

Reflections

Bloom where you are planted

ON Saturday, October 1 at 10am, I joined with those who expressed protest against the closure of Okehampton Hospital.

While most of those who know me expressed their gratitude for my presence, a few were pleasantly surprised. It was because as Catholic priests we get moved to different places every so often and therefore becoming a permanent resident of a place is extraneous. But, I was convinced whichever place I minister becomes my permanent residence temporarily.

This noble conviction has been the anchor of my priestly life even when 'power and control situations' tossed me around before I landed in Okehampton in 2011.

'Living and dying for the people that one serves' was explicitly seen in the lives of very many laity and missionaries making the lives of many peaceful and painless. The Polish Shimon Peres in Israel and the Albanian Mother Teresa in Calcutta are the recent examples.

The ones that are personally and passionately connected to me were the Italian born Jesuit priest Joseph Beschi (1680- 1742), the Irish born Congregational missionary Robert Caldwell (1814-1891) and the Canadian Lutheran missionary



By Father Darline Marianathan, St Boniface, Okehampton and Holy Family Church, Chagford.

G U Pope (1820-1908) whose father was from Padstow, Cornwall. These people went to Tamilnadu, my homeland, India for missionary service.

They started to learn Tamil for their missionary work but ended up exploring and sharing the rich treasures of Tamil language and its classically opulent literature to the world. Their discovery, research and contribution are acknowledged by UNESCO and the Indian Government.

Their life and work have given the sense of pride and identity to 77-million Tamils, one of the oldest and largest ethno-linguistic cultural groups in the modern world. These great men engulfed their life with a lot of determination to give their best to the people, language and culture that they found themselves in.

Whoever we are, wherever we are and whatever we do, let us give our best, bringing life and joy as Saint Francis de Sales would say, 'Bloom where you are planted'.