

EDITORIAL

The Guru Appeal... our *raison d'être*

There is a lot about the French that we often find difficult to like or understand. They make funny looking cars, they pay a lot of money to eat snails (escargot), their sense of fashion can be mystifying and the women are apparently known to flash the odd hairy armpit.

Whilst the Cholas, the Portuguese, The Dutch and the British chose to invade the old country from the West, the French preferred to "come the other way" and landed in Trincomalee in 1782. Strangely, they came to Trincomalee to fight against the British in the American War of Independence. Needless to say, the French attempt at conquest and colonisation lasted less than six months and is now a forgotten footnote in the island's history.

In more recent years, the French invented 'Minitel,' a video-text service that made perfect sense to the French but was shunned by the rest of the World who opted for the World Wide Web.

The French may be a strange lot, but the British colonies borrowed a lot from the French by way of language, culture and collective consciousness. One such borrowing is the phrase, *raison d'être*, meaning the **reason for being**.

The English, like their Germanic ancestors, are known to make a discipline of separating 'reason' and 'emotion.' In contrast, the French blend them like they do egg and oil to produce mayonnaise. Wikipedia explains *raison d'être* as a phrase that suggests an "intense emotional attraction to a course of action." In other words, emotion is reason enough to do something... As Thomians, we get the idea.

Our Thomian ethos ensures that we do the right thing because we want to do it, not only because we have to. We

take pride in taking the high road, often at a higher cost, because in the end that is what sets us apart from the rest of the mob.

If all that is true about us Thomians, then can we choose to ignore our *raison d'être*? Our founder, Bishop Chapman, urged Thomians to be "good as well as wise" and we'd do well to heed his call and respond with our wallets to the appeal from STC Gurutalawa. In this newsletter and by email, the Rev. Marc Billimoria has appealed for support from the global Thomian fraternity for funding that can help build and sustain STC Gurutalawa.

The OBA has previously channeled a few thousand dollars to Guru for various projects and has once again responded to the Headmaster's call, albeit with a smaller amount. Unfortunately, the OBA's funds are limited and have to be dispersed sparingly. The OBA regularly receives and responds to similar appeals from Mount Lavinia, Prep School and Bandarawala as well as from other worthy causes like the Mother Theresa's Home in Ratmalana and the Fred Hollows Foundation.

Given that the OBA's response falls far short of the Headmaster's expectations, the Guru Appeal must be cast wider to the network of Thomians who have built their lives and careers on the solid foundations of the Thomian experience that binds us all. It doesn't matter if we schooled at Mount, Prep, Guru or Bandarawala. Our seeds were sown in Muttuwal almost a 160 years ago.

If memories of our school days quickens our pulse and if the pitch perfect rendition of the College Song raises goose bumps, then we must have what it takes within us to respond to the Guru Appeal. How much is irrelevant but we must respond. To give back as we have taken is our reason for being... that is our *raison d'être*

Esto Perpetua

Vasee Nesiah
Editor