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Dear Members and Friends of COMIUCAP,

The V World Congress of COMIUCAP in Bogotá, Colombia, was a success. Unfortunately, it will also remain marked by the unfortunate death of Professor Noel Sheth, of the Society of Jesus. Our Friend and Colleague is no longer with us; he is in God, though. His Passing into Eternity occurred on the evening of July 7, the last day of the Congress. In what follows, I just want to articulate some of the information I have about what happened.

Father Noel Sheth delivered an excellent paper on Mahatma Gandhi and intervened frequently to deliver excellent comments to papers by others. His mind was sharp as always. After the General Assembly of COMIUCAP, Noel came to congratulate the newly elected President of the network. His hand was unusually cold, but his words were as warm as ever. I could feel something unusual, but nothing more than that. We assume that he went home to the House of the Dominicans, where he was staying and enjoying their hospitality. They treated him very well. Some of us wondered why he was not in the LECTIO FINALIS and the Closing of the Congress. Nor was he present in the final banquet.

As far as I can see, Father Noel felled on the stairs coming from the first floor of the house to the ground floor. The fall was horrible. I did not see the body since when I arrived in the house at around 10PM of July 7, the Colombian authorities had already removed the body to the Legal Institute for the autopsy and all the rest that must legally happen in such situations. Fr. Sheth was found face down in a pool of blood. I gathered that before going to sleep, he wanted to meet some of the students living in the Dominican Convent that helped him during his stay with some practicalities. He never made it to the students. I assume that he had a stroke or something similar and so felled down the stairs without any resistance. Apparently, there were no signs of resistance to the fall; hence, the massive injuries to the head that he suffered.

The decision of the Bombay Province was to repatriate the body, a complex process in which the Province of Colombia of the Society of Jesus was certainly very helpful. Particularly helpful were also both the Superior of the Dominican Residence in Bogotá and the relatives of Fr. Noel living in the capital city of Colombia.

COMIUCAP is the Sectorial Group for Philosophy of *the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU/FIUC)*.

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On July 8, the day after the closing of the Congress in Bogotá, a group of Colleagues went to the famous Cathedral of Salt, some 30 km outside of Bogotá. There, at 1PM local time, we celebrated a Mass for the Eternal Repose of our beloved brother in Jesus Christ and the Society of Jesus.

I express my sincere condolences to the Bombay Province, to the JDV community in Pune, to Fr. Sheth's family, to the Society of Jesus in India and to all the Colleagues and Friends of Father Noel Sheth around the world. From what I saw during this Congress in Bogotá, I can only say that his views are immensely important and will continue to be deserving of our attention.

On the time he departed to Colombia to participate in the World Congress of COMIUCAP, Professor Noel Sheth SJ was teaching at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, and working at the local *Heras Research Institute*. Before retiring in Mumbai, he taught for more than thirty-five years at the *Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth*, Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune, India. He was a former President (Principal) of this institution and a former Rector of the Papal Seminary nearby as well.

Noel Sheth held a doctorate from Harvard University and has been recognized for his many achievements as Scholar in Sanskrit and Pali. His name is part of the *Who's Who of Sanskrit Scholars of India*. Recently, he had been the Convener of the History of Religion Section of the 14th World Sanskrit Conference held in Kyoto, Japan. Among his numerous scholarships and prizes, we can distinguish the "Dr. Sam Higginbottom Award for the Best Principals of India, 2004-2005." As a teacher, he was deeply revered and admired by his students.

Professor Sheth published widely in India and abroad on Sanskrit and Pali exegesis and on comparative philosophy and theology, and has taught different Indian religions and philosophies in many universities around the world. He was a member of several national and international learned bodies and a member of the Board of Editors of some international journals. He also was an adviser to the Jesuit General for interreligious dialogue with Hinduism and a Member of the international Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations for the Society of Jesus worldwide. Between 2008-2013 he was also the Vice-President of COMIUCAP for Asia.

As President of COMIUCAP, I express sorrow for the sudden death of Professor Noel Sheth and yet express deep gratitude to God for in recent years allowing him to assist us on different occasions, but especially on the different occasions leading up to the World Congress of COMIUCAP that took place in Johannesburg in November of 2013. Noel's contributions to COMIUCAP were always relevant and most appreciated. May he now Rest in the Peace of God.

João J. Vila-Chã, SJ

(President of COMIUCAP)