

Ranchi Jesuits

Year Book 2021



Renowned Belgian Missionaries of the Chotanagpur Mission



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Fr. Constant Lievens, SJ



Servant of God and Martyr
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Ranchi Jesuits

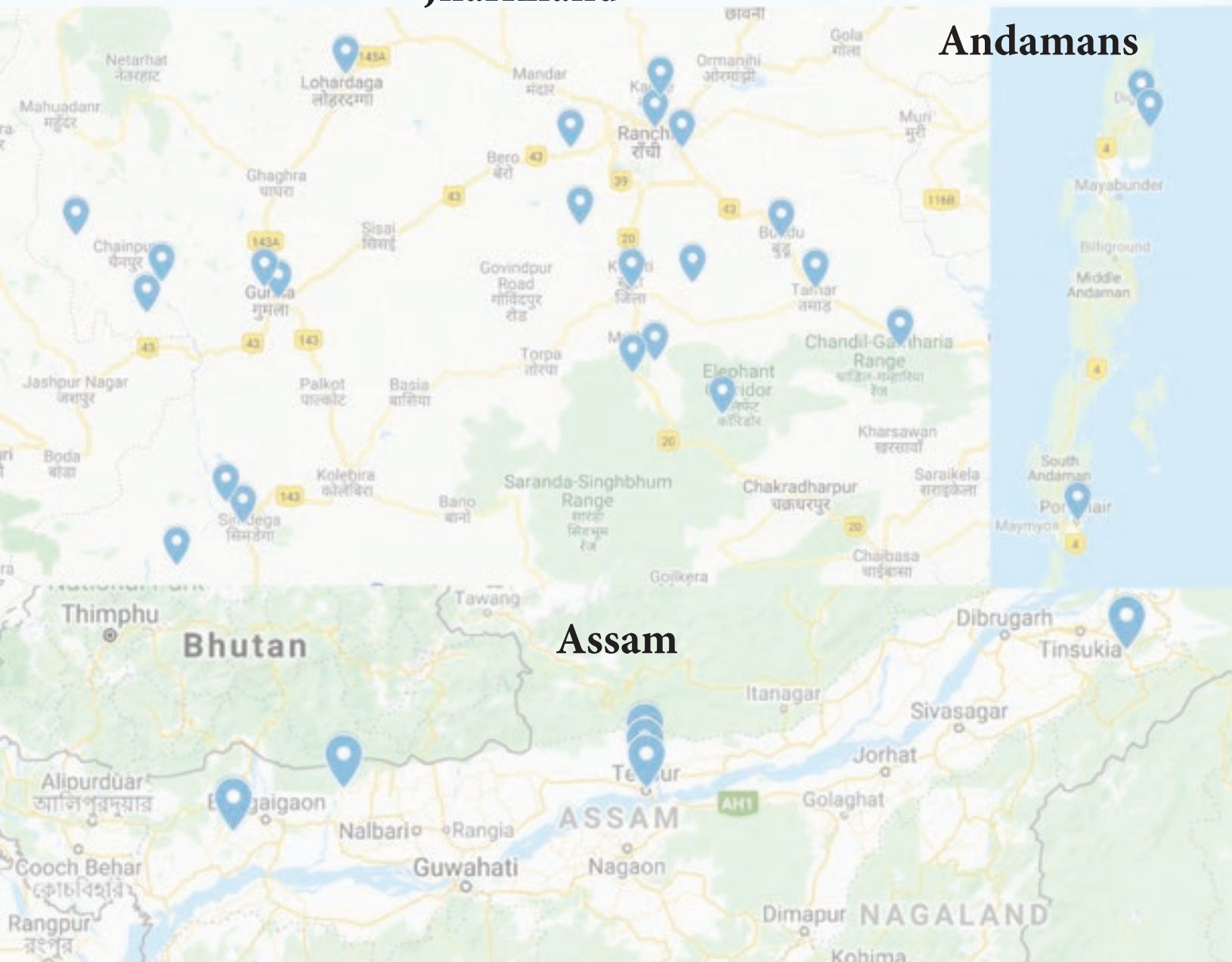
YEAR
BOOK | 2021

AMDG

For the Greater Glory of God

Ranchi Province

Jharkhand



Imprimi Potest

Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ

Provincial Superior
Ranchi Jesuit Society

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- » Fr Ajay Remi Soreng, SJ

- » Fr Edwin Ritesh Dungdung, SJ
- » Fr Alex Tirkey, SJ
- » Fr Edwin Dang, SJ
- » Sch Ajay Paulus Minz, SJ

FOREWORD

Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ,
Provincial Superior

On May 22, 2021, I complete one year in the office of the Provincial of Ranchi Jesuit Society. I am grateful to God for His abundant blessings upon me and the members of Ranchi Jesuit Province. I also thank Fr. Socius and all the members of Sadbhavna who have been guiding me thoroughly in making my stay here a comfortable one. I thank you dear brothers for your sincere prayers, best wishes and for your constant and concerned support so far.

It has been a year of learning various things of my office and it has made me aware of my duties and responsibilities. I have this continuous happy feeling that I belong to the Society of Jesus and that Ranchi Jesuit Society is a part of a Grand Universal Society. I also take pride in knowing the fact that it is one of the biggest Provinces with the highest number of Jesuits in South Asia.

Ranchi Jesuit Society has not confined itself to Jharkhand but has also gone beyond the territory such as Assam and Andamans. Moreover, we have moved overseas and our men are missionaries in Africa, Cambodia, Guyana, Japan, Jordan and Rome. God has called our brothers to serve in these distant lands.

The year has been a very challenging one. We have had immense challenges to face and also had enough possibilities to prosper in. The Pandemic situation affected every sector of our life. Many of our men were affected by Covid – 19. Many, however, have recovered from the sickness and some sadly succumbed to it. Their absence is a great loss to the Province.

The pandemic situation disrupted our usual life and works. But we were able to find some alternatives to make our life and works more meaningful. Though we were at various locations living our daily lives at different pockets of our provinces, we were ever united with one another in our minds and hearts. During the pandemic times, lots of good works were carried out by all our communities especially by reaching out to the poor, migrants and the vulnerable. I congratulate you all for your true sense of service and charity. I regret that due to the Pandemic situation, I could not make my timely official visitations to all the communities. In such scenario, though, I managed to visit many communities. We had wonderful moments of bonhomie then.

In my letters and addresses on different occasions in the province, I have always wanted to create a sense of “We feeling”. This is what makes us the “Companions of Jesus” and “Friends in the Lord”. I also stressed on ‘Jesuit ways of life’ which must be visible in our life. Let Ignatian discernment be part of our daily life.

Come what may, Christ should always be the center of our life and work. We have to be always united with Him in our daily spiritual activities. Like St. Ignatius, we have to find God in everything. Each thing we do must be for the Greater Glory of God.



Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ
Provincial, Ranchi Province

The year ahead is the Ignatian Year for us. To this end, the Ignatian year will open on the 20th of May 2021 (anniversary of the injury at Pamplona). It will conclude on the 31st of July 2022. The 12th of March 2022 will be its centre, marking the IV centenary of the canonization of St Ignatius with St Francis Xavier, St Teresa of Jesus, St Isidore Labrador and St Philip Neri.

Let this time be a point of conversion for all of us - at the individual, community and institutional levels. The Ignatian Year Committee of the province has concretely framed the plan and programme for us all. I would expect every member of the Province to attend to these honestly and earnestly. Besides, we also have before us Universal Apostolic Preferences and have aligned Ranchi Province Apostolic Preferences with the UAP. We have to keep them in our mind consciously and work towards them.

Fr. Superior General has convoked 71st Congregation of Procurators which will start in Loyola (Spain) between the 16th and the 22nd of May 2022. "To see all things new in Christ", is the motto of the Congregation. As a part of preparation for the Procurators Congregation, we will have Province Congregation in the fourth week of September 2021.

I firmly believe that we are the precious instruments in the hands of God. We have to surrender and submit ourselves in the hands of God and allow Him to work through and with us. We are integral parts of God's plan in his creative and curative missions. Our ministries should have this guiding force throughout. At the same time, we need to network and collaborate with one another by entering into various cooperative measures by establishing inter-ministries and inter-provincials rapport and also by creating trust among men and women of our world.

Ranchi Jesuits Year Book 2021 is the mirror to what we are and what we are called for. I congratulate the Editorial Board headed by Fr. Sanjay Kerketta, SJ for bringing out Ranchi Jesuits: Year Book 2021 in our hands. I also thank all the authors for sharing their life and works from different places. This will certainly create a sense of belongingness among us and also inspire and motivate us to accomplish our calls.

May God bless all of us!

Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ,

Provincial



Handing over of office of Provincial: Fr Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ to Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ



Seeking the blessings of His Grace Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ after the handing over ceremony

THE EDITORIAL

Fr Sanjay Kerketta, SJ

The cannon ball that hit and damaged the legs of Ignatius became a turning point in his life. It closed the early chapters of his chivalrous expedition which was devoted to vanities and worldly fame. "...a shot struck him on one leg, shattering it completely; and as the cannon ball passed between both legs, the other also was completely injured." (Testament and Testimony, Ch. 1.5, p. 17) The global infamous killer pandemic Covid-19 was no less than a cannon ball impact in all intensity in its devastation to modern world falsifying all scientific, medical and technological human claims of superiorly governing the world. The superpowers, principalities and reasons fell flat before the cruel and deadly virus shattering the essential fabrics of human life and existence prophetically inviting for timely conversion and reorientation. North and south, east and west echoed the cry and sigh of death and haunting disaster in this indivisible universe for all people and nations too are so closely knit together for any of them to imagine that it can live apart.

Jesuits today cannot remain unaffected and untouched from this global phenomenon. Inceptive years of the Society of Jesus witnessed such pandemic all across Europe and Africa and in Latin America in one form or the other. St. Ignatius himself encountered the stigma of plague in Venice (Testament and Testimony, Ch. 4.41, p. 51) as he was preparing for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and later in Paris (Testament and Testimony, Ch. 8.83, p. 89) in search of lodging. St. Aloysius de Gongaza died as a result of caring for the victims of a serious epidemic at the age of 23 on June 21, 1591 in Rome.

They went, they saw, and they conquered in the way they responded magnanimously (Sp. Ex. 5.1) impelled by the Spiritual Exercises. Kudos to Ranchi Jesuits! Who were "not

deaf to his call, but readily and diligently" (Sp. Ex. 91.4) responded to risky situation adhering to the byword of 'creative fidelity'. We are not silent pall bearers and mourners over the dead, but pathfinders amidst chaos. It is for the nature to shed tears;

"The dark tree still sad when other's grief is fled,

The only constant mourners o'er the dead." (Lord Byron)

But we are the people of Resurrection. So,

"Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

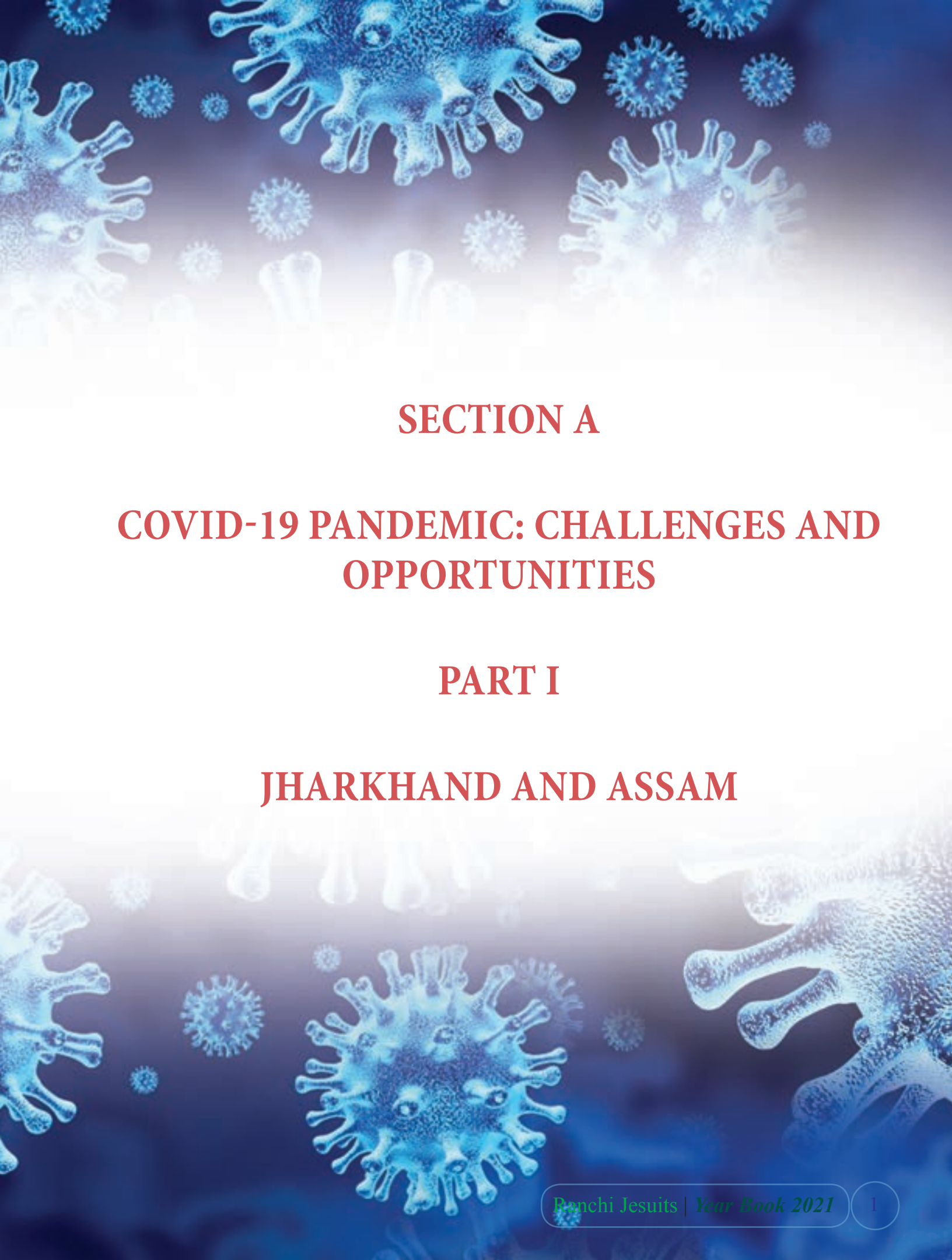
And death shall be no more; Death thou shalt die.
(Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud, John Donne)

We are clay jars but believers that the extraordinary power belongs to God. "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed" (2 Cor.4. 8 -9).

As I present to you the Year Book of Ranchi Province I hope and pray that this will uplift our moral and drooping spirit. Further, let the sting of death not paralyze our mission and apostolic preferences but call us towards a genuine conversion and authentic praxis of the Word. Let us work towards building a hope filled world, as Martin Luther King Jr concludes his historic speech, "I've been to the Mountaintop", "I'm not worried about anything, I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."



Fr Sanjay Kerketta, SJ
Principal, St Xavier's School,
Doranda, Ranchi

The background of the entire page is a blue-toned image featuring numerous COVID-19 virus particles. These particles are depicted with their characteristic spherical shape and prominent, irregular surface spikes. They are scattered across the page, with some appearing larger and more detailed than others, creating a sense of depth and focus on the pandemic theme.

SECTION A

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PART I

JHARKHAND AND ASSAM

WILL THIS GLOOMY ROAD LEAD US TO EMMAUS?

Fr Milianus Beck, SJ

“Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” (Lk 24:18). There wasn’t anyone like Cleopas to ask such questions for everyone knew what had happened. Indeed, the rapid and global spread of Covid-19 plunged almost all into an unseen life situation. With the deadly sting of the virus, the age old context and framework of the Common Houses crumbled like a pack of cards. Both the formators and formees were forced to abandon the familiar means – learning setups, living and praying together, organized social and pastoral involvement, common reflection and discernment. We felt like being rudely thrown into the untried alien water and compelled to swim across right away. Diverse were the waves – web programmes, electronic gadgets and devices. There was no alternative but to befriend them to get connected to continue our journey. Recalling our journey on the unfamiliar “gloomy road of Emmaus” (cf. Luke 24:13-35) during the last academic year let me retrace our footsteps again.

The unfamiliar road of the formees was apostolic communities, study houses, retreat houses, and hostels. After being located afresh and adopting fresh means the rebuke followed, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” (Lk 24:25). It was appropriate as we entertained questions like, Where is God? Why is this suffering? How long Lord? True, though the journey continued, none of us remained untouched by sadness, despair and hopelessness.

The first task we ventured into was healing ourselves as well as others. The suffering Christ was visible on the streets, markets and slums - migrant labourers, slum dwellers, homeless, the poor and the hungry people. The suffering people became our source of prayer. In this “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?” (Lk 24:31). Yes, we did encounter the Lucan “stranger” (Lk 24:31) when generous souls not only joined but also inspired us to lighten the pains of suffering people. It was no exaggeration that the family of yesteryear has enlarged; intimacy with and confidence on the other surfaced more profoundly than ever.

The pandemic created a worldwide threat but at the same time reminds us that we are a global community. The new ambience was reducing the gap between our words and deeds. Certainly, this road was training us about our religious life, mission of the society, studies and our formation. Joyful, vibrant and supportive community life was tremendous for many of us. Spiritual activities like community prayer, Holy Mass, and monthly recollection added one more tune to our music of life.

It needs extra effort to look at the divine figure who walks among humanity unnoticed. The disciples did not notice Jesus but he did notice them. It is futile to wait only for the breaking the bread. We have to recognize Jesus opening our eyes, revealing himself, sharing his self with us on the road. Our little faith on the alternative channels and preconceived ideas about the formation made us lingering on the road. Darkness that diverted us from the road was colossal. Physical and mental strain, lack of zest, thoughts of missing peer groups, lamenting over the monotony of living with the aged community members disheartened many formees. Like the grieving disciples on the way at times we recalled our life in the common houses and echoed the disciples’ belief that with the death of Jesus everything is lost. The disciples did not



Fr Milianus Beck, SJ
Professor, Vidyajyoti, New
Delhi

expect God's anointed to suffer and missed the humble Jesus who shows up on the road with them. He opens our eyes through the testimonies of all those who live according to his vision of humanity.

"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over" (Lk 24:31). Yes, frequent rousing thoughts to serve as beacons on the way for us were numerous. Many formees relished a sense of maturity in dealing with the other while others noticed that they have been slow to anger. A sense of belongingness, feeling at home, feeling trusted, readiness to love and to be loved, feeling of more sensitivity towards the needs of others and feeling of increased confidence and responsibility was amazingly invaluable.

It is consoling to realize that the suffering assists us to grasp our human fragility and weakness. And we are in need of God's healing touch in order to bring wholeness in the relationship between God and humans. New prism to see God's ways was wide open; our perspectives were altered; the people became the living books and library. It was a good opportunity to explore our inner world and ponder over the language of God. Prayer, study of relevant issues, reflection, sharing and discussion on how we theologically encounter this reality of Covid-19 pandemic would be a constitutive part of our response.

The challenges we still struggle within our way is to accept that suffering breeds transformation. It is difficult to be true to our image and trust in the providence of the Lord by living an authentic life like Jesus. Our identity as religious, indispensable nature of our vocation and mission, moving from religiosity to spirituality, from superficiality to depth, from being exclusive to inclusive, and from being administrators to animators is enormous – all requires our total surrender. However, we still hope to come closer to the disciples who, "...got up and returned at once to Jerusalem" (Lk 24:33). It implies that we meet the one at the table in Emmaus as well as in Jerusalem.



YOUNG JESUITS WITH NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

Fr Medard Xalxo, SJ & Fr Edwin Ritesh Dungdung, SJ

Introduction

The Covid-19 affected negatively the entire globe. It was the first of its kind in human history where the citizens of every country have gone through hard time. Probably this experience will stay in the hearts and minds of many. Practically all were in the state of panic and fear. The uncertainty continues to exist, and this is the challenge for all. It is in this context the following enumerations will highlight some of the salient features of the Formation of young Scholastics during the Lock down.

Challenges

It was a tough time to get our Scholastics back in the Province from the Common Houses. Pune and Delhi Scholastics were lucky to return to the Province just one day before the Lock down whereas other centers of learning were still held back in their respective places. A great deal of difficulties was faced with regard to the reservation of the tickets and due to change of the Government Protocol the tickets were cancelled. It was an experience of solidarity and the good care from the national centers. When the situation was sufficiently relaxed the Scholastics were able to come back to the Province. As they came back to the Province it was a tough job to place them in different communities. All were not very welcoming to accommodate them just because of fear and uncertainties. Still, the various communities were able to adjust and accommodated the Scholastics. At this juncture nothing could be done in the initial stage of pandemic for the Scholastics. It was a tough time for the PCF to engage them meaningfully. Scholastics benefited from the Apostolic communities by observing the ministries.

Positive Experiences

Some of our Scholastics were engaged in the distribution of ration offered by the Government of Jharkhand during the Lock down. It was a great help for those who were most in need and thus their family was supported. Some utilized the existing library well, grew in the knowledge, practiced the skills of reading and writing, participated in webinars, and in various other meaningful activities.



New way of Learning



Fr Medard Xalxo, SJ
PCF, Ranchi Province



Fr Edwin Ritesh
Dungdung, SJ
Dean, Manresa
Scholasticate, Ranchi

It was a time of adjustment and new way of living for our men. The online classes were introduced on time. It was a new way of learning for our men. Again, the lack of equipment and infrastructure was poor. The internet facilities were not up to the mark. I would like to appreciate the generosity of the XISS community, particularly the Superior and the Director who availed the computer lab for online classes. It was a great and timely help for our Scholastics. Though it was stressful looking at the screen for a long period of time yet rewarding. There was a lack of mentoring in academic life, the help could not be sought from the Professors physically. Since the protocol of professional distance was maintained practically in all the places so spiritual direction too was difficult. At some point in the initial stages the Eucharist and the evening prayers too suffered. Slowly as the situation improved all the common activities returned to normalcy. Those Scholastics who were sent in the Apostolic Communities witnessed the hard work, dedication and commitment of senior Jesuits. It was an inspiration for the youngsters and they were energized to study hard and accomplish their academic demands on time.

Frs. POSA and CDF speak to PCFs

Fr. Keith Abranches, SJ (CDF) and Fr. Stany D'Souza, SJ (POSA) arranged a zoom meeting for the PCFs on 10th November, 2021. They were concerned for our Scholastics in terms of their Formation so both of

them wanted to take the pulse of the Scholastics during the pandemic. A number of good opinions as well as difficulties and hardships were shared by the PCFs. It was a hard time for the PCFs to take care of their Scholastics.

Fr. POSA mentioned a few points on Formation which is worth mentioning in summary form. Formation is to become an integrated person. Taking into considerations the human capacities, activities and experiences one needs to grow in self-awareness in order to become a genuine person. The Formee is the convinced disciple of Christ so cultivate the spiritual conviction. It is important to encounter the Risen Lord through prayer and contemplation. The need of the hour is to find a good spiritual director to accompany in their spiritual journey. The essence of our Jesuit training is to be educated and avail themselves wherever the need arises. The intellectual formation helps a formee to distinguish between the essential and non-essential. Therefore the Scholastics need to be encouraged to be critical and creative in socio-political, philosophico-theological and pastoral reflections and thus grow in openness, freedom, humility, compassion and avail themselves in the service of the Church. Along with the intellectual formation the formee has to grow in simplicity, team work, hospitality, cheerfulness, optimism, apostolic fervor and love for the poor. By putting into practice all these values will help the formees to be committed witness to Christ.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC: BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Fr Ignatius Tete, SJ

Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic unlike any other epidemic in human history and something like the original sin has affected the entire creation, the whole humanity and the Church across the globe. It has brought life and death, blessings and curses. At its secretive origin, in its rapid global spread and in its gradual decline there seem to be at work both human element and divine wisdom. While the groaning creation has taken a sigh of relief with ozone being restored, the fearful humanity has been fighting against it with measures such as unprecedented lockdowns, social distancing and putting on masks, etc. The pilgrim Church on the other hand, under the leadership of Pope Francis has been pleading with God for threefold intention - to put an end to this pandemic, to heal the victims of corona virus and to grant an eternal rest to those who have died of it. Scientists (Environmentalists) have been searching for the causes of Covid-19; the leaders of the nations are suspecting some political reasons and the adherents of different faiths are trying to find out the divine design. In the context of global warming is it the Nature's fury unleashed? In the race for superiority over the world power, is it a subtle dubious device of a nation? In response to human atrocities, rampant injustices and manifold sin of the world, is it a manifestation of God's righteous judgment, or a divine testing or a preceding sign of the Day of the Lord?

In this brief write up there has been a daring quest to hear the voice of God recorded in the pandemic and to perceive a divine design imprinted in the corona virus. Along with this quest there is an effort of discernment made on the dynamics of Tertianship at Sitagarha as a response to God's design underlying the pandemic.

A. God's voice and design: God reveals himself and his plan in Creation and in human history through his words and deeds manifesting his love, wisdom and power. Covid-19 pandemic is basically a natural calamity of unique character. Whatever natural or human causes may be behind its origin, it is not outside the purview of God's redemptive design. God is speaking to the humanity and revealing his design through this pandemic. In order to hear his voice there is a need to listen to his Word as recorded in the Bible in both the Testaments.

- (a) Old Testament perspective: In both the creation stories we have an account of human dignity established, human destiny determined and human means provided to maintain that dignity and to achieve that destiny (Gen. 1-2).

God's judgment and mercy with the First Parents: The first creation story gives an account of male and female being made sharers of God's dominion over the creatures having been created in his image and likeness. This dominion is to be exercised in accordance with God's design, by acknowledging him as the Master of the universe and by sharing in his Sabbath (Gen 1:1-2:4a). The second creation story has a graphic narrative of man being endowed with God's breath and a woman being formed from his rib. Both man and woman have their dignity of being endowed with divine breath, equality and complementarities. Their destiny is designed to attain the tree of life – the fullness of life - by means of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge



Fr Ignatius Tete, SJ
Tertian Master, Sitagarh,
Hazaribagh

of good and evil. That means they are to remain in submission to God, to stay God-centred and not self-centred. In other words they are not to make their self-centred will a criterion for determining arbitrarily what is good and what is evil. Subsequently this is a perennial human tendency. A warning is given that the day they eat the forbidden fruit, they will die. Thus God sets before them life and death in the garden with a freedom to choose (Gen. 2:1-25). Unfortunately they decide to do their self-centred will and enter the domain of death. Thereby for the humankind they sow the seeds of all human misery with manifold disorder within self, with each other and with Nature being cursed. Their disobedience results in toil and struggle, pain and suffering including sickness and finally the painful death. They distort their dignity, get deprived of their destiny and get separated from God. God, however, while in his righteous judgment allows them to use their freedom in making a wrong choice with its consequences, in his mercy extends his protective care assuring them of their full restoration (Gen. 3:1-24). We have thus a dynamics of human sin, righteous judgement and divine mercy in the subsequent salvation history.

God's judgement and mercy during the time of Noah: In the time of Noah when the whole earth gets corrupt, filled with violence along with the corrupt lustful humanity, it draws God's righteous judgement of destructive deluge followed by his mercy of the covenant with the entire creation (Gen. 6-9). From Noah's three sons there develop 70 nations (Gen. 10). When the human pride reaches its peak symbolized by the tower of Babel, there falls God's judgment upon the humanity bringing about confusion that renders it broken, fragmented and scattered (Gen. 11:1-9). However, God does not abandon the humanity in that broken state, he chooses Abraham with his threefold promise of giving him descendants, land and to bless the whole human race through his offspring (Gen. 12:1-3).

Moses, an instrument of God's righteous judgment: When the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites are reduced to the bondage of slavery in Egypt because of the hard heartedness of Pharaoh, God sends 10 plagues through Moses to liberate them in order to make them a holy nation and a priestly kingdom through the Sinai covenant (Ex. 1-14). The first 9 plagues are natural phenomena used by God for his purpose. While the ten plagues prove a curse for the oppressors, Pharaoh and the Egyptians, they turn out to be a blessing for the Israelites (Wis. 11:5 -19:22).

In the plain of Moab Moses in his farewell speeches narrates to the Israelites God's mighty deeds on their behalf and asks them in turn to be faithful to him, warning them of disastrous consequences like pestilence, all forms of sicknesses, drought culminating in their exile (Deut. 5-28). He sets before them life and death, blessings and curses and pleads with them to choose life by being faithful to God (Deut. 30:15-20).

God's judgment and mercy with King David: An Old Testament belief is that the natural calamity is caused by God's wrath against human sin and that this wrath must be appeased in order to stop the calamity. When King David takes census in order to take stock of his military strength disregarding trust in God, he is asked to make a choice among three calamities – three years' famine in the land or three days' pestilence in the land or fleeing three months chased by his foes. Relying on God's mercy he chooses pestilence and 70 thousand people die of it. He is then told to make expiation by offering sacrifices on the altar to be built on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite because the Angel of pestilence is stopped by God while standing there and commanding ongoing destruction. David buys that plot of land and does as he is told (2Sam. 24). Subsequently that plot of land becomes the site of Solomon's temple (1Chr. 22:1; 2Chr.3:1). Providentially, on the day of the dedication of the new temple Solomon puts forth before the Lord God 7 intentions (1Kgs 8:22-53). In the 4th intention he pleads with God that he may hear the supplications of the people of Israel when they raise their voice in the temple struck by famine, plague or by whatever sickness or natural calamity (1kgs 8:37-40).

God's judgment in terms of the Day of the Lord according to the Prophets: The prophets speak of the Day of the Lord when the wrath of God (righteous judgment) would be kindled. Before the exile the day of the Lord is oriented to punish Israel for her infidelity (Amos 5:18-20; 8:9-12; Joel 2:1-11). After the exile it is envisaged for

the end times when the remnant of Israel will be saved but her oppressors would incur God's wrath (Zeph. 1:14-18). Without using the imagery of the Day of the Lord Isaiah foresees in the end time a hopeful future for Israel and the humanity in terms of 'the new heavens and the new earth'(Is. 66:18-24).

Job's dynamic perception of God's judgment: Job questions the traditional understanding of God's righteous judgment that God rewards the just and punishes the wicked. He feels that God has failed in his righteous judgement in his case because though he is innocent, he has been struck by natural calamities and subjected to terrible physical sufferings (Job 6-7). He wants to fight a case against God face to face (Job 9-10) with a hope to win (19:23-27). However, when God reveals to him his wisdom and power at work in the mystery of maintaining the order in creation, Job acknowledges the divine purpose (Job 42:2) and admits his ignorance (Job 38:3) and his littleness (38:6). His deep personal experience of God enables him to feel the divine global perspective which gives meaning and solace to his predicament (38:5-6). The suffering of Job as God's righteous judgment is a testing period (Job 1:12; 2:6) resulting in his enlightenment on the mystery of God's dealing with the creation and the humanity (Job 42:1-6, 10-17).

- (b) New Testament Perspective: In the New Testament the dynamics of sin, God's judgement and mercy takes on a more nuanced form. Suffering in different forms as part of God's judgment is consequent on the fall of the first parents and the sinful condition of the humanity collectively and individually. To the paralytic man Jesus tells that he has come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32), forgives his sins and heals him physically as well (Mark 2:5, 11-12). At the pool of Bethzatha he heals a man, sick for 38 years (Jn. 5: 8-9) and later tells him in the temple not to commit sin any more lest something worse happen to him (Jn. 5:14). Regarding the blind man of Jerusalem he makes it clear that his blindness is not caused by his sin or that of his parents but his blindness is a means to reveal God's work (Jn. 9: 2-3).

COVID-19 Pandemic: a call to repentance - Referring to the violent death of the Galileans caused by Pilate and of 18 persons killed by the fall of the tower of Siloam, he declares that it happened to them not because they were worse sinners or offenders but that such events are occasions for self-introspection and repentance (Luke 13:1-5, 6-9). COVID -19 may well be God's judgment upon the humanity but those who are affected by it or died of it are not to be considered worse sinners than those who are spared, but it does call for a genuine repentance, a change of mind and heart to every living human being. It also creates a situation for revealing God's work through genuine service and care and concern for one and all.

COVID-19 Pandemic: a probable remote sign of the Day of the Lord – Jesus in his eschatological discourse enumerates certain signs preceding the Day of the Lord, such as great earthquakes, famines, plagues, dreadful portents and great signs from heaven (Luke 21:11). He warns the disciples to be alert at all times and to pray that they may have the strength to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36). He also hints whether the Son of Man would find faith on earth when he comes (Luke 18:8). St Paul tells the Thessalonians that the Day of the Lord will be preceded by the rebellion i.e. widespread abandonment of faith, a period of lawlessness fraught with powerful delusion leading people to believe what is false and finally the appearance of the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth (2Thes. 2:3-12). Expressing his cosmic vision Paul declares that the entire groaning creation, subjected to futility waits with eager longing for the revelation of the children of God and to be set free from its bondage to decay and to obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom. 8:18-25).

Towards the final section of the book of Revelation there is an apocalyptic description of great and amazing portent of seven angels with seven plagues symbolized by seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (Rev. 15-16). They are to pour out the seven bowls of plagues on different parts of the earth and the sky. These descriptive details are not to be interpreted literally, but as contributing to the general effect of intense calamity and terror. These seven plagues echo the ten plagues of the exodus event. The seventh plague culminates in the fierce battle between Christ with his heavenly armies and the beast and his army

resulting in the final victory of the Lamb. Thereafter there follow the creation of a new heaven and a new earth and the coming down of the heavenly Jerusalem wherein only those can enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 17-22). In the last chapter the 7th beatitude reads, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates".

St Paul along with his contemporary Apostles and Christians expected the glorious coming of the Lord or the Day of the Lord to occur already in their life time. Already two thousand years have passed since then yet the Day of the Lord has not yet been realized. In recent history of the Christendom there have been several rumours. Some doubt whether it will ever happen. Yet the world shaking event of such a magnitude and deadly nature like COVID- 19 sheds powerful light on the meaning of human existence and human destiny. For Christian faith it is one of the signs of the Day of the Lord not so much perhaps in the sense of its imminence but in the sense of the truth that one day it will happen. The first step towards the Day of the Lord is one's own death. Those many companions of ours who have gone before us because of corona virus warn us 'to keep awake and be sober' (1Thes. 5:6) and 'to put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation' (1Thes 5:8). The SSC tertians did perceive this warning as a *kairos* to a great extent.

B. Response of SSC Tertianship: Loving surrender (*Acatamiento*): It has been a rather confirmed experience that when deep trust is placed in the Divine Providence, God runs the SSC Tertianship supplying the number of tertians, providing resource persons and creating opportunities for retreat ministry and experiments. Amidst all the uncertainties of COVID – 19 situations, with trust in God and in consultation with and the approval of Fr. POSA, Fr. George Pattery SJ the Tertianship programme was rescheduled for starting it on August 1, and to conclude it on January 30. While the Tertianship at Shembag excluded the experiment in view of it being done back in the Provinces, Sitagarha Tertianship included it as a necessary element of the dynamics of its programme with a hope that UAPs related activities could be done in the campus itself even if experiments outside might not be a possibility. Humanly speaking, though circumstances were not that favourable, the tertians from 12 Provinces and 2 Regions of Nepal and Kohima were able to arrive on time, 14 of them by taking flights and 10 of them by their private vehicles. Two extra ones were also admitted at the last hour. By God's grace the inauguration took place on August 1 as scheduled with the keynote address by the Provincial of Hazaribag, Fr. Santosh Minj, SJ highlighting the theme 'Walking with the Excluded'.

- (a) The preparatory phase: The preparatory phase consisting of one month was a time dedicated to an intense preparation for the long retreat. Though the tertians were in quarantine for 14 days being secluded from the larger community, regular classes were held on the primary sources: Autobiography, the Letters, the Spiritual Diary and the Spiritual Exercises. Enlightened by these sources they developed an admiration for St. Ignatius, love for the Society and a sense of belonging to it. By the end of August they were fit physically, mentally and spiritually to start the retreat. Astonishingly no one fell sick during this period though in the larger community several were in the grip of viral fever or malaria. This fact was a welcome sign from God for the Divine encounter.
- (b) The Divine Encounter phase: The most conspicuous measure to cope up with COVID-19 was to enforce lockdown and staying at home. Making journey was strictly forbidden or highly restricted or rather risky. In this context, the theme of the long retreat was kept, 'Journeying with Jesus to the Father's House'. Journeying with Jesus on his paschal way may be difficult but there is security and there is much guarantee to reach safely to Father's House and to stay in it. Corona virus with its highly contagious nature and deadly effect could serve as a good imagery for sin. During the long retreat all of them in solitude and silence of the entire campus, made a good journey with Jesus and experienced the joy, peace and security of the Father's House. COVID- 19 has thus brought its blessings of keeping the tertians watchful and careful. They learnt the art of getting rid of sin and of keeping away from the contagion of corona virus that

is metaphorically one's core sinfulness. How good it is to stay at home and stay safe in the Father's House! The challenge, however, is to keep on journeying with Jesus and to stay in the Father's House constantly being aware of one's core grace and core sinfulness.



- (c) The experiment phase: Because of COVID -19 the tertians were deprived of the prized blessing of Sitagarha Tertiaship, that is the retreat ministry and the experiment among the poor and the marginalized. Along with this they also missed the pilgrimages to Dhori Mata and to Fr. Constant Leaven's mission land. However, they are the only privileged batch to witness the annual memorial service held on 24th October at 'Punya Bhumi' the place of the martyrdom of Fr. A.T. Thomas in 1997.

The Tertiaship experiment is supposed to be a grace-filled time among the poor to deepen one's core grace of the retreat experience and to counteract the dominant manifestations of one's core sinfulness. At the beginning of the experiment phase each one of them prepared an eight day Ignatian retreat. The tertians had been already divided on 4th August into four UAP groups with some specific activities to be done in the community and in the campus in terms of prayer services and some motivational class or input for the Jesuit novices, juniors and the other formees in the campus. In God's Providence the second year novices were kept by Fr. Novice Master under the care of the tertians for more than two weeks. Four tertians representing each UAP group were assigned to guide triduum to the minor seminarians. Besides these activities the modified campus experiment comprised three types of corporal pursuits – clearing up bushes of a particular plot of land, to plant vegetables in the garden and to pick up plastics of the campus to make it a plastic free zone. Majority of the tertians derived blessings from these activities whereas some had a bitter taste of 'curses' resulting in harbouring of some negativity.

- (d) The integration phase: In this last phase integration is to take place in confirming and deepening the experiences of the Spiritual Exercises by resonating with the spirit of the Constitutions and to perceive the Gospel values enshrined in it. The sapiential reading of the Constitutions did help the tertians to appropriate our way of proceeding blending Ignatian spirituality with Jesuit spirituality and to inculcate discerning love. Towards the end of the last phase the visitation of the POSA, Fr. Stany D'Souza, SJ coincided with the integration triduum and played a role in the integration process. The negativity mainly springing from the deprivation of the retreat ministry and experiment among the excluded made few of us realize the preciousness of those two blessings and to thank God for them in their deprivation. At the end having made progress themselves the tertians left the School of the Heart with a sense of victory over corona virus – core sinfulness- to better help others to make progress for God's greater glory.

Conclusion

On listening to the Word of God one can conclude that COVID -19 is definitely a powerful sign of God's judgement upon the entire humanity. Whether it is a blessing or a curse will depend on how one responds to it. If one accepts its call for repentance and reorients one's life to one's destiny it is a boon for that person. If one just ignores it and refuses to change for better it may prove a doom for that person. It is a testing period resulting in a blessing or a curse. It is a sign for the Day of the Lord – 'the acceptable time and the day of salvation' (2Cor.6:2b). For a Jesuit it challenges and alerts him 'first of all to keep before his eyes God and the nature of this institute which is so to speak, is a pathway to God' (Formula of the Institute 1:4).

JHARNA SPIRITUALITY CENTRE: SHOWING THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Fr Edwin Dang, SJ

The recurring question that surfaced in 2020, when the Covid-19 turned our lives upside down and brought us face-to-face with the reality of human frailty, loneliness and death was, 'Where is God in all this?' This was a time of rupture, confusion and complexity that left many with a melancholic experience of the absence of the 'Emmanuel – God with us'. The experience of the absence of divine is not something uncommon as every storm encountered in life leads to raise mysterious questions on the existential reality of life; for instance; 'why everything seems so different than what God intended to be?' 'How can I live peacefully amidst all these?' 'What is the purpose of life and creation?' 'How can I understand God's blessing in 'Be fruitful and multiply?', 'How can I find God in all these?' These are the kinds of questions that are proper to Ignatian Spirituality and Ignatius answered them all so convincingly in the 'Principle and Foundation' of the Spiritual Exercises. When the grim reality of Covid-19 is assessed and interpreted in the light of Spiritual Exercises and placed before God it serves as a guide to discover how God's presence can be found and experienced in everything and in every situation.



Fr Edwin Dang, SJ
Director, Spirituality
Centre, Namkum, Ranchi



In January 2021 we conducted one-month 'intensive Ignatian spirituality course' for religious from different congregations. At the end of the course most participants articulated their insights in these or similar phrases; 'God can be experienced and found in everything', 'nothing is outside the purview of spiritual life', 'God meets us where we are', 'we do not have to change the situation or condition for God to love us', 'we are loved even in/with our imprecations'. All these insights point to the Ignatian way of 'Finding God in all things and all things in God'. This is how Ignatian Spirituality is and has been a priceless guide to millions of people from the devout believer to the doubtful believers over the past 500 years. It continues to give us new eyes 'to see all things new in Christ' and leads us to accept, understand and interpret the reality in a more realistic way, opening the door to a more joyful and peaceful life according to the plan of God.



The Ranchi Jesuits ignited and guided by the spirit of St. Ignatius with their innovative gestures and humble services have been leading many to experience the presence of 'Emmanuel' God with us in the difficult times. Their contribution in various walks of life gives a glimpse of remarkable vibrancy of the living tradition of the spirituality of St. Ignatius which has worked for people from an astonishing variety of

times, places, and backgrounds. The Jharna Spirituality Centre since its inception in 2008 has been constantly at the service of 'showing the way to people through Spiritual Exercises and discernment of Spirits'.

Jharna Spirituality centre: Jharna Spirituality Centre is one of the privileged spaces in the province for spiritual and human formation. The centre by means of spiritual exercises, seminars, workshops and personal accompaniments assists individuals and groups to get connected with the divine and dips them deeply to discover life-giving-stream in their own life and ministries. The spacious and peaceful 'Jharna' premises is conducive to facilitate spiritual disciplines; silence and solitude enabling one to be attentive to listen to the promptings of deep inner voice of one's own true self and to come in contact with the springs of spiritual life which are hidden in the depths of one's own soul.

Our Mission

Showing the way to God through the 'Spiritual Exercises and discernment', and give praise, reverence and serve Lord, our God, finding Him in all things.

Our Vision:

To lay strong foundation for holistic spiritual, emotional and psychological well-being by deep personal 'God experience', whereby freed from all inordinate attachments one offers oneself to God in complete freedom and magnanimity.

We strive to facilitate individuals to recognize their 'giftedness' by instilling in them;

- » The capacity to recognize the power of the Word of God for healing and spiritual growth.
- » The ability to perceive, understand and interpret life experiences and situations more realistically according to vision of God for each one's life.
- » The resources to modulate affective expressions constructively to become more consistent and committed in their mission.
- » The ability to discover key factors for more resilient responses to traumatic events and develop a personal action plan for self-care in these challenging times.

Jharna Spirituality Center's Initiatives to mark Ignatian Year 2021-2022

An Intensive Course on Ignatian Spirituality to Religious: One of the purposes of Jharna Spirituality Centre is to make Ignatian Spirituality known to others, which is one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Jesuits. Many men and women Congregations follow the six or eight days retreat guided by the Jesuits, and yet compared to the Western countries, the methods and the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises are hardly known to them. Much more so, the lay people are practically out of this concern. In the West even the 30 days Retreat is common among the lay people. The Indian laity has still to be introduced to Ignatian Spirituality.



Keeping this thought in mind and in view of sharing the knowledge and practice of Ignatian Spirituality in this Ignatian Year 2020-2021, the Jharna Spirituality Centre organized a month course on the subject and the participants were invited from various religious Congregations. The response was quite encouraging. The total number of 17 women religious turned up for the course. Ten St Anne's, three from Charles Borromeo sisters, two each from Clarissans and the Missionary Sisters of Jesus the Eternal Priest. Except a few, all of them were preparing themselves for their Final Professions. Hence the courses given to them were very appealing. The course was divided into three main sections: First, Ignatian Spirituality, Dynamics of Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian Key Meditations and Contemplations, Examen of conscience, rules of Discernment of Spirits, etc.; second, Religious Life, evangelical Counsels, the spirituality of consecrated life, Religious Community life, Introduction to OT and NT, etc; and third, the Psycho-spiritual integration which addressed various issues related to interpersonal relationship and one's own personal growth, such as Psycho-social human development, psycho-sexual integration, psycho-dynamics of human life, conflicts, needs, values, emotions, etc. Fr K.C. Philip S.J., Fr Camil Kerketta S.J. and Fr Edwin Dang S.J. were respectively the resource persons for these three sections of the course.

The Programs of Jharna Spirituality Center, Namkum during 2020-2021

Purpose	No. of Groups	No. of Participants
Recollection	10	93
Triduum	6	71
Annual Retreats	22	131
30-Day Directed Retreat	5	33
Counseling	8	8
Online Retreat	1	35
Spirituality Course	2	25
Quarantine Service	6	25
Language Courses	2	7



HIGHER EDUCATION: DISTURBED BUT NOT DEVASTATED

Fr Pradeep Kerketta, SJ & Fr Ajay Arun Minj, SJ

Higher education plays a defining role in pursuing a career which interests and inspires a student. It brings awareness of what a student is actually capable of and enables him/her to improve his/her life and thereby contributes to the world as a whole. In particular, Jesuit higher education attempts at forming the students of sound mind and heart (Constitution 440). It helps students to strike a balance in whatever work they are engaged in. The vision of Jesuit education has been progressive in nature in both the areas of knowledge and character (Constitution 392). That is why the 'Magis' is stressed upon in our education system and the character formation is key to our education. St. Ignatius the founder father of the Society of Jesus in his Spiritual Exercises clarifies that knowledge of one's own interior life (Sp. Exs. 63) and knowledge of the Divine (Sp. Exs. 104) precedes the knowledge of the world (Sp. Exs. 233). These dynamics to acquire knowledge help a student knowing the world around him/her better and a student begins to view the world through the prism of religion/God, which gives him/her a new perspective of the world, in so doing serve and contribute to the betterment of common home and common good. To educate and help the graduating students to be leaders-in-service or men/women for others has been the hallmark of Jesuit higher education since the sixteenth century. In order to elaborate the higher education related issues in the pandemic this article has been divided into three parts (1) Identification of challenges in higher education (2) Our responses to covid-19 induced challenges (3) Visualization of future trend.

Like many other sectors the higher education has also been unprecedentedly disrupted by Covid-19 pandemic. Right from the day on March 22, 2020 the educational institutions have not got any relaxation to begin their academic activities throughout the country. According to the UNESCO report, the pandemic has affected almost 68 % of total world's student population as per the data taken during the first week of June 2020. As far as the higher education is concerned the following major areas have been affected.

All the academic activities have been destabilized and disturbed. As per the protocol and guidelines issued by the union and state regulators all the four higher education institutions namely, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, Xavier Institute of Social Service, St. Xavier's Sonabeel, Assam and St. Xavier's Simdega of Ranchi province have stopped physical classroom teaching and learning. It was a great challenge for the college management to select the suitable and deserving candidates during the new admissions. St. Xavier's College Ranchi having a large number of applicants to various disciplines faced a tremendous pressure in the whole process of admission. St. Xavier's Sonabeel had the challenges of different nature as the campus was made a quarantine centre by the government initially, which was later converted to one of the Covid-19 centres of the district. Parents and students were reluctant and scared of taking admission at St. Xavier's Sonabeel because the college building was used as the Covid-19 centre. This affected the admission process adversely. Even the admission process of XISS was affected badly. Due to the surge in covid-19 cases in different parts of our country, students were in dilemma whether to take admission or not. Since the businesses were shut down, financial stress had increased due to which many willing students couldn't join XISS. Widespread Corona cases were so scary that our outstation potential students didn't turn up as it was expected. Students experienced a major setback when hiring companies and organizations either postponed the joining dates or in extreme cases cancelled

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the appointment letters. Hence, students were in a real trouble.

The pandemic has badly affected the regular internal assessment systems of higher education. Regular internal assessments were either cancelled or postponed directly impacting on future education of students' life. This created anxiety to both students and parents at different levels. Some of them, particularly the students were psychologically disturbed due to the uncertainty of situation. In St. Xavier's Ranchi entrance tests for new admission were cancelled. As a result, the targeted groups of students and many deserving students might have lost opportunity to take admission in our premier institution. Some works like research, project and internships were also hampered. Researchers were facing constraints as they couldn't travel nationally or internationally for research related works. It has badly affected scientific laboratory testing and practical classes. For instance, St. Xavier's College Ranchi could not conduct a single practical class in any stream. This directly affects research motivation and interests of students.

The pandemic has not only reduced employment opportunities but also it has taken away jobs of many. During the pandemic job recruitments got cancelled. There were certain cases where students failed to join companies because they did not have score cards in their hands due to delayed examinations. Worst still, thousands of job holders have lost their jobs on account of retrenchment inside as well as outside India. Consequently, revenue of the families has drastically fallen, which in turn has aggravated the poverty and unemployment situations. This directly affects the interest for higher education in students.

Despite innumerable difficulties and challenges our higher education institutions' responses were commendable. They have started open and distant learning and E-learning through the usage of technology and internet infrastructure. Though institutions have changed their operational habits to a great extent nevertheless it is still a challenge for some of the senior professors for whom technology is not an attraction. Many students hailing from rural areas cannot afford the required electronic gadgets with high speed internet for online learning. Even if they have means, they do not have continuous and uninterrupted internet network in many locations. As a result, students are not able to attend classes on a regular basis. On top of that monitoring and mentoring of students become difficult in an online mode. In spite of all these constraints and challenges our colleges have put the best of their efforts to train young men and women according to the thrust of the Society. To cope with the challenges, the institutions have tried online methods for regular internal assessment. St. Xavier's Ranchi dared to arrange offline examinations for the final year students. They have successfully completed the final semester and were able to move to other stages. The students of second and fourth semesters are promoted without semester examinations. The college continues to arrange the offline semester examinations taking necessary precautions and arrangements. Practical classes are also arranged to help the students to prepare for practical examinations. In our colleges, taking online examinations were of huge challenge especially for rural colleges like St. Xavier's Simdega and St. Xavier's Sonabeel where network connectivity is a serious issue. In order to overcome such an issue, question papers were sent through WhatsApp and students had to write and submit the soft copy through WhatsApp soon after the examination and the submission of hardcopy



subsequently. Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) constituted a digital team with the objective of enabling professors, staff and students for academic activities. The institute also constituted a task force to ensure the compliances of covid-19 protocols and guidelines in the campus for hassle free environment. So, XISS continued its works with staggered opening of the institute.

There were glimpses of blessings in disguise as our institutions took lead to grab the opportunities to serve people who were in need of our service. Apart from institutional works, XISS also acted as facilitator and enabler in packaging and ration distribution in collaboration with district administration. This act has undoubtedly created goodwill among the regulatory authorities. Some of our students and staff actively involved themselves in reaching the necessary materials to the Covid-19 affected people to the affected area with great zeal to serve the humanity. It was certainly in line with Jesuit education to become men and women for others or leaders-in-service. Similarly in the case of St. Xavier's Sonabeel, the whole campus was made available for the district administration for Corona patients.

All the four institutions continue to respond to the pandemic situations constructively. However what is important is to identify the future trends following the Covid-19 pandemic so that our higher education institutions are ready for immediate and constructive response whenever required. We visualize the following trends in higher education in future: Firstly, social distancing and isolation might constrain the fun and joy of campus life. Students are going to feel lonely,

going to miss opportunities to share their feelings with peers. Sports, gyms and tournaments might be in low gear for longer period and physical activities of students might be hampered. This might cause psychological imbalance in students. There will be certainly a need for psychological and medical counseling. Another possible trend in future is that students' attendance for offline or online classes may slow down. It will be on us, teaching faculty and administrative staff to engage students in open and distant learning in creative and attractive digital platform. Getting updated with digital world and equipping oneself with required skill sets are going to be the challenge for everyone. Furthermore, the mobility of the students for higher education nationally or internationally is likely to be slowed down. Therefore, institutions need to raise the standard and avail necessary courses and degrees to the students. For this there will be a need to have the shift systems. This is going to be an added pressure on the administrative staff of the institutions to manage. Widening gap between privileged and less privileged learners will be another trend. This will create inequality. Our institutions have to really play greater roles in maintaining equality and strengthen social fabric. There is a need to find ways and means to bridge the widening gap and provide quality education to everybody so that the less privileged do not suffer. Also it is by value education, students of privileged class could be motivated and inspired to join hands in bridging this gap between privileged and less privileged in our higher learning institutions and colleges. Our aim is to create inclusive infrastructure for inclusive development of our stakeholders and therefore we Jesuits have to make conscious and concerted effort to meet the impending trends in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic.



SECONDARY AND HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION: FROM DESK TO TECH

Fr. Manohar Khoya, SJ & Fr. Sanjay Kerketta, SJ

“The single problem plaguing all students in all schools everywhere is the crisis of disconnection. Meaningful Student Involvement happens when the roles of students are actively re-aligned from being the passive recipients of schools to becoming active partners throughout the educational process” says Adam Fletcher. Active-student-teacher partnership in teaching-learning was one of the key goals of our association with Adhyayan (Adhyayan Quality Standard), thereby creating new atmosphere and ways of teaching learning. When the Second review of our nine schools was concluded and the reports and recommendations were posted to the Principals, (Review reports form part of the Ranchi Province Yearbook 2020) they started preparing to get down to the task to realize the quality standard in their schools, which in Jesuit nomenclature could be termed as Magis is our schools.



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Gumla

The Covid-19 pandemic entirely halted our normal course of teaching-learning and we were to venture into virtual mode of teaching-learning which in every way proved to be unprecedentedly an arduous task given the situations – lack of funds and resources, untrained teachers for virtual classes, lack of technology, data and network issues. We were left blank faced and ill prepared. And yet we had to sail through our oars against the wind to propel and row into the deep.



Fr Sanjay Kerketta, SJ
Principal, St. Xavier's
Doranda

What a didactic dichotomy – since the evolution of Mobile-Age we had been warning the parents and students to beware of the use of mobiles. And now we had to counsel them to arrange Smart phones, laptops and i-pads, etc. to connect them by all means.

As St. Paul says, we were “Struck down but not defeated.” While some of our schools started immediately the WhatsApp groups of students to connect with them to guide and impel them for self learning, a few of our schools employed ERP systems to teach online while the

teachers, even those who were averse to mobiles and such technologies, were trained to connect virtually. Though

started with embittered feelings and apprehensions, both learners and teachers acclimatized and adapted to the

otherwise new mode of teaching and learning. In

Ranchi and vicinity all the high schools managed to connect with the students through some

platform or the other. While St. Xavier's School, Doranda entered into contract

with Extramarks and later with the Cute Brains; Prabhat Tara School, Dhurwa

was facilitated by Iguru. At the same time Loyola School, Khunti, St. Xavier's

School, Sarwada, St. Xavier's School, Bundu and Inigo High School, Saporom used

the Government portal to continue the process of teaching-learning.

In Gumla and Simdega districts too, many schools



tried to function on online mode. The schools located at semi urban area, (for instance; St. Ignatius' high School, Gumla, St. Xavier's School Gumla, St. Mary's High School, Samtoli) tried to connect the students through WhatsApp as many as possible. The teachers shared the teaching materials through whatsApp in the form of notes, videos, and voice recordings, etc. Also, some teachers tried to have online classes in Google meet and Zoom. Teachers also shared the learning materials from 'Jharkhand Digi Sath' App. Later, students were guided to register themselves in 'Learnytic App' (for class 9 to 12) and 'Jharkhand Digi School App' (for class 1 to 8) as per direction of the Education Department. In Inter colleges students' response was better. About 90% students were connected whereas in lower classes about 60% students were connected for the online classes. Thus, even in semi urban area many students could not benefit from the online classes due to the lack of smart phone. To help out such underprivileged students was a great challenge. Wherever students did not have resources to attend online were called in batches to attend tutorials following the Covid-19 norms and guidelines.

Later, parents-teachers meetings were called for class 9, 10, 12 to know the ground realities of the students at home, and to seek some way out to continue the teaching-learning process in better way. Some of the parents shared that their children are growing with negative behavioral changes during lockdown being out of control and indiscipline, hence requested for offline

classes.

In the rural area, the online classes could not be conducted due to the lack of smart phone and network problem. However, some schools called the students of higher classes for offline tuition classes for limited hours from the month of September-October when lockdown was a bit relaxed.

Some of our schools tried to have online competitions on singing, painting, essay writing, IT exhibition and quiz etc. In some schools, some celebrations and functions like children's day, Independence Day, Christmas gathering, Class 11 Fresher's Day were shared to the students through You-tube.

A gist of the experiences of our teachers and students speak volumes about how learning in this pandemic has created new vistas of learning: "We started online teaching with lot of apprehensions, fears and dilemma but as we climbed up the ladder, things became smooth and we were able to connect with the students. It became a new normal. We kept discovering new things as we took more and more initiatives and learnt more than we taught. Perhaps, we would never have learnt in our lifetime the nuances of online classes if not for this situation. We do feel distanced from our students and parents, but we have learnt to cope up with such adverse situation. At the same time, we do feel sorry for the students who are developing physical, emotional and psychological problems, yet we did try to help them



by meeting and guiding them time and again face to face. We also had time to talk to them individually. To sum up, the situation is adversely unprecedented, but we have given our best to stand our ground as educators.”

As the board examinations are drawing closer, with the guidelines of the Government, the students from 8 to 12 have been coming to school for offline classes that has given some breather to us to prepare them well for their examinations. It is learnt that there is a vast deficit to be made up and the schools are giving their best to the greatest extent possible.

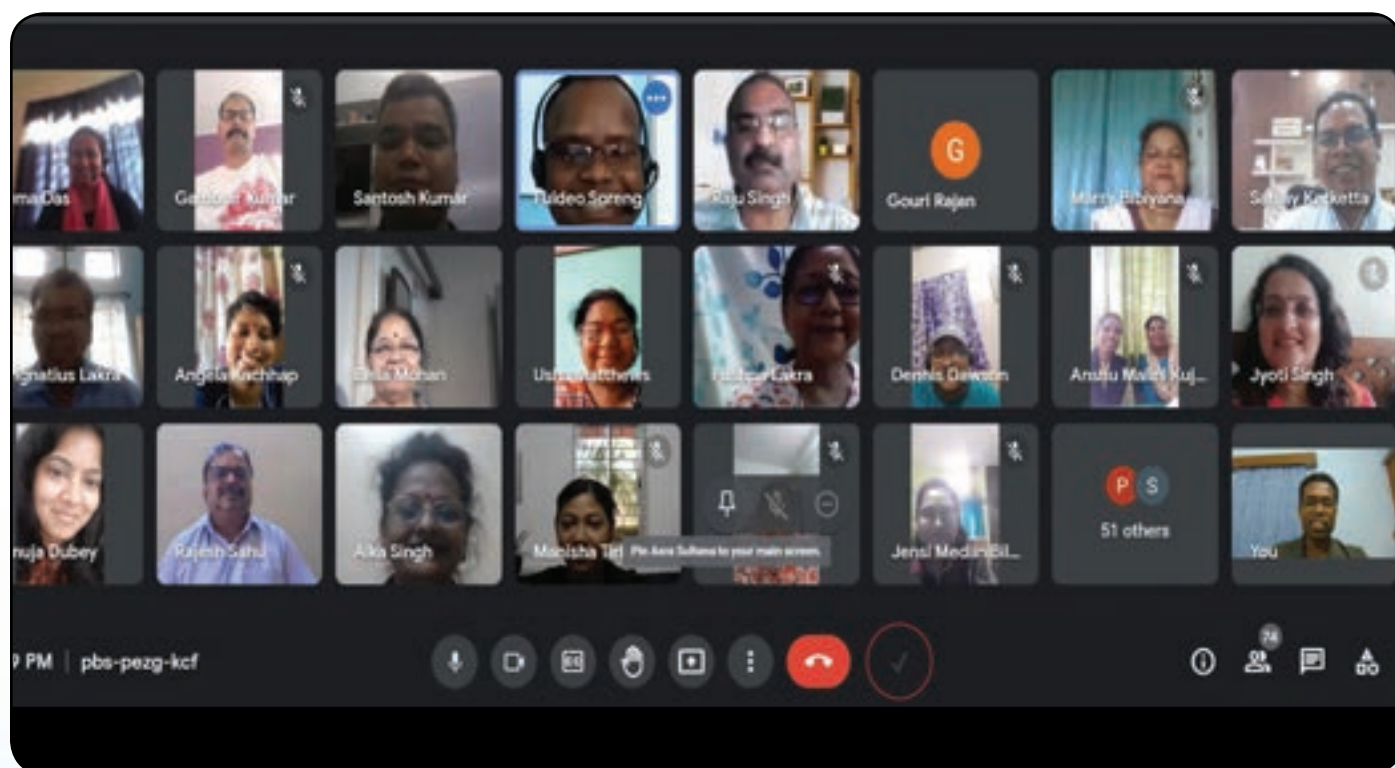
Financial crisis was another challenge that all our high schools were faced with irrespective of their past financial situations. While the Government notifications disallowed to collect fees other than the tuition fees, the recurring expenses continued to burden us. At the same time, there was hardly any contribution of parents even for the tuition fee. And yet we did not let down our collaborators in terms of their remuneration and livelihood. Thanks to the RJS that in due time bailed us out even in this situation.

In spite of all such adversities, our schools managed to have some workshops and training sessions for the teachers, either virtually or face to face as the situation improved.

Another outstanding effort that was exhibited by our institutions was to immerse themselves in the works of

mercy and charity, specially for the needy and the migrant labourers in collaboration with the RJS and respective district administrations. Ours in rural districts also ventured into the awareness programmes in the remote areas. At the same time, all the schools in Ranchi – St. John's Ranchi, St. Xavier's Doranda, Prabhat Tara Dhurwa, Inigo School, Saparom, Kishor Nagar, Namkum lent their hands in the distribution of the rations and other needs among the needy. So much so, the schools participated actively in the “RanchiCares: Mission One Million Smiles” – an initiative of Ranchi District Administration and the Civil Society. Prabhat Tara was also made centre for health workers and security personnel to cater to the needs of Paras HEC Hostipal – A Covid-19 hospital.

Thus we withstood the testing time and with new learning we wish to see a better future and commitment in our high schools setting up new standards for teaching and learning at the same time incorporating our plans and strategies in attending to the UAPs mandated by the Society and the Province. We have sailed across the last Academic Year with brave hearts and looking for better times but we have to have still braver hearts as the second wave of the pandemic has just made an entry. So we are reminded of the Risen Lord's Words, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28: 20b). With this assurance of the Lord, we wish to continue our service with lots of hope even in the grim scenario.



PASTURING AMID PANDEMIC

Fr. Samir Dungdung, SJ

Introduction:

The entry of Covid-19 pandemic with all its uncertainties certainly worried us the pastors. We were cautiously concerned about our people. There were apprehensions and anxieties as to what if the faithful are infected massively. However, God does show the ways if we have complete trust in Him. We came into actions immediately. First of all, we isolated ourselves, cancelling meetings and gatherings, and Holy Mass with neighbours. As we received guidelines from the Government and the Province, we tried to operate accordingly and also went about bringing awareness among people about the Covid-19 protocols.

Impact of Covid-19 on our life and work:

Our life and works were stagnated for a few months. At least in the centre, we followed maximum guidelines of the Government and Province. We solely depended on the prayers. The church bells stopped tolling, sacraments, sick calls and even burials were not attended for a few days. But undeterred by the unprecedented conditions caused by Covid-19, later our pastors ventured into visiting and attending to the needs of the faithful. Financial liabilities struck us badly. It was harsh on our Catechists as we were not able to remunerate them. Somehow, we managed to pay them from our savings which was a great relief at this moment of crisis. Some generous souls and others like the three wings of our parishes (Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh and Yuva Sangh) gave donations for various needs of the parish and thus supported us in the hours of needs.

As people could not manage to sell their domestic products, their lives too were handicapped due to the lack of cash. Those who had gone to cities as labourers and had come back to their homes also found it difficult to survive due to lack of jobs. Moreover, they were idle, and some involved themselves in anti-social activities too. School children also did not know what to do. Most of them did not study at all as they lost interest in study and forgot the lessons which they knew earlier. The government asked teachers and headmasters to take online classes but for the lack of smart phones and data, lack of electricity, network issues



Fr Samir Dungdung, SJ
Parish Priest, Tongo Parish
in Gumla Diocese



completely hampered their normal course of studies, which in the days to come may have many repercussions. It was not at all a better solution for these children. In short, entire family and pastoral life was affected squarely. In such situations too, our pastors in their own various ways brought comfort to the uncomfortable.

Our responses as pastors:

In this situation, our responses to the situation were as follows-

1. Prepare practical and applicable guidelines for our parishioners. For this, we took help from the guidelines of the government as well as the guidelines of our province. After finishing it, we sent it to the villages to be told: mainly- there would not be any gathering, religious functions even Holy Mass but each family prays by itself. There would not be Holy Mass at the centre church too. Yet, some of our parishes did continue with sufficient precautions.
2. We spotted the neediest people in our villages for minimum help which we wanted to give. And then distributed soaps for handwash, masks, rice, daal, oil, potato and sanitizer, etc.



Our Attitude now:



Now, after many phases of unlock, at least in our interior places, far from cities normal life has come back. We do not have to fear because, there have not been detected Covid-19 infections either through tests or that people have not been detected with symptoms. We do wonder as to how the villagers have not been affected at all while the city dwellers have been so adversely affected by both the first as well as the second waves of the pandemic. It is probably either because of the healthier environment in the villages or the anti-bodies that are developed in the villagers because of their rough and tough life since their childhood. Thanks be to God that he has still kept the villagers safe so far. Due to businesses and parishes opening up income generation activities have been boosted giving relief to the parishes as well as the faithful. Slowly, the normalcy to some extent is being experienced, obviously with the sense of new normalcy. People are able to sell their domestic products, employments to some extent are available, children have been able to come to schools and so on. The Parish activities have picked up the momentum and the faith of the people continues to blossom even as the second wave has struck the State. However, we do sensitize people that the precautionary measures need to be in place as none knows how this pandemic can abnormalize the entire system.

SOCIAL APOSTOLATE DURING PANDEMIC AMONG THE GRASSROOTS

Fr Anuranjan Hassa Purty, SJ &

Covid-19 Pandemic had a very long and huge impact on every countable sector and life. Every country was hit by the Pandemic caused by COVID 19 all over the world, challenging the already existing service delivery system, health care, Finance and governance to address the collateral damages caused by this Pandemic. It is well known fact that COVID 19 was indeed very expensive for the weaker and vulnerable/ marginalised section of the Society.

The state of Jharkhand was also one of the states that faced the load shedding caused by the Pandemic Induced Lockdown. State witnessed the huge number of returned migrants from all over the country, specially lack of food and resources and collapse of Health system to a large and alarming rate. The cascading effects in Health Care System, Employment, Deforestation, Economy are still to be analysed and the adversities are still left to be measured.

Below are a few impacts that Covid-19 had on the sector of Health Care, Food Security, Nutrition, Sustainable Livelihood and Employment.

As per the NFHS data, Jharkhand stands highest in terms of Malnutrition, Jharkhand contributing 47.8% underweight children followed by the state of Bihar at 43.9%, whereas India's average is 35.7%. In terms of acute malnutrition, Jharkhand stands in second position at 45.3% after Bihar. West Singbhum, Khunti and Dumka have the

highest percentage of underweight children. West Singbhum, Godda and Pakur have the highest percentage of stunted children under 5. Khunti, Dumka, East Singbhum and West Singbhum have the highest percentage of children under 5 years of age who are severely malnourished and wasted.

As per the study published on May 2020 by John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (America), India contributes 20% in Global malnutrition and would exceed 10% more in this Pandemic. This study further reflects that the hurdle accessing services will also have a huge impact. It is estimated that 11.57 lakh children and 56700 mothers will lose their lives globally in 6 months. Looking into India's Health and Nutritional services affected due to Covid-19 will increase the number of maternal and new-born deaths. It is estimated that 49850 more child deaths and 2398 maternal deaths will happen. It further claims that due to this pandemic situation services like immunisation, IFA supply, Nutritional services, services for new born care, safe institutional delivery, etc. were affected very badly and these services were reduced up to 40-50%, therefore India's



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Lohardaga

share on Malnutrition will increase from 21% to 31.5% globally.

The Lockdown forced the locking down of Mid-day meals at Schools and Aanganwadi centres. It is to be noted that Mid-day meals play a vital role in Nutrition in the state of Jharkhand where the Malnutrition is alarming. Vulnerable sections of society were driven further into pathetic situation of food scarcity and large number of community were devoid of any kind of services due to lack of Identity card, Ration card, etc, which further degraded their situations.

Jharkhand is one of the labour hubs for the metro cities and lakhs of people migrate to the neighbouring cities, states for the search of better job opportunities due to lack of job work in the state. During the lockdown period, thousands of People walked back home from far away cities and states crossing hundreds of miles on foot. More than 10 lakhs migrants returned during the lockdown period, to be precise between the month of May and September 2020.

Loss of jobs means loss of livelihood and money; people were forced to reduce their food consumption in terms of both quality and quantity, at the same time there was no job at hand.

As per the study conducted by Prof. Dayal and Ms. Bharti on the Employment in Jharkhand, the unemployment jumped to 47.1 per cent in April 2020 and 59.2 per cent in May 2020 – during the peak of

the lockdown. The unemployment at the all India level was also high in these two months but was less than half that of Jharkhand. The unemployment in the state started decreasing with the relaxation of the lockdown. After the unlock-one, the unemployment in Jharkhand decreased to 20.9 per cent and that of India was 10.2 per cent in June 2020. Since then the unemployment rates, both at the state and national level have remained in single digit, but the unemployment in state has remained more than the national level.

As per the survey conducted by Azim Premji University (APU study) , 58 per cent of the respondents of the rural areas of the state reported that they lost their job in this period. Casual wage workers were the worst hit. 76 per cent of them lost their jobs. The casual workers and self-employed non-agricultural workers reported 65 per cent fall in their average earnings in this period. The farmers were also badly hit by the lockdown. Agriculture sector though not impacted due to good weather condition but was severely impacted due to disruption of supply chain and transportation. Eighty Nine per cent of the farmers reported that they were unable to sell their produce at full prices. Salaried wage workers were also affected very badly; 42 per cent of the salaried wage workers also reported that they were either not paid their salaries or were paid only reduced salaries. As a result, there was a fall in employment and income. Twenty Seven per cent of the households reported that they did not have enough money to buy even a week's worth





of essentials and 77 per cent of the households reported consuming less food than before.

Covid 19 Response

It is noteworthy to mention that Combat action from the Government and the Civil society organisation in battle against Covid-19 was actually powerful and effective in the Country. Amidst the Lockdown, chaos and confusions, many noble contributions were made in terms of cash and kinds. Humanity and charity are still powerful and existing among the people.

In the state of Jharkhand, Govt. introduced many new schemes and programmes to address the Covid-19 damages, and CSOs came forward with the first hand support to address the Damage and serve the community with empathy.

In the context of Jharkhand, the Govt. introduced the state cell to deal with the incoming migrants and those displaced and in distress in the neighbouring cities. Thousands of distress calls were made, tracked and brought back safe to the state; Quarantine centres were made; community kitchens were introduced. It also brought to limelight that the neediest and the vulnerable groups in distant rural pockets were devoid of basic Identity card and services. The advent of CSOs in the midst of this chaos is praiseworthy. In the state of Jharkhand, CSOs came forward to join hands with the Govt. and walk the march relentlessly to provide the people with every possible service which would safeguard their lives and fulfil the basic need, at least a meal a day, one hygiene kit per home and awareness on

Covid-19 at every nook and corner of the village.

Jharkhand Govt. Introduced the Mukhya Mantri Shramik Yojana for the Migrant Labours above the age of 18. This scheme is alike MGNREGA and guarantees 100 days of work to the beneficiaries and also guarantees the provision of stipend in case of failure to provide the job opportunity. Community kitchen programme, Promotion of PDS service, MGNREGA, THR, Mukhya Mantri Dal Bhat Yojana was implemented throughout the state with a mission that nobody should sleep hungry. Numerous Campaigns were

started by the INGOS, NGOS, VO and individuals to address the immediate needs of the people. Many health guidelines were introduced and promoted by UNICEF; emergency food Distribution programmes were introduced in the Country funded by the national and international Corporate, Philanthropic Institutes/ Organisations. Apart from the Food and Medical Relief, Special focus was given to the farmers in Jharkhand, many Seed Producing Companies, banks, Network Distributed seeds and other Farming Amenities to the Farmers. The contribution of Standard Chartered Bank, BAYER are noteworthy to mention here which not only provided farmers with the best varieties of seed but also provided them with other materials, technical handholding support as well, which was made possible through the relentless work of CSOs present in Jharkhand. It is to be noted here that the situation at rural areas was very disheartening because many of the farmers were forced to consume the seeds kept for the future cultivation for survival.

Surveys were conducted by the CSOs in all parts of Jharkhand helping the govt. to Identify the most vulnerable people and those without any Identity or Ration cards, enrolment was done and were provided with Food Kits and hygiene kits. VBN was also a Part of the Jharkhand CSO forum which was born amidst the Pandemic, this forum was formed with an objective to facilitate the Dialogues, Discussion, researches and outlook among the CSOs spread across Jharkhand accompanied by Social Activities, Academicians and Individual Experts. Studies were conducted in six thematic areas such as sustainable agriculture, Nutrition, Primary Health,

Employment, Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and CSO study in the context of Jharkhand. After these studies, many strong and necessary recommendations were made and were shared with the Jharkhand CMO and different concerned departments. It is praiseworthy to mention here that the Positive response and prompt actions on these recommendations were received from the end of Govt.

Experience And Reflection

It is an undeniable fact that without the CSOs, the Response work would not have been stronger and effective as it has been. This Pandemic taught the CSO many valuable lessons which will surely impact all the CSOs, its perspective, Proactive Attitude and outlook towards the development of Society. VB Net Foundation with its 19 Partners joined hand with other CSOs, Govt. Authorities and Community volunteer to reach the people with relief as fast as it can be. The government also realised the importance and immeasurable contributions the CSOs made in this chaotic time of Pandemic and how it was one of the most important and effective forces of actions. CSOs could see the scope of Convergence, need of Convergence activities/ mode of work with the Government, other CSO partners, Individual and most importantly with the communities in future if development and proactiveness in all sectors are to be initiated.

This Pandemic made us realise about the importance of Community health care and how fragile our health

care systems are. This pandemic really gave a clarion call to rebuild and reconstruct our focus on Primary health care and services and at the same time a need to strengthen the basic health and hygiene care. It was seen and many studies showed that due to frequent hand washing and basic hygiene maintenance, large number of Communicable diseases and outbreaks were reduced to a large extent. Thus, this habit has to be continuously reinforced even after the end of this Pandemic. It was realised that the Rural Pockets and the Marginalised community are still devoid of basic Fundamental and special constitutional rights of which they are entitled to, thus there is a need of stronger Mass awareness generation programme in these communities and pockets where the actual intervention and action is needed.

Many CSOs also witnessed fund exhaustion during the Pandemic as they selflessly contributed both in cash and more in kind, risking their safety, their lives and backups for the future. Therefore, the near future would demand the strengthening of Resources and its mobilisation to sustain self and continue its service to the society.

Future holds the immense scope of work and opportunities for the CSOs to rebuild the damage caused by the cascading effect of Pandemic and reform the social Structures and work towards the development of the community in true sense, joining hand with the community, fellow CSO partners and the Government.



AT THE SERVICE OF STRANDED LABOURERS WITH GOVT.

Fr Mahendra Peter Tigga, SJ



Fr Mahendra Tigga, SJ
Director, Hoffmann Law
Associates, Ranchi

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi on May 4 declared that Congress would bear the travel expenses of home-bound migrant workers, whom the Centre and some states were charging for the train and bus trips. This announcement rode on the public outrage that set counter agenda to push the government to the brink. A flurry of damage control announcements in the media followed suit sans official confirmation or denial. Meanwhile freshly arriving passengers at a few destinations confirmed in the media that their journey was far from being free. This is only a sordid sequel to the nationwide lock-down abruptly enforced by the Prime Minister from April 4 onwards seeking to control the Covid-19 pandemic. Even as the third phase of declared lock-down is to end on May 17, the builders' lobby prevailed upon the Karnataka Government on 6th May to cancel the North-bound trains that were to carry the starving and desolate construction workers. Public outcry and protest of the rights activists, however, forced the Government to backtrack on the decision.

The unsavoury scenario is aptly previewed in the above referred statement of Mrs Gandhi, "Since the partition in 1947 the country for the first time witnessed

heart rending scenes of thousands of labourers being compelled to walk thousands of kilometres before reaching their homes. Their indomitable longing to join their loved ones was prepared to take on acute food shortage, pennilessness, lack of medicine and conveyance.

Even the thought of it has jolted every Indian who acclaimed their strong determination." Even as this report is being written on May 9, exponential growth of the Covid-19 victims is defying the lock-down pause button.

Much before Mrs Gandhi's response, Mr. Hemant Soren, the youthful CM of Jharkhand, directed the labour department on March 23 to promptly set up a control room in order to flash several toll-free numbers in the media for receiving distress calls. A website on behalf of the Government was also launched for accessing the stranded people. In no time it got over 6.5 lakh people registered. Energetically managed by Mr. Johnson Topno of Partnering Hope into Action (PHIA) Foundation and his Covid-19 Response Team, the control room accessed numerous labourers stranded all over the country. The team was constituted of 30 PHIA collaborators and 150 volunteers.

On 13th April, a Jesuit Fr. Mahendra Peter Tigga as counsellor joined the team that included Mr. Balram as mentor, Mr. Sunil Minj as reporter, Mr. Roshan Kiro as counsellor and other social activists of the PHIA team with the kind of 'Mission Relief' strengthening the hands of Government.

While financial support from the Central Government was hardly adequate, over 200 institutions and voluntary organizations active in over 600 districts nationwide were approached for help. Significant among them were Christian institutions who promptly and generously rose to the occasion with cash, shelter and food.

In view of linking the distressed labourers with local volunteers particularly in South India, two Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, Jini Joseph and A. Mary Jayanthi were included in the Team at Nepal House on April 17. Their few initial phone calls to the stranded people in South India indicated that over 90% of



them were in dire need of food. Hence the Sisters quickly extended their reach virtually to the entire country. Enabled by church catalogues, they contacted 6732 prospective good Samaritans who generously fed over 2204 persons all over the country.

Even as the contacts increased, Fr. Mahendra started a Nodal Office at Hoffman Law Office and Satya Bharati, Ranchi, on April 21 and he included 14 collaborators to work with him. Even as the two Dominican Sisters continued their task, five Ursuline Sisters (Srs. Julia George, Punam Lakra, Meenakshi Nivedita Nayak, Sunita Lakra and Lucia Minj), four Daughters of St. Anne (Srs. Sunita Baxla, Asrelian Kujur, Leokadia Xess and Eveline Minj) and three Jesuits (Frs. Bipin Lugun, Cyprian Ekka and Sch. Ashish Digal from Jamshedpur Province) were added to the team. While cautioning the group regarding frequent irate telephonic responses of the aggrieved, Fr. Mahendra exhorted the group to exercise maximum restraint and generous compassion instead. The strategy paid off in creating positive vibrations in the victims of pandemic catastrophe. The team members later confessed to have been moved by pathetic condition of the stranded labourers.

The task assigned to the team was two-fold: assisting the prospective beneficiaries in filling up eligibility form online for receiving Rs. 2000/- as help from the Jharkhand Government and, secondly, linking them in 11 states to local groups of priests, sisters, NGOs, families and friends for food supply.

“Fortunately, in several places one or the other Church group was found actively responding to this rare humanitarian crisis”, said Sr. A. Mary Jayanthi, adding, “It made us approach them with confidence and to rest assured of their sustained help.” Where possible, the people’s plight was shared with the team through small video clips as well. Our successive 5-6 phone calls to every group also reassured the victims of our concern. Having thus intensely worked together for 12 days, the group members now individually accompany them on phone.

According to official records about 9 lakh labourers, including a sizeable group of Tribals, work outside the state. While maximum query came from those hailing from the non-Tribal Giridih and Garhwa regions, only 873 Tribal of the entire state sought help from Jharkhand control room. Is it so because of their illiteracy or that few of them would browse newspapers or that they would wait for additional

reassurance from the Church or familiar support groups? The phenomenon may need to be probed. However, those who got enrolled in the Government records through phone calls are likely to receive priority in job/livelihood allocations. Fr. Mahendra Peter Tigga informed that the drive will be particularly made favourable to the Tribals.

On the other hand Fr. Martin Peter, SJ, a Jesuit personnel of Hoffmann from Jamshedpur Province, was part of the Ranchi Jesuit Covid-19 Pandemic Relief Team, who along with the team extended his helping hand in reaching out two centres namely, Muri and Dorea, Tamar looking after the work assigned to two different centres, which looked after the migrant labourer, their food, shelter, medicines and other necessities. He also extended his help with Missionaries of Charity Sisters in distribution of dry ration and food to the poor in various places in Ranchi, which often required Police Help to control the crowd following the guidelines of Covid-19.

In the Third phase, the office of Hoffmann encouraged various friends, families and individuals to come forward with dry ration and finance and cloths in order to render the relief to the very poor people of suburban parts of Ranchi and Khunti District namely,

- » Ara Gate (110 families)
- » Kucchu (65 families)
- » Dolda (100-120 families)
- » Bahaya (72 families)
- » Twice to Jonha (86 and 75 families)

Not only the distributions on above places were commenced but when the needy people got to know about the relief they personally fetched the institution and seven sacks of rice were being delivered to the concerned families.

Meanwhile, another task was given by PHIA FOUNDATION for the packaging of the dry ration of worth one Crore to be distributed in the Covid-19 hotspot zone Hindipiri and also in Shanti Rani Ghaghra. The packaging took place in the proximity of Ursuline Convent who supported the cause heartily, even added the essential commodities from their side such as sacks of mask and sanitary pads supplies. Along with the officials of PHIA Foundation and other social workers Hoffmann gave its services with its volunteers and Lawyers.

Year 2019-2020 was the year of Corona Pandemic, that affected the whole world. During the Lock Down all the worship places were closed. The people were looking for Online Mass. Satya Bharati took the initiative to start it. The first online mass was arranged on 29.03.2020 (Sunday) in Manresa chapel, which was made available through the YouTube channel of Satya Bharti, Ranchi. Fr. Amirt Lakra, Rector of Manresa House Ranchi was the main celebrant. It was our first attempt and was appreciated and encouraged by many.

During the Easter, Ranchi Archdiocese wanted to conduct all the Easter services have it Live telecast. Mr. Prabhakar Tirkey and Ratan Tirkey had a friend Mr. Arun Prakash who ran a T.V. channel "Shruti Visual Information Pvt. Ltd." Fr. Peter Mahendra Tigga and myself went to Arch Bishop's House with them and finalized the matter and the Live telecast started from 5th April 2020 on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil, from St. Mary's Cathedral Ranchi. Most Rev. Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ presided over the liturgy with Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarnes. After this Ranchi Arch Diocese started its own T.V. channel which was carried on every Sunday in different Parishes.

For 31st July, the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola and the feast of St. Francis Xavier on 3rd. December 2020 Holy Mass was telecast from Satya Bharati You Tube channel by Fr. Bipin Lugun and Sch. James Ekka. This was done mainly for the students, staff and parents of our Jesuit Schools. It was well appreciated.



The Holy Eucharistic Celebrations of 31st July, the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola and 3rd December, 2020, the feast of St. Francis Xavier was live streamed from the YouTube channel of Satya Bharati, Ranchi. Fr. Bipin Lugun and Sch. James Ekka made this endeavour possible. This online celebration of Mass was done mainly for the students, staff and parents of our Jesuit Schools. It was well appreciated.

During the Lockdown Satya Bharati extended its help in the relief centres. SB (Satya Bharti) car was registered for relief centres namely Muri and Doreya. We visited both the places from time to time where our Manresa Juniors helped and took care of migrant people. This relief work was well documented in the camera of SB, Ranchi. SB also had "Jharkhand Control Room for Covid 19



Fr Alex Tirkey, SJ
Director, Satya Bharti,
Ranchi



Response” for gathering information of the migrants stuck in different States. Frs. Cyprian Ekka and Bipin Lugun with Hoffman Law Associates contacted such migrant workers, to bring them back to Jharkhand.

When the Lock Down was opened we had six video dance shooting, 3 for Christmas and 3 on “Laudato Si” of Pope Francis, composed by Fr. Alex Tirkey. The videography was done by Frs. Bipin Lugun, John Jyoti Kujur and Scholastics James Ekka, John Osga and Paulus Minz. It was telecast on You Tube. Thanks to Ursuline and St. Anne’s Juniors and the candidates along with the candidates of Missionary Sisters of Jesus the Eternal Priest, Morabadi.

Six Volumes of “Seasonal Dance” and ten Volumes of “Mausmi Geet” of Fr. John Lakra, SJ were uploaded to YouTube. All the above can be found in the YouTube channel of ‘Satya Bharati Ranchi’.

This year Hindi Bible Diary ‘Pajhra 2021’ was in much demand. Vatican Radio news was also shared through WhatsApp with the listeners. Almost all the events of the Province were captured and shared through WhatsApp with the Province men and others.

AROUSE Research (Video & Sound Studio) Gumla:



The nationwide lockdown enforced all at once by the Government to control Covid 19 Pandemic witnessed heart-breaking scenes of thousands of labourers being compelled to walk to their homes. Envisioned difficulties and anxiety of food shortages and lack of conveyance also couldn’t stop the indomitable desire to join the family. Audio-visual center Gumla was at the service of such stranded labourers. It provided shelters and food. During the Christmas season it produced a few Christmas video album and uploaded on YouTube. Apart from making and uploading religious and tribal videos, the centre had videographed and documented the priestly Ordination events of Frs. Claver Minj SJ and Elphiz Kerketta SJ at Kereng, Rohit Kujur SJ and Bimal Minj SJ at Noadih, Subodh Lakra SJ at Majhatoli, Ajit Kerketta SJ at Samtoli and Sameer Xavier Bhawnra SJ at Dhingurpani.



PANDEMIC THEOLOGICAL LESSONS

Sch. Alok Ekka, SJ

Life is full of surprises. Down south in Chennai, in March 2020, a group of Ranchi men was thinking of getting back to the Province and having a well-deserved holiday. But the Global Pandemic Covid-19 shattered all our plans and dreams we had for a couple of months. We had to stay where we were due to the nationwide lockdown that was announced on the 24th of March 2020. What would you do if you are stuck in a place for two months, that too at the cost of your two months of holiday? Would you feel frustrated, upset or dejected? Maybe. We went through all of that and much more.

However, this wasn't all negative. At Satya Nilayam, we undertook online courses, each one took two of them. For most of us, it was a new thing which brought us loads of experiences and opened a wide range of possibilities. With the online activities, we too had enough time to relax. We also made our annual retreat. We were quite reconciled with what was happening with us. What we were not OK with was what was happening outside. We felt for our Brothers who were stuck like us in places like Trichy, Bangalore, Sitagarha, Patna and Delhi. We had Brothers who were abroad whose return was delayed due to the pandemic. The nation-wide lockdown brought havoc in the lives of billions of people in India. The news we got from the TV and Social media was extremely disturbing. The migrants walking back to their hometowns in the hot summer, walking mile and miles to get back to their native places so that they can save their lives, it was the most horrific Exodus I have ever witnessed. We were so ready and willing to help those suffering migrants. We thought we had given our lives for the service of the people but there we were closed inside our boundary-walls, sitting and doing nothing. I had never felt such helplessness. But our miserable situation was soothed by something we saw our Province men doing in the Province and outside.

Ranchi became the epicentre of relief materials being distributed and our Scholastic friends worked like warriors. The Deacons helped out

in the Shelter Homes run by Ranchi Jesuits, RTC Taruns along with Manresa Scholastics helped pack the food materials to be distributed, the Regents with their respective communities and teams went around educating people, bringing awareness and distributing relief materials. Those of us within the closed gates were delighted to see the response of the entire province. We were extremely proud of them, but not without regret for not being there. This went on for nearly 2-3 months. Chennai group was able to come back after 2 months, all thanks to the efforts of Loyola College, Chennai, Satya Nilayam Community and the Province Curia. On the whole, the entire pandemic experience has been a roller-coaster experience. At one point of time, I feared if my formation would be delayed, as that would add another year of formation. But things have been smoother ever since our quarantine. Of all the formation houses, RTC Tarunoday stuck with the offline mode of classes. The picture of western countries recording the huge number of deaths will remain for a long time. So will the number of affected people in India, and ultimately the loss of some of our elderly priests. All these experiences have taught us to never take life for granted. We are to be patient even in the toughest moments. 'Everything will pass' and 'we can get through it together' are what drove us out of this tragic year which continues even in 2021. We have grown in our faith as we prayed very hard for our loved ones and the world at large. The daily liturgy during the pandemic was a blessing and we felt deeply for our faithful who could not take part in the Eucharist. The online broadcasting of the Holy Mass, the online lectures and seminars, various webinars and proper use of the social media will be some of the main things that we will take out of these months. Being tech-savvy isn't bad after all. We hope to utilize our experiences of the Pandemic to instill hope and love in the people. The faith in Jesus Christ helps to undergo even the darkest of moments, always knowing that there is a resurrection at the end of it when we shall rejoice and be glad for the infinite mercy the Lord has shown on us.

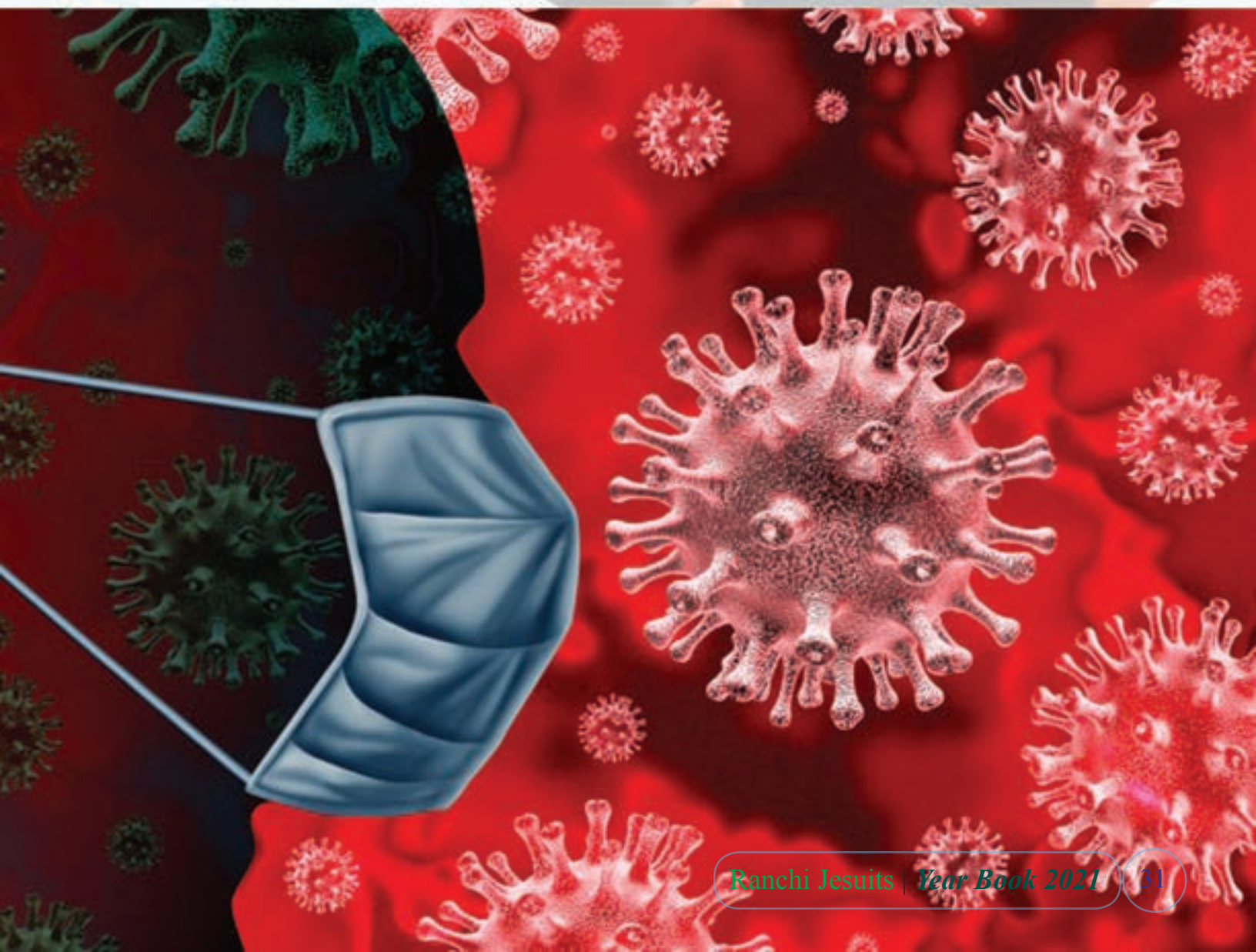


Sch. Alok Ekka, SJ,
Theologian, RTC,
Tarunoday

SECTION A

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PART II: DIASPORA



COPING WITH COVID -19 IN EAST AFRICA

Sch. Johny Dungdung S.J.



Fr Johny Savio
Dungdung, SJ
Regent, Ocer Campion
Jesuit College, Gulu,
Uganda, Africa

The year 2020 will long be remembered in the annals of history because of the Covid-19 pandemic. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020, and the first cases in the East Africa and Great Lakes (EAGL) region were confirmed on 13 March 2020. While the number of confirmed cases were reported still relatively low compared to the rest of the world, figures continue to increase daily. The East Africa has been trying to cope with the pandemic in various ways. On March 18th 2020 the President of Uganda addressed the whole nation commanding to shut down schools, colleges and institutions. Thereafter the presidents of the other countries did the same, except Tanzania. The President of Tanzania didn't believe in locking down the whole country just because of Covid-19. He had his own arguments to support his decision. So there has never been lockdown in Tanzania. As that year drew to a close, the Covid-19 vaccine made its debut in several countries. But East Africa is still awaiting for the vaccine. However there have been efforts made to cope with the pandemic as it has inflicted devastating impact on various sectors of life.

Economy

The pandemic has caused significant adverse impact on the global economy with governments around the world implementing various fiscal measures to mitigate its effects and provide relief for businesses and households. Within East Africa, the impacts have been felt in different ways and the measures taken by the respective governments have also differed on the areas of focus and comprehensiveness.

Naturally, the lockdown put a complete halt to normal commercial activity and the movement of people. This curbed the flow of income to many people all across Africa. Supply chains

have been interrupted for months now because many Chinese factories have shut down production. And other small business selling textiles, electronics or household goods are in deep trouble. Entertainment industry has been hit hard here in Uganda. Less recreational services are yet to open. Many business people in the region canceled overseas trips. As restrictions were eased, there was a "slow comeback to business as usual, but not a pre-Covid-19 "business as usual." There are still limitations in terms of people getting their income and getting their day to day needs.

Education institutions, students and teachers

Schools were reopened around October 2020 in some countries: like Kenya, and Uganda only for Candidate classes (7th, 10th and 12th class). A general reopening of schools is hoped to take place after the candidates have finished their exams. There has been attempts to provide online learning, but it catered to a very few students – probably less than 10% only, which has been partly what we are applying here at Ocer Campion Jesuit College, though limiting or impossible for students in rural areas because of no internet access. There are other consequences, as children stay longer at home doing nothing, many have turned to domestic laborers, having early pregnancies, etc. Others working in the farms or extractive industries like mining, and sand harvesting, or fishing suffered. The lockdown has affected both the teachers and the students seriously. Many teachers have turned to be farmers, businessmen and businesswomen, and a few even committed suicide because schools couldn't afford to pay salaries to the teachers. However our Jesuit school in Uganda managed to get benefactors from America who provided monthly salary to our staff members.

Jesuit communities

Jesuit communities in East Africa are taking care of themselves. Fortunately so far no Jesuit has died because of Covid-19. We are grateful to God for protecting us. We are following the regulations and protocols of our respective Countries. The provincial has been alerting Jesuits to do the same. Since Eastern Africa Province comprises five different countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan, the movement to different communities was a great challenge because the borders were closed. Recently the borders were open so we are able to move to different countries with a covid-19 test certificate. In December 2020 Sch. Johnny Dungdung visited Jesuit Communities in Nairobi. He was welcomed and treated very well even though there were restrictions. His visitation with Bro. Vincent Soreng, SJ in Pedro Arupe house, Nairobi was very unique. Bro Vincent is well known and respected in the province, and because of his personality he is called a living saint.

Jesuits in Gulu, Uganda have spent the lockdown period within the school premises doing creative works like gardening, fishing, constructing boat and poultry farm etc. Fr. Joseph Rodriguese is keeping himself fit by regular exercises and medication. In spite of his health complications he is punctual and active for every activity in the house. Johnny, as the Minister of the house had to be extremely careful as he does purchases of food and other rations for the house. Sanitization and low mobility and outings are restrictive. Holy Masses were held and are still held by only community members. Non-Jesuits are not allowed in our communities. This has made us so far escape from infection of the virus.

Outside communities

People generally have suffered many sicknesses like: Aids, Ebola, Malaria, etc. So the Advent of Covid-19 didn't

terrify them much. We are grateful to God because the East Africans have not been badly hit. However, the virus is still around, and the poorer families especially those in densely populated areas, lack medical infrastructure and resources. They are always left vulnerable to the virus, and limited resource base.



The restricted movements due to lockdown has impact on agricultural production in the region and increased food insecurity, in particular in urban areas where subsistence farming is not an option. Movement restrictions had coincided with the first rains planting seasonal and limited farmers' access to inputs. This has also led to a shortage of labor to harvest crops, and the closure of or lack of access to markets has prevented farmers from selling their produce, thus reduced food supply leading to an increase in prices. The closure of markets also reduced people's access to food, and the poorest households are not able to purchase goods from supermarkets, where the prices are higher. This has given rise to negative coping mechanisms including child labour, child marriage and transactional sex.

Concern

A matter of concern is that the economic impacts of COVID-19 can quickly reverse the gains made in poverty reduction in Africa so far as we have witnessed in the last decade. The choice is to deal with the economy while at the same time managing the spread of Covid-19 virus. These are some of my observations and what I expect from the Society of Jesus is to take on, especially the vulnerable who have been pushed into the cracks, by virtue of their low level income or purchasing power, a call to ensure that no one is left behind.



NEW WAYS OF OUR MISSION IN GUYANA

Fr. Elias Surin, SJ & Fr. Amar Bage, SJ

Guyana, a country on South America's North Atlantic coast, is defined by its dense rainforest. It has great ethnic and religious diversity. The population of the country is 782766 with about 44 percent are of East India descent, 30 percent of the population is ethnically African and 17 percent are mixed Indian and African. Nine percent of Guyana's people are Amerindian. The largest religious group in Guyana is Christianity with 57 percent of the population.

Diocese of Georgetown is the only diocese in the country. His Lordship Bishop Francis Alleyne, OSB is the Bishop of the Diocese. There are 60000 Catholics in the Diocese. Parish Lay Assistants (Lay Leaders) play a vital role in the diocese.

At present 20 Jesuits are fully engaged in Socio-pastoral ministry in the diocese. Fr. Peter McIsaac, SJ is the Regional Superior of English speaking Caribbean Jamaica – Guyana region.

Jesuits from Ranchi Province are rendering their selfless and generous service with commitment and dedication here in Guyana since 2006. At present Fr. Anugrah Amar Bage, SJ and Fr. Elias Surin, SJ are carrying on their challenging mission in Guyana with great missionary zeal and enthusiasm.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the internet and the social media- Whatsapp, Facebook, Messenger, etc. became the blessing for us. The situation forced us to learn how to make best use of the social media for the better communication. The Sunday Holy Eucharists were online in Facebook and also broadcast by the local Radio Stations. The Clergy Conference, Annual Retreats and the Parish Lay Formation took place over Zoom. In order to have better community life, we had regular virtual meetings. We had more time

to spend together and to know one another better in our communities. In the absence of the priests, the Parish Lay Assistants played a vital role to keep the church running in their respective villages. They were more united and cooperative in their service. It brought awareness of personal health, personal relationship, care for others and care for nature. The Apostolic Exhortation, 'Querida Amazonia' (Beloved Amazon) by Pope Francis, particularly the great four dreams-working for justice in our community, being proud of our identity, caring for nature and for each other and becoming joyful evangelizers touches the core of our life.

Fr. Anugrah Amar Bage was the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Hosororo, Mabaruma in the North West for the last five years. In the month of May 2020, he was transferred from there to begin the new apostolate in education offered by "Jesuit Worldwide Learning" (JWL) -Higher Education at the Margins in St. Ignatius Mission Lethem in central Rupununi. The programs are facilitated both online and onsite. He is currently the onsite facilitator for two programs "Learning facilitator" and "Sustainable Development". Out of ten students for Learning facilitator program, four have successfully completed and soon they will be graduating. He also assists in the pastoral ministry in St. Ignatius Mission Lethem.

Fr. Elias Surin is the Parish Priest in St. Joseph's Catholic Church Kurukabaru, Pakaraima Mountains. He keeps on visiting all his 14 village churches in the far distances in valleys and in rainforests. He arranged annual retreat for the Parish Lay Assistants to renew their faith and commitment. He also arranged three days retreats for the youth as they prepare themselves for the sacrament of confirmation. He had leadership program especially for youths. Annual retreats and leadership programs were well appreciated.



Fr Elias Surin, SJ
Missionary in Guyana

NEW EXPERIENCES WITH NEW CHALLENGES IN JAPAN

Sch. Priyatam Lakra, SJ

Greetings to you all from Japan. It is a pleasure to share with you my adventurous life experiences in Japan. Presently I am staying in Wakamiya Scholasticate, Tokyo. We are 21 in the community, from seven different nationalities. I am learning Japanese language. I go to 'Nichibei Global School' for my language studies. The language class consists of eight students from seven different nationalities. Learning Japanese is quite challenging and interesting as well. I am at basic level two and learning about 2,000 scripts/alphabets which include Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji.

In the course of my life in Japan, I come across some unusual lifestyles which prove that Japan is so different from the other countries. Life here is so different from the life I lived in India. The pace of life is very fast here. I see the people always rushing. Every day my one-way travel to school is of 45 minutes. The distance is usually measured by Minutes as Japanese transportations are highly regarded for the efficiency and punctuality, which makes travelling to any part of the country easy and convenient.

I often witness cultural shocks because of a new lifestyle. I am also getting used to

frequent earthquakes which are just ignored by the natives here. The people of this place are so gentle and generous. It is edifying to see so many young and old people volunteering to do social service by helping the children, aged and weak people to cross the roads. The cleanliness is another thing that I admire here. The rivers, streets, roads, markets and all public places and water closets- all are unbelievably neat and clean. It is rare to see people talking to each other in public places. They don't talk on phone in public places. It is in the nature of the Japanese people not to bother or disturb anyone. It is so strange to see people lost in their own world, busy surfing phones. Traffic rules are systematic, and people sincerely follow the traffic rules. Konnichiwa (hello), Arigato gojaimas (Thank you), Sumimasen (Sorry), Itterashai (All the best!) are the most common expressions which people are used to in their everyday conversations.

The pandemic situation

The life in Japan amid pandemic has given rise to an alarming situation where the elderly people are the most vulnerable. Situation is still extremely serious, despite a recent drop in the weekly average new cases. The Japanese government has already announced a state of emergency on January 4, 2021. The restaurants, shopping malls, super markets and pubs get closed by 8.00 pm.

On a positive note, I have observed that people in Japan continue to take effective preventive measures. Work life moves on in its own pace. Everywhere social distancing and the use of mask is mandatory which is seriously taken up by the people of this place. It's rare to see people without masks. Our Jesuit communities are seriously following the protocols set by the government and the Province curia. We are not expected



Sch Priyatam Lakra, SJ, Studying in Japan



to visit any community. No visitors are welcomed in any Jesuit community. Communications, socialisation, classes, spiritual conversations and all work affairs are done online.

I am so happy to be in the community where I get to know about a lot of things happening overseas. The community is very vibrant and supportive. It's possible to interact with each other only while dining. The rest of the time a person has to take an appointment to chat with because everybody is busy doing something important. It is so strange to see them watch TV News only for two to three minutes. It is rare to see anyone relaxing or chatting apart from the dinner time. So, I have got a lot to learn from them especially the value of time. The life span of Japanese is so long compared to ours in India. Crossing 90 years of life journey is just normal here. I think the reason for this is nutritious food and health consciousness. We eat mostly sea food and fruits that are indeed so nutritious. Just to experiment the organic strength, I brought and kept an apple in my room, which remained fresh even after 26 days. Fr. Ando, an 86-year-old social worker, travels by train every day and works full day.

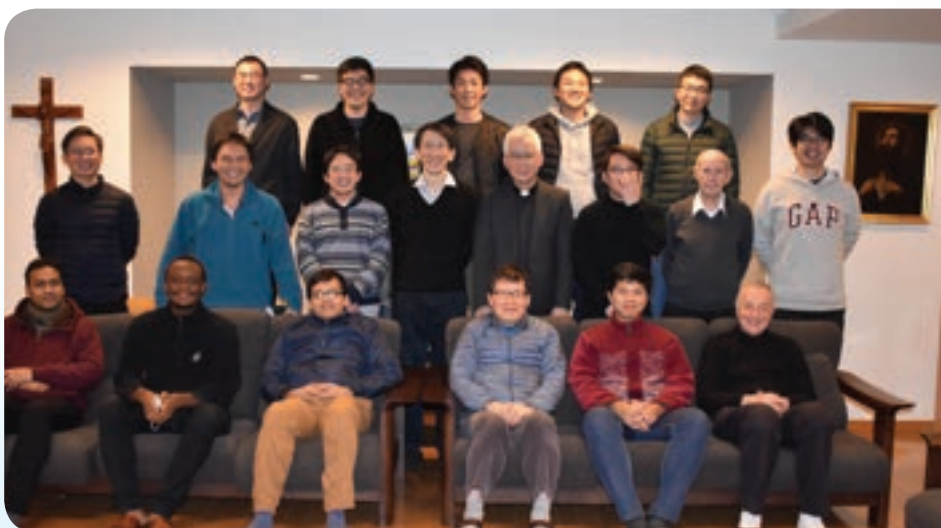
When I talk of religion, there is a perfect blend in Shinto, Buddhism and Christian religion. It is an important thing to know that the Japanese don't want to be limited to an institutional structure of religion. It is common for the people of other religion to get marriage blessings in the Church. The same is with Christians. They go to Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples and pray with good will. There are some Jesuits, who are Christian converts from Buddhism. It is so strange for me to know that some Jesuits are the only Christians from their Buddhist family. It is quite normal in Japan to see persons of one family belonging to two different religions. There is also a big number of atheists in Japan. People in fact don't bother about who belongs to which religion. What matters most here is the cultural-spirit of Japan and human values. There are lot of things worth learning from the Japanese culture.

Japan is different from India in many ways. Japan is considered as one of the safest countries in the world. Crime rate of the country is very low. If a person has lost anything anywhere, there is a high

chance of getting it back if he/she is able to report the time duration of paths travelled. People are sensitive to the needs of others. It is kept in mind that others are not hurt or faced by any inconvenience because of one's selfishness and negligence. While walking on the street or roads people are gentle and kind in giving space for the others to walk. The things all around are very high-tech and all well-organized.

Let me now talk of some sad realities of this place. The people of this place are workaholics which often culminate in suicide. The hectic and busy life is far away from social life which leads people to stress and frustration. Those who are frustrated and depressed mostly commit suicide by throwing themselves in front of trains because it causes easiest and fastest death. I personally have witnessed a disturbing scene of committing suicide at the railway track. At present the suicidal-ratio of Japan has drastically increased. One of the major reasons for growing suicide rate is of course Covid-19 pandemic which has caused unemployment to so many people. There are students who did part time job but unfortunately lockdown and no earning brought them to roads with no food and no shelter. It is so disturbing to see and know about the people who are left with no future. Jesuits of my community go out at night and help the needy and frustrated people and bring hope in the lives of many people.

I earnestly pray and look forward to the good will of people – that all live the human values to the maximum. Let us pray that we imbibe the spirit of UAP and continue to work for the greater glory of God wherever we are placed.



PLUNGING IN PARIS DURING PANDEMIC

Sch. Peter Paul Horo S.J.

What a difficult and uncertain situation it was, when I landed in Paris along with Sch. Sudhir Lakra SJ. I was surprised to find almost empty airport, all deserted as the French Government had declared the 2nd phase of the lockdown. It was November 8, 2020 and France, like many other European countries, was in full containment.

Fortunately, Sch. Subhod Lakra SJ and two other Jesuit fathers Fr. Bruno SAINTOT SJ and Fr Romain SUBTILAND SJ managed to get to the airport to pick us up. Just after the arrival we rushed to the community. I attended mass and I was welcomed by the community members. It was both natural and warm. Then I had a lunch in the community. The first surprise, the lunch was very different from what I'm used to. The thrill of the change of scenery was short-lived because, there was a common recreation and, there I understood that I have found a new family. This family spirit is both surprising for me because of the disparity of profiles and appreciable because any interaction requires an effort, as much for me as for my interlocutor.

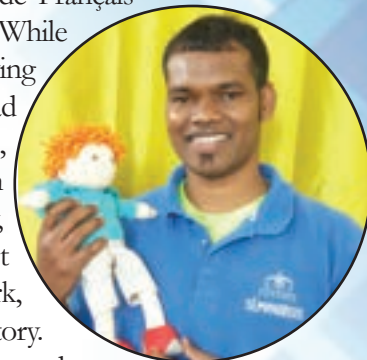
My stay in this community lasted a week before French classes began. Every day I found someone available to help me to learn the French Language of which I could speak a few words. It was also possible to speak because I had already had some classes in India before coming to France. I am

really appreciative and grateful to Fr. Jyoti Baxla SJ, who generously offered a French Language course to me. I also found it difficult to understand the rapidity with which the French speak their language. But I understood that I had to work hard and "take a plunge", which made me discover the patience of my host. This situation was

temporary because I had been enrolled in a French language school in the heart of French capital Paris (Ecole de Français pour l'International). While many were having online classes, I had my face-to-face class, this is how I felt much comfortable to study, and that was the start of a new framework, new faces, a new story.

I also had a precise agenda, with fixed programme: each week three courses at the EFL. Three times a week I also have French classes with Mr. Arnaud de MIOLLIS a retired Army commander and a close neighbour and friend of the community who has already helped a number of community members to perfect the French language. At Centre Sèvres, where I am sent to study theology, I already started attending online classes: "The introduction to Christian Theology" by Fr. Philip Endean. There is a good response from my part. There is community meeting once a week. This encourages me and contributes to my integration into the society of Jesus. My community comprises seventeen members from eight different nationalities. All of us share our experiences and ideas. One of the biggest challenges we are facing at the moment is the coronavirus Pandemic. The interaction with other community members is very limited; in most of Jesuit communities in Paris, visitors are not allowed as many Jesuits are affected by the pandemic. In spite of all of those challenges, I still find my community supportive and that motivates my intellectual, spiritual and Jesuit life.

Hence, I always have chances to learn new things which are of a great help to me at present and in the continuing year. This is how I am growing in unity among the people with the new atmosphere. Seeing this vast programme, I turn to saint Ignatius who tells me and I understand what I still have to do- "Pray because it all depends on God, but act as if it all depends on you."



Sch Peter P Horo, SJ
Studying in Paris



HUMBLE MISSION WITH ROYAL GOVT. OF CAMBODIA

Fr Manoj Kumar Ekka, SJ



Fr Manoj Ekka, SJ
Missionary in Cambodia

The news of the pandemic covid-19 spread like a wild fire in Cambodia. It disrupted the public life. All the schools, social, political and religious gatherings were banned. International borders and flights were closed. There were fears, frustrations and uncertainties in minds and hearts of the people for several months before opening and loosening the lock down situation. The tourism being the main source of job and income in Cambodia was hit badly by the lockdown. Big hotels and resorts were closed. Many people lost their jobs. Due to lockdown many factories were closed, making millions of people jobless. In the initial period of the spread of pandemic covid-19 seven Muslims were tested covid-19 positive in Battambang. All of them came back after attending conference in Malaysia. This caused suspicion and discrimination against the Muslims. The people refused to sell anything to them and buy from them.

The decision of the Royal Government of Cambodia to combat the pandemic covid-19 was very quick and strict in the initial stage itself. The education institutions, all kinds of big social, political and religious gatherings were banned. The people were made aware of using precautionary measures such as to use masks, sanitizers and washing hands frequently. The Government closed all the international borders. The decision of the Royal Government of Cambodia has both the positive and negative outcomes on all walks of public life. The number of the people infected and died by pandemic covid-19 is very small. The country enjoyed freedom more than other parts of the world during the pandemic. Thanks to the Royal Government of Cambodia and the cooperation of the people for

dealing very effectively with the new and strange situation created by pandemic covid-19.

Fr. Manoj Ekka, SJ says that he was not panicked so much when he heard about pandemic. He followed all the precautionary measures suggested by the Ministry of Health of the Royal Government of Cambodia. He disciplined himself following the slogan 'stay home stay safe' in the initial time of the outbreak of the pandemic. He kept himself inside the Church campus. But "Welcome Center for the Sick", Health Centre of the diocese of which he is the director and his staff never stopped working. They prepared and kept ready everything to welcome the victims of covid-19 if needed. They went to different parishes and institutions to educate the people about the pandemic. He also utilized the pandemic time to complete some pending works in his parish. He cleaned a pond in his parish campus which was not cleaned for 40 years by his project 'rice for work'. This gave his parishioners work during covid-19. He feels satisfied that the water from the pond is now used for different purposes. He also beautified the soccer field of the parish planting grass on it, fencing



and planting very valuable trees around it. The pandemic made him spare more time for his staff members. He encouraged them during the pandemic period. Due to his contacts with ACTS Singapore, Caritas Singapore and Caritas Cambodia he was able to provide his staff and the poor members of his parish with emergency rice packages.

During the period of pandemic Fr. Manoj had unique experiences of satisfaction. He noticed that his flocks have strong desire for the Holy Mass, prayers, the Sacraments of the Holy Communion and Confession. In order to quench the thirst of the faithful he celebrated several Masses for the small groups of people at different times. He brought Holy Communion for the people in their own families very specially for the old and the sick. On the occasion of the feast day of The Body and Blood of Christ he brought The Blessed Sacrament to different houses and the streets of his parish. The people showed great respect to The Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Manoj Ekka, SJ brought the youth of his parish to Kampong Cham diocese for the exchange program of faith and experiences.

Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti, SJ had to postpone his Final Vows scheduled on 31st July, 2020 and home visit from 4th October to 4th December 2020. The youth apostolate in the diocese of which Fr. Rajat is the director, he had to postpone many programs for the youth including the youth synods in four pastoral areas of the diocese. He organized Faith-Based Youth Leadership Development programmes for two smaller groups of the youth.

The youth office also organized online personal contacts with the

youth and special prayer meetings for the preparation of Christmas during the Advent season.

Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti, SJ took the pandemic situation as an opportunity to strengthen his relationship with God, people, nature and himself. He gave more time for prayers, spiritual readings and personal reflections. He visited staff members frequently to show solidarity with them. In order that the students do not forget their lessons very specially the young ones he organized smaller groups for teaching and studying in the villages. During the pandemic time he encouraged the youth of his parish to plant more trees and reduce the use of plastic. In the midst of pandemic people of his parish experienced a big flood, heavily destroying all their standing paddy crops and vegetables. He helped the people with emergency help packages during these difficult times. He also gave five hens and vegetable seeds to some poor families of his parish to support their economy. The people express their gratitude to Fr. Rajat because the hens already started giving eggs and hatching.

Fr. Manoj Ekka, SJ and Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti, SJ experienced that there is a strong sense of belongingness in their community and in Cambodia mission during the pandemic. They shared their joys and sorrows, hopes and frustrations among themselves. They felt the need of the prayers and support of one another during the pandemic. It was similar for the families, too. The people had more time for their family members. Of course we cannot deny the negative side of covid-19. Fr. Manoj could not go to Singapore, Australia and South Korea to meet his benefactors due to covid-19. The priests staying alone in the parishes felt very lonely and isolated. People were looking at one another with suspicion. There was growth of domestic violence during the pandemic. Many migrant workers were forced to come back to their home towns from abroad and big cities from Cambodia and are without any works. All these have negative effect in the economic, social, psychological and spiritual life.

Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti, SJ was fully incorporated in the Society of Jesus on 4th January, 2021 in a Solemn Holy Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Enrique Figaredo, S. J. His final vows were received by Fr. Oh In Don, Francesco, SJ, the Delegate of Korea Jesuit Province. He thanks one and all for prayers and support.



WORK FROM HOME IN ROME AMID COVID-19

Fr Prem Xalxo, SJ

Looking back at the harsh realities of the start and the gradual spread of Covid-19 and its impact on life, existence and relationships demonstrates how we, despite recent spectacular technological revolution, can become helpless and clueless; but at the same time, as one human community, can struggle and collaborate to cope up with any adverse and difficult situation. Exactly one year ago, the first case of Covid-19 in Italian soil was confirmed on 31 January 2020 when two Chinese tourists in Rome were tested positive for virus; which resulted into the immediate suspension of all flights to and from China. A week later, an Italian man repatriated back to Italy from Wuhan was confirmed positive. Since, the more cases were being identified in north Italy; most of the northern regions were placed under quarantine. As a precautionary measure, all the schools, colleges and universities were closed on 5 March 2020 as a preventive measure against the spread of Covid-19; and on 9 March, the entire country was put under strict Lockdown. In the beginning people struggled to come to terms with the strange new reality; however, as the number of contagions and deaths increased, gradually people understood the seriousness of situation. The feeling of uncertainty and claustrophobia replaced the sense of living in an orderly society protected by the present mammoth developments in science and technology, and people accepted the lockdown not as

an order from the Government, but as their own responsibility. As the country struggled to cope up with a steep surge in the number of deaths, a profound sense of unity, collaboration and mutual support started to emerge and enhance in every walk of life, including the religious communities. Following the same lines, Ranchi Jesuits living in different Jesuit communities have some rich, vibrant and enduring experiences to share.

International College of Gesù

The Covid-19 has made a tremendous impact on every aspect of community including spiritual, academic and apostolic life of International College of Gesù. After a serious discussion with the Staff members, R.P. Luis Orlando Torres, Rector, presented a carefully drafted rules and regulations to be followed strictly by the community members with an aim to ascertain the safety of all as the first priority. The doors of the community remained opened for the Jesuits of the neighboring communities; however, the question of entertaining non-Jesuits guests was prudently kept on hold. Even the Room of St. Ignatius was kept out of reach for the non-Jesuits.



Fr Prem Xalxo, SJ
Professor at Gregoriana,
Rome



During the high time of uncertainty, fright and social distancing, two new Jesuits from Ranchi arrived in Rome on Saturday 3 October 2020 to pursue theological studies in Pontifical Gregorian University – Kuldeep Linda and Sandeep Bage – along with Deepak Toppo (CollegioBellarmino) and two Ursuline Sisters – Prabha Topno and Shanti Sabina Samad. All five of them had undergone Covid-19 Tests before coming out the Airport; however, except Deepak Toppo, all others were allowed to participate in all community activities from the first day onward. To begin the online classes immediately after their arrival was tough and challenging for both Kuldeep and Sandeep; but they seemed to adjust themselves well in no time. They could enter the University premise only after the implementation of a new rule which allowed the physical presence of the students in the class rooms based on their Role Numbers. Taking turns to go to the University or to follow the classes online was very unique and special. As a new mode of teaching and learning, it posed tough challenges to both the Professors and the students. For those students who were physically present in the class rooms, wearing the masks for 3-4 hours was often suffocating; whereas those, who followed the lessons simultaneously online, were often bored and tired! Quite often the students could notice the struggle and discomfort of the Professors in responding to the questions and clarifications of both the online and physically present students at the same time. The exams too were held in all possible modalities – viva online and in physical presence, written exams and assignments. No doubt, Covid-19 has opened the doors for new and innovative methods of teaching and learning!

After one-year of living with Covid-19, the community members of International College of Gesù are relieved and profusely grateful to God for keeping each and every member safe and healthy whole throughout the year. So far no one was tested positive, and no one was subjected to isolation or quarantine. It's true that the Covid-19 Pandemic has made life unusual and difficult, but at the same time it has helped the community to stay together for most of the time, and thus enhanced the spirit of unity, fraternity and collaboration.

Collegio Roberto Bellarmino

The first Lockdown forced the inmates of CollegioRoberto Bellarmino to stay back at home for Easter probably for the first time in its history. In fact,

after the closure of Gregorian University from 5 March, no one was allowed to go out anywhere. All remained attentive to adopt all possible safety measures to stay away from the Corona Virus. Despite a sense of fear and uncertainty, the atmosphere of the community in general remained serene, but active. All demonstrated willingness and keen interest in collaborating with one another to make the community activities more meaningful and participatory. Although the academic activities posed great challenges, the students were kept busy by the Professors through Online lessons, reading materials and assignments.

During those challenging days, Deepak Toppo arrived in Rome as one of the new community members to pursue Licentiate in Spirituality. He had a negative Covid-19 Test result in his hands as he came out of Rome Airport; but for the safety of the entire community, he was asked to be in strict quarantine for 14 days. In a way, it was a blessing in disguise for Deepak, who utilized the time in isolation to learn the intricacies of online classes and also to strengthen his Italian language skills. Unfortunately, after staying safe and away from Covid-19 almost for one complete year, the community was struck by the virus in February. Properly when Kulwant had gone to Ranchi for study and research, and Deepak was awaiting to start his well-deserved Semester break, the entire community had to be in Home Quarantine. Towards the end of January, there was a Covid-19 Positive case, which increased to four within four days. The Authorities decided to go for Covid-19 test for all the community members. To the awful and sad surprise, 14 were found to be positive. With such discovery, the community was shaken and scared. Strong recommendations were made by the Medical Personnel that the entire community be placed under Quarantine, which brought the community life to a halt. Strong directions and guidelines were given to avoid the further surge in Positive cases; wearing of masks and the use of gloves while touching anything in common were made compulsory. Common Masses and Social Hours were cancelled and the presence of the community members in the refectory for meals was drastically restricted to one person per table, the House Library was closed down, moving out of the house, even if one was negative, was strictly forbidden, and all were asked to stay in the personal rooms as much as possible. The community was kept under the regular observation of a Medical Team with Covid-19 tests done on regular basis. After more than 25 days of home

Quarantine, thanks be to God, all were tested Negative. Amidst all those frightful days, Deepak was happy with his performances in the First Semester exams.

General Curia

Right in the beginning of the Pandemic, as the Covid-19 contagions intensified exponentially with an incessant stream of death gripped the members of the General Curia with shock and helplessness. During the highly complex crisis situation of Lockdown, the General Curia formed a committee to study the crisis and to issue a Protocol to the Jesuits and to lay-collaborators to fight against it with care and diligence. The lay-collaborators were asked to stay at home and to work online from home. The movement of the Curia members was restricted to the Curia campus; and the access to the General Curia for all visitors, including Jesuits and non-Jesuits, was strictly prohibited. All the Seminars, Training Programs, Meetings, Official Visits to the Provinces, etc. were cancelled with immediate effect, and audio-visual mode of Meetings and Training Programs was adopted. During the long period of Lockdown, personal as well as communitarian prayers were intensified. On different occasions, special Holy Masses were offered to pray for those affected by Covid-19, and also for the medical personnel who were working overtime to take care of the patients, and for those who were tirelessly dedicating their time and energy to find a cure for the Pandemic. The Prayer turned into an indispensable instrument to comfort and support each other, and to be united with the suffering humanity around the world.

Amidst those trying and difficult moments, Fr JohanVerschueren, Delegate of R.P. General to Roman Houses, delivered a talk on Corona virus to the Curia community. Bro. Soto A. Wenceslao, Archivist of the Curia, introduced the community to the historical facts and the property of the whole Curia. The guided tour of the entire Curia Campus in small groups led by him was highly enriching and eye-opening, as most of the Curia community members were not aware of the rich historical treasures of the Curia. Likewise, many individuals came forward to exhibit and share their skills and knowledge in different fields, and enriched one another. Many Provinces needed funds to help out the people suffering from Covid-19 and from the resultant dire economic situation. Taking note of the urgency of providing help to the needy Provinces, R.P. General extended generously the monetary aid to many Provinces to salvage the people from their painful situations. Still trusting on God's grace and love, the General Curia look to the future with great hope, which is seen in the form of the Year 2021 being dedicated to the preparations for the Apostolic Plan of the Curia 2022-2026.

Pontifical Gregorian University

During the persistent Covid-19 period, the community of Gregorian University Professors experienced profound and enriching transformation in the community spirit. Soon after the start of the Lockdown period, the community gathered together at noon in the Chapel for the Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament with special prayers invoked and hymns sung for the protection from the Pandemic. A sense of gratitude





and appreciation prevailed for the commendable services rendered tirelessly by the medical personnel to the victims of Covid-19. In the absence of the co-workers, all community members generously offered their helping hands in running the daily chores of the house from cleaning and arranging refectories, washing plates and utensils, cleaning and disinfecting toilets and bathing rooms. The collaboration, enthusiasm and mutual help in carrying out various house chores enhanced the community spirit. While dedicating part of the day to assure the smooth running of the House, all the Professors continued exploring various creative and innovative means and methods to reach to the students. Some of the recently developed technologies, viz., Google Meet, Zoom, Webinar, Virtual Office, Forum Online, YouTube, and even WhatsApp, became extremely useful and handy in conducting Online classes and sharing the didactic materials.

Due to Covid-19, the off and on Lockdowns have helped Linus to focus on personal study and research on various themes. He utilized the time fruitfully by preparing a new course on “Proclaiming Christ through Liturgy” as a new evangelization approach. The pandemic also helped him to live in a community with regular prayers and meals, like a monastery. He dedicated his time and energy on trying to proceed further in completing the Dossier (Position) on the Servant of God Constant Lievens. The first two Chapters of Dossier have already been officially approved by the Relator. He began updating the historical context of Belgium at the time of Lievens’ childhood. Since all the Documents of Moorslede Parish were destroyed during the First World War, Linus started to look for the supportive

sources for the purpose. Earnest prayers are requested from the faithful for the speedy beatification of the Servant of God.

In crucial period of Covid-19, the Faculty of Theology had organized an inter-Departmental course on the theme Theology and Covid-19 Challenges: Dialogue with Science. One Professor from all five Departments presented a Paper on a pertinent question proper to his/her area in the light of the challenges posed by Covid-19 – Questions on God (Department of Biblical Theology); Questions on Time (Department of Patristic Theology); Questions on Human Beings (Department of Fundamental Theology); Question on the Church (Department of Dogmatic Theology); and Questions on Life (Department of Moral Theology). The final paper Questions on Life was presented by Prem, who integrated the value of all forms of life as God’s precious gifts with some of the intriguing questions in terms of changing human relationships amidst social distancing and dominant technocratic paradigm.

Being at home was a blessing in disguise for Prem. With the help of two technicians, he prepared two short video clips in two languages Italian and English to promote Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology, an inter-University project coordinated by him. A four-page interview of his vision of Joint Diploma as the Coordinator of the program was published in *Credere*, one of the Italian journals. Since all the public events in the University premise were suspended, the Inauguration of Joint Diploma for the Academic Year 2020-2021 was held online on 29 October. Only 6 students were allowed to be physically present for the event – three students from

the previous batch to share their experiences and the other three students to receive Diploma on behalf of all the other students. His Eminence Card. Peter Turkson, Patron of the Joint Diploma, encouraged the students in his message to put into practice in their daily life whatever they had learnt. R.P. Mauro Mantovani SDB, President of the Conference of Rectors, challenged the students in his message to be founts of hope and inspiration amidst despair caused by Covid-19.

As the final analysis, we can firmly conclude that coping with Covid-19 in Rome has been highly enriching amidst hopes and despairs, fear and anxiety. But at the end of the tunnel, there always seemed to be a ray of hope in the form of enhanced communitarian spirit to collaborate and the resolve to stand united against an unknown faceless enemy. No doubt, amidst the claustrophobia and continued uncertainty, a “sanitized” humanitarian spirit has evolved to work together for a better future leaving aside all differences. In another positive note, the Covid-19 outbreak has articulated in a vivid and profound manner that the entire humanity is a closely tied community with a shared future, and only as one community in mutual collaboration and support, we can tackle various challenges and crises. And so, in the words of Pope Francis, “Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope” (LS 244).

Beatification Process of the Servant of God Herman Rasschaert

Kulwant successfully finished his licentiate from the faculty of Canon Law of Pontifical Gregorian University. He got Magna Cum Laude in all the exams

of Schola Textus (Code of Canon Law). Under the guidance of Fr Marcelo Gidi, SJ, he wrote his licentiate thesis and got Summa Cum Laude. According to the destination that he has received from Fr Provincial Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ (as well as approved by the Roman Delegate), he has enrolled himself for the doctoral study in the faculty of Canon Law. Before submitting his argument, he is attending a few classes *Cursus ad doctoratum* in the University. Apart from his doctoral study, Kulwant is working for the beatification and canonization of the Servant of God Fr Herman Rasschaert, SJ. He is working together with Fr Pascual Cebolada, SJ the Postulator General of the Society of Jesus. However, as Fr Pascual is handling the cause of Fr Arrupe, he has fully entrusted the cause of Fr Rasschaert to Kulwant. Therefore, Kulwant recently visited Gerda and Kutungia for further study and research on Rasschaert’s life and mission. There he met Fr Valentine Kerketta and Fr Jailas Kullu who explained to him about the work on the beatification process of Fr Rasschaert. Kulwant is happy to know that under the able guidance and inspiring leadership of Fr Valentine Kerketta, the Episcopal Delegate, the Diocesan Inquiry Board is carrying out the beatification process with indefatigable energy, conviction and enthusiasm. As a result, so far the Inquiry Board has interviewed 17 witnesses.

The Diocesan Inquiry Board is determined to finish the diocesan process by the end of 2023. At this juncture, Kulwant feels that not only the Diocese of Simdega but the entire Ranchi Jesuit Province is involved in the beatification process. On behalf of Ranchi Jesuit Province, Rev. Fr Provincial Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ is showing his personal keen interest to speed up the beatification process of Fr Herman Rasschaert SJ.

Building and naming a magnanimous auditorium in Manresa House Ranchi, is one of the vivid examples of his commendable effort to speed up the beatification process. Surely, it will have an indelible mark in the beatification process.



JORDAN AND NEAR EAST MISSION DURING PANDEMIC

Fr. Bimal Kr. Kerketta, SJ

Jordan, officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is an Arab country. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Israel and Palestine (West Bank). The capital Amman is Jordan's main city. It is also the country's economic, political and cultural centre. Sunni Islam is the dominant religion. It coexists with an indigenous Christian minority. There are thousands of refugees here due to wars and different reasons in neighboring countries. The whole population is about eleven million.

Like any other country in the world, Corona didn't leave Jordan untouched. It developed slowly and affected severely as the time passed. WHO guidelines were followed strictly. Government had to tighten restrictions closing restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, etc. and limiting the numbers at any type of gatherings. Educational Institutions (Kindergarten to University) had to depend on virtual learning. Semi lockdowns were imposed. Later it had to undergo a total curfew on Fridays for the rest of the year. Jordan depends much on tourism. With the closure of international flight services and other restrictions hundreds of hotels got shut down. Now, after almost a year situation is improving.

In the last four months of stay, it has not been easy for me and the Jesuits here to see the challenges of people in the midst of global pandemic. Any type of medical issues/treatments got sky rocketed. After Kuwait, Jordan is the 2nd country in the world which has high money value and life is expensive here. Home quarantine, isolation, social distancing, online classes, online holy mass, limited number in any type of gathering, etc. took many to the other extreme. Cases of daily stress, mental health, loneliness, depression, etc. are not easy to handle. Hundreds lost their jobs, or their salary was cut. With the limited resources parents have to adapt with their children. It is said that wearing mask is the vaccination for oneself and the other. Government has begun charging fines for those breaking the rules.

The new Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem H.B. Pierbattista Pizzabala, OFM, was welcomed on 7th January. It was his first pastoral and official visit as head of the Latin Church in the Holy Land. One of his messages was, "Believing in God, we've to learn to live with Covid-19 following all WHO guidelines."



Fr Bimal Kerketta, SJ
Missionary in Jordan and
Near East Mission



LABOURING WITH THE LABOURERS OF TEA GARDENS IN ASSAM

Fr Thomas Barla, SJ

Historical Background

Working among the tea plantation workers (aka tea tribes/ Adivasis) in Assam during the Covid-19 pandemic has been both terrifying and satisfying experience. Historically, with the connivance of the human traffickers in 1841 the British colonizers took the first batch of Munda, Oraon and Kharia tribals (Adivasis/indigenous people) from central India for tea plantation. Hundreds of thousands of the Adivasis, since then, have been trafficked from Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh as cheap labourers for tea plantations. Hundreds of families were “settled” in “colonies” or workers lines in tiny quarters and they continue to live in those colonies for generations. Unlike their parent communities in central India, the tea plantation workers enjoy no constitutional safeguard, i.e. as Scheduled tribes.

Bereft of basic facilities like education and health services, the people are living in miserable conditions as the government policies are not implemented and the people are deprived of the benefits they are entitled to. Consequently, mortality rate is the highest among the Adivasis. They get only 167 rupees for their hard labour whereas the government rate outside the tea plantation is 350 rupees.



Fr Thomas Barla, SJ
Mission Superior, Assam
Mission

The Jesuits during the Pre-Lockdown Period

As soon as the Covid-19 menace struck the region the Jesuits of Assam Mission swung into action. Fr Thomas Barla, SJ, Director of Gana Chetana Samaj (GCS), gathered information from various sources and the GCS held serious meetings with its staff and with the Jesuit communities. They decided to organize awareness programmes in the tea gardens and villages to prepare themselves for safety. Awareness programme through PPT presentations about the virus and the protective measures required was first conducted for the volunteers and the instructors of supplementary education. With that, the information spread in tea gardens and villages and the people invited the GCS team for awareness programme in their tea gardens and villages.

Lockdown and its Impact on the Tea Plantation Workers

Suddenly, the Prime Minister of India announced a national lockdown on 24 March 2020. Initially meant for 21 days, the lockdown extended to four phases: Phase I (25 March – 14 April), Phase II (15 April – 3 May), Phase III (4 May – 17 May), Phase IV (18 May – 31 May). Neither the government nor the ordinary people looked prepared. Continuous

lockdown with joblessness and foodlessness were too much for the poor people, the tea plantation workers and daily wage laborers. Although the people from all walks of life suffered inconveniences during the lockdown we assessed the situation and extended our help in the following way:

1. **The Migrant Workers:** The migrant workers remained stranded in their work places without work, salary or food. Initially, some people managed with their own resources. Others received government support, from NGOs and other charitable groups but for most people it was a question of survival. Sensing the uncertain future, many headed for home but no one was allowed to move out of their shelter. They faced real difficulties.
2. **Daily Wage Labourers:** They had no work and no money. Some survived from little food grains received through Public Distribution System, NGOs relief food materials and other individual's help. Their living conditions were pathetic because most families were large and the food grains received were meager.
3. **Tea Garden Laborers (Permanent and Casual):** Although the government announced that employers would pay their employees without work during the lockdown, but the employees were neither paid nor any ration given. Some received food grains through Public Distribution System but that was insufficient for their survival. Tea Plantation workers had no other source for their livelihood; they faced an extremely difficult situation. Forced to cut down their meals for survival, they went through mental agony, they felt pressured to demand that the tea gardens be opened for their survival. Finally, the tea industry was open. The tea labourers worked without fear.
4. **Villagers without Ration Card:** Some of the families received Rs. 1,000/- from Jan Dhan Yojna and some dry ration (rice, dal) during the third phase of lockdown. There were families that had only one meal a day. There are instances where families borrowed food grains from their neighbours. Soon, they will have to pay them back.
5. **Widow Headed Families:** Some families with widows as sole bread winners had a very tough time. They received some food grains from Public Distribution System but that was insufficient to feed the family.
6. **Families Dependent on Forest Products:** Many families that are dependent on the sale of minor forest produce like fire wood and charcoal had no market to sell their goods. Moreover, many families were new settlers and had no ration cards. They faced a lot of difficulties. They were in dire need of help from NGOs.

Intervention of Jesuits and their Collaborators during the Lockdown

1. **"Save the Souls":** Keeping in mind the concept of "Save the Souls," Gana Chetana Samaj (GCS) conducted a quick survey with the help of parish priests, catechists, staff and volunteers in some villages and tea gardens. Post survey, the GCS selected tea estates like Belsiri, Singri, Panbari, Hugrajuli, New Addabari, Sessa, and villages like Berajan, Tinighuria, Kolabari, Rabarbill, Nadipar Panbari in Middle Assam, including many





Santhal villages in lower Assam that were in dire need of relief materials.

2. Identifying the Real Needy Families: With the uncertainty of the lockdown period the lists of needy families kept multiplying. Hence, with the help of All Adivasi Students Association of Assam (AASAA) and All Adivasi Women Association of Assam (AAWASA), local leaders, and Panchayat members we identified the most deserving families and provided relief materials.
3. Preparation and Distribution of Relief Materials: Procurement and packing of the relief materials required quick action because the permission for distribution of relief materials was granted on a daily basis for a limited time. Due to lack of time and inter-district travel restrictions we involved the local people for permission and distribution of materials while following all procedures and protocol. Led by Fr Xavier Lakra, St Xavier's College community distributed dry ration (10 Kg of rice, 2 kg of dal, masks and sanitizers, etc.) to 150 poor families of Tugh Basti, Solabasti, Bakulibasti and Sonabheel.
4. Donation to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund: The Assam Jesuits, Fr Pius Xalxo, Delegate of the Provincial, the Mission Treasurer, Fr. Cyril Guria, S.J. and Fr Xavier Lakra, the superior of St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel, handed over a

cheque of Rs. 50,000/- from Purvodaya Seva Samaj and another cheque of Rs. 50,000/- from Xavier Trust to the Deputy Commissioner of Sonitpur District for the Chief Minister's Fund.

Collaboration With District Administration

The government invited the NGOs, Trusts and other registered organizations to take active part in relief works. District officials organized meetings of all the registered societies and trusts and issued guidelines for relief workers but without resources. With limited resources, the NGOs and Trusts opted for relief works. GCS, Purvodaya Seva Samaj and Xavier Trust took up Chariduar, Rangapara and Dhekiyajuli for relief work – all led by the staff of GCS.

Contact and Collaboration with NGOs and Well Wishers

Father Thomas Barla's networking with NGOs and well wishers in Assam and elsewhere helped to expedite the relief work despite inter district travel restrictions. It was a very effective collaboration for information and distribution of relief materials. The NGOs shared their resources with other NGOs for other districts according to the need.

The Roles of Jesuit Pastors, Principals and Others

Communication, commitment and collaboration among Jesuits in Assam Mission made the relief work efficient. The parish priests kept regular contact with the parishioners and people of other faiths and contacted NGOs for help. Similarly, the Principals kept contact with teachers and students about people in villages and families and sent awareness phone messages to the students about the safety guidelines issued by World Health Organization. Reminders from Principals left a deep impact on the students and their families.

The Role Of The Catechists Of All The Jesuit Parishes

Catechists in parishes and villages worked as conduits in providing relief works. The pastors communicated with the catechists and the latter provided data from

villages, both Christian and others, about the dire needs and also got relief materials when needed. They did the survey of families in need and helped in distribution of food materials arrived in their villages.

Contact And Working With The Migrant Workers

Through the pastors, catechists and teachers of the supplementary education centres and the families the GCS collected the phone numbers and address of 1,367 migrant workers working outside Assam. Mr Amar Surin of GCS contacted all the migrant workers, inquired about their situation, offered information, and linked them with NGOs and Government support systems, and encouraged them to stay safe wherever they were. It was a very noble work contacting the migrant workers one by one and listening to them and helping and supporting them through phone regularly during the lockdown.

Donors And Benefactors

In this time of crisis, many individuals and agencies offered their help and support. Caste and creed seldom mattered. Many individuals personally came forward with their own resources and also generated resources from their own friends and supporters. To name one, Mrs. Anjali Tirkey, a social activist based at Guwahati, contacted her many friends, relatives, known persons and was able to generate funds to help thousands of families. Three overseas funding agencies generously contributed to awareness programme and food relief

materials through GCS are:

- » Jesuit Missions, London, UK, contributed INR. 9,07,972.00 for awareness programmes and relief materials.
- » Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, Sweden, also contributed INR. 4,91,952.00 for the relief materials and the awareness programme.
- » JIV DAYA FOUNDATION, 5420 Lyndon B Johnson Freeway, Suite 410 Dallas, TX 75240, USA contributed INR. 5,50,000.00 for dry ration.

With the help and support of the above mentioned donors, we were able to give relief to 2,051 families and awareness to 5,606 individuals.

Achievements

We adopted 42 villages and 25 Tea Estates Lines for our project. Only 4 persons tested Covid-19 positive but recovered within 4 days. Till date, no Covid-19 related death has occurred in those areas. 2,051 families received dry ration as relief materials. 5,606 persons (and their families) received health awareness on COVID-19 and safety mechanism. So, altogether 22,424 persons benefited from our service. Patients after recovery faced no social stigma because of awareness programme.

Lesson Learned

- » Sensitivity: We need to be sensitive in times of disasters and can save many lives.
- » Contact: Contact with field level staffs and leaders, with similar organizations, with government departments, with funding agencies and others becomes crucial. The field level contacts provide information about the ground reality, needs, affected persons, and the types of relief needed. Our contact with NAZDEEK, an NGO based in Delhi with its operational area in other states, helped us to contact 1306 migrant workers and they were taken care of in other states. Contacts with the Funding Agencies brought big relief and contact with and permission



from different government departments helped us to obtain relief materials and authorization.

- » **Timely Action:** Timely response in such situations can save many lives.
- » **Quick Survey and Assessment:** Survey or quick assessment of the data helps in providing relief work effectively.
- » **Meetings and Proper Planning:** In order to have effective and successful results we need meetings, discussions and proper planning.
- » **Team work:** Team work is crucial in disaster management. Inclusion of professionals in different fields like health workers, social workers, coordinators, field workers on the team enhances efficiency and effectiveness.
- » **Documentation:** Documentation for review, reporting and future reference are very important.

Challenges Faced

- » **Getting Timely Permission for Relief Work and Awareness Programme:** With strict lockdown, obtaining permission from government officials for relief related works, often on a daily basis or days together for limited hours of relief work proved very challenging.
- » **Submission of Sample Relief Materials and**

Awareness materials: Every bit of the relief material required the approval of the District Commissioner's office to ensure quality and quantity. Getting the samples of relief materials approved from the office became a challenging task and consumed a lot of our time.

- » **To get correct and genuine Beneficiaries' List:** Prolonged lockdown created fear and insecurity about food and multiplied the number of needy people but we had to identify and verify the neediest families.
- » **Fixing Criteria to list out Beneficiaries:** We followed criteria in identifying the genuine beneficiaries – persons without ration card, land, permanent job, income and the widow headed families and shortlisted them for relief. Persons owning land also had no food.
- » **Transportation of relief Materials to the very interior villages:** Villages without roads and villages with dirt roads proved difficult to reach the relief materials. Recipients of relief walked half the distance and we had no proper place to keep our relief materials.
- » **Packing of relief materials:** Weighing, packing and preparing kits and travelling for distribution with our staff proved challenging, tiring and risky.
- » **Availability of Health Workers for Awareness Programme:** Most health workers were busy in quarantine centres, hence getting health workers for our team became very difficult. We managed our health by following the WHO and government guidelines.

Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic has affected and continues to affect the whole humanity, economy, health, industry, states and countries. The social, cultural, spiritual and educational lives have changed. The movements of people have been restricted. The fear and insecurity still persist in the minds and hearts of people. But concern for humanity was felt and seen among all sections of people. People contributed from their resources to the help and support of the needy.

Health and hygiene were given much importance even in villages. There was a feeling of God's presence and protection in the tea garden areas and the villages as they received help and support during crisis moment and also remained safe from pandemic.





SECTION B

FOOTPRINTS TO BE FOLLOWED



SPRING FROM LALGANJ: FR JOHN'S CALL AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Fr Praful Ekka, SJ

Fr. John Lakra, SJ, a scholar on Tribal music and dance, Tribal Liturgy and Tribal Spirituality was born on June 21, 1935 in a big sounding small village, called Lalganj under Tongo Parish of Gumla District. His father was a farmer and mother was a housewife. He had three elder sisters. He was the youngest and the only son in the family. He studied his Primary school in Datra, a neighboring village. For middle school he came to Tongo where his religious vocation germinated and flourished. His father was dead set against his becoming a priest. He had clearly told his mother, "You do educate your son and make him Hakim but not a priest." The reason why he was not in favour of his priestly vocation was that he was the only son. His father's desire was that the young boy would look after the family property and would continue the family. Fr. John also liked his thought and he was convinced. One day in the school, during break, while Fr. John was playing with other boys, a teacher asked him, "John, what do you want to become?" He answered, "I do not know." The teacher said, "Why don't you become a priest?" Fr. John said, "It is impossible for me to become a priest because I am the only son in the family. My father will not allow me." The teacher said, "No John, it is not so impossible." Then Fr. John began to think as to why the teacher says that that was not so impossible? For him it was clear that he cannot become a priest.

In the school, students were going for Holy Mass and praying from Swarg Dwar. Fr. John found two prayers in Swarg-Dwar to his taste : one to know the vocation and another to become strong in the vocation. These two prayers he was reciting every day after Holy Communion, hiding from his friends, "Lord, help me know my vocation and show me the way." Then gradually he realized his vocation and talked about the matter with the parish

priest adding his problem. Since Fr. Jaivenois, the Parish Priest had got his transfer, he asked

a seminarian to meet Fr. John. The seminarian asked him, "John, what do you want to become?"

But Fr. John did not talk to him openly and he was hiding something from him. So, realizing the problem of Fr. John, the seminarian told him that Fr. Parish Priest had asked him to meet him. Now, thinking he knows everything, Fr. John told him straight away that he cannot become a priest. The seminarian also supported the idea and told him, "It is not so impossible." "Why do people say it is not so impossible," he began to think and came to know that it is possible and realized that there was a way. His mother was religious minded and a simple lady.

One day he asked her "Mother, let us go to the Church together." He said this so that they would not be alone on the way. While walking, he began to give her spiritual talk and make her understand that vocation comes from God, therefore it should not be disturbed and no one should become a hurdle for anyone, neither parents nor relatives. Thus he made her understand clearly. She said, "My dear son, I had not understood this and was not allowing you to become a priest. Now I understand it clearly. So wherever God calls you, go there. I am happy." But there was yet another hurdle - his illiterate sister. She had a very simple reason for not allowing him to be a priest, i.e. if he goes away from the house,



Fr Praful Ekka, SJ
Director, Apostolic
School, Gumla



all their property will be taken away by others and their enemies. At this point, Fr. John consulted fathers and a father told him that of course his mother had all the authority over him but he was no way under his sister's direct control. And if she says yes, he should not bother. She also did not force him. Thus, he overcame all the hurdles and went to Apostolic School, Ranchi.

Slowly he came to know the difference between Diocesan Priests and Jesuit Priests and after finishing his intermediate studies at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, he joined the Society of Jesus for Ranchi Province. For his Novitiate he was in Sitagarha, Hazaribagh. He graduated from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. Thereafter, he went for his philosophical studies to Papal Athenaeum Pune and pursued his theological studies at St. Mary's College Kurseong. He was ordained priest in Ranchi Cathedral in the year 1969. He did his higher studies on Spiritual Theology at Gregorian University, Rome. When we talk about his contribution, he has contributed a lot to the Society of Jesus. He had big responsibilities as a PCF and Province Consultor and he carried out these responsibilities efficiently. Fr. John Lakra is a Professor Emeritus, St. Albert's College, Ranchi. He taught Spiritual Theology, Tribal Culture, Tribal Spirituality and Logic for many years in St. Albert's College, Ranchi and many other philosophates and theologates. These courses were very practical and useful for the seminarians in their ministries and life. He also served the Institute in the capacity of Dean and Registrar of the Faculty of Theology. In the meantime, amidst all these, he offered his valuable services as the editor of Nishkalanka, a monthly catholic magazine and the torchbearer of Christian life and values. During his editorship it had the highest subscribers.

He has distinguished himself as Scholar on Tribal Music and Dance, Tribal Liturgy and Tribal Spirituality and has been conducting a number of seminars and workshops across the country. In the beginning, neither did he know dance steps nor how to play mandar. But slowly he learned and got mastery over them.



He had to work hard. He did a real research and composed Mausmi Rag and dance steps in six volumes of audio-visual CD for the coming generations, to preserve and keep alive the beautiful tribal culture. It is a great contribution to the Tribal society. According to him the Tribal spirituality is the greatest contribution, the climax of everything. As he says, "Tribal culture and tribal music is indeed a very important component for tribal identity." He realized that tribal spirituality is by far the most important facet and more lasting value of tribal culture which earns human dignity and character certificate to the tribals of Chotanagpur. It is a general opinion that the tribals are simple, humble, honest and genuine people. Usually the tribal domestic servants and labourers are much in demand, because they are known to be honest, trustworthy and hard-working people. The tribal sense of community spirit, mutual help and cooperation is appreciated by all. These and many other human qualities are implanted in the tribal heart and soul which make tribal people liked by others. But these are spiritual qualities. In other words tribal spirituality makes them attractive to others.

In the area of Tribal Liturgy too he has done a great job. When the Second Vatican Council brought renewal in the Liturgy and gave place to the local languages and cultures to make it more meaningful and devotional, Fr. John composed Dharme Ohma, Adivasi Missa Sangrah, Nemha Danre Puthi, Kuruk Missa Puthi, and Nemha Ulla. These books are widely used in the Liturgy. The Passion Reading and Exultet, music and melody by Fr. John Lakra are very popular in the Chotanagpur church. They are used practically everywhere during the Easter liturgical services. He has excelled himself in writing books and has left his mark as a well known tribal writer. He has a number of books to his credit: Mausmi Rag, Dharme Ohma, Adivasi Missa Sangrah, Nemha Danre Puthi, Kuruk Missa Puthi, Nemha Ulla, Kurukh Ritual, Tribal Culture, Dao Tingka, Adivasi Sanskriti, Puna Gachharka, Kurkhargahi Dao Chhalao.

Many people ask Fr. John as to who will be the next champion of tribal culture in Chotanagpur after him. His answer is that he does not really know. And he further acknowledges that nobody comes to him though he is ever ready to help. He tried to train the trainers. But that was not successful. Anyway, he has a message for scholastics and the young priests, "If we want to preserve and keep alive our culture, we should free ourselves from our prejudices against tribals and have a genuine love and interest in our own people and in our own culture."

A TINY PLANT OF KONBIR NOATOLI INTO A BIG TREE: FR MATHIAS' LIFE JOURNEY

Sch Ajay Paulus Minz, SJ

The Story unfolds

I am Fr. Mathias Dungdung, SJ, I am 95 and have spent my 74 years in the Society of Jesus. At present I am in the Infirmary of Manresa House. Here I am taking rest and praying for the Society of Jesus. Not long ago Sch. Ajay Paulus Minj came and said that he wanted to write about my vocation story and my contributions to the world. I started thinking, whether my life is worth writing about. I told him that if he wants to read about me, he should read the book "Ujale Yadon ke" which I wrote at the behest of Fr.

Henry Barla. Fr. Francis Minj has also written about me in Nishkalanka, which was published on the occasion of my golden jubilee in the Society of Jesus, which I celebrated on 20 June 1997. Paulus said that he was going through these writings but would love to hear about me from (the horse's mouth) my own mouth. So, this is my life story in short. It will be a great joy for me if this short life story touches you or moves you in any way.

I was born on the 12 January in the year 1926, in KonbirNoatoli. My father was Joseph Sawna Dungdung and mother was Martha Tete. My father took part in the WWI. The Indian battalion was sent to France. My father returned home but he developed an ailment. He developed an illness because of the gas used in the war. He did not stay long to take care of the family. I was only three years old when he left me and my mother for his eternal abode. After the death of my father, the family consisted of only two people, namely my mother and me. But I had also aunties, who took great care of me.



Sch Ajay P Minz, SJ
Regent, Catholic Press,
Manresa House Ranchi



The Seed of Vocation Grows

Vocation does not grow on a barren land. It needs a good soil, where the seed grows gradually. The first seed of my vocation was laid when I was still a child. That was the time of Latin Mass. Every priest needed a mass server for his Mass. That's why my mother used to send me for Mass daily. Though, sometimes, especially during the winter, I felt lazy, and my mother used to coax me to go to daily Mass by rewarding me with boiled eggs or other edibles. Was it selfishness or devotion, that drove me to-wards the Holy Mass? I see it as a selfish devotion. Whatever may be the intention behind my daily attendance of the Holy Eucharist, one thing was sure that I was very regular in its attendance. My mother made sure that her child gets a good Catholic faith formation. She too attended the Holy Mass twice or thrice a week. The Saturdays and the first Fridays were a must for her.

We had a regular evening prayer in the family. My uncle's family also came for the evening prayer. Not only did I receive a good knowledge at school, but also a sound knowledge of religion at home from my mother. She loved singing religious songs. I used to ask her to sing me a hymn, which she did in her sweet voice. She mostly loved the Marian hymns. My mother got widowed at an early age of 23. But because of her deep faith in God, she remained cheerful

all her life. I saw this as a child and drew strength and inspiration from her life.

When I was in sixth or seventh standard, one Belgian Father De Meester came to our house. He was of a short stature. He had his cassock on. I saw his cassock and said, "I will also put on this type of dress." "For putting on this dress you have to become a priest." My mother said. "Okey, I will become a priest." I said. I was a little boy then. Father De Meester started laughing and said, "It is a very good idea that you want to become a priest".

One day I asked my mother whether I could become a priest. This happened after I completed my I.A. from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. I had joined Minor Seminary. There were two choices for the candidates at that time - either to become a Diocesan priest or a Jesuit. I had decided to become a Jesuit. After I revealed my mother my wish to become a priest, I added quickly that I want to become a Jesuit.

"Why don't you become a Diocesan priest? They take care of their family and they also take short time to become a priest. Jesuit formation takes a long time. I may die before your ordination." My mother said. "No!

I have decided to become a Jesuit"

I think for the first time I had a different opinion than my mother. Then my mother revealed a secret. She said- "You had two siblings, who passed away at an early age. I prayed to God, that if my son survives, I will dedicate him totally to God. So, now as you are thinking of becoming a Jesuit priest, go ahead my child." She said, "If I have to offer my son to God, I will not do it half-heartedly. I will do it with all my heart."

Now I consider how great a sacrifice my mother had made. She did not think about herself. Her sacrifice is way greater than mine. While I got so many Jesuit friends, she was to remain alone after she consented to my decision. The love is tested by sacrifice. Such was my mother's love for me and for God. The seed of vocation which grew on the fertile ground of my soul, prepared by my mother, had now become a little plant. After getting the blessing from my mother for my call to the Society of Jesus, I did not look back.

Time of Growth

On 20th June 1947 I joined the Jesuit novitiate in Sitagarha. My companion from Ranchi Mission, who joined the novitiate with me was late Bishop George Saupin, SJ. Under the care of two Novice Masters, namely Fr. Quirijnan, Fr. Peter Ponnet, I grew in the knowledge of Jesus, the Church and the Society of Jesus. Fr. Ponnet was my Novice Master in the second year of novitiate. After two years of novitiate I took my first vows on 21st June 1949. After the novitiate I did not go for classical Juniorate. Fr. J. B. Moyersoen, the Mission Superior of Ranchi sent me to St. Xavier's College for Bachelor in Hindi Honours. We were the first batch in Hindi Honours and our H.O.D. was Fr. Camil Bulcke, SJ. Two years of college studies got over soon. After completing my Bachelor, in the year 1951, I was sent to Shem-baganur for my philosophy. The philosophy lasted three years. After my philosophical studies I got my regency in Loyola High School, Kunkuri. Although I had degree in Hindi Honours, I was asked to teach Sanskrit, English, Geography, and Biology. This taught me that we have to be ready for any work in the Society of Jesus.

After three year of Regency, I, along with Barnabas Bara, were sent for theological studies to Belgium. Louvain was the place of my theology. But after two



years the entire faculty of theology was shifted to Heverlee, three kilometers away from Louvain. I did the rest of my studies in Heverlee. Between Heverlee and Louvain there is a graveyard, where Fr. Lievens was buried. I visited his grave and prayed there. On 10th August 1960 I got ordained in Heverlee. After my ordination my first ministry was in Aschaffenburg, Germany. There I was a Military Chaplain for the army camp of American soldiers. I returned from Belgium to India through a sea route. The journey lasted 29 days.

Time to bear fruits

On 03 July, 1965 I joined St. Xavier's College as a Hindi professor. At that time Dr. Fr. Camil Bulcke was the Dean of Hindi and Sanskrit Faculties. The next seventeen years I spent teaching in the College, teaching Hindi to the students. I used to demand punctuality and silence in the class room. Few shayri during the class used to put the students in good mood. I loved the students, especially the girls and also got the love in return.

After my retirement from the college the Sitagarha Novitiate needed a Socius. I took care of the Novices for two years. After that I taught Hindi in the Sitagarha Juniorate for two years. I had prayed to God that wherever I may be, I may be able to be with my mother during her last moments and that I may also bury her. On 03 February 1986 Pope John Paul II had come to Ranchi. I had also brought the novices with me. In Ranchi I came to know that my mother was sick. I visited her in the Ursuline hospital in Konbir Noatoli. She felt very happy. But she asked me to go back and take care of the brothers. I came back to Ranchi and attended the programme. After the Programme ended, I got the news that my mother was no more. I reached there and saw how she lay peacefully in bed, as if in sleep. God had been gracious enough to answer my prayers.

From 1987 to 1990 I served in the Paramvir Albert Ekka College Chainpur as a caretaker. At that time the college was going through troubled times. From 1992 to 2011 I served as the director of Dr. Fr. Camil Bulcke Research Centre in Manresa House. Since 1983 hundred and thirty-eight research students have got their Ph.D. doing their research in this place.

Time to look back and smile

My Whole life I have been as a teacher and professor. Literature was my field of work. I have written and translated thirty-five books. God has given me this talent and I think I was able to make use of this talent to serve him. "In the Society of Jesus there is nothing small, if we do them with the thought that this is the will of God."

On 20 June 1997 I completed my fifty years in the Society; on 21 June it was my sixtieth year in the Society. On 10 August 2010 I celebrated the Golden Jubilee of my Priesthood. On 10 June 2011 this 87 years old pilgrim got retired. The feet of this traveler have got tired but the journey is still on. Like St. Augustine he wants to say, "O Beauty! Too late have I loved thee."

Few extra words

Paulus has asked me to say a few words of encouragement to the young Jesuits. What is there to be said to be a Jesuit. For him everything is said. Live your life according to the charism of St. Ignatius - Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam and Magis. Live as St. Ignatius has written – in total detachment. And remember "tension nahi lene ka". However great your pain should be, your face should bear a smile. I asked Paulus about the good qualities of a Jesuit. He said that he should be a man of prayer. "Yes! Indeed, he should be a man of prayer. Once I heard the address of late Fr. Adolfo Nicolas to the Patna Jesuits and was very impressed. He said, "Make time to pray every day." So, prayer is important. According to me Jesuits should have three qualities - "He should be a bit holy, a bit intelligent and a bit lazy," Lazy means he should also know to take rest.



HALTED IN CHOTANAGPUR FOR A CAUSE: LIFE JOURNEY OF FR MARC DE BROUWER

Sch Ashish Kujur, SJ & Sch Francis Tirkey, SJ

Each one of us has somehow found one's way into this world. But we can ask for what purpose or reason we are here? Among the many philosophies and religions, we find no shortage of answers offered. But which answers to be considered right or wrong is still in a dilemma. Life is a precious gift given by God freely. There is no condition applied by God for it. Life could be shared, felt and experienced with one another. Life is not a bed of roses alone but full of thornes also. However, we need to find the final goal of our lives.

Missionary word is originated from Latin word- missionem, which means 'act of sending.' Fr. Marc De Brouwer is a Jesuit missionary, who has been sent to India to share his life with others as well as to become an instrument of God. This conversation with Fr. Marc De Brouwer is an initiative to know about his life journey in the Society of Jesus:

Fr. Marc De Brouwer, you have completed 95 years of your life. How did you get influenced to be a priest?

Recalling some outstanding influences that brought me to the Society of Jesus, the first and tone giving experience was definitely my first communion. The Sisters of St. Andrew had told us in the preparation for our first communion that Jesus was coming and that he wished children to come to him. We were six years old. This first encounter with the Lord put a definite stamp on our relations. The Lord and me could talk to each other and understand each other. This always remained a basic faith experience which included later the possibility of becoming a priest. Over the High School years in Bruges' Diocesan College life horizons broadened and presented an attractive career as an engineer. These two ideas remained with me as guiding

principles even when I joined the Novitiate in the year 1994.

Curiously



enough

my wish

of total surrender

included a condition that I should be directed to an Engineering career even as a Jesuit. This was broadly accepted and the visa application to come to India mentioned its purpose. It was to start a technical school in Ranchi.

In every person's walks of life family plays a major role. Family atmosphere has a direct impact on growing children. In connection to this would you like to take us back to your early Childhood days. What was your turning point where you really felt the need of becoming a Jesuit? How did the seed of vocation germinate in you?

My family was very supportive. I had already thanked the Lord for inviting my elder brother Christian to the Novitiate. His example though did not influence my choice. I had met and rejected the idea of joining the Carmelites and the White Fathers of Africa, who both had houses in Bruges. I longed for a deep spirituality and so the only remaining choice was the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit Fathers were confessors in our school.

The long retreat in the first year Novitiate put a Marced angle to my relation to the



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Regent, St. Ignatius HS,
Gumla



Sch Francis Tirkey, SJ
Regent, Apostolic School,
St. Ignatius, Gumla.

Lord. The exterior considerations of meditations and contemplation did not deepen my Jesus relation but rather made it more formal and distant. Ever remained unshaken was my will and decision to surrender.

I am ever grateful for the directions profusely given by my Novice master, a real Master, though he worked more on character formation than on spirituality. Philosophy took me for three years to Holland in the Bermanium of Nifmegen. This was a blessed time with innovative ways of thinking. Those years directed my thinking into the principles of development of people where I am now immersed.

The course of theology did not satisfy my thirst for knowledge about the Lord and His Good News; the Kurseong cold and assorted health problems may have been the cause, together with a lack of outside contacts with people. We lived in a segregated world.

Fr. Marc, when did this thought of coming to India as a missionary emerge in you? Having spent so many years in India as a missionary how do you connect the past situation with the present progress?

The thought of coming to India as a missionary emerged in me when I got an appointment to Biru region as Parish Priest of Khanjaloya. It was an explosion of joy after the long years of training. It is true that spiritual depth was pushed to the background amidst the multiple activities of the Parish. Even my longing to bring the Gospel message to those who had not yet heard it did not find time for expression. This points to a lack of discernment which I now realize remained a lacuna in the several posting that came my way. The thirteen years as Assistant Director of the Catholic Cooperative suffered of the same lack of discernment. And still more my stretch as Director of Namkum Agricultural Training Center. Discussions and prayer for discerning the Lord's will should have changed into new horizons the course and routine of these active years.

Gumla status as Director of Catholic Charities started a process of reflection. Though again this suffered from the lack of consultations and discernment. Daily activities with constant nagging care for finance by foreign donors for our huge team hampered searching for the leisure of discernment. What was the very purpose of the Job? Was it really a priestly activity? Here was a region aspiring to progress amid a total lack of

leadership in the rural areas. Reflection and experience led to course corrections till we with our team of collaborators realized that the way of development is unique. It is the man who said I am the way. Adoption of projects with their innumerable meetings attempted to answer the inner quest of people's heart, not imposing a pattern of development as often recommended for NGO's. material development was an entry point not an aim. Our duty was to encounter and learn from the spirit active in every person. He is the living spirit manifesting life into people's consciousness.

This led to a great appreciation of people searching for truth. It led me years ago to my choosing India as field of apostolate. People here searched for truth. The response could be expressed as manifesting God's goodness to villages and its families. The aim of development thus crystallized into bringing peace and cooperation among poorer people. As God's children they too are eligible for discerning their way. Our action should lead them to such maturity.

Finally, what do you expect from the budding Jesuits? What should be their priority? What message that you would like to give them reading the signs of the time?

You are asking me for advice to a younger generation. Such a large question would be narrowed to a little advice. Study with comprehension in study years and continue spiritual deepening for your whole life. Especially talk your ideas over with the Lord but very pointedly with your Superiors who are there for mutual discernment of Lord's invitations.

Thank you Fr. Marc De Brouwer for sharing with us your living experiences of your life journey and more importantly for your total surrender to God and His people in Chotanagpur. This will surely inspire the young Jesuits to be full fledged Jesuits by committing, dedicating and availing themselves even in uncertain situations.

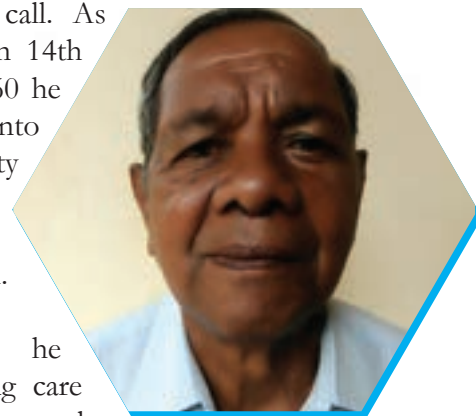


NANESERA TO MANRESA: A LIFE JOURNEY OF POLYCARP

Sch Sameer Ekka, SJ

Br. Polycarp was born on 2nd April 1938 at Nanesera, Simdega Jharkhand. He belonged then to Banabira Parish but as of now his Parish is Nanesera. He is the youngest child among ten siblings. He had three brothers and 6 sisters. All of them have taken heavenly abode. His Father's name is Hilarius Lakra and Mother's name is Sabina Kindo. Being the youngest child, he received a lot of love and care in the family. He grew up in a very devout atmosphere. He did his primary schooling at Nanesera. Then for middle school he moved to Banabira and was in the boarding. And for his high school he went to Rengarih. His time at Rengarih was counted as a candidacy year. Before he could complete his matriculation, he went to Sitagarha for his novitiate. Let me share with you his vocation story.

people from his family and friend-circle persuaded him to join for Priesthood but he stood by his decision. He was very much clear about his call. As a result, on 14th August 1960 he entered into the Society of Jesus at Sitagarha Hazaribagh.



He says he loved taking care of building, cattle, farms and kitchen. From the beginning of his life in the Society he has enjoyed taking care of building, cattle, farms and kitchen. He is 83 years old but he is still taking care of farm and dairy at Manresa. Years have passed but he continues to give his service to people in every way possible. He felt a great joy in every work. People have experienced him as amazingly simple, humble, loving and caring person. His dedication to his work is commendable.

When asked whether he had enjoyed all the responsibilities given to him so far in the Society he said, "Yes". He is someone who loves working behind the curtain. I asked him a question, "Why did you opt for Brotherhood and not for priesthood?". He answered, "I enjoy working behind the curtain. I always wanted, that I would look after the Jesuit houses and house chores so that Jesuit priests could do their ministries well without worrying about house. I wanted to help them in that way. I have been doing that and I enjoy doing that." That was his reply.

Br. Polycarp has been a great caretaker of houses. He never said no to any responsibility entrusted to him by the Society. He is a source of inspiration for young generation. His simplicity and humility are adorable.

It was at Banabira Parish school (He does not recall which year, but he is quite sure that it was Banabira while doing his middle school there). He happened to spend time with scholastics from Sitagarh Hazaribag. These scholastics went to Banabira to work at fields and to prepare grounds for sports. Polycarp enjoyed working with those young, energetic, hard-working, and inspiring Jesuits. It was there, he was deeply moved by the scholastics. He was impressed by the work of scholastics and when he got a chance to accompany them, he did it so with a great joy. For example, he accompanied them to jungle as they went to cut firewood. He accompanied them in fields as they prepared sport ground and fields. Besides, he spent evenings with them. The Scholastics used to ask him casually "Would you like to become Jesuit like us?" In answer to that he just smiled then. He was asked this question often. As it was mentioned above, he was impressed by the work of young Jesuits, so he gave a thought on joining the Society. From the beginning he was convinced, that he would join the Society for brotherhood. He had a call for brotherhood. Quite many



Sch Sameer Ekka, SJ
Regent, Apostolic School,
Manresa House, Ranchi

I WANT TO BECOME A BROTHER LIKE BR MARCEL: BR FELIX

Sch Henry Kullu, SJ

Bro. Felix Prakash Tete, SJ is a deeply spiritual and hard-working man. At the age of 85 he is active. We can still see the passion for work, a lot of interest in taking tuition for children and in growing plants. He lives a very disciplined life. He takes care of own health and physical wellbeing. He is so very regular for his morning and evening exercises. Indeed, he is a great inspiration for young people – Jesuits and Non-Jesuits alike. Here is how he narrates his brief life sketch and his vocation story.

Family background:

I was born to Louis Tete and Getrud Soreng in a village called Jhipatoli of Karangaguri, which is a parish now under Simdega Diocese. In the family, we were four brothers and one sister: Gabriel, Stanislas, Fidelus, and Felix and one sister Mary. I was the youngest among brothers and one sister. My elder brother, Fidelis, died of snake bite while staying in my cousin Benedict's house. He was staying with him and went to Rengarih school. My mother left us when I was two years old. My father left me and my elder sister to the house of our Aunt. However, later, my maternal aunt came and took us and took care of us with her children. When I was hardly two years old, my father went to the Andamans with my cousin and did not come for long seven years due to Second World War. After seven years, when he came home, my elder brother Felix showed my father on the way but I could not recognize him. My elder brother left his schooling after seventh standard due to financial problem in the family. He decided to leave so that he could send me for schooling.

Education and his vacation:

One day while taking bath in the river, my elder

brother told me, "You will go to school from tomorrow.

I will get you admission to the school."

I did not say anything.

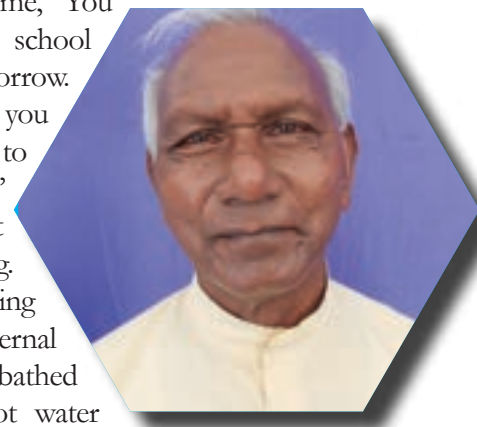
The following day my maternal mother bathed me with hot water and got me ready for

school. From that day onwards my school life started. I studied in Karangaguri till the third standard and went to Dhingurpani, but after a year I came back to Karangaguri and completed there till the fifth standard. Later I went to Banabira for class sixth and seventh. I was very pious from childhood and continue to be so even now. The seed of my vocation was sown in me by Brother Marcel Barla during my primary education. I had seen him and always desired to become like him and work like him. Whenever someone asked, "What would you become in life?", my immediate reply used to be "to become a brother". Though initially I was about to join the Salesians as they used to come for vocation promotion. I used to write letters to Salesian fathers and they were impressed by me and I was almost ready to leave for Calcutta to join Salesians on a fixed day. However, I had a different calling perhaps.

Father Julius Topno, SJ, the headmaster of the school, somehow came to know about my joining Salesians and objected. "Without the knowledge of the family members you must not go." He said strictly. Actually I did not dare to tell about my going to Calcutta even to my elder brother. So, it was cancelled. The Headmaster told me later, "You can also become a brother or a priest in our society. Here you have to go to the Apostolic School



Sch Henry Kullu, SJ
Regent, ATC, Namkum,
Ranchi



for the priesthood and for the brotherhood. You can apply now.” So, without further studies I directly went to Hazaribagh for brotherhood. I know how much overjoyed I was. I said to myself, “Now my wish is fulfilled. Now, I would become a brother for life and work like Brother Marcel Barla.”

I reached Sitagaraha, Hazaribag along with 22 other companions on 15th May---. I have had wonderful experiences of candidacy. We were taught English Language and other working skills. I picked up English well and pretty fast and all other working skills. Working in the paddy field, driving tractor and other household works were all so enjoyable. I did all the works happily. Very soon I got trained in masonry and driving of two and four wheelers. Those initial five years of living experience in Sitagarah made me confident. I felt within me that I can face upcoming challenges. I also experienced that my superior was confident about me and from my part I loved the Society and its members.

Life in the Society:

On 15th May 1959 we got a new status along with two scholastics and three brothers to work in Kunkuri. On 26 May we reached Manresa House Ranchi and the next day early morning we left for Kunkuri. Fr. Rector showed us the big hall where bigger students used to sleep and said, “You have to repair the leakage of this hall. During the rainy season, it leaks and we are unable to stop after putting our whole efforts.” I got an idea to repair it. All materials were made available. The next day with the help of other brother and some students, we started the work and within one week we managed to finish it. We watered for 15 days morning, noon and evening. The work was done well. Later during a heavy rain it was seen that there was not a single drop of leakage. Seeing our work whole Loyola community was highly impressed. I felt it was a great achievement. Later we renovated the whole school building. One brother was assigned in the new parish. We two were given separate offices. One brother was looking after the poultry and piggery, farm, paddy fields and I was a boarding master of 577 students.

While working with students, I took lot of initiatives. Right in the beginning I planted sixteen *Munga*, six *Putkal* trees. I also started planting vegetables. I started *Krusveer* for small children and started *Maria Marg* for older students. Love for the school and country could be seen when big students started joining Maria Marg. Self-help group and

NCC were a few important initiatives taken for the high school. All these things increased the standard of the school.

While dealing with all kinds of people in the shops, markets and schools and government offices I felt the need of certain degrees, hence I talked to the Regional Superior and I was allowed to appear in the Board of exams of Higher Secondary School Certificate of M.P. Even after spending five years in the state of M.P. I had some difficulty with regard to my identity. Mr. Mareel Tete, a cousin of mine, a Registered Land Owner and a Lecturer of Loyola Kunkuri had to file an affidavit for me in the Court of Jaspur. I studied well along with all other duties and completed all my exams, and the result came in hand by the postman. I had passed with 72%. Now the doors for other degrees were open for me. I completed B.A. in English and M.A. in Political science. The Society of Jesus gave me ample opportunities.

I took my final vows on 15 August 1967. Five days later, I was appointed as minister in apostolic school Kunkuri. I was also given the responsibility of taking care of the choir, and of the sick. Later I was sent for nursing training for nine-month in St. Martha hospital, Bangalore. Just in the one-day orientation program I said to myself, “It is so difficult. I never thought of all these.” Nursing training was indeed very tough for me. However, I completed my nursing course within two years with great effort. I came back with four certificates all practical, public health, home nursing, health teaching, and first aid. On return to Ranchi I was surprised to see Fr. Rector and community members of St. Albert’s College, Ranchi at railway station who came to receive me. I rendered my service there among seminarians for about nine years.

Later, I was asked by Fr. Pascal Topno, Provincial, to start a brother’s candidate house in Khunti. In four years there were about thirteen aspirants. But later this was closed down and the provincial asked me to go to St. Mary’s High School for teaching English. I was an approved teacher there for nineteen years. I loved to play hockey but my favorite game ever remained Basketball. It was there I drew a great sense of achievement by playing and preparing for future Jesuits and to send them up for national championships.

After my appointment in St. Mary’s Samtoli, I was in many other places in Ranchi and rendered my services. Presently I am in ATC, Namkum praying for all of you!

IF THEY CAN DO SO, WHY CAN'T I: FR BRITIUS

Fr Fuldeo Soreng, SJ and Sch Patras

Fr. Britius looks at his life as a gift of God to him and associates it as God called Jeremiah, Isaiah, Elijah and other prophets for his mission. He says that he has experienced God's love and care through his parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, near and dear ones. He thanks God for the brothers and sister with whom he grew. Later he realized that God was calling him for his mission. As he did with prophets so did he respond to His call. He says that God has created him only and only for this purpose. Now, Fr. Britius has turned to his seventies. He recently celebrated Golden Jubilee in the Society of Jesus for which he thanks the Lord.

In his interview he shares his mixed feelings of religious life with us.



Fr Fuldeo Soreng, SJ
Vice-Principal, St Xavier's
Doranda, Ranchi

Childhood and early life in Behrinbasa:

Fr. Britius was born of Mr. Junas Ekka and Mrs. Josphine Ekka. He had three brothers and one sister. He is the youngest son. He then belonged to Samsera parish. He completed his primary and middle school from Samsera. In 1965 he came to St. John's High School Ranchi. He graduated from St. Xavier's College Ranchi in 1975. Fr. Britius says that he still misses his mother; his father died before he was born. It was a great shock and painful moment for his mother at that time. She did not like him to be born without the shadow of his father. In spite of all those she took care of him very well. She said that he was a gift to her from God; therefore, she would offer him to God. He says that his mother observed a strict discipline and prayerful atmosphere in the family. That is the bond that kept all of them together as one family. Of course, he enjoyed the companionship of his brothers and sister. He also enjoyed his childhood with his friends. Those were the days that he still remembers.

Further he mentions about his Vocation and says that he was attracted by the dedicated life of foreign missionaries who gave their lives so generously for anything and everything. He wonders as to what made them to come here and work for us. He appreciates the dedicated services that they have rendered to us. They worked a lot for us, because of whom today we have an identity. All these things made him think that 'if they can do so why can't I'. This inspiration led him to his priesthood. He says that his mother inspired him for the same. Her feeling was that God gave her this gift (Britius). And to this I shall offer to God and to the whole world.

He says that most touching thing was the friendship among the Scholastics. It helped him to grow in the Society. Another thing is the amount of freedom with responsibilities in the Society. The Society took great care of him in the initial stage of his formation. He says



Sch Patras, SJ
Regent, St Xavier's
Doranda, Ranchi

that his message to the youngsters would be, that wherever you are planted, grow well and be fruitful.

He further gives his message to formators that they should take care of the young ones and should mould them accordingly. One must be their friend who can understand them. Even the same applies for the Spiritual Fathers. He says let the Scholastics grow as they wish. But time and again they should be guided if they are strayed.

To all the Regents he says, to enjoy the responsibilities and to be what you are. We should give our best. Everyone looks at you and trusts you. We should keep the promises that we make. He says about his core experience is offering oneself to the Society for the whole world. He liked almost all the ministries of the Society. All the ministries are equal and important in the Society. He liked looking others growing in all the ways possible. It is worth mentioning here that as a priest he started his life in forming the candidates, either in the candidate house or in minor seminary. Later he spent a long span of his life as a Spiritual Father in Papal Seminary Pune and at Satya Nilayam Chennai. Having been called back to the



Province, he remained a caring Superior and Vice Principal at St. Xavier's School, Doranda until he had to undergo by pass surgery. Then he spent a year or so in Loyola Khunti and is praying for the Society at Manresa House even though he still remains as a member of St. Xavier's Doranda community.

He spends his time in reading Scripture, books and newspapers. He also helps other sick persons by reaching them the needful things. He shares his experiences with each other when he is free. Also he goes for walk in the morning and evening. He further says to grow in the Society as brothers. Spread the Good News to others.

He gives his message to SXD Family and says that it needs to keep growing finding strength, courage and consolation from the Lord.



FR. PATRICK: A LEGEND MODEL OF A PASTOR

Fr Henry Barla, SJ

Fr. Patrick Tete, SJ is just four years away from hitting a century. After his services at the Kanke Parish as an Assistant, he has been staying in the Ranchi Province infirmary at Manresa House. There he leads a regular life: Mass, breakfast, a brief nap, short walk in the corridor, newspapers, Breviary (which he never misses whether morning or evening), rosary, occasionally meeting visitors, etc. No medications at his age! Unfortunately he is somewhat hard of hearing; and now he also needs a walking stick. Simple person; simple life. One can see him having occasional banter with his neighbour Fr. Mathias Dungdung (95). Poking the other one says, “You will die first;” swift response comes from the other with a big smile “You will die first.” And their walking sticks meet to clatter.

Fr. Patrick comes from Baijutoli, a village in Rengarih Parish. He is the eldest among five sons of his parents. God has called his four brothers for their eternal reward. Despite these tragedies in the family, his parents were magnanimous to let Patrick follow the inspiration that had already caught up his heart. He was inspired by a Rev. George Martin’s life and ministries in the mission. And so he proceeded to study at St. John’s, Ranchi. He was also influenced by the Jesuits. He followed various stages of the Jesuits’ formation, and was ordained a priest in 1949, after his theology in JDV, Pune.

From now on began the real life of apostolic engagements of Fr. Patrick. And his principle field would almost always be pastoral. That was his forte. Just as he had a chance to study his theology with some scholastics from Germany, Belgium, Italy and other West European countries and make undying friends with them, so now in his pastoral life he got almost in all parishes to live and work with the foreign, mostly Belgian, Jesuits.

From them he learnt *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi* as a missionary, as a Jesuit. Those years’ life was tough in the



Chotanagpur mission. Few bikes were available, if there were. One had to cycle through the fields as there were hardly decent roads, or may be plod through the mucky trails.

Fr. Patrick was very good at and quick to master the Mundari language in Khunti and Karra. He also worked in Ulhatu, Samtoli H. School (Rector), Salgaposh, Patrachauli and Kanke (not mentioned sequentially). He had a chance to work with the young energetic Jesuit Louis De Meester (in Khunti); sadly he died young of cancer. He was also with our famous Fr. Herman Rasschaert the martyr at Gerda, who had a booming voice, and the great banker Fr. Albert Van Exem. There were some more “giants” with whom Fr. Patrick had lived and worked. As a Parish Priest in Khunti, with meagre means he built up the Maranghada Parish.

Almost daily he motored to see the work there. The parish buildings or the Church could not be decently built due to paucity of



Fr Henry Barla, SJ
Counsellor, St Xavier's
Doranda

One can see him having occasional banters with his neighbour Fr. Mathias Dungdung (95). Poking the other one says, “You will die first;” swift response comes from the other with a big smile “You will die first.” And their walking sticks meet to clatter.



funds, and it pinched Fr. Patrick rather hard. Some years later, Fr. Patrick was transferred to Salgaposh. He did a great job there.

The local dialect there is Kharia. Patrick neither learnt nor spoke his tribal language, Kharia. Mundari was his channel of communication with the people for years as long as he was in the Munda Disum. Here Sadri was enough! From here he built a Church at Dumkitoli on the boundary line of Jharkhand and Odisha. The people of Dumkitoli are extremely grateful for it. On major feast days, our Fathers from Samtoli go there for liturgical services. Samtoli was a rather relaxing status for Fr. Patrick. There he had not to run around as in parishes, but pray, plan and execute certain needs which he did with great joy. He saw the need for a building and good hall for the high school. He also felt the need for somewhat decent living rooms for the Fathers. He looked for funds and built a new school wing, got the hall reshaped, and made the residence self-contained. During his last innings as Parish Priest, that was in Patrachauli, he felt a great need of Church and residence. The Church wall had cracked and the fissure was getting wider. Fr. Patrick immediately set to plan for both needs. And he did build a new Church and a residence for the Fathers.

One may wonder, and rightly so, especially the sources from where Fr. Patrick got funds. Well, God helps those who help themselves. We may remember that Patrick had several good friends from Europe during his theology days. He never lost track of them but used to keep corresponding with them from time to time. This golden opening was before him when situations as those mentioned above came. The donor agencies were generous because Fr. Patrick was sincere, transparent and trustful. But he capitalized more on earnest prayers to Our Lady who could beg for him. He never forgot to bulldoze God's gate day and night. Like a good beggar he kept looking daily for a letter or two from the donors. And God always answered his prayers. That is how Patrick worked. The works are over. His European friends have all gone to heaven. But Fr. Patrick's simplicity, trustworthiness, availability, sensitivity to the needs of the poor, patience, etc., have remained ingrained. That is who Fr. Patrick is and more.



SECTION C

REPORTS



2020

FORMULATING THE RANCHI PROVINCE APOSTOLIC PLAN (PAP)

Francis Minj, SJ

Genesis

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam as ever inspiring charism helps the Jesuits to discern God's will for greater good in every age. Following this practice, GC 36 explicitly asked Superior General, Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ, to review the Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus. He, in turn, asked all Jesuits and collaborators worldwide to engage in spiritual conversations and suggest the apostolic preferences for the Society of Jesus. Ranchi Province held an extended consult on 31 January 2018 and came out with seven apostolic preferences. Further consultation and spiritual conversations in groups during the Province Days (21 – 24 May 2018) affirmed those preferences. They are: (1) Intellectual engagement in socio-political analysis to address the issues and problems of our times, (2) Empowering the vulnerable, especially tribals, women, children, unorganized youth, and migrants, (3) Defending democratic values, upholding and re-establishing Constitutional principles and safeguarding human rights, (4) Jesuit identity and integral formation, (5) Reconciliation, justice and peace, (6) Ecological degradation and (7) Fundamentalism and a dialogue of cultures and faiths for a peaceful and harmonious life. Post discernment, on 9 June 2018, Ranchi Province sent them to the President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. Among them the Province sent three preferences to Father General.

After receiving all suggestions, Fr General led his extended council into a serious discernment in early January 2019. At the end of the deliberations, the Fr General and his extended council came out with four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) for the Society. Fr General, then, presented the four proposed preferences of the Society to Pope Francis on 17 January 2019. After making his own discernment, Pope Francis officially gave the universal apostolic preferences to the Society. Fr General promulgated the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) on 19 February 2019. He, then, asked each Province to discern and articulate ways and means to live out and implement the Society's preferences in all segments of our ministries.

While the Provinces discussed the apostolic preferences, the JCSA also conducted a simultaneous process of REGAE-II (Reorienting for Greater Apostolic Effectiveness). Both processes culminated in the

Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP)



I
To show the way to God through
Spiritual Exercises and Discernment
(Promotion of Ignatian Spirituality)

II
To accompany young people in the
creation of hope-filled future.

III
To walk with the poor, the outcasts of
the world, those whose dignity
has been violated in a mission of
Reconciliation and Justice.

IV
To collaborate in the care of the
common home.



Fr Francis Minj, SJ
Dean, RTC, Kanke, Ranchi

formulation of the Conference Apostolic Preferences (CAP), rationalized and restructured secretariats of different commissions of the Assistancy. Likewise, each Zone articulated its own Zonal Apostolic Preferences (ZAP) and each Province its own Province Action Plans (PAP). As expected, the UAP functions as the guiding star of the Epiphany and shows the path to all the CAPs, ZAPs and PAPs. Thus, every Jesuit and collaborator shares in the mission of the universal Society.

Formulating the Ranchi Province Apostolic Plan (PAP)

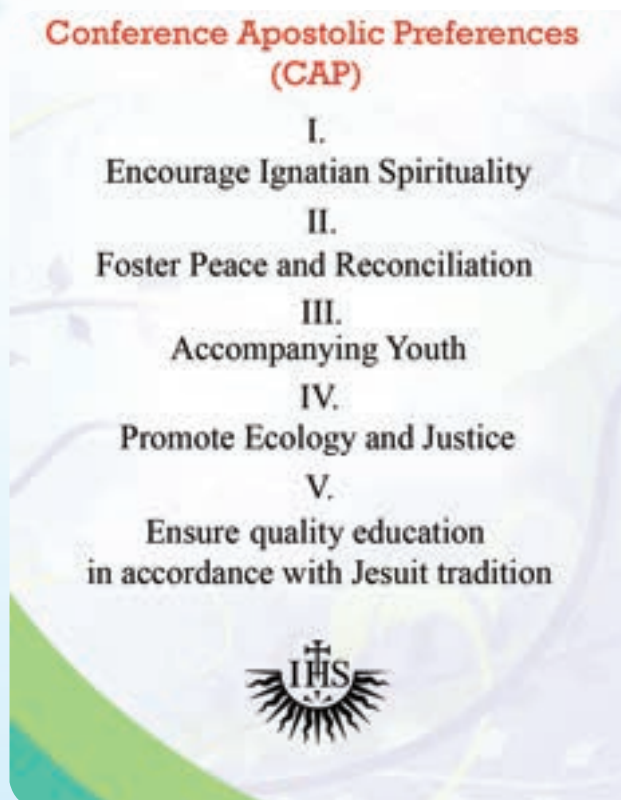
Meanwhile, Covid-19 pandemic stifled our plans for discussion and serious discernment on the Apostolic Preferences during the Province Days in May 2020. All meetings were cancelled, and in effect, all processes of the spiritual conversation, discernment and articulation of the Province Apostolic Plan. During this challenging time, Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ, assumed the office of the Provincial and pursued the matter. He formed a committee of six Jesuits: Fr Francis Minj (Coordinator), Fr Xavier Soreng, Fr Joseph Marianus Kujur, Fr Medard Xalxo, Fr Francis David Kullu and Sch. Ajay Paulus Minz. Then, through a letter dated 30 September 2020, he asked all the Ranchi Jesuits to conduct spiritual conversation on the Universal Apostolic Preferences

(UAP) in order to articulate our Province Apostolic Plan (PAP) in sync with the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP), Conference Apostolic Preferences (CAP) and Zonal Apostolic Preferences (ZAP).

Many difficulties confronted us: Covid-19 pandemic left about a dozen Jesuits diseased and 14 of them deceased. Strict lockdown precluded all possibilities of having organized meetings. Communication became another big issue as some of our communities still remain electronically unreachable both in the mainland and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Being aware of the problems, committee at its first meeting, decided to provide a format for the Province men so that it was easy to tabulate. In the second meeting on 11 October 2020, the committee approved the format prepared by Fr Francis David Kullu. Fr Provincial sent another letter with the finalized format on 13 October 2020 asking the Province men to submit the data by 30 November. Despite all odds, overwhelming and creative responses from almost all the 46 communities, institutions and ministries and 11 commissions added up to 1338 activities!

Two important points worth noting emerge from the proposed goals and activities sent by different communities and apostolates: (1) they are very meaningful, practical, implementable and well discerned but (2) they represent the communities of the place, not necessarily the Province as a whole. Hence, after scrutinizing all the proposed goals and activities, the committee grouped them under five Apostolic Preferences of Ranchi Province according to the frequencies they occurred in the reports. They are: (1) Being rooted and grounded in Ignatian Spirituality and sharing the same with others, (2) Walking with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, particularly the tribals, for peace, justice, reconciliation and harmony, (3) Understanding and accompanying youth for a meaningful life and a hope-filled future, (4) Caring for and Preserving our common home and promoting ecological justice and biodiversity, (5) Being men of competence, commitment, conscience and compassion to ensure quality and value-based education in accordance with the Jesuit tradition and heritage

While prayerfully deliberating on the types of objectives and activities, the committee felt it necessary to tabulate them under each of the Universal Apostolic Preferences. The committee retained the original objectives and



Ranchi Province Apostolic Preferences (PAPs)

- 1 Being rooted and grounded in Ignatian Spirituality and sharing the same with others
- 2 Walking with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, particularly the tribals, for peace, justice, reconciliation and harmony
- 3 Understanding and accompanying youth for a meaningful life and a hope-filled future
- 4 Caring for and Preserving our common home and promoting ecological justice and biodiversity
- 5 Being men of competence, commitment, conscience and compassion to ensure quality and value-based education in accordance with the Jesuit tradition and heritage
- 6 Promoting vocations and ensuring quality formation with good formation policy, programme, structure and implementation

activities submitted by individual communities for future references, but the committee also selected the objectives and activities according to their frequencies and eliminated or regrouped those activities that were similar or almost the same in order to avoid repetitions. As suggested, different communities and commissions had also added the fifth preference applicable to the Province.

On 9 December, the committee took up the tabulated data for analysis according to objectives and activities. In a prayerful discernment, the committee in the fourth meeting on 14 December, revised the objectives and finalized PAPs. The committee held its fifth meeting on 22 December and fine-tuned the objectives and activities. With the final presentation on PAPs, action plan and format finalized, the members of the committee shared responsibilities to give final shape to each section. In short, every member of the committee worked assiduously ever since the task came in their hand. While fine-tuning the objectives and activities, the committee merged and reformulated some of them without losing their original intent and content.

Next task for the committee was to align the goals and activities of different communities and commissions to those five preferences. While the committee retained the original proposals from individual communities for future reference for their specificities, the committee grouped them into 20 objectives (goals) and 130 activities under five apostolic preferences. Thus, after serious deliberations, personal and group works, the committee presents the Ranchi Province Apostolic Plan (PAP) to implement the Universal Apostolic

Preferences (UAP). The preferences, objectives and activities represent all individuals and communities of the Province because they have been collated from the reports obtained from the communities.

PAP and its Future

A review and evaluation committee constituted by Fr Provincial will further monitor the progress of the proposed activities, evaluate and also might give a new orientation according to the emerging needs and changes wrought by different forces and circumstances. As such, the preferences are to percolate to every segment of our ministries. On behalf of the committee, I wish all communities, commissions and ministries a stupendous success in this meaningful journey at this point in history. This journey, I believe, is the call of the Lord (SpEx 92-98) that demands our generous response. The committee thanks every Jesuit and community of the Province for your insights, prayerful support and valuable contributions.

We learned from one another while we worked together. All the members of the committee—Frs. Francis David, Xavier, Medard, Joseph Marianus and Sch. Ajay Paulus deserve a deep sense of gratitude for their insights, suggestions and contributions. Fr Francis David Kullu provided technical help and Sch. Ajay Paulus Minz chipped in his artistic contribution. We hope and pray that the PAPs become guideposts for shaping the mission of the Society for the greater good of humanity and for the greater glory of our Creator during this catastrophic time.

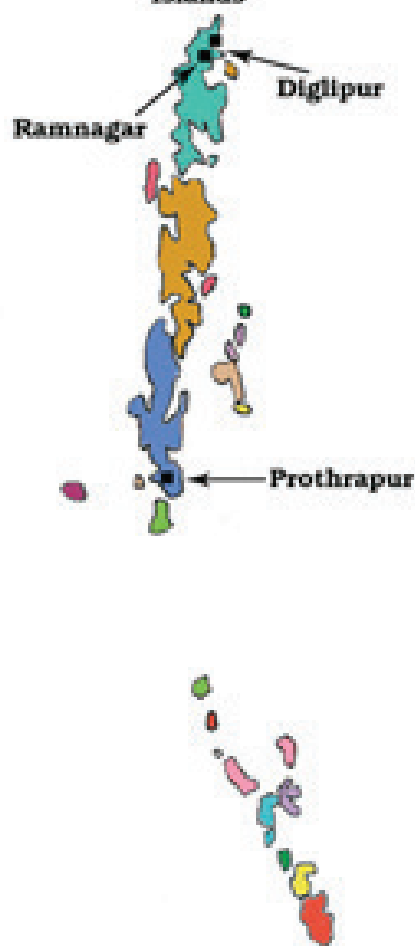
JESUITS PRESENCE IN ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS SINCE 1711 A.D.

Fr. Alexius Dungdung, SJ

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are spread from north to south in the Bay of Bengal to Indian ocean. From North, Bay of Bengal to south, Indian Ocean, from north Diglipur island to south Campbell Bay (great Car Nicobar Islands). The sea route is available from ancient days. And it was the only means to travel to different islands. Big and small islands comprise Andamans, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay full of dense forests. Out of 572 plus islands only 36 islands are inhabited. Aboriginal tribes are Jarawa, Sentenalis, onge, Andamanees, Nicobaris, etc. The rest of the people are migrants from Indian states and other closer countries, like Burma, Malesia, Jawa & Sumatra, etc.

The concept of 'Kala Pani' has disappeared. Islands have become a tourist place. Many Indians come to the isles as tourist for holidays. Its main city is Port Blair, is connected with Air as well as sea routes from the Indian cities and ports and from other countries. The Andaman is connected by ATR (land route), sea and air routes. Southern Isles are connected with sea routes only. Port Blair city is developing very fast. All facilities are available here like any other cities of India.

Ranchi Province in Andman Islands



Jesuits Presence In The Islands: Since 1711 A.D.

FIRST ATTEMPT: With missionary zeal many religious priests have passed through this sea routes of the islands to reach East Indies (Jawa, Sumatra, Indonesia, Japan, Chinese Islands and during the time of second world war to Burma), etc. The first attempt was made by the two Jesuit Missionaries from Carnatic- Pondicherry mission. These two French Jesuits landed at Car Nicobar Island in the year 1711 A.D. They faced lots of difficulties from the local tribes and were killed by them.

SECOND ATTEMPT: In 1836 A.D. four French Jesuits landed in the same island from the same Jesuit mission (Carnatic-Pondicherry mission). They worked very hard to be friendly with them. They translated their dialect into Roman Script. They left no stone unturned to be with them and with their culture, but hostility grew so much that they had to leave their



Fr Alexius Dungdung, SJ
Missionary in Andamans

mission. The local tribes did not like the colonialists among them.

THIRD ATTEMPT

The Ranchi Jesuit-Mission:1918-1954:

The consequences of the First World War damaged and destroyed supply line completely in France. To restore this damaged terrain labour force was needed. The British officers recruited 2000 tribals of Ranchi (the Chotanagpurians) as supply men. Twelve Hundred of them were Catholics and some others from different parts of the country. Fr. Orey, SJ of St. John's school Ranchi led them to France on 13th June, 1917. These people repaired the rough and damaged terrain before the stipulated time. In 1918 war was coming to an end and Army left recruiting from Ranchi. After finishing the job they returned to Ranchi with great joy of their home coming. Meanwhile message reached British Officers in Andamans that Ranchi people are very strong and laborious. They wanted labors from Ranchi. In Chotanagpur there was a time of famine at that period. The 800 people from France returned to Ranchi on 16th July, 1919. It was a tough time for the Jesuits to get job for them. During that period Mr. M. Bonig, Divisional Forest Officer (D.F.O) Diglipur, reached Ranchi, visited Ranchi Jesuits at Manresa House, the Jesuit Mission Superiors' Residence. The fathers were happy to have some solution available for the time being. The terms and conditions were agreed upon. Initially Fathers agreed to send their men for six months and they had to return home. The British Officer agreed to the conditions. The Fathers' immediate problem was solved. The first batch of 400 men was sent to Andaman without any priest. They landed in

Carleu Island in 1918 and from there they were sent to different islands to work. In the year 1919, the first week of May Fr. Van Esbeck S.J., the Parish Priest of Ranchi visited these people in the islands. Away from home and their family members and acquaintance they lived happily in the remote islands. Every Sunday they were gathering for church and prayers. One of them would lead the prayer and play the role of catechist. He was teaching prayers, songs, and leading Rosaries. Fr. Van Esbeck, SJ was pleased with their religious practices. He gave them religious instructions encouraging and supporting them by his precious presence among them. After staying one month with them he returned to Ranchi. While coming back laborers sent money, news, and letters for their families. The Father (s) faithfully brought back their messages. The expiry date of their contract got over and the second batch of 327 men were ready to go to Andaman. Many volunteered to go for the second time. They were in high spirits. Then third, fourth and fifth batches went and later it became a routine exercise. Many batches went and many Jesuit priests accompanied them for a month. This practice of pastoral visit took place till they got the residential priest in Andaman (Rose Island, close to Port Blair) 1947. The whole of Andaman there was only one parish, Port Blair. The priest had to tour from north to south for his pastoral work.

Catholic Labour Bureau in Ranchi :

Through Labor Bureau Jesuits sent many labour forces to Andamans. It was monopoly of the Jesuits to send labourers to the isles. It was their obligation to make their pastoral visit as their mission tour. Through their pastoral visit they were taking care for their people in far away land. They had the responsibility that all the terms and conditions are implemented and their dignified life is preserved. Slowly many agencies and companies stood in Ranchi and Kolkata to break the monopoly of the Jesuits. By hook and crook other agencies put pressure on the priests of Ranchi, so they had to close the catholic bureau/ Father Challan/Saheb Challan / Mission Challan. The Jesuit Fathers stopped sending labor force to Andamans, but continued making their Pastoral tours. Now many private agencies minted money for sending men to Andamans. They had to get commission for their job now.

During W. W. II 1938-1945:



During the time of world war II the Andaman–Nicobar Islands came under the occupancy of Japanese army. The many Chotanagpurians came back to their home, and those who were unable to come back were left to their own fate. It brought the toughest time for Ranchi community. Many lost their jobs, and there was little to eat. Everywhere hunger and frustration prevailed. After the dropping of Atom Bomb in Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan, it surrendered to the allied forces. Once again islands came under the British rule. The British officers again approached the Ranchi Jesuits to give courage and solace to their people. This time Fr. Roland Bossuyet, SJ, a Belgian citizen Ranchi Jesuit visited the Islands. He made it a point that his visit must be of pastoral tour to his dear ones. Before independence Catholics of the islands were officially taken care of by the Arch Bishop of Rangoon, Burma (1928- 1947).

After the independence:

In 1947 A.D. Islands became part of Ranchi Arch Diocese. Since this time onwards Catholics of the isles were directly under Ranchi Arch Diocese. Ranchi took great interest to look after their people and the other catholic communities. The Arch Bishop of Ranchi regularly sent Jesuits for pastoral tours. The Ranchi catholic community demanded the residential priests for them so that their connection remains intact with the mainland. In 1947 the Arch Diocese of Ranchi sent a first residential priest, Fr. John Decoq , SJ, a Belgian Jesuit of Ranchi. His residence and church was built in

the Ross Island near Port Blair. When the government administrative buildings were shifted from Ross Island to Port Blair Fr. Decoq , SJ also shifted his presbytery and church to Phoenix Bay, Port Blair. The new church and residence was completed and blessed on 08.12.1950. From here the church activities were intensified. In 1953 his successor was Fr. Van Verelst, SJ. Due to some misunderstanding with government officials he was expelled from Andaman in April, 1955. He came back to Ranchi, Catholic Labor Bureau stopped sending men from Chotanagpur. They started going through different agencies. For eight months there was no priest. Faithful had Christmas without priest in Port Blair. Also Labor Bureau / Mission challan/ Saheb Challan/ Father Challan was fully stopped. No more labors came through this agency. The Ranchi Arch Bishop sent two diocesan priests, Rev. Fr. John Lakra and Rev. Patras Lakra. They opened Nirmala School in 1960 at Port Blair. St. Anne's Sisters of Ranchi came to Port Blair in the same year, and helped Diocesan priests to run the school and in their pastoral work. The Arch Bishop Pius Kerketta, SJ made his first pastoral visit to Andaman in 1962. In his first maiden journey he travelled by boats and he felt that there was a great need of more priests in the isles. He also felt the dire need of transit house in Calcutta for rest house till they board the ship for sailing to Port Blair. He approached Pillar Fathers (SFX) from Goa in 1964. The SFX Fathers were given charge of the Islands in 1965. Under their supervision and care Andaman and Nicobar developed in different spheres of life. Faith grew and became stronger. Bishop of Ranchi made its pastoral visit now and then. In 1984



Port Blair Diocese was created and Rev. Alex Dias, SFX became the first bishop of the Diocese. Under his leadership and guidance the diocese grew stronger and steady. His Grace invited various religious groups to work in his vineyard. Now there are five men religious, nine women Religious and Diocesan priests working in the Diocese.

Fourth Phase Of Jesuits' Presence: 1987 onwards :

In this period Rev. Bp. Alex Dias, SFX, the Bishop of Andaman and Nicobar Islands asked help from Ranchi Jesuit province. Ranchi Jesuits had a precious opportunity to resume their long cherished and forgotten apostolic work in the islands. After 33 years of Jesuits' absence in the islands Ranchi Jesuit provincial sent Fr. Vital Ekka, SJ, to the islands. He left for Andamans on 19th August, 1987 and reached Mayabunder parish. From there he moved to North Andaman and started Diglipur parish in the same year 1987. As soon as he started living at Diglipur his zealous missionary spirit moved him to search for the lost sheep in the deep and thick forest land. Very often he used to watch people in Diglipur market /bazaar, seeing their faces and listening to their familiar "Sadani" language, intervened them, saying in their own language, " Kaisan aha na /bhai ? "(How are you, my brother?). With familiar faces, he continued conversing. The people were very happy to talk with him. They invited him to their families. Thus by visiting them he found out the lost people of north Andamans. With tender love and care he looked after them. He organized them and intensified his pastoral work. In north Andaman there was only one parish, Diglipur. Now there are four parishes namely, Diglipur, Ram Nagar (Jesuits are working), Radha Nagar and Kala Pahar.

Ranchi Jesuits under the Bishop's direction involved themselves in the pastoral work in the diocese. They felt one among them. In spite of the hardships and difficulties they found joy and happiness to be with them in their ministries. They faced the smooth boating in the seas and occasionally rough storms of the sea. In the islands they moved on foot. For the pastoral tour they had to close their residence a week and come back for Sunday mass. Since 1987 many high and low tides have come and gone to the sea shores, similarly many Jesuits have worked in the diocese and still working in it. At present the POSA is also sending the spiritual fathers

in the diocese. Many more Jesuits have experienced the joy of giving their services to the diocese. In the diocese Jesuits are in Prothrapur (Port Blair), Diglipur, Ram Nagar and Katchal (used to be).

New Venture In Jesuit Ministry:

It is a recent development in the Jesuit ministry in Islands that Andaman & Nicobar diocese has initiated to invite Jesuits to open the new English Medium School in Diglipur, North Andaman. The Ranchi Jesuits have baptized it as Loyola Academy. It will have from Nursery to standard XII. Right now we have two Jesuits (Fr. Alexius Dungdung, SJ and Fr Roshan Bage, SJ) involved in this ministry.

Spiritual Ministry In The Diocese:

In the diocese one spiritual Father is appointed by the POSA for the priests and religious. His ministry is travelling far and wide to provide spiritual food for the priests, religious and others.

Diglipur the growing City: Now Diglipur has been connected by air, land and sea routes. Its population is about 48 thousand, (Bengali, Ranchi community, Tamil, Telgu, Malyali and some other migrants are living here). Its main languages are Bengali, Sadri and Hindi, etc. It has an Army base head quarter, Naval base, Areal Bay sea port, Mud volcano, beautiful Islands with their own natural beauty, longest river of the island, Saddle peak,(the highest mountain), Air force and Air Port at Shibpur, (yet to be opened for public) full of areca-nut, Twin Islands (Rose and Smith) and its beauty, etc. It is a fast growing city and shows great potential to flourish as a great city.

Sources:

- » Diocese of Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, cath.directory 2018.
- » The Mission of West Bengal, By Fr. H. Josson, s. j.
- » "Chotanagpur Ke Adivasiyon ka Andaman pravasan ewam Vikas me Yogdan" 1918-1990, By Dr. Agapit Tirkey.

FRONT LINE WORKERS OF MANRESA SERVICE 24x7

Bro. Telesphore Horo, SJ

Quite often we Jesuits think of how to minister people pastorally, educationally or socially. We hardly give due importance to health sector. The Province infirmary situated in the campus of Manresa House, Ranchi is trying to bridge this gap by serving scores of Jesuits from within the Province and even outside.

There are six health staff in the Province Infirmary. Srs. Lucy Soreng and Suchita Kujur are two St. Anne's Sisters who are trained nurses. They are available in the infirmary round the clock to serve our ailing Jesuits. Mr. Ranjit Xaxa is a male helper. After his service to the infirmary for about two years, Mr. Ajay left the work due to some personal reasons. In his place Mr. Stephen Sanga has joined the infirmary as a new male helper. The male helpers do their night duties in turn. Mrs. Elizabeth and Mrs. Helen are female helpers. Br Telesphore Horo, SJ, a trained nurse himself, is pursuing his Teachers Training Course (T.T.C.), In spite of it, he avails himself in critical times to render his service to sick Jesuits. Dr. Samir Kujur gives his service to the inmates once a week on a regular basis as the House Doctor. However, he can be contacted in emergency at any time. Even our Novice Master is very generous in availing the novices. He gives novices generously to help the inmates.

The infirmary wasn't unaffected by Covid-19. It had created a lot of fear and apprehension in inmates. While serving some Corona-affected patients, Bro. Telesphore himself contracted the disease. In the quarantine period he learnt how to take care of Covid-affected patients practically. He felt that it was a grace for him because he overcame the sickness and he could give practical suggestions to

home isolated people. The pandemic period of Covid-19 also proved to be a grace and means of discipline to some of our inmates in the infirmary. Quite a few inmates were very frequent to go out and used to risk their health and life before the pandemic. But the fear of Covid-19 controlled and disciplined them to remain in the campus. As a result, practically all inmates are safe and sound, and are enjoying their good health. Now we have a separate dining room where inmates take breakfast, lunch and supper separately. This too prevented the already elderly and sickly Jesuits from contracting Corona.

Presently, there are several Jesuits recuperating from their sickness in the infirmary. Fr Robert Kindo, Fr Benjamine Lakra, Fr Pratap Toppo, Fr Mathias Dungdung, Fr Patrick Tete, Br Habil Kujur and Fr Clement Ekka are permanent members of the infirmary. Fr Cyprian Ekka, Fr Dharamshil Kujur, Fr Britius Ekka, Fr Patrick Xalxo and Fr Anupchand Kiran Minj and Fr Rajesh Sandil will remain here until they recover fully from their respective ailment. Some Jesuits, like Fr Ephrem Baa, Fr Christopher Lakra, Fr Marc De Brouwer and Fr Abraham Minj went back to their respective places after staying here for some days in the infirmary. Province Infirmary has also been generous to the Jesuits and collaborators of other neighbouring provinces, such as, Dumka, Hazaribag, and Madhya Pradesh. It was more evident during the Covid-19 Pandemic.



Br Telesphore Horo, SJ
Province Infirmary,
Manresa House, Ranchi



BOOK RELEASES/REVIEWS

Edwin Ritesh Dungdung, SJ

Over the years Ranchi Province has been contributing to the intellectual ministry of the society of Jesus by publishing many books/articles. In the previous Year Books of Ranchi Jesuits the list of the books and publications were released. Here continuing with the tradition we have six more in the kitty.

Religion, Conversion and Identity: A Sociological Study of the Urãoñs in Chotanagpur

Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ

The book entitled 'Religion, Conversion and Identity: A Sociological Study of the Urãoñs in Chotanagpur' of 326 pages, published by Primus Publications, New Delhi, in 2020, is an academic work of more than 15 years. Academic rigour, intensive fieldwork, historiography and critical analysis have



shaped the book in its present form. The theme being sensitive, it was quite challenging not to be polemic and stick to the basics of an objective research. The book is an outcome of single-minded devotion with personal sacrifices to the intellectual ministry.

The study has been set in the theoretical perspective of religious conversion in general and that of tribal identity of Christians in particular. It views how the formation of the identity of a distinctive ethnic group of converts, in this case that of the Urãoñ tribe of Chotanagpur, takes place over a period of time. The study explores how there are continuous negotiations leading thereby to the restructuring of the identity of converts' community in relation to those of the non-converts, especially to that of the Urãoñ Sarnās. The study observes that although there are compatibilities between both the communities in terms of Constitutional mandate and sameness in their cultural perceptions and manifestations, collective histories and ancestry, there are also problematic angles in their social relationships as they continue to be dichotomized as insider-outsider and same-different in everyday life. The formation of a new community through religious differentiation highlights the multiplicity of identity and its fluidity. The book deals with critical and relevant questions in the realm of the sociology of religion, the sociology of politics and the sociology of identity. It deals in particular with the question of identity of the tribal converts to Christianity and the tribal Christians who constitute a new community. However, this book makes a departure from the available literature. This study adds to the existing knowledge in the sociological discipline, religious



Fr Edwin Ritesh
Dungdung, SJ
Dean, Scholasticate,
Manresa House, Ranchi

studies and social anthropological studies. The book is based on intensive field work in the Malti village of Ranchi district, in the state of Jharkhand in central India. It has also used historical and other documents available at different organizations/institutions.

मंज़िलों के पार: A Polar Star to Guide One's Destiny is a miniature imitation of the spirit of the early Jesuit dramatics, academic and scholarly tradition by **Fr Irenius Toppo, SJ**. This book containing seven one act plays was scripted and enacted in the auditorium of St. Mary's High School, Samtoli, Simdega scaling from 2010-2007 during his prefectship in the hostel. The themes focus on the mainstay conflicts, undercurrents, struggles, searches and confusions of the adolescents and youth. The characters depicted primarily were the hostellers. Shows were put up not less than 7 times a week prefiguring the Annual Fest of the Founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius of Loyola on 31st July. Aiming at attaining the skill of eloquence and oratory this focused more on dialogue and acting so as to instill confidence and sense of identity in the students. Dialogues were purely original and colloquially palatable to the audience with the flavour of vernacular jibes. Male and female lead and cocasts were drawn and rehearsed from the real student life situation and campus atmosphere and settings. This attracted much audience and accolade in the locality. All the paraphernalia of modern drama with the light and sound and LCD projector and Power Point effects added the fanfare to it with as less props as affordably practicable. The opening, closing and intervals included modern thrillers, hip-hops and key addresses of the Principals. The themes of the plays were succinctly presented

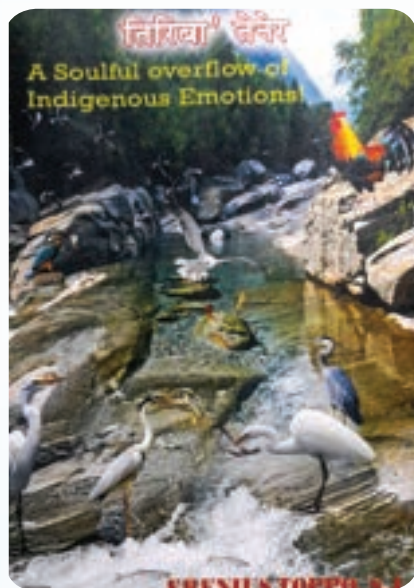
in the beginning. The tones were by invoking the Divine which are known as muses in the plays of William Shakespeare in the 16th century Renaissance setting.

तिरिबा' तेनेर: A Soulful Overflow of Powerful Emotions, (which literally encapsulates "Blessings from Above") is the maiden composition of Fr Irenius Toppo, SJ as a poet. This is the compact of 32 original poems in Kharia in two distinct segments. First part is richly descriptive and reflective outlaying closely knit vibrant Kharia life and living lived out and keenly observed in the villages round the seasons; depicting the symphony and harmony with flora and fauna and peaceful, joyous communitarian coexistence. Some compositions are near sonnets or at par. The Second Part is a narrative embedding the sequential order of nuptial rites and rituals. They are lyrical, rhythmic and narrative in nature.

The print and publication owes to the repeated plea of Kharia intelligentsia in Ranchi to provide the Regional Language Department, Ranchi University with the texts for Graduation and Post Graduation curriculum. This is also a tiny literary contribution towards attaining 8th Schedule status to Kharia language in the Indian constitutional provision. Fr. Paulus Kullu, SJ and Dr. Fr. Joachim Dundung, SJ of fond recent memories are the inspirations in this uncharted domain. Dr. Anil Birendra Kullu has been a constant support and motivating factor and force owing to his affinity with Kharia language and allegiance to Ranchi University.

Ukaab Ki Udaan

Ukaab Ki Udaan – is the first book of Fr Francis David Kullu, SJ, written in Hindi, which the author calls – an expression of his heart in terms of his short stories. It is his first attempt to fly high like an eagle with the wings



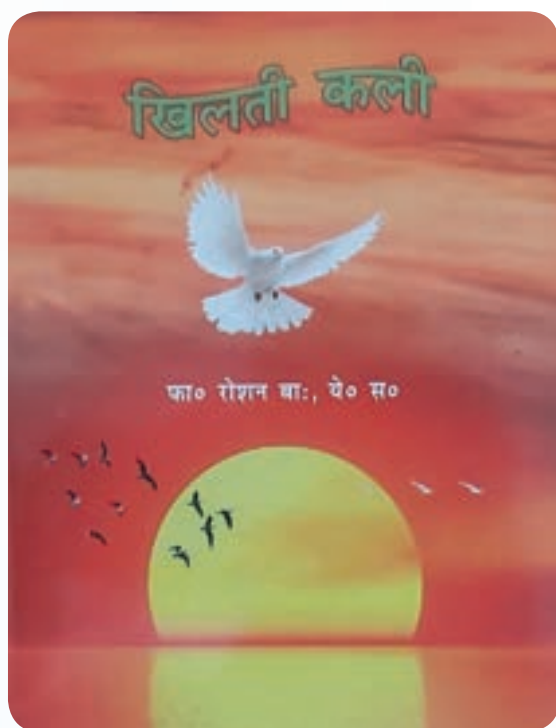


of imagination, life experience reflection and creativity. The title of the book – Ukaab Ki Udaan means “Flight of an Eagle”. He deeply believes that we can fly high, provided we have two wings- Simplicity and Purity. Simplicity must be in the intention and purity in the affection.

The book is a collection of 25 stories written in Hindi in the span of five years. The book was published by Xavier Publications with the ISBN: 978-93-85408-13-7, printed at Catholic Press, Ranchi in May 2017 and is being solely distributed by Satya Bharti, Ranchi. The Ranchi Jesuits has all the copyright over it. The illustrations have been done by Sch. Ajay Paulus Minz, SJ. The foreword given by None other than great Hindi scholar Fr. Dr Mathias Dungdung, SJ summarizes beautifully the important elements of a story. “Though Fr Francis David Kullu obtained master’s degree in Computer Science from famous Madras University” he accepts, “He has great interest and capabilities in Literature as well. The book proves that!” All the stories have also been published in Nishkalanka, the value based Christian Monthly Magazine. One of them was awarded as the best story by Sandesh Monthly

Magazine. If you have not yet read, it is worth reading!

Khilti Kali



A poet’s heart is a chiselled diamond, and when any human experience falls upon it, it is reflected and spread far and wide. When the human eye falls on the vast universe, the different hues of nature affect it in various ways, filling it with joy or welling it up with tears. Indeed, the notes of nature are diverse. Poetry is the expression of sublime emotions, the spontaneous articulation of powerful feelings. When the soul’s bud opens and blooms, it gives an experience of sovereignty, a feeling of utmost power and liberty. The pure and free spirit experiences divine power on witnessing the activities of the multi-coloured and multifarious nature. Khilti Kali by Fr. Roshan Baa, S.J. is a poetic offering made to the Almighty. It is a witness to his spiritual upliftment. It reflects not just the devotion to God’s power, but also the identification of the soul with the divine. The one hundred and sixty-four poems published in the book carry the sense of not just devotion and faith in all that exists – known or unknown, powerful and strong, but also that of a unification with the Omnipotent. In these poems, Fr. Roshan has depicted divinity as the desirable with the help of his personal experiences and realizations, societal perspectives and tribal culture. These poems also give an impression of the poet’s determined lifestyle characterised by self-confidence, willpower and

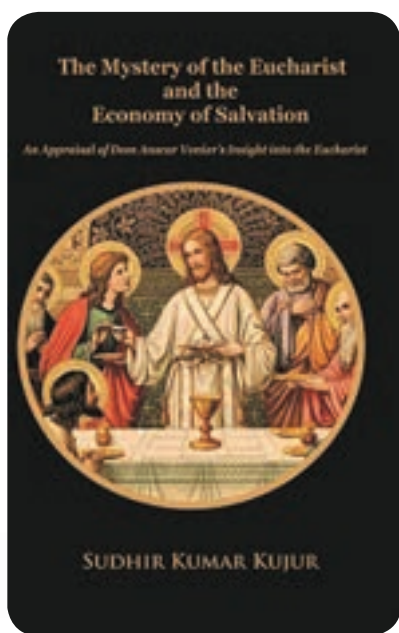
unwavering perseverance. The sense of fulfilment attracts the human spirit at all times, and when that happens, one starts to perceive the rest of the world with greater intimacy and affection. At this stage, the dearest God’s shadow is seen everywhere in the universe. These poems contain the poet’s desire for love, devotion, knowledge, reclusion and peace, and also publish explicitly the unshakeable devotion and unparalleled love for the Almighty. The poet not only prays for the darkness of helplessness to be quelled, but also wishes for the predominance of

jubilance and delight in the lives of men and women. The book has not just preserved human values, but has also dignified them. The poet has sung about the glory of God (“Tere Bin Main Veeraan”) and has also urged himself for spiritual awakening (“Jaag Jaa Mera Man”). The poet finds peace in submitting himself to the Almighty (“Mera Sab Tan-Man-Dhan Arpan”). The poem “Tu Hai Mera Charwaha” bears the wonderful sense of a complete union of mankind, the consciousness of seeing others as a reflection of oneself and one’s soul as a mirror to the entire humankind. The individual and mankind are inseparable – that is why the poet calls light the nectar of life (“Jeevan Jyoti ka Paraag”). The poet regards the appreciation and devotion to the divine light of the Almighty that illumines our hearts, opens our eyes and brightens our homes, as the fundamental mantra of life. When the divine Keeper looks after us, then the joy we derive is boundless, everlasting and wonderful.

All poems in the book are replete with the sense of goodwill, compassion and the concern for human welfare. The poet, as far as is possible, tries to imbue man and woman with the ability to sympathise and also prays for the world to be rejuvenated and radiant. Devoid of all linguistic affectations, the poems are never the produce of the poet’s wobbling pen (unlike what he modestly states in the Preface), but the pleasurable expression of his vivid and pure feelings. The poet is close to God and this realization has been depicted in the final poem “Khuda ki Baarish Meri Aankhon me Aaya”. The poet can feel earnestly and deeply; his experiences are diverse, his expressions clear and his vocabulary rich. May his creative inspiration light up again in the near future, and may the bud bloom again. Wishing Fr. Roshan Baa, SJ, the best.

(Dr. Kamal Kumar Bose, Associate Professor & HOD, Department of Hindi, St. Xavier’s College, Ranchi.)

The mystery of the Eucharist and the Economy of Salvation



Martin Vonier, later known as Dom Anscar Vonier, OSB after joining the Benedictines, was a top name in the field of Theology of the sacrament of the Eucharist. He had been a forceful exponent of the underlying principles of the sacred sciences. The book titled, “The mystery of the Eucharist and the Economy of Salvation” is a critical appraisal of his theology of the sacrament of the Eucharist by Fr Sudhir Kumar Kujur, SJ. The book has been published by the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK), New Delhi and is available online in Amazon, one of the e-commerce giants.

The arrival of the book in the year 2021 amid the onslaught of Covid-19 pandemic worldwide with its multi-dimensional impacts proves to be a precious and much needed gift to the readers in general and to the people of Christian tradition in particular. At a time of Covid-19 disruption when faith life is questioned and sacramental life is challenged, the book rediscovers and restates the inherent dynamic nature of the sublime sacrament – the Eucharist. In the book the author has portrayed Vonier’s significant insights into the Eucharist and his understanding of Philosophical, Anthropology, Christology, Pneumatology and Ecclesiology and thereby provided the readers with the

whole spectrum of Christian tradition. The author has presented them in a systematic and comprehensive body of doctrine against the broad horizon of the economy of salvation. The book has been divided into three parts. The first part deals with the Historico-Theological background of Dom Anscar Vonier’s Understanding of the Eucharist. The second part deals with a chronological exposition of his Eucharistic Theology and the third part provides an evaluative and prognostic synthesis of his Eucharistic Theology.

Many congratulations to Fr Sudhir Kumar Kujur, SJ. Fr Kujur obtained his S.T.D. from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He is a resident professor at Regional Theology Center, Ranchi, an extension of the Faculty of Theology, Vidyajyoti, Delhi.

21 June 2020: First vows of the Novices at Ashirvad-Jharna

Six novices took their first vows in the Society of Jesus in a small congregation of about 50 at 9.30 AM at Ashirvad-Jharna Novitiate, Namkum, on 21 June 2020. The well conducted Holy Eucharist with devotional hymns sung by the first year novices. Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ received the vows, who in his homily dwelt upon the following points: that there are a few people from among the tens of millions who listen carefully, among the careful listeners there are a few who understand it, among those who understand it a few like it, and among those who like it there a few who follow it. That is what is vocation and is called by the Lord.

Among the three young men in the Gospel who volunteered to follow Jesus' tough propositions of the future life were given to them. They had to be



prepared for it rather than regret in the end as having wasted their life and labour in vain. The disciple is to bring "the salvation of the Lord to the end of the earth." The Lord assures every follower unconditional and lasting support in the midst of trials and hardships. He says "the Lord is bigger than all our fears." Mother Teresa teaches us as she says: "I am a broken pencil; the Lord sharpens me all the time." "What you are is a gift of God to you; what you become is your gift to God."

Those who took the vows at Ashirvad-Jharna were: Schs. Amit Barla, Chhatapahar, Ashwin Kindo, Rengarih, Ashwin Tigga, Malom Noatoli, Benojit Narzari, Udalguri (Tezpur), Rasal P. Xess, Samsera, Thomas Purty, Gaurbera (Khunti); 2 Novices took their vows in Balipara Assam: Rohit Toppo, Tongo and Shashi Shamir Dhanwar, Prothrapur, Andamans, 3 at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag: Damien Bara, Namkum, Samlong, Oswald Ekka, Prothrapur, Andamans, and Joseph Prashant Toppo.

Scholastic Anand Minj, SJ, pronounced his first vows on Sunday 20 December 2020 at Manresa House Chapel. Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ, received his vows. Present were his some 6 family members and the Fathers and Brothers of nearby communities. Sch. Anand could not take his vows together with his co-novices on 21 June 2020 as he was suffering from a serious health problem. He was perfectly alright in six months which enabled him for the vows. The ceremony was simple but meaningful and most significant for Anand as he rode upon the uncertainty of his future in health and life itself. A person of perseverance and courage which made him unwaveringly strong in his vocation, he epitomized the sense of service, tenacity in work accompanying covid-19 patients and other sick Jesuits. Surely God will bless him with

Fr Ajay Soreng, SJ
Secretary, Sadbhavna,
Ranchi

many more untapped qualities yet in him.

26 November 2020: Blessing of the newly the western wing of St. John's English Medium School:

St. John's English Medium School is recently born to the Province (2008). But in 12 years it has catapulted into a massive structure in all four sides and excellent education. It has responded to the need of the time and the aspiration of the public expediently. On 26 November 2020 all the three floors, second, third and the fourth, of the Western Wing of the school were blessed by Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ. All the Jesuit fraternity of Ranchi Zone was present. It was a happy moment and the sense of fellow feeling and growing together prevailed.



An atmosphere of the celebration in both, that of thanking the Lord for His gracious kindness to the School as well as the hearts exhilarating with the items on the dinner table. The blessing was a sign of growth and consolidation of the vision of our first Fathers of the Province in the field of education. In the end all praised and wished well the Superior, Principals and the members of St. John's Community.

3 December 2020: Blessing and dedication of Auditorium, at Manresa House, Ranchi:

The 3rd of December is a historic date the Society of Jesus keeps it as a special memorial date when 5 centuries ago the great missionary and founding member Jesuit died on Sancian Island, off the Chinese Coast. To commemorate that august date Ranchi Province chose it to dedicate and bless yet another three historic floors built upon the very soil where the first missionaries of Ranchi Province including Fr. Constant Lievens lived, logged and drained

out themselves, blessed and named after: 1) The top floor (The second floor) - Fr. Herman Rasschaert Auditorium, 2) The first floor, Br. Louis Minj Wing (the first tribal Jesuit of Ranchi Province) and the Ground Floor, after Fr. Constant Lievens Infirmary. A great many Jesuits of the Province congregated for the blessing and dedication ceremony. Fr. Provincial led the Eucharistic Holy Mass when eulogies of these three great men were read out for the emulation of the Province men. There was an aura of awe and wonder for what the Lord has done through these men for the people and the land of Chota Nagpur. Their memory is eternal residing in the heart of every



Jesuit.

21 December 2020: Jubilee Celebration at Province Level

The 21st of December, Monday, was the most significant and memorable day, when the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Province Jubilarians of 2020: 1) Fr. Alexius Ekka, 2) Fr. Britius Ekka, 3) Fr. Nicholas Tete and 4) Br. Isidore



Ekka, was celebrated at the Fr. Herman Rasschaert Auditorium at Manresa House. Fr. Alexius Ekka officiated at the Holy Eucharist while Fr. Nicholas Tete delivered a personal life experience homily, quoting the great and inspiring examples of the recent past missionaries from his communities and the Province. Their lives had been the track records of wonder and achievements which undoubtedly induced Fr. Nicholas to join the Society of Jesus. Like Fr. Nicholas other three Jubilarian compatriots also have done wonders, achieved success during their tenure of office and have

contributed hugely to the Province. The Jesuit family gathered during this event was joyous and contented because of these men's vocation and life.

Deaconate Ordination at Christ the King of Catholic Church, Kanke

With great uncertainty of the Covid-19 Pandemic situation, it was the first time ever in the history that the Central Zone Provinces arranged the Diaconate ordination in Ranchi Province. On 13th Feb 2021 the Diaconate ordination of our 6 brothers from Central Zone was held under the initiative of Ranchi Theologate (RTC) Tarunoday at the Sacred Heart Parish in Kanke. The names of our brothers are Dns. Sandeep Kujur, Libin Kerketta, and Jonny Kujur (RAN) Tobias Tigga, Cyril Beck (MP) and Pravakar (JAM). Beside this, two of our brothers Dn.



Satay Prakash Baskey(HAZ) and Dn. Stanislaus Murmu (DUM) were ordained as deacons in their respective Provinces. The Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ conferred our beloved brothers as Deacons. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ, (Provincial of Ranchi), Rev. Fr Jerome Cutinha, SJ (Provincial of Jamshedpur), Fr Raymond Kerketta, SJ (Socius, Ranchi) and Fr Medard Xalxo, SJ (PCF, Ranchi) and a few other Fathers were present for the occasion. The melodious voice of the choir was conducted by the RTC theologians along with St. Anne Sisters and Anita Hostel girls.



The Final Profession of ours this year

After the first wave of the Covid-19 Pandemic in India, we have some sigh of reliefs in the month of December 2020 to February 2021. Though there were lockdown in different part of our country, we were slowly getting back to normal. During this time, Ranchi Province was blessed with five Jesuits who professed their final profession in the Society of Jesus. Fr Peter Mahendra Tigga, SJ pronounced his final yes to the Lord on November 27, 2020 amid the packed attendants of his mother, family members, relatives, friends and well-wishers in the relatively small chapel of Manresa House. It was the first final vows received by the new Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ. The second in the row, Fr. Sylverius Chermako, SJ made his final commitment to the Lord in the Society of Jesus at Ashirvad/Jharna, Namkum on December 8, 2020. Jesuits and some religious sisters of Namkum and around formed the modest congregation of the ceremony. A sizable number of family members of Sylverius also added to the joy of the occasion.

A few days later, Fr. Suman Beck, SJ professed his final vows at Agricultural Training Centre, Namkum, Ranchi on January 19, 2021. Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ received his vows with obedience to the Pope. Fr. Swarn Tigga, SJ made his final commitment to the society of Jesus at Prabhat Tara School, Dhurwa on February 11, 2021. Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr Xess, SJ, received his vows amidst the presence of about 50 Jesuit Fathers and Brothers, a good number of the family members, friends and well wishers, and the local parishioners. Three days later, Fr. Binod Toppo, SJ pronounced his final vows at Fr. Herman Rasschaert Auditorium, Manresa House, Ranchi on February 14, 2021. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Provincial flanked by the Rectors and a small number of

Jesuits on the dias, while others were below the stage. A good number of the family members together with his father and mother, friends, well wishers and the CLC Team were present on this solemn occasion. Under the direction of Sch. Sameer Ekka, the Minor Seminary students led the melodious choir. Our hearty congratulations and best wishes for their life fully incorporated in the Society of Jesus.

Priestly Ordinations of the Year

There were 8 Deacons who were ordained priests in the months of January and February 2021. Two deacons, viz. Dn Claver Minj, SJ and Dn Elphiz Kerketta, SJ were ordained at St. Joseph's Church Kereng on January 5, 2021. Indeed it was a happy moment for the faithful of Kereng Parish in Gumla Diocese. A week later, it was the turn of Holy Family Church Noadih, Gumla diocese, when two of ours, Dn. Rohit Kujur, SJ, and Dn Bimal Minj, SJ were ordained on January 12, 2021, whereas Dn Subodh Lakra, SJ was ordained a priest at St Ignatius Church, Majhatoli on January, 16, 2021. Dn Ajit Kerketta, SJ was ordained priest at St. Anne's Cathedral, Samtoli, Simdega Diocese, on January 31, 2021. This year after a gap of long years, we witnessed an ordination in Khunti Zone, when Dn Bimal Nag, SJ was ordained a priest at the Sacred Heart Church, Maranghada in Khunti diocese on January 31, 2021. The last of the ordination in this batch was Dn Sameer Xavier Bhawnra, SJ. He was ordained a priest by Bishop Paul Lakra, DD at Dhengurpani Parish of Simdega diocese, Jharkhand. Unlike normal situation, owing to Covid-19 situations, many of our Jesuits could not attend the ordination programmes. However, the whole province remembered them in prayers on those great days and wished them all the best for their priestly life.



Fr Peter Claver Minj



Fr Elphiz Kerketta



Fr Subodh Lakra



Fr Ajit Kerketta



Fr Bimal Nag



Fr Bimal Minj



Fr Rohit Kujur



Fr Sameer Bhawnra

Congratulations

Wish you all the best for your priestly ministries!

The outbreak of Covid-19 has caused tremendous challenges to the world in peoples' daily lives. It has impacted beyond the spread of the disease but at the same time it has inspired creativity and innovation. Information Technology and Digital media have proved to be the important drivers of change in everyone's life. Here are some of the digital footprints left by our Ranchi Jesuits who have captured with creativity the glimpses of Covid-19 Pandemic situations. Scan the QR codes through your mobile QR code & Bar Code Apps to rewind 2020-21.



Subject: Virtual Inaugural of the Ignatian Year 2021-2022
Channel: Satya Bharati, Ranchi
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 481
Published: May 23, 2021
Likes: 16

Subject: A tribute to Br Modestus Tirkey
Channel: Satya Bharati, Ranchi
Production: Satya Bharati Ranchi
Views: 2.7K
Published: April 27, 2021
Likes: 71



Subject: Fr Edwin Dang || Fr Deepak Toppo || Br. Sagar || LIBERATION || Theological Reflection
Channel: FIKPANI ROSHAN
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 542
Published: Aug 7, 2020
Likes: 33

Subject: Rowing into the Deep Water || Marching towards wisdom || Corona
Channel: FIKPANI ROSHAN
Production: Xaviers Ranchi
Views: 725
Published: June 24, 2020
Likes: 62



Subject: A Tribute to Fr Stan Swamy, SJ || Streamed Live from XISS
Channel: Xavier Institute of Social Service
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 36.2K
Published: July 10, 2021
Likes: 851

Subject: Tribute to Stan Swamy at Bagaicha, Namkum, Ranchi
Channel: FIKPANI ROSHAN
Production: Xaviers Ranchi
Views: 278
Published: July 16, 2021
Likes: 12



Subject: St. Xavier's Inter College, Bundu (2020-2022) // Orientation Video
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: St. Xavier's Bundu
Views: 3.9K
Published: Sept 2, 2020
Likes: 190

Subject: Fr John Lakra, SJ Celebrating Mass in Khurukh Language
Channel: James E
Production: Manresa House, Ranchi
Views: 27.5 K
Published: Aug 26, 2020
Likes: 513





Subject: Covid-19 Shelter Home, Dorea, Tamar.
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 2.6K
Published: April 10, 2020

Subject: Response to RJS to Covid-19 Crises || UAP 2019-2029
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 1.7K
Published: May 8, 2020



Subject: Homecoming: Battered & Bruised
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 4.8K
Published: May 27, 2020
(Narration: Late Mr Raphael)

Subject: Selfless Service to Covid-19 Migrants
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: Ranchi Archdiocese
Views: 433
Published: May 20, 2020



Subject: Blood Donation Camp
Channel: RBX Symphony
Production: Ranchi Jesuits
Views: 673
Published: May 6, 2020

Subject: First Vows: The Commitment
Channel: Satya Bharti, Ranchi
Production: Satya Bharti, Ranchi
Views: 5.57K
Published: June 21, 2020
Likes: 37



Subject: A Glimpse of Manresa House Jesuit Residence, Ranchi.
Channel: James Ekka, SJ
Production by: Satya Bharti
Views: 1.9K
Published: May 16, 2020

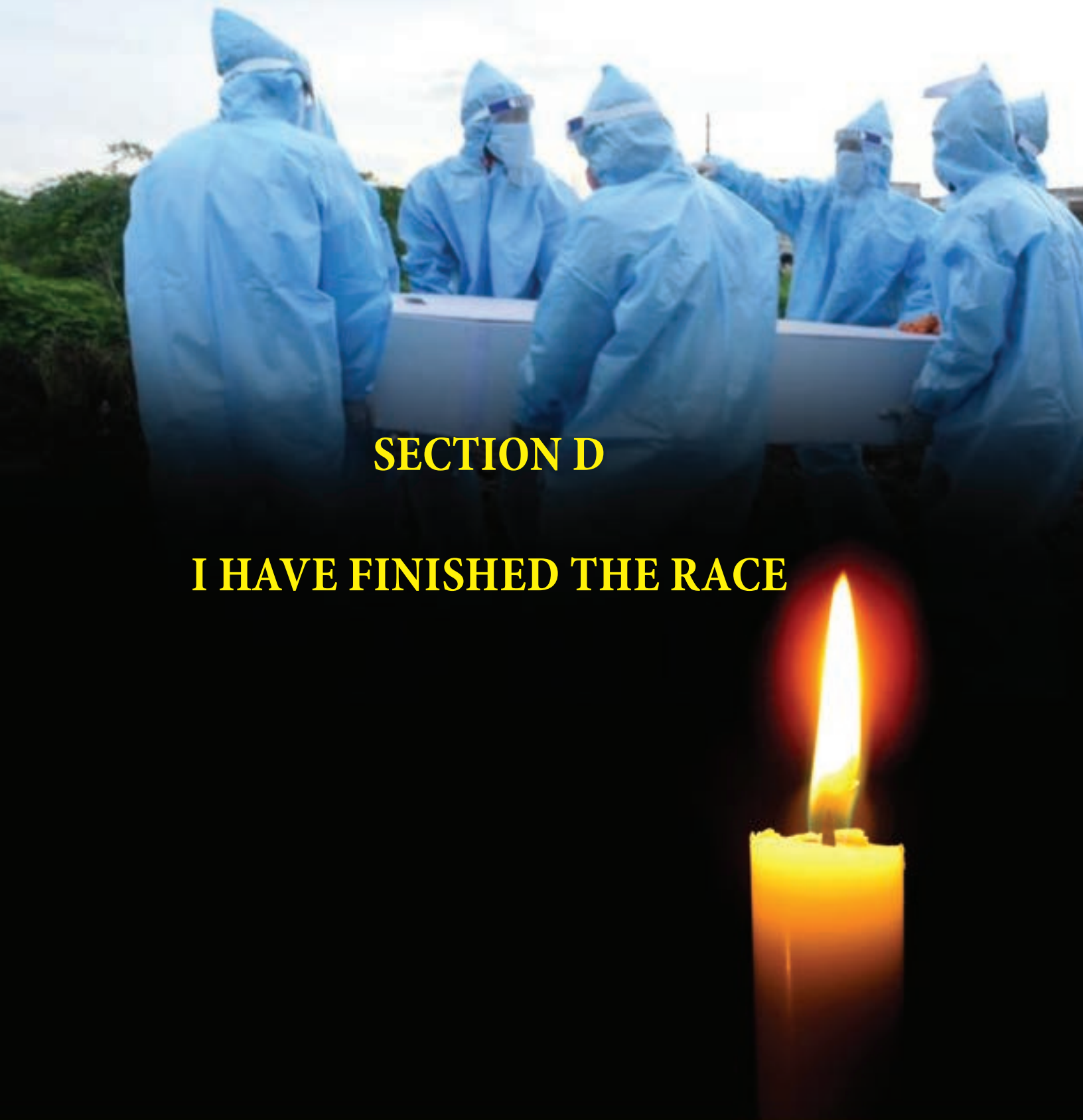
Subject: First Vows of 6 Novices at Ashirvad, Namkum
Channel: Satya Bharti, Ranchi
Production: Satya Bharti, Ranchi
Views: 5.57K
Published: June 21, 2020
Likes: 37



Subject: Final Commitment of Fr Binod Toppo, SJ in the Society of Jesus
Channel: Satya Bharti, Ranchi
Production by: Satya Bharti
Views: 986
Published: Feb 18, 2021
Likes: 25

Subject: Xavier Utsav-2020 || St. Xavier's College, Ranchi||College Anthem||Manresa Collegians
Channel: FIKPANI ROshan
Production: Xaviers Ranchi
Views: 3K
Published: June 13, 2020
Likes: 46





SECTION D

I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE

Father Erik Henry Breye SJ, after completing three years of Philosophy at Leuven, left Belgium on 1 August 1964 as a young missionary to India. His companion was Fr Winant Callewaert SJ, who had completed just one year of philosophy. Callewaert went back to Belgium after a few years of stay in India but Erik remained till the end of his life, a desire he had always cherished.

Born on the 10th of December 1940 at Izegem (Belgium), Father Erik Henri Breye SJ was the only boy of his parents who grew up in a strong bond of love and understanding with his only sister who was elder to him. Whenever Erik visited his country, he would spend his time at her house. He enjoyed his stay in the good company of his brother-in-law, a very candid person, whose fateful death in December 2019 had affected him deeply. Ever since his affable brother-in-law's death, Erik would regularly call his sister to remain in constant touch with her till his death parted ways from her on the 18th of September 2020.

Until he entered into the Jesuit Novitiate at Drongen, Belgium in 1959, Erik had no association with the Jesuits. Yet, once he had joined the novitiate, the Society of Jesus became his home for the rest of his life. At his small home-town of Izegem, his mother ran a fur shop and his father worked as a representative of a known Cake factory of the place. His parents had, thus, little time to inquire about young Erik's progress in the school. Besides, they were not highly educated either. This made Erik take upon himself the responsibility of managing the school affairs all by himself. He forged his father's signature on the class progress reports, thus presumed to spare his parents' time of monitoring his performance at the school. His parents knew nothing about it until one of his teachers inquired into the reason for his parents' detachment from his school education. When the report reached his parents, Erik's mother inquired from him about this and so came

the truth to light. Erik had no other way than admit his mistake, explaining his intentions.

The new missionary, Fr. Erik went to St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagaraha (Hazaribag) to learn Hindi. A few months later, he was assigned to teach Hindi at St. John's School, Ranchi. Being a beginner himself at Hindi, how he managed to teach Hindi to the Middle school boys was an amusing comedy of errors. Erik narrated this funny experience a couple of times with a lot of interest along with its amusing moments.

Coming to India fulfilled one of Erik's aims— to be a missionary. Still, it was not the end of his goal and it was certainly not all that smooth and easy. He came to realize it sooner than later when he was given 5 consecutive years of regency without being promoted to theology. Of these five years, four years were spent in teaching Philosophy at St. Albert's Seminary, Ranchi. It might appear a little exceptional though Erik narrated it with a smile how he enjoyed it. The Provincial himself reckoned that Erik would probably discontinue and leave the Society. However, Erik's positive attitude and his fortitude stood him in good stead to be unperturbed by such an opinion of his superiors. Besides, his interest in the seminarists made his superiors change their minds, finally promoting him to theology and earmarking him for teaching in the Seminary.

Erik was a kind and humble person. He readily acknowledged his mistakes like tricking his parents concerning his school progress report. So too was his acceptance of the judgment of his superiors without begrudging, arguing, or complaining. He looked always at the brighter side of things in life and work. One of the best-kept secrets was, perhaps, his sense of good humor, even when faced with an odd situation. This positive outlook was part and parcel of his attitude and philosophy of life which remained so, till the end of his life. His last dinner in the community on the previous



evening stamps the final seal to it when he had enjoyed the conversation at the table, interacting with his best of humor and making the company alive.

Erik had the panache and flair for looking at the positive side of things and accepting any hurtful or unpleasant situation with a peace of mind. He would seek all the time a point of concurrence and appreciation where things appeared disagreeable and opposite. This reflected in his observations or in his opinions in a statement that surprised his colleagues, wondering at his wisdom and depth of perception and understanding.

Despite holding a critical and variant opinion on some issues, Erik, as a man of the Church, had a deep respect for it, submitting himself to the authority of the orthodox teaching of the Church and its positions. As a theologian, his orthodoxy was commendable. At the same time, his critical views on certain matters were quite revealing which challenged one's faith and position. He would gently prod others to see a different perspective of things that one would otherwise simply ignore as a possibility. This indicates his openness to different opinions and thinking towards an understanding of one's faith. This was his way of understanding and responding to adapt theology effectively to the demands of new situations. He took great care and interest in reading new books and articles on theology and Scripture that contained somewhat critical and contrary views to critique and make a balanced assessment on them. He made a fine distinction between what was important and what was peripheral. In his sudden passing away, the Faculty of St. Albert's has lost an icon and stalwart of critical thinking who made the faculty of theology alive in spirit with his thinking and orientation, inspiring others open to differing opinions.

As a teacher of theology, Erik had the art of communicating the matters of faith in a simple way that even an average student could easily understand and feel encouraged to make effort to learn and progress in deepening one's faith. Although he would not remember the names of his students, yet in his assessment of each of them as persons, he was fair and objective and fatherly in personal guidance. He appreciated their strength and encouraged them. He

was a compassionate formator for decades who moulded, guided, taught, and accompanied them with lots of love and dedication. Given the choice, the students would prefer him as their mentor and guide.

Erik was a man set apart for formation. Of the 56 years he lived in India, including 8 years spent in studies (B.Th., Licentiate, Doctorate), 46 years of his life were spent in teaching the seminarists at St. Albert's College, Ranchi.

Besides, he was socius to the Master of novices at St. Stanislaus, Sitagarh (Hazaribag) after his priestly ordination for two years (1973-1975). He served St. Albert's Seminary with distinction in various capacities—as a prefect of the Seminarists, as a librarian, as a teacher, moderator of the M.Th. students, and the president of the faculty. The best of his contributions, though, lay in inspiring the Seminarists by his person and life. His friendly and non-threatening dealing, his understanding of the students and staff endeared him as a good colleague and companion to members of the community and staff. His consistency in work was an inspiration to many. His spiritual guidance to the Seminarists and several others was much sought, loved, and appreciated.

It is only fair to delve into Erik's interior life— he and his God, his prayer and faith, and his relationship with Christ. He had an unflinching commitment to his prayers and devotion to celebrate the daily Eucharist with fervour. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown since 11 March 2020— during the entire period of this pandemic— he enriched the teaching staff for over five months, beautifully connecting the entrance hymn with the greeting and the reading, inviting the participants to celebrate their life in the Holy Eucharist. His succinct and precise interpretation of the word with its life application, daily motivated each one to deepen one's bond with their Master.

Besides teaching and guiding the Seminarists in the College, Erik dedicated his free time equally in the pastoral care of the souls. As a confessor and preacher of recollections, he was always much sought after. His regular talks on Sundays to the sisters of the Daughters of St. Anne for many years was a hallmark of his dedication to the spiritual care of souls. From the beginning of his theology at Jnana Deepa

Erik had the art of communicating the matters of faith in a simple way that even an average student could easily understand and feel encouraged to make effort to learn and progress in deepening one's faith.

Vidyapitham (JDV) Pune (1969-1972), Erik developed and mastered the art and skill in giving such talks to different groups of religious and thus endeared himself by his acts of generosity. He further deepened his pastoral care as a confessor during his study for Licentiate (1975-1977). This remained for him a lifelong ministry at St. Albert's where he found time to render such services to numerous groups of religious, priests, brothers, and sisters in and around Ranchi. His way of communicating things across and his advice at the confessional was a great source of encouragement and spiritual strength for many. He knew how to assuage inner healing through the mercy of God and His forgiveness.

Erik had suffered from jaundice during his regency at St. Albert's Seminary (1965-1969) which taught a few new habits in his life. In the summer of 1965, he made a long tour of the Mission on a bicycle, visiting parts of Barway and Jashpur-Mission and came back to Ranchi via Kurdeg, Rengarih, Samtoli, and Noatoli. He enjoyed the tour, meeting a number of his co-missionaries, and getting to know the expanse of the Chotanagpur Mission. He, however, did not realize the exhaustion of his body due to dehydration. It was aggravated by a bout of diarrhea. He had to be admitted to the Holy Family Hospital, Mandar (Ranchi). Worse still, he began growing pale. His condition deteriorated and lay critical in the hospital bed in a state of coma for almost two weeks. The sisters in the hospital, realizing the severity of his condition, made assiduous prayers for his recovery. On the fourteenth day, Erik unexpectedly opened his eyes to the great surprise of the sisters and himself, wondering why the sisters stood around his bed clapping their hands. Following this wondrous recovery, he was advised by the doctor to start smoking cigars. Later, he started smoking a pipe which he enjoyed at his leisure. He was happy about the critical event which gave him this opportunity to smoke a cigar or a pipe for the rest of his life to spend his pastime!

Erik maintained good health, free of any illness till 2018 when he was afflicted by dengue fever, causing thrombosis of his legs. It caused serious health hazards as the blood clots affected his lungs. In early 2019, his condition deteriorated, almost crippling his free movements due to the acute problem of breathing. Yet, his poise, patience, and calm were remarkable. After over six months of long treatment, he could regain his health, breathing a sigh of relief to savor normal life again. Moreover, he was delighted to lecture on Grace in February-March 2020 to the students of first-year theology, his very last in the Faculty before joining the rank of a professor emeritus. Ever since he was relieved

from any teaching assignment or any other responsibility in the Seminary. Erik perceived subconsciously, the time had come for him slowly but graciously prepare himself for the last journey.

The pandemic of Covid-19 and subsequent "lock-down" since the 11 of March 2020, compelled the St. Albert's College to suspend all the academic activities. All the Seminarists were sent back to their respective dioceses while the teaching and administrative staff stay put in the House. It gave Erik the last of the opportunities to render his pleasant services to the community as the main celebrant at the daily Holy Eucharist for more than three months till he was suspected of contacting Covid-19 on 1 August 2020. On the following day, he was reportedly tested positive for the coronavirus, obliging him to home quarantine for two weeks, plus another week in isolation after testing negative. Erik came out of this pandemic without any of the symptoms of viral infection, rejoining once again, the regular life in the community.

Since 2010, Erik also showed signs of Parkinson's. It gradually became more evident. Yet he did not seem bothered much about it and, he managed all the activities by himself unhindered, including driving his scooter with childlike joy.

Erik's sudden death on the 18th of September 2020 morning came as a rude shock to the community of St. Albert's college and the members of the staff miss his presence immensely. On that ill-fated morning, he went to the refectory at around 5:30 a.m., as he was used to, to drink a cup of coffee before his daily morning prayers in his room. One of the Seminarists who happened to be there at that moment, noticed Erik perspiring and having difficulty in breathing. He seated him into a chair and rushed to his room to get his cell-phone. Erik, meanwhile, fell unconscious on the floor. He probably collapsed struggling for his last breath. He was attended to immediately. The efforts to revive his system did not succeed as there was no response at all. Erik had already peacefully breathed his last. With his sudden demise, the last of the Belgian Jesuit missionaries service ended abruptly at the Faculty of St. Albert's College, having served for nearly 46 long years. With his departure from this earthly home, the last chapter of the illustrious history of the Belgian Jesuit missionaries, their contribution to the formation of the local clergy and the Church through this premier Institution of St. Albert's College has etched gloriously in the annals of this institutions' history.

Father Louis Francken SJ came from a family of solid Flemish farmer's stock: hard-working, two feet on the ground, honest, with a deep-seated piety, no fuss and with a heart for the less privileged. Father Louis has kept this precious legacy his whole life long, in the various capacities of his rich educational and social ministry. Works speak louder than words has been very much true for the quality of his life in the service to others.

He was born on 7th July 1938 on the farm in Wuustwezel, a village in North Belgium. He was the second of a family of three girls and two boys. At the end of his Secondary Education in a local diocesan High School, he made "the somewhat unfamiliar choice of joining the Jesuits with the request to be sent to India as a missionary. It was a very good choice indeed," so wrote his elder sister in her farewell letter a few days before his death. He left his family in Flanders 56 years ago: he left his large family and many friends in India on 5th October 2020, when the Lord called him into His everlasting love.

Joining the Society in 1957, followed by juniorate and philosophy in Leuven (Louvain), he came to India in 1964. Two years regency in the just established XISS (1964-65), M.A in Economics in Delhi (1966-67), theology in Pune (1967-1971), ordination in Ranchi, tertianship (1972) followed by a year of teaching in the Novitiate (1973) in Sitagarha, Hazaribag.

Then started his long tryst with St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, and especially with the new XISS which at that time was in the same premises. Mainly teaching Economics in the College and XISS, he was also in charge of the Juniors at Manresa House (1974-77), Registrar of the College (1978- 82) and Principal of St Xavier's College (1982-87), and Director of XISS (1988-90). After a break as Socius to the Provincial (1990-1992), he was back at XISS as Director (1993),

Assistant Director (1994-98), Professor and Head of the Research Department (1999-2003). He had a short spell as superior and faculty member at ISI Delhi which was not his cup of tea (2004). Back in the province, Fr Francken took charge of Province Projects while he also was in ATC (2005), Assistant Secretary to Fr Provincial (2006-09) Ranchi and Treasurer at ATC (2010-2011).



Then came his last assignment when as Director of Kishor Nagar from June 2011 till August 2020, he took on the tremendous task of succeeding Father Vic Van Bortel SJ, and that at a time when others think of retiring. He directed the 650 boys with a seriousness, a sense of duty, and especially a quiet and deep fatherly love so typical of him. He also took care of the much needed renewal of the infra-structure. Last year was as it were the 'swan song' of Fr Louis: the 50th anniversary of Kishor Nagar: a splendid celebration in all respects, witnessed by many visitors from Belgium and especially by many grateful old-students of Kishor Nagar. We saw a tired, yet contented and happy man!

A nagging stomach ulcer broke out a few weeks ago causing much bleeding. In spite of several Units of blood-transfusion he became too weak and succumbed on the 5th October at 11:00 pm. in Constant Lievens Hospital and Research Centre, Mandar.

Does his curriculum vitae not look like a typical Jesuit symphony of varied ministries with a consistent ground tune? Education and the care for self-development of the oppressed and underprivileged was his great passion. He loved much and was loved much by many. He was an example and inspiration, a faithful soldier/servant/ lover of the Lord who returned to his true Home.

Fr. Joachim Dungdung, SJ, was born on 4 July 1947 in a village called Salangapos, which was also known as Bhathitoli because there was a brewery at the Southern part of the same market place. Salangapos was not yet a Parish then. His parents were Mrs. Mariam Dungdung and Mr. Elias Dungdung. His parents wanted Joachim to look after the family cattle and plough the fields and not to go to school. Because of this concept he began his schooling at the age of 13 years.

The primary school was in the village itself up to class 5 after which for the middle school he walked 14 kms up and down to Samsera Parish School. For the High School he found himself at St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla, under the versatile all rounder Headmaster, Fr. Peter Paul Van Nuffel, SJ. It was under him that Joachim cultivated all his talents and potentials to the full. In sports he bagged gold medals in 100, 200, 400 metres and high as well as long jump. In a programme he presented a country song, "Maina, maina kahisla, maina kanha chali gail," and thereafter, he was fondly called 'Maina'.

After the High School studies he joined Pre-University 1970-72 at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi which qualified him to join the Jesuit Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag. He took his first vows in 1974 and continued his Juniorate studies 1974-75 in the same college. He pursued his degree studies 1975-77 again at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. His Philosophical and Theological studies were completed at a stretch 1977-1983 from Gyana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, staying at De Nobili College, Pune and was ordained priest on 1984 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Samtoli.

In 1985 he taught for a year at St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla, then became the Director of the CLC of Ranchi Archdiocese 1986-91 which he fulfilled in great success. Being initiated in the youth ministry so far, he

was appointed as assistant director of "Jeevan Pravesh" at St. Ignatius' Gumla 1995-96. His command in Hindi again took him to St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, as a Dean and Hindi Professor of the Juniorate 1997-2005. For a change he was brought to St. John's High School, Ranchi, as an assistant teacher together with the responsibility of the Archdiocesan CLC Director 2006-10. In 2011-12 he shouldered the much needed work of Archdiocesan vocation promotion as the Director of the Archdiocesan Vocation Centre, Hulhundu. He was called back to Sitagarha again as a professor in Hindi for the Juniorate there in the years 2014-17. Back to Ranchi in 2018-19 he took up the job of a hostel warden of Loyola Hostel and the Editor of Nishkalanka. In the following year 2020 some more responsibilities were added to him as the Superior of Loyola Training Centre and the Coordinator of Marriage Encounter. Such was Fr. Joachim, a man full of varied responsibility, but he never grumbled for the load of works. Joyfully, courageously and skillfully he carried them out on time and efficiently.

He made use of his God-given talents for the benefit of others, especially the poor and the needy. One of his challenging undertakings was to do something for the preservation and development of the Kharia Language and Culture. During his Jesuit training he started making serious study on the subject. During summer vacations he could take some time out to visit the Kharia villages and listen to them and noted down the findings in his interviews. In the later years he compiled them in his books: (1) Kharia Jeevan and Parampara (1999), (2) Surli Kapli Kontang (Kharia Poem 2011), (3) Chotanagpur ke pahari Sabar Kharia (2013), (4) Kharia, Munda aur Oraon Sanskriti ka Tulnatmak Adhyayan (2015- his research book) and finally, (5) A Short History of Rengarih Parish (2019). Besides there are two collections of hymnals to his credit: (6) Prabhuwa: Sonhor (1998) and (7) Missa Darom ro Senel (2006). Another feature he had in his life was his passionate love for Mother Mary. As CLC Director he organized



Br. Basil Tirkey's death came all of a sudden when he lay for the CT Scan and X-rays for other ailments for detecting his problems on the Ratu Road Centre in the morning hours of 7 December 2020. He had been, though, suffering from cough and tiredness which he bore silently and carried on his daily chores without making much fuss about them, unaware that the simple cough could be deadly. He had been admitted to the Seva Nilaya Health Centre, Ara Gate for all these ailments. The treatment process was on, and for this purpose that he lay on the X-ray machine, but never to get up.



Br. Basil Tirkey, SJ, was born on 7 July 1947 to the parents Marcus and Sabina Tirkey in the village Chamutoli under Banabira Parish, Simdega District, Jharkhand, some 40 kms West of Simdega. After finishing his primary school at Banabira Parish he proceeded to St. Mary's High School, Samtoli for matriculation. Completing his matriculation he came to the Apostolic School, Gumla, as a candidate for Brotherhood in the Society of Jesus as in those days

brother candidates were kept there for six months or a year. Thereafter his long training and apostolic works continued at different places of the province until his death.

After his first vows till his last day, he had been posted to a number of Institutions and Parishes: as a workshop manager in St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha and Agricultural Training Centre, Namkum; as a minister, in charge of the field and farm, garden in St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla, Ashirvad/Jharna, Namkum, St. Michael's Khunti and St. Mary's High School, Samtoli, he served these institutions wholeheartedly, putting all in his capacity. Community members were happy that they had such a handy person in their communities available for various engagements.

Br. Basil had been suffering from the blood pressure hazard constantly. He faced it bravely by himself finding out all types of treatment: such as wearing hand band in the wrist regularly to keep the blood pressure checked, using some herbal combinations, etc. In the end he did succeed in taming the blood pressure. Besides, it was not known he ever suffered any other ailments.

Marian Procession in all the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Ranchi and inculcated the devotion of Our Lady. Later, he wrote a number of articles and published them in Nishkalanka, the Hindi catholic Magazine about the practice of devotion to Our Lady. In His last days he was making preparations for the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Nishkalanka Magazine, the date was yet to be fixed, for which he had the last meeting with the editorial board members on 17 October 2020 two days before his death.

As person, Fr Joachim never sought for comfort, name, position or prestige. He was such a simple man to the core. He loved and devoted himself to whatever works entrusted to him putting his whole efforts into them. A happy and friendly person turned out to be an inspirer, guide, thinker, writer, musician, composer and a good Jesuit priest. He touched the lives of many people. His death in the Covid-19 Pandemic time was in deed a great loss. We could not even give him a due burial. May his soul rest in peace!

Br. Basil had a happy temperament, sometimes jovial and would burst into a real hearty laughter on some interesting things or subtle jokes on somebody. He enjoyed company with the province men or the community members never criticizing anyone unless when things were too much to bear, but soon after easily forgotten.

He was a ready and willing worker. Any assignment, status or in institution he would do and fulfill his duty cheerfully and earnestly putting his heart and soul completely into them. One never saw an irritated approach to his work who saw to it that it was completed satisfactorily.

A variety of assignments were given to him:

in a parish life he saw to it that the gardens were green and full of vegetation, regularly and continuously supplying vegetable to the community kitchen. In the school set up he looked after the working staff efficiently and kept them in good humour. Buses had their own appointed drivers, but sometimes someone would fall out because of the previous night party. In such a situation Br. Basil would himself drive the bus to bring the students to school on time. He was a ready Jesuit to fill the gap of this kind and that he seemed enjoying such moments, that he got the opportunity to show no sign of wearisome moments disturbing the routine of the school.

Br. Basil was a music lover for which he would put aside all else and be a part of the choir. He had a Casio on which he practiced the hymns at leisure times. He had the whole range of cassettes in his possession. When needed he would play them. The Sunday Mass saw Br. Basil never missing from the choir. On his Casio he supplied the melody for the devotion of the faithful. Perhaps this ministry gave him the greatest satisfaction. Driving was another of his hobby. He liked driving since he had been trained in Pune as a mechanic. The travelers felt safe when he was at the steering wheel, though there were some mishaps here and there.

A man of gentleness, kindness, generosity, readiness for any assignment, happy demeanour, all these characterized his person. In his office as a minister or kitchen care taker he promptly welcomed the visitors and made them comfortable and homely and he would serve the guests himself.

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FATHER LINUS DUNG DUNG SJ (1951-2020)

Fr. Sudhir Kumar Minj SJ

Fr. Linus Dungdung SJ who never lost touch of consciousness of himself was a man always prompt in his response and willingly submitted himself to the judgment and decisions of his superiors. He was an unassuming person in his pastoral ministry, and in the responsibilities entrusted to him. He knew his strengths and limitations and made the best use of his capabilities in the service of the laypeople, religious and priests. He, thus, recognized how he could best serve the Church and realized his mission. He had learned how to live his Jesuit vocation in constant discernment of God's will and possessed the right disposition in his interior life and of the community. He lived his life following his Master, in this manner, till He bid him to his eternal abode. The final response to His call for him was, however, not without struggle and fight to the finish as he succumbed to the infection of the deadly SARS Corona Virus pandemic and died on 29 December 2020. He became the second Jesuit of the Ranchi Jesuit Province to fall victim to this pandemic.



Fr. Linus, hailing from a remote village of Chorbindha under Jitutoli Parish at that time (now Rampur), had an opportunity of doing most of his schooling in an urban set-up on account of his brother who worked in Ranchi. He would later complete also his university studies as well in Ranchi. The urban influence of Ranchi, however, did not diminish his rustic nature, lifestyle, and way of thinking. He remained a country-man all through who possessed some of the fine qualities of a country people— simple, sincere, down-to-earth faith, and hard-working.

Fr. Linus Dungdung understood much early in his Jesuit formation, the value of his down-to-earth faith that he had inherited from his family and environment, which he earnestly applied to his life of prayer. This was reflected in his attitude and way of life. Yet, it was not a world cut apart but an integral aspect of his daily life and work. What he taught as a Master of the novices for several years, he had himself ordered and appropriated it in his way of life. He could, thus, set it as an example for others. No wonder, that it was rightly remarked about him among the members of the Province to be a man of prayer. A faithful observer of the set time of prayer and regularity in it was one of the marks, he was much appreciated for.

If Linus had a depth of prayer life that gave solidity to his faith, his social life and the human relationship, on the other hand, was equally lively and full of warmth. His cheerful look and good humor made his colleagues and friends as well as strangers, comfortable with him to establish a point of contact. He was always discreet in any given situation and humane in his dealings with others. Though trained as a professional counselor, he never used his profession as a tool for self-aggrandizement and popularity other than in helping others in their needs, especially— the religious, and others seeking spiritual direction, personal counseling, and guidance in a process of discernment.

Fr. Linus Dungdung had a zest for apostolic work. He applied his whole heart and mind in the discharge of his duty to whichever responsibility he was entrusted with. He may not have been very perfect and efficient in doing the job but he was trustworthy, and he was consistent, and persevering to bring things to their logical end. His sense of duty and his tactfulness in dealing with any grave matter or any sensitive issue was commendable. The finest aspect of his person was, no doubt, his integrity which won the faith and trust of all those who came into contact with him or sought any help from him.

The type of works Fr. Linus Dungdung was called in to serve, reveals the amount of trust the province had on him: a sub-prefect of the boys' hostel with over 400 inmates in St. Ignatius' Gumla, and as Assistant Director of the Apostolic School in the same place, Minister of the Manresa House, Master of novices at Namkum, Socius to the Provincial at Sadbhavna, Parish Priest of Tongo— one of the largest and the only Jesuit parish in Barway (Diocese of Gumla), and among the Mundas in Maranghada in Khunti, Rector of St. Mary's High School Samtoli, where he facilitated the opening of a new University College— St. Xavier's Simdega. These works, more than anything else, speak of his apostolic availability.

Observing the humble character of Fr. Linus Dungdung, his polite behavior, and his good humor, one could

easily be puzzled to see another side of his personality that exhibited conviction and firmness in the discharge of his duty. He would not compromise on the matters of discipline and principles. Yet, he knew how to blend them with prudence and kind sensitivity and avoiding unnecessary confrontations in any situation.

Linus, being very conscious of his limitations, was never very assertive and forthright except where it pertained to his bound duty. This may have been a weak-area of

his person. All the same, he was able to mitigate this by his human concern and sympathy. It is in this that he was a very down-to-earth person whereby he could be able to touch many hearts.

Fr. Linus Dungdung had a zest for apostolic work. He applied his whole heart and mind in the discharge of his duty to whichever responsibility he was entrusted with. He may not have been very perfect and efficient in doing the job but he was trustworthy, and he was consistent, and persevering to bring things to their logical end.

Conscious of his duty, he would go to any length to make sacrifices, even at the cost of his health and need. To a certain extent, the tragedy of his contracting Corona Virus, which proved fatal for him, lies in this spirit of dedication and self-effacing in service to the community and others.

Could it have been a mere coincidence that the man whose life had moved around the commitment to his master in true dedication to service of others, missed not even the least act of rendering his service? Fr. Linus, even as lay in critical condition with cold and high fever in the dispensary of the Ursuline Sisters at Samtoli, did not fail to make the necessary arrangements for boarding and lodging for the 15 Seminarians and the two Jesuit professors accompanying them on a three-day-pilgrimage to the landmarks of the Jesuit mission in Chotanagpur— in Khunti, Biru and Barway. Forgetting his physical indisposition, he made several calls to inform the group about the arrangements, who arrived Samtoli much behind the fixed schedule, has left a mark on his sense of commitment and of service. On the next day Fr. Linus was taken to Ranchi for better treatment but he would return never to his earthly dwelling than to depart for his heavenly abode on the morning of 29 December 2020. His earthly remains were laid to rest in the cemetery at ATC Namkum, Ranchi.

Energy and enthusiasm in prayer, life and work epitomized the life and works of Fr Anthony Doongdoong, the only odd spelling of surname found among the Kharias. Born to Mr Paulus Dungdung and Mrs Mariam Soreng on 7 April 1933 at Bindhaintoli of erstwhile Samtoli Parish, young Anthony pursued his early education in Samtoli. Academically bright, Anthony moved to St John's High School, Ranchi and stayed at the Apostolic School with the noble intention of becoming a priest.

His friends often nicknamed fair skinned Anthony as "Fransisi" (Frenchman). He did not mind it. During his high school days he exhibited his proclivity for science, an orientation that his mentors loved to promote. Anthony, then, went on to do his I. Sc., and he was proud of it. He also prayed for his vocation in front of Our Lady of the Poor installed on the Cathedral premises. He joined the novitiate on 30 July 1957 at St Stanislaus College, Sitagarh together with Albert Dungdung, John Ekka, Walter Kongari, John Lakra, Joseph Lakra, Anil Mitra (CCU), Cedric Rebello (CCU), Carolus (Charles) Soreng, James Tirkey (MAP), Vincent Topno and Mathias Toppo of whom John Lakra and Walter Kongari (JAM) are alive. Br Angelus Xess was also his co-novice but Fr Martin Topno mentored the Brothers. Well schooled in Jesuit life by Fr Francis Quirijnen, his novice Master, Anthony pronounced his first vows in 1959, and stayed at SSC for his Juniorate.

He was back to Ranchi to do his B. Sc. from St Xavier's College. After his philosophy he enjoyed teaching science during his regency at St Xavier's School, Ambikapur. He was ordained on 24 March 1969 at St Mary's School, Samtoli. His theology during the post Vatican II era proved easy for him; he took his exams in English, not in Latin. However, he did have to learn Latin because soon after his theology, Anthony moved to Gregorian University, Rome to pursue his Licentiate and Doctorate in moral theology. Someone seems to have commented

that an Adivasi like him would take years to complete his doctorate. Anthony took up the challenge and completed all his studies in three years!



However, his achievement came with a cost. Anthony suffered from both mental and physical fatigue. Sensing the problem, Fr Philip Ekka, then Provincial, sent him for tertianship at Vinayalaya, Bombay. On his return to Ranchi Fr Anthony took up teaching moral theology at St Albert's College. Again, like his Gregorian days, he would forego sleep and meals for books. Fr Jules Backaert had regained his mental health when appointed Rector at Sitagarha. Would it work for Fr Anthony too? Fr Philip thought so. Fr Anthony found himself as Rector at Sitagarha in 1977-1978.

Teething problems at Sitagarh, both managerial and otherwise, affected Tony's health. Again, Fr Philip thought that Tony would be healthy in the company of his batch mate. So, Fr Tony found himself in Rengarih in 1979 as assistant Parish Priest. He lived in Rengarih until 1993 and assisted Fr Albert Dungdung (1978–1982), Fr Cornelius Ba'a (1982–1987), Fr Albert Dungdung (1987–1991), Fr Alexander Beck (1991–1992). Enthusiastic and energetic as he was, come rain, winter or summer, he always availed himself for administering sacraments, especially anointing the sick. He walked through the muddy fields or thick forest if his cycle or motorcycle did not move, much ahead of the person who came to take him. On one such occasion, well past midnight he walked to Gariabahal, a village in the forest, to anoint a dying woman in her travail. Fr Tony put on his stole and began to pray. The baby was born! Both mother and the child were safe. "The power of the priest's stole and of prayer!" the people said. Tony himself had survived a major accident.

He worked in Keondtanr (1993–1997) and Kohima Region (1998–2000). He wished to stay in Assam but his health issues brought him back to Ranchi. He stayed at Tarunoday as assistant librarian and spiritual director (2000–2007). His last assignment was in Patrachauli (2007–

2010) parish. He came to Constant Lievens Infirmary in 2011 at Manresa House and remained there till the end of his life. On 18 February 2021 he was admitted to Seva Nilaya Health Centre at Ara Gate for typhoid. His Rector Fr Amrit Lakra thought he would be back to the community in a week's time. Quite used to administering the sacrament of the sick, even during his last sickness he made frequent nocturnal visits to the ailing Deacon Sandeep Kujur at the same health centre. On 20 February, he looked restless. Fr Raymond Kerketta, Socius to the Provincial, assured the sister in-charge to send a novice to be by his side. But Tony died of a massive heart attack at 11:45 a.m.

Despite intermittent psychosomatic illness, Tony seldom lost his élan of life. He troubled the dullards like the bedbug even on what others considered unimportant. As a child of Bindhaintoli, he belonged to Samtoli, Barwadih (since 1963) and to Bindhaintoli (since 1987) parishes but he talked much about Rengarih; so people thought he was from Rengarih. His lengthy sermons treasured his desire to promote the faith. An ardent admirer of Louis Cardon, the Biru Mission pioneer, Tony wished to have a shrine at Bandipahar, the launching place of the mission. He had the people dig the supposed grave of Cardon's horse only to find some human hair! He treasured intellectual inquisitiveness, banter, energy and enthusiasm to work with determination and learn new things. He appreciated the intellectually gifted persons exhorted young men and women religious to excel in life. He authored three books, two on the Kharias of Chotanagpur, and one on Fr Louis Cardon. He wanted to have his doctoral thesis published. He travelled all around in search of it but could not recall the name of the Jesuit to whom he gave the only copy of his thesis. Well, Tony, may God publish the doctoral thesis of your life in heaven!

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FR EDWARD KERKETTA SJ (1952 – 2021)

Fr. Ignatius Kujur, SJ

Father Edward Kerketta was admitted in Samford Hospital, Kokar, Ranchi on 1st March 2021 as he was tested Corona positive with pneumonia. Earlier he was being treated in Ursula Hospital, Konbir Noatoli for three days. When covid-19 symptoms were suspected, he was brought to Mandar Hospital from where he was referred to Samford Hospital for better treatment. In spite of all efforts of the medical department there, Father's condition did not improve, and he breathed his last in the morning at 8:30 am on 8 March 2021.

Born on 24 February 1952 to John Kerketta and Agnes Kerketta in an ordinary farmer's family but devout Catholics, in the village Gindra Chamatoli, Rengarih Parish, about a km east of the great river Sankh. Early schooling and Middle of Primary was done at RC Middle School, Rengarih. On his way back home from the school young Edw ard would join other group of boys and play with them, hunt rabbits, rats and birds and reach home late in the evening to face the displeasure and ire of the parents. All these habits did not spoil him though. After Rengarih he headed for St. John Berchmans Apostolic School, Samtoli to complete matriculation in 1972. He was one to choose religious life from among his 5 brothers and 2 sisters.



As a Minor Seminarian at St. Aloysius Minor Seminary, Ranchi, completing his intermediate at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, he joined the Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha on 20 November 1974. Pronouncing his first vows on 13 November 1976 and finishing his Juniorate in Sitagarha itself in 1977, his graduation studies brought him to St. Xavier's College, Ranchi 1977-79. To continue his formation for Philosophical study he was at Satya Nilayam, Chennai in 1979 to 1981. He did his regency at the Apostolic School, Gumla 1981-83 where he was loved, respected, liked and obeyed by all the apostolic boys which he cherished so much in later years. The theological studies were at two places, one at Regional Theologate Centre, Tarunoday, Ranchi and Vidya Jyoti, Delhi 1983-87. He was ordained Deacon at Vidya Jyoti in 1986 and ordained priest on 29 April 1987 in Samtoli by the Archbishop Telesphore P. Toppo, DD. He made his Tertianship under the skillful hand Fr. Pierre Jacob, SJ, at Sitagarha and took his last vows at the

Rengarih Church on 3 September 2002.

What Jesus had said of Nathanael, “Behold, indeed, in whom is no guile!” (Jn. 1, 47) fits well with Fr. Edward Kerketta, a person of simplicity and innocence. No one has ever seen him picking up heated argument or strong disagreement on any point with anyone whatsoever. A man of kindness, gentleness, openness, obedient, friendly and pleasant in all situations, who fulfilled his duties as a parish priest wherever he was without complaining for anything and doing them sincerely and faithfully.

His field of action was mainly in parishes right from his ordination in 1987 to his last day on 8 March 2021, such as Patrachauli, Muri, Soso, Rengarih, Diglipur (North Andman) and finally Keondtanr Parish. In Diglipur he served the longest 13 years in all.

His field of action was mainly in parishes right from his ordination in 1987 to his last day on 8 March 2021, such as Patrachauli, Muri, Soso, Rengarih, Diglipur (North Andman) and finally Keondtanr Parish. In Diglipur he served the longest 13 years in all. He kept his community members happy and cheerful never giving them any worries or anxieties. He took care of them lovingly and with great concern. Superiors also found him very obedient. Once he was sent to his own home parish, Rengarih. He was asked whether he would mind going to his own parish; his reply was “if you are not finding anyone then I am ready,” and he did go there and took his final vows there itself – a great consolation and coincidence.

As a parish priest he shepherded the faithful in a very spiritual way, would be ready to go to the faithful to administer the sacraments any time of the day, sincere in his pastoral services, undermining his personal interests in order to fulfill the needs of the faithful. He often visited the faithful, not talking much but doing his pastoral ministry diligently. Whenever he was requested to go to any village he would be prompt to go and serve them with a long smile on his face. He would not often care for his food, but rather be busy in their care, love, service and sacraments. For all these he was loved and respected by the people.

He was a man of prayer too. He would not miss any prayer service with his people. Prayer was his first priority and because of this he never hurt his people by his word or action. He tried to keep his parishioners happy, satisfied, blessed them and encouraged them in their spiritual life.

People would not hesitate to come to him because of his openness, availability and punctuality in responding to their call. He always bore quietly his pains, difficulties, problems and failures without complaining about food, clothes, residence, people, authorities, rules, pastoral duties, any appointment, place or lack of facilities.

He was a person of a little more than a short of stature, well and strongly built physique, sturdy enough to face the parish life hazards. His facial composer was serene and contented, unperturbed by anything, which radiated the inner joy

and fulfillment of his religious life.

On October 2019 he came from Andamans to Ranchi for a medical check-up for the bone-pain in the leg and other ailments. Having done all this he was appointed parish priest on November 2019, but joined it only on June 2020. Within a few months he could win the hearts of the parishioners through his cordial pastoral care approach. He came to know the villages soon, its people, its distances from the parish, number of families, their daily works and so on. He had hardly been busy in 8 months at Keondtanr Parish, after the Ash Wednesday 2021 he felt a body pain, fever and cold thinking possibly due to the weather change. He thought the sickness would go away soon, so he remained with the treatment of the local doctor. After two days he could not function normally, he agreed to go to the Ursula Hospital, Noatoli, run by the Ursuline Sisters on 26 February 2021. The early detections were typhoid and pneumonia.

His innocent living reflected in this that in his last days as he was suffering from cough and fever he carried on saying Masses in the villages and being available to the people in other engagements till his sickness aggravated to a point of impossibility. By then it was too late. Without realizing Covid-19 had taken hold of him to the point of no return. He suffered from high blood pressure as well and other ailments too.

He was a religious of commitment, dedication and honesty. He believed more in giving than receiving for himself and quietly went on doing what he thought was his duty. May his soul rest in peace!

FR. ANIL K. TIRKEY, SJ (1953-2021)

Frs. Elias Surin, SJ & Amar Anugrah Bage, SJ

Fr. Anil Kishore Tirkey, SJ, was born on 4 October 1953 in the village Chatti in Soso Parish, Gumla and joined the Society of Jesus on 20 November 1973. He was ordained priest on 20 May 1986 and took his final vows on 8 September 2000. Fr. Anil had been admitted to Constant Lievens Hospital and Research Centre, Mandar a week before together with other Fathers of St. Ignatius' Community for Covid-19 treatment. They all got recovered and went back to their community. Fr. Anil was kept back for observation of Covid-19 related effects. On 26 March in the late noon quite many documents of AROUSE, Gumla were signed by him brought by Fr. George Soreng. The attending Doctor came hurriedly and communicated that the Father had to be taken to the ICU because his Oxygen level was going down. All precautions were taken care of, yet in the morning of 27 March 2021 Fr. Anil breathed his last.

Openness, kindness, willingness, readiness, generosity, cheerful bearing, pleasant countenance, dedication and commitment are some of the qualities which characterized the person of Fr. Anil Kishore Tirkey. The first sight of him would portray his happy disposition with his smiling face welcoming you and make you feel good. There would be no worry for the rest of your time with him. He would go round to provide you with the things you would need or have gone to him for. And in the end he would see you off pleasantly so that your journey back is safe and good.

Fr. Anil was a musician. He loved music, especially playing guitar and singing. His favourite song was, "Bless the Lord, O my Soul." He played other musical instruments also with ease and in perfect blend of notes harmoniously. However, the drum set was his favourite which he would hammer around in a good speed as the music would require. But above all he never boasted of his talents. He made his appearance invariably in any musical event with two drum sticks in hand. The audience liked his performance.

In life, most of the years he was a treasurer in various communities: at St. Xavier's, School, Doranda, British

Guyana and St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla. During his stint at St. Xavier's School, Doranda, the unwelcome teachers' strike took place due to some flaws by his predecessor's pen. Fr. Anil put them all in their right place and the problem got settled before long. He knew that the treasurer's table was the pivot upon which an institution revolved. Therefore, accuracy and transparency mattered a lot which he justified strongly.

Fr. Anil Kishore Tirkey, SJ, was sent to Guyana arriving on 23rd December 2006 with Fr. Anugrah Amar Bage, SJ. When he was leaving for Guyana his elder brother was on his death bed. Yet the missionary spirit propelled him to go ahead surrendering his ailing brother into



the hands of the Lord. He returned to Ranchi on 29th December 2019 and was assigned at St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla. In Guyana, he was assigned as the house treasurer in Brickdam Presbytery, Georgetown and also was helping out in the cluster of parishes in Georgetown for four years. In 2009 all the Jesuits came to Arrupe House, Queenstown, Georgetown from Brickdam Presbytery leaving the house for the Diocesan Priests where he as minister helped out in the parishes for three years.

In 2012, he was assigned to be the Parish Priest in St. John the Baptist Church Plaisance, in the East Coast Demerara for seven years. He would prepare the homilies on time. After twelve years of service in Guyana he went to Manresa Spain for his Ignatian Immersion Programme in 2018 for a Sabbatical. After his sabbatical, he was in Arrupe House, Queenstown for a year helping out in celebrating the Holy Eucharist in Georgetown.

He was parish priest of Muri Parish for some years which the people remember happily as visiting them regularly, particularly the sick and the old. One never got tired of his company. He believed in companionship and had many close friends. And what a company in which if he didn't crack a joke or two! The first thing the companions would ask of him was a joke before beginning anything, though sometimes, the same joke would be replayed

again. Humour reigned in any of his gathering. He held the view that in such an atmosphere the work would progress better. Never was he seen in tension or worried, though there were aplenty in his lap. He took them all in a stride and not let anyone know he underwent so many of them. He had a magnanimous heart. He would accept everyone. He would listen to everyone. He was a good shepherd. He knew all his parishioners. He was a creative person and would come up with his creative ideas in his preaching and teaching. He had a reading habit and would read many books and share them with others.

The Marian Devotion was another of his spiritual gift and had a special devotion to Mother Mary. He would spend time with his Rosary in Prayer. He would encourage people to recite the Rosary Prayer as well. Youthful spirit dominated his appearance, dealings and actions and had special love for the young people, and loved to work with them. He was Systematic or organized. Whatever appointments he received in the Society of Jesus, he put his whole heart and mind in it trying his best to be systematic and well organized with the files, document and records up to date.

Fr. Anil's companions remember him as a gentle, loving and kind person whom the cruel covid-19 took away. It is with great sorrow that his companions learned of his sad demise. A dedicated life has come to an end. He was a unique and special figure in missionary endeavours, and a guide and example, especially in the mission field. Among many of his colleagues he was a shining example showing keen interest in the work and had the ability to quickly grasp the reality.

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BR. MODESTUS TIRKEY, SJ

(1948-2021)

Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess, SJ

Br. Modestus Tirkey was born on 14 August 1948 of Mr. Lukas Tirkey and Juliana Toppo in the village Putrungi under Katkahi Parish. He was the 7th child among 3 brothers and 4 sisters. Though Br. Modestus was born in Putrungi village but his Primary to Matriculation studies were done in Ratasili and Ambikapur, in the then Madhya Pradesh State. The reason being that the father of young Modestus, Mr. Lukas Tirkey, was studying in the Boarding School of St. John's, Ranchi, which was then surrounded by wild bushes all around, so the jackals used to haunt the school at night. Interestingly student Lukas and others used to chase them to the Ranchi Lake from where they used to pester the school.

There were few houses between the Ranchi Lake and St. John's School in those days. St. John's students used to play hockey around the bushy ground of the present Sadar Hospital as well, Mr. Lukas used to narrate about his school days to young Modestus.



Mr. Lukas studied up to class IX at St. John's School, when the Missionary Fathers took him to Ratasili Parish as a catechist in 1955. Ever since he remained a catechist for his whole life and kept on moving from Ratasili, Manpur, Jhingo and Larangi Parishes. While young Modestus completed his schooling from Primary to Matriculation from the boarding schools of Ratasili and Ambikapur in 1956 to 67. On June 1967 he joined the Minor Seminary, Ranchi and on October 1967 he was sent to St. Stanislaus' Sitagarha for six months of Postulancy. Thereafter, he joined the Novitiate on 21 April 1968 and took his first vows on 22 April 1970. One year of Juniorate being over, he enrolled himself for TTC courses at Sitagarha itself and wrote the final exams in 1973. Passing with good marks he was sent to the Primary School, Lohardaga, as a teacher and taught successfully for 3 years. On June 1976 he was brought to St. John's Middle School as Headmaster and gave his services in teaching as well as helping in various ways to the school till 1993, in all 18 years. And again on June 1993 he was transferred to Prabhat Tara Middle School, Dhurwa and served till 2012 for long 20 years. During this period he was elected President of Jharkhand All Religious Brothers' Association (JARBA) which he

directed usefully for the good religious life of all the Brothers) in 2005-08. Back again to Lohardaga Middle School as a hostel superintendent for one year 2012 to 13 that saw him an active educationist. Then there came a change of service as a minister in Ashirvad-Jharna Novitiate from 2013 to '16. From 2016 onward he again shouldered the responsibility of a Headmaster of the Primary School, Bundu, till he could carry on no more till 2021. He fell ill with covid-19, brought to Agricultural Training Centre, Namkum for a few days. As it got aggravated he was taken to St. Anne's Hospital and Research Centre, Ulhatu, for treatment. Before the doctor could do anything, on the stretcher he breathed his last on 25 April 2021. On the next day, 26 April 2021, at 2.00 pm with all the religious ceremonies, he was laid to rest in the ATC, Namkum Cemetery, following all the guidelines of Covid-19.

Br. Modestus was a catechist's son. His father had been associated closely to the missionary Fathers life-long. So his religious and character formation went along inseparably. Naturally his father would have liked to see his son a religious. It was fitting that Br. Modestus joined the Society of Jesus.

Br. Modestus' motto in life was the 'Magnificat' of our Lady who in humble surrender always gave praises to God. Joining our Lady he also spent time in praising God which gave him the greatest joy. He used to say that though being unworthy, God chose him to be a religious. The other greater delight he experienced was his young students' untainted innocent love. Even after scolding or reprimand, the children would quickly forget all that and be close to him as if nothing have happened. He was fond of them and the children found him loving as they used to run behind him to wish him good morning or good afternoon Brother!

During his school days the teachers, though being senior to him, would respect him and follow his instructions in fulfilling all that would be asked of them. You felt small before such returns. He felt grateful to the Society of Jesus for what opportunities it provided him. He recalled that the Society thought of him worthy of pursuing studies: he was offered to follow the Teachers' Training Course, made him finish his Intermediate to MA studies and placed the responsibilities of being Headmaster of major schools, though he was an ordinary Brother.

No work is small in the Society. If the worker is of

small heart, even a big work would seem small to him and the vice versa. He always gladly fulfilled all the works entrusted to him like gardening or in the kitchen, considering that everything came from the Lord. As a Headmaster he did not himself bury in academic curriculum but concentrated on sports and games as well. During his time the famous 'Football Moona Cup' existed which he engineered so thoroughly well that gained its name every year. The children learnt much from these activities.

As a religious he followed the path of simplicity, humility, friendliness and loving approach to people. His simplicity and outward appearance misguided people of what treasure of qualities were hidden in his person. Devotion and dedication to the given work were his character. His seventy-two years of life speaks a volume to us. Every morning the province men will miss him when they will check WhatsApp messages. Even during his ailing days, he continued faithfully wishing happy birthday to his province men. His immense love and interest for the Society of Jesus is noteworthy. He was fond of updating himself about his province men and therefore he not only knew the province men but also their designation and other details. He never missed morning Mass and evening prayer. Community life, community celebrations, community outings were his top preferences. He was punctual and regular to school in spite of his health issues. His public life was vibrant as he knew people by their names and place. He was connected to many of his old students on Facebook and WhatsApp. He was gifted with a sharp memory to recall and reproduce any person with his or her Biodata whom he had met before. He enjoyed any food and never complained about them. He had a great sense of gentleness in his approach and dressing sense. He was humble and obedient in asking permission to superior for going out or if he needed anything. This religious gesture of belongingness to the Society is an epitome to us. During his last days he was deeply affected by the pandemic news of Corona. On 22 April he himself acknowledged - "lagta hai isbaar hum bhi nahi bachenge". I think this was an indication and acceptance from his part that he stood nowhere in front of the strike of nature.

Such a good religious completing his life journey he departed to his heavenly reward, without giving much trouble to his fellow Jesuits. May his soul rest in peace!

The last days of Fr. John Tirkey were a succession of visits to a number of hospitals with a hope of recovery from covid-19, but he could not be saved. On 18 April 2021 he left Noadih Parish for St. Stanislaus' High School, Lohardaga. While staying there he made a visit to Constant Lievens Hospital, Mandar, for consultation with the doctor there. His condition did not improve in Lohardaga, so he was shifted to Singpur Nursing Home, Muri, on 22 April. It looked things would turn out to be better there.

Facilities ran short for treatment there for such a deadly sickness. On 27 April he had to be shifted again from Singpur to Ulhatu St. Anne's Hospital. After two days of treatment at Ulhatu, his condition worsened. So he was finally shifted to Dev Kamal Hospital, Bajra, Itki Road, on 29 April afternoon. He had been just taken in to the hospital. Fr. John breathed his last during the preliminary check up at 5.23 pm on 29 April 2021.

Fr. John Tirkey, SJ, was born in the village Akasi Pakritoli in Katkahi Parish on 16 March 1962. His parents Mr. Louis Tirkey and Libina Barwa were blessed with 7 children, 6 sons including John and a daughter.

Fr. John had his Primary and Middle School classes at Boys' Middle School, Katkahi till 1978. Thereafter, he proceeded to St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla, in 1979 for his Matriculation education and completed it in 1983. Intermediate studies were completed from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, in 1983-85. On 11 July 1985 he entered the Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha and took his first vows on 11 July 1987. For his Juniorate he was sent to XTTI, Patna, from July 1987 to May 1988. Then he was sent to A. L. College, Vijayawada for his graduation studies June 1988 to May 1991. The Philosophical studies took place soon after at Satya Nilayam, Chennai June 1991 to March 1993. After completing his regency in Nagaland 1993-95, he was at first at Tarunoday, Arsande and then to Vidya Jyoti for Theology 1995-98. On 12 April 1999 he was ordained priest at Katkahi Parish. Soon after he was appointed as an Assistant teacher cum hostel prefect at St. Mary's High School, Samtoli in 1999-03. Tertiaship followed

soon after in Raia, Goa in 2003-4 and took his final vows on 12 April 2007. After academic and religious studies were over, he was appointed as an Acting Headmaster 2005-10 at St. Peter's High School, Tongo which he took over on the approved post as a Headmaster in 2010-14. In 2014 he was transferred to St. Mary's High School as an Acting Rector cum Headmaster till 2019. His last status was at Janata High School, Noadih as Headmaster from 2019 till his death on 29 April 2021.



Fr. John Tirkey, SJ, was a loving and caretaking person and as a senior he always loved and took care of those who were junior to him either during formation or in the high schools wherever he was a Headmaster or a Prefect. He was considerate towards those under his charge of both either Scholastics or students. He played the role of a guide to all who approached him.

He loved sports and game and played all kinds of outdoor games, like hockey, football, basketball, volleyball and so on. Among these games, his favorites were hockey and football. As a Headmaster of St. Peter's High School, Tongo, he used to arrange "Inter School Hockey and Football Tournaments" for the boys often. He always wanted to see his team as a winner. Annual Sports are parts of school activities so he never skipped them every year. He encouraged the students to take part in them and developed their sporting skills to enhance themselves with strength and confidence.

He was an extrovert who mingled with others and made friends easily. He liked socializing with people and got his work done finally. Singing and dancing were not out of his interest. Tribal dance and Music were his favourites together with drumming the tribal drum (mandar) vigorously.

Fr. John, as a person, was simple, friendly, approachable, and honest. He was committed and dedicated to his work. He was psychologically mature and balanced, physically strong, and active. He was simple but bold to take decisions.

In the early morning of 30th January 2020, in Samford Hospital, Ranchi, the Lord called to Himself Br. Stephen Kerketta, SJ. Little did he realize when he was taken to Constant Lievens Hospital, Mandar for some health issues about a fortnight ago that he was never to return to SXC, Ranchi, his own Community.

Noticing some symptoms of corona virus, a test was conducted in the Hospital immediately. The test result turned out to be positive with pneumonia. This caused him acute breathing difficulty. He was rushed to Samford Hospital, Ranchi and got admitted in the Covid wing where he was under treatment in the Intensive Care Unit. Despite all efforts of the Medical Team in the Hospital, he succumbed to the disease.



Born on 1st June 1945 at Barwadih Pahantoli village to late Mr. Ignace Kerketta and late Mrs. Julia Tete as his father and mother, Br. Stephen was brought up in a strong Catholic family atmosphere. He had his schooling up to class X in the parish school Barwadih. Later he did his Intermediate privately. Deep down in his heart he had a desire to be a Jesuit Brother. So he went to St. Ignatius' School Gumla for pre-postulancy programme. He was happy to be one of the five selected candidates for postulancy. His postulancy in Sitagarha exposed him to quite a few tasks that he would undertake later in the Society. His Novitiate formation blended appropriately prayer and works which Stephen engaged happily. On 2nd February 1966 he took his First Vows together with five of his companions as Jesuit Brothers in the Society and stayed there for another year for Juniorate. Then his years of ministries started in different communities of the Province which he accomplished them with much dedication and availability.

The significant contributions he has made speak of volumes of the quality of his vision accompanied by earnest commitment as a true son of St. Ignatius. He is one of the Jesuits who lived and served in major Communities as well as in some parishes of Ranchi Province: St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla (1968-1969), St. Xavier's College, Ranchi (1969-1975), Catholic Church, Soso (1975-1976), Catholic Church, Tumdegi (1976-1977), St. Xavier's School,

Ambikapur (1977-1978), St. Xavier's School, Doranda (1979-1986), St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha (1989-1993), St. Xavier's College, Ranchi (1993-2008), Catholic Church, Noadih (2008-2009), St. John's Middle School, Ranchi (2009-2019) and St. Xavier's College, Ranchi (20019-2021).

His first appointment was in St. Ignatius High School, Gumla (1968-1969) - quite a big community. As an incharge of fields and garden, Br. Stephen convinced his Rector to ensure the safety with strong brick walls around the campus. For irrigation purpose water was pumped from the Pugu river. As the electricity supply was constant at night, he would pump in the water into the Community tanks till mid night and during the day he would irrigate the fields and the garden. He confessed that his one year time passed happily and very soon. Then he was assigned to work in the main office of St. Xavier's College, Ranchi (1969-1975) - from fields and garden to busy office tasks, a difficult transition. But gradually he learnt the tricks of the trade and gave his valuable service to one of the prime educational institutions in the Ranchi city for five long years.

Then his service was needed in Catholic Church Soso (1975-1976), one of the old Jesuit parishes. Br. Stephen had to look after the farm and garden - full of vegetables and fruit trees. Campus was wide open and security was a big concern. Here also Br. Stephen became an instrumental to raise stone boundary walls around the campus. His service was needed in Tumdegi parish, then a Jesuit-manned mission centre, late Fr David Kerketta, SJ being the parish priest. As Garden and Farm In-charge, his spirit of service and commitment reflected there as well though he went through some initial difficult moments in the community.

After his tertianship in Sacred Heart, Shembaganur (1978), he was assigned as Minister and Treasurer in St. Xavier's School, Doranda under the guidance of Fr George Karakunnel, SJ and Br. Tarcitius Toppo, SJ. It was a challenging task for him, especially to maintain the account of the School. But slowly he learnt things and successfully accomplished his duty for seven years (1979-1986). His joy

was doubled when he took his Final Vows here in 1980.

Gradually his health issues became a concern for him. He found difficult to give himself fully to active ministry. He represented his case to the Provincial who considered it and gave him SXC Community, Ranchi, where he engaged himself as a Sacristan and assistant Minister until his last days.

A few human and Jesuit characteristics of Br. Stephen could be worth noted: he was a happy, simple, soft spoken and friendly and very accommodative. His presence radiated pleasant feeling amidst his Jesuit brothers and the people he came across. He was accessible to all those who were in need.

As a Jesuit Brother, he loved his vocation. At times he expressed his genuine concern towards the dwindling vocation of Brothers in the Society of Jesus in general. He was convinced that a Jesuit Brother has a significant role to play in the Society. He had special love for the sick and the elderly members. Often he was seen visiting some of the inmates in the Manresa House Infirmary.

In these Institutions and mission centres (in some twice even) he had put in a yeoman's work with marvelous achievements and that too in a record time. He has accomplished his share of the Mission. Well done! He has gone for his reward from the Lord who had called him a 'companion in His Mission'.

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FR. SEVERIUS EKKA, SJ (1938 - 2021)

Fr. Philemon Ekka, SJ

Fr. Severius Ekka, SJ was born on 7th September 1938 in Chichwani village, in Katkahi parish. He was the second son among three brothers. He did his middle school in St. Joseph Middle school Katkahi. After his high school in St. Johns' Ranchi and Inter College in St. Xavier's college Ranchi. He was interested in Maths and Physics as a science student.

With much prayer and a Jesuit he entered July 1961 in St. Sitagaha. In two man of prayer and faith and justice his first vows in After Novitiate Joseph's Bangalore 16th July 1963. work in literature back to Ranchi for his from 1964 to 1966. He was studies. He did well in his studies. Thereafter he was sent to Sacred Heart College Shembaganur for his Philosophical studies from 1966 to 1968. After completing his philosophy he was sent to St. Mayr's Samtoli for his regency. Here he proved himself with his talents and qualities as Science teacher in a year.



fervent desire to become Society of Jesus on 15th Stanislaus College years he made himself to fight gallantly for he committed with the Society of Jesus. he was sent to St. for his Juniarate on After one year of hard and spirituality he came B.Sc. in St. Xavier's College clever and hard working in his

He was sent to St. Mary's Kurseong for his theological studies from 1968 to 1970. This was the transition period when Theological institute was shifted from Kurseong to Vidya Jyoti Delhi so his final year of theological studies was done from 1970 to 1971 in Vidya Jyoti Delhi. After his Diaconate ministry he was ordained on 25th April 1973 in his home parish, Katkahi. Soon after his ordination he had few months of pastoral ministry.

Those days very few studied science among the tribals and there was dire need of a science teacher in St. Mary's High School Samtoli, Simdega. Therefore, Fr. Severius Ekka was appointed as science teacher in Samtoli. Usually Religious are transferred from one place to another according to the need and place but Fr Severius worked hard as a science teacher from 1974 to 2001 as full duration of his service period for 27 years in St. Mary's Samtoli. Fr. Severius was well known for his teaching among the parents, students and teachers. In the course of his stay in Samtoli he made his final commitment in the society of Jesus with his final Vows on 15th August 1977 at St Mary's High School, Samtoli. Fr. Severius was a man of discipline for which students liked him much and his teaching. Besides his teaching ministry he was a man of mission. He used to go to Simdega jail for his prison ministry. As long as he was in Samtoli he did his prison ministry very faithfully. The inmates of the jail liked his service to them. As he was faithful in his educational ministry so also he was faithful for the prison ministry.

After completing his educational ministry he had a great desire to become a pastor hence he was sent to Catholic Ashram Soso for few years to work as assistant parish priest and even there he continued his educational ministry. At this age he had great dream and desire of becoming a missionary in Assam so he was sent to Chidimit, Garo hill in Assam as assistant parish priest.



He visited Christians as well as non-Christians equally whenever it was holiday or he found his own way of recreation. He rarely went for home visit. But whenever he went for home visit, he used to visit many families and spent enough time in talking about the genealogy of the family relationships and others. Villagers liked him for visiting the families. Fr Severius retired in 2001 after his tiresome 27 years of service in St. Mary's High School Samtoli, Simdega.

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During his stay in Manresa House he kept up his holiness and spiritual ministry. He made sure to join all the spiritual and other activities of the community. When his ill-health did not co-operate with him he had to visit doctors in Ranchi as well as in Mandar. In spite of ill health he was always cheerful, man of prayer and visiting his neighbors next to his room in infirmary to talk and spend some time with other inmates. Last days of his time was mainly spent in Constant Lievance Hospital and Research Centre. Often he expressed that his mortal remaining to be taken to Samtoli after his death as he spent longest period of his life in service. He breathed his last on 22nd April 2021 at Lievance Hospital and Research Centre Mandar. His long intended desire to be buried in Samtoli was fulfilled as Curia decided to bury his mortal remaining in Samtoli.

Such a dedicated and good religious person completed his earthly life journey and departed his heavenly kingdom cheerfully. May his soul rest in peace!

Fr. George Burh, SJ

When we see the life of Fr. Gyan Prakash Minj, his life was filled with struggles and trials. He hardly enjoyed the filial love as his father was in military service. Fostering the siblings was solely shouldered by her mother. Although she did it very well and looked after them very tenderly, Fr. Gyan always experienced the absence of his father, which he expressed quite many times. A wish of his parents was to keep the family united, but the brothers of Gyan as they matured got married and all had their own way, this pained him a lot. His parents had spent all their money and energy in giving them good education but his brothers hardly came up to their expectation. Eventually his mother too, left the ancestral house and stayed with her youngest daughter-in-law. Because of that he avoided going home.

Fr. Gyan was a quiet and soft spoken person; spoke with the people only when it was necessary. He was always a loving character liked by all and hated by none. However, he was easily accessible by anyone, one of the main characteristics of a Jesuit. He was sensitive and good at heart. He was ready to help when he was approached, but if so he was ready to do it even beyond the extent of his time and space. There were some students who approached him for some help and he never denied. He availed himself for them. He loved the students but he did not express it openly. That's why he was not understood by his colleagues. As a scholastic he was loved by all his friends. He specially won great admiration in the football ground. When he was with the ball in D area, everyone was confident that he was going to send the ball to the net.

Fr. Gyan was a responsible person. He was always soft spoken and his words were sweet. He was never seen or heard yelling at anyone. It is evidently known that he did stray when in Andamans, but he came back to the Society with great humility. He was very hard working and he did not leave any work unless finished. He was ready to accompany the needy anytime but he would not show it off. Whatever work was assigned to him he would do it with his utmost ability.

Whether in the school, parish or it may be in the

field of gardening, he made it sure that things should proceed ahead smoothly. He was seen going out in the scorching sun or pouring rain only to complete the pending work. In the school too he would avail himself so that students should not suffer because of him. He was quite optimistic for the future of the students who were under his care. For the hostellers he had already stocked rice and firewood for the near future. He had a plan of levelling another play-ground for the kids and tots as they could not be accommodated when seniors ones were playing. As a good teacher he tried his best to groom the students with his capacity. With his intention, I believe, he had enrolled himself for T.T.C., so that he could be a better teacher and administrator for the school, in fact that was his dream.

We feel so sorry that we lost him at this young age. The Society certainly feels the loss and the vacuum created at his demise. May the loving Lord give him peace in his abode.



Fr. Peter Claver Lakra, SJ

Fr. Isaac Tete was born on 23 February 1955 in Bhelwadih village of Khanjaloya parish in a devout Christian family of late Mr. Mathias Tete and late Mrs. Salomi Dungdung. He grew up in the family of his elder sister, Mrs Felicita Dungdung in Dwarsini. He received his early education in the parish school. After passing seventh standard he joined Apostolic school Gumla and did his matriculation from St. Ignatius High School, Gumla. He joined St. Aloysius Minor Seminary Ranchi and completed Intermediate Science from St. Xavier's College Ranchi. He joined the Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagraha on 20 November 1974 and after two years, he took his First Vows in the Society of Jesus (21 November 1976).

It was a great event for him and the family members as well as the villagers. It is evident from the fact that in remembrance of his receiving cassock for the first time in the Novitiate, the villagers had Curus Gari programme on 3rd December 1974. Still the villagers celebrate the Curus Gari Feast in the village each year. Fr. Isaac's becoming a priest was a great blessing for the family as well as the village. He was the only priest in the village. His father was a happiest man when Fr. Isaac was ordained a priest on 29 April 1987. He told us that his father's long awaited dream was fulfilled and he wanted nothing in life.

Fr. Isaac did his regency in St. Albert's College Ranchi and Socius to the Novice Master in the Novitiate in ATC, Namkum. So he had deep understanding of religious life and of the youth. Occasionally he shared about great Jesuits history of Society of Jesus. It was interesting to know about the past history of the Church from him. He reminded us of great feast of the church and the Society of Jesus. He respected individual's ideas and encouraged initiatives. He had great hope from

young Jesuits. He said that these young scholastics will be the future Superiors and Rectors. He respected every human person - young and old. He did not want to become any obstacle on the way of Jesuits, staff and guardians.



Fr. Isaac was a good planner and organizer. He had sense of good administration and discipline. At times he did not get support but he was firm in his decision. The staff and students liked his way of dealing. In his tenure as Principal of St. John's High School, Dorea, the School produced 100% result in the Matriculation Examination in 2019 - 2020. For this great achievement,

the whole of Tamar Block appreciated the Principal and Staff of the School.

He had good Knowledge of Computer. All the office works were done by him working for hours in his office. At times he forgot his meals. He knew the urgency of the tasks and often there was no assistant to finish the official works. He spent hours in preparing the recognition papers for St. John's High School Dorea.

Fr. Isaac Tete was calm and serene man. He looked young even at the age of 65. The students said he looked very young, the age of about 40 - 50. But he would smile and say I am now 65 years old. He was respected and listened to by the Staff and the students. It was painful that due to lockdown most of them were away in their houses and unaware of his death on 6 May 2021 in St. Anne's Hospital, Ulhatu. They will miss him much when the school reopens at any time. May God reward His faithful servant eternal peace in heaven.

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Br Felix Prakash Tete, SJ breathed his last at the age of 85 on Friday, June 11, 2021 at 5:45 PM in St Anne's Hospital, Ulhatu situated in the periphery of Ranchi. He had been admitted there a week earlier for his complain of persistent cough and cold which were later diagnosed as the symptoms of dreaded Covid-19 pandemic. He was treated for the pandemic but he succumbed to it with a cardiac arrest on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His burial took place on Saturday, June 12, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. His devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Mother Mary was seemingly rewarded in his heart being sandwiched by the two Heavenly Hearts. United with the two Hearts he joined the 14 Ranchi Jesuits who went before him from September 2020 onwards to the Father's House. With his death finally stopped the series of deaths of the Ranchi Jesuits during the 2nd wave of the pandemic. In this series of 15 deaths spread over 10 months Ranchi Province suffered the loss of 11 Priests and 4 Brothers.

Felix Prakash saw the light of day on April 8, 1936 in Karangaguri Jhipatoli which then fell under the jurisdiction of Banabira parish of the current Simdega diocese. He was the youngest and the sixth child of his father Mr. Louis Tete and his mother, Mrs. Gertrude Soreng. He was orphaned at the age of 7 when his mother died of a fatal fall and his father was away stranded in Andamans due to the 2nd world war. When he was 8 years old, his eldest brother got married and little Felix began to be looked after by his newly-wed sister-in law as his own mother. God took care of him as his beloved child who was destined for

Jesuit Brotherhood. Felix did his primary schooling in the village school and he finished his middle school in R.C. School, Banabira staying there as a boarder.

After having passed his 7th standard, in 1955 along with his two village companions he joined postulancy in St Stanislaus College, Sitagarha where a year later he entered the novitiate on 1st February 1956. His Novitiate period had the record of largest number of novices for Brotherhood as many as 35 including both the years. His novitiate was followed by his Juniorate in Sitagarha itself. As a Novice and a Junior he was much loved and appreciated for his simplicity, honesty and generosity by his fellow companions, the Fathers of the community and even by the Tertian Fathers of that period.

Apart from some formal training in medical service in Bangalore and much later a short theological formation in DNC Pune, he upgraded his minimal educational status of 7th standard through his hard private studies. Like our Founder he realized the need and importance of studies for carrying out one's mission effectively. Therefore one after another he accomplished his private matriculation, B.A and even B. Ed. while engaged in different assigned ministries in different institutions of the Province. In the span of 65 years of Religious life after his basic formation at Sitagarha he was assigned to nine different institutions for different types of ministries. In these nine institutions one could describe his

personal, community and apostolic life as characterized by seven C's: commitment, compassion, concern, counsel, courage, criticism and correction.

Br Felix got his first assignment to Loyola

In the span of 65 years of Religious life after his basic formation at Sitagarha he was assigned to nine different institutions for different types of ministries. In these nine institutions one could describe his personal, community and apostolic life as characterized by seven C's: commitment, compassion, concern, counsel, courage, criticism and correction.

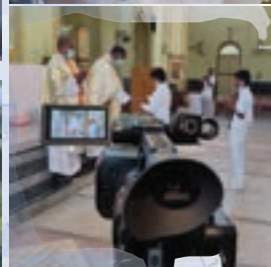
Kunkuri with the office of domestic administration. Besides this office, he also looked after the two big hostels of nearly 300 boys blending strictness with kindness. All the 7 C's started germinating in discharge of his office and in his general conduct. He criticised the boys and corrected them with love and concern. He was committed to them in taking care of them day in day out. He was prudently courageous in pointing out their faults for improvement. With his good experience of domestic care and dealing with the boys in Kunkuri he did still better with growing confidence in his 2nd assignment given in Ambikapur where he had an additional charge of an assistant teacher. After his medical training in Bangalore he was given charge of an infirmarian in Kunkuri in his third assignment. With this office he grew in his compassionate care, concern and medical skills. Seeing the quality of his medical care he was assigned to St. Albert's College, Ranchi as an infirmarian. He was much appreciated by the Seminarians and the staff for his vigilant and friendly medical service. The theological ambience of the Seminary instilled in him an interest in tribal culture, in social justice issues and even a desire for doing theology. So, he had a brief theological formation in DNC Pune after which he was made the Director of Brother candidates and Vocation Promoter in Loyola Khunti. He loved that work and conducted several youth camps and retreats in Biru and Barway accompanying the youth and showing them the way to God.

The 7 C's could be evident more conspicuously in St. Mary's Samtoli where he was assigned as Assistant teacher on an approved post along with his office of an infirmarian and Brothers' Vocation Promoter. He was much appreciated and loved by his students, especially the day scholars. He was always available for the needy whether they be students or people of the neighbourhood or strangers. He would visit villages

and hold meetings with them offering them counsels for leading a life of dignity. He was alert to the needs of the sick and suffering, more especially the sick of his village, Karangaguri. When he was transferred from St. Mary's Samtoli to Manresa House, Ranchi one elderly lady exclaimed, "Br. Felix is going away; all of us will be dying one by one". It did happen that she and few others died shortly afterwards. After his service of one year in Manresa House he was transferred to Catholic Church, Soso as Minister and in charge of farms and fields. There he took tuition classes for the poor students. While there he celebrated his golden jubilee in 2006 in the presence of nearly all the Brothers of the Province. From there he was transferred to ATC, Namkum where he celebrated his diamond jubilee of Religious life with much felicitation in 2016.

The four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) are the concrete expressions of Jesus' attitudes, values, words and deeds. In the latter part of the Religious life of Br. Felix, UAPs found their spontaneous expressions. He accompanied the youth either organized or disorganized with his interest in their all round growth through his constructive criticism and corrections. He took care of the mother earth by taking care of trees and plants, by planting new trees wherever he went and by counselling people to do so. He showed the people the way to God though his counsels in retreats and meetings. He courageously participated in meetings, rallies, and 'dharnas' to promote the cause of human rights. With his compassionate love and concern he walked with the poor and extended his helping hand to the needy, the sick and the suffering. His last visit to his sick grand niece, an Ursuline nun turned out to be his last step towards his heavenly abode. May the Eternal King and the Universal Lord who called him to labour with him make him share in his eternal joy and glory!

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seeing all things
new in Christ

Finding
God
in
Pandemic!

