

FR. JOHN D'MELLO, S.J. (89/65)

Born :14.12.1932 Entered the SJ: 20.06.1957
Ordained :09.06.1966 Final Vows : 26.01.1977
Died at Xavier Bhavan, Digha Ghat, Patna, India, on 24.08.2022



Studies & Formation:

Secondary Education: St. Francis de Sales High School, Nagpur 1949
Higher Sec. Education: Up to I. Sc, Jalgaon 1951
Novitiate: Vinayalaya, Bombay 1957
Philosophy: DNC Pune 1960
Regency - Yr 1: Delhi, Chuharhi 1961
Theology: West Baden & Bellarmine Sch. Of T. USA 1963
Post-Graduate Study: MBA, Notre Dame, USA 1968
Tertiarianship: Hazaribagh, St Stanislaus 1969
Apostolic Assignments as a Priest:
Minister, St. Xavier's, Delhi, 1968
Min. & Vice Principal, St. Xavier's, Patna, 1970

V. Principal, St. Xavier's, Delhi, 1971
V. P S. X, Patna, 1972
Principal, St. Michael's, Patna, 1972
Minister, DNC, Pune, 1973
Rector, Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, 1976
Parish Priest, Muzaffarpur, 1982
Provincial, Patna Province, 1983
Rector, XTTI, Patna, 1989
Helping in the Administration, K.H.F.H, Patna, 1996 - 2019
St. Xavier's Patna, Residence, Community Service, 2020
Xavier Bhavan, Rest, 2022

Fr. John D'Mello was known as '*Gamcha Father*' as he used to go around with a towel around his neck. He was also known as "Happy Birthday Father" as he used to wish everyone "Happy Birthday". When someone said that it was not his/her birthday, he used to tell him/her to live each day as though it is his/her actual birthday, even though that particular day is not his/her actual birthday. Another explanation he used to give was that the birth of every day should be a source of happiness. We need to accept every day happily. Before starting the Funeral Mass, in order to honour this habit of Fr. John, the main celebrant of the Eucharist, Archbishop Emeritus Most Rev. William D'Souza, SJ, requested all the participants to stand up and sing Happy Birthday to Fr. John as he is celebrating his birth into eternal life. Towards the end of his life, Fr. John was telling people to be joyful rather than just be happy. For him being joyful was more holistic and integral. This had more to do with an internal disposition of gratefulness to and trust in God. He was inspired by the following Gospel passage, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Lk 2:11-12).

Fr. John was a man of prayer. He had a great devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He never missed mass even for a single day. While he was serving in the hospital, if any assigned priest could not come for the Holy Eucharist, he was always willing to substitute, even at the last minute. He used to spend long hours in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. He could be seen late at night on the terrace, reciting rosary or praying silently. Very early in the mornings he could be found in the chapel, prostrating in front of the Blessed Sacrament. If you did not find John in his office, he could be found in the chapel. He had a very close union with the Lord. For him, prayer was talking to God and meditation was listening to God in silence. He enjoyed reading spiritual books. He had a good collection of spiritual books and he was willing to share those books with anyone who wanted to make use of them.

Fr. John was known for his sensitivity towards the poor. He used to collect whatever money he could and distribute them among the poor and the needy. While he was working in Kurji Holy Family Hospital, his charity extended to the poor patients, needy co-workers and other employees of the hospital. He was unbiased and impartial in his dealings with the hospital staff, co-workers, patients and their relatives. He was also available to spend quality time with those who were in distress or depression.

Fr. John was a very community-oriented person who valued community life. He was very lively during community recreation after supper and he enjoyed a game of cards. He was very human in his dealings with others. As a superior, he trusted his men and had confidence in them and brought out the best in them. Many young members in the community couldn't believe that the superior could shout, fight, joke and laugh aloud. He had no inhibitions and was transparent in his dealings with others.

(Jose Thayil, SJ)

All the Patna Jesuits are requested to offer one mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. John D'Mello and all the members of Xavier Bhavan and St. Xavier's Communities are requested to offer two masses for the same intention.