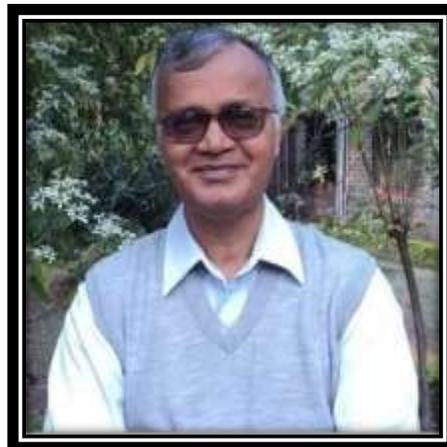


**OBITUARY OF  
FR. AUGUSTINE CLARENCE TIGGA SJ (HAZ)  
1948 – 2020**

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**Augustine Clarence Tigga** was born on 10 August 1948 to Mr Nicholas Tigga and Ms Susanna Minj at Newlands, Jalpaiguri, in the State of West Bengal. Originally hailing from Gumla District in present-day Jharkhand, his parents had migrated to Jalpaiguri in West Bengal seeking better prospects for the family. The Christian community was a small one in the Tea gardens of Newlands, West Bengal. His father hosted Sunday prayers at home in Sarugaon Tea Estate as the parish Dim Dima (Jalpaiguri Diocese) was far from where he lived with his family. (6 sisters and 4 brothers, he was 2<sup>nd</sup> Child)



However, lacking good educational facilities in Jalpaiguri, Augustine was enrolled in St. Xavier's Boarding School in Hazaribag. He travelled from Sarugaon Tea Estate to Hazaribag; St. Xavier's to begin schooling in 1958. One of The Australian Newsletters 'News From India' in 60s, carried an article about Catholic Adivasi students of St. Xavier's Hazaribag signaling Augustine as 'Perfect Gentleman'. As may he be, he was at the same time a cricketer, footballer, singer and mouth organist. It was in St. Xavier's that the desire to be a priest and a member of the Society of Jesus was born and nurtured. The example and life of the Jesuit missionaries kindled the fervour in him. He joined the Society in 1969. And after him his younger brother Fr. Xavier Tigga too followed him and joined the Hazaribag Jesuit Province as well.

After completing his Novitiate and Juniorate in 1972, he obtained graduation from St. Xavier's College Ranchi in English Literature. After completing his Philosophy in Pune, he did 02 years of regency in St. Robert's High School, Hazaribag. The regency at St. Robert's School was a manifestation of his growing administrative abilities and his dedication to the welfare of the children under his care. His friendly and approachable nature endeared him to the students. The result was a homely climate in the school with a healthy degree of discipline which promoted the growth of mature young men with improved academic performance.

After completing his theological studies at JDV, Pune, he was ordained a priest by Bp. George Saupine S.J. in his home town on 19 April, 1982. Soon after the ordination he was appointed parish priest of Gothgaon of Palamau district under the skillful guidance of Fr. Deonis Dungdung for familiarizing Mass and Sacraments' application. After this he was appointed acting parish priest of Kanjia in a remote place of Daltonganj Diocese.

Augustine was the first local Jesuit to go to the University of Scranton (USA) (19'87-'89) to do his master's in English. In this way he was a pioneer to many others who went abroad for their studies later. He showed them that it can be done. His study at the Scranton, USA, ensured that he would be well equipped to educate students of all backgrounds. As Vice Principal in St. Xavier's

School, Bokaro Steel City, much demand was made on him to organize Parents' Night, Annual School Sports and many other school functions. He was competent as a teacher, counsellor and organizer. This he did in his capacity as teacher, Vice-Principal and administrator in Hazaribag St. Xavier's, Bokaro St. Xavier's and as a vice Principal and Principal of St. Joseph's School, Mahuadanr as well. He had a short stint of two years ('1996-'98) in the University College of St. Xavier's Ranchi, to teach English, collaborating with the Ranchi Province.

He spent most of his religious life with the young generation-students and religious; formation, and with school and college going students; and he had been a source of optimism, joy, friendship and inspiration. He was in educational apostolate for 24 years. He was intimately bound with his alumni friends. The saying might be very true; 'I have freely received, and I give freely.'

He was multi-talented, had good knowledge of English and Hindi, a very good speaking and singing voice, delivered systematic, brief and inspiring sermons and was a good teacher. By nature he was *quiet*, friendly and approachable. *He had a good command of English and was an avid reader.* His knowledge of English language and literature was phenomenal; his sense of humour in conversation was quick and amazing and his general knowledge was encyclopedic.

Along with the education, Augustine played important role in the formation of the young Jesuits as well. As Socius to the Novice Master for two years, he accompanied the novices on their journey into the Society, teaching and guiding to discover their vocation. Later, He was called to be a Spiritual Guide to philosophers and theologians in De Nobili College, Pune. Such skills and ease he had acquired from Sadhana. He took his final vows on 03 Nov. 1997 at St. Xavier's Hazaribag.

On a Personal note: "He had a very fruitful 3 years as spiritual director at De Nobili College, Pune, often referred to as the largest formation house of the Society of Jesus globally. As his provincial I found him very trusting and readily available. He did not make any excuses to avoid transfers." *Fr. Edward Mudavassary.*

He suffered from nagging health problems in the latter years. September 2009 happened to be a critical year for him as he had to be hospitalized after a heart attack. He recovered, rather true to say that he got a gift of a new life and he understood, he had to slow down. Gradually diabetes took a toll on his ministry as he had to spend many months under specialized care in Kolkata for diabetic foot and amputation of his toes.

He bore his illness patiently in deep faith. Here is a true Jesuit, who would never flinch at hardships ahead, and never miss an opportunity to serve those in need at any time, come what may! But, sadly the sickness and weakness did not permit him to continue his teaching. He was confined to his room. Despite these ailments and suffering he made a remarkable recovery and was all set to mentor the Juniors. He went back to the Lord as quietly as he lived. His passing at this age, on 15 August, 2020, was unexpected as he had plans to teach the young Jesuits at SSC Juniorate, Sitagarha.

He will be remembered as a beloved formator and teacher; and also for his many inspiring talents, gentlemanliness and personal integrity. May the Lord give him eternal happiness!