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Newsletter of Darjeeling Jesuits

September ~ 2020

From the Provincial's Desk

We celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Mary on 8 September. The celebration of this feast of Mary has three very important lessons for us today. She teaches us (i) to experience the joy of Christ and share it with others; (ii) never let adversity beat us down; (iii) and always help those in need with love and mercy. Mary responded to God's call with great joy, haste and perseverance. We will be filled with an inner joy when we discover Jesus in the brokenness of our world and the brokenness within ourselves. Nothing and no one can take such inner joy away from us. With Christ in our lives, we will find the strength and hope not to be sad and discouraged of what we see today in and around us but to rise in haste just like Mary to help others in need. Victory is to those who repeatedly rise up, without getting discouraged. If we imitate Mary, we cannot sit with our arms crossed, just complaining or perhaps avoiding any effort so that others do what is our responsibility. Making a difference and helping others does not have to be done on a grand scale but entails doing everyday things with tenderness and mercy. Mary's perseverance came from her reliance on God and His goodness for the strength and courage needed to stay by Christ's side. In the world in which long-lasting values are rejected and everything is changing, the Virgin Mother encourages us to be men and women who are constant in doing good works and are always faithful to our lifelong commitment to priesthood and religious life.



PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAM

September 2020

- 03-04 Visitation: Gandhi Ashram & 5th Mile
- 05-06 Visitation: Sakyong
- 09 Meeting of the Heads of Schools & Colleges
- 10 Gayaganga: MC meeting
- 16 Visitation: Province curia
- 17 Visitation: Senior Home
- 19 Province Consult

APPOINTMENT BY FR GENERAL

Fr Dionysius Vaz: Provincial of Karnataka Province
Fr Stanley Karakkada: Rector of St Joseph's School Community, Darjeeling

APPOINTMENT BY FR PROVINCIAL

Fr Roshan Minj: Headmaster, St Peter's primary school

FR BASIL REPORTS FROM A GOVERNMENT RUN QUARANTINE CENTER AT CHALSA...



I am at Tiyabon Govt. Youth Hostel, Chalsa in quarantine for the last ten days. There are about fifty of us here. I am given a self-contained room. Lights, fan and geyser are all in working condition!

I was detected Covid-19 positive on 18 August at Malbazar government hospital. The same day I was taken to the quarantine center. Fortunately **Fr Saby** and **Fr Bijoy** and **Teresa**, our cook were found negative.

The first thing that came to my mind when I was told that I was corona positive was the call to be 'indifferent to health or sickness' as given in the principle and foundation (*Sp.Ex.23*) and for which that I prayed earnestly in my two month-long retreats. Indifference is one of the points I preach every year on the feast of St Ignatius, the founder of our Society. The time spent in the quarantine is



a grace-filled time for me. I became aware of God's providence. I am thankful to God that all the basic needs are taken care of. I am aware of how much people care for me. It is a time to re-establish and strengthen my bonds with

God and my people. I get phone calls and messages from my community members, province men, and my school, college and university classmates. I receive regular 'get-well soon' messages from **Mrs Patrizia**, our well-wisher and benefactor, from the parishioners, my family members and relatives. One day my younger brother was at the gate of the quarantine building at 6.00 am with an electric kettle, green tea and fruits!

Initially I was worried how I would spend time. I asked our minister **Fr Bijay** to bring a Mass kit, a copy of the Bible, and the breviary. I celebrate the Eucharist, read the Bible, and recite the breviary and the rosary daily. The Lord gave me this opportunity. I learned to surrender my life and work for the Lord and I experienced great joy in doing that. I had started writing a project for Covid-19 relief work, and then I myself became a Covid-19 patient! Thanks to **Fr Shiju** and **Fr Joe Victor** who completed the work for me and even got it approved. I have become aware of the power of teamwork with the uniting presence of people and God. Sometimes I only need to initiate and share. The work will go on. The end result is much better than what I would have done!

At one time I thought I was going to die! Aren't many people dying of Covid-19? Was I prepared for it? But I was not afraid of death! There are so many good things that the Lord through his people has done for me. I was worried about some pending work though. But ultimately I became aware that it is the Master's work that I am doing, and He will see to it that it is done in his time and according to his plan. This realization was very redeeming. As a Parish Priest I often worry what to preach, what message to give to the people! Here I do not have that worry. I became open to listening to the message given to me in daily readings and prayer. I have become more of a receiver than a giver. It is only what I have that I can give - both material and spiritual. It is a time for gathering of gifts and Grace that hopefully I will share with His people. I am now better prepared to face death "When He comes the second time, or calls me home." In the quarantine centre we are people of different religions. In conversations people ask me about my address and occupation. I tell them that I am a Catholic Priest. They have respect and admiration for this way of life. So, the quarantine time is a schooling when the Master is "teaching me like a school master teaches his pupil."

I wish to thank all of you for your prayer and for your encouraging words during my 'Corona Journey'. **Fr Saby** was unwell for a few days, but has bounced back. **Schs. Romiyo** and **Chris** (NEP) attend online classes, after having taken admission to St Joseph's College, Bengaluru and St Xavier's College, Ahmedabad respectively.

LOYOLA COLLEGE, NAMCHI, SIKKIM

Fr Francis George spoke at a webinar organized by the Education Department of Sikkim University on the theme teacher education in the light of the New Education Policy 2020 on 8 August 2020. The Independence Day was celebrated with a Holy Mass presided over by **Fr Roshan Tirkey** and followed by the flag hoisting ceremony. The students and staff who reside in the campus saluted the national flag as it was hoisted by **Fr Paulose**. The first year hostel students bid farewell to the outgoing students on 23 August 2020. The thanksgiving Mass was offered by **Fr Paulose**. **Fr Francis**, in his farewell message stressed the need to be creative and innovative in a changing world. **Fr Francis** inaugurated the online classes for the 3rd semester

students on 24 August 2020. Admission process is on for B.Ed., M.A. in Education and M.Phil/Ph.D.

Fr Francis George

Sch. Joseph Kerketta writes from Asha Kiran, Mangalore...

On 15 August we had a triple celebration, the foundation day of the house, the solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady and the 74th Independence Day of India. **Fr Dionysius Vaz**, the Rector of St Aloysius College was the main celebrant.

Asha Kiran YouTube Chanel was inaugurated as part of the birthday celebrations of our superior **Fr Alphonse Fernades**.

HLDRC

One of the proactive initiatives of HLDRC in tea gardens in the Terai and Dooars was enhancing the twenty study centres run by HLDRC. We are grateful to the financial help provided by **Mr Hanspeter**.



According to our estimate 70% of the rural students do not have access to online classes. In one such centre at Bamandanga tea garden of Nagrakata we teach fifty students a day from class II to class VIII in four shifts. **Fr Pascal** regularly visits those centres to encourage the students and teachers.

15 Help Desks operated by HLDRC across Terai-Dooars region continue to facilitate tea garden labourers in filling up forms for food coupons and other welfare schemes of the government. The continuous and consistent hard work of the *lok manch* network of HLDRC encouraged one hundred people, most of them young, to serve voluntarily as community leaders.



The time of covid-19 pandemic has been a beautiful experience of networking with government officials, the civil society, NGOs and several grassroots organizations.

Fr Amid Kujur along with other trainers completed a course on spoken English and computer for one batch of students. Admission is going on for a course on 'computer hardware & networking' for the unemployed youth. There will be a job training and placement course for another batch of graduate students by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

Fr Pascal Xalro

HELP RENDERED DURING THE PANDEMIC

Education of students has suffered much during the raging pandemic particularly in the tea gardens of North Bengal. Thanks to the help offered by **Mr Hanspeter**, we have



been able to run three Balwadi centres for poor students at Faudijote and give financial help to the poor students of St Mary's school, Singla.

Fr Joe Victor

NORTH BENGAL ST XAVIER'S COLLEGE

Online classes for 3rd and 5th semester students began on 19 August. Admissions for the new academic session are just trickling in. Understandably, the number of admissions is not proportionate to the surprisingly large number of online and offline applications that are being received. A three-year project sponsored by the Italian Bishops' Conference (IBC)



and SOS-India came to a completion this year. The entire college fraternity extends our deepest gratitude to **Ms Patrizia**, the president of SOS-India for her relentless efforts at the progress of the college. We also place on record our sincere gratitude to **Mr Chris Lowney**, the president of Philomena Scholarship Foundation for promptly responding to our request with 'the gift' (the term he uses for any financial help) for the needy students of our college. As part of our institutional plan and the priority given to ecological concerns, we recently installed a 5 KW solar paneling on the roof of the main college building and constructed a system for rainwater harvesting. This is our first attempt at tapping alternative energy sources and conservation of water. **Sch. Barnabas** began online classes for Philosophy even as his BA final year exams are pending. **Fr Julius** and **Fr Cherian Padiyara** visited us one afternoon.

Fr Lalit

MANRESA JESUIT NOVITIATE, KALIMPONG

In preparation for the solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady we had a day of recollection, points for which were given by **Fr Socius** for first years and **Fr Director** for second years. On 15 August, we participated in a Solemn Mass presided over by **Fr Socius**. **Br Gabriel** hoisted the national flag. Novices **Subash** and **Aatish** delivered thought-provoking speeches at the occasion. In the evening get-together all the



novices eloquently presented their well-prepared speeches. **Fr Binod Kerketta** and **Br Gilbert** were the special guests of the evening.



Novice Sanchilit Dungdung

ST VINCENT DE PAUL, HATIGHISA

The parish youth and 'Christ-teens' enthusiastically came forward to repair the approach road to the church and the school damaged by heavy rains. The Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SSVDP) and women's groups of the parish are at the task of beautification of the church surroundings.

Fr Alex has been very zealously visiting families, administering the sacraments, conducting funeral services (there were unusually a large number), visiting the sick and distributing relief materials wherever people needed most. **Sch. Ashish Soy** stayed with us for a short while before he went to Ranchi for his studies. After a long wait, **Sch. Reuell Paul** finally arrived on 2 August for his regency.



Ever since his coming he has been helping **Fr Lawrence** in running the primary school, hostel for the boys, assisting in the school office and campus discipline. We wish him a very happy stay and cherishing experience at Hatighisa.

St Vincent's school continues to be affected by the lockdown. However the school office manages to admit new students and keeps in touch with the parents and teachers. **Fr Lawrence**, as the Province coordinator of the Education Commission, organized a webinar on the New Education Policy and its impact on minority institutions on 24 August. **Fr Sunny Jacob**, the JEA secretary was the main speaker. There were 171 participants among whom were religious and priests from all over India besides Darjeeling Jesuits.

Fr Alvin Minaj, SJ

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, DARJEELING

Fr Stanley Karakkada assumed charge as the Rector on 15 August with the Holy Eucharist celebrated by **Fr Provincial**. The Jesuit community would like to place on record our gratitude to **Fr K L George** for shouldering the responsibility for the past sixteen months.



Fr Provincial came for his annual visitation on 15 August and spent with us ten days. He along with the Rector visited all the dispersed units. He addressed us all on 24 August. The admission process is on for classes III and VI. Due to the pandemic entrance tests could not be conducted. **Fr Leo** held online interviews with the selected candidates and their parents. **Sch. David (NEP)** returned to the school after staying at Mungpoo for forty-five days during the lockdown. **Sch. Amit Kullu** joined the community. He will be doing his degree studies at St Joseph's college. **Br PD Vincent** is actively involved in maintaining the campus, planting new saplings, pruning old trees and online accounting. **Fr Frank** is busy with the Bible apostolate. **Fr Pappa** enlivens everyone in the community with his graceful presence. **Fr Anuranjan** helps **Fr Stanley** at Lepcha Busty offering the Eucharist and other pastoral activities.

Fr Anuranjan

ST PETER'S, GAYAGANGA

Besides the regular Masses, there are arrangements for village-wise Masses in the church for the *Krus-Veers*, Chris-Teens and youth on weekdays. At the beginning of the month, St Peter's Higher Secondary School got its premises sanitized for protection from Covid-19.



The School distributed Transfer Certificates online for the outgoing students of Class 12. **Fr Simon** is looking after the work of maintenance of the school and the hostel premises. **Fr Nabor** has

replaced **Br Robert** as the school treasurer. The latter is busy getting weeds removed from the paddy field. The community acknowledges the generous help given by some of our parishioners for paddy cultivation.



Fr Augustus Ekka

HAYDEN HALL

The Hayden Hall team is now learning to live and work in the current situation referred to as the, 'new normal'. This involves working and living amidst the vagaries of corona pandemic with due precautions for preventive measures. With a belief that the good deeds can change the world, Hayden Hall is still tirelessly helping people fight against hunger and distress.

On 22 July 2020, a team from Hayden Hall **Ms Babita**, **Ms Sujata**, **Ms Jamuna**, **Sr Chunku**, along with **Mr Bivek Pradhan**, a qualified psychologist, visited Shanti Busty at Lower Tukvar. They met the villagers who mainly worked as labourers but now have lost their livelihood during the corona crisis. **Mr Pradhan** interacted with the youth there and had a short session with them on career guidance. To supplement the government aid, Hayden Hall reached out to the villagers of Shanti Busty the following week and distributed some basic rations and vegetables to 170 families.

On 31 July 2020, the Feast of St Ignatius of Loyola was celebrated with a Holy Eucharist presided over by **His Lordship Bishop Stephen Lepcha**, **Fr Paul D'Souza** and other priests from Bishop's House. Only a few staff members could join the celebrations due to the lockdown called by the local administration to confront the pandemic.

In the 'new normal' the Education Department is busy preparing the teaching aids for the children. These aids would be helpful when the children return from the virtual to the actual classrooms. DB Tech in association with Hayden Hall has started an online tea plantation course from the last week of July.

The CDWs (Community Development Workers) have started their regular community visits. They are also in regular touch with the Municipality Office for SHG (Self Help Groups) for schemes that would help the women of the community to earn a living.

The masks made by our women of Livelihood and Entrepreneurship are winning the hearts of local and online customers. As the masks happen to be an essential need of the hour, they have been focusing on trendier and skin friendly designs.

Fr Paul D'Souza

GANDHI ASHRAM SCHOOL, KALIMPONG

The celebration of the feast of St Ignatius of Loyola was on a low key this year. The school teachers continue to teach smaller groups of students in villages. **Fr Binod** visited families of every student of the school to understand their living conditions and monitor their studies. **Fr Paul**, the director, regularly visits the school making sure that the construction work and the school activities run smoothly. **Br Gilbert** keeps himself busy looking after the house and the campus.

Fr Binod Kerketta, SJ

REST IN PEACE

Fr Isidore Pinto, SJ (PAT)	78/57	07 Aug 2020
Fr Elias Arockiasamy, SJ (AND)	80/58	12 Aug 2020
Fr Gaudentius Kongari, SJ (HAZ)	86/66	12 Aug 2020
Fr Patrick de Melo, SJ (GOA)	78/61	14 Aug 2020
Fr Augustine Tigga, SJ (HAZ)	72/51	15 Aug 2020
Fr Gaston Roberge, SJ (CAL)	85/64	26 Aug 2020
Fr Walter Stephen Andrade, SJ (KAR)	78/53	26 Aug 2020