

Christmas 1968

My dear friend,

We have admitted the second batch of boys and girls to the College. Next June, in order to admit the 3rd year students, we require the sanctions of the Government and the University of Kerala. A high school in this State is 10 years, then 2 years of Pre-Degree, 3 years for B.A., or B.S., and 2 years for M.A., or M.S. Education is free until the 10th grade and the Government pays the salary of the teaching and non-teaching staff. In addition, the manager of a school will get a maintenance grant of about Rs. 3.00 per student. Private school means that you can maintain your (Catholic) atmosphere in school and appoint your man if qualified. In colleges tuition is collected and the Government meets 80% of the deficit. Teachers cannot be fired easily as they have security of tenure and have to be paid the national scale of salary.

At present the Communist dominated State Assembly is enacting a revised University Bill which under-cuts the freedom of the management completely. They believe that the University should be another department of the Government without autonomy. So we are having a very tough time. With a brute majority in the House these days, they are passing the Bill section by section without minding the strongest protest from us. In this State of Kerala there are 130 colleges of which 115 are private colleges run by Hindus, Christians or Catholics. Thus State aid means the loss of freedom. If the Assembly will not make suitable changes in the Bill we will take them to court or we may close down all 115 private colleges as has been agreed jointly by the private managements. Anyway, we are facing a hard situation and a stronger opponent. Keep us in your prayers.

Let me wish you a happy, holy and merry Christmas and assure you a memento in all my three masses, at Christmas. We say mass now in Malayalam. The people and priests appreciate, enjoy and live the mass. Experiments to introduce an Indian mass is going on.

Effort is also being made to evolve a Hindu-Christian theology and philosophy instead of Scholastic. There were practically no protests against the Papal encyclical or nobody is leaving the Church as such. Here, we are struggling for existence and trying to build up a Christian society. Our problems are very different.

We were terribly saddened by the murder of Bob Kennedy. So we were practically indifferent about Nixon and Agnew or Humphrey. I hope Nixon will be a success because his strength, as in a democracy, depends ultimately on the people. Even today his eye seems to be on the next election.

I am participating in the translation of the Holy Bible, and doing a bit of research, eventually to publish a history of Christianity in Kerala. This is a very laborious piece of work. Please let me know all about you.

Very sincerely yours,

*Fr. Denis J. Araujo*

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