



**Toward the Centenary - 06**

**AUXILIUM COLLEGE – VELLORE, KATPADI  
A HISTORICAL GLANCE**

***It all began with Mary!***

North Arcot District in the year 1952 as yet had no college for women. Mr Abdul Khader, the District Educational Officer and Mr Jerry Lobo, the Director of Public Instruction approached the Provincial Sr Teresa Merlo informing her that the Government has decided to extend Vellore Town to the north of River Palar advising her to purchase the land which was sold out for establishing educational institutions of higher learning. Mother Merlo who was about to leave for Japan, entrusted the task to Sr Cesira Gallina her successor. Mr Abdul Khader who had seen for himself the quality of education imparted by the Salesian Sisters in other centres was resolute that it must be the Salesian Sisters who must establish a college for women at Katpadi. Sr Cesira prayed, sought advice and thought seriously over the matter. Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, Dr Louis Mathias SDB, welcomed the idea and the Superior General Mother Linda Lucotti gave her consent.

On 30 October 1952, 53.86 acres of land situated in Kangeyanallore and Kalinjur villages was purchased from the 'The Katpadi Co-operative Township'. Later on, more land was purchased. Stretching wild and barren to the east of Vellore-Chittoor road and south of Katpadi railway station, this area in those days looked dreary and desolate.

No sooner had the first deed was signed than the Sisters began their task of building a small hut for the Sisters, deepened and widened an existing well and the construction of a canal from the well across the property for irrigation purposes. On 18 April 1953, the site for the college building was blessed by Mgr Mariaselvam SDB, Bishop of Vellore. It was a daring venture for Mother Cesira whose only resource was Sr Helen Fernandes who was completing her post-graduation course, ready cash of ₹5,000/- and her abiding trust in the Divine Providence, Mary Most Holy and St. Joseph. Sr Nancy Pereira toiled along with the workers day and night while Mother Cesira and Sr Helen went through the formalities of starting the college. On 1 July 1954, Auxilium College began with one year Intermediate course. The community comprised of seven Sisters: Sr Cleoffe Fassa, Superior, Sr Helen, Sr Nancy, Sr Anna Abraham, Sr Anna Xavier, Sr Giovanna Villavarayar, and Sr Maria Fino.

From 1967 onwards, the care of the farm and fields were taken up by the community of Sacred Heart Home. Auxilium College was registered as "The Katpadi Auxilium Society" under the "Societies Registration Act XXI" of 1866 on 30 March 1979.

**THE AUXILIUM COMMUNITY** was born in June 1953 when Sr Cleoffe, Sr Anna and Sr Nancy came from St Mary's Convent, Vellore and took their abode in the little cottage that was built for the Sisters. On 15 June 1953, a part of the cottage was transformed into a chapel and Fr Pianazzi Archimedes SDB, Salesian Provincial, celebrated Mass. One day a huge parcel arrived at the Convent. Not knowing from where they opened it and to their great surprise found a life-size statue of St. Joseph which they placed in the middle of the cottage. Later on, the statue was placed in a niche in the middle of the fields from where he watches over and protects the whole campus harkening to the supplications of all who approach him with faith and trust. On completion of the

college building (Arts Block), the first three rooms on the ground floor were used as Sisters' residence, hosteller's dining hall and Chapel respectively.

The second block (Cesira Block) was constructed in 1959 and the community was shifted to a part of this building. The hostellers were also accommodated in the same building. In 1965, the community was shifted to the ground floor of the Senior Hostel (M.M.Block). In 1967, the Province designed a specific year of Juniorate immediately after Profession, forming a new community 'Auxilium Home' of the Juniors and students Sisters staying in the M.M.Block.

In 1969, when the Novitiate was shifted to Bangalore, the Community of Auxilium Home was shifted to the Novitiate House and was called 'Sacred heart Home'. From 1971, the animation and administration of the Auxilium Elementary School and High School were entrusted to Sacred Heart Home. The student Sisters who were part of Sacred Heart Home Community joined the College Community on 20 June 1971.

In 1977, the State Government brought about a change in the Educational System of 11+1+3 (SSLC as Std XI, 1 year Pre-University Course and 3 years of Undergraduate Course). The new system was 10+2+3 (SSLC as Std X, 2 years of Higher Secondary Course and 3 years of Undergraduate Course). Since the High School did not have the necessary laboratories and the College had additional laboratories due to discontinuation of Pre-University Course, the administration of the High School and the Elementary School was given to the College Community in 1977. But in 1980, the administration of the Elementary School was handed over again to Sacred Heart Home. A separate building was constructed for the residence of Sisters and the college community moved into it on 7 June 1981.

Auxilium College which began on 1 July 1954, on a small scale with 12 staff members and 67 students in the first year Intermediate Course, today has on its records 185 members on the staff and strength of 3659 students of whom 478 are Catholics. There are 828 students in the hostel. Sr Cleofe was the first Secretary and Sr Helen, the first Principal. In creative fidelity to Don Bosco's educative method, Sr Helen laid a firm foundation for good academic standards, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, sports and social services, besides building up a friendly atmosphere, family spirit and good interpersonal relationship between staff members, Sisters, students, past pupils, parents and the local public which has always been a unique characteristic of Auxilium.

On 5 January 1955, the first college building, Arts Block, was blessed by Fr Renato Ziggotti SDB, the Rector Major, as a monument of gratitude of the 25 years of missionary work of the Salesian Sisters in North Arcot District.

Since 1954, there has been a gradual increase in the number of admissions. The College achieved phenomenal growth by getting 100% results in all the courses at the end of three years of study. The academic excellence, discipline, character formation and the integral education are commendable merits by which Auxilium has won the admiration and esteem of the society.

A one-year Pre-University Course was introduced in 1956 and affiliation was granted for the three-year Bachelor's Degree courses in Tamil Literature, English Literature, Economics, Chemistry and Zoology in 1957. On 22 April 1957, a large three-storey structure enclosing a quadrangle as hostel block for students was blessed by David Marianayagam, Bishop of Vellore. In 1960, permission was granted to upgrade the Elementary School (existing from 1952) to Middle and High School. A three-storey Hostel, M.M Block as well as a three-storey School building under the supervision of Sr. Anna Abraham, were completed in 1964 and 1965. In 1966, B.Sc. Mathematics was introduced. The majestic Chapel in memory of the centenary of the Mary Help of Christians Basilica in Turin was blessed on 10 August 1968 by Mgr David Marianayagam SDB, Bishop of Vellore.

The period between 1970 to 1980 witnessed several changes in the policies of the Government like the University Departmental audit programme, new regulations of the Government on private colleges, decentralization of power on academic matters by the University, the introduction of the semester system, greater involvement of the colleges in community development and finally, the shedding of the PUC from colleges. The three-storey Science Block was blessed on 15 October 1971 by Mgr Rayappa Anthony Muthu, Bishop of Vellore. In August 1975 the college enthusiastically took up the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) proposed by the University of Madras to inculcate in the students, love and concern for the poor. The developmental activities carried out in the neighbouring Thiruvalluvar Nagar, Kangeyanellore and Kalinjur villages have played a vital role in transforming the face of the villages and giving the students a sense of social responsibility. Camps were conducted even in distant villages. Now NSS has five units with 500 volunteers. In 1975, B.A. Economics was discontinued and B.A History was introduced. In 1977, B.A. Degree course in Tamil Literature was discontinued and B.Com. was introduced in 1980.

**SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION:** Foundation stone for the Silver Jubilee memorial auditorium was blessed by Dr Simon D. Lourduswamy, Secretary to the Sacred Congregation for Evangelization of People on 23 December 1976. It was completed in 1979, the Silver Jubilee year and was blessed by Mgr Anthony Muthu, Bishop of Vellore in the presence of the founders and the pioneers. The three-day celebration (7, 8, 9 February 1980) marked various events in the presence of Dignitaries: A.P Bhatikar, Collector of North Arcot; Dr G.R. Damodaran, Vice-Chancellor, University of Madars and Mr Prabhudas Patwari, Governor of Tamil Nadu who specifically mentioned that Auxilium was the Educational capital of North Arcot District. The theme chosen for the Silver Jubilee year was "Reach out and Touch". The College carried out several development programmes for the poor and the marginalised.

During the decade 1980-1990, College has been focusing on quality education and integral formation rather than rapid expansion since the concern was to uplift the majority of first-generation learners of Vellore District and its neighbourhood. It started new courses only when the third and fourth generation learners of the district felt the need for more courses, keeping in tune with the needs of the society. In 1991, keeping with the explosion of knowledge in the field of Science and Information Technology, B.Sc. Computer Science started as the first self-financed course in the Evening College was a boon to the young women of the locality. Then followed many new, innovative and job-oriented UG and PG courses: B.Sc. Biochemistry, B.B.A, and M.A. English in 1997, B.Sc. Physics, B.Sc. Microbiology and M.Sc. Mathematics in 1999, and M.Sc. Computer Science in 2000. B.Sc. Degree course in Physical Education, Health Education and Sports in the year 2001 came as an appropriate response to the many aspiring sportswomen of Vellore and the surrounding districts. Yet another course of high employment potential, B.C.A. was also introduced in the same year and the college grew in leaps and bounds in infrastructural facilities and new buildings: Computer Block, Indoor Stadium and the Students' Dining Hall. In 2002 M.Sc. Bioinformatics was started. In 2002, the College was affiliated to the nascent Thiruvalluvar University. M.Com. was introduced in 2003.

**GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION:** In 2003, the Golden Jubilee Year, Auxilium College got accredited by the NAAC with A<sup>+</sup> status having an institutional score of 90-95%.

In the year (2003-2004) a host of formative activities were conducted for the staff, students, past pupils, and every department carried a variety of reach out programmes. The glorious events that marked the mega celebrations from 12 to 14 February 2004 were solemnised by the presence of: Fr Joaquim D'Souza, SDB, Regional Councillor, South Asia; Sr Wilma D'Souza FMA, Visiting General Councillor; Provincials of FMA India; Mgr A. M. Chinnappa SDB, Bishop of Vellore and

other Bishops of Tamil Nadu; Thiru P.S. Ramamohan Rao, Governor, Tamil Nadu; Thiru A.X. Alexander ADGP, Tamil Nadu; Dr A.C. Mohandas IAS, Collector, Vellore; Prof. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chairman, U.G.C, New Delhi. The golden jubilee memorial 'Media Block' was inaugurated and M.Sc. Electronic Media was introduced.

In 2005, M.Sc. Chemistry and M.S.W. programmes were introduced. A language laboratory was set up in 2007. On 1 June 2007, the UGC and the Thiruvalluvar University conferred Autonomy Status on Auxilium College. With this breakthrough, the College could work its way effectively and launch innovations efficiently. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) was introduced.

A new Block for all administrative requirements (Regina Colombo Block) with modern amenities was inaugurated on 15 October 2009. In 2007, PG course in Zoology was introduced along with M. Phil. Degree Programmes in English and Mathematics and the first newsletter "Auxi News" was released. In 2008, M. Phil. in Chemistry and Commerce were introduced. Auxilium Study Centre was established to coach students for UGC-CSIR/NET Examinations and Entry-in-service examinations.

Departments started Certificate Courses in addition to regular courses with the assistance of UGC. To inculcate research culture, Auxilium Research Cell was constituted in 2008. Smart classroom facilities were added. M.Phil. in Computer Science and Zoology were introduced in 2009. Auxilium stepped higher in the field of research with the introduction of a PhD in English, Mathematics and Chemistry. The Department of Commerce started ICWAI Coaching classes for students. The Department of Communication Media launched Web TV and Web Radio.

In January 2010, the College was re-accredited with A-Grade and a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.41 out of 4 and an institutional score of 90-95%. In 2010, Certificate Course in Communication Skills was introduced by the Department of English. In 2011, the Department of Zoology and Commerce started Certificate courses in Medical Laboratory Techniques and Human Resource Management and Development. PhD in Zoology was introduced. The College improved its infrastructure with the addition of the canteen, students hostel, outdoor stadium and floodlighting of the basketball court with UGC's financial assistance. In 2012, M.B.A. was started.

The presence of Don Bosco's Relic in the campus on 5 November 2012 was a significant event in the history of Auxilium College. The College was privileged to host the celebration of the FMA World Feast of Gratitude on 26 April 2013.

**DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS:** With immense joy, the College celebrated the 60 fruitful years of its mission among the young on 19 and 20 December 2014. A solemn Thanksgiving Eucharist was concelebrated by Dr.Soundararaju Periyannayagam SDB, Bishop of Vellore, Fr.Raphael Jayabalan SDB, Provincial of Chennai, with the Diocesan Curia, the Salesians, the Religious and the Diocesan Priests of Vellore. Many luminaries were present at the concluding celebrations.

The College embarked on the process of extension of autonomy and got the conferment till 2020-21. The digital library of diamond jubilee memorial, Women's Hostel and Fitness Centre were inaugurated in 2016. India-Sri Lanka Youth Exchange Programme was organized joining hands with Audacious Dreams Foundation from 5 to 12 July 2015. In August 2016, the College was accredited with A<sup>+</sup> Grade having a CGPA of 3.55 out of 4 in the third cycle of Accreditation.

In 2017, the two-wheeler parking space was expanded and additional restrooms for students were constructed. Ramps were constructed in all the buildings for the benefit of the differently-abled students. BBA (Hospital Administration) was started in 2017 in collaboration with Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore. M.Phil. PhD Programmes in Management Studies were also started in the same year.

Auxilium College was selected as the *Centre for Excellence by the Commonwealth Youth Council*. The India-Malaysia Youth Exchange programme was initiated to strengthen bilateral foreign relations among members of the Commonwealth of Nations, Asian Union and G15.

The College has been granted the status of a registered online learning platform on NPTEL-SWAYAM to enable the students to excel in fundamental research by pursuing Online certificate and diploma courses. The College conducted District Youth Parliament “The Voice of India”, as a Central Government undertaking, and was identified as the Nodal Institution for Vellore District. with our staff and student as the Nodal Officer and student delegate to participate in the National Youth Parliament held in Delhi presided by the Honourable Prime Minister.

Auxilium College was recognized as a Mentor College to guide five mentee colleges as an honour conferred on colleges that have a NAAC score of 3.26 and above. For the academic year 2020-2021, the college has a proposal to start B.Sc. Psychology, M.Sc. Biochemistry, M.Sc. Microbiology and PhD in Commerce and Physics.

**AUXILIUM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION:** The dream of FMA Chennai Province and the people of Vellore District to have a College of Education for young girls of the district and the diocese was finally realised on 6 September 2012 with the Recognition Order from NCTE Bangalore for an annual intake of 100 students. The classes were held in the Administrative Block of Auxilium College for the first three years. The B.Ed. Block was blessed by Dr Soundararaju, SDB, DD, the Bishop of Vellore, on 8 June 2015. Principal and the staff work together to make the students into full-fledged Salesian Educators. The students are assigned teaching practice in the neighbouring schools and they are appreciated for their formation, creative ways of teaching and their educative presence among the children. In 2015, NCTE, Delhi passed a law to make the B.Ed. to two-year Degree Course. The college has full strength of 200 students of whom 51 are Catholics. At the university examinations, the college obtained 100% passes every year with distinction. In 2013-2014, R. Nithiya (Mathematics) secured the First Rank with ten gold medals.

**THE PAST PUPILS ASSOCIATION** of Auxilium College started in 1961. During the first meeting on 6 August 1961, 60 past pupils were present. The unit was officially established on 4 March 1962. All the final year students were enrolled till 1987, but from 1988 only the students who desired to be in the association were enrolled. Today the association has 22884 members on roll. Auxilium is proud to record that 86 past pupils of the College are FMA.

**ASSOCIATION OF SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS** started in Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar, in 1970 by Fr. Joseph J. SDB, Rector, was transferred to Auxilium College in 1975. They played a major role in the establishment of Gandhi Nagar Parish. In 1980 the “Association of Young Salesian Co-operators” was started. On 18 November 2001, the Silver Jubilee of the “Association of Salesian Co-operators” was celebrated and the Golden Jubilee celebrations were held in October 2017. At present, there are 20 active Salesian Co-operators and 37 Young Salesian Co-operators.

**VIDES** which started in the year 2001 with 37 members, now has on its roll 85 active members.

**Auxilium Family** marches ahead with unwavering faith, abundant hope and benevolent blessings from the Almighty, appreciating the commitment and dedication of every individual of the management, teaching and non-teaching fraternity, parents and students of Auxilium.

Auxilium began with Mary and continues to march to greater glory under her comforting mantle. Mary is the Queen and Mother of Auxilium College.

**“Let us walk with Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and beyond.”**

*Sr. Kunnathu Anna & Sisters  
Auxilium College Community, Vellore-6*

