

# Installation and Institution of Rev. Marc Billimoria As the 13<sup>th</sup> Headmaster of S. Thomas College at Gurutalawa.

The Service of Institution and Installation of Rev. Marc Billimoria as the 13<sup>th</sup> Headmaster of S. Thomas College at Gurutalawa took place at the Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi, S. Thomas College, Gurutalawa on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The service commenced at 10.30. a.m. officiated by the Rt. Rev. Duleep De Chickera the 14<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Colombo.

The chapel was packed to capacity with a sizeable overflow. The congregation included sundry members of the Board of Governors, Old Boys of the College in hopeful numbers augmenting members of the Committee, friends and relations of Fr. Marc and parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, Mirihana, in which he was, up to his appointment, the incumbent Vicar. The parishioners had made their way in a hired bus; truly testimony to the affection and regard they had for him and a symbolic augury for the future of the school.

There was a special order of service which commenced with the singing of the Old Hundred, the Hymn All people that on earth do dwell based on Psalm 100, the Entrance Hymn to the Holy Communion Service initially up to the point of The Sermon And the Creed. The sermon preached by the Bishop was on GOD's faithfulness and Caring enunciated by Jesus himself in the well known teaching Consider the Lilies of field.

Then came the INSTITUTION which was preceded by a sequence of Questions and Answers relating to the execution of his stewardship as the Headmaster. The Lord Being my helper and culminating in his actual commissioning and a special blessing on the Headmaster and his family present in person. Then the Bishop accompanied by The Archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya, the Chaplain, and the Headmaster, proceeded to the Headmasters Stall for his INSTALLATION after which he was formally presented to the gathering of people present.

The service then continued with The Ministry of the Sacrament, the Post Communion In which the Collect was said by the New Headmaster, before the Blessing and The Dismissal and the Recessional Hymn Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go.

The gathering then went in procession led by the College Band to the Canon. A. J. Foster Memorial Hall for General Assembly. A feature of the procession was the inclusion of three horses obtained for the school, courtesy Mr. Jacques Hughebaert who had been placed In Charge of the school till the appointment of the new Head.

Addressing the Assembly the Bishop referred to the dire straits the College had been in and referred to the unexpected emergence of Mr Hughebaert as divinely provided at a juncture when the closure of the school had appeared to be imminent.

The presence of a greatly increased student population now, was indicative of measures he had taken to stem the tide. He welcomed the new Head who was not only a priest but an old Thomian and called for the support of all concerned. However he

struck a discordant note, as far as the many Old Boys present were concerned, when his Lordship peremptorily cautioned against interference in the affairs of the School unaware of the circumstances in which he was moved to say so, particularly in the context of the recent past when it was precisely the Old boys who had filled the breach and brought the state of the school due to years of administrative neglect, to the fore, and set a train of events which had changed its course to its present regenerative possibility.

It was axiomatic that with Father Marc as Head, with the support of Mr.Hughebaert and Mr Christo Gonawela as Manager, there would be no question of interference.

Mr Hughbaert made the point that the horses he introduced would establish a resonance with the era of the School under Dr Hayman in which there were horses and the school was much sought after for the special type of Education it imparted.

Rev. Marc Billimoria then addressed the assembly and conveyed to all present, by his assurances and bearing, that the school was indeed on the threshold of a new Era which would reach out to the values of the past in the pursuit of excellence though under radically changed social conditions.

The Head Prefect proposed the customary Vote of Thanks and the assembly concluded with the singing of the College Song and the National Anthem.

The Service was conducted in all three languages and the singing was robust.

The Head master then invited all those present for Lunch. It was a vegetarian lunch and at the behest of the Head , no different from that of the Boys. It was noteworthy that the boys were smartly dressed.

**P.S.Duleepkumar.**