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No 3

Newsletter of Darjeeling Jesuits

April ~ 2020

From Provincial's Desk

The common belief is that there is a spiritual purpose behind everything that happens, whether that is what we perceive as being good or being bad. It is in this light I see that Covid-19 virus has something to teach us. My meditation is based on the reflections of *Fr Arturo Sosa* and *Mr Bill Gate*.



The Covid-19 virus reminds us that we are all equal, regardless of our culture, religion, economic position or our reputation. The disease which is spread all over the world treats us all equally. In having been affected globally we are all connected. When one is affected, the effect is on another. Bill Gate says, "The false borders we have put up around each other have little value as this virus does not need a passport." Secondly, the disease reminds us of the shortness of life and of what is most important for us to do, which is to help one another, especially those who are old or sick. Thirdly it reminds us that our true work is not our job. That is not what we were created to do. Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other and to be of benefit to all. It reminds us to keep our egos in check. No matter how great we think we are, a virus can bring us to a standstill.

In the light of the above, as we are locked in, let us spend time in reflecting and understanding the panic-ridden situation we live in, learn from our personal and collective mistakes, and take collective responsibility for the Planet. Life is cyclical. Hence after every difficulty, there is always ease. We do not need to panic. Even the panic shall pass. But what is very important is that we learn important lessons from this disease and become better human beings, better priests and religious for God's mission.

PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAM

April 2020

(If the curfew is withdrawn)

- 18 Meeting of the Superiors & DOWs
- 19 Province Consult
- 20 Formation Commission Meeting
- 24 Meeting of men in Social Apostolate
- 25 Higher Education Meeting

PROVINCIAL'S APPOINTMENTS

Fr Zacheus Dungdung: Director, Pre-Novitiate
Fr Tommy Kollakkompil: Director, LPC

Fr Amid Kujur: HLDR

Fr Frank Subba: Bible Apostolate/CLC
Coordinator (Residence - St Joseph's School,
Darjeeling)

Fr Daniel Bara: Nepal

Fr Justin Bage: Headmaster, St Peter's Primary
School, Gayaganga

DIACONATE ORDINATION

Sch. Antony Xalxo was ordained a deacon by **His Grace Anil J.T. Couto**, the Archbishop of Delhi on 22 February 2020 at the Millennium Hall of St Xavier's School, Delhi. Congratulations Antony!



FR GENERAL'S VISIT TO THE PROVINCE



Fr Arturo Sosa Abascal, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus visited Darjeeling Province from 2 to 4 March 2020. Due to missing a flight from Delhi, he had to cut short his programs in Darjeeling on 2 March. However he was present for the closing ceremony of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Hayden Hall. He was greatly impressed by the magnitude of the works undertaken by Hayden Hall. He addressed a gathering of Jesuit alumni at St Joseph's school, North Point. He gave a short message to the staff and students of St Joseph's school, North Point on 3 March before going to Kalimpong to meet our novices at Manresa. He spend over an hour with them. Before returning to Matigara, he blessed the

new auditorium of Gandhi Ashram. After having had his breakfast with the Bishop of Bagdogra he went to Gayaganga to address the staff and students of St Peter's school, Gayaganga, St Vincent's School, Hatighisa, North Bengal St Xavier's College, Rajganj and the parishioners of St Peter's Church on 4 March. In the afternoon he visited Jesu Ashram. He concluded his visit by offering the Holy Mass for all the Jesuits of the Province gathered at Matigara.



In his address to Darjeeling Jesuits he praised the Province for the cultural diversity of Jesuits and the variety of ministries. He stressed the need for a pioneering spirit and urged Darjeeling Jesuits to move to frontier missions. It was indeed a graceful time of coming together of all Darjeeling Jesuits.

HAYDEN HALL

The Superior General of the Jesuits was the Chief Guest during the closing ceremony of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the foundation of Hayden Hall. His Lordship, **Bishop Stephen Lepcha**, the Bishop of Darjeeling, all the Jesuit Fathers who accompanied Fr General from Rome and **Fr John Wilfred Lobo, SJ**, the Provincial were welcomed warmly by the entire staff. Present for the occasion were the founding members and the former staff of Hayden Hall. **Fr General** in his address urged those present to look ahead and to seek new ways to foster human development as per the motto of the institute.

Hayden Hall observed the International Sick Day on 11 February. Our community development workers visited many sick people. The Hayden Hall dispensary operates Monday till Saturday for the needy. Hayden Hall celebrated the International Women's day on 8 March 2020 with the global theme 'Each for Equal'. The day was celebrated in collaboration with seventy Self-Help Groups of Darjeeling.

Mrs Sujata Lepcha has been visiting our study centers with full energy and enthusiasm in and around Siliguri to analyze the different issues

facing the centers. Hayden Hall had started with five study centers in 2015 which increased to fourteen by 2019, giving free education to two hundred and ninety children of the Terai. The next mission in that area is to have more awareness programs on domestic violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, issues regarding the dropouts, trafficking and health camps.

A meeting was held at Xavier Sangitanjali, Matigara on 10 January 2020 where teachers from the different study centers of the tea gardens were present. They shared and discussed about the hardships they had been facing and the ways to eradicate them.

A one-day seminar was held at Loyola School, Kelabari on 24 January 2020. **Mr Peter Lepcha** and **Fr Basil** were the resource persons. Eight teachers from Siliguri and five teachers from Kelabari area attended the seminar. **Mrs Sujata, Mrs Purnima, Mrs Prena** and **Ms Helena** visited our study centers at Kalej Valley.

An awareness seminar on the rapidly spreading corona virus (COVID-19) was conducted by **Sr Chunku Sherpa SJC** for the parents of our students on 16 March 2020. The parents, mostly mothers were advised to take precautionary measures for themselves and their families.

Darjeeling Traffic Police chose Hayden Hall for manufacturing Auto Trash Bags. During the freezing month of January, we sold 700 bags with the help of Darjeeling Police. Handmade products of Hayden Hall were sent for an exhibition at the Sabala Mela held in Siliguri from 6 February 2020. Darjeeling Municipality has come forward to support and promote the products of Hayden Hall.

Ms Dipika Adhikari

ST PAUL'S KURSEONG

Fr Peter Jong directed a five-day Ignatian retreat for the youth of St Paul's Parish from 29 January to 3 February. Four of our parishioners attended a workshop for catechists at Loyola Pastoral Centre from 13 to 16 February. Videos based on three *bhajans* from the album *Timro Charanma*, composed by **Fr Peter Jong** were released on 16 February. **Fr Giles** was the Chief Guest for the function. **Fr Kevin, Fr Mangal, Fr Chiran** and **Fr David** were present along with the parishioners. **Mr Justin Lepcha**, the cinematographer and editor of the videos, was felicitated by the youth of St Paul's.

Novena of grace to St Francis Xavier was held in the parish from 4 to 12 March. **Fr Samuel**

Lepcha, Fr Alex Lepcha, Fr George Lepcha, Fr Andrew Lama and **Fr Solomon Rai, SDB** preached during the novena. **Fr George Lepcha**, the Director of ICYM gave a seminar to the youth of the parish on 7 March. **Fr Peter Jong** participated in a Leadership Training Program at Navjivan Retreat Centre, Delhi from 15 to 21 March.

Fr Peter Jong Lepcha

REGIS COMMUNITY, TORONTO

I went to Le Moyne Villa at Syracuse, along with three Scholastics from the US and Scotland, to spend some time away from Toronto. The Villa house is at Lake Cazenovia, which is frozen at present. I am now busy working on my assignments and final paper.

Sch. Oshish Tirkey

LCE, NAMCHI

Twenty-nine of our students along with **Fr Joseph Sandanasamy, Sr Mary K.A., SCN** and **Mr Umesh Pradhan** the librarian visited Vishakapatnam, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. The students had an enriching experience of the socio-economic, religious, educational and cultural life of South India. The 1st and the 3rd Semester results were very encouraging. The College organized a singing and elocution competition on 16 and 22 February respectively.

NBSXC, RAJGANJ

In the month of February the College Cultural Fest was celebrated with much gusto, followed by the Annual Sports Day. The College felicitated the outstanding performers both academic and extra-curricular activities on 24 February. **Mr Avishek Tiwari**, the DM of Jalpaiguri was the Chief Guest and **Dr Sanchuri Roy Mukherjee** was a special guest. The College bid farewell to the graduating batch on 25 February.

Fr Lalit Tirkey and **Dr Bipransh Tiwari** attended a two-day national workshop on NAAC Documentation and Preparedness in Shillong. After returning from a medical check-up in Bengaluru **Fr Gabriel** spent a few days at Matigara. He is now back in the community. The community went for a picnic to Laligurans beyond Mateli, Chalsa.

Fr Lalit Tirkey

DNC, PUNE

Fr Mark Hoo from the Province of Japan gave us a talk on volunteering to work in Japan Mission

on 3 February. It was an occasion of great joy when twenty-four of our brothers were ordained deacons on 9 February. The community bid farewell to **Fr Ilanko**, the spiritual director, who was appointed as the Socius of the new Chennai Province, and the outgoing Theologians and Philosophers on 22 February.

Sch. Evan Basnet

ST VINCENT'S, HATIGHISA

One hundred and twenty "Christ-teen" children of the parish bicycled all the way to Saat Bhaiya Tea Estate to visit the sick immediately after Sunday Eucharistic celebration on 9 February. The Catholic community was deeply touched by their visit. The children were offered a delicious meal.

The parish *krusbeer* group had a special Mass on 23 February after which they conducted a prayer service and performed cultural dances for the inmates of Palliative Health Care Centre at Hatighisa. The inmates were deeply touched by the act of love and concern expressed by one hundred and eighty boys and girls. Sixty of the parish youth went for a picnic to Tipu Khola forest on 16 February 2020.

The renovation work of the Jesuit residence is almost done. The school undertook the construction of a bicycle stand and a watchtower at the gate.

Fr Lawrence along with the school staff **Mr Sanjeev Chettri**, **Ms Julita Xalxo** and **Ms Nirupa Kujur** went to Indian Social Institute, Bangalore on 14 February to participate in a two-day seminar on Peace and reconciliation – a response to GC 36, Decree 1. **Sch. Rajasekar** went to Dhyana Ashram (Kolkata) to make an eight-day retreat.

Fr Alvin Minz

ST XAVIER'S, LENGPUI

We had two farewell programmes for **Fr Daniel Bara** on 24 January. In the morning we had a short programme with the College staff and students and in the evening we had a thanksgiving prayer service cum dinner for the clergy and religious of Aizawl city. There were around seventy people including **Bishop Stephen Rotluanga CSC**. **Fr Daniel** left for Matigara on 31 January. The entire staff and students went to the airport to bid him goodbye. I attended a meeting regarding the NAAC evaluation for our college. Our college is placed

under Pachhunga University College as our mentor college.

Fr Justin

ST PETER'S, GAYAGANGA

Rev. Fr Arturo Sosa Abascal, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, accompanied by **Fr Vernon D'Cunha SJ**, **Fr M.K. George SJ** and **Fr Peirre Belanger SJ** visited us on 4 March. A public reception was accorded to the visiting dignitaries by the staff, senior students, nurses, alumni, parishioners, priests, religious and laity. There were about one thousand and two hundred people gathered inside a tastefully decorated *shamiyana* at the football ground of St Peter's High School.

The staff and students of St Peter's Primary school gave farewell to **Fr Nicholas Christuraj J** on 7 March and to **Sch. David** on 21 March. The parishioners celebrated the International Women's Day on 8 March. **Fr John Kennedy** directed a retreat for fifty-eight youth of the parish from 8 to 11 March at LPC, Matigara. **Fr Fredrick Baraik** gave a seminar for the 'Couples for Christ' on 9 March.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other common prayers at the church have been suspended till 31 March to prevent COVID-19. The Higher Secondary Examinations began on 12 March but had to be postponed from 19 March due to COVID-19 outbreak. Although the school and the hostel were closed due to the pandemic, all the guardians of the midday meal students of the High School had to be supplied with rice and potatoes from 22-24 March as per the orders of the Government of West Bengal.

Sch. David Donald

REST IN PEACE

Br Thomas Rama, SJ (KAR)

69/41 01 February 2020.

Br Joseph C. Kochukunnumpuram, SJ (PAT)

81/58 07 February 2020

Fr Edwin Rasquinha SJ (BOM)

91/60 20 February 2020

Fr Felix Tirkey SJ (DUM)

52/28 02 March 2020

Fr Geoffrey Michael Meagher SJ (HAZ)

77/59 05 March, 2020

Fr Petrus Kerketta, SJ (MAP)

71/51 09 March 2020

Fr Arakal Jacob, SJ (AND)

96/75 12 March 2020

Fr Dominic Muthedath, SJ, (PAT)

85/63 20 March 2020.