

Introduction

35 days ago, on December 13, 2022 we had gathered here (Assumption Church) for the funeral Mass of Fr. Arulanandam, S. J. which happened to be Fr. Cap's 90th Birthday. The mood was different; therefore, I did not wish him. The next day I went to wish him. He told me, 'Amrit, I am very unhappy with you.' Even his facial expression showed he was unhappy. I felt bad to hurt his feeling and I explained to him the situation and I sincerely apologized. Then he smiled and told, 'me I am unhappy not because you did not wish me yesterday, I am unhappy because you allowed Fr. Arulanandam to jump the queue. You are the Regional Superior; you should have stopped him. I should have gone not him.' That was Fr. Cap, always witty.

He prayed to God and God heard his prayer and took him to be with Him eternally yesterday at 3 PM. He did not have any sickness. He lived a ripe age. He used to share with some of us that once a palmist on the roadside told him that he would die on the road. We would tease him Fr. Cap please carry your ID card always and don't give us too much trouble searching for you. He really did not trouble us. Rather he taught us how to grow old and live the old age gracefully. Fr. Cap loved Jesus, he was a true Companion of Jesus and very close to Jesus. Therefore, God took him at 3 PM the time Jesus died on the cross.

Fr. Cap was born on December 13, 1933 in Cleveland, Ohio. He was 33 days old when our country Nepal was hit by one of the most devastating earthquakes.

He entered the Society of Jesus on September 2, 1951 and ordained a priest on March 9, 1964. He arrived Nepal in 1958 and made Nepal his home for 64 years. He served Nepal and her citizens in different capacities. In honour and appreciation of his selfless and dedicated service

the government of Nepal granted him adopted citizenship on November 22, 1971.

Fr. Cap was a history of Nepal Vicariate and Nepal Jesuit Society. With his exit one more chapter of the history of Nepal Vicariate and Nepal Jesuit Society ended. In 34 days we lost two Jesuits. It has been really very hard for us. On behalf of Nepal Jesuit Society, and I personally would like to express our deepest condolences to Mr. Chirs Miller, Emilie Miller, Maureen Miller brother and sisters of Fr. Cap, Laura and all his relatives and friends back in the US. Nepal Jesuit Society, Nepal Vicariate, alumni and his friends here in Nepal are equally saddened. May God grant us the strength to bear the loss of Fr. Cap. We thank God for the gift of Cap. To us Fr. Cap is a saint and we rejoice in the Lord that we have one more gentle and simple soul to pray for us from heaven. We pray that God grant him eternal rest.

Eulogy to Fr. Cap Miller

I have known Fr. Cap for little more than 33 years. What I am going to share are some of the things that he shared with me, some of my personal experiences of him, and some I have heard from other Jesuits and non-Jesuits.

After high school when he wanted to join the Jesuits he told his mother. She told his dad and dad was happy. He said to Fr. Cap, “Cap, when you were born I made a novena that you would become a priest. But I did not want to tell you otherwise you be forced to become a priest. Now you have made this decision by yourself to be a Jesuit. I am very happy.” But his grandfather wanted him to be a diocesan priest and become a bishop; Jesuits hardly become bishops.

Some years ago one of the candidates for the Society of Jesus wrote, "Fr. Cap is a man with a heart of gold." The most attractive quality we find in Fr. Cap is that he was a very optimistic person. About the candidates or scholastics, he would often say, "They are making very good effort...he is better this week", and so on.

Everyone felt at ease and comfortable with him. His non-threatening facial expression and smile and welcome attitude was always noticeable. He enjoyed having a cup of tea with friends. Whether Nepalese or foreigners, rich or poor, he had time for all and he made very good friends with people of all walks of life, not considering gender, caste, color and creed.

From his Tipling days, a remote Tamang he was affectionately called *Meme* (grandfather in Tamang) or Milan Father instead of Fr. Miller. I feel he deserved that name because he was a milansaar (Nepali word for friendly and warm) person. He was very sociable and always left a positive impression on the hearts and minds of all who came in contact with him and she / he left with God experience. He always wore a Nepali cap and when people asked his name he would point to the cap and say, my name is Cap.

He enjoyed cycling, trekking and going for long walks. When in Godavari and Jawalakhel school he used to take students for trekking, and they always remember that as a highlight of their school life. His favourite place was Manang and he would go there whenever he got a chance.

He was a dedicated teacher and never liked to miss his classes. He was principal both at Godavari and Jawalakhel and superior in most of our communities in Nepal.

His room and office would always be open, this spoke of an open heart. He did not like to possess anything, and was not bothered for new clothes. I was told that when he was appointed to Pokhara and arrived there he told the Mission In charge, “I have come penniless. I have no money.” He would travel long distances by bus or micro bus and didn’t take flights for domestic travel. Once I asked him Fr. Cap why don’t you travel by flight? You save time. He told me, Amrit I am not in a hurry, I have plenty of time. Moreover, while travelling by bus I meet many people and I talk to them.

He would always be available for spiritual ministry and enjoyed going out for Mass in parishes and convents and also to remote villages like Gyalthung, Baglung, where others didn’t want to go, often travelling by night bus. He was spiritual director for many in the Region and Vicariate. For some of us Jesuits he was Juniorate Dean and (RCF) Region Coordinator for Formation. One of the responsibilities of RCF is to approve the personal budget of those in formation stage. You know while in formation stage even a rupee will be a big amount. We make our personal budget and go to him to get it approved. He would check the budget thoroughly and we would be praying that he will not cut the amount. After going through the budget he would say there are some mistakes in your budget; I have underlined them; please correct them and bring it back to me. We take the budget back hoping that the amount is not cut. But to our surprise the underlined would be spelling mistakes not the amount. He paid attention to the words not the figures. This explains how understanding and compassionate he was. As he walked around the city he had his rosary or prayer beads rolling on his fingers. He was a prayerful person, a man of God and the Spiritual Exercises.

He enjoyed jokes and often he gave funny cartoons from magazines or newspapers on birthdays of fathers and brothers. He used to share a lot of

jokes with us; many of them about old people and their forgetfulness. One of the Jesuits shared with me on week-ends dinner time they used to have a drink together in the community and Fr. Cap enjoyed a drink. Once he said, please don't tell Fr. Marty Coyne that I am taking drinks. He knows my New Year resolution: "no drinking this year. The community is changing me, making me give up my good promises."

Fr. Cap was a humble person. He used to share with us that he was a difficult person for the Superiors. When he was teaching in a school once a primary class teacher told him, "Fr. please teach these class one new students how to tie and untie their shoe laces. They don't know how to do it." Fr. Cap humbly obeyed and the whole day was spent teaching children how to tie and untie their shoe laces. He was tired at the end of the day and he said to himself, "Oh God, is this what a Jesuit priest is supposed to do?" In the evening as he was reading the Bible he came across the passage where John the Baptist says about Jesus, "I am not even worthy to untie his sandals." That was a source of consolation for Fr. Cap.

One of Fr. Cap's sayings was, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans, usually His plans for you are different, often the unexpected happens in your life." Isn't it very true?

Fr. Cap had a special love for the poor. He used to get his benefactors to help the poor children, and his love for the poor was especially seen after the 2015 earthquake. He would bring poor people and make sure that they got something, like tents and food items. On week-ends he would visit jails taking with him clothes, books and magazines for the inmates.

Fr. Cap was a scholar, and as most of us know that he did his P.D. in Anthropology from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu after living many years in Tipling in Dhading District. He has authored 3 books. He is one

of the well-known anthropologists. He was a voracious reader and there would always be a book in his bag that he often carried around.

Fr. Cap never wanted to hurt or disappoint anybody. During class one admission time he would come with a few names and say, “Now I can tell those people that I have given the names to the Principal”.

Fr. Cap was proud to be a Nepali citizen and always spoke positively about Nepal. He told us when he went back for a home visit to the U.S. first time with a Nepali passport, at the immigration the officer looked at his passport and chatted with him about Nepal...and at the end the officer said, “Though a Nepali you speak very good English.” Fr. Cap had a good laugh.

With his white beard and similar looks he was often mistaken for former Prime Minister Sushil Koirala and he used to make fun about it.

God was generous in giving Fr. Cap a long life. We are the lucky and privileged ones to have enjoyed his presence, companionship, and friendship. That is, all of us, thousands of old boys and girls, officials, ordinary people, poor people, villagers, inmates in prisons, fathers, brothers, sisters, parishioners and others.

Love and cheerfulness flowed from his face; his optimistic attitude was his strength. His compassionate heart reached out to the under-privileged and the needy. In the modern world of materialism, comfort and plenty, he lived a simple life and with the minimum. He showed us that we do not need much to live a happy life. One can be happy with the minimum.

We thank God for this great person today and every day. He lived and enjoyed life fully, made people happy, gave his best in everything. We are sure that the God of love and compassion, whom Fr. Cap served faithfully for all these years, will reward him richly.

Eulogy for Fr. Casper (Cap) Miller, S.J.

January 2023

Amrit Rai, SJ

We can almost hear him say from up there,” Please don’t hurry and make me a saint today itself, take your time.” Let us be happy and proud that we had such a great friend and companion like Fr. Cap for so many years. May his soul rest in peace!

Amrit Rai, SJ