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TEACHER OF THE FORTNIGHT

CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS, HER FORTE

As a child, she always played teacher and when others urged her to take up a career in law, administration or management, she knew there was only one job that offered the kind of satisfaction she desired — teaching. Crystal David John, head of the department of economics, Stella Maris College, Chennai, has a passion for teaching and economics like no other. She believes this passion comes from the inspiration she found in her teacher at the bachelor's level. She was schooled in Lucknow and continued her graduation at

Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, followed by MA and PhD in economics at the University of Lucknow. She taught at the Department of Women's Studies in Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute and at the Centre For Research on the New International Economic Order, Chennai, before joining Stella Maris College in 2010.

She thinks corrections and administrative duties keep her from doing what she loves most — engaging with students — but is inevitable with any role. "The



interaction and the spark in their eyes when they connect with your subject cannot be compared with any other experience.

Watching weak students blossom and apply theories to day-to-day observations is rewarding," she says. This professor is also a blogger and loves to read when she is not teaching or guiding PhD students. "With the advent of Facebook, many of my students reach out to me. I feel very happy when I hear from them."

As head of the department, Crystal has introduced several certificate courses to help bridge knowledge gaps and equip students. She has the honour of having taught every single subject in economics and says, "But my favourites remain macro economics, public economics,

gender studies and international economics. I've come to believe that you learn more from teaching than learning. I'm still learning with my PhD students. It's gruelling and challenging, but exciting."

Known for her refreshing bluntness and vast knowledge of the subject, students love her style of teaching and attitude. "I like to connect economics with other fields. Epistemology and challenging the homogeneity and assumptions of theories thrills me," opines Crystal. When she is not teaching, she loves to travel.

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