Reminiscences

Wrishi Thakur Raphael

July'97....
'Oh please!! You are playing the ghost of Jacob Marley, but you look more scared than a toddler on his first day in kindergarten!! Back to the shades, now...!'

It took me a record 25 shots to get the sequence right and the lines, the expressions, the steps...

Towards the end we were all starting to wear thin of patience and enthusiasm but not Sister Carmel Looby. Every motion had to be perfected to the last detail, every syllable of each word had to be audible to the end of the hall room and each expression had to be a 'Kodak moment '.Such were the standards of her dedication towards each duty I saw her perform .We were trying to stage the 'Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens for the schools 25th anniversary. Had it not been for her obsession for order & precision, the drama would have been an epic disaster. In the end, the Christmas Carol went down as one of the greatest shows ever staged in our school. It was a magical night of achievement for all of us.

Sept/Oct '97...

'Wrishi, since you are a Christian student it's your rightful duty to study the Scriptures and sit for the paper in Cambridge Finals. Come now, do a few classes... if it bores you so much I'll rest my case.' That was in fact the first time my eyes were opened to the realms of Christian faith and devotion .Before Sister Carmel talked me into taking Scriptures all I ever knew about my religion was what I heard during sermons on Sundays. Sister Carmel illuminated the pathways of spirituality to that crazy teenager who never gave a tinker's thought to his Savior who bled for him

Sept '98...:

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.'When will you stop picking on your classmates, Wrishi!!!' exclaimed Sister Carmel after a complaint reached her ears following a skirmish with a classmate...

"I wonder,' she sipped a glass of water,' It will be quite interesting to watch you project your aggression in a more orderly setting. I want you, Iraj & Hassan to face the school's debate team day after tomorrow. Let's see how you boys do. Here's your topic.'

We were eight graders at the time this happened.The school team comprised of seniors and they were all at the top of their game at that time.Throughout the next 48 hrs the three of us brainstormed more intensely then all our years in school put together. Sister Carmel taught us all about the norms of Parliamentary Debate and how to arrange our ideas in one stream. She even made the necessary changes to our speeches. The school team lost by a point. I guess we were declared winners only to boost our confidence. We went on to represent the school, next year. We had a good winning streak too .The gift of expression incorporated with logic & sensibility is the greatest gift a student can have and Sister Carmel made us realize that gift.

I would be all lost for words if I tried to sum up the numerous ways and instances she influenced my life. Before I met her I use to think a teacher's duty starts and ends in the classroom. But she was the kind of mentor, who would go out of her way, on any given day to ensure the welfare of her students, to make sure a pupil was doing well in class or just to make sure he or she made it home safely.

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But it is said in the Scriptures:

"Of course, no discipline at the time is enjoyable, but it seems painful; later on, however it affords those schooled in it the peaceful fruitage of an upright life." Hebrews12:11

Sister Carmel would refer to those periods of retribution as 'hard love'. I called them my worst nightmares. But now I believe that the people who love you unconditionally have the right to judge you and if needed, discipline you .Among the many things she taught me was how to love everyone and also to sow love in everyone's heart. The selflessness and perpetual bliss of her consecrated soul continues to shield our school from the pollution of the world's decadence. I only hope I am able to carry a piece of her ever devotional spirit on this journey called life. It will conjure the strength I need to carry my own cross.

Answer : Salvador Daly