

THE INVISIBLE STRENGTH BEHIND BLESSED JOSEPH ALLAMANO

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Any manager knows the importance of having the right people in the right positions at the right moment. This is the secret of productivity, progress and transformation. More important, the ability to know “who should be where and at what time” is the secret of the relationships behind which production takes place and without which no progress can be achieved. Bad blood among people who are supposed to work together can be a big hindrance to success. This is what makes Camisassa a great man in the Institute. He was the assistant of our Founder Bd. Joseph Allamano for many years (42 years to be precise). In fact Blessed Joseph Allamano had him as his vice and the bursar for all those years. He proved to be a worthy assistant, a supportive pillar and a source of energy for Blessed Joseph Allamano. The Foundation of a congregation is never a simple thing. Even Allamano had to be patient for 10 years waiting for the approval of our institute. This and other great tasks demanded that Allamano have a responsible, trustworthy and resourceful person beside him. Camisassa was there for the job! A silent, faithful technician, who encouraged Allamano when there were difficulties, supplemented him with helpful advice and warned him if ever there was a need. In other words, the down to earth Camisassa was the third and fourth eyes of our Founder. With him our Founder could plan accurately, implement policies timely and go to sleep peacefully. He, Camisassa, provided our Founder with not only a serene environment to work, but also a disposition to make the right decisions.

As shock absorbers of vehicles receive all the weight and tension caused by the rough road and smoothens them into a lovely ride, Camisassa was there for our Founder even when the going was tough. Their long life together remains a testimony of the need of compatibility of characters, personalities and temperaments of people who have to live and work together. As we celebrate this year of our Founder, let us not forget Camisassa. We will in fact not be doing any favour to him. We will be doing exactly as our Founder wished when he said, "Don't forget this man". Fr. Allamano affirmed many times that it was through the support of Camisassa that he founded the Institute. Camisassa, the man who was behind the serene face of our Founder in the most crucial period of the foundation of the institute, was also a co-founder with Fr. Allamano. He was the invisible strength of our Founder, the man without whom our Founder would have probably collapsed due to the many responsibilities that were on his shoulders. He, Camisassa, a man who rarely said much, spoke a lot through his activities. Humility was a key quality for him and commitment in everything was a foundation of his life.

Unlike our Founder who did not have a chance of stepping in Africa due to health issues and the many duties that he had, Camisassa had the advantage of having been in Kenya (February 1911 to April 1912). He therefore had the advantage of having had first hand information of what walking and working under the intense heat of the sun for many hours meant. His docile personality and a bit of experience in the mission taught him the logic of gospel: that if there is to be peace in any undertaking, somebody has to sacrifice something, obey unconditionally and support the good cause without demanding to be the visible landmark. Camisassa the silent man had chosen in life to be that person. As coordinators of a play stay at the back of the stage to ensure a smooth play on the stage by the actors, Camisassa was ready to work at the back of the stage to ensure a smooth process of evangelization. As we continue the work of evangelization in a world that is sick of the desire for publicity, advertisement and propaganda, may we be able to emulate the example of Camisassa who did everything for the glory of God. As Camisassa pleased the heavenly father “who sees that which is done in secret” (Mt 6:4), may our lives be a testimony of our faithfulness. May we likewise in our vocations serve God through our brothers and sisters, without counting the cost. May Camisassa’s living example be a living pillar of our commitment. Amen.