

A Eulogy to my dear friend and classmate, Xavier Sequeira.

Delivered at his visitation August 17 2020

Good morning to all of you for participating in this visitation particularly those who for reasons that are beyond our control are unable to be here in person but nevertheless are present virtually worldwide.

My name is Ray deSouza and I have been Xavier's friend since I was four years old. It is my privilege to have been asked to deliver this eulogy by his family.

Firstly my sincere condolences to Xavier's family; Virgilia and Willy, Annette, Justin and Tina, Brendon, Sean and Avril and to all members of Xavier's extended family and friends worldwide.

How does one even start a eulogy to Xavier. This is not a person who we thought would ever pass away. But reality has set in and our friend, our brother, uncle, mentor, and confidante is no more.

For 68 years I have been a friend of Xavier, through our entire school lives, our music adventures, and our travels and, at so many social gatherings on five continents. Through all of this time he never failed to amaze, to astound, to leave you in awe and sometimes even in shock. And just when you thought that he could shock you no more he would find yet another comment, another joke or song or prank. We could go on for hours relating these episodes from each of our own experiences. I will not repeat them. But let me give you two insights about Xavier that I hope will capture for you something else about this unbelievable person

Xavier had an amazing ability to transcend generations. In an instant he could relate to children, their parents, their grandparents and all this at the same time. This is no accident nor is it a learned trait. Rather this goes to the warm, loving, endearing and empathetic soul that was so much a part of Xavier.

Through the years I have admired his ability to connect with anyone, at any time and with unbelievable generosity. His concern for the disadvantaged in Tanzania, India and Cuba might not have been known to many but it was something that illustrates the deep bond he had with the less fortunate. Their plight brought him to tears many a time and in my presence. And his generosity was contagious. Many of you frequently contributed to Xavier's projects without even being asked to do so. Putting others before himself was Xavier's beacon.

Today, however, I want to share with you a facet of Xavier's personality that is equally poignant to the stories about his love of living. They are about Xavier's last months of his life.

I had been visiting Xavier almost every week for the past year. We would gather to exchange stories and our conversations would last for hours interspersed with trips to the grocery store and, of course, the fish market. I would be there to partake in Xavier's wonderful culinary creations and listen to his stories or "habaris" as he called them. Sadly, COVID put an end to those visits.

In the last two months or so, his body ravaged by illness and pain, and his inability to meet personally with his family and friends that meant so much to him, led Xavier to the realization that it was time to face his creator. He spoke to me of "going home" of "checking out" and he spoke of "wanting to be with his mummy". This saddened me greatly. I wanted him to rally back to good health and I spoke to him about returning home from the hospital, of life after COVID and how we could all live for many years to come enjoying life as we did for decades before.

He amazed me with the courage he displayed as he approached the end. He was ready. He began to remember our childhood adventures, mentioned names of people from days long gone by, his travels throughout the world and his love for a good time. In conversations with his brother Justin, who spent many hours with Xavier before his passing was that he too noticed this unbelievable ability to remember people and episodes of his life in minute detail? We both felt his resolute courage and complete lack of fear of moving on to the next life. Justin mentioned that during this time he remembered a quote from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. It suggests that true courage is NOT about facing life but about facing death and I quote, *"seeing death, a necessary end, will come when it will come"*. *"COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES BEFORE THEIR DEATHS; THE VALIANT NEVER TASTE OF DEATH BUT ONCE"*.

In closing please allow me to say a few words to my best friend of almost seventy years:

Xave, I will miss you. I am sorry for telling you many times that you should stop singing your favourite song Al Di La. You invariably forgot the words, usually mis-pronounced the Italian lyrics but yet you insisted on me accompanying you time and time again.

I know now why that song meant so much to you. I found out only very recently that loosely translated into English this song speaks about

The End,

This song speaks about The After Life

This song mentions the Next Step,

And finally it describes The Beyond.

You, Xavier, were preparing

For the perfect end to a life well lived,

You were preparing for

An epilogue to a play that only you could have written

And you were preparing for a musical ending that only you could have sung.

And now I can hear you in the far far distance beyond:

You are singing:

Al di la, della volta infiniti,

Al di la della vita. Ci se tu, ci se tu.

*Wherever you walked, the flowers will forever bloom,*

*And Whenever you smiled all the gloom turned to sunshine*

Arrivederci caro amico

Kwa Heri Ndugu wangu

Good bye my dear and brave friend.

Until we meet again, keep singing Xavier keep singing

Ray deSouza

August 17, 2020