

# THOUGHTS

Ananda Kishore, 1985

It was just around 9 PM and I was gazing intently at the monitor, copying and pasting values from one cell to another in the excel sheet, when the phone buzzed. It was a Kolkata number!!

"Hello Ananda, it is me Debu, how are you?"

"Hi Debu, what's up man?"

"What is wrong with you Ananda, don't you read my emails anymore? What are you doing on the write-up thing?"

"Well, Debu, see it is past 9 and I am still at work. I do read all your emails but the work pressure has been a bit too high and ....." the usual excuses followed!! Debu was his usual best at persistence. And that is how this begun.

ST. Mary's? Last year during my annual visit to Kolkata, I made it a point that I would visit my school along with my elder son who is about six years now. Both of us were extremely excited. My son's excitement was on the two fronts:

a. He would get an opportunity to commute in the Metro.

b. He would also witness first hand the "St. Mary's" his father keeps on telling him about.

For me visiting my old school with my son was, well, I was simply ecstatic!!

So there we were on one June 2004 morning in front of St. Mary's. The name I guessed had changed - during our days it was written very clearly - "St. Mary's Orphanage & Day School." We took permission of Bahadur - da and voila!! There were those two beautiful fields staring down at us. My obvious comment to my son - "This is my school - you do not have such grounds in your school". He kept quiet. We walked to the office - it was acute nostalgia for me!! I could still walk here blindfolded man, even after 20 years!! That was awesome!! One of those frequent occasions - I was bloating up!! My son observed. Well, we spoke to a kind looking lady at the office and asked her if we could take a quick tour and she readily agreed. ST. Mary's was on vacation too.

This used to be our library. This is where the staff room was - you know, staff room, where our teachers used to lunch and rest when they were not in the classroom, this was the corridor where we used to play hide and seek, this was the bell which our Bahadur-da used to ring, this was where I used to sit when I was in class II and this was our main hall where we used to...I felt my son's fingers were tightening round my wrist. Oh!! One of the kid's, possibly a boarder, was getting a piece of "cane". We quickly about turned towards what used to be the lunch room for boarders during our days. My son asked "Did you get a beating like this too when you were here?" Umm, good question that - you know what, I make it a point never to lie to my kids. "Well, yes in fact, on those rare occasions when I used to act naughty", I replied. "Our teachers never beat us in our school" said he. I kept quiet.

It was a great tour of my school and both of us enjoyed every moment of it. It is important for each one of us to be proud of our school and/or our college/university. I am extremely proud of St. Mary's since my school had a big role to play in the way I turned out to be in my later years. Thank you St. Mary's – you were important to me.