



Guwahati Newsletter

Archbishop's House, Ambari, Guwahati - 781001

December 2021 - May 2022

Vol. 28:1



Congratulations

Fr. Nicholas D. Sangma

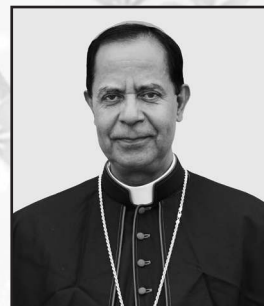


Fr. Jose Hemrom



Dn. Fijichson Ch. Marak

SHEPHERD SPEAKS



Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

Pope Francis has called for a Synod of Bishops in 2023 on the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission". The Vatican has issued a preparatory document called 'Handbook'. The Pope wants the entire Church to be participants and be consulted in the process of the synod. The purpose of the synod is not to produce a document but to make people dream about the Church as it is called to be, "where our hopes flourish, stimulate trust, bind wounds, weave deeper relationships, learn from one another, build bridges, enlighten minds, and strengthen our hands for common mission."

The Pope formally opened the Synod process at the Vatican on Sunday 10 October with the celebration of the Eucharist which was live streamed worldwide. The handbook gives guidelines to the bishops and those who facilitate the synodal process on how best to listen and consult the Catholics and those within the margin of the Church and society. It suggests some questions to prompt reflection, input and ideas. They fall under ten general themes and people can discuss what is most pertinent to them and share with honesty and openness about their real experiences and reflect together what the Holy Spirit might be revealing through what they share with one another.

Some of these questions are-

- To whom does your particular church need to listen?
- How is the laity, especially the women and youth listened to?
- How do we integrate the contributions of the consecrated men and women?
- What space is there for the voice of the minority, the discarded and the excluded?
- Identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening. How can they be overcome?
- How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?

However the most basic question is how does this "journeying together" which takes place in different levels like village, parish, religious community, diocese and in the universal level, allow the church to proclaim the gospel in accordance to the mission entrusted to her? And what steps the Spirit invites us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?

This synod is a spiritual process that requires us to listen to the Holy Spirit and to one another. The synod involves the entire people of God to find a common ground by dialoguing, conversing and discerning with the possibility of reaching a harmony.

Each Diocese will spend six months dialoguing intensely with as many people as possible, including those on the peripheries, those who left the Church or hardly ever practice, those who are poor, migrants, refugees and the voiceless discerning what God is saying in the signs of the times.

The whole process requires creativity. All the feedback that is generated from village, parish and religious community level is gathered and synthesized by each diocese and sent to the Bishops' Conference. The findings from conferences and oriental churches will reach the Synod of Bishops' office who will write the working document for the synod proper in 2023. This synthesis will reflect the common trends and points of convergence that will inspire an original point of view or open a new horizon. The bishops, who with their charism of discernment will be authentic guardians, interpreters and witnesses to the faith of the Church, will lead the process of the synod.

The Archdiocese of Guwahati officially opened the synodal process on 17 October, 2020 with a concelebrated Holy Mass presided by his Excellency Most Rev. Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India.

Fr. Joby Abraham is the chief coordinator of the synodal preparation in the archdiocese. The other members of the team are Fr. Anna Amala Christian, Sr. Dominica Kasho MSMHC and Mr. Isaac Hereh.

We have sent a prayer prepared for the occasion to be recited in families, communities and parishes asking the power of the Holy Spirit to help us in our endeavour to be a Church always open to the Spirit. Besides the formal prayer we request our people to pray sincerely that the synod may be an occasion to bring in a renewal in our parishes and the archdiocese.

I request all parish priests and superiors of communities to take the synod seriously as our Holy Father wishes. The whole process, including our discussions in villages, SCCs, parishes, women and youth groups, sodality and parish councils should be carried out in an atmosphere of prayer. The archbishop would want a report of all that is done in the parishes and communities in written form highlighting the inspirations and insights they have received as they went through the synodal process. You will also find the summary of the Handbook beautifully summarized by Fr. Joby Abraham for further clarity.

You can access more details, literature, videos and progress of the synod worldwide on line at www.synod.va

Praying for the blessings of God on our synodal journey,

Yours sincerely,
+John Moolachira
Archbishop of Guwahati

Editorial

Marian Devotion and Mary's Promises



We show our love and gratitude to Blessed Virgin Mary by honoring her in various ways. Two months in a year (month of May and October) and various feasts and solemnities are celebrated around the year to show our love and honour her. The month of May is blessed with two important Marian Feasts viz the feast of Our Lady of Fatima celebrated on 13 May and the feast of Mary Help of Christians celebrated on 24 May. We venerate her under many titles and it is significant that she is deep in the minds and hearts of the Catholics. We honor her and pray to her by reciting the holy rosary which is the weapon against the devil. When we pray the rosary or when we have the true devotion towards her, we must remember that there are various promises attached to it.

There are at least seven promises of the Blessed Virgin Mary those who pray the Rosary. The rosary is the powerful weapon that our mother gave to us. There are promises she made to those who pray with true devotion. They are as under-

- a. He who is truly devoted to the rosary will not perish without the holy Sacraments.
- b. I will free from purgatory those who pray the rosary with devotion.
- c. All who entrust themselves to me, when praying the rosary will have the whole celestial court of intercessors, in life and in the hour of death.
- d. He who prays it devoutly, and takes the mysteries as a life testimony, will not know misfortune.
- e. They are my children those who recite the rosary, and brothers and sisters of my only Son, Jesus Christ.
- f. They will obtain everything they shall ask for through the rosary.
- g. Those who spread the devotion of Holy Rosary will be assisted by me in their needs.

Let Marian devotion be an occasion for us to receive the promises of Virgin Mother Mary and become like a child of God who approach with total innocence and confidence. We pray that she may protect us always and show the right path leading us towards her Son Jesus.

Fr. Lucas Hemrom

SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATORY DOCUMENT OF SYNOD 2021-2023

The theme for the synod of Bishops in 2023 is "For a Synodal Church: Communion, participation, and Mission." Prior to the Synod Pope invites the entire church to reflect on the theme that is decisive for its life and Mission: "it is precisely this path of sinodality which God expects of the church of the third Millennium"

1. What is Synodality?

It means "journeying together", all the baptised by virtue of their Baptism and confirmation are recipients of the anointing of the Holy Spirit thus they have the rights and duties to speak and listen. Through this, Christian community not only receives the services but becomes reliable partner in the mission of the church.

2. Why is Synodality?

By virtue of the anointing of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism, the totality of the Faithful "cannot err in matters of belief. It is also the possible solution to the problems plaguing the Church.

3. Is it democratic way of functioning?

No, This is an ecclesial process that can only take place" at the heart of a hierarchically structured community" Every Synodal process, in which the Bishops are called to discern what the Spirit is saying to the church, not by themselves but by listening to the people of God, who "shares also in Christ's prophetic office" (LG, no. 12)

4. Scope of this exercise

To rediscover and establish the fact that "in the Church every one has to learn as everyone has to teach"

5. What are we to do?

Recall our experiences of being the Church, re-read and deepen these experiences in greater depths: What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited? Gather the fruits to share: Where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the spirit asking of us? What are the points to be conformed, the prospects for change, the steps taken? Where do we register consensus? What paths are opening up for our local Church?

6. How can we do it?

The Synodality as a way of being the Church and as the procedure for functioning as the Church the following ten themes and the questions can be used as a starting point or helpful guidelines:

a. Companions on the Journey

Who are those who "walk together"? Who are those who seem further apart? How are we called to grow as companions? What groups or individuals are left on the margins?

b. Listening

How are the laity listened to, especially women and young people? What facilitates or inhibits our listening? How well do we listen to those on the peripheries? What space is there for the voice of minorities, especially people who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

c. Speaking Out

What enables or hinders speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in our local Church and in society? When and how do we manage to say what is important to us?

d. Celebration

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations actually inspire and guide our common life and mission in our community? How do we promote the active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy? What space is given to participating in the ministries of lector and acolyte?

e. Sharing Responsibility for our Common Mission

Since we are all missionary disciples, how is every baptised person called to participate in the mission of the Church? What hinders the baptised from being active in mission?

f. Dialogue in Church and Society

What are the places and means of dialogue within our local Church? How do we promote collaboration with neighbouring dioceses, religious communities in the area, lay associations and movements, etc.? What particular issues in the Church and society do we need to pay more attention to?

g. Ecumenism

What fruits have we drawn from walking together? What are the difficulties? How can we take the next step in walking forward with each other?

h. Authority and Participation

A synodal church is a participatory and co-responsible Church. How is authority or governance exercised within our local Church? How are teamwork and co-responsibility put into practice? Have we had fruitful experiences of synodality on a local level? How do synodal bodies function at the level of the local Church (Pastoral Councils in parishes and dioceses, Presbyteral Council, etc.)? How can we foster a more synodal approach in our participation and leadership?



i. Discerning and Deciding

What methods and processes do we use in decision-making? How can they be improved? How do we promote participation in decision-making within hierarchical structures?

j. Forming Ourselves in Synodality

Synodality entails receptivity to change, formation, and on-going learning. How does our church community form people to be more capable of "walking together," listening to one another, participating in mission, and engaging in dialogue? What formation is offered to foster discernment and the exercise of authority in a synodal way?

The Synod website provides suggestions on how to pose these questions to various groups of people in simple and engaging ways. Each diocese, parish, or ecclesial group should not aim to cover all the questions but should discern and focus on those aspects of synodality most pertinent to its context. Participants are encouraged to share with honesty and openness about their real-life experiences, and to reflect together on what the Holy Spirit might be revealing through what they share with one another.

7. Time Line of Synodal Procedure

1. 9 October 2021, Saturday - Inauguration of the preparatory phase in Rome
2. 17 October 2021, Sunday - Beginning of the Diocesan Phase
3. April 2022 - Prior to which the report from the dioceses to be sent to Episcopal Conferences
4. October 2023 - Assembly of the Synod of bishops in Rome

SERVING THE SYNODALITY: ANIMATION OF ANIMATORS

In a spirit of Synodality, the core team of the synodal preparation in the Archdiocese of Guwahati, consisting of Rev. Fr. Joby Abraham the chief coordinator, Rev. Fr. Anna Amala Christian, and Sr. Dominica Kasho MSMHC, conducted a zonal level animation for the parish animators from January 4-7, 2022. A total of 88 animators from 36 parishes attended the meeting, along with the parish priests except a few. Centres for the animation were Rangjuli, Nagrijuli, Dispur and Kathiatoli.



A Preparatory Document for the synod and the *Vademecum* were systematically explained to the animators by Fr. Joby. In his session, Fr. Joby also presented the fundamental questions that need to be addressed by the lay faithful, and the basic guidelines to follow while preparing the report of the meeting. Fr. Christian, on the other hand, elucidated the theme and the purpose of the Synod, the meaning of the logos, and the various phases of the Synodality in the language of the place.

While Sr. Dominica spoke on some of the pitfalls that need to be taken care during the whole process of Synodality.

An intense session of hours was worthwhile, as the animators at the parish level understood the place of the laity in the Church and the significant role that all the baptized are called to play in the Church. It is hoped that the experience of the Synodal Process will bring about a new springtime for listening, discernment, dialogue, and decision-making, so that the whole People of God can better journey together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



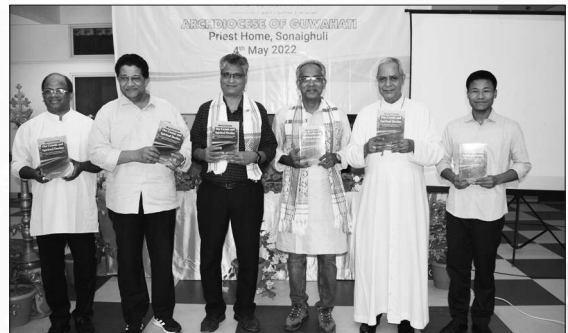


ARCHDIOCESAN SYNODALITY

The Archdiocesan Synodal Meeting cum Recollection was held on 4 April at Priest Home, Sonaighuli. There were 80 diocesan as well as religious priests who took part in the Synodal meeting. The meeting commenced at 10 AM with a prayer led by Fr. Christian and lighting of the lamp. It was animated by Rev Fr. P.D. Johny SDB. All the participants were divided into 5 different groups for a Synodal group discussion. After the lunch there was Reporting and Common discussion and followed by Concluding remarks by His Grace. He was happy that all the participants took active part in it, actively listening, discerning, dialoging and decision making process.



On this occasion a book titled 'Our Cosmic and Spiritual Destiny' authored by Rev. Fr. Dr. Jose Mannukulangara was released. This is the third book to be published by him. The synodal meeting was linked with the monthly Recollection. It was preached by Rev. Fr. Thomas Manjali emphasizing on the Synodality and Pastoral Collaboration.



ST JOSEPH CHAPEL, BOKOCHIRING BLESSED

On 10 May 2022, Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, inaugurated and blessed the St. Joseph chapel at Bokochiring, a mountainous village, on the Meghalaya border, in St. John Bosco's Parish, Boko. Fr. Joy Kachappilly, Parish Priest, Fr. Raphael Cherukareth, Assistant Parish Priest, Fr. Paul Minj, Sisters from the Vicuna Niketan convent, Catechists, Catholics from both Boko and Hahim Parishes were present on the occasion.



In his homily, during the Holy Eucharist that followed the blessing, the Archbishop invited the people of the village to make good use of this lovely house of worship for their prayer on Sundays and other days of obligation. He also challenged them to live authentic Christian lives so that their neighbours may love and accept Christ. After the Holy Eucharist, the villagers felicitated the dignitaries. Lunch was, then, served to all.

The chapel, built on a hillock in the middle of the village with 19 Catholic families, has now become the converging point for the people. The chapel was built with the financial assistance that the Parish received from the Salesian Mission Office, New Rochelle through the recommendation of Rev. Fr. Januarius Sangma, Provincial, Salesian Province of Guwahati.

Despite the hour-long rain during the Holy Mass that ruined the muddy road from the village to the tarmac road making the return journey arduous for the visitors, everyone was happy that the Church is progressing in these remote areas of the Archdiocese.

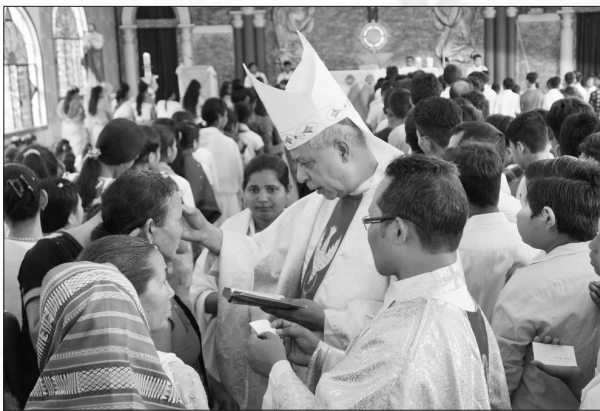
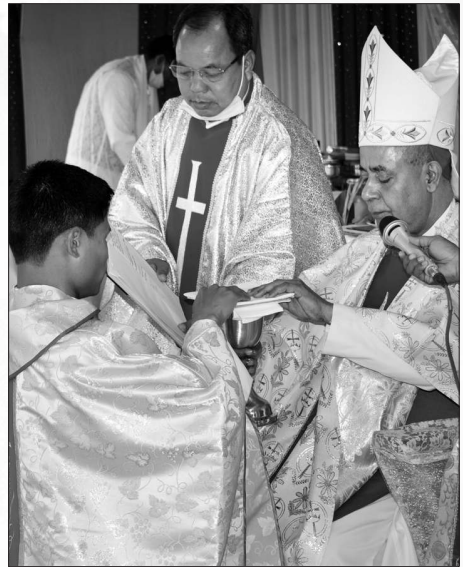
TIDINGS FROM GOJAPARA

PRIESTLY ORDINATION

"You are a priest forever according the order of Melchizedek." Heb 5.6

With the dawn of the New year, St. John Bosco Shrine, Gojapara is blessed with a new priest for the Archdiocese of Guwahati in the person of Fr. Nicholas Sangma. He was ordained a priest by Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati on 22 January, 2022 in the premises of the parish. Fr. Nicholas is the 5th priest ordained from the parish. The grandeur and solemnity of the day was added by the presence of Rev. Fr. Januarius Sangma, Salesian Provincial of Guwahati province. Altogether 58 priests and a large number of brothers and sisters were also present on the happy occasion. In spite of the inclement weather and the uncertainties of Covid 19 restrictions, large number of faithful from near and far attended the solemn ordination ceremony. All those who came for the event expressed joy and happiness at getting one more priest for the Church.

In his fatherly exhortation to the newly ordained priest, the archbishop said that the priest is for all people at all times and at all places. 'You have chosen the path that is best which God has enshrined for you' he further said.



CONFIRMATION

The 24 of April, 2022, will go down in the history of St. John Bosco Shrine, Gojapara as one of the important dates. After having trained for four days, 216 children and few adults received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati. Large number of faithful participated in the Holy Mass on that special Sunday.

During his homily the Archbishop exhorted the candidates to remain firm in their faith in God and the Church and to be ready to face the challenges in life arising out of our faith in Jesus Christ.

CHAPEL BLESSING

A visible sign of God's bountiful blessing and grace on the faithful of Borbakra village under Gojapara parish was seen on 12 May, 2022 in the form of a newly built beautiful chapel. Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati blessed the chapel and Rev. Fr. Januarius Sangma SDB, Salesian Provincial of Guwahati Province, inaugurated the Padre Pio chapel named after the famous Capuchin saint. There were 28 priests and a number of religious brothers and sisters and a large number of faithful were present on the occasion. In spite of the heavy shower in the morning, God has blessed the day with good and pleasant weather.

In his homily Archbishop exhorted the faithful to make this chapel a source of grace and blessing by coming regularly to it for prayer and intercession. He also told the gathering that our prayers must echo in the ears of God as it is in the chapel.



ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, SONAPUR

PRIESTLY ORDINATION

On 15 January 2022, when the world was still in the grip of Covid - 19 pandemic, St. Patrick's Church, Sonapur was blessed with a new priest for the Archdiocese of Guwahati, in the person of Rev. Fr. Jose Hemrom. He hails from St. Mary's Church, Ural under St. Patrick's Church, Sonapur which is previously blessed with two other priests already. Rev Fr. Jose Hemrom is the third priest of the parish. He was ordained by most Rev. John Moolachira, the Archbishop of Guwahati in the presence of large number of priests, religious and



lay faithful who witnessed and solemnized the event even amidst fear of pandemic. Rev. Fr. Mathew Anchukandam, the parish priest was overwhelmed with the presence of the people of God and expressed his appreciation with the words of gratitude.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The sisters and catechists were the instruments in preparing the children to meet the Lord when they were ardently desiring to receive the Lord in the Eucharist. On 27 March 2022, 19 children received the First Holy Communion in St. Patrick's Church Sonapur. It was a day of great joy for all the faithful of the parish and especially the children who received Jesus for the first time in the Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Rev. Fr. Mathew Anchukandam, the parish priest, Fr. Ajeet Tirkey, the assistant parish priest and Fr. John D'Souza concelebrated and somenized the event.



CONFIRMATION

On 3 April 2022 another important day as 22 adults received the sacrament of Confirmation in St. Patrick's Church, Sonapur. Most Rev. John Moolachira, the Archbishop of Guwahati presided over the Holy Eucharist and conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation. The presence of fathers, sisters and large number of faithful of the parish witnessed and solemnized the event. Eucharistic Lord filled their hearts and minds with peace and contentment.



CHRIST JYOTI SCHOOL, SILCHANG

BIHU CELEBRATION

Culture is the vehicle of the Gospel

"This day is very unique father, I experience a splendid atmosphere here" exclaimed Shri Tapan Coudhary, a state level Bihu artist, who was the guest of honor on the Bihu celebration in Christ Jyoti School, Silchang. On this auspicious day the students came in their Bihu attire. That itself was a beautiful sight to see. The presence of the guardians added flavor to the celebration. Every class starting from nursery to class X, gave one



each Bihu program. The local Bihu teams were present too and performed in the open ground. The Bodos also joined with their traditional dance. The neighbors together with our supporting staff performed the Tiwa prayer dance with *dhol*. Shri Biswajyoti Chetia, the lecturer of Botany Department, Jagiroad College, Shri Pravin Dev Raja, the Raja of the Tiwa community, Shri Manohar Patar, the *Gaonburah*, Shri Sublen Bordoloi, a Council Member were some of the eminent dignitaries present for the function.

This Bihu function was organized looking forward with few objectives: to teach and root the children in their culture. It was to bring the neighborhood people to the school campus for community building. It was a day of celebration and relaxation.

THE WORLD TELLS US TO SEEK
SUCCESS, POWER AND MONEY;
GOD TELLS US TO SEEK
HUMILITY, SERVICE AND LOVE.



JUNIOR PRIEST'S ANIMATION PROGRAM

The two days Junior Priests' animation program was held in the Archbishop's House from 21 to 22 March 2022. The program was animated by Fr. Arul SJ emphasizing on 'loneliness' in Priestly life and how to overcome it and motivated each one to participate in the group discussion. It was first of its kind to be held in the archdiocese to give morale boost to the young priests.



He also stressed on the healthy aspects of solitude, where in today's constantly connected world finding solitude has become a lost art. He beautifully brought out the benefits of seeking solitude amidst hectic life. There were 15 Junior Priests who were ordained after 2012, participated the animation program. It was concluded with the Solemn Eucharist which was presided over by Archbishop John Moolachira at 3.00 PM at Archbishop's House Chapel on 22 March 2022.

HOJAI BLESSED WITH A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

The blessing and the inaugural function of the new school building was held on 18 April 2022. It was indeed an auspicious day for all at Don Bosco high School, Hojai. The Archbishop of Guwahati Archdiocese His Grace John Moolachira blessed and inaugurated the new school building. It was a moment to thank God for being with School management throughout the construction of the building. His Grace felicitated and appreciated the team for their hard work. There was a short cultural programme. Many fathers and sisters from the different communities were gathered together to take part in the celebration of the inauguration and the blessing of the Golden Jubilee block. It was the day, we felicitated Sir Amul Raj Peter who retired from our school after 40 years of teaching service. The children presented the programmes with great pomp and splendour. Their enthusiasm was heart winning. The blessing ceremony ended with a fellowship meal.



FATIMA REGIONAL HOUSE, RANGIA

LOVED... CALLED... CONSECRATED...

O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever. (Ps 118)

May 24, 2022 was indeed a day of joy and gratitude to God for the Sisters of our Lady of Fatima, Northeastern region as they celebrated three different colored Jubilees of Sr. Santan Nago, the Golden Jubilarian, Sr. Seena Antiparambil, the Ruby Jubilarian and Sr. Salina George, the Silver Jubilarian. And also thanksgiving Eucharist for the newly professed Sisters, Sr. Verina Engtipi, Sr. Rossie Nongrum and Sr. Ainita Rani as they expressed their gratitude for the gift of their vocation.



We joined them as they offered their symphony of gratitude to God, for 50 years, 40 years and 25 years respectively. Their hearts were full of joy and thanks to God, for God has been walking with them these years. They have been faithful to the religious life, because God has been steadfastly faithful to them and never let them down.

It was indeed an occasion of joy and privilege to honor these sisters whom the Lord has loved to the core of their being and called them to sow seeds of love in human hearts. The Lord made them His instruments to heal the bruises, wipe away tears and banish fears with their kind, understanding and gentle care. We appreciate their wholehearted dedication and selfless service.

Sr. Santan has led the Congregation for 12 long years, effectively, and is now our leader for the Northeast Region. She has been involved in various ministries throughout these 50 years.

Sr. Seema was an animator in communities, teacher at the primary level, a social worker and immersed in pastoral activities at different parishes. Sr. Salina served as an animator, a nurse and a social worker at different areas of the Northeast region. We esteem their exemplary lives of challenges, uncertainties, and disappointments, yet they were filled with hope and amazement. Yes, there were the moments where our Sisters often heard the

Lord saying "Believe in me. Let not your spirit be down. I am the living God, in my name you shall prevail".

We were very glad that his Grace John Moolachira, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Guwahati was with us, to bless us all and especially our sisters who marked their special days in their lives. Along with eight priests, sisters, parents and relatives of our newly professed sisters and well-wishers who added joy to the celebration.

ST. PAUL PASTORAL CENTRE, RANGIA

WOMEN ANIMATION

Catechetical Commission together with Women Commission of the Archdiocese organized a program for women viz AMEN. It was conducted for two language groups; Garo and Hindi-Assamese Speaking communities. The participants benefited a lot and were happy to get together for the same. Fr. Maria Soosai, Fr. Edwin OSJ, Sr. Suman, Sr. Jessy SMI, Sr. Kerti SMI and Dn. Nicholas D. Sangma were the resource persons who animated the whole program.



GARO CATECHETICAL PROGRAM

Catechetical Program for the Garo children of the Archdiocese was held at St. Paul's Pastoral Centre, Rangia. Around 55 children participated in the 4 days program for the children from different parishes of our Archdiocese. The whole program was animated by Sr. Vimala DST and Sr. Amal DST.



GLORIA

The Catechetical commission of our Archdiocese organized a program for our Catholic children from 26-29 Dec 2021 in St. Paul's Catechetical Centre, Rangia viz "Gloria". A big number of 202 children of Assamese and Hindi Speaking participated the program from different parishes of our Archdiocese. Fr. Lucas

Hemrom was the resource person who animated the whole program. Sisters and OSJ seminarians helped in the animation of the sessions. Catechetical formation on the basis of Bible and basic catechism were the prime focus.

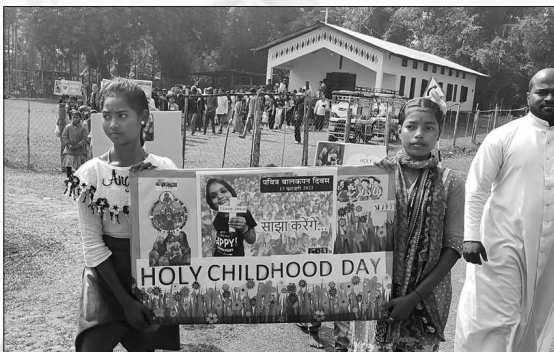


INSTALLATION OF NEW DIRECTOR

On Easter morning, St. Paul Catechetical Centre, Rangia was blessed to have Fr. Joby Jose Chakkalakkal OSJ as its new Director. The outgoing Director, Fr. Roju Jose Kodavil OSJ welcomed him to the new responsibility as the Catechetical Secretary and the director of the St. Paul's Catechetical centre. Fr. Joseph Olickal, the finance administrator was the main celebrant for the installation ceremony. Last eight years, Fr. Roju was the director of the centre; on his transfer, Fr. Joby is appointed as its new director. We sincerely appreciate and thank Fr. Roju for carrying out his responsibilities so well as the director and we wish him God's abundant blessing for the new mission entrusted to him.



LOHARGHAT



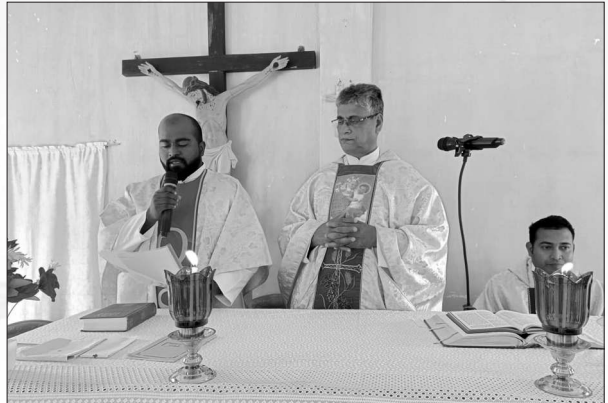
HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY

On 13 February 2022 Holy Childhood Day was celebrated in St. John Paul II Parish, Loharghat with number of children and faithful of the of the parish. This was a special day kept aside for children of the parish engaging them with lots of activities. Input sessions were conducted on various themes and there was also procession taken

out to demonstrate their unique role in the family and society. Children also showcased their talents on this occasion in the form of cultural events. A large number of parents and guardians also were present to witness and encourage the children.

NEW PARISH PRIEST INSTALLED

22 May 2022 was an important day for the Catholic Church, Loharghat as it had its new parish priest installed in the person of Fr. Rixon Thaikkootathil OSJ. The outgoing Parish Priest Fr. Bibin Milton Valiyaveettil OSJ welcomed the new parish priest to the new responsibility. Fr. Mathew Anchukandam, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese was the main celebrant for the installation ceremony. We sincerely appreciate and thank Fr. Bipin for carrying out his responsibilities well as the parish priest, taking care of the people and working for their upliftment. We wish him God's abundant blessing for his higher studies.



ST. JOSEPH'S DAY CELEBRATED

St. Joseph Sodality members along with the parishioners of St. John Paul II Parish, Loharghat celebrated the feast of St. Joseph on 20 March 2022. The day's program began with the hoisting of the flag and lighting of the lamp ceremony. Fr. Lucas Hemrom enlightened the gathering with beautiful reflections on the life of St. Joseph and insisted on to imbibe the qualities of St. Joseph in our day today lives to make our Christian life more meaningful. After the talk the celebration of the Eucharist was presided over by him. It was followed by the community meal.



MONTHLY RECOLLECTION CUM CHRISM MASS

On 12 April 2022, Monthly Recollection cum Chrism Mass was celebrated in Christ the Bearer of Good News Cathedral, Dispur. It was presided over by His Grace Archbishop John Moolachira and concelebrated by 180 priests. A good number of religious brothers, sisters and few faithful turned up to participate in the Chrism Mass. Fr. Sebastine KV SSP animated with the recollection talk after which blessed Sacrament was exposed for praise and adoration. The MSMHC Junior sisters from Hatigaon created an ambience for prayer through their melodious voices. Fathers, brothers and sisters participated in the sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for the Easter Celebration. After the Chrism Mass a sumptuous meal was served.



SISTERS' DAY

On 5 February 2022, I felt more than ever, the place of women in the Church is being recognised and valued. In many dioceses religious women enjoy due respect and honour. One such diocese is Guwahati Archdiocese. It has the highest presence of women religious, belonging to 50 different religious congregations in Northeast India. For them, the Archdiocese organises some specific programme every year. This year too, the diocese dedicated February 5, as Sisters Day. Thanks to the good understanding among the priests of the Archdiocese, a good number of sisters, 250 in all, participated in the programme.

True to the spirit of Synodality, the programme was coordinated by Sr. Escociana Vaz, North East Regional Secretary of CRI. She welcomed the august gathering warmly. Quoting the words of Pope Francis she highlighted, our coming together 'is a timely

occasion to rediscover the centrality of Jesus in our lives'. May we continue to hear his voice saying, 'I am counting on you "to wake up the world"'. Here we are to discover the centrality of Jesus in our lives and to wake up the world - to witness Christ and be prophets to the world.

Anchored by Sr. Agatha Vitsu BS, the day began with a brief introduction and an inaugural function at 9.30 am, followed by the input sessions in the morning. Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians gave the first talk on Synodality, and Sr. Esther Kaini Sapriimmai, Provincial Councillor for Formation (SCCG), gave the second talk on Formation for Evangelisation.

With the heart of a Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep, and whose voice, the sheep are familiar with, His Grace, John Moolachira the Archbishop of Guwahati was present all through. Listening is the first step in this synodal process. During his session, His Grace chose to listen to the sisters. He invited them to share the things that concern their life and mission. In a spirit of openness and with the father's heart, he listened intently to all that the sisters had to say.

Before the lunch break the participants were divided into 15 groups for a group sharing on the following:

1. The things the sisters appreciate in the Archdiocese of Guwahati.
2. The things they are not happy about in the Archdiocese of Guwahati.
3. The things that Archdiocese can do to bring about the renewal in the Archdiocese.

After the sumptuous meal, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, while many priest along with the Archbishop, availed themselves for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To conclude the day at 3.00 pm, there was a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by His Grace John Moolachira and concelebrated by Fr. Joby Abraham, Parish Priest of the Cathedral, Fr. John Paul, Secretary of the Archbishop, and Fr. Vincent Mochahary OFM Cap, Parish Priest of Matia - Majerburi. At the end of the Holy Eucharist Sr. Jaimary Lyngdoh Lyngkhoi CFMSS, proposed the vote of thanks.

With a contented heart, the sisters dispersed to their respective community, enthused and energised to give them in the service of the Church. The Sisters remain ever grateful to His Grace John Moolachira for his large heart to accommodate many religious congregations of women and men, giving them enough freedom to use their creative skill for the mission.

May our YES to the Lord be a visible sign of God's love, goodness and upliftment of the poor, needy and suffering.

Pope St. John Paul II has noticed the historic role of women: "I extend a special word of appreciation to the Missionary religious Sisters... How can we forget the important role played by women?"

HATIGAON TIDINGS

MSMHC: FINAL PROFESSION

In a world of glamour, comfort, race for success and contradicting values of the Gospel, the Church witnessed yet another manifestation of faith and courageous commitment as the 16 MSMHC sisters made their final vows to God on December 8, 2021, at MSMHC Generalate, Hatigaon. In a solemn Eucharistic celebration officiated by Archbishop John Moolachira of Guwahati Archdiocese. The sisters pledged their vows to the Lord in total freedom, to commit themselves to His cause. Highlighting the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the



Archbishop said that the feast reminds us that sin is incompatible with holiness. The appeal of St. Paul to the community at Ephesus to be holy and blameless before God and to live only for Him is addressed to every Christian, he said. Like Mary, all Christians are called to live a life in conformity to the will of God, seeking to do his will in everything.

Although the ceremony was strictly private due to covid-19 pandemic, the presence of nine concelebrants, most of whom were chaplains of the MSMHC Generalate and the religious sisters in and around Guwahati added joy and meaning to the religious ceremony of the perpetual profession.



ARRIVAL OF NEW BATCH OF JUNIORS

On December 15, 2021, the new batch of Junior sisters arrived for the 10 months' organized Juniorate course. A total of 29 sisters were inducted into the course through a solemn and prayerful ceremony. In the absence of the Superior General Sr. Philomena Mathew, who was on visitation to Kolkata



province, Sr. Asha Mao, General councillor for Formation officially welcomed the juniors and declared the Juniorate course opened. In her keynote address, Sr. Ancila Jose, the Economer General reiterated the significance of Juniorate as spiritual and intellectual formation to get set for mission *ad gentes* which is the main focus of formation for various apostolates of the congregation.

The Juniorate course 2022 has a new directress in the person of Sr. Smitha George. On this occasion, she was given a heart-warming welcome and assurance of God's blessings to accomplish her mission of accompanying the young sisters.

YOUTH CORNER

PREPARED TO RECEIVED THE LORD

In the month of December 2021, the Youth Commission Office of the Archdiocese of Guwahati, organized various programs for the youth in preparation for Christmas and to spread the joy of Christ's Birth.

On 4 December, a day of recollection was organized for the youth, around the Guwahati city and Fr. Maria Anthuvan SDB, Provincial Secretary and Rector of Salesian Provincial House, Panbazar was the resource person. He inspired the youth with his powerful message on freedom from and freedom for, how to choose between what is right and wrong and the various new challenges that the youth of today are facing.





On 13 December 2021, Pre-Christmas Celebration was organized for the Youth. The program began with the Holy Eucharistic celebration. After the Holy Mass, the youth gathered for the cutting of the Christmas cake. The other programs included Carol singing, Talents show, Bible Skit Competition and games.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF PEACE AND JOY

The Singing of Christmas Carol dispelled the darkness of fear amidst pandemic and the ongoing conflict and set in the spirit of Christmas joy, peace and hope. On 19 December 2021, youths around Guwahati City, organized Carol Singing and wishing God's blessings upon everyone at Christmas Season. They staged the program, at City Centre, Ganeshguri, Guwahati. The melodious voices of the young in tuning the hearts to the vibes of Christmas, bringing people together and spreading joy among them.



The melodious voices of the young in tuning the hearts to the vibes of Christmas, bringing people together and spreading joy among them.

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN" (LK.2:14)



Christmas season arrived with its peace, joy and love as we celebrate the Birth of Christ. To solemnize and celebrate joyfully, the Word becoming Flesh and dwelling among us, the Youth actively involved in organizing the choir at St. Joseph's Church Co-Cathedral, Panbazar during the Christmas Vigil Mass. The echoing song of Christmas once again poured forth the joyful vibes of Christmas.

"THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US" (JN 1:14)

To add the meaningful celebration of the Birth of Christ and share this joy with the less privilege ones, in collaboration with the Jesuit Fathers, the youth celebrated Christmas with the children around Uzan Bazar and organized various programs for them, which included various entertainments and competitions. It was indeed a celebration of God's unfathomable love for His people.



ADIEU AND WELCOME



On March 13 2022, The Youth Commission Office organized a day of gratitude for Sr. Bernadette Kropi MSMHC, the outgoing NERYC Director and welcomed Fr. John Barman MSFS, the newly appointed NERYC Director. The program began with the Holy Eucharistic celebration by Rev. Fr. John Barman MSFS. After the Holy Eucharistic celebration, they were felicitated with Gamosha, bouquet of flowers and other entertainment programs.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The North East Regional Youth Commission Office under the leadership of Rev. Fr. John Barman MSFS, NERYC Director, organized a Leadership Training Program from March 29 - 31 at MSFS Provincial House, Satgaon, Narengi for the youth of North East Region. The main focus of the program was to create a platform where youth come together to share their aspirations and learn from one another. The training aimed at building leadership



skills, dealing with change and current situations, creating awareness of job opportunities and career guidance. The Resource persons were: Mr. David D. Sangma, MCS, Director of Housing/ Mineral Resources, Jt. Secretary to Govt. of Meghalaya, Rev. Fr. Chetan Machado, Deputy Secretary CBCI/CCBI, Ms. Jyotsna D'Souza, ICYM National Youth President, Mr. Allen Brook, etc. Twenty-two young people from the Archdiocese of Guwahati coming from different Parishes attended the program.

4TH NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE, NADIAD

Sebin Davis Sebastian

It is with great privilege to share my experience of participating in the 4th National Youth Conference organized by the Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM) at Nadiad, Ahmedabad from 26 April to 1 May, 2022 on the theme "Youth for a Synodal Church". I, along with 5 of my friends: Jeffrey Ekka, Jeffrey Daimary, Daniel Hasda, Mary Nomita Joseph (St. Joseph's Church, Panbazar), Andrew Sangma and Diocesan Youth Director Sr. Esabella D. Sangma participated the program.



The event officially began on the 27 April, where we along with the rest of the North East Region took part as a team under the leadership and guidance of our Regional Youth Director (RYD) Fr. John Barman, MSFS. The first day included more of the official proceedings like the Inaugural Ceremony, Inaugural Eucharistic Celebration, General Body Meeting, National Council Meeting etc.

Days 2-5 (28-30 April) were the core of the conference, where we the delegates along with our directors and representatives of various youth movements like Jesus Youth, Salesian Youth Movement etc. were divided into various groups of about 20 each. Each of us in the group shared our experiences, discussed on Synodality and put forward our suggestions with regards to their respective home parishes and dioceses and a Synodal Church in India. It was really wonderful to get a platform where we could openly share our own worries and concerns, joys and sorrows, pains and gains caused by the Holy Mother Church, especially in our respective regions.

Evenings on these three days were filled with workshops on various topics like Mental Health, Coping Mechanism and Healing, Business and Startups, Dating and Relationships, Social Media and Internet, Education in the Nation, Environment and Sustainability, Creating Leaders, Catholic Theology and Discernment.

These days also included cultural programs in the evenings where the youth from various parts of India, showcased their culture with pride. The rest of the time were filled with Morning and Evening Prayers, Daily Mass, Animations, Award Ceremonies, Taizé Prayer, Adoration and Confessions which created an almost hectic schedule, not to mention as a Jesus Youth I was always on the lookout to meet more JYs from other parts of India!

On 1 May the Conference was again filled with official programs like Eucharistic Celebration, Concluding Ceremony, handing over of the Conference Flag to the next host region.



Barring the extreme weather in Nadiad which was about 44-45 Celsius every day, and the local food which took about a day for us, the youth from North East India to get used to, we had a wonderful and grace filled productive time.

As I conclude, I can only look back with the utmost gratitude to our Lord God Almighty for not only providing us with this opportunity but also for, guiding us, leading us and protecting us during this journey.



Words are not enough to thank His Grace Archbishop John Moolachira, Rev. Fr. Joseph Olickal, the Finance Administrator, Rev. Fr. John Paul, Diocesan Procurator and our beloved Sr. Esabella, DYD for giving us this wonderful chance and supporting us to attend, learn and participate in this conference. Our heartfelt gratitude also goes out to Fr. Vincent Xalxo SDB, Parish Priest, St. Joseph's, Panbazar and Fr. Sojan Pulickal, Parish Priest, St. Francis of Assisi, Rangjuli for providing us with all the necessary permissions, recommendations and helps to go forward with this opportunity.

BIRTHDAY CUM PRE-CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God" (Lk 1:46). It was a grace filled occasion on 14 December 2021, as we have celebrated the birthday of our Archbishop, John Moolachira cum Pre-Christmas get together of the priests and religious of the Archdiocese of Guwahati. The program was conducted in Priest Home, at Sonaighuli. Most Rev. John Katrukudiyil, bishop of Itanagar, preached the recollection, after which the fathers, brothers and sisters took part in the sacrament of reconciliation. During the confession the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and the seminarians filled the atmosphere with beautiful and melodious singing. A short felicitation program was conducted in honor of the birthday of Archbishop and celebrated the pre-Christmas with great joy to welcome the savior of the world. The program was concluded with a sumptuous meal.



DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE, KHETRI

Annual retreat of the regent brothers was held on 28 Nov to 1 Dec, in Divine Retreat Centre, Khetri; where eight brothers from Guwahati, one brother from Bongaigaon and OCD brothers attended the retreat. It was animated by Fr. Thomas Ettiyil, VC, emphasizing on venerable Fulton J. Sheen: "The secret to my preaching is that I have never missed spending an hour in the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. That's where the power comes from. That's where sermons are born. That's where good thoughts are conceived

As every retreat is a desert experience with Jesus, where being busy with the Lord one gets away from all miseries.

It was really wonderful retreat; where we could spend time with Jesus in silence and reflect about our vocation. On 1 December, we were blessed by the presence Archbishop John Moolachira, who offered the Holy Eucharist. At the breaking the word of God, His Grace said that our vocation is to be in the company of Jesus. His grace appreciated the hard work and dedication of the staff in the retreat centre. All the brothers maintained discipline and kept the spirit of retreat till the end and thus, beginning new journey of life.



EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE SLUMS OF GUWAHATI

International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8 organized by Bethany Social Service Centre, Gorchuk, Guwahati. This day is a focal point in the movement for women's rights to celebrate womanhood. The theme "Gender Equality for a Sustainable Tomorrow" was depicted on the stage, along with other posters and decorations. The theme focuses on the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, gender equality, environmental and disaster risk management. Whether she is a home maker, a teacher, engineer, a doctor for ages women have been making the world a better place to live. It is very important to give them all the respect and create a world where they can live freely and safely.

Mrs. Pranamika Sarma, a social worker at special cell for women in Panbazar Police Station Guwahati was the chief guest and the guests of honour were Fr. Shekhar Das SFX from Pamohi, Sr. Shwetha, the provincial councilor and Sr. Sapna, the Superior of the community. Through their empowering speech, highlighted the importance of gender equality and equal Rights and privileges of women in our society. They brought to the notice of women the available Laws that exist for their utility and benefit.

Sr. Mavis, the director saluted all the women of our society, and acknowledged their significant contribution to the family, society, country and the world. She said women every day strive to ensure the equal sharing of benefits. Without gender equality today, equal sustainable tomorrow is impossible; therefore start taking action from today for better tomorrow. Recognize, applaud, and cheer the brave women who have constantly advocated and promoted equitable, gender-focused and just society. Give power and provide platforms to this generation and the next, by reading and sharing the success stories and work of women and girls on the frontline.



Dear women, you are beautiful, smart, kind and unique. You are worthy of love and affection. You are Precious ! You are a Diamond, a Rose, a Pearl the most stunning of God's creation. You are worth more than you can ever imagine. Your worth surpasses all earthly

things because in the eyes of the Lord, you are loved; you are powerful, strong and capable. Realize the power within you !

Participants were around 140 together Self Help Group (SHG) members, Beneficiaries, Bethany Promotional School (BPS) Mothers, Tailoring Students, Garchuk Catholic Community Women, Bethany Candidates and Sisters from 17 slums area of Guwahati, were present for the day's programme. Women's day special dances, songs and dramas were performed. SHG members exhibited their group Income Generating Activity (IGA) products. The day was enjoyable for all the women. Happy International Women's day. Long Live Woman Power!



THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS (FMA) HEADING TOWARDS A CENTURY IN INDIA

As FMA India has entered into the third year of the centenary celebration of the arrival of the pioneers, and FMA Northeast India into the second year of its preparation for the centenary, here's something to know more about us



ASINGLE THOUGHT OF YESTERDAY CREATES A MARVEL TODAY

In making her weakness become her strength, Mary Mazzarello, a young peasant girl of Mornese, Italy, and later Co-Foundress of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is able to leave us a marvel today. She, who was known for her strength that defeated even that of men in the vineyards became very weak after the attack of typhoid and was left almost like a lifeless leaf waiting to get dry and be blown away with the wind. Yet, her determination to love God in deed and in life made her so daring so as to let her weakness stand as a strong foundation to build up even greater strength for the sake of doing good .

The Chronicles of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians speak of the humble beginnings of our Origin.



IF ONLY I COULD BE A DRESS MAKER!

"If only I were quicker with my needle and could work as a dress maker, what a number of girls I could gather! I would teach the little ones to knit stockings, sew and mend, and make their own dresses. In the meantime they would be kept away from danger, flippant conversations and vanity. I would teach them to love God and Our Lady. I must really become proficient."



Something singular occurred about this time which strengthened Mary's desire to work for young girls, although she did not speak about it until long after.

MARY WAS NOW READY TO HEAR FROM THE VOICE OF THE LORD A NEW MISSION

One day Mary was walking along the hills of Borgoaalto when she seemed to see a cluster of buildings before her which had the appearance of a girls' school. She stopped and stared in wonder saying to her, "What am I looking at? There has never been a building like this here! What is happening?" Then she heard what resembled a voice which said to her, "I entrust them to you."

Habitually self-controlled, Mary walked quickly away to put the affair out of her mind. But these girls were always there calling her, especially when her steps led her again in the direction of that hill. Nothing but throwing herself into her work with increasing order could distract her from the matter.

AN INVITATION TO HER FRIEND, PETRONILLA

The intuition of being able to learn the trade of a seamstress, the desire to find a workshop, the anxiety of reaching out to the girls of the village to do them good is shared by Mary with Petronilla.



One morning Mary met Petronilla at the Church exit and drew her towards a little-used path known as the Orchards. Standing under a large nut tree with her friend she said, "Listen Petronilla I really believe that God wants the two of us to work for the girls of Mornese. Look, you are not strong and after my illness, I can no longer work in the fields. We both have an ardent desire to save our own souls by doing good for young girls. Do

you not think that if we learned to sew, we could accomplish this? I have decided to learn dress making. Come with me and we will go to Valentino Campi. He is a good tailor and an excellent Christian. He goes to the Sacraments and has only one five-year old son. We shall be quite safe and sound under his roof. As soon as we learn enough to manage on our own and take in a few girls who would like to learn sewing our aim would be to keep them from harm, make them good and teach them specially to know and love God.



Mary Mazzarello and Petronilla began their work of teaching and helping the young girls to avoid occasions of sin. This noble mission still continues to exist in all parts of the world where the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are present true to the sole aim of the origin i.e. "to save souls", making every stitch 'an act of love for God.'

The legacy left by Mary Mazzarello was soon picked up by our pioneers who arrived in Guwahati on 8 December 1923. A vocational training school was started for bigger girls and young women mainly from the interior villages on 9 August 1924. The girls were taught weaving, knitting, embroidery and tailoring. They were also given the basics of literacy: reading, writing and arithmetic, the possibility of learning a trade, some knowledge of house-keeping, health and hygiene and above all, education to faith.

Today, we have a number of Vocational Training Schools which include new courses like, beauty & spa, fashion designing, tailoring, painting, embroidery and other updating Courses which aim at giving a trade to drop outs and young women.

AUXILIUM REACH OUT, Development Society of Salesian Sisters near Holy Child School, Krishnanagar, Guwahati offers a three-month Residential Fashion Designing Course, Job Placement Training, Entrepreneurship Development Training.



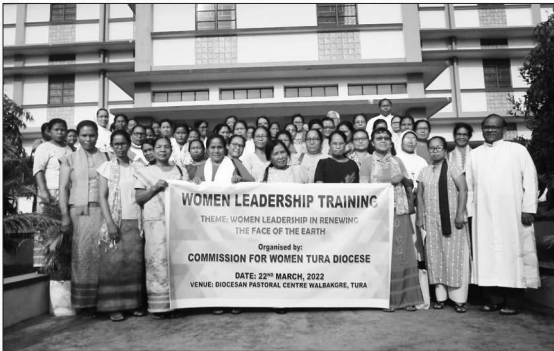
The mandate given to Mary Mazzarello "I entrust them to you" has been translated into a specific mission for poor and marginalized young women through the Vocational Training Centers giving them a New Lease of Life.

Sr. Mary Kamei FMA (ING)

NEDSSS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN, NORTH EAST

Regional women commission organized three-day leadership training for the Catholic women of North East at NEDSSS, Guwahati from 25 to 27 February 2022. The theme of the training was on "Women Leadership in Renewing the Face of the Earth". Sr. Sunanda, the Regional Secretary of Women Commission, North East took the initiative to conduct this programme. There were 43 women leaders actively participated from different dioceses of North East. The purpose of gathering was to educate the women leaders on ecological spirituality, familiarize the women to care for the Common Home, our earth and building leadership. Sr. M. Jyotisha SND, a renowned *Laudatosi* animator from Patna was the resource person for the training.



The effective points highlighted at the training were the integral ecology, integral human development, unity of the heart, mind and soul and building positivity, interior conversion of heart and the elevation of soul for renewing the face of the earth. The group also was given opportunity to study on our wants and needs. The basic needs are food, shelter, clothing, education, health and security. Our wants have no end in our lives. Therefore, we need to discern well and choose right thing based on our need.

The additional themes learned were God created everything good and He saw glow in everything. We are interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent in our existence. We need





to restore and renew our earth as it is our common home. We also must understand that we are all brothers and sisters, be human always and the future of our earth is in our hand. We need to develop the grace of gratitude, praise and stewardship. God's love is God's creation and our world is one family. The spirit of life dwells in every living creature and call to enter into relationship with God.

The grey aspects of human life also were realized like discrimination in colour, cast, gender inequality and 'environmental issues like global warming, climate change, glaciers melting, pollutions, drought, reduced ground water, forest fire, mechanized world, deprivation of girls' education, need for clean water, loss of biodiversity of plants and animals, severe heat and cold and above all the destruction has done to the earth. The question we need to ask is how can we promote communion of hearts, interfaith gathering, and nonviolence in the society and renew the face of the earth?

RUBY JUBILEE CELEBRATION



With immense joy and gratitude to God, the Ruby Jubilee of Archbishop Thomas Menamparambil was observed on November 20 at Guwahati. Archbishop Thomas served as the bishop of Dibrugarh for 11 years and the Archbishop of Guwahati in Assam for 20 years before his retirement of 18 January 2012.

The Holy Eucharist and felicitation programme was held at Christ the Bearer of Good News Cathedral at Dispur. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Archbishop Thomas Menamparambil, Archbishop John Moolachira with several other priests.

Archbishop John Moolachira addressing on the occasion spoke of the impact Archbishop Thomas has through his life and work and his dedication to the Church and the people.

Fr. Krualia Chittattukalam SDB felicitating the Ruby Jubilarian said, "We have gathered to felicitate Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil on completing 40 years of his episcopal ordination as a Special Ambassador who served the dioceses of Dibrugarh, Guwahati and

Jowai. He is an extraordinary and multifaceted personality who has accomplished much in his life; a friend of youth, a son of Don Bosco, a religious, a teacher, a brother, a priest, a builder, a planner, a bishop, a poet, a writer, a thinker, a researcher, a promoter of peace, Chairman of the office of Evangelization of FABC or the Chairman of CBCI Commission for Education and Culture and much more than all these he is an Ambassador of the Lord who carries his message to the people of the Northeast and around the world."

"On the day of the Ruby Jubilee, I would like to greet you in the above words of the Psalmist because you are amidst us in the name of the Lord," said Fr. Anna Amala Christian, "You are blessed because very few bishops in the world get to celebrate the Ruby Jubilee of their episcopal ordination. Secondly, we are blessed because we are fortunate to have a bishop like you. It is through you that the Archdiocese of Guwahati and the Church in North

ST. CLEMENT COLLEGE, NAGAON

THE LAW OF WASTED EFFORT

We are in middle of the year 2022. At the beginning of the year we all wished our beloved ones and friends a year of success of prosperity. We intensely pray that we remain untouched by failures. Some of us are even afraid of the term failure! When I was asked by Fr. Messiah to pen down a message for the Archdiocese Newsletter, I am reminded of a message I received from one of my uncles and the message was titled 'the Law of Wasted Effort'.



Lions succeed only a quarter of their hunting attempts - i.e., they fail 75% of their attempts and succeed only 25%. Still the lions continue to hunt not just because of the hunger, but it is because of the understanding of the Law of wasted effort. It is a law that has been instinctively built into animals, a law in which the nature is governed. For instance, we see, half of the eggs of fishes are eaten, half of the baby bears die before puberty, most of the world's rain falls in the ocean, most of the seeds of the trees eaten by birds. Scientists have found that animals, trees and other forces of nature are receptive to the law of wasted effort.

The human beings on the other hand, think that the lack of success in a few attempts is a failure. The truth is that we only fail, when we stop trying. Success is not to have a life free of pitfalls and falls, but success is to walk over your mistakes and go beyond every stage where your efforts were wasted, looking forward to the next stage - continue all over again.

We are given opportunities. We will face continuous failures, as we embark for another tryst with success. So what do we need? Trust in the Lord: the source of our life; trust in yourself: the gift of God, and trust in the failures: the source of knowledge of our success. Believe like Santigao of "Old Man and the Sea" of Eart Hemingway, that "My big fish must be somewhere".

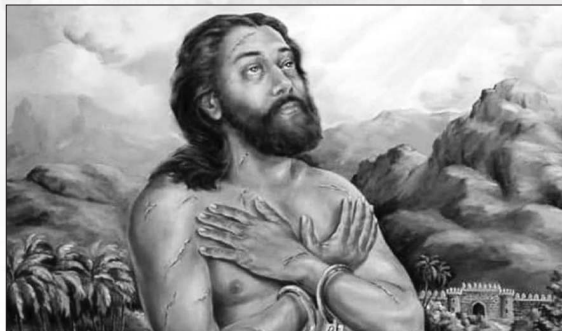
God's Blessings!

Fr. Emmanuel Uppamthadathil

ST. DEVASAHAYAM PILLAI

May 15 2022 is a red-letter day for the Catholic Church in India as it witnessed the Canonization of Blessed Devasahayam Pillai - the first lay person and martyr of the Indian soil to be declared a saint of the Catholic Church.

The road that he travelled from Neelakandan Pillai to Devasahayam was a long one. He was born in a wealthy Hindu family on 23 April 1712 in the kingdom of Travancore, a place called Nattalam, in the present-day Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. His name was Neelakandan, his father was Vasudevan Namputhiri, a Brahmin temple priest and his mother Devaki Amma, who belonged to a Nair caste. He became very proficient in study of language and the art of warfare especially the South Indian martial art. He later on began his career as a soldier and married Bhargaviammal.



He became renowned court official at the Travancore kingdom under king Marthanda Verma. He was appointed in different capacities as palace official and worked in the royal treasury.

In 1741 Dutch East India Company wanted to capture Colachel, a fort belonging to the Travancore kingdom. In the battle that followed the Dutch were defeated and imprisoned 24 Dutchmen. Among them there included the Flemish commander Captain Eustachius De Lannoy. De Lannoy later on became the commander in chief of the Travancore army.

Neelakandan Pillai came in contact with De Lannoy and unlikely friendship grew between the two and started sharing each other's personal lives. When he was afflicted by the trials in his life, De Lannoy became the source of solace.

In his life he was undergoing a series of misfortune in his life, like loss of crops and livestock. He even performed religious ceremonies and sacrifices but did not produce any positive result.

De Lannoy consoled him and shared about his Christian faith that God does not punish but loves everyone equally. He was profoundly touched by the story of Job who had absolute trust in God amidst all trials and tribulations. Now he was convinced that Christ was sufficient for him and he fell in love with Christ and expressed a strong desire to get Baptized.

De Lannoy knowing the political situation sent him to Fr. Giovanni Battista Buttari at Vadakkankulam, because the king had threatened with imprisonment if he became Christian. The priest too was aware of the danger path he had chosen with his conversion. After 9 months of preparation, he was baptized on 14 May 1745. He chose to call himself

'God is my help - Devasahayam, the local rendition of the name Lazarus.

His life was filled with great joy able to live out his new faith. His joy was complete when he was able to win his wife over to the faith against the objection of the family. He continued to serve the king and preached the gospel with firm faith. He became friends with the poor and the oppressed. He began to speak against the superstitions and injustices the Brahmins and the ruling class. Nothing could make him renounce Christ; he was not afraid of those who could kill the body.

Marthanda Verma and his heir, the prince was tolerant to the Christians. They had even donated land to Fr. Buttari to build a church there. A Brahmin and some others got furious with Devasahayam and threatened to exile the Christians of the kingdom. They begun to fill the king's ears with false accusations. The king ordered Devasahayam's arrest. Some of his friends asked him to escape but he would not. De Lannoy encouraged him to remain firm in faith and helped him to receive sacraments from a priest nearby. He was arrested on 23 February 1749.

He was arrested and was brought before the king and threatened with cruelty if he did not renounce his faith. The king ordered his imprisonment. He was confined to a narrow dark prison. He was ordered to be paraded for sixteen days across the kingdom, hands tied at his back and seated on a buffalo. He was beaten with a thorny stick and applied chilly and pepper powder rubbed into the wounds. He would fall off the buffalo, riding on the rough terrains. A great number of people gathers to witness his courage and the joy with which he bore the suffering.

These punishments did not work and so the king ordered Devasahayam to be imprisoned in Travancore. On his journey he requested for water to quench his thirst but was thrown among the rocks. He wept and prayed. He struck the rock and a spring broke forth to quench his thirst. He was tied to a tree such a way that he could not move. For seven months he was made to live below the tree under the observation of an executioner. Large number of people would gather there to ask him to pray for them. The executioner had no children and on the prayer of Devasahayam, he was blessed with a child. The prison slowly became crowd and resemble a place of prayer.

He was tortured from every side. He was starved, suffocated, denied water, thrown into a ant-infested cave, and among the poisonous snakes and scorpions. The king was disappointed with every method applied to put him to death. They planned to put him to death in secret in another prison. But he stood firm in his faith. He continued to share the merciful love of Jesus with the soldier and all who came to visit him.

After three years of intense persecution on 14 January 1752 Devasahayam Pillai was taken to the edge of the Aralvaimozhi forest, his legs tied in chains and was carried on a pole like an animal for slaughter. On reaching the place of his execution he begged for some time to pray. Eight shots were fired at him and his body fell. Since the execution was carried out in secret, much later the Christians came to know and found the mortal remains of Devasahayam Pillai and buried it before the main altar of the Church of St. Francis Xavier at Kottar.

His last prayer:

"O Jesus, do not abandon me. Into your hands O Lord, I commend my spirit. O beloved Mother Mary help me."





Editor: Fr. Lucas Hemrom & Fr. John Paul
Published by: Archdiocese of Guwahati, Ambari, Guwahati- 781 001
+91 80119 65081, secretaryguwahatiarchdiocese@gmail.com
For Private Circulation Only