



BAG-e-CHA

Catholic Diocese of Bagdogra

Monthly 'E' Newsletter

February 2023

ISSUE NO. XXIII



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

We are in the synodal period up to 2024. Nay, this synodal call is to make the Church truly 'synodal' or to remind that the Church in its originality is (supposed to be) 'synodal'! Henceforth, the Church has to be nothing else but synodal.

The Holy Father promulgated the Apostolic Constitution on March 19, 2022, which is *Predicate Evangelium* (Preach the Gospel, henceforth PE). It is one of the most important legislative acts that Pope Francis has promulgated since his election in 2013. Almost a decade in the making, much of it has already been implemented along the way. The final document does make some significant changes and provides the vision of a Curia that is evangelical, service-oriented, promotes synodality, is shorn of careerism and highly professional. It was a modest attempt to discourage ambition and worldliness in the priesthood.

Although the PE is the latest work of Pope Francis, the aim and objective of this document is vividly clear in all his exhortations and writings. While the document is directly addressed to the Roman Curia in the Vatican, the contents are very well applicable to all of us, to the entire Church.

The document reminds us of the main task entrusted by the Lord Jesus (cf. Mk 16:15; Mt 10:7-8). This is not just a mandate, but it is also a call to the Church for rendering the first service

to each person and to all humanity. How does the Church do it? By bearing witness, in word and deed, to the mercy which she herself had freely received. We are exhorted to remember the example Our Lord Jesus himself gave, namely he washed the feet of his disciples. He also said that we shall be blessed if we do likewise (cf. Jn 13:15-17). [1] In this way, "the evangelizing community places itself through works and gestures in the daily lives of others, shortens distances, lowers itself to the point of humiliation if necessary, and takes on human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in the people" [2]. In doing so, the people of God fulfil the command of the Lord, who, in asking them to proclaim the Gospel, urged them to care for their weaker, sicker and suffering brothers and sisters.

It's a clarion call to us beginning with those of us in some or the other authority and trickling down to every single synodal traveller in faith to walk the path of humility, caring, listening and serving. Those of us who are in authority of some kind, shall we begin first and be examples for our fellow travellers?

+Vincent Aind
Bishop of Bagdogra

Seva Kendra Siliguri:

December 2022 was a very significant month for Seva Kendra because of two very important events. First is the Golden Jubilee Celebration on 17th December. Officially Seva Kendra which was blessed on 7th October 1972 is 50 years in existence, hence an elaborate celebration was organised to mark the occasion. The highlights of the day were a stage program, an exhibition and a sumptuous meal. All stage items were theme based highlighting the various projects and activities being implemented by Seva Kendra. The projects of Seva Kendra were further showcased in the exhibition. 600 plus guests invited from among all the parishes, institutions, NGOs, ex-staff and well-wishers of Seva Kendra were very appreciative of the quality of the program and the entire planning and organisation of it. **Archbishop Thomas D'Souza** who has played a very significant role in the development of Seva Kendra was the Chief Guest of the day. The other very prominent guests were Rev. Fr. Paul Moonjely, Executive Director of Caritas India New Delhi and Mr. G. Senthil Kumar, Executive Director of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), New Delhi. For about the first 35 years with the help of the CRS and Caritas India Seva Kendra was able to effectively serve the people of the region.

The second big event in December 2022 was the visit of the Apostolic Nuncio. On his way back from the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the diocese of Darjeeling His Excellency Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli was the guest of Bishop Vincent Aind on 8th December. This gave us the blessed opportunity to welcome him to Seva Kendra.

On 21st January for all the staff of Seva Kendra a picnic was arranged at MM Terai to acknowledge their cooperation, hard work and team spirit in making the Jubilee function successful.

-Fr. Felix Pinto

Pradhan Nagar Siliguri:

The month of January has been a blessing to Pradhan Nagar parish and quite many events took place in this month. On 3rd of January 2023,

some Holy Matrimony took place. That includes both, fresh as well as rectified marriages.

15th of January was a special and memorable day to all the youths of Pradhan Nagar parish. The youth made a maiden visit to Ashagram and spent the entire day with the inmates. The youth experienced the warmth and love of the children in the Centre.

The women on the other side, made a visit to Jeevandan in Mailanijote Parish. The women were extremely happy to spend the time with the patients in Jeevandan.

The prayer group in the parish is very active. Time to time, the group visits the sick and suffering families and offers special prayers for the needy.

-Fr. Naresh Beck

Mailanijote:

The Jesus Youth in collaboration with Mailanijote parish organized a full day retreat for the youth. There were 45 participants who took part in the retreat and experienced the divinity of Jesus. The participants were from Kharubhanga, Faudijote, Hansqua, Gayaganga, Bhimbhar and Mailanijote parishes. Some five resource persons led this beautiful retreat. The participants felt the retreat was fruitful and enriching, as many of them experienced Jesus.

-Fr. Edward Kerketta



Gayaganga:

1. Awareness Program:

An Awareness Program was conducted on Tribal Land/Tea Garden Land/Land Right to Adivasi people of tea gardens on 22nd of January at Gayaganga Parish by *Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad*. This was a full day program.

Some 200 people had registered themselves for this program. Some NGOs and other social workers were also present. Fr. Donatus Tirkey TOR, Fr. Pascal Xalxo SJ and Fr. Joseph Xaxa too attended this seminar. The President of ABAVP Mr. Tez Kumar Toppo, Secretary Mr. Junas Kerketta, and Advocate Naveen Kerketta were the chief resource persons for this day. The resource persons explained the establishment of the tea gardens in Assam and Bengal. The *Adivasi* people from *Chotanagpur* were brought in this area to work in the tea gardens. Other aboriginals of Bengal did not want to work in the tea gardens as bonded labourers. So they left the place and settled in some other parts of Bengal and remained in agriculture. In the course of time these migrated *Adivasis* settled in Bengal and are still living in the land given by the tea companies. The government least bothers about the development of these people. The government gives more attention to *Para, Bari, Guri, Jote* etc. but not to the *Lines*, because these latter do not own the land for themselves. This program was organised to enlighten and awaken the tea garden people.



2. Praise and Worship:

Weekly praise and worship and adoration started by the Parishioners of Gayaganga in the Parish every Friday at 5:30 pm in this month of January. And they conclude with the Holy Mass. Faithful from neighbouring villages come for this service. Men actively participate in this prayer service. They themselves preach and make good prayers.
-Fr. Joseph Xaxa

Ambari, Catechetical Centre:

In the months of December and January, the Catechetical Centre Ambari had some activities. On 2nd of December, the director along with the assistant director had a meeting with Bishop Vincent Aind. The main agenda of the meeting was the evaluation and proper planning for the next year 2023. Besides, Bishop Vincent Aind highlighted the importance of BEC in an attempt

to put into practice the Synodality of the church.

On 9th of December, the Commission for Catechetics, organized a meeting with all the headmasters and school teachers at St. Vincent De Paul School, Hatighisa in which, the commission evaluated the catechism books and the need of more updated catechism books.

The Centre availed itself to conduct a 5 days retreat (21 - 25 January) for 2 TOR deacons. The director himself was the preacher.

-Fr. Matias Toppo

Papal Seminary, Pune:

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards", says Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. Bidding farewell to 2022 with many fond memories of all ups and downs of life and received manifold blessings of God last year, we have stepped into the New Year 2023 backed up by the experience and learning lessons of life to continue the journey. January has been a great month for the Papal Seminary Pune with lots of resolution and activities for the days to come. On 1st of January, we had feast of Mary, Mother of God and being the new year, the Papalite students had a picnic in collaboration with the supportive staffs of Papal Seminary and of nearby houses hailing from Chotanagpur area. The regular classes for the JD students resumed from on 4th of January onwards so the students on vacation had reached one day ahead. On 11th of January, the Papalites had Rector's address to the home of love, the papal community, highlighting the need of the hour of the church and important conclusions from the Rectors' meet in Kolkata. Remaining faithful to the culture of Papal Seminary, we had Pongal celebration, representing the Tamil culture and feast of new crops and cattle. On 18th of January, we had spiritual conference by Fr. Stephen Jayard. Philosophers' Day is another important event for students of philosophy in Papal Seminary. The Philosophers' Day was a five days event with the theme "Bettering the Better" from 19th to 23rd January. On 24th and 25th the Papalites had community recollection on Nonviolent Communication. On 26th of January we had Republic Day celebration for which all the JD students had gathered in the main chapel of Papal Seminary for the Holy Eucharist. After the Mass and hoisting of the national flag we concluded the event with a high-tea. Finally, the

month was concluded by the visitation of POSA (Provincial of South Asia), from 23rd to 28th of January. POSA had meeting with Papal community where they had cordial discussion on different aspects of Papal Seminary for the betterment of the Home of love and the Church.

-Bros Anuraj and Roshan

Morning Star College, Barrackpore: *Ad Auds* Examination:

"Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves." (Psalm 126:6) Indeed it was a day of great joy for seminarians of 3rd year Theology as they successfully completed with excellent results their *Ad Auds* Examination after intensive preparation for almost two weeks. The exam was conducted on 12th January 2023. The mode of examination was viva and there were two panels consisting of three professors each. It started at 8:30 am and ended by 7:00 pm. Each student was given 30 minutes and was examined on their knowledge of morals, canon law, correct pastoral approaches to contemporary problems of Christian living and proper skills in the administration of the sacraments. This year twenty-four students appeared for this examination and all passed with good percentage. Above all, three students from our Diocese namely: Br. Manoj Kumar, Br. Gabriel Gupin Hansda and Br. Robin Ekka too appeared for the examination and passed with flying colours with the grace of God and prayerful support of you all. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." (Prov. 16:3)

-Bro. Robin Ekka

Cricket Tournament 2022-23:

The sports committee in Morning Star Regional Seminary this year chose to have the cricket tournament on 26 January. The matches were held section wise. Three teams from Theology section and three teams from Philosophy section were to meet among themselves. Rest of the community members, all the fathers and seminarians, were in the cheering committee. The first match was played on 21 January 2023 between first year theologians and third year theologians. The first year theologians won the match and qualified for the final match. The third year brothers got a second chance to play against the 2nd year theologians and this time they managed to win the match and they

too qualified for the final match. On 22nd, it was the Philosophers' day where the first match was played between 3rd year and the 2nd year philosophy brothers. The 3rd year philosophy held on to their seniority over the 2nd year philosophy team and managed to qualify for the final. The 2nd year philosophy team got a second chance to play against the 1st year philosophy team. But the 2nd year team could not manage to win this match either. Ultimately the first year philosophy won the match and secured a place for the final.

The final match was played on 26th of January 2023, after the celebration of the Republic Day. The first final match was played between the third and first theologians. The match was of twelve overs. The third year theology team made a good score and set the target of 136 runs for the loss of five wickets. The first year theologians tried a chase but they couldn't score even 100 runs and lost all their wickets. Hence, the third year team became the Champion from the theology section. On the other hand, the second Final match was played between the first year and the third year philosophers. First year philosophy team did good batting and Brother Aman with his excellent batting scored 91 runs and at the end of twelve overs the team scored 140 runs for the loss of six wickets. The third year philosophy team gave a good chase and in the last over the team managed to win the match and became the champion of the current year. It was really a competitive game. We all enjoyed much. Finally the teams were honoured with trophies according to their performances. From the theology section Bro. Rogar was awarded "the man of the match" and Bro. Vimal as "the best bowler". On the other hand, in philosophy section, Br. Aman was declared the "man of the match" and Br. Sumit was awarded as a best bowler of the tournament from the philosophy section. We had thus a lot of fun during the cricket match.

-Bro. Sumit



BIRTHDAYS	ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY
1 st Feb: Fr. Anthres Toppo	2 nd Feb: Fr. Thomas Vayalil
2 nd Feb: Frs. Michael and Pradeep	19 th Feb: Fr. Joseph Xaxa
6 th Feb: Fr. Valerine G. Desouza	
9 th Feb: Fr. Sanjay Kindo	

BISHOP'S PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023

01	Wednesday	:	Meetings in Good Shepherd School, Bagdogra
02	Thursday	10:00 a.m. :	Final Profession: Carmel Ashram, Jalpaiguri
03	Friday	10:00 a.m. :	Silver & Golden Jubilee of 2 DSA Sisters, Malbazar
04	Saturday	02:30 a.m. :	BCDE Meeting – Auxilium School, New Chumta
05	Sunday	06:30 a.m. :	Mass for the People: Our Lady Queen Church, Siliguri
		02:00 p.m. :	Meeting with Local CRI: Asha Niketan School, Ranidanga
06 (Monday) – 10 (Friday)		:	Bishop's House, Siliguri
11	Saturday	03:00 p.m. :	Mass for the People: George Line (Mailanijote Parish)
12	Sunday	07:30 a.m. :	Mass for the People: Parish Day Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Bhimbhar
13	Monday	:	Bishop's House, Pradhan Nagar
14 (Tuesday) – 16 (Thursday)		:	Seminar on Marriage Instruction: Seva Kendra, Siliguri
17	Friday	02.00 p.m. :	G B Meeting: Divya Mata English Medium, Bhimbhar
18	Saturday	a.m. :	departure: Mangalore
18 (Saturday) – 24 (Friday)		:	Mangalore
22	Wednesday	:	ASH WEDNESDAY
25	Saturday	a.m. :	arrival: NJP/ Siliguri
		p.m. :	Visit of General Councilor: Sr. Ann SJC: Bishop's House, Slg
26	Sunday	:	Seminar for village catechists: Ambari
27 (Monday) – 28 (Tuesday)		:	Bishop's House, Siliguri

LENT 2023

My dear brothers & Sisters in Christ,

The holy season of Lent is very near. Lent is a season in which we are called to embark on a spiritual journey of reflection, repentance, and renewal. The Church reminds us that the Lord calls us and invites us during this time to a life of change and conversion. The Scripture readings speak of beginning anew; of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; of conversion of heart; of forgiveness. They remind us we are called to live a holy life.

We begin this Lent with cautious optimism that progress is being made against the coronavirus pandemic. In some ways, the pandemic may have seemed like an extended Lent, as many parallels can be seen between them. During Lent we practice penance, sacrifice, fasting, and abstinence to come out on the other side renewed and strengthened to celebrate the Paschal mystery and new life at Easter. In a sense, the coronavirus ushered in a long-lasting "Lenten Season." We have made sacrifices; we have experienced or witnessed suffering, and now look forward to new beginnings and emerging from the ashes of the pandemic. Suffering, pain, sadness, the cross, these are never a dead end, Jesus' Passion assures us, death will never have the last word for He has conquered it when He rose again. They point to new life we find, during Lent, signs of life for us, our communities. Lent is not an end in and of itself, but a season that leads us to the joyous and hope-filled celebration of Easter.

My dear brothers & Sisters in Christ, I invite each and every one of you in this season of LENT to join me to lead, to reconnect with God, with church, with community and with family after pandemic-imposed restrictions kept us apart. Let this Lent be the time to restore our practice of faith and rebuild a vibrant church for now and the generations to come.

WISH YOU ALL A FRUITFUL SEASON OF LENT