly a Renaissance individual. His external life may not have been remarkable but the interior man was a burning flame of love. Not something airy fairy. But he tried to love his fellow-people as His Father in Heaven loves His people in a tangible and concrete manner. And love knows no boundaries. Fr. Wavreil spoke to me through his life as a living Holocaust and what it means to live the theology of the Cross than many an erudite priest I have had the misfortune to meet so far.

Before I sign off, I need to raise just a few issues spoken of in *The Herald* dated 3rd October, 2008. One writer has tried to speak of Hindutva as being suppressive of the heteroglossic nature of traditional Hinduism. He has pointed out that Hindutva arises out of an encounter of Brahminic forces with later Semitic religions. This same author also quotes Romila Thapar in his argument against Hindutva. Before I proceed let me gently point out that though I am fully against Hindutva yet let I humbly put forward that the theoretical reasoning thereof in the said article is flawed. Does the author mean to say that it is wrong for Hindus to desire monotheist attitudes, or even monist attitudes? Both already have existed for centuries in Hinduism. And what is wrong if Hinduism assimilates Semitic elements? Also if Romila Thapar is to be accepted as a great historian, can the author then, who is a professed priest, agree with her fundamentally atheistic and non-absolutist stance? How is it possible, then, to accept somewhat

of one author while not mentioning that she considers any religion as opium for the masses and quote her out of her Marxist, nihilistic and materialistic contexts? Hindu Fundamentalism needs to be countered on three fronts: absolute intellectual honesty and clarity, social activism which involves Hindus and Christian lives which are exemplary.

I do not expect my letter to be published for I am carping too much and that may not go down well with the powers that be. But then this is the greatest homage I can pay to Fr. Wavreil and *inculturation*. Incidentally George Meneze's article in the same issue of *The Herald* was an eye-opener and he hits the bull's eye. Congrats.

Now that a nun has been raped in Orissa, I urge both my Catholic friends and Hindu liberals to start meaningful and sustained protests throughout Bengal before the communal forces butcher innocence here.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Your Confirmed Hindu Brother in Christ,
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