

A Jesuit Author of International Repute: Fr Hedwig Lewis, SJ  
Fr. Varghese Paul, SJ

In recent years he is not seen in public and yet he is an internationally known author. He remains confined to his room or to the house library and yet he is a much sought after spiritual counsellor. He is hardly seen in conversation with his friends and yet he is communicating with the whole world through his own website (<http://joygift.tripod.com>) and the internet.

He is not proud of his achievements and yet I am proud of my novice companion. He is Fr Hedwig Lewis, SJ of Gujarat Province of the Society of Jesus. We did our noviciate and Gujarati language studies together at Mount Abu, Rajasthan for three years.

Fr Hedwig Lewis was born in Mumbai on October 19, 1945 to devout parents Mr Placid Lewis & Mrs Mary Lewis of Goan origin. Being in touch with Gujarat Jesuits he entered the Jesuit noviciate at Mount Abu in 1964 just after his matriculation in Mumbai.

During his Jesuit formation and priestly studies Fr Lewis did his MA with English literature from the MS University, Vadodara. He was ordained a priest in 1977 and then joined St Xavier's College at Ahmedabad as lecturer in English.

Being a resourceful person with many talents and qualities Fr Lewis initiated several extra curricular activities and personality development programmes for the college students like Saturday cultural activities, value education, counselling, etc. He has also conducted programmes for managers in the corporate world.

He became the Vice-Principal of the College in 1984. Then he took a sabbatical break in 1985-87 to do his second MA in Human Resource Development from the American International College in Springfield, Mass., USA. He also served as Assistant Pastor in two parishes, as well as taught in a Catholic college there. On his return Fr Lewis was appointed Rector of the College Jesuit community in 1988 and then, Principal of the College in 1991.

In recognition of his educational innovations the All India Association for Christian Higher Education (AIACHE) honoured Fr Lewis with the Rev T. A. Mathias Award. The Award citation reads: "This prestigious national award is a mark of AIACHE'S recognition of his devotion to academic excellence, introduction of educational innovations, concern for the integrated development of students and commitment to high standards of professional ethics."

Fr Lewis was successful in imparting the Jesuit Charism to the college staff and students alike especially through his booklet "The Xavier Character" which was later integrated in the prospectus of the College. He has also served the College as Director of the Xavier Institute of Languages and also as the Director of the Xavier Centre for Human Resource Development.

In June 1995 Fr Lewis underwent open heart surgery and later in October suffered a neurological disorder which forced him to leave his teaching career. The incapacitating sickness could not defeat the spirit of *ad majorem dei gloriam* in Fr Lewis and he launched into a new career of writing.

While studying theology at Vidya Jyoti, New Delhi Fr Lewis edited “Ave” and now he edits “Navajuni” a quarterly publication of the Jesuit Parivar (family) in Gujarat.

Fr Lewis is well-known in the English and Spanish speaking world as a popular author especially in spirituality and counselling. His first book “At Home With God” (1991) has run into several editions including nine editions in Spanish. His books “Fun With Words” and “How to Study” are popular especially among school and university students. He has 19 books to his credit and many of them fetched good reviews in many Church newspapers and periodicals.