



Rev Fr Ornellas Coutinho SJ: An Inspiration, a Teacher, and a Genuine Role Model

Himani Chemburkar Chandorkar

Behavioral Skills Facilitator & Coach, Vadodara

Abstract: Fr. Ornellas Coutinho SJ (Gujarat province), fondly called Orny, died at 3 pm on 27 October, 2022, at Vadodara. He was born on 6 August, 1942 in Mapusa, Bardez, Goa. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1961. He pronounced his first vows on 21 June 1963 at Vinayalaya, Mumbai. He did his philosophy (1964-66) and Theology (1970-73) at Jnana Deepa, Pune. He was ordained a priest in Bombay, on 07 April, 1973. From 1976 to 78 he served as Minister, De Nobili College. Most of his life he spent in the school as teacher or principal. He was a well-known musician and football coach.

As rector of Papal Seminary, Pune (1st June 2004 - 9th June 2007), he radiated a spirit of joy and enthusiasm. As an affable and joyful person, he was well liked by the students and staff alike. He organized the Golden Jubilee of Papal Seminary's transfer to Pune (2005). Here is an appreciation of him by a former student.

Cite as: Chandorkar, Himani Chemburkar (2022). Rev Fr Ornellas Coutinho SJ: An Inspiration, a Teacher, and a Genuine Role Model Version 1.0). *AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies*, Nov-Dec 2022 (67/6), 49-53. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7264769>

Keywords: Ornellas Coutinho, Jesuit educator, Papal Seminary Rector, Gujarat Jesuit

A Genuine Inspiration for Me

All of us have some special favourite people in our lives beyond family and friends....ones who have a deep impact on our lives! Father Orny Coutinho was one such favourite person for me.... One who played a very vital role in shaping me as a person!

I remember as an 8 year old kid I always looked forward to meeting him as he brought so much joy with his wholeheartedness ...he would laugh heartily with us, share chocolates with us, enjoy eating out of our tiffin boxes and express his joy and appreciation in a way which always doubled our joy! Today knowing he is no longer with us took me back to those days back in school that brought back memories of all his actions and words that knowingly/ unknowingly inspired me...

- To believe in my own self and have the grit & gumption to make things happen
- To never lose the connect with the joyful child within
- And most importantly embrace the simple art of respecting all around you by simply listening to them & giving them your time & undivided attention (Something which he did so beautifully & effortlessly even with us class 4 kids)

There were so many more ways in which he inspired by him. Although he is no longer around us, I believe a part of him continues to live within innumerable students like me in the form of the values he instilled in us! (I am so glad I got an opportunity to share my gratitude in person when I met him a couple of years back!)

Father I will miss you a lot, but I promise to continue to celebrate the life you lived by practising what you taught us not by teaching but by example! — with Orny Coutinho.

Teacher Who Taught Without Teaching

It was recess time in school. Me, a class 4 kid then was having her sandwiches from her lunch box when a stranger came up to me with a beaming smile and said “Wow!! You seem to have some tasty sandwiches! Can I try one?”. I didn’t know him, perhaps he was a teacher from higher classes. But I couldn’t stop myself from giving him a piece of my sandwich – such a sunny persona he had! And as he took a bite of the sandwich I could see he loved it! He asked me my name and asked me whether I would share my tiffin again sometime. I smiled back with a yes before he went his way. After he left I got to know he was our new School Principal who was supposed to take charge from the following day. Never before had I seen the Principal of the school so lively and friendly! And even at such a young age I really looked forward to have him as the Principal!

Father Orny Coutinho certainly was a Principal/ teacher like no other....sitting and chatting with kids during the recess time, being a foodie(that’s what I felt he was then) trying out whatever we got in our tiffin boxes, and amazingly remembering the name of every kid he met.

One day he asked me whether I liked deer.....and then to my surprise he said we would soon have 2 in a little sanctuary he was planning to build inside the school campus.... With deer, birds, rabbits!

This was like a dream come true for a class 4 kid and during every lunch break before I opened my lunch box I would knock at his cabin door..... go inside and ask the same question everyday – “Father, when will the deer come?”

This went on for weeks and not once did I see him irritated. He would always welcome me into his cabin, at times share a toffee and tell me “Himani, still there is time”, sometimes he would show the sketches the horticulturist had made for designing the little sanctuary, but not a day was there when I was made to feel unwelcome or my curiosity was curbed. Till the day came when he came searching for me during the lunch break and said “Himani, there is a surprise that I want you to see” and somewhere I knew what it was and as I walked or rather sprinted along with him we came face to face with parents of a student who had

come to meet him and for a moment I felt... “Oh! Now I won’t get to see the surprise”, but then my eyes twinkled when he told them “Can you wait for 10 minutes in my cabin? I have promised something to this kid since long; need to fulfill that first”. As a kid that was a memorable moment....as it made me feel valued!

Father Coutinho, its been years since I last met you, but I want you to know, these little things that you did left an everlasting impact in my life, teaching me some vital life lessons which I do try to practice!

1. The value of making people around you feel valued – could be just remembering names.
2. The value of making people feel comfortable with you.
3. The value of living up to your promises
4. The value of encouraging curiosity
5. The value of being kind and patient
6. The value of spreading smiles
7. The value of giving importance to little things in and for others thus instilling confidence in others
8. The value of developing the spirit of enjoying little things in life – could be just a sandwich shared

Concluding Wishes

Without actually teaching all of this you have contributed in creating a “Himani” who is a little more curious, a little more confident with a little more perseverance, a little more kind, a little more patient and yes a little more happier and contented in life than I would have been otherwise, with you instilling the seed of the spirit of enjoying the little things in life and spreading that joy! Father Coutinho, I always loved what and the way you taught (The Subject of English) but the above lessons you taught are far more valuable!

[Modified from her Facebook postings]

Article Received: Oct 28, 2022, Accepted: Oct 29, 2022; Word Count: 1202



Himani Chandorkar, is a behavioral skills facilitator & coach by profession and run a learning and development solutions firm based out of Vadodara. Email: himani@etude360.com | ORCID: 0000-0001-9815-3707.



© by the authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/> by

/4.0/

Life of Orny in Brief

He was born on 6 August, 1942 in Mapusa, Bardez, Goa. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1961. He returned to the Lord on 27 Oct 2022 at Baroda.

Formation	Institution	Place	Year
First Vows	Vinayalaya	Mumbai	21 June, 63
Juniorate	Vinayalaya	Mumbai	1963-1964
Philosophy	JDV	Pune	1964-1966
Language	St. Xavier's School	Anand	1966-1967
Regency	Loyola	Ahmedabad	1967-1968
B. Ed	St. Paul's College	Belgaum	1968-1979
Regency	St. Mary's School	Nadiad	1969-1970
Theology	JDV	Pune	1970-1973
Ordination	St. Peter's	Mumbai	7 Apr 73
MA		Surat	1978-1980
Final Vows		Pimpri	21 June 80

Responsibilities Held in the Society of Jesus		
Responsibility	Place	Year
In charge of Pre-novices	Ahmedabad	1973
Vice Principal	St. Mary's School, Rajkot	1974-1976
Minister	DNC, Pune	1976-1978
Principal	St. Xavier's School, Surat	1982-1983
Principal, Rector	Loyola Hall, Ahmedabad	1983-1990
Principal, Superior	Rosary School, Baroda	1990-2000
Dean, Superior	Juniorate, BTC, Pune	2000-2003
Director, Manager, Superior	St. Xavier's School, Surat	2003-2004
Rector	Papal Seminary, Pune	2004-2007
Coordinator	Alumni Association, Gujarat	1983-2004
Coordinator	Baroda District	1996-2000
Parish Priest	St. Xavier's Parish, Ahmedabad	2007
Superior	Gurjarvani	2007-2010
Rector	St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad	2010-2014
Coordinator	Ahmedabad District	2011-2014
Manager	XICA, Ahmedabad	2012-2014
Rector	Sneh Jyoti, Sevasi	2014-2020
Animator	English Medium School, Anand	2020-2021
	Infirmery, Jeevan Darshan, Baroda	2021-2022

Thanks to Gujarat Jesuit Province

