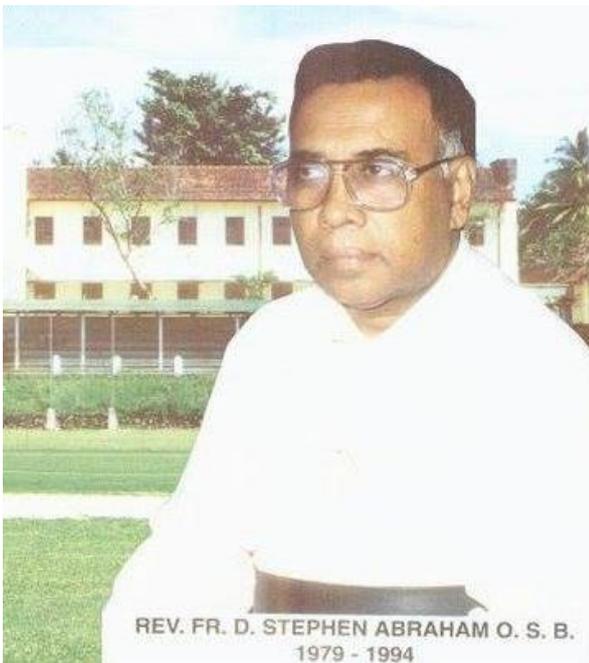


Golden Jubilee Celebration of Rev. Father Stephen Abraham O.S.B “To Sir With Love”

by Ajantha Ellepola (Melbourne)

On 17th December 2014 Reverend Father Stephen Abraham former Principal of St. Anthony's College Kandy will be celebrating his golden jubilee having entered the portals of “Priesthood”. We thank almighty God in having made his decision to have Rev. Father Stephen under his careful wings for past 50 years and beyond serving the community with utmost dedication and passion. Fifty years ago in 1964 he received his priestly ordination at Monte Fano, Ampitiya Kandy.



As an old boy of St. Anthony's College Kandy I wish to extend this very humble tribute to a dear priest our former Principal through this publication. He is a great teacher, counsellor, mediator, friend and above all a fully rounded up human being with great qualities. Whatever tribute paid to him must be attributed to that virtuous father and valiant mother whom he may say “with deep gratitude for giving me their blessings as a shield against life's winds and storms”.

Being the second eldest of a family of nine children, five boys and four girls. No doubt he would have had his parents and siblings' love, care and guidance to mould the “Person” he is today, Rev. Fr. Stephen even today has taken the responsibility as the eldest boy of his family to provide much needed guidance and

advice whenever they needed it. His siblings Hazel, Annesley, Vernon, Aloysius, Marie, Maureen, Paulette and Chrysostom rally round in his spiritual journey from the start just like thousands of others who were always there for him as his dedicated followers.

Rev. Fr. Stephen was born on 15th February 1933. He had his primary education at St. John's College Colombo and for his higher education he joined St. Joseph's College Colombo in 1947. Being a devoted catholic and his pious ways drove him to join the Monte Fano Novitiate in Ampitiya Kandy in 1956. He pursued philosophical and theological studies at the National Seminary Ampitiya till his ordination in 1964.

After ordination, Rev. Fr. Stephen's first assignment was in 1965 at St. Anthony's College where he served for three years as a member of the staff. He then took a teaching break to complete his Bachelor's Degree in 1968 at Madras University in India.

After his higher studies Rev. Fr. Stephen returned back to St. Anthony's College and served in many capacities as a Teacher, Prefect of Games, Warden of the Hostels, Sectional Head, Master of Discipline before he was appointed Director of Primary Department of the College in 1965.

Rev. Fr. Stephen was appointed as the Principal of St. Anthony's College in 1979 when the College was going through its darkest period. When there was “confusion” and “uncertainty” as to the future of the college he stepped in while other priests were reluctant and uplifted the college from its predicament.

Today St. Anthony's College Kandy is firmly established as one of the best schools in education, sports and discipline, thanks to Rev. Father's determination and power of command. A loyal band of fellow priests, a very active Old Boys Association, Parent Teachers Association rally round his leadership and supported him to achieve more during his 15 long years as the Principal of this great Institute.

For us at St. Anthony's College he has truly been a "Father with Us". Improving school buildings, many facilities and above all a sense of being at home within the portals of St. Anthony's are some of the fruits of his magnanimous leadership.

A noteworthy achievement of this great priest is the implementation of the housing project to celebrate his Silver Jubilee of priesthood by providing 25 houses to the minor staff of College and well deserving families of the area at "Anthony Gama". Which is a model housing scheme opened in 1990. This was a fitting celebration by participating in the International year of Shelter for the Homeless programme in fitting manner with the help of College Scout Troop and Old boys support; this outstanding priest achieved his goal.

Being involved in many extracurricular activities in the college such as Shakespeare Drama competitions, College choir, Debating team, Literary Festivals, Elocution and Public Speaking gave me the opportunity to come to know this great priest's finer points with proper advice and guidance. He is not only a devoted teacher but a priest who is dedicated to the wellbeing of many a deserving students and those outside as well.

The name of Rev. Father Stephen Abraham O.S.B will no doubt go down in Antonian history both as a master builder and as a disciplinarian moulding of children from all walks of life. He laboured untiringly till many of the urgently needed buildings were completed. The dream of many generations of Antonians was made come true in March 1993 when the College Gym was opened by Rev.Fr Stephen who was an instrument in making this long cherished dream a reality.

After leaving College in 1994 Rev. Father Stephen was appointed as the Principal of St. Nicholas International School in Rajagiriya. He served there for well over 3 years, subsequently held many designation over the years while doing lots of community services including building up English book library at St. Anthonys College and another at National seminary Ampitiya. Also running a refugee centre for in displaced families, assisting families effected with tsunami, while participating in many other community and social work services in a big way.

Rev. Father has widely travelled across the world especially in Australia and America. He was a well respected priest in many parishes in Australia and gained lots of popularity among troubled youth who came to the church to listen to Father Stephens Sermons.

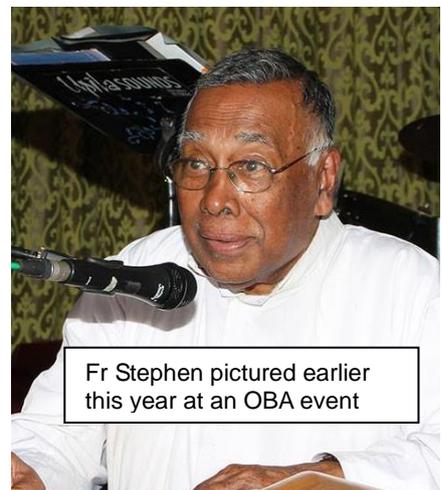
Rev. Father Stephen emphases that "Whether you are at the altar or and about in the community you have to be your real self. Priesthood is not something you can put on and takeoff. Underlying it all is a sense of a personal relationship with God to live that relationship" he also stress "It is not celebration of the sacraments that's important but the sharing of joy and sorrow, struggles and hopefulness and all those human emotions that go with those different stages of life".

We salute you dear Father for all that you were to us and we pray for your happiness and long life. You were a loving father to the Antonian family and we owe you a debt of gratitude that cannot be paid.

May God bless you Rev.Fr Stephen Abraham O.S.B on your Golden Jubilee Celebration!!



17th December 1964 the day Rev.Fr. Dom Stephen Abraham was ordained as a priest at Monte Fano. With his parents, siblings and other members of the family.



Fr Stephen pictured earlier this year at an OBA event