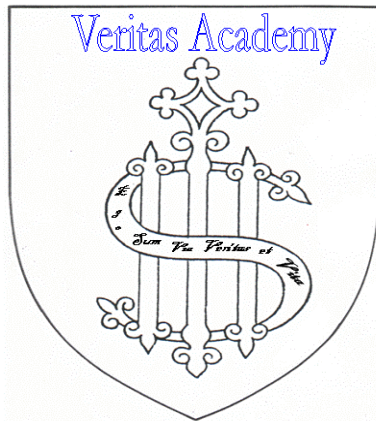


The Launching of Veritas Academy

June 12th is a day to remember for the priests, faithful and children in South India.

Without much fuss or fanfare, the first day of classes at Veritas Academy began for al-

most 30 children. There has long been a need for an integrally Catholic school in Tamil Nadu. All the priests posted here have remarked upon the sad state of the Catholic schooling which is seen across India (and elsewhere in the world). The bureaucratic obstacles have always been a deterrent to the creation of a traditional Catholic school. Recently, an unforeseeable event occurred which provided the stimulus for the launching of a school. The transfer of an entire orphanage from another state to be closer to the priory and tradition (*see APOSTLE XI*) brought some serious and far reaching questions to the priests. Almost 20 young children have received Baptism and superb catechetical instruction within the past year. The question arises then, "Do we send these impressionable and pure souls to the local apostate Catholic schools, or even the government schools, both of which teach lies, propaganda and everything except the true faith?" On



the supernatural level they are totally deficient and also on the natural level these schools are a man-made disaster zone. Considering all these points and constant experience, there seemed to be absolutely no option except to begin our own Catholic school, however modest. After gaining permission from the District Superior, the prior sat down to take a hard look at the obstacles that must be overcome to make the school project happen. Legally, the obstacles could be sidestepped by calling the school a "Tuition Center" and using the school of a close friend to "register" the children officially.

The other obvious problems which had to be faced were teaching and curriculum. A small description or summary of the problem should be helpful to our readers. Aside from a few exceptions, the method of teaching which is found here does not follow the true principles of pedagogy. It must never be forgotten that most schools here are an investment, a business venture, and as such, the actual learning and understanding of the students is always going to take second place after the bottom line. Since the financial considerations are of utmost importance, the teachers are compelled primarily to do whatever is necessary to make the school a business success, not firstly to make certain that their students are learning and comprehending the subject at hand. If the students of a school obtain high marks on the government exams, the school prospers financially, since more students are enrolled in the school the following year by parents eager to have their children get high marks. Finally, therefore, it behooves a school to order the curriculum towards the constant review and memorization of innumerable facts, figures, and essays which will appear on the government exams. Although this is not the only problem with the education system here, it is certainly a large part of the problem. Added to this problem is that the common curriculum is full of liberal propaganda, irrelevance, and gravely negligent in subjects that are truly important.



Above: Dr. Sunil introduces the older girls class to the rudiments of the beautiful Latin language.

A Catholic curriculum was provided to Veritas Academy by the good graces of Our Lady of Victories in Idaho, USA. Most of the children cannot speak or read English, but it was still decided to make it an English medium school. More than 20 teachers were interviewed from a local Catholic teaching college and only several were found to be potential candidates. From that group one teacher was hired, two were hired from within the parish and for the rest of the teachers the priests looked inside our small house community. The six pre-seminarians had recently finished one year of classes and it was decided that they could now help with the teaching of the children. The prior would teach a Bible History class to the older students and the pre-seminarians would teach



Above: The desks and chairs stacked after classes in the corridors on the ground floor of the priory in the difficult first few weeks of operation.



Above: The boys anxiously awaiting dismissal.

basic English, Latin, Tamil, Hindi and some mathematics. Utilizing the helpful books sent by Our Lady of Victories (and C-Link), the children (spread from grades 1 – 7) would be given two separate English classes each day (English grammar and speaking English). Further, they have a Catholic science class, Bible history, Latin, Hindi, Tamil, and Mathematics. Once a week the girls are given a sewing class and the boys are given a singing class.

As mentioned on the cover page, the first weeks were spent on the ground level of the priory, since the school building was not able to be rented until July. The boys vacated their bedrooms each morning after breakfast and unstacked the desks, arranging them in each classroom. Then at 4 pm, the

process would be reversed, stacking the desks in the corridors and reclaiming their bedrooms.

The first quarter of school was recently completed and the progress of the children is a source of consolation to the teachers and priests. All the children and teachers at Veritas Academy continue to beseech your prayers for the continuance of this humble school which is trying to forge a new path within the Indian education system. It is not by chance that the name and motto “*Ego Sum Via, Veritas et Vita*” were chosen. Truly, it is in this country that we have such need of Our Lord and His truth. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”



Above: The girls lineup before the first class.