

# Appreciation: Fr Arthur Vella SJ

Society

Community

21 May 2018 | Times of Malta | 0

2 min read



Times of Malta

*Albert Borg writes:*

“Tell him I am calm and serene.”

It was the last message Fr Arthur addressed to me as he lay in his hospital bed awaiting the Father’s call to join him in His home. The call finally came at 4.05am on Pentecost Sunday. And he could face the end with such composure only because of his profound conviction, expressed many a time as we saluted each other for the night, in these four simple words: “I am not alone”.

A deep faith and a life spent in the presence of the Beloved carried him forward each day to help so many discern God’s will for them

Privacy

Young and old, simple and sophisticated people, priests, male and female religious and married couples, unbelievers, those who had lost their way and were trying to find it again, all were won over, especially by the one quality that stood out above the rest: his sense of acceptance of the person in front of him.

It was a quality foreshadowed in his work on Aquinas so many years back for his doctoral dissertation, 'Love is acceptance'. This was no sentimental ploy.

Even as one would be unburdening oneself, his unwavering attachment to the values of the Gospel shone through his non judgmental attitude, suggesting almost of its own accord the way forward in the concrete situation one found oneself in.

Whether there was a solution or not, he was there like a rock, helping to carry the cross.

He was provincial, founder and first superior of Dar P. Manwel Magri SJ, the Jesuit house on the doorstep of the University campus; rector of the Jesuits' International College in Rome, the Gesù; lecturer in theology at the University of Malta and, for a time, in Santiago, Chile; director of the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality at the Jesuits' Curia, Rome; and rector of the major Seminary in Gozo.

His participation as delegate of the Maltese province at one or two general congregations of the Society of Jesus and his membership of the Lemieux Commission for the reform of the administration of Church property in the Archdiocese of Malta, directly willed by Pope Paul VI, were among the more delicate and sensitive of his roles.

The love for his vocation as he faithfully lived out his religious vows, especially his obedience and his almost fanatical attachment to poverty in all senses of the word, constituted a precious gift to the Church in an age where values have become relative and negotiable.

The sense of loss at his departure is by far outweighed by an intense gratitude for having been so utterly enriched through the life of this faithful disciple of the Lord.

*Independent journalism costs money. Support Times of Malta for the **price of a coffee**.*

Support Us



Grant Thornton and Dhalia launch insightful study on property prices



Privacy