



“Now let’s get this right,” says Anthony Stalin. “If seven cats have seven kittens, there must be errr...seven times seven, plus seven and then times the lot by four errr.. lots of paws?”

Great Minds

While visiting my little sister-behind-bars in Belgium (she is an enclosed Carmelite at Quievrain), she recommended that I read the life of Fr. Pierre-Jean de Smet S.J. (1801-1873), the legendary Belgian missionary of the North American Indians, for he had many ideas about the apostolate which included opening a school for orphans. So, when I returned to India, I downloaded the biography by Fr. E. Laveille S.J. (published in 1915) and began to read, ...and read, and read.

Chapter after chapter brought smiles and even tears to the eyes as colourful descriptions of great projects, beautiful landscapes, tribal cultures, dangers, tragedies and miracles leapt from the pages. All of Fr. De Smet’s activity was driven by a desire to bring souls to the knowledge and love of Christ. He met with opposition from nature, from hos-

tile Indians, from traders, from government and even from his own confreres and superiors. Sometimes he feared that all his work would come to nothing, but, realising that success would only come through embracing the Cross, he abandoned himself to holy obedience—even if it meant being confined to a bursar’s job far from his beloved Indians. The author declares that “he sowed in tears, for someone else to reap with joy,” but in reality he did a fair bit reaping for himself. He baptised over five thousand Indian children and, with a child mortality rate of about 75% before the age reason, he made for himself a legion of intercessors in heaven.

Among the most memorable quotations of Fr. De Smet was one to a Mother Superior of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. He said,

Believe me, you will never succeed in



“I’ve thrown more than 25 rupees into this silly wishing well; I can’t possibly fail again!”

this country unless you call down the blessing of heaven by founding schools for the Indians.

The first school was established in Flourissant, St. Louis in 1824 with the goals of making the best use of the priests (by making the Indians come to them); training the children as interpreters and catechists; making apostles of the children within their own families; giving a home to those who were orphans; and marrying the boy orphans to the girl orphans so that truly Catholic communities might be established.

Now if these were not the very same goals of our own Veritas Academy, then **there’s no tea in China ..or India for that matter!**

The old school year ended before Holy Week as usual. Three girls and three boys sat their final exams after Easter and we are now busy recruiting new children from our Mass Centres for the new school year which begins in June. As usual we are greatly indebted to our volunteers, without whom we could not function. The same is true of our benefactors who have faithfully sponsored our children over the last six years.

May Fr. De Smet intercede for us and inspire us all to be true missionaries after his own heart which he described thus to his father:

To suffer and to die for the salvation of souls is the sole ambition of a true missionary.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks to all our benefactors and volunteers. You are storing up treasures in heaven—may God bless you all.

In Jesu et Maria,
Father Robert Brucciani



Gerard Keiser of Dickinson, Texas, U.S.A., sports a temporary moustache to blend in with the locals; he seems very happy about the end of term.



Do you ever get that end-of-school-year feeling? Teachers Cecilia and Maria, certainly do.



Best friends, Cecile Hess and Maria Mettler of Gelfingen and Goldau in Switzerland prepare to board their flight home.



Holding back the tears. Young Joseph Bradshaw of Hampshire, U.K. doesn't want to go home.



It's all too much for Mary Williams of St. Mary's, U.S.A.