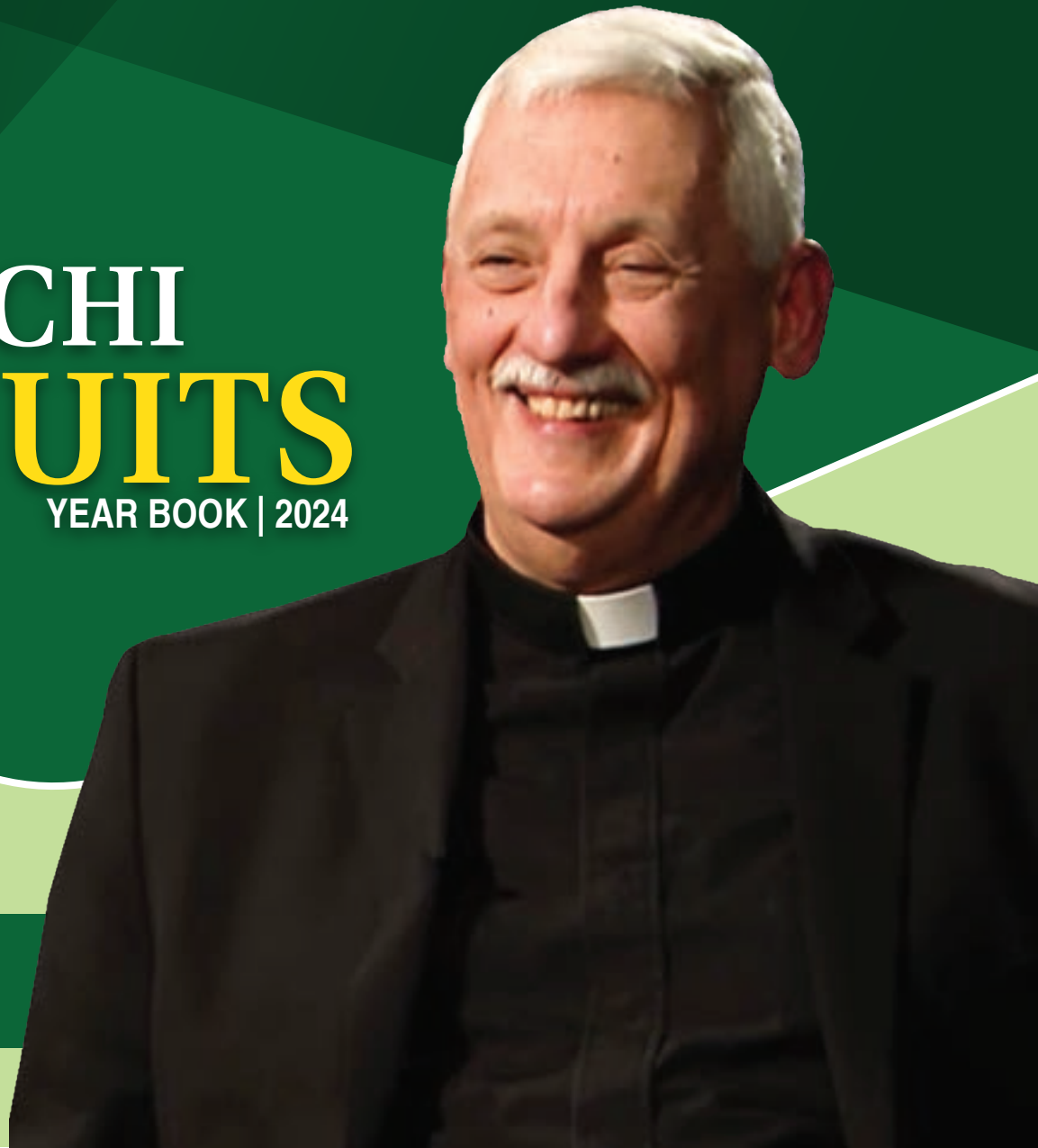




# RANCHI JESUITS

YEAR BOOK | 2024



**Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ**  
Superior General of the Society of Jesus







The Vision of La Storta, 1537



# RANCHI JESUITS

YEAR BOOK | 2024



# Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life - Mission



**RANCHI JESUITS**  
YEAR BOOK | 2024



# **RANCHI JESUITS**

## **VISION MISSION STATEMENT**

### **VISION**

**Inflamed by the love of Christ, we, the Jesuits of Ranchi Province, journey together as 'pilgrims of hope' with trust in the Holy Spirit for creating a just and humane world.**

### **MISSION**

- To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and Discernment
- To walk with the poor and the outcasts of the world to promote human rights, dignity and self-esteem in the mission of love, peace, justice, and reconciliation
- To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future
- To collaborate and network in caring for our common home to make all things new in Christ

**Imprimi Potest**  
**Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ**  
**Provincial Superior**  
**Ranchi Jesuit Society**  
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## Foreword

**A**s we embrace the year 2024, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment in the history of the Ranchi Jesuit Province. Our theme, "Reimagining and Restructuring our Life-Mission in Ranchi Province," invites us to reflect deeply on our life-mission and adapt to the evolving needs of our times.

Inspired by the vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola and guided by Ignatian Spirituality, we are called to discern the movements of the Spirit in our lives and respond with courage and creativity. This yearbook captures the diverse and vibrant facets of our mission, providing insights and inspirations as we move forward.

Our universal mission calls us to extend our reach beyond geographical and cultural boundaries, exemplified by our missionaries in Cambodia, British Guyana, Jordan, Africa, Japan, Rome, Assam, and Andamans Missions. The Quadrilateral Mission, relevance of studying law, emergent political perspectives, and our efforts in engagements in different sectors of ministries highlight our commitment to bring peace, reconciliation, justice and human dignity.

Education remains a cornerstone of our apostolate, with initiatives across primary, secondary, and higher education. Programmes like AICUF, CLC, and Jeewan Pravesh ensure we remain responsive to the needs of young people. Our ministries extend to metro cities and migrant communities in Chennai and Kerala, reflecting our commitment to pastoral care in diverse settings.

Ecology reminds us of our responsibility to care for our common home and nurture our spiritual well-being. Our formation programmes, pastoral work, and focus on Jesuit and Brothers' vocations are essential in preparing individuals to continue our mission with integrity and fervour.

The personal journeys and contributions of our members are beautifully captured in the interviews with Br. Nicholas Topno, Fr. James Toppo, Fr. Henry Barla, and Fr. K.C. Philip. Their life stories inspire us and provide valuable insights into living our vocation faithfully. The obituaries honour the lives and contributions of our members, inspiring us to continue our life-mission with integrity and fervour.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess and his editorial team for their dedication and hard work in bringing out the Year Book 2024. May this yearbook serve as a source of inspiration and a reminder of our shared commitment to the Greater Glory of God.

Yours in Christ,

  
**Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ**  
Provincial







## From the Editor's Desk

As we embark upon the milestone 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ranchi Jesuits Year Book, it is with great joy and reverence that we reflect on the theme guiding our Province in 2024: **“Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission.”** This theme resonates deeply with the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose life and experiences continue to inspire and guide us in our journey. St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus, was a man of profound spiritual insight and vision. His transformative encounter with God during his convalescence from battle injuries marked the beginning of a lifelong journey of discernment and service. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises, a cornerstone of Ignatian spirituality, teach us the importance of discerning God’s will in our lives through prayerful reflection and contemplation.

In our current context, as we face new challenges and opportunities, the call to **“Reimagine and Restructure Our Life-Mission”** invites us to discern deeply how we can continue to serve God and humanity with renewed zeal and commitment. This theme encourages us to evaluate and adapt our approaches while remaining rooted in our Ignatian values of faith, justice, and solidarity.

The Scriptures remind us in Proverbs 19:21 that “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” This verse underscores the importance of aligning our aspirations and plans with God’s purpose, trusting in His guidance as we navigate the complexities of our mission.

Throughout this Year Book, you will find a rich tapestry of reflections, articles, and stories that embody the Ignatian spirit. These contributions from our writers offer diverse perspectives on how we can live out our mission in today’s world, drawing from the wellspring of Ignatian spirituality. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the writers and contributors whose dedication and insights have enriched this publication. Your words not only inform but also inspire us to live more deeply the values of our Jesuit tradition.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Ranchi Jesuit Society, I express my sincere appreciation and best wishes to each one of you who has contributed to this Year Book. May God bless you abundantly and may the Ignatian spirit continue to guide and sustain us in the years to come.

Yours in Christ,

**Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess, SJ**  
Editor



# Ranchi Province Days - 2024





# SECTION

# A



## CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES



**01**

## Embracing Universality : A Jesuit's Journey Beyond Boundaries

**Sch. Pingal Bilung, SJ**

• Satya Nilayam, Chennai



Universality is not merely a term within the Jesuit circle; it is a profound way of life, a guiding principle that shapes our very essence, and a cherished ideal that defines our identity and Mission.

When Jesuits hear the word “Universality,” it evokes deep emotions and ignites an urgency of purpose. We are proud to be men on a Universal Mission, perpetually moving, growing, and breaking boundaries. For us, the vastness of the globe is not a limitation but a grand canvas waiting to be explored, expanded, and embraced.

In 2020, I found myself standing at the Ranchi Airport, poised for a journey to Nagaland; a commission of a different kind- to be among people of different races, ethnicities, cultures, and entirely different geographical landscapes and locations. I was Accompanied by Sch. Anand Dungdung, and five aspiring novices who destined for their novitiate to Shillong. That was my first venture beyond the confines of my province, a very nostalgic yet exhilarating moment. As I waited to board the flight in a very comfortable lounge, my

curious mind started raising several questions: How would I get adjusted to new environments? What would be the challenges I would have to face? Would I be able to embrace the reality over there? The concept of Universality and the Universal mission, often discussed during my novitiate and Pre-Novitiate days, was now going to become a reality. There I was on a new frontier altogether, the borders of the world; away from the comfort of my cocoon, to live the Universal mission, we are so often extolled to ponder over.

Our identity is not rooted in who we are but in what legacy we belong to and the charisms we subscribe to: a Universal Mission that transcends nations, races, traditions, borders, and cultures. It impels us to relinquish our comfort zones, ivory towers, fears, and anxieties; and thus, become one with the universe. Universality is not just a lofty ideal; it demands proper attitudinal dispositions openness to the unknown realities and possibilities, and self-confidence to face and embrace them.

At present I am doing my philosophical studies and every activity be it academic, pastoral, spiritual, or social in its orientation - is meticulously designed to inculcate in us a mindset of Universal Mission







and Universality. The various ministries assigned to us, coupled with extensive exposure and outreach programmes, significantly foster this sense of Universality. These ministries and our exposures beyond classrooms, do emphasize that our Mission transcends our specific province, region, or assistance; highlighting the vast and Universal nature of the Society of Jesus.

In common houses like Chennai, the most prominent factor is the blend of scholastics from around the globe. This diversity fosters a much broader sense of oneness and union with the entire Society. Both academic and non-academic activities, such as seminars, workshops, endowment lectures and philosophizing sessions orient us toward the Universal Mission.

The academic environment in Chennai is exceptional. The subjects that we get ourselves engaged in during our philosophical and intellectual formation, are not merely confined to the local or national issues but cut across cultures, systems of knowledge, and faith traditions. A wide range of philosophical traditions help us broaden our horizons. Each subject we study introduces us to a new system of knowledge, a new way of thinking, and a new lens of looking at realities, reinforcing the concept of Universality. In addition to this, various intellectual activities such as National Seminars, endowment lectures, and celebrations like The World Philosophy Day and Cultural Diversity Days are meticulously designed to foster the spirit of Universality. The chosen themes for these academic activities and celebrations of the last couple of years have

been Universally appealing; for example, the faculty conducted national seminars on Universal themes like peace, reconciliation: Philosophical Reviews; Reasonable Deep Disagreement: Multi-dimensional perspectives; Universal and Global Impact of Violence; Inter-cultural relations, etc. have further enriched our understanding and commitment to the Universal Mission.

Annual cultural tours to South India have helped us get ourselves fully immersed in a much deeper understanding of diverse cultures, always promoting a much finer sense of Universality. The warm hospitality of Jesuit brothers during these outings fosters a feeling of oneness and a greater sense of belonging to the same Society. These outings serve as a prelude and interlude to what it means to be part of a Universal Society for the Universal Mission of Jesus.

Our outreach and exposure programmes, integral to our academics, take us to various places of worship in the city. We study, learn, observe, think, and interact with people from different faith traditions. This practice which is a regular feature in academia, helps us immensely shed the tag of narrow-mindedness and prejudices, allowing us to appreciate the beauty of other cultures and religions. We recently have had a chance to visit and interact with different faith traditions such as Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Being exposed to different religions, faith traditions, and different ways of perceiving the divine, also fosters a sense of Universality. It prepares us for the Universal Mission by teaching us to appreciate and respect the beliefs and





practices of others. This exposure helps us become more inclusive and open-minded.

Living outside one's province and having a good interaction with the scholastics from different parts of South Asia with very diverse socio-economic, political, and cultural backgrounds is a commendable experience and it's once in a lifetime opportunity. It challenges us to adapt, accommodate, adjust, and appreciate different food habits and customs, preparing us for the Universal Mission. This experience teaches us to embrace diversity and become more adaptable, tolerant, enduring, respectful, mindful, tenacious, and resilient.

Living among people with different cultural practices and belief systems enhances the feeling of Universality. It reminds us that we are meant for all people and places, and not bound to one geographical location or ethnicity. These exposures given to us regularly broaden our understanding and foster empathy, congruence, and compassion for others.

The atmosphere of the entire common house is conducive to fostering a sense of Universal Mission and the spirit of Universality. Professors and the entire teaching and non-teaching faculty promote this spirit without bias, prejudice, or partiality. These experiences and emotions contribute to building a sense of Universality, making us feel that we belong to one Society with one Mission for the greater glory of God.

To conclude, the Universal Mission is not just a concept but a way of life for the Jesuits. It requires us to embrace diversity, be open to new experiences, and new perspectives, and constantly strive to broaden our horizons.

Universality is the heart of our Jesuit identity. It is not merely an idea but a lived reality, shaping our Mission and our lives. As we embrace this Universal Mission, we transcend boundaries, connect with diverse cultures, and become true men for others, serving humanity for the greater glory of God.



*Ranchi Jesuits in Satya Nilayam, Chennai*



**02**

## Our Life - Mission in Guyana : To love and to Serve in all things

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

• *Missionaries at British Guyana*



Guyana is a country in South America and this is the only English-Speaking country in South America, like majority of the Caribbean Islands. Guyana means land of many waters! This is a beautiful country rich in natural resources, cultures and traditions.

Jesuits' presence here is since 1857 when Pope Pius IX entrusted the Guyana Mission to English Jesuits. Jesuits came in the country when Guyana was still under British rule. Guyana became independent only in 1966 and became Republic in 1970.

The English Missionaries' initial focus for their work was in Georgetown and along the Atlantic coast. It was under Bishop Compton Galton, SJ that the Rupununi Mission to the Amerindians of the Interior was founded with Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes, SJ in 1909. The mission stations were founded at Sand Creek in the South Rupununi in 1949 and St. Joseph's Mission at Kurukabaru in the Pakaraima Mountains in 1956. Santa Rosa Mission in Maruca in the district of North West was founded by an Irish Priest in 1836. It was

abandoned for some time. Jesuits resumed the mission to serve the indigenous people in the Northwest Region of Guyana. The Christian faith kept on growing amidst the opposition and hardships. Almost a century later, on 29

February 1956, the Diocese of Georgetown, Guyana was canonically established and Bishop Lester Guilly, SJ was the first Bishop of Georgetown.

The country is 214,969 kilometers in size and population according to the census of 2022 is 808,726. There are Indians, Africans, Europeans, Portuguese, Chinese and Amerindians. At present, number of Venezuelans and Cubans has increased in the country. Thus, Guyana is a multicultural society.

The country has maintained its unity in diversity under the National motto, 'one nation, one people and one destiny'. It is very tolerant with the religions. There are 54.2% Christians, 28.4% Hindus and 7.2% Muslims. There are many other Christian denominations in the country. The Catholic population is 52,901 which is 8.1% of





the total population. Bishop Francis Alleyne, OSB is the shepherd of the Diocese of Georgetown. There are 24 parishes in the Diocese which are looked after by 21 priests. Out of 21 priests, 14 are Jesuit Priests, 5 Diocesan Priests and 2 IVE Priests. There are 56 nuns of different congregations from different parts of the world.

The English Missionaries focused not only on social and pastoral ministries but also on education and started schools in the city as well as in the interior among the Amerindians. Jesuits played a significant role in providing education to the people in the country. However, after independence in 1966 all the schools were nationalized except one, managed by Ursuline sisters (OSU) which this is the only Catholic School in the Country.

Though the schools were all Nationalized, the church continued its educational apostolate by providing training to the lay people known as "Parish Lay Assistance (PLA)." Since then, Parish Lay Assistants (PLAs, Catechists) are playing a vital role in keeping the church active and vibrant. We are working in the parishes, administering sacraments and accompanying the adults, youth and children in their faith formation. There is also an effort to promote the social, cultural life and education of the people, especially among the Amerindians.

To preserve and to promote the Amerindian culture and tradition, Jesuits took initiative in Deep South Rupununi to offer the bilingual educational program – Wapichan (one of the Indigenous languages) and English Medium School in Sawariwao and few other villages. The atmosphere of the school is very homely marking cordial relationship with the students and teachers. The Toshao (the head of the villages) and the entire village communities are actively involved in the school activities.

Since 2006 Ursuline Sisters from Ranchi are engaged in the pastoral ministry in the interior mission of Guyana. They are Jesuits' collaborators in the mission of community building, faith formation and women empowerment. Their presence makes lots of difference in the mission.

They are very much involved in the pastoral work in St. Teresa Church Karasabai in South Pakaraimas with the Amerindians in the interior.

The society of Jesus has taken up few other ministries in order to give better service to the communities which includes not only Catholics but all others in need of help and support. Berbice is a region predominantly of Indo – Guyanese. They are mostly Hindus and Muslims. For the least privileged youth, Guyana Human Development Centre offers vocational courses in Computer, Home Science etc. The center also offers them the platform for inter religious dialogue. Similar programme is offered in Aishalton in Rupununi for the Amerindians.

Along with various challenges there are also opportunities in our mission.

The biggest challenge in the country is ill-feeling and hatred towards one another, specially between Indo and Afro Guyanese. It is obvious even in the Church and of course in the country. However, these challenges give us opportunities to learn and appreciate different cultures and traditions of the people. It also helps us to be more sensitive, understanding and patient and finally strengthens our spiritual life.

The Diocese of Georgetown, is blessed with the priests from India, Guyana, Brazil, Great Britain, Canada and Nigeria. Guyana was a British colony for many years. There are six races in the country – Indian, African, European, Portuguese, Chinese, Amerindians and very recent one is Spanish speaking community from Venezuela and Cuba.

Guyana has a multicultural identity and a multi-ethnic identity. It is a multicultural society with several religions, variety of food, clothing and lifestyle. For some missionaries it is hard to accept the local culture and tradition as many stay together without marriage.

Multiculturalism has been a hallmark of the Society of Jesus. We the sixteen Jesuits come from six countries and speak diverse languages have inserted into the culture, the language and the reality of each place. Though it is challenging, the mission becomes easier, joyful and fruitful once





the local culture and tradition is accepted with open heart and mind. Fr. Elias enjoys saying mass in Patamona one of the Indigenous languages of Amerindians.

Another challenge is the problem of migration. In recent years the number of migrants has increased in the country. There are many immigrants from Venezuela. They are fleeing from Venezuela because of violence and poverty, looking for their basic needs. There are many from Brazil and Cuba looking for jobs and better living. Due to the increasing number of immigrants from different countries, Guyana is facing cultural challenges,

unemployment and human trafficking.

Guyana region was part of British Province till 2018 then it was annexed to the Caribbean Regional Province. On 31 July 2023, the Society of Jesus established the Caribbean Province as a new territorial division integrating Cuba, Miami and Dominican Republic with the Jesuits of English Caribbean Guyana and Jamaica. Being a member of the Caribbean province is also a challenge in terms of language and cultural differences. However, we are hopeful by the grace of the Holy Spirit that all our effort in the name of Christ Jesus will bear fruits in twenty, fifty and in hundredfold.



**03**

## Land of the Rising Sun : Japan Mission

**Sch. Priyatam Lakra, SJ**

• *Wakamiya Scholasticate, Nakano-Ku, Tokyo, Japan*



Well-known as the country of the rising sun; Japan has been a landmark of relentless missionary struggles in the church history. Historically, Shinto, the Indigenous spirituality centered on *kami* (spirits)

and nature worship, coexisted with Buddhism and came from China in the 6th century.

Christianity was introduced to Japan in the 16th century, notably with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in 1549. Through time and culture, Christianity in Japan has been a tale of resilience, adaptation, and unwavering faith. There was a time of brutal persecutions of Christians, including torture, executions, and forced renunciation of faith. There have been several notable incidents in this period, such as crucifixion of twenty-six Christians in Nagasaki in 1597. On 5 February 1597, six European missionaries of the Franciscan Order, three Japanese Jesuits, and seventeen

laymen, who had been apprehended in Kyoto and Osaka and marched to Nagasaki, were raised on crosses and then impaled with spears.

Here I am with my four years of experiences, faith sharing, and learning from the Japan Mission. It seems quite unrealistic for me to have spent these four years in the mission land with so many cultural differences and religious diversities. It is quite interesting to experience the blend of scientific temperament and cultural diversity that harmoniously coexist. Though quiet but steadfast flame of Christian faith has been flickering for centuries. Japan has always had a diverse and significant mission in spreading the good news that started from the 16th century onwards. Despite church persecution and struggles the mission work bore fruit though a small but dedicated Christian community emerged. At present Jesuit missionaries from 21 countries are working in the Japan mission land.

The mission in Japan is undoubtedly a journey of adaptation and resilience across time and cultures.







I had a great time learning Japanese culture and the education system by working in a school in Hiroshima almost for two years. Teaching the students there has brought me more confidence in my Japanese communication. I feel grateful and blessed to have such an opportunity to be directly involved in the education ministry. I was involved in teaching English and catechism, and conducting an Ignatian leadership programme for high school students in Hiroshima. This year in April, I shifted to Tokyo from Hiroshima for my theological study. I am glad to witness a new spiritual world in the course of my studies. The church history of Japan itself is a new adventure to me. In the current situation, despite the challenges of a society shaped by different values and traditions, the spirit of Christian faith in Japan continues to be strong in various forms of outreach. The message of peace, harmony, justice, and hope continues to resonate with many Christian believers and non-believers, drawing them into vibrant communities.

It is inspiring and encouraging to see the Japan province and its new phase of mission despite the lack of personnel. In the present scenario, the Japan Province has already started closing some of the Jesuit communities and started working in the institution with the lay collaborators. Though there are 136 Jesuits in the Province, the mission

demands more men to contribute their time and energy. The current situation is that the church institutions are shrinking due to rapid social and cultural change. Youth and job holders seem to be more concerned with their jobs and earning sources than spiritual activities in the church. There are so many churches with just a few Christians or no Christians. In Kyoto Diocese there are 41 churches with 9 clergymen including the Bishop of the Diocese. In Nagasaki, there are so many old churches used just to showcase the history of the struggles and glory of the church in the past. In Naru island, Nagasaki there is a beautiful '*Egami Catholic Church*' which is a world heritage site and now has only one person as a catholic believer in the parish. Some female congregations and institutions are already on the verge of closing due to unavoidable reasons. However, what I appreciate is the relentless effort made by the church to keep going despite the challenges.

In my opinion, the pace of change in Japanese society is quite fast due to the technological and scientific advancements which make things outdated in a very short time. But new challenges introduce new ways and ideas to keep pace with modernity where a beacon of hope can be seen shining on the horizon. In a world marked by strife, war, and division, the message of love and





reconciliation that Christianity brings has the power to unite hearts with a common purpose to establish a harmonious society.

I believe that the testament to faith's enduring power, the human spirit's resilience, and the boundless love of God, the Christian mission thrives in the Land of the Rising Sun. As we journey



in the mission together, let us continue to nurture this flame, letting it guide us to a brighter future filled with hope, love, and compassion. Though away from the motherland, I continue to feel your prayerful support and warmth of togetherness in the mission land in Japan.







04

## 75 Glorious Years of St. Robert Bellarmine College, Rome (1949-2024)

**Fr. Kulwant Minj, SJ**

• *St. Robert Bellarmine College, Rome*



**T**his year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of St. Robert Bellarmine College (In Italian, Collegio San Roberto Bellarmino), Rome by Fr. General Jean-Baptiste Janssens in 1949. The

Bellarmino College is an international formation house in the heart of Rome for Jesuit students in the second and third cycle of studies in different Pontifical Institutes and Universities. The purpose of this article is more to present the formation program of Bellarmine College today than to offer a historical account of the past 75 years. However, at this juncture, it would also be appropriate to remember the beautiful and fascinating history of the establishment of the College.

### The Intellectual Tradition of Bellarmine College

The Bellarmine College was born as a house of study of the Society of Jesus and throughout history it has always been a house of study. This is demonstrated by the choice made by Pope Paul V in 1607 and by his Successors who chose to entrust the management of the Bellarmine College Building to the Society of Jesus. When the Roman College was founded in 1551, a seminary was needed for the formation of clergy in which Bishops would send their seminarians to study at the nearby Roman College, the present-day Gregorian University, Rome. That's how the name of the street we live in comes from, Via del Seminario. For some centuries, the Bellarmine College remained linked to the will of the Popes who wanted a seminary at the service of some dioceses all over the world.

However, in 1870 the Italian troops captured Rome and the Italian State forced the Roman College to leave its first headquarters. Then the very nearby Bellarmine College became the new Gregorian University. Here it remained until 1930 and then the Pontifical University moved to Piazza della Pilotta. During this time the Professors of the Gregorian University resided in the Bellarmine College while its internal structure began to undergo various transformations. In 1949, Fr. General Jean-Baptiste Janssens decided to transform Bellarmine College into a house for Jesuit students studying in Rome. From that time on, Bellarmine College conformed to the tempo of academic life at the Gregorian University which expanded its programmes and changed the physiognomy of its student body. At present, several Provinces of the Society of Jesus send Jesuits to Bellarmine College who enroll themselves in the second and third cycle of studies in different Pontifical Universities. Most of the students go to the Gregorian University, however, to a lesser extent, some study liturgy at Anselmianum and patrology at Augustinianum.

Today, St. Robert Bellarmine College is the College of Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. From 19 May 2024, the Pentecost Sunday, the Pontifical Gregorian University is known as Collegium Maximum. On this day, following a Decree issued by M.R.P. Superior General Arturo Sosa, 3 Jesuit Institutions in Rome, namely, Pontifical Gregorian University, Pontifical Biblical Institute, and Pontifical Oriental Institute were integrated into one. Under the heading "New Configuration of the Pontifical Gregorian University", the Press Release states, "The three Institutions share a common bond as they were all entrusted to the Society of Jesus by the Pope. The Gregorian, established



in 1551 by St. Ignatius of Loyola, served as the academic hub known as the “Roman College” for centuries. The Pontifical Biblical Institute, founded in 1909, serves as a center for advanced studies of sacred Scripture. The Pontifical Oriental Institute, established in 1917, is focused on higher studies in the ecclesiastical sciences and the Canon Law of Eastern Churches”. The Press Release further states that “The Statutes were created following the Chirography signed by Pope Francis on 17 Dec. 2019. In this letter, the Holy Father ordered that the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute be joined to the Gregorian University while still retaining their names and missions. This was done in such a way that they are now part of «the same juridical person, as academic units of the University». The request aims to improve the ability of the two Pontifical Institutes to carry out their specific missions in the present context” (cf. R.P. Prem Xalxo, Ranchi Bulletin, June 2024, pp. 10-11).

### **The Community Life**

Each year, the Bellarmine community consists of about 75 Jesuits from about 40 Provinces of the Society of Jesus. Most of its members have been sent to Rome to pursue their licentiate or doctorate in various subjects. All are animated by the spirit recommended to us by the Congregation Fathers: “Free from any nationalistic or particularistic intolerance, they will have their minds universally open to different cultures, civilizations, and forms of mentality, as is required by our very apostolic

vocation” (cf. Complementary Norms, n. 111). As a result, to choose the path of consolation that strengthens our faith hope, and charity, the Community always takes into account the movements of the spirit, both individually and communally (cf. GC 36, Legislative Decree, n. 9, 10 and 12). The Community helps its members feel part of the apostolic body of the Society. Knowing the fact that the Jesuit community is a concrete space in which we live as friends in the Lord, our community life is always at the service of mission where, through fraternal union, we are called to proclaim the Gospel making the community life itself a mission (cf. GC 35, D. 2, n. 19 and D. 3, n. 41).

Keeping in mind the Jesuit Charism, every Wednesday the whole community gathers for the Eucharist, dinner, and a meeting either in respective sharing groups or as a community. These weekly events have a formative purpose. The group meeting serves to promote the knowledge of community members through personal sharing and spiritual dialogue; the celebration of the Eucharist and common meals encourage mutual help. The sharing groups also organize outings and other activities together. Indeed, these activities help to build community, especially among such a diverse group belonging to different cultures. In addition, once in three months, a Jesuit from DIR (Domus Interprovinciales Romanae) is invited to guide the Community in a reflection on an important topic related to the universal Church, the charism of the Society, formation for ministry, and/or personal and spiritual development. Community retreats twice during the 10 months of the academic year deal with aspects of Jesuit spirituality or recent documents of the Church and the Society.

### **The Academic State of Students**

The goals pursued by the students at Bellarmine College assume, to the extent possible, the indications of “intellectual depth” that Fr. General Arturo Sosa pointed out in his letter of 10 July 2017 entitled: “Our life is a mission, the mission is our life”. In this letter, we read: “To respond according to our way of proceeding to these apostolic challenges





we need [...] the intellectual depth that allows us to go beyond appearances and that helps to find new possibilities for a life worthy of all human beings. Two years later, once again Fr. General, in a letter dated 10 April 2019 titled “The missions entrusted to the Society in Rome”, recalled the importance of the intellectual formation offered in Rome for the Church and the Society. We read: “Currently, just fewer than 2 percent of the total number of Jesuits go to Rome for stable work, to which must be added just over 5 percent of Jesuits in formation throughout the Society, who come to pursue their studies in Roman academic institutions [...]. My predecessor, Fr. Nicolas, asked Major Superiors of each Conference to send each year to these centers in Rome a certain number of Jesuits, who are particularly gifted intellectually and humanly, with a view to future formation tasks, and who may be available, if their possession of the required qualities is ascertained, for a mission in the DIR and other international bodies [...]. Finally, intending to ensure the growth of the Society of Jesus as a universal body, I consider it very important that there be a qualified and proportionate presence of young Jesuits from all the Assistancies in the Interprovincial Houses in Rome”.

Thus, the objectives of Bellarmine College, as stated by Fr. General are: 1) to offer to the whole Society the opportunity of sending Jesuits to study in Rome; 2) to prepare, in the most opportune circumstances, both those who will work in the international Institutes of the Society and those who will teach in the Roman Institutions entrusted to the Society by the Holy See. From the standpoint of these objectives, doing studies in Rome provides Jesuits with both experiential knowledge of the universal Church and personal acquaintance with the international dimension of the mission of the society. As a result, the students of Bellarmine College dedicate their lives, their studies, and their pastoral energies to the apostolate of the Gregorian University. They participate in the apostolate of the university not only by studying but also by striving to be an example for the other students of how to study and how to live a religious life meaningfully.

More than anyone, our present Superior General, Arturo Sosa is aware of the opportunities and challenges of formation for mission in Rome.

## Conclusion

In the past 75 years, the Bellarmine College has been blessed by a large number of qualified Jesuits, some of whom have gone on to become engaged in the houses and apostolic works of the Society in Rome, as well as in interprovincial and provincial apostolates of the Society. Several alumni of the College have been Provincials and others have engaged in formation work; many have become university professors and administrators and have committed themselves to the Interprovincial Roman Houses and works. Countless Jesuits have been involved in pastoral, social, and educational work and ministry of Spiritual exercises and accompaniment.

The College counts more than 15000 (fifteen thousand) alumni from more than 90 different countries. The number of South Asian Jesuits in the College has significantly increased in the past 20 years. From among Ranchi Jesuits, Fr. Prem Xalxo (2000-2005), Fr. Michael Kerketta (2002-2004), Frs. Sylverius Chermako and Suman Beck (2012-2014), Fr. Edwin Dang (2014-2018) and Fr. Deepak Toppo (2020-2024) were students here. Currently, Frs. Kulwant Minj, Pramod Bara, and Alok Ekka are students at this prestigious College. Indeed, the formation at Bellarmine College prepares Jesuits for a great variety of missions in their home provinces and service to the universal Society.





05

## The Cradle of Civilization : Middle East Mission

**Fr. Bimal Kr. Kerketta, SJ**

• Amman/Jordan



**I**t was 6th August 2002. The first air trip.... I landed safely at Cairo airport (Egypt). In the beginning everything was a nightmare. I had to begin from scratch as most of the things were new to me. The sound of French language in the Jesuit community and the Arabic language around the house was a mere sound. The time difference of 4.30 hours was big for me. Here and there, a tone of racist color comments for being black was evident! A daunting task of survival! It was like, either you swim or sink. In such a situation, I was able to put forward my personalized simple faith of a Jesuit and it carried me on. Since then, year after year have gone by facing all the challenges with work satisfaction and receiving humble appreciation of the people of good will. It was the first Middle East Jesuit mission initiative on behalf of the Ranchi Jesuit Province!

Within a few months of my early Arabic language studies, I was blessed to meet some of the Jesuits from India who had come for a conference in Cairo. They were S.Arokiasamy (VidyaJyoti, Delhi), Rudi Heredia (Mumbai) and Cedric Prakash (Gujarat).

Firstly, they were surprised to see a tribal Jesuit in Egypt. After their conference got over, I was asked to take them to the biggest mosques of Cairo, some Coptic orthodox churches, a Coptic catholic seminary. Listening to my Arabic while dealing with the various situations was unbelievable for them. In the end, a genuine encouragement on behalf of every one of them was a big boost. It has been imprinted in me till today. Time flies.

Majority of the Christians of the Middle East are orthodox of different denominations – Coptic, Syrian, Chaldeans, Armenian, Greek, Maronite, etc. Most of them follow the Julian Calendar; hence Christmas is on 7th January. This is the feast of Epiphany in the Latin calendar. The feast of Easter also differs. This year it was five weeks behind the Gregorian calendar. In Egypt, Coptic Orthodox are in majority and Latin Catholics are a few thousands who are in Cairo and Alexandria. For a priest, to offer daily holy mass is important. To learn to celebrate the Holy Mass in Coptic rite in Arabic language facing towards the altar was another challenge. Orthodox priests have a special dress - code and they grow a beard. It was another uphill task to be able to get integrated with them during feasts, meetings and other occasions. Systematic







efforts to adjust with patience paved the way. The Holy Mass in English almost disappeared and French took its place.

Muslims are more than 85% of the total population of Egypt. Sunni Muslims make up roughly 85% - 90% of the global Muslim population and 60% of the population is in the Middle East. In my village Kinirkela, our neighbors are Muslims. During my schooling and college studies, some of my friends were Muslims. This given background was a big help to get into the new customs and cultures of life. I adopted a principle from the beginning – how do I help a Muslim to be a good Muslim and how do I help myself to be a good Christian in my daily life? In such an atmosphere, to be a Catholic priest from foreign country was another challenge. One has to be prudent and humble to be able to deal with every situation. I was involved mostly in the field of education and social service. It was a great revelation learning from the other. Eighteen years of mission work in different places of Egypt had passed.

In September 2020, I moved to another country, Jordan. It was the period of Covid-19. It took three months to enter the country. This is another Islamic Country. In the Middle East, Arabic is the most commonly spoken language. Today it is the official language of more than 20 countries. It is spoken

by approximately 300 million people worldwide. Here, I had to learn Jordanian Arabic. It took me some time to pick up and understand the language. Here Greek orthodox is in majority. When it comes to Catholics, it should have been Greek Catholics. On the contrary, Latin Catholics are the second highest in population among other denominations. The Kingdom of Jordan has done something really good for the Christians of these areas. The King is the custodian of the Holy Land. Under his protection and guidance all the denominations agreed that Christmas will be celebrated on 25th December and Easter according to the Eastern rite. Whatever be the differences, it helps to breathe freely as Christians. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are three major monotheistic and Abrahamic religions in the world, each of which originated in the Middle East. It helps here to see the confluence and beauty of it.

It has been an enriching experience to work with the people of different churches, pastoral work through a non- territorial Sacred Heart Parish for the English language Catholics of the Latin rite in Amman, refugees from Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Eritrea, and other African countries. Universal society of Jesus helps me to understand the universality of human beings in their context and challenges.





06

## Shepherding the Lost Sheep : Pastoral Apostolate in Assam

**Fr. Xavier Lakra, SJ**

• *St. Xavier's College, Tezpur, Assam*



**T**he Assam Mission celebrated 25 years jubilee of the presence and mission of Ranchi Jesuits in North East and Assam on 15th, October 2023. It was an occasion to look back and thank God for the grace-filled journey of Ranchi Jesuits in the Assam Mission.

It is worth mentioning that the Jesuits' mission in the North East was started in 1970 by the Karnataka Jesuits, but remained only in Nagaland and Manipur until 1995. At that time, the Kohima Region was carved out, extending the mission to Assam and other states in the North East.

In 1996, Fr. Hector D'Souza, the Regional Superior of Kohima Region at that time, invited the Ranchi Jesuits to establish their presence in the North East and work particularly among the Adivasis. These Adivasis had migrated from the Central India (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orisa, Madhya Pradesh) to work in the tea gardens during the British rule in different phases from 1838 to 1947.

The unexplored territory of Assam Mission did not see any Jesuit presence until 1998. Frs. Xavier Lakra and Gabriel Xess were the first Ranchi Jesuits to arrive, landing in Guwahati Jesuit House

on 13 January 1998. On January 18, they reached their first mission station, Missamari Parish in the Diocese of Tezpur, where they worked for four months. On 13 May 1998, they moved from Missamari to Balipara to live in a rented house owned by Mr. Gagan Pathak.

Later that year on 18 October 1998, Balipara was declared a Parish with 24 village units by Bishop Robert Kerketta, SDB, DD. This new parish was carved out of different units of Rangapara, Dholabibil, and Tezpur parishes. At that time, the total number of Catholics was 5000. The Newly created parish of Balipara had a diverse group of faithful, including Adivasis, Garos, and Boros Tribals.

The pioneers stayed in the rented house until 4 February 2002, when they moved to a newly erected Jesuit residence in Balipara. Thus Balipara, Tezpur, became the first Mission Center for the Ranchi Jesuits to establish their presence and extend their mission work in Assam.

In the beginning, the Ranchi Jesuits worked in collaboration with the Jesuits of the Kohima Region for nearly 9 years in different mission stations, in different capacities. It was on 3 December 2006, Assam Mission was created from Kohima Region by a Decree of Rev. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus at that







time. The new mission called 'Assam Mission' was handed over to the Ranchi Jesuits under the guardianship of Fr. Xavier Lakra, the Delegate of the Provincial of Ranchi.

The Mission was challenging, but the missionaries were prepared to invest their heart, mind, and efforts. There were lots of scopes and opportunities to work among the people and spread Gospel values. The Adivasis, namely Santhals, Oraons, Mundas, and Kharias had been forced to migrate from greater Chhotanagpur to work as bonded labourers in the tea gardens. They were illiterate and exploited at different levels. Despite 150 years of their existence, they remained landless, backward, uneducated, and strategically neglected by both the Tea companies and governments. Although they were the backbones of the tea estates in Assam, they were denied basic rights and entitlements as Scheduled tribes. They were like "sheep without shepherds." (Mt. 9:36), They needed someone who could help and accompany them, someone who could listen to their agony and heal their wounded lives. This was the call for the missionaries, whom the Lord was sending to "go and liberate the captives" (Lk. 4:16-21).

The Balipara Parish was the first Jesuit House in Assam and was made the center of the mission. The parishes covered more than 25-30 kilometers and included many large and small units. Parish Priests could only celebrate the Eucharist in each unit once or twice a year. Despite this, the faithful of Balipara Parish have kept their faith alive, which now needs to be strengthened and deepened. On 8

December 2001, the Holy Cross Sisters of Ingenbohl (Switzerland) joined the Jesuits as collaborating Sisters to assist in pastoral and educational works.

With the cooperation of the village catechists, the Eucharist was celebrated in the Unit churches. The Sisters conducted Catechism classes and prepared the village people for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Due to the distance between villages, the Pastoral Sisters stayed in their respective villages, preparing couples for the sacrament of marriage or the rectification of the marriage. Regular visit to the different units of the Parish and celebrating the Holy Eucharist in their respective units gradually deepened the villagers' faith and strengthened their commitment.

In addition to the regular celebrating of the Holy Eucharist in their village units, Small Christian Communities (SCC) were formed, where the faithful shared their faith and helped one another to deepen their spiritual lives. Meanwhile, to empower the womenfolk, many Self-Help groups were started, fostering saving habits among them. Income-generating activities, such as rearing pigs and paying their children's school fees, became very popular.

The education of Adivasis was a significant concern. To address the high illiteracy rates among tribals (Adivasis), night schools were started in all the centres. These schools taught those who had never attended any school the basics of the alphabet, how to write their names, and how to





read and record the weights of green tea measured daily in the record book.

As a result, there was a strong desire to read and write. Given the opportunity, our people began writing their names on all government documents, replacing thumbprints with their signatures.

Youth groups were formed in all our parishes and units, assisting others in learning to read and write their names, and even reading stories. Baba Divas and St. Monica Day were also popularized and helping the faithful protect their families.

Parents were motivated in various ways about the importance of a good education for their children's successful future. Eventually, schools were opened in five centers: Balipara on 3 May 1999; Pengaree in 2002 (in collaboration with Daughters of St. Anne on 5 May 2013); Kathalguri in February 2003 (with S.C.J.M.); Manas Bansbari in January 2005 (with D.S.A. (Daughters of St. Anne's as collaborators since 19 December 2010), and Mushalpur in July 2007 (with Sisters of Our Lady of Grace as collaborators since 2008). Self Help Groups and saving habits were also introduced by the pioneers in all our centers.

So far five parishes have been established where the Jesuits of the Ranchi Province have been working with the aforementioned activities: St. John's de Britto Parish in Balipara (Tezpur Diocese), St. Xavier's Parish in Pengaree (Dibrugarh Diocese), St Ignatius Loyola Parish in Kathalguri, St. Xavier's Parish in Manas Bansbari and St. Xavier's Parish in

Mushalpur (Bongaigaon Diocese). However, on 11 December 2020, St. Xavier's Parish in Mushalpur was handed over to the Diocese of Bongaigaon at the request of the Bishop of the diocese.

The literacy rate among our people was once only 10%. However, due to increased access to education, many students have now become teachers in our schools. Some have even started their own schools or qualified for government jobs in sectors such as LIC, Banks, and Railways. As a result, their socio-economic conditions have significantly improved.

Many of our students have chosen to become Priests or nuns. Currently, there are four local Jesuit priests serving the Assam Mission, along with over 20 or more nuns for various congregations. Additionally, four students have chosen to become diocesan priests.

There is no doubt that the Assam Mission has been a fruitful pastoral vineyard of the Lord. The Lord has favoured all the missionaries working there, entrusted to the Ranchi Jesuit Society. Now that the tribals (Adivasis) of Assam have seen a ray of hope for a brighter future, they are determined to assert their rights and improve their lives. The Ranchi Jesuit Province will remain ever ready and dedicated to bringing the Good News and Gospel promises to their sons and daughters in the tea gardens of Assam.







07

## Accompanying People on their Journey : Pastoral Apostolate in Andamans

**Fr. Joseph Suman Baxla, SJ & Fr. Sikandar Tirkey, SJ**

• *Missionaries at Andamans*



There is a famous saying in Andaman Islands, “Andamans nahi dekha to kya dekha”. Ask Fr. Alexius Dungdung, working in Andaman Mission as the Principal of Loyola Academy, Diglipur, North Andamans, who would say, “Diglipur nahi

dekha to kya dekha”.

Andamans is beautiful to see in every sense. The beauty of nature is ecstatic. The picturesque view of the beaches is mesmerizing. The people are friendly so also the flora and fauna of the land. There is profound hospitality in every heart and home. Andamans is called Mini India as it reflects unity in diversity. People of all caste, creed and colour reside in peace and harmony. The nature and people add to the beauty and serenity of Andamans leaving no space for hatred or animosity. Love overflows through their profound hospitality. All these constitute a very good ambience for life and work of any kind. Andamans welcomes each

and every person to share its happiness.

To carry out the pastoral work in such an exquisite divine atmosphere is indeed a joy. The Jesuits of Ranchi Province have taken up the task for several years. Needless to say, that they have discovered the utmost joy in their service to Praise, Reverence and Serve God, in order to save souls in this beautiful part of the universe.

Life is difficult. The task is hard. The road is arduous. For, the life mission in Andamans involves, in a way, 24x7 days of work by a pastor. It calls for long hours and distances of journeys, very far but little wide, by boats in open sea/creeks, and walking on foot through dense forest, scaling the heights of series of hillocks all along the way. It requires a tremendous investment of time and energy. When all these are done faithfully, the pastoral work is a rewarding and fulfilling experience to the core of it.

The Christian population in Andamans is a composite of different castes, colours, races, and regionalities like its social demography. The people here hail from almost every state of the Indian Union. Hence, it is multicultural and multi-linguistic in nature. This is an added beauty of the Christian community. The people in general here are simple, hospitable, generous, docile, cultured, respectful, and God-fearing. So are the Catholic Christians of the land. Therefore, it is a beautiful and thrilling experience to do pastoral work in such a situation. The faith is very much alive and vibrant in Andaman Church. People are religious. They value sacraments. They are very respectful to the priests and nuns. They have a deep sense of





belonging to the Church. They closely collaborate and contribute to all the activities of the Church. Their availability is superb. Their generosity is surpassing. The pastoral work here, therefore, involves accompanying the people in their faith and religious journey as individuals, families, and communities. Hence, the pastors are always on their toes. They are on the move. These journeys are sometimes very arduous. On some occasions, it is hours of journey by machine dinghy (boat) in the open sea or by Halis dinghy in the creeks. On other occasions, it is walking for hours through the forest crossing the creeks on the way by walking over the tree trunks laid across. These journeys are full of excitement in their absolute sense. Needless to say, pastoral work in Andamans is an adventure.

The pastoral life and work in Andamans are packed with activities in every season and on all occasions. So much so that at times there is no space for a pastor to have his meal or rest and relax. Imagine, a pastor on Christmas day starting his ministry at 6.00 am with Christmas Mass in the parish church for his faithful and ending his day with the burial of one of his beloved parishioners at 5.00 pm. In between he is out at a far away village travelling halfway by bike and halfway walking on foot, for Christmas Mass at 11.00 am. This is a Christmas

celebration for him. This requires an untiring zeal, indomitable courage, and total commitment to ministry. In all these, a pastor has to be very imaginative and creative. He has to continuously restructure his priorities. He has to constantly involve himself in the task of reimagining his way of proceedings. There are no set propositions of pastoral life and work in Andamans. One beautiful thing is that the Diocese has provided the pastors and the faithful with the Diocesan Policy. It is a guideline to all and for all to be followed in the Diocese for their life and work. The ultimate goal of the Diocesan policy is the good of the people. So, in every plan of activity, this has to be adhered to. But there is also ample space for being creative and imaginative, nonetheless.

The pastoral activities in Andamans comprise daily Eucharistic celebration for people. Administration of sacraments, regular family visits, praying for the sick and needy, attending the BEC/SCC prayers every evening with the people in their groups are regular. These are daily chores of life and mission. Besides, there are various other Sacramental celebrations which one has to officiate and attend. There are different pious associations/groups e.g. Vincent de Paul Society, Maria Sena, Missionary Families of Christ, Charismatic Movement Group,







and Jesus Youth, functioning in the Diocese. All these movements are led by the laities who are the functionaries. The pastors have to co-ordinate, collaborate, and animate the events in close networking with them. These groups keep the Christian faith alive and burning in the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Charismatic retreats, seminars, novena prayers, padayatra (pilgrimage), adorations, and other prayer services, etc. for different groups, are regular features in every parish. Sunday classes for children have a special place in the routine. A pastor needs and is expected to be available for all these activities in the Parish community.

Jesus' life and work involved a mission of going to the people and reaching out to them with the Good News of the Kingdom. Therefore, he was always on the move. One can see him travelling on the road and moving in the streets where people dwelt and lived so that everyone has the taste of the Kingdom. This is the approach to pastoral life and work in the Andaman mission. The people scattered in the long terrains of the Andaman

Islands are compelled to live a hidden life confined to the secluded islands where they inhabit. They are not the lost sheep. They are much like the isolated sheep. They are in need to be reached out and cared for. This is the mission work of a pastor in Andaman, to go after the isolated sheep, be with them, spend time with them, and listen to them so that no one feels left out or abandoned. This task requires incredible determination, ultimate courage, and unfathomable enthusiasm. It calls for a passionate involvement in the pastoral ministry. It demands regular carrying of the cross. It entails the generosity, readiness, and willingness to give and to give until it hurts. It involves giving cheerfully as St. Paul says, "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) The Lord has himself said, "Take heed what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get and still more will be given you." (Mk 4:24) This is the spark of hope and the silver lining behind the clouds that inspires every pastor of Andaman to delve deep into the sea for a good catch at the end of the day.

**08**

## Launching the Quadrilateral Mission : Historical Perspective

**Fr. Ajay Soreng, SJ**

• *St. Stanislaus' High School, Lohardaga*

### Rising of the Quadrilateral Mission



The Oxford dictionary holds the meaning of 'quadrilateral' as a flat shape with four straight lines. The Belgian Missionaries of "The Bengal Mission" based in Calcutta expanded their first missionary activities in

Chotangpur that Fr. Joseph Müllender called the 'Quadrilateral.' The Quadrilateral Mission was the euphoric pride of the Bengal Mission then as there was not a single catholic faithful in the land on 10 July 1869 when Fr. Augustus Stockman the first pioneer Jesuit pitched his tent at the police line of Chaibasa. Seven Munda families working in Chaibasa expressed their desire to become Christians. Since the neophytes were not Hos of the place, Stockman decided to relocate to Khuntpani where Bishop Walter Steins baptized them on 8 November 1873. His plan was to settle a "Christian colony," a practice done by missionaries elsewhere. However, the method failed. Khuntpani was a Ho country and the Hos disliked Christians. Stockman learned a lesson that it was better to take the Munda Christians to their traditional community.

Stockman reimagined his mission and trekked with his neophytes to Burudi, now called Kochang, and founded a centre in 1875 under the patronage of the Sacred Heart. Another centre emerged in 1881 at Sarwada under the patronage of Mother Mary, hence Stockman called it Mariadi. Similarly, another centre emerged a Bandgaon under the patronage of St. Michael in 1882 and at Dolda in 1884 under the patronage of St Joseph, hence Josephdi. These four centres emerged from the Himalayan mandate of Mgr. Walter Steins to spread

God's Kingdom among the indigenous people, then called the Kohls. These four centres, for Fr Joseph Müllender, formed the Quadrilateral mission.

How did it come about? Fr. Augustus Sockman, a Walloon, sturdy and physically tough, grounded in an Ignatian spirit and a heart with boundless missionary zeal settled down to business in Chaibasa and around. After a hectic going around for fishing souls and a long anxious wait of five years he could have his first crop of harvest from the 7 poor Munda families of 28 historic persons. The foundation at Khuntpani had been laid and the building would be constructed by the posterity. But the divine plan had otherwise. It was not to be either at Khuntpani or Chaibasa, but to be at Tutui village and Burudi hills under the Quadrilateral that the mission would grow, develop and flourish. So, it did according to its measure in the given circumstances. Chaibasa and Khuntpani just played the role of a spring board to catapult the Khuntpani faithful and Fr. Stockman to Burudi, as the first catholic mission station under the then British Raj in Lohardaga District. The shepherd Stockman had the smell of his sheep and followed them meekly to Tutui-Burudi. Like the Patriarch Abraham of the Israelites Fr. Stockman at Burudi tried all methods to establish and fortify the base from where he envisioned that the rays of the Catholic faith would go forth to all corners of Chotanagpur. The options were of building a good church for the small flock to come together to pray, a room for catechism instructions and class for the children; bringing the Sisters of the Daughters of the Cross atop the hill for female witness, starting the construction work and above all visiting-exploring the area. All these weighed down heavily on him. He fell ill and left Burudi.





*Catholic Church, Kochang*

A young priest of 32 Fr. John Fierens arrived at Burudi on 16 February 1877 to shoulder the mission begun under which Fr. Stockman in 8 years of hard work had broken down his health. Fr. Fierens, in the prime of his youth, energetic, full of zeal for souls set his course of activities, namely touring, trekking and reaching out to every village for contacts and conversions. The mountainous country, hills, valleys, ravines, dense forests for miles on end, but nothing of it dampened his zeal. In four years of his relentless labour his census of January 1880 read 257 Catholics. A big achievement indeed!

As the saying goes "An army marches on its stomach," is somewhat applicable here, for a new mission station is born to the 15 miles north of Burudi, at a village called Buruma. Actually, when the new residence of Burudi was being constructed 3 to 4 families from Buruma had gone to Burudi to work there to dispel their hunger and famine. In the bargain the entire families were instructed and baptized. Like Tutui now Buruma Catholics had to be looked after which was done by Fr. Ferdinand De Cock from Doranda. A new station was born on 22 May 1878, the second post of the Quadrilateral. On 28 January 1881 another young, energetic and dynamic personality, Fr. Joseph Müllender 31 years old arrived at Buruma having 41 Catholics. Finding Buruma not measuring up to the standard of a Jesuit mission station and its location not ideal, he was displeased with it. A new favourable location on all counts would be the answer. Eventually he

tumbled upon a plot/place and called it Mariadi in Sarwada village. He bought this vast land for Rs. 30/- and shifted there on 21 October 1881. Sarwada had then 77 Christians.

Archbishop Paul Goethals made a pastoral visit to Sarwada and Burudi in 1880. From this visit the restructuring of the Quadrilateral began. The Archbishop advised Fr. Fierens to move more to the 12 miles north of Burudi to Bandgaon, a populated and strategic place. Fr. Fierens in May 1882 went to establish himself at Bandgaon in a chapel-hut and from there he looked after both the posts of Bandgaon and Burudi. In 1884 the official order came to effect it as follows: "The year 1884 ushers a phase of expansion, when Bandgaon is



*Catholic Church, Sarwada*





opened and Dolda decided upon for a new centre. And thus, these two, with Burudi and Sarwada, will form the “Quadrilateral,” so called by Müllender, and so often mentioned in the history of the Mission”. Fr. Motet was appointed overall in charge of Bandgaon and Burudi. Bandgaon had the total of 108 Christians.

The process of rearranging in 1884 brought more changes. On 7 January 1884 Fr. Jan Desmet was sent to Sarwada which had 300 Catholics. Fr. Müllender’s pioneering spirit never took a break. He opened yet another mission centre at Dolda and called it Josephdi when he became a proprietor of the property for Rs. 30/- on 16 August 1884. Dolda is encircled by the dense forest of the sky-high Sal trees. After its 100 years of existence in 1984 during the blessing of the newly built church by Fr. Joseph Moens, Fr. Albert Van Exem had then commented looking at those high Sal trees across the compound, “What on earth Fr. Mullender thought of starting a Mission Station over here!” One can argue about the choice of Dolda for it is only 6 miles from Sarwada. Fr. Müllender justified the opening of it because Dolda fell under the jurisdiction of the tiny State of Tamar. He later highlighted his idea that he had extended his mission as far as the State of Tamar. For which he

did slog day and night visiting as many as 30 odd villages on the hills of Tamar. But the fruit of his toil was scanty, just 68 Catholics in 1886.

It would not be hyperbolic to say Fr. Müllender was the Fr. Constant Lievens of the Quadrilateral. He was the man who gave his all and in the end of it to lose all. It would be an incomplete story of the Quadrilateral without a personality sketch of Fr. Müllender: an inimitable zeal, infinite energy, a man of formidable courage to parley with the Munda, Manki and the Raja of Tamar on behalf of his Christians, confronting and reasoning out with the vexing Protestant Ministers like Rev. Alfred Nottrott, endless trekking the jungles, hills, mountains to reach out to villagers with Gospel message, in drenching rains or burning sun or chilling cold at any hour of the day noon or night unstoppable peddler to catechize his neophytes right in the paddy fields, patient and persuader on the discontent, resentment, near revolting of the employees, at the same time constructing a massive residence cum church at Dolda, and an initiator and pioneer of outreaching areas, a prolific daily diary maintainer of each day activities, an example to all generations of Jesuits, over and above suffering from malaria right from the time of his arrival at Buruma until his final departure from



*Catholic Church, Bandgaon*



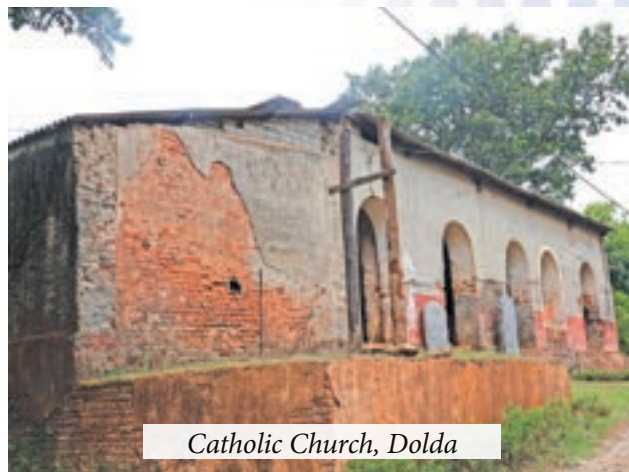


the Quadrilateral when he said, "Seventeen years of my Indian life have completely demolished me." The Bengal Mission eulogizes this man as "just one step short of his greatness" as Fr. C. Leivens.

Thus, in a span of 10 years from 1875 to 1884, the Quadrilateral opened: Burudi 1875, Sarwada 1881, Bandgaon 1882 and Dolda 1884, and the Christians comprising in all 4 centres were 733, a reason to be proud of, but in comparison to Doranda-Jamgain where the tide of conversion was picking up a faster pace, it was a labour lost.

### Sunset in the Quadrilateral Mission

The glory of the Quadrilateral in 12 years of Missionary work until 1886 was 1541 Catholics in all. But in comparison to the coming of Fr. Constant Lievens and his whirlwind like conversion movement dwarfed all the 13 years of achievements (1869 to 1885) of the founder Missionaries, Fr. Augustus Stockman, Fr. John Fierens, Fr. Jan De Smet, Fr. Celestine Motet, Fr. Chrysanth Sapart and the hero Joseph Müllender. Fr. Constant Lievens surpassed the number of 1541 Catholics in one year's time by August 1886 at Torpa. The Mission authorities in Calcutta were deep in discerning, reimagining, reorienting the mission, envisioning and rearranging the Quadrilateral for the Chota Nagpur Mission. In 1886 first Fr. Motet was taken away to Doranda from Bandgaon, Fr. Fierens shifted to Chaibasa from Burudi to look after sick Fr. Stockman, Fr. Jan De Smet sent to Torpa from Mariadi to help Fr. Lievens and Fr. Müllender brought to Bandgaon from Dolda to take care of all 4 posts- Burudi, Mariadi, Josephdi and Bandgaon, as a commander of 4 kingdoms. Seeing the signs of the times, the whole focus of the mission turned to Torpa where the sea-tide of conversions was beckoning. The forlorn, left to itself, dejected the Quadrilateral under Fr. Müllender bravely tried to sail through the neglected troubled waters. Many woes were added to the region: the Sardar Movements created discontent against the Pastors, Birsa Munda's political uprising severely affected the Christians who reverted to their traditional faith. The mission history records in 1894, "The entire Quadrilateral had 125 baptized Catholics and 4 catechumens, in Bandgaon Fr. Hoffmann wrote



*Catholic Church, Dolda*

in 1895 ...not more than 4 Christians were attending Mass on Sunday, some 15 in Sarwada, a dozen in Dolda, none in Burudi....." This was the fate in the end the Quadrilateral suffered and was fully ruined.

In 1891 Mgr Goethals in dejection poured out his heart to Fr. John Baptist Hoffmann, "No one wants to go there." "Let me be sent," replied Hoffmann, "I am ready to stay on till death rather than abandon the country where so many of our Fathers have either sacrificed their life or their health." These are the words of a saint and another liberator of the Quadrilateral, of the tribals, of the church in Chota Nagpur. As in summer we do not see a single blade of grass on the dried and parched up playground, but in the rainy season the whole ground is green. History repeats itself. What had been lost in the Quadrilateral in its troubled era, it has bounced back a hundredfold now in 2024. In 1885 and onward Fr. Constant Lievens gave Chotanagpur liberation, faith and a vibrant church, Fr. J.B. Hoffmann restored land rights to the tribals through his monumental Chotanāgpur Tenancy Act, 1908, Encyclopedia Mundarica and many more to name them - all from the abandoned Quadrilateral. In 1982 a third pioneer was born in Fr. Joseph Moens. He retrieved the past glory of the Quadrilateral. He rebuilt Dolda and established the Daughters of the Cross there, built a church in Burudi and installed the Daughters of St. Anne. Therefore, it is not lost. It is reaching its heights. Burudi-Kochang is already declared a pilgrimage centre. It will herald faith and devotion to all Chota Nagpur again afresh!



09

## The Relevance of Studying Law Today

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**I**'te inflammate Omnia' – Go set th world on fire, it is an apt maxim to begin with. Fr. Hoffmann and Fr. Lievens had lived out this maxim by deeply externalizing it into their lives and understanding its true

meaning; they channeled their full potential to the mission entrusted to them. It was not an easy task for them to come from the foreign land and work for the tribal people who knew no way out against injustice. 19th century is the era when Fr. Lievens landed in Chotanagpur, the land was considered as an unsuccessful mission land. Nevertheless, Fr. Lievens seemed ready to confront all the barriers and rapidly started his mission. Shortly, he sensed that the tribals were in the clutches of violation, exploitation, injustice, discrimination and most importantly for no proper land rights.

Similarly, no tribal person of Chotanagpur would forget the contribution of Fr. Hoffmann who drafted the CNT Act 1908.

Neither of them was jurist nor from the legal background. But with constant effort, they understood the illegality of legal framework. Accordingly they embarked in the legal field and initiated the work of justice which is a core value of Christ Jesus – 'Go and set free the captives'.

This initiation of Fr. Hoffmann and Fr. Lievens was a small spark which showed a way to the need of social justice for the Jesuits of later time. Ranchi Jesuits have maintained the words of Fr. Lievens- 'fire must burn', to keep the fire alive Ranchi Jesuit society have been making unwavering effort and have brought up many Jesuit lawyers who are directly in touch with the tribal people and attending to all their problems, to name a few – Fr. Peter M. Tigga, Fr. Ignatius Minj, Fr. Xavier Soreng, Fr. Anupchand K. Minj, Fr. Anselm, Sch. Stanislas Tirkey (currently pursuing) and Sch. Shashi Samir Dhanwar (currently pursuing). All these Ranchi Jesuits have been trying to keep the fire alive, ignited by Fr. Hoffmann and Fr. Lievens in their times.

Today the way and manner in which the secular society needs our help is very different from the







times of Fr. Lievens and Fr. Hoffmann. We are looked upon as person knowing every sect of law and who can give them a fair and speedy justice with the proper knowledge of legal provisions. Today we are looked upon as a beacon/ray of hope which continuously radiates and spreads its light to others. In the present context, for instance - the land issues are not in same manner like - *zamindars* alienating tribals from their land and resources. Nevertheless, there are different set of persons who are making them alien in their own lands be it government using lands for the business purpose, they don't make proportionate compensation to their land, thus making the tribals alienated from their own property. Likewise, the tribals are stamped out of their place for the purpose of setting factories, construction of dam, defence centre and many other projects. Therefore, studying law is a need of the time. By legal knowledge we can be advocates for our people in need and be seen as a means to promote justice, uphold human rights, and address social injustices. Law in actuality, empowers our mission and we are an individual who understands and protects the rights of marginalized groups, contributes to a more equitable society. Law plays a crucial role in shaping the norms and institutions that govern society, fostering stability, order, and cooperation within communities. These benefits could be imparted to the people who do not have access to proper legal consult, only if, one has equipped himself with these. Studying law prepares

individuals with the tools to address societal problems, whether through legal advocacy, policy reform, or community development initiatives.

Advocacy for the marginalized and oppressed is a call for us as Jesuit lawyers. With a full knowledge of the legal framework and the constitutionalism, we can advocate and fight for the rights and dignity of vulnerable populations. Today it is our duty as Jesuits to introduce the provisions of different legislations and Acts to those in need and help them to be ensured and enshrined by all social securities that the government provides them. Advocacy for the marginalized is also one object among the UAPs (The Universal Apostolic Preferences). Legal knowledge is also a way to fulfil the mission orientation of UAPs – walking with the poor, the outcasts of the world and with those whose dignity has been violated, thus we could board in a mission of reconciliation and justice.

To put as bullet points of relevancy of legal knowledge would be -

- **Understanding Rights and Responsibilities:** In an increasingly complex world, knowing the law helps individuals understand their rights and responsibilities as Jesuits. This knowledge empowers us to advocate for fair treatment under the law.
- **Navigating Legal Systems:** Legal systems govern various aspects of our lives, from business transactions to personal rights. Studying law equips individuals with the skills





to navigate these systems effectively, whether in resolving disputes or seeking justice.

- **Social Justice and Advocacy** : Law plays a crucial role in advocating for social justice and addressing inequalities in the society. As Jesuit Lawyers and scholars, we would be able to contribute to shape policy, challenge injustices, like - Fr. Hoffmann contributed by drafting CNT Act, 1908 and of recent time Fr. Stan Swamy.
- **Globalization and Interconnectedness** : In an era of globalization, legal issues frequently transcend national borders. Understanding international law and legal frameworks is essential for addressing transnational challenges such as human rights abuses.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Legal education fosters critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. These skills are valuable not only within the legal profession but also in various fields of our mission, where complex issues require careful analysis and reasoned solutions.

- **Ethical Considerations** : Law is intertwined with ethical considerations, because it helps us to uphold principles of justice, fairness, and integrity.

In conclusion, study of law remains relevant and essential in today's context, offering a pathway to understanding, justice, and meaningful engagement with the legal, social, and ethical issues of our time. It provides a framework for advocating the constitutionalism among the marginalized, and to have fruitful mission fulfilling all the visions of the society of Jesus.

Fr. Hoffmann and Fr. Lievens may not have directly addressed the relevance of studying law but their perspectives on education of law or legal system was well witnessed by their lives and service. Their works for the tribal people vividly reflects that they viewed legal knowledge as a means of promoting justice, empowerment, community-building, ethical development, and advocacy for the marginalized, all of which resonate with the mission and values of the Society of Jesus.





**10**

## Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission: Emerging Political Perspectives

**Fr. Ireneus To'ppo, SJ**

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This article was written when an impasse existed regarding government formation at the centre and the bargaining to the power at its hike; anti-incumbency strong and the India Coalition adopting the wait and watch tactic.

To explain such coincidental tension, I begin with the scene set at Pontius Pilate's headquarters early in the morning, where Annas and Caiaphas sent Jesus after subjecting him to mistreatment, including spitting, slapping, mockery, humiliation, and abandonment by his disciples, as well as denial by Peter (John 18: 28). This leads to Pilate's question, "Are you the king? ... What have you done?" (Jn 18:33, 35) Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. ... But as it is, my kingdom is not from here" (Jn 18. 36).

Jesus clarified his perspectives about his idea of a kingdom. Did He mean that the kingdom and politics disinterested him? Is His defence not enigmatic? Doesn't it sound like an escapist tactic?

Or is it His stoic standard and diplomatic position?

India coalition's stance in the aftermath of the 2024 Parliamentary Poll Results analogously reverberates this view disclaiming to form the Government at the centre. Their Press Conference was published as follows:

Hinting that it has not given up on the plan to form a government at the Centre, the INDIA bloc on Wednesday said it will "take appropriate steps at the appropriate time to fulfil people's desire not to be ruled by the BJP government".

... "This is a mandate in defence of the Constitution and against price rise, unemployment and crony capitalism of the Modi government," the statement read.

"The bloc will continue to fight... We will take appropriate steps at the appropriate time to realise the people's desire ...," it said.<sup>1</sup>

The two analogies above suggest different models of politics, based on the principles of secular and sublime facets of St. Augustine of Hippo's idea of the City of God and the City of Man.<sup>2</sup> The City of





God upholds spiritual, in Indian context constitutional values like comprehensive morals, ethical and inclusive ideologies over cheating, subterfuge, manipulation, power, money, dominion, anarchy, autocracy, and pseudo-religious propaganda. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Founder of the Jesuits in The Spiritual Exercises envisions this third model which could be termed a praxis model calling forth rapid contemplation, reflection, analysis, vision and action. He proposes in the Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (The Spiritual Exercises, no.91-100)<sup>3</sup> how a temporal king is an idealist and visionary all for the welfare, benefit and good of the people.

Meditation on The Two Standards, The One of Christ, Our Supreme Commander And Lord, The Other of Lucifer, The Mortal Enemy of Our Human Nature elaborates this idea where there is a confrontation of ideologies and how the true commander's call is for the spread of goodness and a reign of secular and spiritual justice, peace, reconciliation and liberty.<sup>3</sup> (The Spiritual Exercise, no. 136-146).

This spiritual exercise is a true propaganda model which comes out with a specific manifesto of reaching out to the poor, Dalits, Adivasis, unemployed, oppressed, minorities, women and daily wage earners. The 24 pages Nyay Patra – Congress Manifesto-2024 with 10 Chapters titled Equity, Youth, Women, Farmers, Workers, Defending the Constitution, Economy, Federalism, National Security and Environment became an effective and comprehensive vision that garnered votes for INDIA Coalition-2024 coming closer to forming a government with the aid of the same ideologues.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus clarified his perspectives on the concept of the kingdom and its implications as he tackled the hypocritical Pharisees and Herodians on the question of paying taxes to the emperor or not<sup>9</sup>



(Mk 12:13-17). It is worth considering whether He intended to express his lack of interest in the intersection of the kingdom and politics or whether He invited the reconciliatory position between these, closer to the spirit of the Kingdom Exercise (Sp. Ex, 147). In the Pre-Poll 2024, away from road shows and massive public rallies held by the political parties and their candidates, without involving in politics, Ranchi Jesuits took a discreet step at grassroot levels and encouraged the electorate literacy programme to conscientize the voters against the impending polarization process.

Following the 2024 Parliamentary Poll Results, the INDIA coalition through their Press Conference held on June 5th at the AICC headquarters, in New Delhi refrained from staking their claim to form government. The NDA formed the government and a new unexpected atmosphere is reflected in the Parliament. The rest to follow in the days to come will be interesting.

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11

## Social Apostolate : Restructuring Social Issues of Adivasis in Assam

**Fr. Anuranjan Purty, SJ**

• Gana Chetana Samaj, Tezpur, Assam

### Ray of Hope



“My grandfather was the first who came to Assam during the British time with a great hope of better future. After few years my father followed him in order to find my grandfather. My father was fortunate enough to be

placed in the same tea estate where my grandfather already was. Both of them were engaged in the estate. The bright future, as they had thought of, never came in spite of hard work in the tea garden. They were provided with ration for a week and some amount to purchase for their necessary requirement. I did not see my grandparents but often my father narrated the sordid story of migration to Assam and the misery they endured. My father was born in Jharkhand but I have not seen the birthplace of my father. As my grandfather had a great hope of better life so did my father but without education it was impossible. Quality

education was not possible in the tea garden as the standard of school is very poor. On the other hand, the private school was too expensive to afford. However, my father was determined to educate his children in spite of financial crunches.

It was in the year 1998 some fathers, housed at Balipara, started coming to visit and offer Masses for the faithful in the garden and motivated parents to send their children for education in the school they had started. In the year 2006 late Fr. James Lakra, SJ, started his regular visit to tea gardens and motivated the youth for hockey. He also encouraged the youth and the children to go to schools. This helped the children and parents as well to understand the importance of education. He motivated parents to send their children to schools. Consequently, we have some graduates and some are doing their college studies. Now practically all the children go to school. There are two priests and a few nuns from our tea garden. We feel great privilege to have the fathers who visited our tea garden, especially, late Fr. James Lakra,





SJ, who inspired us to feel that the dreams of our ancestors and parents seem to be coming true.”

This is the story of the family of Mr. Mathrew Kongari and the tea garden of New Adabari.

Mathew Kongari is, at present, working in Gana Chetana Samaj, the Social Centre in Assam. Similarly, there are thousands of such stories we can hear from the Adivasis who have undergone hardships in and out the tea gardens.

### **Background of Adivasis in Assam**

The history of the Adivasi (tribal) community in Assam is closely associated with the tea industry. In 1823, British colonizers discovered tea in Assam and sought labourers for clearing the forest, to level the ground for tea plantation and to establish the tea industries in Assam. Unable to convince local residents to serve as tea garden workers, the British uprooted the Adivasis from various places in Central India, from the regions of present-day Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and transported them to Colonial Assam as indentured labourers during 1838-1947 in multiple phases to work in tea gardens. The Adivasis were the best option to make them work in the tea garden as they were hard working, simple, non-violent, easy to be controlled and be engaged with cheaper wages. The British Raj developed a plantation structure that kept Adivasi workers isolated from the larger society. They were trapped as the labourers working even for low and poor wages and opportunities. They became dependent on the

owner of the tea estate for their basic livelihood.

The present day Adivasis in Assam are the descendants of those helpless labourers who gave their sweat and blood to make the tea industry a flourishing business. At present their number is estimated to be around 8 million (80 lakh) or nearly 20% of Assam's total population of which estimated 4.5 million reside in residential quarters built inside 800 tea estates spread across entire Assam. Another 3.5 million reside in the nearby villages of tea gardens. They live almost in every district of Assam but their density varies according to the number of tea gardens in different regions of Assam.

The Adivasi community has contributed immensely to the economy of Assam as they are the mainstay of the Tea Industries' labour force. Their contribution to the vitality of this pivotal industry has enabled the state to carry forward its development agenda and thus to overall economic stability in Assam. Today, Assam contributes about 51% of country's total tea production, which is 20% of the world's tea production.

However, the living condition of Adivasi community is very poor even today. They are one of the most backward and exploited communities in Assam due to decades of continuous exploitation by tea estate management and neglect on the part of the government. Even after having lived in Assam for more than 150 years, Adivasis have never been assimilated into mainstream society.





This is partly due to Adivasis' isolation on tea plantations, and also the existence of widespread prejudice against Adivasis from local groups who still consider the Adivasis as aliens in Assam. To make matters worse, the State government of Assam has not yet recognized them as Scheduled Tribes; hence they cannot take advantage of the affirmative action programmes to which they are entitled. Due to their poor economic status and illiteracy, other communities look them down as the most backward class in society.

In many respects, the Assam development agenda has eluded Adivasis. The Constitutional rights to life, minimum wages, health, water, food, and housing are regularly violated. The Adivasi Community members are widely denied of decent housing facilities, good communicable roads, electricity connection, subsidised food rations, safe employment, old age pensions, and access to important government programmes. The violation of their rights and entitlements are known to many but are not reported to the authorities. As a result, their issues do not receive due attention by the authorities. The plight of the Adivasis in Assam rarely figures out as topics of public discourse.

### **Walking with the Poor**

Gana Chetana Samaj (GCS), the Social Centre was founded by the Jesuits of Kohima Region in 1999.

The social work activities were initiated by Fr. Oscar Pereira, SJ, the Bombay Jesuit to reach out to the adivasis, tribals and other marginalised communities in Assam. Gana Chetana Samaj is committed to the empowerment and emancipation of women, children, youth, farmers, tea garden workers, desolated and disadvantaged rural people. It visualizes a just, humane, equitable and harmonious society irrespective of caste and creed. In the year 2006 'Assam Mission' was created from Kohima Region and the Mission was handed over to Ranchi Jesuits with a focused goal to empower and emancipate the poor Adivasis and marginalized communities and to make them self-reliant.

Today, Gana Chetana Samaj works in 4 Districts, namely, Sonitpur, Tinsukia, Kokrajhar and Baksa districts of Assam to cater to the needs of the Adivasis, Assamese, Nepali, Garos and Bodos etc. However, the Adivasis are the main target group as they are the most marginalized and neglected communities.

Since its inception, Gana Chetana Samaj has initiated various developmental activities, such as, community building, awareness programmes on the issues of poverty, illiteracy and backwardness of Adivasis and other tribal groups, were conducted. It started with the sensitization of the poor and



*Preservation of Tribal Culture, St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel, Assam*





marginalized and formation of the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) so as to create a platform wherein they can come together to critically analyse their own socio-economic condition and to make the collective effort to solve their problems. Eventually this helped them to be free from the clutches of money lenders and reclaimed their mortgaged land. They are linked with the financial institutions for loans to take up income generating activities and raise their per capita income of their families. Since 2008, Gana Chetana Samaj has shifted its focus to issues and problems faced by Adivasis, tribals and other marginalized sections in tea estates and villages.

Another important development initiative was initiated to educate the women from the tea garden area to bring educational awareness among the Adivasi community. This initiative further generated supplementary education for the children of Adivasi, tribal and marginalized in different villages and tea gardens. The objective of the supplementary education programme is to build the educational foundation and to boost their morale and confidence through extra curriculum activities and study regularly in the study centres. Today, there are 81 study centres in all the four Districts of the intervention areas where 3500 students are benefitting from the centres. In order to support the Adivasi students of 10<sup>th</sup> standard coaching classes are being conducted to help the students do well in the examination. At the same time, a career guidance programme for the college

students is initiated with reading materials, information regarding different job opportunities and online filling of application forms. Spoken English classes, soft skills and computer classes are conducted for the youth.

Right Based Approach (RBA) was another initiative where villagers were informed and trained to access their rights and entitlements under the provisions of Panchayati Raj and National Food Security Acts 2013. These training programmes brought awareness among the people regarding the Government's different welfare schemes and enabled them to stand up and demand their rights for ration, Job card, old age pension etc.

Livelihood activities for farmers are the best practice to bring changes in the rural areas. In the upper Assam of Tinsukia District, the Gana Chetana Samaj started a project to help people to have their own tea gardens to add their income and become self-employed. Many villagers who have land of their own are growing tea and this has added to income generating activities. They have also made an agreement that they will educate their children with the income.

In Central Assam of Sonitpur District the farmers have adopted alternative sources of income through piggery, fishery, and poultry farming. Training in tailoring and weaving is run at Bandarhagi village in Missamari area to help and guide the trainees in production of traditional Adivasi "gamosa" (a towel) and saree and also create awareness and





self-employment among the Adivasis women. Ms. Elina Topno from Daragao, Missamary, says with a smile on her face, “I am very happy to be trained in tailoring. I have started tailoring and embroidery. I stitch dresses as per the order given by the people. Now I earn around Rs. 2000 per month that fulfils my basic needs and I don’t have to depend on anyone.”

One of the biggest concerns of the Adivasis in Assam is the denial of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. Although they have been fighting for decades to get ST status, they are still deprived of the basic entitlements of Schedule Tribe. Adivasis in Assam are known by tea-tribe which is never accepted by them. Tea-tribe is a political term given to define the Adivasi Community. Their entitlement as Schedule Tribe exists in other parts of the country or the state. They originally belong to the tribal community but not in Assam. This denial has deprived the Assam Adivasi community of legal considerations for accessing better education, employment, health care, and other services and opportunities.

Adivasi culture and identity is another aspect of a great concern. Culture is the most important part of any tribe or group for self identity. Each tribal group has a specific culture, celebrations, festivals that relate to their identity and the way of life but the Adivasis, settled in tea gardens, have

forgotten own cultures, rituals, music & dance etc. Through Gana Chetana Samaj Adivasi culture is being continuously promoted among the people through training and celebrations in order to preserve the Adivasi identity and culture. Now, the *Karam* festival is celebrated all over Assam with paid holiday and *Sarhul* festival is being slowly introduced among the people.

There are many challenges and issues when we look into the life of Adivasis in Assam. However, life in mission is always the service of faith and the promotion of justice (GC, 32). We are challenged and encouraged with the word of the Lord, “to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.” (Lk.4:18). Through Gana Chetana Samaj, effort is being made to sensitize people in economic empowerment, education, healthcare, legal rights, and cultural preservation, that can liberate them from the bondage of poverty, oppression, injustice and illiteracy. These initiatives can bring about lasting positive change in the lives of the people.

Thus a vision of a just and equitable society in Assam can be realized, ensuring that the Adivasis in the tea gardens live with dignity and opportunity.





# 12

## Social Apostolate in Ranchi Province

**Fr. Mahendra P. Tigga, SJ**

• Hoffmann Law Association, Ranchi

### Geographical Background



The state of Jharkhand, earlier known as 'KHUKHRA' is situated in the eastern part of the country with its geographical boundaries between Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to the west,

Odisha to the south, and West Bengal to the east, covering an area of about 79,714 square kilometres with a wide range of geographical diversity with large historical incursions affecting the lives of Tribals, today known as Scheduled Tribes as mentioned in the Indian Constitution. Rocky Mountains, shrubs covered hills, plentiful water bodies, minerals along with vibrant wildlife and the rich cultural heritages give the State a significant status in the country and world-wide. According to the census report of the year 2011, the total population of the people is 4.06 Crore. The Scheduled Tribe population of Jharkhand State is as per census 2011 is 8,645,042.

### Historical Background

In the year 1868, the first phase, the beginning of the Bengal Mission was made by an adventurous bullock cart Journey of 98 miles from Midnapur to Chaibasa by Fr. Augustus Stockman SJ on behest of then Archbishop Steins of Calcutta with a view to start a mission among the aboriginal tribes, designated as 'Kols' by the British.

In the second phase, later in July 1869 this baby Bengal Mission found an identity of its own and moved to the direction of Chotanagpur with a clearer and sharper vision of establishing itself among the Mundas since the Ho's of Chaibasa showed not much signs of accepting the Good News. However, the second stage of the Bengal Mission lasting almost 17 years, established itself well with slow but steady conversions among the thinly populated Mundas in the jungle of Tabo-Ghat.

Beginning of Social apostolate in the Province as a way of Evangelization of freedom and self-governance –







The third phase of the mission started with the arrival of Fr. Sylvein Grosjean and the newly ordained Fr. Constant Lievens, the Mission of Bengal proved to be a Balt from the blues. The socio-pastoral touch of Fr. Lievens prepared the ground for sowing the seeds of social work. After sometime his colleagues Fr. Desmeth, Fr. Cardon, Fr. Dihon and Fr. John Baptist Hoffmann and many more became the followers of Fr. Lievens, studied the woes of the victims of oppression, found the legal fallacy of the oppressors and took the Tribals to the Court and brought about redressal and justice to the innocent, who were suffering because of the '*Dikkus*' and the *Zamindars*.

To my understanding the lack of formal education as well as division among themselves caused the Tribals to lose against '*Dikkus*' aggressions and Aryan dominance.

Hence, the gradual liberation from the clutches of the *Dikkus* and Aryans and the fear from evil spirit brought about by Fr. Lievens and his companions, champion and this mission turned out to be one of the biggest success stories of the social- legal apostolate and ministries.

Sadly, we realize that the Tribals are still at stake not just in Jharkhand alone but wherever they are in the world. The pathetic condition of Tribals in Brazil, south America, Australia etc are some nations to be mentioned, where the Tribals are basically deprived of their land and identity.

The rampant Land alienation of the Tribals in Jharkhand can be witnessed so clearly with the

anti -tribal Government policies, the corrupt Government officials and manipulations in selling and snatching off from the Tribals. Indeed, it is a serious issue and needs to be addressed immediately. Along with this exploitative and nefarious link between politicians, police forces and unscrupulous business men is rooted very deep which continues the policy of divide and rule among the Tribals.

Another issue which needs to be attended namely, the massive unemployment, leading to migration of our young people to the cities otherwise forcing them to join the Naxals and its movements. Presently, trafficking of our young children is also very alarming.

From the very inception, socio- legal apostolate has been the base for the Chotanagpur mission by the first missionaries. Interestingly, the apostolate still needs to be continued with greater attention with more systematized and upgraded methodologies, due to the rapid change of the time.

The immediate need of the hour is to get the mission seriously inserted into the lives of the Tribals, marginalized, Dalits, women and children the most deprived sections of the state. One of the most complex issues of the mission is to bridge the gap between Sarna Tribals and Christian Tribals. We also have to spend our personnel and resources in political literacy and awareness building programmes for the people and especially the youth. It is indeed a high time to spend ourselves in shaping the youth by deepening their genuine concerns for their own land, culture and history. We need to prepare them for their future leadership grounded in their roots with the power of Gram Sabha enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

'Fire must burn', the inspirational quote of our mission has to be materialized in our common and broader collaboration to face these challenges, poses a serious question. We need to question, retrospect, discern, revitalize our system, rethink our policies and options once again with an honest evaluation of the past and road map for the future with clear vision mission.



The Province Social Commissions' resources

In Jharkhand the Ranchi Province has its Social and Human Rights Commission centres at Ranchi, Khunti, Simdega, Gumla, Lohardaga. The Commission work is also extended in Headquarter at Tejpur our Assam Mission with its sub centres with the issues of the Tribals and other backward class groups.

We are engaged in project-based ministries, right based approaches to Government Schemes and developmental works in connection with MANREGA, Right to Food, Pension, Minimum wages, right to Information, at block and district level. We are also strengthening the socio-political and legal awareness programmes for the student and people at large as per our reach and requirements.

Secondly, the Commission members through the AROUSE centres at Gumla, Simdega and Lohardaga are engaged with the works of literacy classes at villages, right based awareness programmes for the people, facilities of computer and stitching classes. The library facility for the students preparing themselves for various exams and interviews for the job. Arouse at Gumla is involved in micro products of pickles, Jam, Jelly, as well as Tribal Shawls and Silk Sari and 'Bandi'. Unfortunately, one of the factors namely, lack of fund is derailing our aims and objective of the ministries. One of the major contributions of Arouse is that we have established a Tribal Museum, which serves the society with its self-explanatory facts.

Mission in Assam is trying its best to educate, empower and strengthen the Tribals also known as Tea Laborers or Tea Tribes, marginalized and poor people to come up together and fight for their survival by helping them to have their own tea gardens in order to get out from the vicious circle of structured manipulation and suppression in the Tea Gardens.

Legal advocacy and socio-legal awareness programmes and seminars to all walks of people are also being taken care of but this too needs to be systematized with regularity and with more lay

collaborations with clear visioned road maps with short term and long terms result oriented efforts, reading the signs of the time.

The alarming issues of divide and rule by bringing the issue of delisting, atrocities to church and its institutions under Jharkhand Anti -conversion Law, sacking the Tribals and others too under Jharkhand Bovine Animal Prohibition of Slaughter Act, creating ambience for the benefits of the Non-Tribals and outsiders to occupy and grab the tribal land with just a simple Aadhar Card, named electricity Bill or water connection or through Sada Patta, which is made by all possible illegal methods. There are systematic attacks on all the efforts made for tribal unity and all our concerned works for the upliftment of the Tribals either. Though the work of helping the people at the Court is done but it is just limited to one or two District courts due to lack of personnel, meaning all our people are dependent on the other lawyers for whom the court case is just a profession for their livelihood and not a mission to help or to save the Tribals and their land and customary laws. In such situation it is a felt need that some innovative, systematic, approach is necessary. My personal view is that the tribal issues can still be dealt with our own village system and customary laws except for some very serious criminal cases, where things have to come to the court.

The agriculture still remains for the nearly 75% Tribals the source of our sustenance has to be fostered once again. I always encourage the concept of '*GAON CHALO*' that has to be reinstalled in the minds of the people. This concept is not just returning back to our villages but to return to our culture, value system, ethos, customs and relations. Unfortunately, the forceful and trendy attraction for white collar job and life has uprooted the Tribals from their villages, weakening the village bond, love to the God's gifted ancestral-land and years old cultures ending with individuality, selfishness, money oriented and disinterested youth from its roots.

Today, the herculean task is to protect the





great mission of the missionaries like Fr. Rev. Frs. Stockman, Constant Lievens, John Baptist Hoffmann and Hermann Rasschaert by helping the Tribals to go back to their roots and stand on their own with the present day challenges and difficulties without losing their identity and unity.

Keeping the rationale of the Province Mission- vision, it was conceptualised to open a forum like “Working People’s Alliance (WPA)” to work hand in hand with lay people collaborators for the protection of Land, Forest and water, preserving the tribal identity and dignity of human person and enhancing the Tribals especially the youth for future leadership. The issues pertaining to Tribal rights and other social interventions is and will be taken care as per the mission and vision of WPA and will be carried out under the guiding principles of Social & Human Rights Commission of Ranchi Jesuit Province laid under Ranchi Province Apostolic Preference (PAP) 2020-30. The team shall be focussing the objective under agenda II and III.

II: Walking with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised, particularly the Tribals for peace, justice, reconciliation, and harmony.

III: Understanding and accompanying youth for a meaningful and a hope-filled future.

“Ignatius of Loyola, inspired by Jesus Christ and the saints in their poverty, exchanged his nobleman’s cloak for the tunic of a beggar. Putting all his trust

in God, he set out on a lifelong pilgrimage in which he always remained close to the poor and interiorly became ever more deeply poor himself. “Our commitment to follow a poor Lord,” Ignatius wrote to the Jesuits in Padua, “quite naturally makes us friends of the poor”

Ranchi Province has proved itself as a Missionary Province in walking with the poor, the marginalized and the downtrodden of all types. The Social and Human Rights Commission will strive for the ‘Magis’ in the coming years, stressing the importance of lay contributors of all denominations and people of good will from all other religions and walks of life. The most important factor of our mission that we need to own up the Cross of Christ the poor and live and walk with the people in their struggles and pain.

The Mission in Chotanagpur or ‘Greater Jharkhand’ is being taken care by five different provinces, namely, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur, Dumka and Chhattisgarh. The offspring of Chotanagpur Mission carries forward the mission of the forefathers according to the needs of the hour. However, together with other lay people we need to stress on common policies, common vision connectivity in our ministries.

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.



**13**

## Need for Political Literacy and Activism

**Fr. Anupchand K. Minj, SJ**

• Hoffmann Legal Cell, Khunti



**P**olitics is dirty and it's like playing a dirty game' is a general perception among people in urban or semi-urban areas particularly in the Christian community. Thanks to such a misconception, self-

claimed morally 'good and educated' citizens hardly take an interest in it. They try to uphold their morality by distancing themselves from it in all possible ways. Such things happen despite all knowing that politics affects all walks of life, irrespective of one's caste, creed, colour, sex, religion and place of birth. Moreover, whether or not one likes or takes an interest in it, politics does like and take an interest in all citizens' lives. In other words, one's likes and dislikes for it are immaterial.

Many Church and Religious Congregational heads realised this reality more in the current scenario. Besides, they also foresaw a more volatile socio-politico-religious and economic situation after the election if they remained passive about it. This realisation alarmed, awakened and galvanised

Jharkhand's different denominational Church heads and Congregational Superiors before the last parliamentary elections. They came together. They reasoned out that despite having a sizeable number of voters in the community, why preferred candidates lose in the fray. Their coming together brought about quite a few desirable outcomes.

Ideally speaking and practically doing anything are two totally different aspects. So, the moot point was where to begin from. People in other territories have exhibited different political work culture and we can learn from them. Their sharing was truly enlightening and challenging. It also optimised the participants' optimism of winning more seats here.

In order to translate plans and principles into practice, the eight Jharkhandi Catholic Diocesan Bishops constituted a central core team. For some practical reasons, the Khunti-based Hoffmann Legal Cell was very active with eight-ten enthusiastic, generous and committed youth who worked every day till late night. Their active contribution accelerated the momentum of the work. The team started working in January and continued it round the clock till the final polling. It toured different







dioceses, parishes and institutions. One of the representatives said “The Chhotanagpur Christian Community never seemed united as it is now”. The non-Christian Adivasis were not excluded either. The initiatives and support from other authorities was remarkable. Consequently, by the time parties announced their candidates for different Parliamentary Constituencies in Jharkhand, the team had already done a lot of solid groundwork with the support of such concerned authorities and figures and well-wishers of the state and the country. Hence, the contesting candidates didn’t have to struggle much in canvassing. It’s only possible owing to sincere, concerted and relentless work of the entire team at different levels.

It’s worth mentioning here that the Christian community is well-known all over the country for its educational, pastoral, social, medical and spiritual contribution to the state and the nation. But in certain areas, like legal and political, the community has yet to explore its potential and make its presence felt. Statistically, there are only thirteen elected Christian Parliamentarians for the current Lok Sabha from Meghalaya-2, Mizoram-1, Nagaland-1, Manipur-1, Goa-1, Andhra Pradesh-1, Kerala-5 and Tamil Nadu-1 which is approximately two per cent only. To voice the concerns of the Christian community like that of Manipur and elsewhere, the Christian representation in the Parliament or Legislative Assembly is to be increased. For this, the Church heads, Religious Congregational Superiors and lay leaders are to conscientize themselves to conscientize their members and then lay faithful. The opportunities and challenges are not far in Jharkhand. The state

assembly election is due in October-November, 2024. Therefore, these Church leaders need to wake up and start preparing the entire community. This issue is with faithful as well. Hence, the authorities and lay leaders in the Church need to have political literacy. To overcome this problem, a timely concerted start and effort is the need of the hour. Political literacy and activism are to be understood and taken into with right perspective. Only then, the Church in Jharkhand will not have no difficulty to pass litmus test, i.e., the forthcoming State Assembly Election, to increase the tally of Christian or the desired Adivasi legislatures in the assembly.

Jesuits are known as frontier missionaries. They have been in the frontiers politically too. Economic and political reduction in Paraguay in South America in the 18th century, Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador in Central America in the second half of the 20th century, wherein Jesuits contributed a great deal to the cause of the general public. They daringly challenged the existing government and its policies. They even risked their lives. Late Fr. Stan Swamy, S.J. from the land of Jharkhand had to pay a price in the form of a custodial death in Mumbai for his social and political activism. Therefore, a mountainous challenge lies ahead of all Jesuits and especially of the Ranchi Jesuits who are overly institutionalised in educational ministries. They are to come out of their comfort zones of the place, people, post, position, prestige and luxuries they are used and attached to. Only then, something significant and newsworthy could be contributed to the building up and well-being of the state and the nation and its citizens. Let us do it unitedly!



# 14

## Schooling : The Initial form of Preaching

**Fr. James Toppo, SJ**

• Manresa House, Ranchi



**M**y dear friends in the Lord, this write-up is an earnest invitation and an ardent appeal to join the Ignatian caravan of dedicated militia in the specialized company under the leadership of Fr. Sylvain Grosjean and his

squadron leader Fr. Constant Lievens, the God-sent heroic and charismatic wonder-workers of the Chotanagpur soil during the last decades of the 19th century. Making an intentional departure from the traditional approach to evangelizing the people, both of these missionaries opted to reconnoitre the vast mission land trying to enter into the thick of the aboriginal tribes to feel their pulse by literally holding their wrists while sitting on tip-toes, just as the village medicine men do and detect if they could, what was or were the malaise that not only corroded the tribal peoples as a nation but that dehumanized them by making them bereft of all human dignity as a community.

Can you visualize a people demographically close to 40,00,000 (Forty lacks approximately) inhabiting roughly 43,000 square miles of hilly terrain with forest or thick jungle cover all over,

living almost totally an alienated life, away from the so-called civilized and developing races of the Indian sub-continent at the time of the expanding British occupation over the country? From the point of view of their ethnicity, anthropological linkages, and linguistic affinities, these aborigines comprised many tribes but mainly of the Oraons, the Mundas, the Kharias, and the Santhals. My theological genesis accounts of these different tribes show that Father or Grandfather figure God, called by different names is their loving and benevolent Creator. The most soothing dimension of these creation myths is the manifestation of the paternal love of the creator to these creatures in multiple ways; above them all the unfathomable love of the Grandfather to these Grandchildren is undoubtedly shown while specifying the livelihood-profession to be no other than agriculture for the tribal people. Over time, this anthropological insight turned out to be the most emphatic conviction forbidding the tribals from adopting any other profession for subsistence than agriculture and its associates. From the viewpoint of their hoary ancestry and common background of people glued to the land, proud of their capacity to work in the fields and forests and inseparableness



*Born to Fight- RC Middle School, Vijaygiri*





Budding Footballers - St. Stanislaus Primary School, Lohardaga



World Yoga Day - Stockman Memorial Middle School, Kochang

from their communitarian lifestyle who had developed a community culture of their own, were a people, a family of their kind. Politically, they were Parha panchayat people, who cherished the sense of equality in society, until the *Nagbanshi Raja* usurped the *Maharaja's* title and power, converted the democratic system of Governance into a feudal system of Governance, and squeezed the joy of life out from the tribal world. They brought in the Brahmins, the Rajputs, the Vaishyas, the merchants and traders, the Khans, and the other dominating, subjugating, oppressing, exploiting, non-tribal, non-aboriginal peoples in big cohorts and fixed them up as *Zamindars*, *Jagirdars*, absentee landlords; gave them lordship over thirty-four even fifty villages each with all the landed property, forest and the *Gair Majurwa* land under the community ownership of the villages. Thus began the downward journey of the tribal society until it touched the rock bottom of its downfall. It was in this situation when the British took over the reign in their hands the status quo of the land upholding the usurped powers of the feudal *Rajas* and the *Maharajas*, giving them protection plus free hand over their forcibly and unjustly made raiyats, the tribals, the proud possessions of the land till 3-4 hundred years ago. Heaven was converted into hell, when the Hinduised *Maharaja*, *Rajas*, and *Zamindars* and all feudal lords first and foremost took away forcibly the entire landed property of the *Oraons*, the *Mundas*, the *Hos*, the *Santhals*, the *Kharias*, and the rest, declared them as their own and restored some of the ancestral possessions to the lineal descendants but with revenue fixed to be

paid annually to the feudal lords. Best lands in every *Zamindari*, the *Majhias* fields were very solemnly declared as the possessions of the *Zamindars*, whose cultivation the *raiya*t of that *Zamindari* would do collectively and surrender the produce to the landlords, the *Rajas* and the *Maharajas* as a matter of duty year after year.

Land alienation from their ancestral possessions went on without impurity. Over and above, labour exploitation of the tribal *raiya*t in the form of *Baith Begari*, mortgaging land to compensate for the money taken in loans, etc. went on unchecked everywhere. In some *Zamindaris* where the landlords were ruffians, with local police on their side played havoc in the villages, by taxing the villagers two, three, or even fourfold by showing false records, which the people could not catch or disprove because they did not know reading and writing.

As time passed, ways and means of oppressing the people got worse and worse; extortion of money, domestic animals, and even landed property for one's inability to pay back the loan taken during bad days years ago became a daily practice in the tribal world.

Can you visualize a people numbering 4-5 million, dying under the yoke of practical "slavery" because they were illiterate, uneducated, leaderless, and powerless to fight back for their rights?

This was the condition of 90% of the people, Fr. Constant Lievens met with when he was on his mission of reconnoitring tribal life, suffering, and slavery in Torpa. This was the mission Fr. Lievens' Superior Fr. Sylvain Grosjean had entrusted Fr.



Lievens with, when he had sent him to Doranda as a total greenhorn, not to preach, not to baptize but to find out what was ailing, disturbing, and chocking the life of the Adivasis as a community.

Within a short span of two months or so, the news of this “*Gora Aadmi*” talking about the life problems of the Adivasi people writing them down with an intention to consult the knowledgeable persons regarding its judicial response in the British domain, spread like wildfire in the *Munda* country definitely but also in the *Oraon* country of *Nawagarh* and *Barwe*, and also in the *Kharia Oraon* country of *Biru Raj* and beyond. The delegations from all the four directions began to come to Torpa, bringing the stories of human sufferings, all caused by the *Rajas*, *Zamindars*, and Money lenders. The conclusions arrived at within two months were that people need education; education regarding the land rights of different parties, education about what to do and how to do it about the land grabbers, cheats, and case fabricators – education about what the British law says regarding land holding – education about what are the punishments violates of law must be subjected to etc.

There were some practical conclusions Fr. Lievens even in his lonely hours in Torpa was arriving at frequently “The people who come traveling 60-80 miles to pour out their woes to me, have to wait for their turn for days. Can that time be better utilized by getting some knowledgeable people to educate them on religion, on Bible, on who we are, why have we come so far to meet the poverty-stricken people here? What does the Cross mean which I patronize, adore, respect mean for me?

Knowing that these tribal people were lovers of singing and dancing, Fr. Lievens was inspired to teach them the Bible in the form of songs and bhajans. Realizing his limitations, he very quickly began to multiply teachers on all fronts, and his mind began to work on a formal education institution, which would permanently go on doing the educational work for the young, new generations. Side by side there should be training schools which would prepare teachers for many subjects.

Reflecting on the new generations which would continue to fill the lives of these people with joy, Fr. Lievens began to plan for a school to be established which would initially fulfil the needs of all the tribal world. Every Christian village would find a primary school, and all the villages in the vicinity of a parish would jointly would run classes till the middle school. The centre of the mission, Ranchi would collect all High School goers in Ranchi. But before all these the informal schooling of the adults as it is going on in Torpa, must be organized in many more places. We must consider these informal and non-formal education centres starting to function as soon as possible.

Within a week, Fr. Lievens had got Fr. Desmet, his assistant to start a carbon copy of Torpa adults’ school, to listen to the haunting stories of landlords’ oppression, extortion of money, or labour exploitation, in Tetra, across the *Koel* River, some eight miles away from Torpa, a place of convenient assembling of *Oraon* people of *Palkot Raj*. Within another week, both Fr. Grosjean and Fr. Lievens had moved to Ranchi to opt for



Children in Colours - St. Xavier's School, Doranda, Ranchi







and purchase a piece of land where both kinds of schools, the formal children's school and also the adult informal school, plus the central Jesuit residence would find their permanent places to function. This place where we have not only St. John's Middle School but also St. John's High School and St. Xavier's College, now after 125 years of its acquisition happens to be that place, which the new evangelists purchased in June 1816. Apart from Manresa House and St. Peter's Primary School, this huge Coffee *Bagaan* of Ranchi Road, which served as the informal school for adults coming from *Dighia*, *Mandar*, and their neighbourhoods; also the big delegations of *Barwe* and Jashpur flocked to this Dera for both purposes, their own grievance against the *Zamindars* or their outfits to narrate

to Libin Saheb and to learn this new way of life, which frees them from all kinds of fears, including the fears of the feudal lords and their emissaries. Having come to this stage of fearlessness they could now speak boldly of the Christian faith and its power liberating them from all evils, they could sing the biblical songs of freedom with *vibe* and *gusto*. For distant *Barwe*, this *Dera* became the school conversation and place of unification of one big family of the Churches.

The old traditional religions of the tribal people are the pre-Christian beliefs orienting and leading the inquirers to kerygmatic Christianity provided the late additions to go through the process of purifications.







15

## The Need of Jesuit Values in Our Schools

**Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess, SJ**

• St. Xavier's School, Doranda



**E**ducation is a cornerstone of the Society of Jesus, and has been since 1548 when the first Jesuit school opened in Messina, Sicily. Today, 3,730 schools carry on this tradition all around the world, expanding the minds of 2.5

million students.

Today, the Jesuits are responsible for 3,897 Educational Institutions in 96 countries. These Jesuit Educational Institutions engage the efforts of approximately 1,34,303 teachers, educating approximately 29,28,806 students.

India is the largest education systems of the world. The Society of Jesus in India has founded 118 Primary & Middle Schools, 149 High Schools, 58 University Colleges, 22 Technical Institutes and 16 Business Administration Institutes with 11,525 teachers, educating 3,34,538 students, belonging to every social class, community and

linguistic group. These Institutions are part of the Catholic Church's effort to share in the country's educational undertaking.

Ranchi Province alone has 29 Primary & Middle Schools, 24 Secondary Schools and 7 Higher Secondary Schools with approximately 46,404 students, 1,109 teachers, 376 supporting staff, 53 religious and 88 Jesuits. The Ranchi Jesuits aims at the integral formation of a person and the Vision Mission Statement explicitly explains this -

**"We the Ranchi Jesuit Educators commit ourselves to the service of faith, promotion of justice, formation of our students as persons of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment in collaboration with staff and parents and networking with other educators to bring about transformation of society."**

**"Our Mission in the Education Apostolate is to go out into those frontiers where children are deprived of education due to various reasons."**



*The Future Scientists - Inigo High School, Saporom, Ranchi*





Marching towards Awareness - St. Ignatius High School, Gumla



Stand at Ease - St. John's School, Balipara, Assam

## JESUIT VALUES IN EDUCATION

The values of Jesuit education are rooted in the vision of St. Ignatius, founder of the Jesuit Order. These values prepare students to be wiser and more compassionate as they take the next step in their life journey as men and women for others.

- ❖ **Cura Personalis** - Jesuit education emphasizes the view that each person is a unique creation of God. Cura Personalis (meaning 'care for the whole self' in Latin) is demonstrated by personal attention in the classroom, a deep respect for diversity and difference and an emphasis on holistic care for the mind, body and spirit.
- ❖ **Discernment** - Discernment encourages students to be open to God's Spirit as they make decisions and take actions that contribute to the greater good. Discernment is practiced through prayer, reflection, consultation with others and considering the full impact of actions from diverse angles.
- ❖ **Finding God in all things** - A Jesuit education is one grounded in the presence of God, and encompasses imagination, emotion and intellect. The Jesuit vision encourages students to seek the divine in all things—in all peoples and cultures, in all areas of study and learning and in every human experience.
- ❖ **Magis** - A commitment to the concept of Magis (Latin for 'more') is a hallmark of Jesuit education. It challenges students to go beyond what is expected, interacting with the world with generosity, excellence and empathy. Magis is modelled by personal accountability and high expectations of achievement.
- ❖ **Reflection** - A foundational value of Jesuit education is the practice of reflection. Students are invited to pause to consider the world around them and their place within it before making decisions. This includes challenging the status quo, acknowledging biases and



TEEP Programme at Jharna Spirituality Centre, Namkum, Ranchi





*Principals from MP and Ranchi Provinces at the Inaugural Ceremony of Inter - Jesuit Basketball Tournament 2024*

accepting responsibility for actions.

- ❖ **Service Rooted in Justice and Love** - Jesuit education cultivates critical awareness of social and personal evil, but points out that God's love is more powerful. This value is illustrated through community service programme, service-learning semesters, immersion experiences and various volunteer opportunities for students.
- ❖ **Solidarity and Kinship** - Students work together for the greater good. They develop relationships with their surrounding communities and share their talents and skills to help and serve others. This value is practiced through community engaged learning, where students work with community members to come up with innovative solutions.

## CONCLUSION

One of the most significant challenges Ranchi Province faces is the quality of education. Despite significant evaluations and improvements in recent years through Adhyayan and Province Education Commission, many schools still lack adequate infrastructure, qualified teachers, and an

updated curriculum. Education in towns or cities are still not affordable for a significant proportion of the population. Additionally, there is a significant disparity in access to education between urban and rural areas, with many students in rural areas struggling to access quality education. There is a significant shortage of qualified teachers in rural areas. This shortage can significantly impact the quality of education provided to students and lead to a lack of continuity in teaching. The Indian education system relies heavily on examinations to evaluate students, which can be stressful and often results in a focus on rote learning rather than understanding concepts. Additionally, the examination system can be a source of significant stress for students, leading to a lack of interest in learning.

In conclusion, addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort from the government, educators, and the wider community. By investing in education and introducing reforms to modernize the system, Ranchi Province can ensure its students have access to high-quality education needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.





16

# Jesuit Higher Education : Context, Challenges and the Way Forward

**Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ**

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## The Context



The Society of Jesus has the legacy of running higher education institutions in more than 90 countries. The first Catholic school in India, St Paul's college, was started by St Francis Xavier in 1542, in Goa. The Catholic Higher

Education in India was started by French Jesuit Fathers in 1843, by establishing St Joseph's College, Trichy. According to 2013 statistics by Catholic Church, there were 15,781 catholic educational institutions in India. Among them there were 449 Professional Colleges, 232 Degree colleges and 1782 Junior colleges. The rest were schools and vocational training centres (James, 2021).

Today, there are more than 65 colleges and universities in South Asia. There are more than 77 Jesuit Business Schools in the world. Hundreds and thousands of young, dynamic, and promising students are the beneficiaries of the Jesuit higher education along with their teachers and support

staff. One commonality in all Jesuit higher education institution is – Catholic and Jesuit identity with deep roots in Ignatian spirituality.

The four higher education institutions of Ranchi Province – St. Xavier's College, Ranchi; St. Xavier's College, Simdega; St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel in Assam; and Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi – attempt to disseminate God's Kingdom here on earth with human dignity, self-esteem, peace, social justice, and reconciliation.

The context of the Jesuit higher education today is globalisation and economic liberalization with their positive and adverse impacts. The world is a global village with an unbelievably rapid pace of change. In today's competitive world, it is the survival of the fittest, fastest, and the best. A little more than two decades back, not even one percent of the Scheduled Tribes was reported to be into higher, technical and professional education. Things have slightly changed now, but much more is desirable.

With the corporatisation of education, the concept of universality of education has taken a





backseat. Private institutions are on the rise. The mushrooming of private educational facilities in the recent years reflects an increasing demand for education and the state's inability to provide affordable and quality education.

### **Education with Ignatian Roots**

The articulations by different Superior Generals of the Society, on the theme of education in general and of higher education in particular, have common areas of emphasis.

Pedro Arrupe's wisdom was expressed in 1973 while addressing the Society's Alumni in Valencia, Spain, that our students would train as "men and women for others", i.e., not focused on their "own love, desire or interest" (Spiritual Exercises, 189) but open to others and ready to serve their brothers and sisters in need, as part of the promotion of justice (pp. 3-4).

Arrupe's successor Kolvenbach (2015), explaining who the Jesuits were, emphasized on "men and women for others and with others". He pointed out that our educational tradition urged the formation of men and women with 4 Cs: consciousness, compassion, competence, and commitment (p.4). Kolvenbach, at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., in his speech pertaining to higher education, on June 7, 1989, highlighted the Ignatian world view, value-oriented education, promotion of justice, interdisciplinary education, internationalization, mission and staffing, the Jesuit community, and so on.

Adolfo Nicolas (2010), speaking about the

challenges to Jesuit higher education, points out the importance of promoting depth of thought and imagination, re-discovering universality, and learned ministry (Mexico City – April 23, 2010). Further, "Depth of thought and imagination in the Ignatian tradition involves a profound engagement with the real".

Arturo Sosa (2016) says that the true value of a Jesuit university is to be found in forming men and women who care for the world, the planet, and human life itself, and who bear a sense of responsibility as global citizens who contribute to a project of social transformation "for others". The university should not be a place to merely pile up knowledge; the goal of the intellectual apostolate is to seek wisdom. Sosa (2018) emphasizes on the need to transform the world through Jesuit universities.

### **Challenges to Inclusive Education – What and for Whom?**

Nelson Mandela is quoted often, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." However, it is not as simple as it sounds. Bordiue & Passeron (1990) understand education in terms of "inequality and schooling". They find relationship between the higher-education system and social-class structure. Social inequality is culturally transmitted from one generation to another and that education plays an important role in this transmission. This is one of the reasons, why Paulo Freire (1921) made a case for the 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. Education is always associated with 'power' and 'empowerment'. Farrell (1982) highlights four facets of equality: equality of access, equality of survival, equality of output, and equality of outcome.

What is education sounds terrifying in the context of the Nazi Concentration camp. At the end of World War II, this letter was found in a Nazi Concentration camp. It is addressed to Teachers:

"Dear Teachers, I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness. Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children





poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burnt by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated illiterates. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve towards making our children more human.”

The Jesuit education attempts to make students humane persons with character. This is what makes the Jesuit brand of education different from other brands of educations. However, we must continue deepening this focus.

### The Way Forward

- Emphasis on holistic formation with Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual development of the students.
- Creativity and innovation in pedagogy. Inclusive education with accessibility, affordability, and quality.
- Inter-disciplinary research (issues of migration, displacement, common home, livelihood, women & children, indigenous peoples, AI, data analytics, etc.), critical thinking, conscientization, and policy advocacy.
- Digital and Skill based education for employability and social entrepreneurship.
- Discernment, collaboration and networking in governance.

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## Accompanying Youth in Changing Times

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**I**n his address to the 38th World Youth Day 2023, Pope Francis emphasized that young people are indeed the joyful hope of the church and humanity, always on the move. Pope Francis understands the emotions

and aspirations of young people and recognises the importance of the connection they should have with their inner selves to truly comprehend their lives. Accompanying youth involves building strong, lasting relationships, guiding them through personal growth, and creating a space for open and friendly dialogue. Our involvement through seminars, spiritual conversations, and motivating them to envision a hope-filled future will help them become more secure in their daily lives. Some may be at the periphery of human society therefore; it is our prime duty to gather the scattered and engage in dialogue with them to understand their lives more closely. By doing this, they will one day see their lives bright, their visions clear, and they will achieve greater success, creating a just and humane society.

Guiding young people on their spiritual journey

is a nuanced task, requiring Jesuits to deeply understand what it means to be a mentor and spiritual guide. This involves a careful mix of theological principles, psychological insights, and a profound respect for the individuality and autonomy of young people. Central to Christian teaching is agape, the selfless, unconditional love that seeks the best for others. Leaders must embody this love, showing patience, compassion, and genuine interest in young people's lives, fostering their spiritual and moral development.

As Jesuits, we should encourage young men and women, providing guidance and a safe space for questions, doubts and discussions. By living out their faith transparently, we should inspire youth to pursue their spiritual journeys with honesty and depth. Using the Socratic method, which emphasizes questioning and dialogue, can create an environment where critical thinking thrives. This approach helps the youth to engage intellectually with their faith, wrestle with difficult questions, and develop a robust understanding of their beliefs, empowering them to own their faith.

Community is foundational to Christian philosophy. Creating inclusive communities where young







people feel valued is essential. We should also get attuned to the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of young people's lives. We should provide resources and support that promote overall well-being. This holistic approach reflects the understanding faith is intertwined with every aspect of life.

Church leaders need to understand the cultural context in which young people live, including current issues, media, and technology. Engaging with contemporary culture without compromising core values helps youth see the relevance of their faith in their daily experiences. Helping young people discern their vocation involves guiding them to live out their faith in every aspect of life. We should support youth as they explore their gifts and how they can serve God and others, encouraging a life of purpose and meaning grounded in a sense of divine calling. Inspiring youth to participate in creating a more just and compassionate world aligns with the church's broader mission. Educating young people about social issues and encouraging them to engage in advocacy and service integrates social justice into spiritual lives.

Active engagement with youth involves guiding them to create a hope-filled future, understanding their challenges, and supporting their aspirations and potential. This requires education, mentoring, and creating opportunities for youth to grow in faith, leadership, and service. This approach acknowledges the critical role of young people in shaping the future and aims to empower them as change agents. We must consider that it is our

prime responsibility to guide youth to God through the Spiritual Exercises, spiritual conversation, and dialogue and discernment which highlight the Jesuits tradition of helping individuals discover and follow God's will. The Spiritual Exercises, written by St. Ignatius of Loyola, offer meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices to deepen one's relationship with God. This focus emphasizes the importance of spiritual direction, retreats, and various forms of spiritual accompaniment, fostering a discerning heart capable of making decisions aligned with God's desire.

Jesuits should not remain confined but should actively engage with the marginalized and those whose dignity has been violated, advocating for social justice and striving for reconciliation. This mission emphasizes solidarity with oppressed communities and aligns with the Jesuit commitment to justice, grounded in the belief that faith and justice are inseparable. It involves engaging in advocacy, providing education, and supporting people in their struggles for dignity and rights.

Observations reveal that while a big number of urban youths are educated and goal-oriented, they lack guidance and accompaniment. Conversely, rural youths may be scattered and lack vision it is our responsibility to reach out to all youth regularly for accompaniment and lead them to journey towards tomorrow. Also, numerous young people in Catholic parishes and other churches need our holistic approach. We must not only speak of the marginalized but also work to brighten their futures through constant guidance and support, respecting their dignity, rights, and visions. Our involvement through seminars, spiritual conversations, and motivating them to envision a hope-filled future will help them become more secure in their daily lives. Some may be at the periphery of society, so it is our prime duty to gather the scattered and engage in dialogue with them to understand their lives more closely. By doing this, they will one day see their lives as bright, their visions will be clear, and they will achieve greater success, creating a just and humane society.



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## Guiding Youth for a Hope-Filled Future

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### Introduction



United Nations has defined youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 and the Church defines the term as persons between the ages 15 to 35. Obviously, youth is not a well-defined term. In the context of Ranchi Jesuit

Province; this age-based definition of youth is not much of relevance as the meaning of the term youth changes with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings. In the rural area boys and girls below 15 years of age are active members of youth whereas in cities boys and girls above 25 years of age continue to be part of youth programmes. Thus, the range of the spectrum of age-based definition of youth is vast and fuzzy.

### Youth Apostolates in the Province

Considering the logic of behavioral science that young people act and behave differently depending on their ages and stages of life; Ranchi Jesuits accompany the youth under the following different names of youth ministries:

**Jivan Pravesh Seminars :** This is basically life-orientation program attending to the need of mainly teenagers studying in 10th to 12th standards. The whole module is based on Ignatian Spirituality which concentrates on (i) God's Love (ii) God's Love and our Response (iii) Two standards (iv) Finding God in all things. The purpose of the program is to engage the youth in self-discovery, self-realization, self-acceptance and self-renewal.

**Christian Living Communities (CLC) :** There are two groups – one group from secondary school level and another group is from higher secondary level and college level. The focus of CLC has been to impart Ignatian Spirituality and Christian values to the youth through sessions, celebrations and pilgrimage. One of the most important features of the activities is Marian Devotion.

**All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF):** This is a movement of youth particularly those studying in universities. It is a platform where youth develop their skills like communication skills, critical social analysis, team work, knowledge about Adivasi culture and life style. The focus is to promote leadership skills in youth by making them socially oriented, intellectually motivated and







spiritually inspired citizens of India.

**Parish Youth:** A boy or a girl whether educated or not educated can be part of parish youth provided one is not yet married. This is not very an organized group. The focus is particularly to involve the young men and women in parish activities and prepare them to become active and creative members of the Church.

**Magis Programme :** This is not a particular group of youth, rather it is a program of youth. All the young boys and girls of above groups participate in Magis Program. This creates a platform for wider interactions among youths of different ages and places.

Various capacity building programmes, workshops, sessions and group activities are organized for the youth all through the year under the umbrella of above-mentioned apostolates. A good number of youth benefit from these platforms and later themselves become leaders in their respective profession and places. However, there is much to be done in order to make this apostolate more fruitful and effective. As the Society of Jesus collectively reflects on the theme of 'Restructuring and Reimagining the Jesuit Mission', this is a high time to reimagine this apostolate. The best thing to do this is to look into the current trends and challenges faced by youth.

### Concerns of Youth Here and Now

Concerns related to youth are of various nature and is closely linked with the fast changing socio-cultural and eco-political undercurrents of society

they live in. According to political economist Parakala Prabhakar inequality and unemployment among youth are at all-time high in the country (April 16, 2024 – The Hindu). Like inequality, unemployment and poverty; paper leaks cum unfair practices during public examinations, inflation of various commodities and households has caused a lot of disruptions to the lives of youth particularly the Adivasi youth. Pressure to make career choices early and to become financially independent, peer pressure, digital demands, social networking websites, cut-throat competition in the job markets, attractive presence of digital media etc. have been significant factors determining the behavior of youth. Unfortunately, deteriorating robust social support system and family support system have confused, frustrated and fractured youth. Therefore, addiction and depression among youth are not uncommon today. Addictions of various types and depression in youth are increasingly affecting families and society.

### Reimagining Our Youth Apostolates

Despite our best intentions and involvement, there are good number of youths still out of our reach and the fruits of our apostolate have been meagre. To make this more fruitful, probably aiming the ideal - hundred percent, there is a need for serious reflection and reimagination of this apostolate. I would like to imagine this apostolate in the following manner:

**Apostolate as Ignatian Formation :** Amidst the wake of deep-fake, post truths, showoff and text-







talk the major challenges for youth are to have focused goal, to be original without surrendering one's identity, to be free without surrendering one's responsibility, to love without surrendering one's ability to sacrifice. In order to respond to such challenges, our apostolate has to have strategic plans and durable commitment in helping youth discern their future, become contemplatives in action, become servant leaders and love their families and society living a joyful life.

**Youth as Resources :** Our apostolate has been rendering service to young people through various activities focusing on the struggles and problems they undergo. We need to go beyond and view and enable youth as resources rather than problems or service recipients. Youth themselves have to become collaborative agents to the apostolate. Certainly, they need to be helped and guided but at the same time left free to take initiative and develop new approaches with creativity and boldness. This approach must be a core of our apostolate.

**Youth Accompaniment as Synodal Process:** Youth accompaniment is not a part time activity through some annual programmes, retreats and workshops; rather it is an ongoing process. I would imagine this to be discerning synodal process as Pope Francis suggests in *Christus Vivit*. Obviously, this means there is a need to value, appreciate and be open to the opinions and criticisms of young people.

**Apostolate as Sustained Contact and Involvement :** Our involvement with youth

has certainly made a difference in their lives. However, to make it more relevant and fruitful, there is a need to promote sustained contact and involvement. We could think of creating a space where young people can come and go freely, feel welcome and thereby openly share their joy and celebration as well as difficulties and frustration with adults from various skills and professions other than those a few involved in youth ministry. Number of programmes cannot ensure realistic opportunities to assess their interest and potential in-depth but the follow up and sustained contact and involvement certainly can.

**Civil Society as Collaborators in Youth Ministry:** No youth is useless and no youth is expendable. They have various skills, talents and ambitions. Esteemed alumni of our prestigious institutions can help the young people to identify their strengths and thereby, guide them to meaningful and satisfying life. Could we imagine of platform for open discussions where youth as well as experts from multiple and related disciplines work hand-in-hand towards building a healthy and prosperous tomorrow. This will ensure the optimal functioning of our human resources towards nation building.

## Conclusion

Future is filled with hopes and possibilities when youth of the present are able to make their passion their vocation, their skills their profession and their ambition their mission. Change is possible when youth find their purpose, keep their mind and body busy engaged in creative and meaningful activities.



*Mrs. Shilpi Neha Tirkey, MLA Mandar, with the youth at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi*





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## Current Educational Landscape Today

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In the initial phase, Ignatius and his companions did not have formal schools or institutions. Their teaching ministry was characterized by personal interactions, spiritual direction, study groups and catechetical instruction. These

early efforts laid the foundation for the more organized and structured educational institutions that emerged later, such as the Roman College.

Today, the Jesuits are present in over 112 countries worldwide and have been actively involved in education at all levels, from primary schools to colleges. They place a great emphasis on education, operating over 2,800 schools and institutions worldwide. The Jesuits have been interested in education since their founding in the sixteenth century. Their schools and universities welcome students from all backgrounds and provide a great, well-rounded education. The Jesuits are noted for their creative teaching methods, which emphasize holistic growth, interdisciplinary learning, and the incorporation of ethics and social justice. Many famous Jesuit institutions are world-renowned for their academic brilliance and alumni successes.

Pedro Arrupe, a beloved Superior General of the Jesuits, said the principal objective of Jesuit education is to form "Men and women for others, men and women who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ... men and women who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbours; men and women completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce."

Education today is constantly changing and evolving. It's like a puzzle that keeps getting rearranged to create new and exciting pictures. In today's ever-

changing world of education, it is extremely important to constantly come up with new ideas and ways of doing things. We need to be open to reimagining and restructuring our educational approaches to meet the needs of the present. To do this, it's helpful to look back at the history of our educational ministries and the ways in which Jesuits have responded to different situations. It is important to identify instances where creativity, imagination, restructuring, and pioneering have played a role in shaping our educational efforts.

To better understand our current educational efforts, we should delve into the rich history of Jesuit ministries and how they responded to various educational situations. Examining the historical context and the pioneering efforts of the Jesuit missionaries in the Ranchi region can provide valuable insights into the evolution of educational initiatives and help us better understand the current educational landscape.

The Jesuit missionaries, led by figures like Father Constant Lievens and Father Hoffmann, played a pivotal role in establishing education in the Chotanagpur region, which is now a part of the state of Jharkhand. Their work in this area spanned several decades, from the late 19th to the mid-20th century, and they faced a numerous of challenges along the way. For example: -

1. **Adapting to Linguistic and Cultural Barriers** : As mentioned earlier, missionaries had to learn local tribal languages and develop written scripts to effectively communicate and deliver educational content. This process of cultural integration was crucial in building trust and connection between communities.
2. **Creation of a network of schools and educational institutions** : Jesuits established elementary schools in remote villages and



colleges like St. Xavier's College Ranch, which served as centers for academic and vocational training...

**3. Empowering local teachers and leaders:**

The missionaries recognized the importance of involving the tribal communities in the educational process. They trained members of these communities to serve as teachers, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability.

**4. Advocating for tribal rights and welfare:**

Alongside their educational work, the Jesuits also played a role in advocating for the rights and social welfare of the tribal populations, challenging exploitative practices and seeking to uplift these marginalized communities.

By studying past experiences, we can learn from innovative and creative approaches used by Jesuit educators. These historical examples may provide us valuable insights that can guide our present and future practices, enabling us to build upon successful ideas and address current challenges with greater effectiveness.

When we talk about current educational activities, we mean the things that are currently happening in the field of education. This includes events and programmes that are being organized, as well as the overall environment in which education is taking place. By analyzing these activities, we can identify examples of innovative and imaginative approaches that are making a positive impact. These could be new teaching methods, unique programmes, or creative ways of engaging students in learning. We need to highlight these innovative

approaches because they demonstrate imagination and restructuring in addressing the needs of students, educators, and the broader educational community, like experiential learning and learning by doing and working with the community. For example, we could come across a school that has implemented project-based learning, in which students work on real-world projects to improve their skills and knowledge. This method promotes creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. By analyzing this exercise, we may learn from its success and consider how to apply it in different educational settings.

By reviewing current activities, we can discover opportunities for improvement. We may encounter issues or gaps that must be resolved in order to provide a better educational experience for pupils. This analysis helps us understand the current status of education and offers suggestions on how we can make it more effective and enjoyable.

One of the challenges we encounter is technological advancements. As technology continues to evolve rapidly, it presents both opportunities and challenges in education. While technological tools can enhance learning experiences, they also require us to adapt and keep up with the latest advancements. For example, integrating digital platforms, integrating ICT (Information and communications technology) in TL (Teaching and learning) Process and online learning resources into the curriculum may pose challenges for educators who are not familiar with these technologies.

Another challenge is changing societal needs. Society is constantly evolving, and as a result, the





needs and expectations of students and parents may change. We need to understand and respond to these changing needs to ensure that our educational practices remain relevant and effective. For instance, there may be a growing demand for specialized skills in certain industries, requiring us to offer relevant courses and programmes like conferences, seminars awareness program etc.

Inequality is another challenge that we face. Access to quality education may not be equal for all students due to various factors such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, or cultural barriers. Addressing these inequalities and ensuring that every student has equitable access to education is a significant challenge that requires our attention and action. By identifying these challenges, we can better understand the context in which we operate and design our educational responses accordingly. Each challenge requires careful consideration and tailored solutions to ensure that our ministries effectively address the needs of students and society as a whole.

The Jesuit approach to education has evolved significantly since the early days of the order, but

the core values of holistic growth and development, interdisciplinary learning, and a focus on ethics and social justice remain. Today, Jesuit schools and universities worldwide continue to provide an excellent, well-rounded education, partnering with students and parents from diverse backgrounds. As we look to the future of education, it is crucial that we draw inspiration from the Jesuit tradition of creativity, imagination, and responsive adaptation. By studying past innovations and analyzing current educational activities, we can identify effective practices to build upon. At the same time, we must be prepared to address the dynamic challenges of technological advancements, changing societal needs, and educational inequalities. Only by embracing a spirit of ongoing renewal and restructuring can we ensure that Jesuit education remains relevant and impactful in the years to come. By continuing to develop “Men and women for others,” we can empower the next generation to be forces for positive change in the world. The legacy of Jesuit education calls us to constantly reimagine how we can best serve the needs of our students and communities.



*Senior Secondary Girls' Tour to South India, SXD*



*Teaching and Learning Experience - SXD*



*Inter - Jesuit Basketball Tournament 2024 - SXD*



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## Life in Metro Cities : Opportunities and Challenges for Tribal Youth

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**L**ife in metropolitan cities presents a complex scenario for tribal youth, blending opportunities and challenges. These cities attract people with promises of advanced education, career prospects, and a multicultural

lifestyle. However, for tribal youth migrating from rural areas, this transition unveils a contrasting tale.

There are two main reasons why tribal youth move to metro cities. One of the primary reasons for migration to metro cities is access to quality education and a wide array of job opportunities. Educational institutions in these cities offer specialized courses, advanced infrastructure, and exposure to global trends. For tribal youth, often deprived of such facilities in their hometowns, moving to metros becomes a logical step towards securing a better future.

Universities in metropolitan cities offer high-quality education and cultivate an environment of innovation and teamwork, equipping students to thrive in competitive job markets. For many tribal youth, education represents an opportunity to escape from long-standing poverty and social limitations, contributing to their migration toward urban centres.

The second reason why tribal youth move to metro cities is the rampant unemployment in Chotanagpur. Young men and women who fail to get jobs for lack of competence and other reasons get discouraged and disappointed. They undergo so much family and peer group pressure. At times they feel that they are a burden to their family and do not find meaning in their life. Some who cannot

handle this pressure and cannot face criticism leave their family and move to big cities in search of work not knowing how their life will be in the city. Middlemen and agents use their fragility and helplessness and take them to big cities, hoping to provide some work. When they land in cities like Bombay, Chennai, Delhi and Goa... only a few get decent job after much struggle and most of them get trapped as bonded labourers. They work hard day and night but someone else enjoys their earnings. They are paid only a minimum amount for their survival. Some understand their responsibility for the family; save from the minimum wages they get and many squander the money without bothering about the future and family. Those who can save something support their family in whatever way possible.

While metro cities offer unparalleled opportunities, they also contribute significantly to the brain drain phenomenon, especially in tribal regions. Talented youth, after acquiring skills and knowledge in urban centers, often find little incentive to return to their communities of origin. This exodus of intellectual



Free Time in Loyola College, Chennai





capital deprives tribal areas of potential leaders, innovators, and change-makers, continuing a cycle of underdevelopment.

Integration into urban life poses numerous challenges for tribal youth. Cultural shock, language barriers, and discrimination are common hurdles they must navigate. The disparity in socio-economic status between them and their urban counterparts can lead to feelings of alienation and marginalization.

Moreover, despite their educational qualifications, tribal youth often face stiffer competition and limited job opportunities due to systemic biases and lack of networks. This situation highlights the need for targeted support systems and affirmative action policies to ensure their equitable participation in the urban workforce.

For many tribal youth, urban migration represents a delicate balance between seizing economic opportunities and preserving their cultural identity. The attraction of modernity and consumerism can overshadow traditional values and practices, leading to a gradual erosion of cultural heritage. Efforts to maintain a connection with their roots through community organizations, cultural events, and digital platforms become crucial in this context.

As metro cities continue to evolve as centres of economic and intellectual growth, addressing the challenges faced by tribal youths remain a matter of concern. Policies that promote inclusive growth, foster cultural diversity, and provide targeted support to marginalized communities

are essential. Moreover, initiatives aimed at bridging the rural-urban divide through skill development, infrastructure improvement, and sustainable livelihoods can mitigate the adverse effects of brain drain and ensure that tribal youth contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. The team of MAIN initiated by the South Asian Conference is doing a commendable job in some of the cities. While life in metro cities offers a plethora of opportunities, it is very important to create an environment where tribal youth can thrive without losing touch with their cultural heritage. By nurturing talent, fostering inclusivity, and promoting sustainable development, we can transform urban centers into vibrant hubs where diversity is celebrated, and every individual has the chance to fulfill their potential.

It is a serious question to ask why our brothers and sisters are denied a dignified, decent life in the cities. Why have we been subject to utmost injustice and social injustice? Is it because we did not take education seriously? Or is it because of the submissive character that others are dominating us? Is it because of the dirty politics? We tribals are known for our unity and communitarian life but where does this unity go when it comes to life in the cities? What are those factors that divide us? How long are we going to work under someone?

No doubt that we tribals are very hard-working. We need to use this characteristic of tribals prudently and diligently. We need to ignore and shun all the external forces that divide us. Let us be united and fight for our rights in whatever way possible which will ensure us a happy and dignified life.



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## Migrant Ministry in Chennai Province

**Fr. Anuj Kumar Minj, SJ**

• Bagaicha, Namkum, Ranchi



**T**he Jesuit Migrants Service (JMS) was started in the year 2014 by Fr. Sebastian Crossian, SJ, of Madurai Province then (Now it is part of Chennai Province). The main purpose behind

initiating this ministry was to address the challenges and difficulties faced by the migrants when they land in an alien land. There are different factors, which lead them to migrate from one state to another. One of the main factors is that these migrants want to improve their lifestyle. These workers are engaged in different sectors such as construction, textiles, manufacturing, etc. These workers are unorganised. This is the reason JMS has become a beacon of hope for them through different services: education, awareness, legal support, health services, etc.

### Vision

The primary vision of JMS is “to accompany and toil towards a world in which each lives with identity, dignity and respect”.

### Mission

The mission of JMS is “to help migrant workers to have access to basic rights and legal knowledge”.

Jesuit migrants service is rendering its service in four districts of Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram and Chengalpet. The ministry is divided into two parts- inter-state (Tamil-speaking migrants) and intra-state (Hindi-speaking migrants). Jesuit Chennai province required a Jesuit from central provinces who can speak and understand Hindi well because migrants going to Tamil Nadu from other states are basically Hindi-speaking. These are source states: Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, UP, Assam and Chhattisgarh. Its target groups are migrant workers, Migrant women, Migrant children and homeless migrants. The ministry includes programmes for children (evening study centre), pastoral care (every second and third Sunday Holy Eucharist apart from festivals), rescue of migrants in distress situation and medical accompaniment.

When migrants land in an alien land, they face many difficulties and challenges. The biggest challenge they face is language apart from many other challenges. Due to this, they go through the difficulty of communication in their workplaces. It further leads them to unseen problems. Since they are not able to understand the language of the workplace, they come in contact with contractors. The network of contractors is not very easy for them to understand. Most of the time contractors







take advantage of this situation and exploit them: there is no proper agreement with the company, in other words, we say that there is no written agreement where migrants easily become prey to exploitation. Wage theft and unjust wages are common problems faced by migrants. Since the migrants don't know the language, they can't directly communicate with the owner and the role of contractors comes into the scene.

After seeing the pathetic condition, JMS was established to assist migrants in their distressed situation so that they can live a dignified life to a certain extent in an unknown place. JMS tries to reach out to all migrants and attends to their needs without any discrimination based on caste, religion, language or culture. Now JMS is working in collaboration with MAIN (Migrant Assistance and Information and Network) whose main purpose is to accompany distressed migrants. Its network is all over India. Here we work at two levels: source and destination states. This facilitates all those who are working for the migrants to share information for quick response in distress situations. This networking has enabled us to assist migrants in their needs. The members of JMS avail themselves at any time. Our daily visit to their living places helps them to know that JMS is working for them. It has two field coordinators who are always in touch with the migrants.

### **My Personal Experience of Working among Migrants:**

In today's context migration has become a common phenomenon, not only in India but also across the world. After having spent almost one year in JMS, I feel that migration can't be stopped but what we can do is to ensure safe and dignified migration. It was a privilege for me to work among and for migrants in collaboration with Jesuit



Chennai Province. Since Tamil Nadu is a fast-developing state, it has become a destination state for migrants. Every day thousands and thousands of migrants are landing in Tamil Nadu in search of better livelihood. I have closely witnessed the problems and difficulties faced by migrants. When they come face to face with these difficulties, they don't know how to deal with the situation. My primary duty was to go and visit migrants every day and tell them about JMS and its work. Apart from field visits, I also accompanied them in their medical needs. Due to the language barrier, they find it difficult to go to the hospital where the team of JMS plays a vital role.

There were several distress calls: death interventions, demand for compensation, wage theft, etc. In many cases, JMS intervened and facilitated migrants to get their rights. I could feel one with the people since they are our tribal people. Now I can firmly say that JMS can achieve its purpose and goal. During my stay in Chennai, I went through two difficulties: language and weather conditions. There were many occasions when I wanted to help people, but due to language constraints, I had to depend on others. This ministry requires continuous travel facing humid weather. This weather condition exhausted me completely. Apart from these two difficulties, I had a pleasant experience working for the migrants. It gave me a lot of inner joy and satisfaction when I accompanied distressed migrants in their needs. Finally, I would like to thank Chennai Province for giving me an opportunity to work for the migrants. JMS is indeed rendering a wonderful service to the people. In the words of St. Ignatius, JMS is able to see the face of God among marginalised and downtrodden who need support in search of a better livelihood.



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## Migrant Ministry in Kerala Province

Sch. Anup Tirkey, SJ & Sch. Rohit R. Kujur, SJ

• Jeevika Migrant Outreach Services, Calicut, Kerala

### INTRODUCTION



Jeevika Migrant Outreach Services, known as (MOS) – was started as a unit of SRC

(Socio-Religious Centre.), Christ Hall, Malaparmba at Kozhikode district of Kerala in the year 2015 with the collaboration of

Society of Jesus Kerala Province and SCN Sisters of Bangalore Province. Ranchi and Jamshedpur Jesuit province also joined in 2022 to collaborate with the Kerala province. The migrant workers in Kerala are also known as guest workers. They play an important and crucial role in the development and economic growth of the state. Kerala, cannot function well if the migrants leave the state and go back to their respective places. According to the study on migrant workers, the population of migrant workers in Kerala was 25,00,000 with an annual arrival rate of 3.40 lakhs per year. In the year 2016 it is estimated that there are over 40,00,000 migrant workers in Kerala who come from West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand, Utter Pradesh, and other north states and other parts of India. They involve themselves in any nature of works to lead their livelihood. They get wages between Rs. 350 – 750. If it is a skilled work, they

get Rs. 650 – 12,00. But some middlemen and contractors cheat them and give less wages. They stay in shades, old houses, and unfinished houses. Ten to fifteen people share one room. They share mostly a single toilet and have open bath. They eat

and wash in the same room. Contractors and owners have their share as commission from these migrants. Very often, they are falsely accused and beaten up.

The vision, Mission and Objectives of MOS :-

#### Vision

Social integration of Migrant workers in Kozhikode and other parts of Kerala.

#### Mission

Socio Educational and Cultural development of Migrant workers in Kozhikode and Kerala, through:

Creating a welcoming, safe, wholesome and growth promoting environment for migrant workers in Kozhikode to work and earn livelihood.

Awakening the conscience of Kerala Society with regard to the plight of Migrant workers.







### Objectives

1. Rehabilitation of migrant workers who need support in medical college and mental health hospital.
2. Creating an identity for migrant workers in Kozhikode district and in Kerala by making labour cards.
3. Create good relationship between migrant workers and local people in Kerala.
4. Creating a data bank of Migrant workers in Kozhikode and other parts of Kerala.
5. Improving healthy living and working conditions through health and other social awareness classes.
6. Undertaking awareness classes in different forums for the positive behavioral changes of the locals towards the migrant workers.

### Types of Works involved

The migrants have been involved in a wide range of sectors and industries, performing various kinds of works. Some of the common types of work that migrant workers engage in Kerala include: -

1. **Construction :** Most of migrant workers are often employed in the construction sector, working on building sites, road construction projects, and infrastructure development.

They also perform tasks such as masonry, carpentry, plumbing, electrical and painting. The nature of such work is hard and risky but equally fairly paid. Sometimes they are cheated by the contractors who pay them low wages and during accidents and deaths no compensation are availed.

2. **Services and Hospitality :** This nature of works involve 13% of all works in Kerala. This is the second favourable job for the migrants. They are employed in the service sector, working in hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and other services-oriented businesses. They also engage themselves as cleaners, cooks, waiters, drivers, security guards and care takers.
3. **Manufacturing :** The 12% of migrant workers are engaged in the manufacturing sector in Kerala. They are working in industries such as textiles, garments, food processing, and small – scale manufacturing units. They are involved in production, packaging, quality control, and other manufacturing processes. Some migrants are also involved in the fishery.
4. **Domestic works :** The graph of female migrant workers is more in this system of work. There are 10% of migrant workers working in this field. They work as domestic helpers in households, taking care of cleaning, cooking,



child care, and other house hold works. They play a crucial role in supporting families and maintaining households. Some of the girls are working in Convents and religious houses in Kerala.

5. **Agriculture and trade :** Migrant workers are also found working in the agricultural sector. They are particularly involved in plantations, farms, and agricultural fields. They do the tasks as planting, harvesting, weeding, and other agricultural activities. There are 3% of migrant involved in this agricultural works. Only 2% of migrants are involved in trade and business. They are found working in retail shops, markets, small businesses, and service-oriented establishments. They play such role as vendors, salespersons, drivers, security guards, and in other service-related works.

### Challenges and difficulties

Migrant workers in Kerala face a series of challenges that impact their well – being, safety, and overall quality of life. Their living condition is worse than human living conditions. Some of the significant challenges faced by migrant workers are as follow: -

1. **Exploitation and working conditions:**

The migrant workers leave their family behind and come to Kerala hoping that they will get better pay and life style. But they are vulnerable to exploitation by the employers who pay them low wages and inappropriate working conditions. Employers and contractors also subject them to work for long working hours and pay them nothing in return. These exploitations sometimes lead migrants financially insecure, mentally and physically sick. If accidentally they die, then it is difficult to send the body to their home. The MOS (Migrant Outreach Services) team tries to negotiate with both the employers and government and send dead body to their destined state.

2. **Social discrimination :** Migrant workers in Kerala are called – Bengali, which means,

the labours who are uneducated, uncivilized, and uncultured. Local contractors and people treat them as paid servants and slaves without having any respect as if they are not equal as human beings. Migrant workers are also viewed as outsiders and are often suspected as thieves and Maoists or Naxalite. These discriminations lead migrants to depression and alienation to their Indian identity.

3. **Lack of Legal protection :** The legal issues have become the great challenge for migrant workers in Kerala. They often lack legal protections and face challenges in accessing justice and support when their rights are violated. Very often they have been falsely accused of theft, robbery, drugs suppliers, Naxalites, and other suspects. The migrant workers are simple and are not aware of their legal rights and face the barriers in seeking legal supports.

4. **Housing, living, and health conditions :** The conditions of housing, living, and health have become the main concerns for the migrant's stay in Kerala. They live in the overcrowded and dirty surroundings. They also stay in the broken and unfinished houses and rooms that invite the danger of collapsing and viral diseases. A single and broken small room contains 10 to 15 people. They combinedly cook, sleep and do other necessary activities in the same room. They share a single uncleaned and broken toilet. All these pathetic conditions make their life miserable to stay and work.

5. **Separation from family and language barriers :** The migrants leave their family and stay in faraway places. They feel lonely in new culture, people, atmosphere and language. The language problems become big issue for them. They can't communicate properly and are cheated by the contractors and employers. Sometimes they don't even get their wages. All these issues make them emotionally and psychologically ill.

The MOS (Migrants Outreach Services) team





tries to research and identify the challenges and difficulties and help them accordingly. Team visits the migrant workers' living and working places regularly and takes the inspections of all situations. If the migrant workers are found exploited and discriminated, team takes the immediate actions and does the needful and legal procedures. MOS Team organises the health and legal awareness program to help the distressed migrant workers to be aware with their rights.

### Conclusion

Today, migration issue has become the global subject for universal discussion. People have been migrating from one country to other. Migration carries several reasons such as political, economic, geographical and different other reasons. People

look for better future and life style through working outside as migrant workers. In India, the tribals have become the vulnerable migrant workers in different states of country. They move to metropolitan cities to work as labourers and helpers to get some money to support their family. They become easy victims for *Dalals* and employers. The owners consider them stupid and take advantage of their simplicity. According to the MOS report, it's the tribal migrant workers who have been more exploited and suppressed. The death cases of tribals have increased in recent days. It is to reflect today that owners of '*JAL JANGAL JAMEEN*' are bound to work as migrant workers. Who is responsible...? May be I? You? Education or economic conditions, government policies and projects or our ideologies? It continues...!





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## Deepening Eco-Spirituality is the Need of Time

**Fr. Prabhat Kennedy Soreng**

• St. Xavier's College, Ranchi



**E**cological principle tells us that all created things are interconnected. Human beings depend on other biotic and abiotic factors and their activities affect directly or indirectly to all other creatures. From the spiritual

point of view we can assume that this principle is none other than God labouring and actively present in all created things for human salvation. We human beings can attain salvation only through harmonious living with other created things. We Jesuits strive to find God in all things.

Ecospirituality is an integral part of Jesuit spirituality. Ecological crisis is the effect of harmful relationship of human beings with creation. Ecological problems have emerged due to human ignorance or selfishness (knowing that some activities will cause problem yet they have been done).

One of the greatest threats to human existence on this earth is the adverse effect of pollution. Life on this earth is very much depended on optimum environment. Living organism can adapt themselves to the changing environment if the environmental change is slow but if the climate change is too fast then many living creatures become extinct. In recent time we have heard from scientists, environmentalist and Educationists that pollution of air, water, land and food is increasing with an alarming rate. Now there are so many NGO's, private groups, organizations who are working and networking to reverse the trend of pollution. Some of the countries and governments are making policies and agreements to use alternative sources of energy, organic farming, banning on use of plastic, closing the factories which produces pollutants, preservation of forest areas etc. Now a days most people know what is pollution and its bad effects but only a few people have the courage to combat the issues.



*Tree Plantation by Fr. Nabor Lakra, SJ, Principal St. Xavier's College, Ranchi*





*Tree Plantation at St. Mary's Samtoli, Simdega*



*Tree Plantation at St. Ignatius High School, Gumla*



One of the good things about human beings is that they have the ability and knowledge to restore our mother earth which we have damaged but the negative point is many people do not work for the restoration of mother earth they are guided by self-centered motive. People need good environment to live but only few people work for it. If anyone works for ecology, he works not only for oneself but for all human beings.

The Society of Jesus, for the first time in 1995, during the 34th General Congregation, officially recognized the world's growing ecological and environmental problems and their impact on the poor, the vulnerable, and nature. Jesuits have worked for social justice for years but work for the social and environmental justice seems to be a new dimension in Jesuit's apostolate. We Jesuits have four UAPs, care of our common home is one of them and it should be an integral part of our life mission,

we cannot separate ecology as one of the apostolate.

In Ranchi Province, work for ecological justice was the part of social justice. Now we have a separate ecological commission and ecojesuits networking and province has made action plan to implement UAP 4 where each institution, community and individual has some responsibility but in our province we need to reimagine and restructure ecology work so that care for our common home becomes an integral part of each Jesuit and institution. It should not be optional but essential part of our Jesuit life mission. The challenges to this apostolate are external as well as internal, therefore we really need to reimagine and restructure ecology in our province. Some of the tribal Jesuits claim that their life is eco-friendly; they live very close to the nature so they do not need to plant trees but this idea is wrong they are the main victim of environmental injustice.





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## Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission : Spiritual Perspective

Fr. Ignatius Tete, SJ

• Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum



The title of the article consists of three basic concepts: life-mission, reimagining and restructuring. These concepts couched in new terminology have emerged in recent GCs, more especially in GC 35 and

GC 36 in the context of a renewed understanding of mission and of governance at the service of the mission. Though the concepts look new, the reality contained therein is as old as the foundational graces of St. Ignatius and his first companions. This article will first deal with their meaning and significance and present a Venice model for reimagining and restructuring our life-mission. Thereafter it will touch upon some concrete steps taken by the Society of Jesus for realizing the

process of reimagining and restructuring our life-mission. Finally, it will conclude with a friendly recommendation for the Province.

**Meaning and significance :** The above mentioned three concepts are interrelated. Our life-mission calls for reimagining because of the dynamism of the Eternal King's call and the demands of our changing times. Reimagining in turn results in reordering of structures, be they be internal or external, be they be at micro or macro level. Being rich in meaning they enlighten, inspire and challenge us to live out our Jesuit charism and spirituality in a more relevant and effective way in our modern world.

**Life-mission :** In his letter of 10th July, 2017, entitled "Our life is mission and our mission is life", addressed to the whole Society, Fr. General,



*Breaking the Word of God in Dumka Province*





Arturo Sosa establishes an intrinsic relationship between our life that we live and our mission that we carry out. Basing himself on the findings and insights of GCs 35 and 36 he elucidates both the premises. As regards the first premise – our life is mission - he alludes to GC 35, d.3, no. 41 and points out the necessity of personal, community and institutional conversion highlighting their respective constitutive elements. Concerning the second premise – our mission is life – he draws our attention to the threefold reconciliation articulated by GCs 35 and 36 as the mission of the Society: reconciliation with God, reconciliation with human beings and reconciliation with creation. In order to seek and find the best possible way to the reconciling action of the Lord he proposes to turn our eyes to Christ crucified in those who are crucified today with our way of proceeding marked by spiritual depth and intellectual depth. Further he endorses the recommendations of GC 36 for collaboration at all levels in *Missio Dei* and Christ's mission resulting in networking and discerned planning. Finally, he hits the nail on the head by pointing out that 'our life as mission and mission as our life' find their ultimate meaning in our desired grace of being placed with the Son. Thus conceptually the two premises merged into a compound word: our life-mission. It is used four times in the letter.

**Restructuring :** The two concepts of reimagining and restructuring are associated with governance and mission in the recent GCs. The decree 5 of GC 35 entitled 'Governance at the service of Universal Mission' establishes three principles to guide the structures of governance in the Society of Jesus: 1. Governance structures and ways of proceeding should flow from a perspective of universality 2. Structures of governance should be streamlined, modernized and made more flexible 3. Changing circumstances require a better articulation of Ignatian values and our ways of proceeding. Taking into consideration these three perspectives, GC 35 proposes directives for General governance, Province governance and local governance.

**Re-imagining :** While the concept of restructuring



is implied throughout the decree of GC 35 on governance the term 'Reimagining' features only in the decree of GC36 on governance entitled, 'Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission' and that also in its concluding section. At first GC36 in the said decree enunciates three perspectives – discernment, collaboration and networking - for our contemporary way of proceeding. Thereafter it reviews the steps taken since GC 35 appreciating as well as further clarifying them. Then it makes further recommendations based on the recommendations of GC 35 for Fr. General and central governance, for Conferences of Major Superiors, for Provincial and Regional governance and for local governance. In conclusion it stresses on re-imagining and seeking the greater and more universal good stating, "In seeking to progress in following the Lord, the Society must constantly re-imagine and discern how our governance structures can better serve the mission entrusted to us." (GC36, d.2, no. 28).

The Principle and Foundation (SE 23), the matrix: Though GCs 35 and 36 heavily stress on the role and structure of governance at all levels in dealing with 'reimagining and restructuring our life-mission', they do call for constant personal, community and institutional conversion. The two sets of perspectives respectively stipulated by the two GCs are to be integrated by every individual Jesuit at the personal, community and institutional levels and the governance is to animate this process at all levels.



Every Jesuit is called to integrate and to live out his life-mission enlightened by the Principle and Foundation which is the fruit of the enlightenment of St. Ignatius at the River Cardoner. The Principle and foundation with its five elements is to permeate every sphere and activity of one's life. One is to keep constantly in mind the twofold purpose of life – God's glory and one's salvation as well as the purpose of creation as a means for the purpose of life. Salvation is termed by GC 32 as integral liberation. With this twofold purpose one is enabled to do everything purposefully. However, this requires a proper disposition of interior freedom known as Ignatian indifference. Endowed with this grace of interior freedom one can venture for Magis – for God's greater glory and for one's greater liberation and perfection. When it is applied at the personal level it becomes one's life as a mission, at the community level it is community life as a mission and when it is carried out at the institutional level it becomes our mission as life. One mission flows into the other mission and requires constant discernment, collaboration and networking assisted by the governance. In other words, this life-mission at three levels needs constant re-imagining and restructuring of one's inner self, aligning it with God's design and his action (Missio Dei) in the context of the demands of changing times.

**Venice model :** St. Ignatius' initial conversion through his discernment at Loyola turns into a radical one in Manresa with his total turning to

God's mercy from his self-centeredness and attains it climax when his mind is enlightened at Cardoner (AB 30). There he is transformed into a new person. With this mission of self-transformation achieved, he turns to helping souls in Manresa. He makes his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and desires to stay there out of devotion and in view of helping souls. When his desire is denied by the Franciscan Provincial, he decides to study in order to help souls and begins his study life in the universities of Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca and Paris where he meets oppositions to his mission of helping souls. In face of adverse situations Ignatius undergoes a process of reimagining and restructuring of his life in Loyola, Manresa, Jerusalem, Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca and Paris with his trust in the Lord. In Paris he gathers companions who transformed by the Spiritual Exercises, share his vision of helping souls and decide to go to Jerusalem after the completion of their studies. They gather in Venice preparing themselves to go to Jerusalem (AB 93-95). From his Paris days onwards Ignatius, the pilgrim is not alone. His personal life-mission has assumed the life-mission of Friends in the Lord. To their frustration, ships do not sail to Jerusalem that year for the first time after forty-two years. They wait the year in discernment as per their Montmartre vows. GC 36 describes their life-mission in Venice as a model for us pointing out their discernment of the Lord's call, their lives as Friends in the Lord, their closeness to the poor and their preaching the Gospel with joy. It further observes that for the First Companions, life and mission, rooted in a discerning community were profoundly inter-related as they were all afire with the love of Christ (GC 36, d. 1, nos. 4-5).

Fr. General in his letter referred to above, also observes the unity of life and mission of the first companions during their stay in Venice. He further tells that each one of them experienced a radical conversion in their lives. He highlights certain fundamental characteristics of the change in their life such as love of Jesus, evangelical poverty, closeness to the poor, availability to be sent on mission and being together in a community



*Guided Meditation at Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum, Ranchi*





of discernment. He finally adds that these characteristics pave the way for founding of the Society of Jesus.

When they fail to go to Jerusalem they surrender themselves to Pope Paul III to be sent by him anywhere in the world. When the Pope starts sending some of them, they realize that they will be separated from one another whom God has brought together. So they engage themselves for a significant discernment on their being bound together by obeying one of them. This discernment is known as the Deliberation of the First Fathers. Ignatius is authorized to prepare a blue print for their company to be submitted to the Pope who on reading it exclaimed, "God's Finger is here". However, it took one year since then for the Society to be approved on 27th September 1540. St. Ignatius declares that the Society of Jesus was not instituted by humans means but by God Himself [812]. From his Loyola days he is led by God as a pilgrim and from the Paris days the First Friends allow themselves to be led by God facing adverse situations. Thus, they undergo a long process of reimagining and restructuring their life-mission resulting in the founding of the Society of Jesus.

Steps taken by the Society towards reimagining and restructuring: After the clarion call of the second Vatican Council for renewal of the life and mission of the Church and of the Religious Institutes, the post-conciliar GCs beginning from GC 31 have ventured into reimagining and restructuring our Jesuit life and mission. They have been faithful to the guidelines of *Perfectae Caritatis* by returning to the sources of the Church life and the primitive inspirations of the Religious Institute and adaptation of the laws to the changed circumstances of our times (Vat. II, PC n. 2).

GC 31 which was held towards the end of the Vatican Council tactfully initiated the process of renewal in its 48 documents bringing about pertinent changes in the Collections of Decrees. Later GC 32 defined our Jesuit identity and mission in a new way. A Jesuit is defined as 'a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius

was' (GC32, d. 2, n.1). Our mission is stated as 'the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes' (GC32, d. 2, n.2). GC 34 describes Jesuits as 'Servants of Christ's mission' (GC34, d.2) confirming the previous definition of Jesuit identity (GC34, d. 26, n.1:4). It further clarifies the dimension of Justice by adding 'evangelization of cultures and dialogue with other Religions' demonstrating the interconnectivity of the four dimensions of our mission (GC34, d. 2, n.19). A unique example of reimagining and restructuring has been the revision of the Constitutions by GC 34. It kept the text unchanged but clarified, modified and abrogated certain passages. Having abrogated the Collection of Decrees it prepared a set of Complementary Norms making it an integral part of the Constitutions. GC35 depicts the Society as 'A fire that kindles other fires' and the mission as Reconciliation with God (GC 35, d. 3, nos. 19-24), Reconciliation with one another (GC 35, d. 3, nos. 25-30), and Reconciliation with creation (GC 35, d. 3, nos. 31-36). GC 36 in its turn describes Jesuits as 'Companions in a mission of Reconciliation and justice' and endorses the mission defined by GC35 in terms of three calls of Christ the Reconciler: 1st call – Reconciliation with God (GC36, d. 1, nos. 22-24), 2nd call – Reconciliation within humanity (GC 35, d. 3, nos. 25-28) and 3rd call – Reconciliation with creation (GC 35, d. 3, nos. 29-30). Both the GCs devote one decree each on the reimagining and restructuring the governance in service of mission with recommendations for all the levels of governance. Thus the post-conciliar GCs have kept up the process of reimagining and restructuring our life-mission.

**Catchwords of Fathers General :** The significant catchwords of Fathers General too are examples of the same process. With the catchword of 'Agents of Social Change' and 'Men for others and with others', Fr. Pedro Arrupe enthused the Jesuits to make justice an integral part of faith that does justice. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach calmed the rising storm in the Church against Jesuits with his embalming catchword of 'Creative fidelity to mission'. Fr. Adolfo Nicholas challenged the 'Problem Jesuits', 'Good



Jesuits' and 'Excellent Jesuits' with his stress on 'spiritual depth' and 'intellectual depth'. Fr. Arturo Sosa on his part is enlightening and inspiring the Society of Jesus with his magic phrase of 'life-mission' to be enhanced by personal, community and institutional conversion, discernment and planning.

**Conclusion :** Reimagining and restructuring are concrete expressions of Magis which in turn is the fruit of inner freedom engendered and nurtured by radical and continual conversion, first at the personal level then followed by community and institutional levels. The Spiritual Exercises, a 'spiritual weapon' [408] and 'a gift of the Holy Spirit to the entire Church' (The address of Pope Benedict XVI to GC 36, n.9) are a powerful means for our radical conversion and transformation. GC 36 in its decree 1, n. 18 raises a question as to why the Exercises do not change us as deeply as we would hope. It further asks as to what elements in our lives, works, or lifestyles hinder our ability to let God's gracious mercy transform us. Then it firmly states that the Congregation is deeply convinced that God is calling the entire Society

to a profound spiritual renewal. It concludes the paragraph with a wise counsel saying that we need to appropriate ever more faithfully the gift of the Exercises that we share with so many, especially the Ignatian family and the Constitutions that animate our Society. It further adds that in a world losing its sense of God, we should seek to be more deeply united with Christ in the mysteries of his life. Finally, affirming the efficacy of the Exercises it declares that through the Exercises, we acquire the style of Jesus, his feelings, his choices.

If we follow this counsel of GC 36 by appropriating the Spiritual Exercises and by relishing the Constitutions and our rich Jesuit sources, we shall be urged constantly to reimagine and restructure our life-mission by community discernment and planning. Consequently, UAPs and DSS, the fruits of rigorous and participative discernment carried out in the entire Society, will prove to be useful and effective tools for enhancing the process of reimagining and restructuring our life-mission animated by the governance more especially by the renewed local governance.



*Discerning Leadership Programme at Manresa House, Ranchi (11 December 2023)*



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# Strengths, Challenges and Recommendations : Jesuit Formation Today

**Fr. Deepak Toppo, SJ**

• *Sadbhavna, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, Ranchi*



This article is based on two presentations given during the Ranchi Province Days 2024. The first presentation, "The Status of the Province," was delivered by Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, Provincial Superior. The

second presentation, "Evaluation of Life-Mission from a Formation Point of View," was given by Fr. Ashok Roshan Sandil, the then Province Coordinator for Formation.

## I. Introduction

Jesuit formation is a profound and transformative journey designed to equip individuals for dedicated service to God and His people. It is not merely a training program but a spiritual odyssey. The Church describes formation as sharing in the Father's work, through the Spirit, shaping the inner attitudes of the Son in young men and women (Vita Consecrata 66). Jesuit formation involves internalizing the sentiments of Jesus and the Jesuit charism, with particular consideration of the unique economic, social, cultural, and political contexts of the place. This article explores the

vision and mission of Jesuit formation in Ranchi Province, examines both external and internal influences, assesses the community's strengths and weaknesses, and offers recommendations for young Scholastics and Brothers in formation.

## II. Vision and Mission Statement of the Formation

The vision is to prepare men for God's mission by forming them to be academically competent, spiritually sound, affectively mature, and apostolically committed through active accompaniment at various stages of formation.

The mission is to offer holistic and integral formation according to the Ignatian vision and charism, encompassing spiritual, intellectual, psychological, human, social, cultural, pastoral, and other ministries to work for God's Kingdom as compassionate, committed, and competent Jesuits.

## III. The Outer Context of the Formation

### Economic Factors

Jharkhand has a stark divide between extreme wealth and deep poverty. Many live in substandard conditions, struggling for basic necessities.





Migration and displacement are widespread, with many becoming landless and jobless, seeking better opportunities but often ending up as refugees in their state. The Indigenous and rural communities face alienation and displacement due to resource exploitation, disrupting their traditional lifestyles and pushing them further into economic hardship.

### **Socio-political Factors**

Jharkhand's political landscape is marked by a divide between the ruling elite and marginalized masses, intensified by authoritarian regimes, corruption, and criminalization. Issues of casteism, ethnicity, and religion perpetuate division and instability. Socially, stark inequalities and resource competition lead to inter-group conflicts, weakening harmony. Marginalized groups especially Tribals face persistent discrimination and social exclusion, while civil society struggles against policies that harm education, employment, and livelihood opportunities.

## **IV. The Internal Context of the Formation**

### **Personal Life of Jesuits**

There is a decline in spiritual depth within the Province, with a shift towards shallow spirituality and superficial religiosity. Greed for power and higher positions undermines cooperation and collective mission. Consumerism, favouritism, and discriminatory norms fragment the community. Blaming and judgmental attitudes prevail, overshadowing the sense of 'union of hearts and

minds' for God's mission. Ego-centric behaviours hinder dialogue and shared responsibility.

### **Community Life**

Community life suffers from a lack of collaboration and mutual trust. Meetings often lead to little action, and decision-making is weak. Fear of speaking up for the marginalized and selfish behaviours are becoming more common. Issues like favouritism and excessive drinking are creeping into communities. Strengthening community life requires frequent Spiritual Conversation, active listening, taking action, and treating everyone with respect.

### **Institutional Life**

Institutions face a temptation to chase prestige and recognition, often at the expense of core Jesuit values. Some city institutions indulge in unnecessary luxuries and display wealth, while rural institutions struggle for support. There's a worrying trend of prioritizing flashy displays over substantive values, leading to conflicts and reluctance to share power and resources. Refocusing on values and ensuring inclusivity and support is essential.

## **V. Strengths of the Ranchi Jesuits**

### **Spiritual Vibrancy**

The Ranchi Jesuit Province is renowned for its spiritual vibrancy. A robust prayer life keeps the members alive and active, while community exercises such as community mass, community prayers, community celebrations, and common activities foster a strong sense of unity and purpose. This spiritual foundation is crucial for maintaining the vitality and cohesion of the community and province.

### **Dedicated and Competent Members**

Province is blessed with members who are simple, sincere, and hardworking. They demonstrate a remarkable commitment to their assigned ministries, showcasing competence and focus in their respective fields. Despite some members being overburdened with multiple responsibilities,





their dedication to their work is unwavering and commendable.

### **Collaborative Efforts**

Collaboration is a cornerstone of the Province. It continues to work in 22 parishes under different dioceses, actively collaborating with women Religious Congregations in education and pastoral fields. With concrete written agreements and joint initiatives, such as the appointment of Religious Sisters and lay staff as Principals of English medium schools, Province strengthens its partnerships, enhancing the impact of its ministries.

### **Expanding Horizons**

Ranchi Jesuits are not only maintaining its existing missions but also exploring new opportunities. Invitations from the Bishops of Dibrugarh and Bongaigaon to open new mission centres in Assam and the successful establishment of a school in Diglipur, Andamans demonstrate the proactive approach of the Province in expanding its horizons and reaching out to new communities.

## **VI. Recommendations for Scholastics and Brothers in Formation**

### **Assessment and Accompaniment**

For the effective formation of young scholastics and brothers, it is essential to implement a system of close assessment and accompaniment before allowing them to progress to subsequent stages. Scholastics should undergo thorough annual evaluations to ensure they are fully prepared for the challenges ahead. This rigorous assessment process should be particularly emphasized at the Regency level, where comprehensive accompaniment can provide invaluable guidance and support. By carefully evaluating Scholastics before they advance to Philosophy and Theology, we can ensure they possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and personal development to thrive in their continued formation and future ministry.

### **Personal Growth and Support**

Formators play a crucial role in assisting Scholastics in reconciling their personal issues and

providing the necessary support for both internal and external growth. By addressing and helping them overcome personal challenges, formators ensure that Scholastics develop holistically, fostering resilience and emotional maturity. This comprehensive support system is vital for their overall well-being and effectiveness in their ministries later.

### **Spiritual Guidance**

Assigning Spiritual Fathers to Scholastics and Brothers, especially during the Regency phase, is essential for their spiritual development and guidance. These mentors can provide personalized support and insights, helping Scholastics navigate their spiritual journeys. Additionally, organizing spiritual courses, seminars, and retreats will further enrich their spiritual lives, offering opportunities for deeper reflection, growth, and connection with the core values of their Jesuit call.

### **Promotion of Learning and Development**

Encouraging a passion for reading and the pursuit of additional knowledge is essential for the continuous growth of Scholastics. Emphasizing the importance of ongoing formation beyond priesthood or final vows ensures that learning is seen as a lifelong journey. Additionally, aligning their formation with the diverse ministries of the Society will prepare Scholastics to effectively serve in their chosen fields, fostering a well-rounded and dynamic approach to their vocation.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Jesuit formation is a profound and transformative journey that prepares individuals to serve God and His people with great dedication. In the Ranchi Province, the formation is deeply influenced by the region's unique economic, social, cultural, and political contexts. By addressing both the external and internal challenges, and leveraging the strengths of the community, Ranchi Province is committed to continue to nurture compassionate, committed, and competent Jesuits who are well-equipped to serve God's mission in diverse and dynamic ways in various parts of the world.

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## Equipping Oneself with Spiritual Depths : Pastoral Perspective

**Fr. Ignatius Minj, SJ**

• Parish Priest, Rengarih



I am writing this article in the tensed atmosphere when the citizens of India are eagerly waiting for June 4, 2024, the day when the result of the Election for the Members of Parliament is going to be declared by the

ECI. It is understood that the result of the present election is going to affect the country greatly.

There is a feeling of a threat to the Constitution of India. There is a fear that autocratic governance of the government is going to concentrate the entire power and authority in one hand leading to the fall of the values of democracy. The democratic and constitutional statutory bodies seem to be losing their grip over one's authority and giving in to the powerful. It is apprehended thereby that the beauty of the concept and also existence of the 'unity in diversity' of our beloved country will be defaced. The economic, social, political justice and freedom enshrined in the constitution of India is not going to be achieved. The wealth of the country with only a few people will reign supreme and will not hesitate to undermine and crush the marginalized section of people.

Youth is jobless. Small businessmen are hopeless. Sick and small industries are orphans. National and multinational companies either are not established or shrink the opportunity of the employment. Positive communal harmony is at stake. The issue of Regionalism is challenged to be volcanic.

Jharkhand is going to be affected so also the lives of the people. The incoming of the people from other states has reduced the Jharkhandis proper into minority. Jharkhandis have no hold over towns and cities of the states. They are totally

dependent on the 'Immigrant - Job - seekers' who have now become masters. In most of the towns and cities of the Jharkhand the real inhabitants are hardly seen and if they are there and are seen they are looked down as one of the categories of the people who are losers in every respect. People of the land feel defeated. The creation of a separate state Jharkhand has not fulfilled the dream of the Jharkhandis.

Jharkhand is rich in forests, flora and fauna, mines and minerals yet people are poor. They live close to the nature, in the jungle together with lives-stocks, household animals. They are agriculturists. They are not business men. They don't know how to do



Catholic Church, Rengarih, Simdega





hoardings. They are simple, honest, and sociable having the sense of sharing. The Adivasi group of people have no bend of mind for business at all while the other non-Adivasis Jharkhandis are even engaged in business apart from agriculture. Culturally people are struggling to maintain their tradition. Push and pull between 'balanced-progressive-vision' and fast changing technological usages are real threat to people's Identity.

Therein Jesuit Priests are inserted among the people. They are sent to establish the kingdom of God. It is a privilege to carry the message of Jesus to every nook and corner of the parish and every house and its inhabitants.

The challenges are enormous so was it with the time of Jesus in Jerusalem and in the regions where Roman rule forced them to look for Saviour/Messiah. Religious practices bore less fruits and had no transformative effects on the mass in general or showing even not an iota of the glimpse of the "kingdom of God". On the contrary the persons who had authority over scriptures and who were the rulers, leaders and teachers of the people were 'hypocrites'. They had no character. Poor and crafts men were sufferers and oppressed. Social discrimination and economic inequality had ill-effective and had made the people culturally defunct, mentally and physically sick.

Jesus found them 'a flock without a shepherd'. They were shepherd-less.

When we look at the micro-level the context of the parishes of the rural and town and cities and find two different settings in broad. They are affected not alike by the central and state government's policy and its work. In the cities and towns people are educated, either jobholders or jobless or even there are daily wages workers. When demands for contribution comes arising from their society for the fights of their rights and for a just cause, this group of people faithful would not risk to lose their comfort-zones, job and position. They tend to forget their social and cultural roots even dare to look at it negatively as hindrance to their social status. In fact such people have no identity of its own and drift 'to and fro' finally to end up with no face of its own. However, there is religious fervour. They seem to be hungry for the Word of God. They would like to attend healing sessions and Charismatic type prayers and attend Sunday Eucharist, receive other sacraments.

The rural-based faithful are blessed with immense resources, land, forests and jungles, water and are close to nature, simple and 'obeying'. In spite of the rich resources these people lack good food, good education and good health and good habitat etc., due to lack of money. They are well-knit socially and uphold cultural heritage. Religiously they are open and receptive. They are moved by the call of a genuine leader for a cause, particularly that which affects their lives and existence.

The challenges for the priests working in parishes are an opportunity to be with the people to administer the sacraments and preside over the Holy Eucharist for them. It is further by sharing the effect of Eucharist and lives of Jesus to them by being their companion, leader and teacher in the given context and time.

It is a challenge to equip oneself with maximum of spiritual depths for the clarity of mission, vision and commitment in view of the purpose for which one is 'sent' and commissioned.





The opportunity of daily Eucharist and personal prayers, meditation on Word of God, readings, reflection and sharing should not be missed. Time for seminars and workshops will help a Priest to be aligned with the context in which one is sent. Priest should be ever believing in God and hope for the zest of life and ready to reach out to the needy.

One can always feel being resourceful having found resources within available because no one is without resources. He requires to look around and look within to find resources that is God's gifts, intellect, materials, immaterial, natural, supernatural, moveable, immovable, people with resources and manpower. One requires budgeting of everything with plan to execute with a system to achieve the goal.

The vision of the parish is to establish God's kingdom wherein it is to see to that everyone is in peace, happy and living, loving and caring, thanking and praising God together with lovely and wonderful people of the beautiful world, for all natural and supernatural gifts.

To achieve this end demands participation of everyone, young and old, male and female, with a sense of belonging, commitment, knowledge, expertise, experience, sacrifice and remain believing in God's providence because He knows the best, the reasons, purpose for which He has created you and me and has assigned us to do His job and our performance pleases Him the most. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do," Ephesians 2:10



*Jesuit Residence, Rengarih*





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## Pastoral Apostolate : A Door to all other Apostolates

**Fr. Samir Dungdung, SJ**

• Parish Priest, Kanke



**P**astoral ministry in the Church functions as an inalienable apostolate for the salvation and well-being of humankind and it offers a foretaste of abundant life that Jesus gives (Jn 10:10).

More precisely the pastoral apostolate is important for the salvation of souls, for better families, for faith formation, for promoting vocations, for collaboration and networking, for inter faith dialogue and many similar works. In Jesuit language, pastoral apostolate can be seen as a concrete expression of *cura personalis*. In hindsight, one might consider gratefully how the Jesuit missionaries came to this part of the world in Chotanāgpur with this disposition. They toiled with great missionary zeal for the salvation of human beings. What began as a tiny community of 28 Mundas at Khuntpani grew into a humongous tree with its fruity branches spread across India today.

How do we reimagine and restructure ourselves for an effective pastoral apostolate suited for the rapidly changing times. I consider the following areas for reflections:

**1. Catechism and Related Activities :** Our largely unlettered ancestors in faith lived their Christian faith with depth and loyalty. Their faith was simple but praiseworthy. It was that faith which inspired them to live out their popular devotions and social activities. They had regular evening family prayer, Sunday Mass, rosary, Marian devotion, Sacred Heart Devotion, receiving Sacraments even while they understood almost nothing of Latin language in liturgy. However, they lived

and propagated the faith through popular devotions. One can dismiss the traditional popular devotions as those of the illiterate people but reality bites us with growing superficial faith in our communities. Even while there is a growing number of literates, a large number of families seem to discontinue the practice of family prayers and their social obligations. As a result, even educated children fail to recite the traditional prayers and to imbibe popular devotions and other activities. Traditionally, schools promoted catechism to children. However, fear grips about the government rules that prohibit religious education in schools. Reimagining requires us to provide regular catechism and other related activities to inculcate interest in them.

**2. Family Visits and Liturgy in Villages :** Village liturgies and family visits form inalienable part of pastoral ministry. Somewhere in the course of time, this has been neglected. In this way, there seems to be a disconnect between the shepherd and the sheep. Consequently, we have lost many families and community from our fold. They have gone to other faiths or denominations. Very often, we could listen to people saying-“these families were Christian earlier.” For this we need more personnel or pastors be free from other responsibilities.

**3. Need for Young, Creative and Energetic Pastors:** Pastoral apostolate also needs young and energetic Jesuits. In the recent years, it is seen that most of the pastors are quite advanced in age. It looks like pastoral apostolate is a post-retirement ministry. It looks unreasonable to expect vitality and creativity from those advanced in age and their



*Christ the King Church, Kanke, Ranchi*

movement restricted. Better thing could be to look for those interested in pastoral apostolate let them get trained in the field at the earliest as is done in other apostolates so that Parish ministry could also bear much fruits like other apostolates.

4. **Need for Updating :** It is true, pastoral apostolate might not look very well organized like the education apostolate. A pastor needs to be a multi-tasking person. In the process, he might find his primary task neglected. One is a teacher in the school, pastor and treasurer and farmer – all at one time. In such cases it is very difficult for him to take time out to update himself and get well acquainted with policies and procedures of the time. If the pastor sits to read, a sick call comes. He is not able to concentrate in reading and writing. Nevertheless, he needs it. He has to budget his time or else he is far from updating himself with regards to policies and procedures of the time.

5. **Prophetic Pastor :** Pastoral work finds its way amidst socio-political- economic and religious contexts with their goodness and ugliness. We cannot be saving souls when we the pastors do not play prophetic role like Jesus in encouraging goodness and denouncing evil. Some of our pastors may become mute spectators, deaf, dumb or blind to evil or even compromising with them. The complexity of the time challenges the pastor to become prophetic in all spheres of life in the parish. While it is challenging and demanding, the prophetic task of the pastor leaves both moral and social imprint on the faithful and people of other faiths as well. A pastor can take up prophetic role in animating the parishioners in social commitment, justice and politics. The pastor can also discipline his flock in prayer, culture and other social evils and consumerism of different kinds grandiosely offered and promoted by the market.





**6. Collaboration and Networking :** In the context of decreasing number of vocations and multiplication of works for the pastor collaboration and networking comes not as choice but as necessity. With the decreasing number of vocations, collaboration and networking have become not because the pastors are inefficient or ignorant but in the age of expertise and professionalism the pastor realizes that he does not possess expertise in all issues that concern the society. Hence, collaboration and networking are best methods for offering quality service to the needy. A pastor, then, needs to transcend himself to collaborate with the people of goodwill of all faiths.

**8. Improved Infrastructure in our Parishes:** Qualitative and effective service also require good infrastructure for governance, prayerfulness, professionalism and adequate means of communication. Parishes often lack such facilities. Many parishes lack sufficient facilities for counseling the parishioners and classes for teaching catechism.

**9. Synodal Church :** I think synodal church is the demand of the time. Pope Francis has rightly mandated the church in this area. He has involved all of us in the process and it has to be continued. I think that synodal way of proceeding gives us a good picture and sense of our early Christian community where they came together, prayed together and shared everything among them. This scene is quite

consoling. (Acts 2:42-47)

**10. Promote Inter Religious-Caste Dialogue:**

We live in a multi-religious-caste context. If we wish to have harmonious-healthy-living human communities, we need inter religious-caste dialogue. Although fear of allegations that such practices might attract the attention of our detractors that we do such things to convert people, dialogue is prerogative of the time. We need to look for opportunity and have dialogue with them like that of Jesus dialoguing with the Samaritan Woman. That dialogue brought her to know God (Jn. 4: 5-30). Today, people need to know real God. Today, there are so many religions before us and so many followers. However, it is sad to know that there are less people who really know God and listen to Him. Inter religious-dialogue can help people to know real God and listen to Him and lead their lives according to the teaching of Him. This will help us to create just- living human communities. In this way, we can save many souls.

It is good that the Society of Jesus has taken up pastoral apostolate too as one of its priorities. Let it be really a priority; Let it be considered as a door of all other apostolate; let it become the foundational experience that if this apostolate is good-our families and its children and faith is also good. We will also get good vocation for religious congregations. In this way, we will be marching towards creating a better human society. In this way, we can achieve our goal that is saving soul.



All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully.



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## Jesuit Vocation : A life of Radical Availability

**Fr. James P. Balmuchu, SJ**

• *Sadbhavna, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, Ranchi*



To most of you, this article, titled “Jesuit Vocation” may not seem interesting precisely because you have come across ample books and articles that have already given you the ideas and impressions of who Jesuits are and their aspirations to undergo a long years of Jesuit formation. However, each time we think and reflect upon one’s vocation it’s not only to see how we have been called rather it is to see how this same call is being shaped and framed with contemporary challenges and issues. This article, therefore, is an attempt to refresh our minds with the question ‘What is Jesuit Vocation’ and a renewal

of finding a new call for greater effectiveness.

When St. Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus, it happened against significant religious, cultural, and political changes like the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. During this particular time, Jesuits emphasized education, missionary work, and loyalty to the Pope, which played a crucial role in the response to the challenges of the era. All of these shaped the mission and activities of the Jesuits in terms of who they were and their vocation.

In today’s context, our contemporary challenges and issues help us define our vocation, which is a profound and lifelong commitment to serving God and humanity through the charism and mission



*Ranchi Collegians in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ranchi*





of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit Vocation also involves a journey of spiritual growth, intellectual development, and dedicated service. Jesuits are called to be “contemplatives in action,” combining deep spiritual lives with active engagement in the world to promote the community’s justice, education, social, spiritual, and economic needs.

The Jesuits continue to embody their commitment to service, justice, and faith by reimagining and restructuring their approaches to meet contemporary challenges. Through their dedicated efforts, they inspire hope and transformation, fostering a more just and equitable society. The Jesuit Vocation therefore is a blend of emphasis on education and intellectual pursuits, flexibility and mobility, apostolic availability, community and individual mission balance, global perspective and network, social justice focus and integration of faith and culture.

### **Historical Context**

It has been more than 150 years since the land of Chotanagpur had seen a new beginning through the first arrival of the Belgian missionaries. Ever since then, many young boys decided to be Jesuits just like those missionaries. This land of Chotanagpur is still producing many Jesuit Vocations but today we do not have missionaries instead what we have is their legacy and a changed world with new challenges. The present scenario is inviting us to be missionaries and show our dedication and commitment to wherever we are sent. Therefore, our Jesuit Vocation needs to be looked into with new ventures and mindsets.

### **The Need for Reimagining**

Our vocation, which we receive from divine assistance, is for God and from God. We need to reimagine the process so that we remain satisfied with our call. Today’s world is vastly different from the 16th century. Rapid technological advancements, global interconnectedness, and new social issues require a fresh approach. The traditional Jesuit model, while robust, needs to be reimagined to address.

Reimagining our Jesuit vocation does not necessarily mean that we have to bring some changes rather it is to make ourselves aware of our life mission and the factors, which influence it. It is always to refresh our commitment and dedication with a new atmosphere. Utilizing digital tools for education and evangelization, engaging with diverse religious traditions in a pluralistic world. Embracing environmental stewardship as a core mission, addressing global issues like migration, inequality, and health crises. These are some important issues, which will fortify our Jesuit Vocation and our existence in the current scenario.

### **Restructuring our Jesuit Vocation through our Charism**

Our Jesuit Vocation, which is a dynamic and multifaceted call to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Ignatius, marks a deep commitment to spirituality, community, mission and intellectual engagement and therefore all these aspects need to be updated with new thoughts, new inspirations, and innovations.

**Spiritual Formation :** While the Spiritual Exercises remain central, there is a need to adapt them for contemporary seekers. Digital retreats, mindfulness practices, and ecumenical approaches can make spiritual formation more inclusive and relevant. Providing resources for personal and communal discernment in a fast-paced world is crucial.

**Community Engagement :** Our ministries should focus on grassroots community involvement. Collaborating with local organizations, addressing systemic injustices, and fostering inclusive communities align with Ignatian values. Emphasizing lay collaboration and leadership can also expand the reach and impact of Jesuit efforts.

**Environmental Management :** Responding to Pope Francis’ call in *Laudato Si’*, we must lead in promoting environmental justice. This involves advocating for sustainable practices, educating about climate change, and engaging in direct action to protect the planet. Our institution can serve as a



model of ecological responsibility.

**Global Networking :** Strengthening the global Jesuit network can enhance collaboration and resource sharing. Initiatives like the Jesuit Refugee Service and the International Jesuit Ecology Project exemplify interconnected efforts that can address global challenges. Leveraging these networks for advocacy and solidarity is essential.

**Leadership Development :** Training Jesuits and lay partners in adaptive leadership, cross-cultural competence, and innovative thinking is key. Leadership programmes should emphasize Ignatian discernment and strategic planning to navigate complex global realities.

Restructuring Jesuit Vocation in the context of the Chotanagpur and particularly in Ranchi Province involves adapting to the unique and new cultural, social and economic conditions of the region in terms of culturally relevant training, strengthening Community Life, collaboration with

Laity, enhancing spiritual and Pastoral Outreach, expanding Apostolic Works, embracing Technology and Innovation, and strengthening Global and Local Networks.

By restructuring the Jesuit vocation in these ways, the Ranchi Province can better serve its communities, remain responsive to local needs, and uphold the Jesuit mission of faith and justice in a meaningful and impactful manner.

## Conclusion

Reimagining and restructuring the Jesuit vocation involves a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation. By embracing contemporary tools and approaches, Jesuits can continue to fulfil their mission of education, justice, and spiritual depth in a rapidly changing world. This renewed vision calls for adaptability, collaboration, and a deepened commitment to Ignatian values, ensuring the Jesuit vocation remains a powerful force for good in the 21st century and beyond.



25th Assam Mission Days - 13 to 15 July 2024



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## God's Call to Jesuit Brotherhood

**Br. Telesphore Horo, SJ**

• *Manresa House, Ranchi*



**L**et us begin with a misnomer; clarify it first and then proceed. The vocation to the Society of Jesus, many think, is necessarily a priestly vocation. It is not so. Vocation to the Society of Jesus can be to become a priest or it can also

be to become a Brother. God's call to Brotherhood is a unique vocation in the Society which should be appreciated in itself.

Everyone has his or her vocation assigned by God. This assignment must be understood in terms of a unique calling and profound commitment within the Church. Without affiliation with the Church, the uniqueness of the calling and profoundness of the commitment does not have meaning. Affiliation with the Church elevates commitment and calling combined, to the Religious state.

Contemplative and active ministry are two factors which come into play in Religious life. Emphasis on contemplative spirituality forms Cloistered Religious Life while emphasis on contemplative and active spirituality together forms Active Religious Life. St. Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus emphasizes the integration of contemplative and active ministry. A Brother's Vocation is meant to be an embodiment of this integration.

A Brother's vocation is a testament to the diversity of gifts within the church. Unlike Jesuit priests, Brothers do not receive Holy Orders, but their role is equally remarkable in utilizing their talents to various ministry such as Education, Social Justice, Healthcare etc.

A Brother's Vocation emphasizes that serving God and his people is not confined to sacramental ministry but extends to all forms of service.



*Ranchi Brothers at Loyola Niketan, Bilaspur, Chhatisgarh*



At the heart of a Jesuit brother's vocation is the call to Find God in all things. A Brother's life is marked by a deep personal relationship with God, which he lives through prayers, community life and service. This spirituality invites others to seek and find God in their own lives.

Jesuit Brothers often serve as a bridge between the clergy and the laity, offering a unique perspective that enriches the Church. Their commitment to justice, education, and the care of souls reflects the Jesuits' mission of "helping souls" and promoting the greater Glory of God.

A Jesuit Brother is a man, who has accepted the call of the Father to be a "companion of Jesus." "By his vows, he consecrates his life freely to help the mission common to the apostolic, religious and priestly body of the society: "the service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement".

From the very beginning of his conversion, Ignatius felt called to "help others," to give himself entirely to the service of "the Eternal King and Lord of all." The groups of companions, "friends in the Lord," were to find in their discernment how they were to live their apostolic vocation in the church : by founding a Religious order (*GC 34, Pg 74-75, No-196-197.1995*).

Therefore, the most important contribution of a Brother is the gift of his own self, offered freely in service to the Lord. As a consequence, through a life that is manifestly religious, they offer a prophetic witness, in the Church and in the society - to the world of today.

They are men with a mission which they receive from Christ himself. They carry out the mission as a member of an apostolic body completely dedicated with God's grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the members' own

souls but also with that same grace to labour vigorously in giving help towards the salvation and perfection of the souls of others.

The formation of Brothers has improved. They have been given responsibilities in important works and apostolic activities and have been appointed to positions such as community and province consultants. Based on the positive experiences, GC 34 encourages the whole society to continue to move in the same direction towards our charism. It is the best way to express the unity of vocation and mission in the body of the society (*GC 34, Pg78, No-213.1995*).

Brothers are not ordained but are often engaged in pastoral ministries, providing spiritual direction, retreats, and other forms of pastoral care. They are also involved in environmental advocacy and healthcare service, caring for the sick and marginalized, with solidarity and compassion. They work as nurses, administrators, or in different capacities within hospitals and clinics. Jesuit brothers are found also in various specialized ministries, such as communications- media, publications, or other communications fields to spread the gospel and promote justice.

I am reminded of the universal call to holiness and service. Each Brother's life is a witness to the love of Christ, lived out in humility, dedication and

service. This vocation invites me to consider, how I can use my own gifts in the service of God and others, seeking to find and reveal God's love in all that I do.

Jesuit Brothers live a life dedicated to service, communitarian spirit and spiritual depth, deeply inspired by the Ignatian tradition. Their unique vocation enriches the Society of Jesus and the Church at large. They enrich the Church through their diverse talents and unwavering commitment to their call.





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## Wisdom of Heart and Communication Technology

**Fr. Justin Tirkey, SJ**

• Satya Bharti, Ranchi



**T**he continuous process of reimagining, restructuring and re-energizing ourselves is vital for a meaningful and successful life. Responsible and conscious people have been drawing our attention to this aspect. The advice of concerned

parents, responsible citizens, guardians, Formators and critical media literacy educators to become prudent media consumers and judicious decision-makers as the world interacts with the fast-changing digital world is part of the same renewal endeavour. They do accept the necessity of media use in our lives but also appear apprehensive about the risks of over and imprudent use of media technology. The earnest desire of the guardians today is not that the children do not use the media technology but to use it in a judicious and balanced way.

Addressing the 58th World Communication Day Pope Francis spoke on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which refers to intelligence exhibited by machines, particularly by computer systems. While Pope accepted the importance of artificial intelligence underlined the power of “Wisdom of Heart.”

The power of Wisdom of heart fundamentally underlines the judicious use of anything or any means in a balanced way.

Jesuit Communicators of Ranchi Province have engaged in various media activities to help people use their wisdom of heart. Inspired by the UAP and RPAP and various reflections on our way of proceeding and life-mission many media activities were performed which can be divided into four parts: namely publication, production, media education and documentation. The activities of the communicators in Ranchi Province are in line with the revised mission vision statement of Ranchi Province; the mission vision of the Communication Commission and Ranchi Province Apostolic Preferences helping the media consumers applying the wisdom of the heart. They are as follows:

### **1. Regular updates of the news and views**

The Communication Commission has been very consistent in sharing the information through the Province WhatsApp group. This not only makes the image news circulate among the Jesuit brethren but also keeps us connected. Photo updating keeps us telling the Photo story of the Province covering all the moments of joys and sorrow.





## त्रिदिवसीय आध्यात्मिक साधना पुस्तक का हुआ विमोचन

रंची। त्रिदिवसीय आध्यात्मिक साधना पुस्तक का विमोचन रीकार को स्मरणीय साधना धरती सभागार में हुआ। यह कार्यक्रम बुल्गेरिया में विश्व साधना धरती सभागार में एक अवसर के दौरान पुस्तक का विमोचन किया गया। ग्यानलतिका टोपो द्वारा लिखित पुस्तक त्रिदिवसीय आध्यात्मिक साधना का विमोचन साधना धरती के निदेशक फादर जस्टिन तिरकी, फादर अलेक्स तिरकी, प्रभावकर तिरकी, सन तिरकी, फादर जेम्स टोपो, डा एडवर्ड सिम्बु, फादर टोपो और संविधान के पति सेवानिवृत्त रोआर्जी हॉर्मेन टोपो ने किया। विमोचन समारोह में साधना धरती के निदेशक जस्टिन तिरकी ने कहा कि यह पुस्तक हर मनुष्य के जीवन और सेवानिवृत्त दिवसों में मोल का फलदायी साधना है। उन्होंने कहा कि



ग्यानलतिका टोपो ने जीवन की हर मुश्किल को अंजान करने और सम्मेलनों के सम्मेलन में साधना को चतुर्वर्ण्य बताया है। जस्टिन तिरकी ने इस पुस्तक को अपनाना करने का

कल किया। पुस्तक की लेखिका ग्यानलतिका टोपो ने बताया कि फादर अलेक्स टोपो की जीवन के अध्ययन से उसे बहुत प्रेरणा मिली और उन्होंने से जितना होकर उन्होंने इस पुस्तक

को साधना से जीवन में आध्यात्मिक साधना को साधना को समझा। ग्यानलतिका ने कहा कि इस पुस्तक में तिरकी धर्म की व्यवस्था नहीं बल्कि जीवन जीने की रीति में साधना का महत्व करने की एक छोटी सी बरिस्ता भर है। फादर जेम्स टोपो ने कहा कि इसी प्रकार की अन्य महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर लेखन की आवश्यकता आज बहुत ही जरूरी है। प्रभावकर तिरकी ने आध्यात्मिक साधना द्वारा जीवन को साधने का मध्यम बताया और कहा कि आज के युग में अत्यन्त हर मनुष्य के जीवन का हिस्सा बनना चाहिए। कार्यक्रम का संवादन पूर्व डीएसी सचरप छतर तिरकी ने किया और धन्यवाद ज्ञापन होकर दोपहर 12 बजे एंसेम्बल के निदेशक फादर मोरि पीटर सिंगा ने किया।

## 2. Publication of books

On 23rd March Satya Bharati organized a book launching ceremony where a book “Tridiwasiya Adhyatmik Sadhna” (Three day Spiritual Retreat) by Mrs. Gyanlatika Toppo. Thanks to Frs. Mahendra Peter and Alex Tirkey who facilitated the programme.

## Prayers for the Lievens Triduum

It was for the first time the Lievens Prayer Committee prepared the Triduum prayers in preparation for the death anniversary celebration of Servant of God Father Constant Lievens, SJ. Jesuits along with the Parishioners and neighboring religious communities participated in the prayer service held in the Cathedral.

## Lievens Museum Brochure

In line with disseminating the messages to the people about Lievens Museum Brochure was prepared as “Pilgrimage of Liberation” and distributed to the people to popularize Father Constant Lievens and his missionary activities.

## 3. Mission vision statement

The draft of the Mission-vision statement of the Communication Commission was prepared drawing inspiration from the new mission vision mission statement of the Province. It intends to guide and direct the future course of action in the service of people. It clearly states that “ ignited by Ignatian charism and spirituality, we commit ourselves in collaboration with other commissions

and cooperation with the people of goodwill to disseminate and conserve the Word of Truth through publication, production, media education and documentation. Communication Commission intends to make people judicious media consumers so that it brings true happiness and freedom” in their lives.

## 4. JESCOM Annual meeting in Chennai

The annual JESCOM (Jesuit Coordinators Commission) meeting in Chennai was a moment to strengthen the Communication mission through sharing the media activities, planning, evaluating the mission and committing with renewed vigour. Under the supervision of new Secretary Fr. Venard, the meeting was conducted to rejuvenate the Communication Commission and help people become critical media users using their wisdom of Heart.

## 5. Central Zone Jesuit Coordinators Meet

Central zone Communication coordinators came together in Ranchi to discuss the matters on Media activities in the region. Coordinators of Madhya Pradesh, Ranchi, Dumka, and Jamshedpur participated in the course with some young Jesuit participants of Ranchi Province. The coordinator of Hazaribagh did not participate due to his illness. The coordinators reviewed the media scenario and reflected on the role of media in society and the role of Jesuits in helping people media consumers prudently and becoming the voices of the marginalized.





## 6. Lievens Museum

Long awaited Lievens Museum was inaugurated on 5th November 2023 in the historic premises of Manresa House. It has two vital purposes, namely to keep Father Constant Lievens' memory alive and secondly to popularize the devotion of Lievens among the people of Chotanagpur that will pave the way for his sainthood. On the one hand, the life of Father Lievens will be preserved for the generations to come and learn from His missionary activities to save souls and give the Tribals, a new identity.

## 7. Composition of Hymns

To make the annual gathering of the Ranchi Jesuit Society more effective and meaningful Fr. Justin composed a theme song "You are Ranchi Jesuits" for Ranchi Jesuit Society from the perspectives and expectations of the People. It was recorded in Satya Bharati Audio Studio. It was sung by the scholastics Alok, Pingal, and Blacius.

## 8. Talk on Media and Church Documents

Keeping in line with the RPAP ideal Fr. Justin gave a one-day seminar on Church Documents of Vatican II and critical use of Media to Some 144 Sisters of Daughters of St. Anne of Ranchi in Kunkuri. It was an orientation to the Vatican documents and an invitation to re-imagine the application of suggestions of the document in the apostolic life of the congregations.

## Conclusion

All the above-mentioned activities are part of the visibility of our media ministry. It shows that the men in media are active and creative in bringing the good news to the people. It also reminds me of the attitude of the church which was so skeptical about the media use in the beginning. It had to undergo the process of fear and confusion about media use to enthusiasm and passion for media use. After Vatican II Pope declared that Media is our birthright and the best gift ever given to humanity. It was all possible because of reimagining, reviewing and re-conceptualizing our approach to media.

The call of the hour is that we use media meaningfully not considering it an enemy but an instrument and blessing in the hand of the church. It is an invitation to all of us that let media become an instrument that ignites us, enlightens us and makes us critical consumers of media and judicious decision-makers and co-creators who save the earth, become voices of the marginalized and create a world where there is no fear, but joy of living, walking and growing together with new identity unity, fraternity and prosperity.

It is a call for all of us essentially to remain fully human despite technical progress and use the wisdom of heart for such progress where humanity encounters divinity and guides this cultural transformation for a noble purpose – to build up a community of peace joy and hope.





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## MAGIS : The Mool Mantra of Our Life

Sch. Johnny S. Dungdung, SJ

• JFCT Tarunoday, Kanke



The quadrangle of St. John's School, Ranchi buzzed with an extraordinary vibrancy as students and youths from various Jesuit institutions of India and Nepal converged to participate in the much-anticipated "Magis-2023". The

Magis programme that was held in October, 2023 encapsulated a spirit of striving for the greater good, a cornerstone of Jesuit education and spirituality.

The term "Magis," rooted in Latin, translates to "more" or "greater." It calls each individual to seek not just excellence, but a deeper, more meaningful engagement with the surroundings, the studies, and service to others. The Magis Mantra is not merely a call to do more, but to do better, always pushing the boundaries of one's potential in pursuit of a higher purpose.

Participants infused the campus with a dynamic blend of cultures, ideas, and shared aspirations. This assembly was a testament to the Jesuit network's

commitment to education, service, and spiritual growth. The programme was meticulously organized by the Jesuits of South Asian Assistancy, whose dedication to nurturing young minds is unparalleled. Their efforts ensured that the event was not merely a gathering for enjoyment but a transformative journey for all involved.



**Highlights of the Programme :** The Magis programme began with an inauguration ceremony where Fr. POSA, Fr. Provincials, Coordinators, Jesuit priests, religious and other dignitaries were present. The three days programme featured a diverse array of activities designed to inspire and challenge the participants. Prayers, meditations and Mass nourished the spiritual life of the participants. Workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions covered a wide spectrum of topics, all aligned with the Magis philosophy. Keynote speakers, including renowned educators and spiritual leaders, shared their insights on living a life of purpose and service.



Fr. POSA at MAGIS Programme in St. John's School, Ranchi





*Mrs. Shilpi Neha Tirkey, MLA Mandar, with the MAGIS Co-ordinators at St. John's School, Ranchi*

**The Spiritual Journey:** Integral to the Magis experience was the spiritual dimension. Daily reflections, prayer sessions, and meditations provided participants with the space to connect with their inner selves and contemplate their role in contributing to humanity. The emphasis on Ignatian Spirituality offered a unique lens through which students could view their personal journey of life.

**Cultural Exchange:** One of the most enriching aspects of Magis was the cultural exchange among the youth and students from various parts of India and Nepal. Their performances, exhibitions, and discussions, participants celebrated diversity and learned from each other's traditions and perspectives.

One of the standout sessions was the faith sharing, where were divided into various mixed groups, questionnaires were given to them for discussion and sharing. This exercise not only fostered teamwork and critical thinking but also embodied the Magis spirit by encouraging students to think beyond conventional boundaries. It also fostered deep bonds among them. The shared experiences and collective endeavors forged friendships that transcended geographical and cultural divides. These connections are the seeds of a future Jesuit network that will continue to grow and thrive, united by the Magis Mantra.

Field visit was organized for the participants; they went to various places like old age homes, orphanages, social centers, and coal mines that offered a multifaceted learning experience. At the old age home, students interacted with elderly residents, gaining insights into the challenges and wisdom of aging. The visit to the orphanage highlighted the resilience and needs of children without parental care, fostering empathy and a sense of social responsibility. Social center like Bagicha, Namkum showcased the work done by Fr. Stan Swami addressing local issues of tribal communities. The coal mine tour of Khalari provided a stark contrast, revealing the harsh realities and risks of mining work. Together, these visits broadened the students' perspectives on societal dynamics and the diverse conditions people live and work under, enriching their educational journey with real-world understanding.

**A Vision for the Future:** As the Magis programme concluded, the participants left St. John's School with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to embody the Magis Mantra in their daily lives. The lessons learned and the values instilled during this programme will undoubtedly influence their paths, inspiring them to strive for greater achievements and to serve others with compassion and integrity. In conclusion, the Magis programme was a celebration of Jesuit ideals and a powerful reminder of the potential within each individual to effect positive change. By embracing





the Magis Mantra, participants have not only enhanced their own lives but have also taken a significant step towards creating a more just and compassionate world. As Magis concluded, its

impact resonated far beyond the confines of St. John School. Participants embodied the spirit of Magis and returned to their communities with renewed enthusiasm and a sense of purpose.



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## Restructuring and Reimagining through the Lens

**Sch. James Ekka, SJ**

• NTC Vidyajyoti, New Delhi



With God's providence, a lens was delivered to me by the Society of Jesus. A lens through which I had a chance to perceive my perceptions and to delve deeper into it; a chance to make right the eyes, the heart, and the mind

to understand the reality of life, that behind the beautiful faces lies the mystery of the dark side of life.

Reimagining and Restructuring of a Mission through lens can produce a picture of 8k resolution than actually having a very expensive set. The lens has the power to capture the entire universe with a click. The outcome is possible because of its value. A Jesuit is no less than a lens. Looking back at history, we see how the Jesuits have influenced the present. Jesuits could predict the future. The abilities they developed weren't natural but were values they learned from Fr. Ignatius. The teachings of Fr. Ignatius give us a valuable perspective that can help us understand the world better if we take them seriously. The essence of working for a mission lies not in the capacity but in the desire.

In a study of a camera, a perfect shot can be captured only by the one who has a complete understanding of the exposure triangle. It consists of three variables that adjust how a camera captures light: Aperture (the brightness of the photo), Shutter Speed (how long the camera lets in light), and ISO (how sensitive the camera is to light). Together, these three elements expose a shot properly. In the society of Jesus, a perfect Jesuit need to have the complete understanding of the three pillars: The Spiritual Exercises, the Constitution and the Letters of St. Ignatius.







These understanding can help a Jesuit to take a perfect shot, a perfect instrument of God. Along with these three pillars a Jesuit has to have three elements owned: vision, mission and compassion. These pillars hold a significant power. Vision, mission and compassion reflected in the life of the missionaries of Chotanagpur such as Augustus Stockman SJ, Constant Lievens SJ, and others. The entire Chotanagpur was structured with vision on their arrival and promoted reimagination and restructuring with their departure. These are the shots that is still counted. Their legacy continues to be highly regarded and remembered. If such shots

would be taken by every Ranchi Jesuit, the gallery would not have enough space to accommodate them all.

The lens has the power to tell the truth. Every one of us is endowed with a lens. The most needful thing is to have a desire to take the lens out and capture the truth, the reality and share it with the world.

The challenge that lies ahead of us is our own desire. Therefore, let us try to count not the cost but to offer the prize as a surprise. Let us master ourselves to take an impeccable shot, pursue and slog to grow as a perfect instrument of God.



*Theologizing with the parishes at St. Xavier's Parish, Shillong*



**33**

## Tertianship : "The School of the Heart"

**Fr. Rozario Mosahari, SJ**

• *St. Xavier's School, Pengree, Assam*



**T**ertianship is a time of renewal. A Jesuit revisits the foundational documents and history of the Society of Jesus. As he did as a novice, a Jesuit in Tertianship once again makes the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. The Tertian

prays in silence for 30 days, letting the Lord work on him. This is typically a six-month program that includes spiritual training and apostolic ministry. This is crucial for preparing Jesuits for their final incorporation into the Society. Last year, five dedicated Ranchi Jesuits embarked on this significant journey, being sent to various esteemed institutions to deepen their spiritual and pastoral training.

Fr. Rozario Mosahari, SJ, and Fr. Edwin Ritesh Dungdung, SJ, were assigned to St. Stanislaus College in Hazaribagh, where they engaged themselves intensively in foundational documents and Spiritual Exercises. Meanwhile, Fr. Ashok Kandulna, SJ, and Fr. Ajay Prakash Minj, SJ, were sent to Sacred Heart College in Shembaganur. Their formation focused on the same that is Ignatian principles of discernment and

spiritual growth, preparing them to serve with greater depth and insight. Fr. Fuldeo Soreng, SJ, embarked on his Tertianship at Arrupe House in Sri Lanka, where he immersed himself in the rich Jesuit traditions and practices. Tertianship is the final period of formal religious formation for Jesuit priests and brothers before they profess their Final Vows. It represents a third time of "testing" since a Jesuit's application to the Society of Jesus and his two-year novitiate experience.

As St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19, "Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." This scripture captures the essence of Jesuit spirituality—living a life of service and dedication to God and humanity. Tertianship fosters this spirit, guiding Jesuits to become more effective ministers of faith.

The experiences of these five Ranchi Jesuits illustrate the profound impact of Tertianship. By engaging deeply with Ignatian Spirituality and Biblical teachings, they are being prepared to serve with greater zeal and compassion, embodying the Jesuit mission in their future ministries.



*Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur*



*Arrupe House, Sri Lanka*



*St. Stanislaus College, Hazaribagh*



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## Daltonganj Catholic Diocese : A Beautiful Vineyard of God

**Fr. Ajay Prakash Minj, SJ**

• Daltonganj Catholic Diocese



**T**he Catholic Diocese of Daltonganj was formerly a part of the Ranchi Archdiocese. It was established as a separate Diocese on 5 June 1971, to focus on the pastoral, social, educational, cultural and medical development of

the district of districts of Palamu and Hazaribag. Since, the Diocese of Daltonganj covered a vast area, which made the pastoral care of the people challenging, in April 1995 the Diocese was bifurcated into Daltonganz and Hazaribag Dioceses.

The first Bishop of the Diocese was Rt. Rev. George Victor Saupin, SJ. Fr. Charles Soreng, SJ were consecrated in February 1990 as its second bishop but was transferred to Hazaribag, when

Daltonganj became a separate Diocese. In January 1998, Fr. Gabriel Kujur, SJ was consecrated as the third Bishop of the Diocese of Daltonganj. From 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Bishop Anand Jojo took care of the Diocese as the Apostolic Administrator. On December 8, 2021, Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas was appointed Apostolic Administrator of Daltonganj and after five long years of having no Bishop, on November 30, 2023, Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas was appointed Bishop of Daltonganj.

The Catholic Diocese of Daltonganj covers three districts, namely Palamau, Garhwa and Latehar. There are 23 Parishes and around 39 institutions belonging to the Diocese. The total population of the Catholics in the Diocese is around 67,371. Apart from the Catholics, there are also Christians of about twelve denominations. The languages







Spoken among the Christians are- Hindi, Oraon, Mundari, Kharia, Nagpuri and other tribal languages like – Korwa, Birjia, Pahadiya etc.

The Daltonganj Catholic Diocese is a beautiful and fertile vineyard, with promise of a good harvest. In the context of Daltonganj, the saying fits that The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few. Like any good vineyard, the Diocese is also in need of generous and committed labourers. Whenever there is a need of labourers in the vineyard, the Lord also provides for new labourers. In such a scenario, a call was heard and an invitation was given to collaborate with other workers of this vineyard. The call was given to no other but me. By the grace of God, I was able to respond generously like Abraham, our patriarch in faith.

God said to Abraham, Leave the land you have always known. Go from your homeland to a new land that I will show you (...). The call of Abraham was a divine call for a specific mission. Father Abraham said yes to His call and availed himself of the divine mission. Once he surrendered himself to the will of God, he faced challenges but also witnessed many miracles in his life. He was given a new identity and the eternal title of the Father of Faith for generations to come.

On 10 April 2024, that fine afternoon a phone call came from the treasurer of Ranchi Jesuit Society. I attended the phone call as usual saying to him – “Haan bhai bola Jaye”. He replied that he wanted to

see me. Since I was away from the house, I assured him that I would see him as soon as I got time. This incident made me quite nervous. I felt that something drastic was going to happen soon in my life.

The following day on 11 April 2024, I visited the treasurer. In the course of sharing our life experiences, I was told that there was another plan waiting for me. I felt very strange at first, for I took it as a good joke. But towards the end of our sharing, I felt that the joke might be true. With this sentiment and emotion, I departed from the treasurer’s office.

Indeed, I was a little serious after coming back from the treasurer’s office and began to ponder over the message I received. I underwent a kind of spiritual conversation and discernment process. I thought it might not be true, for I was told to continue the previous responsibility after completing my Tertianship. Anyway, this was my immediate reaction. I was very fresh after my Tertianship. Therefore, the Tertianship experience was quite helpful in understanding and assimilating the spirit of the Society of Jesus.





On 14 April 2024, Fr Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ, the Provincial Superior of Ranchi Jesuit Society happened to talk to me to know my feelings regarding the message I had received. The immediate reaction within me was, how could this be? Anyway, I was invited to discern and ponder over this matter. I surrendered myself to the Holy Spirit telling myself- I am available for any responsibility. It was a very satisfying moment and I felt a surge of confidence within me to take up any responsibility, through which I would be able to give my maximum service.

Abraham followed God's direction and left his entire thing and believed and did what He commanded. I experienced that on the one hand it was a great challenge to undertake, and on the other hand it was a golden opportunity to surrender myself: keeping aside all comforts of life for the just cause. With such disposition of my heart, I dared to say yes...

On 1 May 2024, His Lordship Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas, SFX, the Bishop of Daltonganj Catholic Diocese came to visit St. Xavier's Doranda Community, and finalized my going to Daltonganj. On 15 May 2024, I was escorted by all the community members of St Xavier's Doranda to my mission field. Although the road was winding

and zigzag, the journey was pleasant. The heat wave also disturbed us on our journey. However, we reached our destination safely on time. At Daltonganj Bishop's House, we were welcomed grandly with *dhol-mandar* and a welcome dance. Our feet were washed as a sign and gesture of welcome and great respect. I felt how our Adivasi culture and spirituality are still alive. I felt proud to be an Adivasi.

On 29 May 2024, there was a handing-over ceremony at the treasurer's office at Daltonganj Catholic Diocese. It was quite fascinating and inspiring. As a symbolic gesture, a register and a bunch of keys were handed to me and thereby, I was officially installed as the new treasurer of Daltonganj Catholic Diocese.

More than the challenges, I saw this incident as a great opportunity to learn. The responsibility is a difficult one but I also have received enough cooperation and support from the brothers and fathers in the Diocese. It is very interesting and joyful moment for me to be part of the Daltonganj Catholic Diocese. It is a great privilege for me to collaborate with and work in the Daltonganj Catholic Diocese: a beautiful vineyard where "the harvest is plentiful but labourers are few.... (Mt, 9:37)".





**35**

## Long Live Ye Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo

**Fr. Alexius Tirkey, SJ**

• Satyabharti, Ranchi



**C**ardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo, India's first tribal cardinal, passed away on Wednesday, 19 March 2024, at Constant Lieven's Hospital in Mandar, Jharkhand, at the age of 84. His death marks the end of a remarkable era in the history of the Catholic Church in India, particularly in his advocacy for tribal rights and social justice.

### Early Life and Priestly Ministry

Born into an Oraon tribal family, Cardinal Toppo's journey began with his ordination as a priest in 1969. His early years as a priest were marked by a deep commitment to serving the marginalized and advocating for their rights. After completing theological studies at Urbana College in Rome, he was appointed Bishop of Dumka Diocese in 1978, where he continued his mission with fervour.

### Archbishop of Ranchi

In 1985, Cardinal Toppo was appointed Archbishop of Ranchi, a position he held for an impressive 35 years until his retirement in 2018. Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, became a focal point of his pastoral leadership, where he championed the cause of tribal communities amidst rapid industrialization and socio-economic challenges. His tenure saw significant growth in the Catholic Church in Jharkhand, with numerous initiatives aimed at education, healthcare, and social welfare.

### Elevation to Cardinalate

Pope John Paul II elevated Archbishop Toppo to the College of Cardinals on 21 October 2003, making him the first and only Asian tribal to receive such a prestigious ecclesiastical honor. This recognition underscored his influence not only within the Church but also in the broader socio-political landscape of India. His support for the creation





of Jharkhand state in 2000, carved out from Bihar to give autonomy to the tribal regions, further highlighted his commitment to empowering indigenous communities.

### **Advocacy and Legacy**

Throughout his career, Cardinal Toppo was a staunch advocate for tribal rights and the welfare of the poor. His outspokenness against the exploitation of tribal migrant workers by industrial interests in mineral-rich Jharkhand earned him widespread respect and admiration. He was deeply involved in issues of land rights, education, and healthcare access for tribal communities, which formed the bedrock of his pastoral ministry.

### **Funeral and Tributes**

The funeral of Cardinal Toppo on 11 October 2024, in Ranchi was a testament to his impact on the lives of thousands. A three-hour requiem Mass led by 27 Bishops and attended by tens of thousands of mourners highlighted his influence and legacy. Governor CP Radhakrishnan and Chief Minister Hemant Soren were among the dignitaries who paid their respects, underscoring the cardinal's significance in both religious and political circles.

Archbishop Felix Toppo of Ranchi presided over the funeral service, which was a solemn occasion marked by tributes from across the country. The massive turnout at Loyola College grounds, where the service was held, reflected the deep reverence and affection people held for Cardinal Toppo. The funeral procession from Constant Lieven's Hospital to St. Mary's Cathedral in Ranchi, accompanied by

a cavalcade of 500 motorbikes and cars, further underscored the public's esteem for him.

### **Global Impact and Humanitarian Efforts**

Cardinal Toppo's influence extended beyond India. As President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), he played a pivotal role in responding to crises such as the violence against Christians in Kandhamal, Odisha, in 2007. His solidarity with the affected communities and his plea for justice resonated globally, highlighting his role as a humanitarian leader.

### **Personal Reflections and Legacy**

In personal interviews, Cardinal Toppo often expressed humility and a deep spiritual conviction in his mission. His commitment to the Gospel values of compassion and justice guided his decisions and actions throughout his life. His legacy includes the installation of numerous tribal bishops and his pivotal role in shaping the Church's presence in Jharkhand.

### **Conclusion**

Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo leaves behind a legacy that transcends religious boundaries and resonates with the universal values of justice, compassion, and service to the marginalized. His passing is mourned not only by the Catholic community but by all those whose lives he touched through his dedicated service. As Jharkhand bids farewell to its beloved shepherd, his teachings and example will continue to inspire generations to come, ensuring that his vision of a more just and humane society endures.



**36**

## Tend My Sheep : The New Archbishop of Ranchi Archdiocese

**Fr. Francis David Kullu, SJ**

• *Sadbhavna, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, Ranchi*



**O**n 19 March 2024, Ranchi witnessed a historic event as Archbishop Felix Toppo, the Emeritus Jesuit Archbishop, formally installed Bishop Vincent Aind as the seventh Archbishop of Ranchi Archdiocese. The

installation ceremony, held at Loyola Ground on Fr. Camil Bulke Road, gathered a vast assembly of dignitaries, clergy, religious nuns and brothers, and tens of thousands of laities from Jharkhand and neighboring states, underscoring the significance of the occasion.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli and Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Calcutta, alongside a galaxy of Archbishops and Bishops, highlighting the unity and solidarity within the Catholic Church in India. Romola Horo, a prominent woman leader

from Ranchi, warmly welcomed the gathering, setting the tone with her heartfelt words, "Today is the day of God's love and abundant blessings."

She eloquently traced the rich history of the Chotanagpur mission and the Ranchi Archdiocese, emphasizing its cultural and pastoral evolution over the years. Horo invoked the spirit of late Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi, whose vision for mission and faith continues to inspire generations. She quoted Cardinal Toppo's words, "May the fire of mission keep burning," symbolizing the enduring commitment to spreading the Gospel among India's tribal communities.

The roots of Catholic faith in Chotanagpur can be traced back to 10 July 1869, when Belgian Jesuit missionary Father Agustus Stockman initiated the mission among the Ho tribal community in Chaibasa (now under Jamshedpur diocese). The legacy continued with Father Constance Livens, revered as the Apostle of Chotanagpur, and Father





Baptist Hoffman, who championed the rights of tribal people over their land and property in 1908. The establishment of Ranchi as a diocese by Pope Pius XI on 25 May 1927, marked a significant milestone, with Jesuit Father Louis Vanhock appointed as its first Bishop.

The elevation of Ranchi to an Archdiocese on 19 September 1953, under the leadership of Jesuit Father Nicholas Kujur, the first Adivasi Archbishop, further strengthened the Church's presence and influence in the region. Archbishop Vincent Aind now inherits this illustrious legacy, succeeding Archbishop Felix Toppo, who served diligently after his tenure as Archbishop of Jamshedpur Diocese.

Archbishop Vincent Aind, formerly the Bishop of Bagdogra in neighboring West Bengal, brings with him a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to theology and doctrine. His motto, "Remain in me, as I in you" (John 15:4), displayed prominently at the ceremony, reflects his spiritual grounding and vision for his new role. Family members, friends, and relatives from North Bengal, Jalpaiguri, and Bagdogra, where he served as Bishop since 2015, gathered to support him on this momentous occasion.

Currently, Archbishop Vincent Aind serves as the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for theology and doctrine and contributes actively to the Association of Christian Philosophers of India (ACPI). His leadership roles underscore his dedication to theological education and philosophical discourse within the Church.

The installation ceremony was also attended in large numbers by the staff of Morning Star Regional Seminary in West Bengal, where Archbishop Vincent served for nearly two decades in various capacities, including spiritual director, rector, dean of philosophy, and principal. Their presence reflected solidarity and support for Archbishop Vincent's new chapter in Ranchi.

In conclusion, the installation of Archbishop Vincent Aind marks a new chapter in the vibrant history of the Ranchi Archdiocese. His leadership, guided by Ignatian spirituality and a deep-rooted commitment to theological education and pastoral care, promises to strengthen the Church's mission in Chotanagpur and beyond. As Archbishop Vincent Aind embarks on his journey, we are reminded of the words of Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo: "May the fire of mission keep burning," inspiring us to continue spreading God's love and blessings in our communities.



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## The Dream coming true : St. Xavier's College Shaping up in Simdega

**Fr. Bruno Toppo, SJ**

• St. Mary's Samtoli, Simdega



Success of a nation depends on quality of its educational system and success of its educational system depends on quality of educational infrastructure. Christian institutions make a difference in lives of students

because of good infrastructure and values they impart. Institutions named after St. Francis Xavier are not in exception, due to excellent facilities for teaching, research, games and sports, art and culture, they wonderfully transform students. Quality education and superior infrastructure are interconnected, superior infrastructure assists quality education in various ways. In the scientific age top-notch educational institutions boot

progress in all spheres of life. If the world around us is becoming better and smarter, why should we lag behind? Ranchi Jesuits with strong desire to be efficient and effective in promoting love, peace and forgiveness as a province have undertaken process of reimagining the future and restructuring their life-mission. Construction of St. Xavier's College, Simdega is an outcome of strenuous spiritual process of reimagining the future and restructuring life-mission, which began some twenty years before and now which is becoming a reality. The process of reimagining the future and restructuring life-mission is not static but dynamic; therefore, we must enjoy working hard to be more proficient and active for transforming the world.

St. Xavier's College Simdega is indeed, a big breakthrough for promotion of higher education



*Blessing of the foundation by His Excellency Bishop Vincent Barwa D.D.*





in Simdega, which is one of the most backward districts of India. This young institution is a unit of 'Xaviers Ranchi', a Society registered under the Society's registration Act XXI of 1980 and affiliated to Ranchi University, Ranchi. It became a beacon of hope for the people of Simdega, when it was inaugurated in its temporary campus at St. Mary's High School, Samtoli, on 1 August 2016, with 454 students in Arts and Commerce faculties, 18 Asst. professors and 12 support staff and 3 Jesuits priests and 1 scholastic. Literacy rate of Simdega district is just good with 76% male and 60% female but there is lack of good colleges in the vast geographical area of Simdega district to neighboring states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh. Simdega district is thickly populated with Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and OBCs living in a beautiful plateau amidst rocky landscape with raging rivers and streams, vertical slopes, high cliffs and narrow valleys. The primary part of economy of Simdega is agriculture and agriculture related activities like shellac production, animal husbandry etc. Due to poverty, students cannot afford expenses of quality education in cities. A big number of youths migrate to big cities like; Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Kerala etc; not in search of higher education but for doing menial jobs. St. Xavier's College, Simdega aims to journey with the poorest of the poor and make them capable to find solutions to their problems by imparting quality education.

As John C. Maxwell say, "Dreams don't work unless you do". Process of reimagining and restructuring must be converted into praxis. Dream of establishing a world-class institution for higher education



in Simdega became a reality after the Working Committee of St. Xavier's College, Simdega together with Fr. Provincial completed all the nitty-gritty of constructing a building after spending a lot of time in serious planning and reflection. 2 April 2022, is a memorable day in the history St. Xavier's College, Simdega. On this day blessing of the foundation of the new College building and Fathers' Residence was done by His Excellency Bishop Vincent Barwa D.D. in the esteemed presence of Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, S.J, the Provincial Superior of Ranchi Province, Mr. Naman Viksal Kongari, the MLA of Kalebira, and Mr. Benjamin Lakra, the former Accountant General and a G.B. Member of St. Xavier's College, Simdega. The following fathers from St. Xavier's College, Ranchi graced the occasion: Rev. Fr. Alexius Ekka, SJ, the Rector, Rev. Fr. Nabor Lakra, S.J, the Principal, Rev. Fr. Pradeep Robert Kujur, S.J, the Secretary, Rev. Fr. Ajay Minj, S.J, the Vice-Principal and Rev. Fr. Roshan Baa, S.J, the treasurer. Fr. Florence Kujur, SJ and Fr. George Kerketta, S.J represented the building working committee and the building commission of the province for the solemn event. Mr. Naveen Lakra and Associates with their construction team were present to with the great event and start the construction work. From St. Xavier's College, Simdega Rev. Fr. Pius Xalxo, SJ the Rector, Ephrem Baa, SJ the Principal, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Barla, SJ, the Controller of Examinations, Rev. Fr. Rajesh Sandil, SJ Vice-Principal and Rev. Fr. Bruno Toppo, SJ the Vice-Principal Cum Bursar and the faculty, the staff and the students were present for the propitious occasion along with many officials, educationists and well-wishers.





The 'U' shape G plus 5 college building is not only massive but also magnificent which holds attention and fascination of people. Design concept of the building is a decent blend of past and present splendid Jesuit buildings. Entry through the main gate of the campus gives a beautiful glimpse of entrance portico. Five elegant entrances with beautiful roman architecture porticos from all sides give beautiful glimpse. Three in the front and one each in both wings. Lower ground floor which is semi-basement has facilities of amenities like; store rooms, electrical room, medical room and library etc. Main portico gives elevation to the building to reach out the administrative section at first floor which consists of Principal office, Vice - Principal office, Account section, Research center, Conference room, Library etc. A big courtyard is there in the middle which could be used for sports, cultural and academic activities. Above the academic blocks, there are tiered seating arrangement in the classrooms for superior visibility, comfort and pleasant atmosphere for 150 students each. Huge toilets facilities are provided at the corner of each floor for both girls and boys. In the entire right wing, there are provisions of science laboratories and computer labs with all modern equipment. In the left-wing ground and first floors are meant for library, reading rooms and research rooms. Each floor is having staffrooms and departments rooms, closer to their departmental classrooms.

Staircase, lifts and other exit are designed as per the fire safety norms. In case of emergency, car and ambulance can easily go in and come out of the college building. The college campus will have many other facilities for students like; hostels, staff quarters, chapel, auditorium, canteens, parking, banking, playgrounds etc.

Construction of such an enormous building is a complex and challenging task. We have to manage so many formalities and requirements and also surrender ourselves before God to seek His blessings and protection from mishaps. Process of reimagining and restructuring of project and resources are very crucial in construction. We wish that till June, 2025; the project will be completed. The construction team of Mr. Naveen Lakra, the Architect and Contractor, Mr. Sudhir Sinha, the builder and supervisors Mr. Adhir Sinha, Mr. Rakesh Sahni and Mr. Imran Khan are doing a commendable job. Fr. Provincial in his last visit has reminded the working committee for timely completion of the project phase wise. Thanks to Fr. Florence Kujur, S.J, Fr. Pius Xalxo, S.J and Fr. Bruno Toppo, S.J for closely monitoring and for facilitating the smooth running of the project. Thanks to Fr. Prabhat Kennedy, S.J, the Forest Department of Simdega, Sir. Benjamin Lakra, Fr. Bruno Toppo, S.J and the staff and students of St. Xavier's College Ranchi and St. Xavier's College, Simdega for conducting tree plantation program in the campus.



*The Construction of St. Xavier's College, Simdega in progress*

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## To Give and not to Count the Cost : The Province Infirmary

**Fr. Raymond Kerketta, SJ**

• *Sadbhavna, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, Ranchi*



**U**nder the diligent guidance of Fr. Raymond Kerketta, SJ, Socius to the Provincial of Ranchi Jesuit Society, and with the valuable assistance of Br. Telesphore Horo, SJ, the Ranchi Province continues to uphold its commitment to the

care of the aged and sick. This mission is deeply rooted in the charism of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who emphasized the importance of service and compassion in the Jesuit tradition.

Recently, the Province experienced a transition in its healthcare team. Sr. Lucy Soreng, DSA, and Sr. Suchita Kujur, DSA, who had selflessly served, have been transferred to different places. Their dedication and care have left an indelible mark on the community. Stepping into their roles, Sr. Susana Xess, DSA, and Sr. Virginia Lugun, DSA, have joined

the team, bringing fresh energy and a renewed commitment to the mission.

The work carried out by the Ranchi Province is a testament to the Biblical call to service and healing. As Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." This spirit of service is mirrored in the Ignatian principle of "finding God in all things," which encourages seeing God's presence in the act of caring for others, particularly the vulnerable and the sick.

The Ranchi Province's ongoing dedication to the well-being of the aged and sick reflects a profound respect for human dignity and a commitment to living out the values of Ignatian spirituality. Through their compassionate care, the team embodies the essence of St. Ignatius' vision, making a significant impact on the lives they touch.







## Our Dedicated Nurses



**Sr. Lucy Soreng, DSA**



**Sr. Suchita Kujur, DSA,**



**Sr. Susana Xess, DSA**



**Sr. Virginia Lugun, DSA,**

## The Sick and Old



**Fr. Mathias Dungdung, SJ**



**Br. Habil Kujur, SJ**



**Fr. Gilbert D'Souza, SJ**



**Fr. Clement Ekka, SJ**



**Fr. Pratap Toppo, SJ**



**Fr. Robert Kindo, SJ**



**Fr. Dominic Topno, SJ**



**Fr. Ernest Kujur, SJ**



**Fr. Erentius Minj, SJ**



**Fr. Cyprian Ekka, SJ**



**Sch. Anand Dungdung, SJ**

# SECTION

# B



## SHADES AND SKETCHES (INTERVIEWS)





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## Br. Nicholas Topno, SJ : Bobadilla of Ranchi Province

**Fr. Sushil Tirkey, SJ**

• Manresa House, Ranchi



**B**r. Nicholas Topno, whom some Jesuits call 'Bobadilla', comes from Digri village of Torpa Parish in Khunti Diocese of Jharkhand state, India. He is the eldest son of late Joseph Topno and late Philomina Horo. He had

three brothers and one sister. Two of his brothers have already gone to their heavenly abode. His primary education was completed in RC Middle School, Torpa and High School from St. Joseph High School, Torpa. After his matriculation he had gone out to work for his livelihood but landed into the Lord's vineyard to work for others. I first met him at Sitagarha when I joined the novitiate and also lived with him in St. Stanislaus Jesuit Community Lohardaga for almost six years. I found him simple, humble, caring, cooperative, hard-working and faithful to his personal devotion and duties. Recently, I spent some hours with him in Constant Lievens Hospital, Mandar and tried to listen to his story. I present here some excerpts of his conversation.

### **Brother, how did you imagine or thought of becoming a Jesuit?**

"First of all, I did not think of becoming a Jesuit. It was a gradual unfolding. After the matriculation I went to Orisa to earn money. I worked on a daily wage basis and took up any work that gave me money. A Franciscan brother, named, Sylvester came to visit one of the boys who lived with us. He suggested us to go through some training. He, eventually, invited and guided us to come to Agriculture Training Centre (ATC), Namkum. And we did it and went through training on agriculture for two years. At that time, Fr. Theophil Moons was

the Director of the Agriculture Training Centre and Br. Juel Ekka was a teacher and the minister of the house. While talking to us during our stay in ATC, Fr. Theophil Moons told that he would make us missionaries to serve others. He encouraged us to become Jesuits and missionaries. He informed about us to Fr. Patrick Kullu, who was then the novice master. He immediately came to visit us in the Agriculture Training Centre. After the completion of the training, I had gone back home. But, to my surprise, Fr. Theophil Moons sent a boy with a letter to my house and asked me to come Ranchi. I was kept in Minor Seminary for a night. The following day he arranged everything and sent me to Sitagarha. Among our friends, I alone joined the Society of Jesus in the year 1974. I did not have any documents, neither birth nor school certificates. I wonder, how I was accepted in the Society without any document and nobody asked for."

### **Why did you choose to become a brother?**

"When I joined the Society, I did not have any idea about the brotherhood and priesthood. I only imagined and instilled in mind to become a missionary and go out to serve others. In the initial stages of my formation, I saw some of our brothers and their works that captivated me. I remember Br. Angelus Xess, Br. Suleman Dungdung, Br. Junas and Br. Francis Tirkey who were very simple, hardworking, serviceable and committed to their works. I was inspired by their life-style and serviceable mind and decided to become a brother to render my service to the people."

### **Could you give a chronological detail of your services that you rendered at different places-**

"After completing my novitiate at Sitagarha and



Juniorate in Patna I was sent to the newly-started Pre-novitiate in Tarunoday, Kanke to take the responsibilities of the minister of the house where Fr. K.C. Philip was the in-charge of the pre-novices and Sch. Bricius Ekka was the regent. After one year I was sent to St. Stanislaus College, Sitagarha where I worked as the Kitchen in-charge and later I became farm-in-charge.

When our novitiate was shifted to Ranchi from Sitagarha I came to Manresa House and worked in the kitchen. However, I always thought of going to mission station to work and even put forward my thought to Fr. Michael Fonseca, who was the provincial at that time. He, instead, told that there was no mission station. He sent me to the Catholic Church, Bardih where I looked after the house, hostel and garden and also taught in the middle school.

After my tertianship at Belgaum in Karnataka in the year 1990 I came to Sarwada Parish and lived with late Fr. John Guria. From Sarwada we used to go Rumtukel to start a new parish there. One year later I was transferred to Chennai where I took the responsibility of the Minister in Berchman's Illam. After completing my term in Berchman's Illam I came back to the province and worked in Noadih followed by Rengarih Parish. In both the

places I worked as the kitchen-in-charge and also looked after the farm and agriculture as well. From Rengarih I moved to Agriculture Training Centre (ATC) Namkum and became the Minister and the Kitchen-in-charge of the novitiate. I spent 8 years in ATC, Namkum. Then I went to Prabhat Tara, Dhurwa in 2009. Since Br. Hilarius was not keeping so well so I came to Manresa House to assist him in the kitchen. In the year 2015 I went to St. Stanislaus High School, Lohardaga where I was looking after the kitchen and the garden. Now, I am in the Mandar Hospital but belong to the Jesuit Community of Lohardaga. So, these were some of the works, either in kitchen or garden I accepted them as my ministry and mission work. I shall go back to my community after recovering from my illness."

### **Could you narrate some of the memorable moments of your life in the Society-**

"I was ignorant about the many things of the outside world. Everything was very strange for me. I did not do anything by myself but everything was arranged by Fr. Theophil Moons for my journey and joining the Society of Jesus. How I was understood and accepted in the Society is a mystery to me because I did not bring any documents, namely, birth and school certificate for joining the Society. Nobody asked about my documents but accepted me for the novitiate. Recalling those experiences give me immense joy and happiness.

### **Any difficult moments in your life and how you overcame them?**

"There were several difficult times but the Society took care. Care, concern and cooperation among the community members helped me to face all the difficulties. Most of places I worked in the kitchen and looked after farm and agriculture. Feeding everyone in the community is not a difficult task but making everyone happy is pretty difficult. Sometimes dissatisfaction and criticisms from the community members pained me. I also grumbled but I accepted them as my 'cross' to carry for the service of the others. This is my ministry which has been entrusted by the Society. This gave me consolation and strength to work."





**Brother would say something to us the members of Ranchi province that we may reimagine and our life-mission.**

"We should pray and promote the vocation of brothers in the Society. We need to be trained and edifying in our dealings and services in the Society. Prayer is our weapon and shield to protect us from danger. I regularly have devotion to Mother Mary. We need to pray together and make

our communities better and take care of all the members and different ministries given by the Society. We need to cooperate, collaborate, respect and encourage each other. We need to avoid the things that weakens the bond of the community. Avoid gossip and unnecessary criticism. I think that the Society has given chance to spread the good news to the people through life in and outside Society. I pray that we can do so.



## Memorial of Bl. Francis Garate

(February 3, 1857 - September 9, 1929)

*Jesuit Religious Brother  
Affectionately called  
"Brother Kindness"*

"To the extent  
that it is possible for me  
to do everything well, I do it.

Our Lord does the rest.

With his help,  
everything becomes  
easy and beautiful  
because we have a Good Lord."



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## Fr. James Toppo, SJ : A Man with Holy Restlessness for Mission

**Fr. Binod Toppo, SJ**

• St. John's School, Ranchi



A person is known for being and acting in his life and that has come true in the very person of Fr. James Toppo, SJ. A man ceaselessly journeying for a mission with holy restlessness whatever and whenever it may be on his

way, ever ready to take up challenges with great enthusiasm. Holy restlessness prevails throughout his life. No hardships, no difficulty could dare stop him moving from one direction to the other. A man on a constant journey, who never complained of his tiredness. A man who could produce fruit throughout the year in all seasons, like a tree planted beside the ever-running stream.

A glimpse of his life-mission is portrayed here so as know about this personality who he was, the one ever-ready to challenge the challenges in the mission whatever apostolate he was entrusted with. This is an example set before the youngsters to have courage to dare take up challenges in any apostolate but very especially in the ministry of education.

**Fr. James how would you narrate your life at this juncture as a Jesuit after living a rapid pace of life and when you slow down looking back what has happened in course of your journey?**

Well, my life-journey is not over yet I still continue working not in a sense as before but my life-journey rolls on with a difference. I am busy with my journey in the area of writing. Though outwardly my life journey has slowed down but inwardly I am still in motion, that commotion you might find in course of our conversation.

**Shall we begin our conversation with the**

**family background thereby we move to the next?**

I would prefer to talk about the learning and doing in the Jesuit life-mission rather than all the background of the family and all that has taken place where there was no control of myself. The ministry will suffice all the quest of my brothers who are now busy working as well as who would be shouldering in the future mission of the society of Jesus. All the challenges and hardships they would undergo then they would have firm conviction in the life mission of the society; the vineyard of the Lord is much better to converse.

**Where did you find a start of your ministry in the society of Jesus?**

All that started in the regency period at Ambikapur; as a young Jesuit all seemed for me a pasture land ahead of me. I would see things critically and involve myself in all sorts of works which were in my vicinity.

My actual ministry started in Biru mission when I was appointed as rector of St. Mary's School, Samtoli, Simdega. I was appointed as the Rector among the senior members, I was not well accepted. The reason behind this was that there were approximately all the members of the community were elderly whereas I was a young guy to listen to. Practically most of the community members were busy working in the school and had less time to visit the country side. One of the areas we should look into is that beside our main apostolate we should have concern for the localities of our surrounding as the missionaries had. I took this aspect seriously and frequently visited the countryside to know the situation of the people and wanted to do something for them.





In fact, in the beginning, I wanted to be the part of the school but somehow or the other I did not join the school. It was the lord's plan at that period of time and something more was awaiting for me.

**A lot of things took place in those areas and your active involvement was seen among the people about various matters, I have heard about some and I myself have seen some of them. How would you see these things which have played a great role to form you as a person to manage the situation and take up such steps to contribute for the society in general?**

As I involve myself in the life of the people, I could see the misery and confusion in the market place. The common people were harassed in many ways. As far as I remember that there was a meeting in Kersai by the Hindu group, where they made a blunt comment- if the market is in our hands, then these Adivasi people could do nothing, and ultimately, they will fall back to our hands. That statement compelled me to take as a challenge and I opened *Atmnirver* i.e. Self-reliance shop. There were a good number of people who helped me in this endeavour. The concept behind this initiative was to empower our people to manage the market where we lose our money so easily. In the beginning it worked very well. The concept of

*Atmnirver* (self-reliance) spread far and wide. The simple people would not contain the strategy in their hearts and told the other party and later fall into the conspiracy and later faded away the very concept of that effort. A good number of people carried on their shops but many people could not retain the marketing skills.

**How do you look at now the whole incident of Nanesera, Simdega? How it had made an impact in your life and in the lives of the people in that locality?**

The whole story of Nanesera episode was a plot against capturing of the hillock but this case became more complex. People of that whole area were frightened due to the gathering of Hindus from other places like of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. No one among the priests and leaders dared to visit those places. An incident had taken place that was more heartbreaking and dangerous. There was a complain that in the water reservoirs like wells and Danri डाँड़ी (natural small wells) some unwanted things were put and because of that many people were falling sick. I myself took trouble to visit those places. I had emptied quite many wells and found some kind of jars thrown in them and some bubbles were coming out of them that were poisoning the water reservoirs. That became a burning issue. This issue was brought to the notice of the administration and so the commissioner of Ranchi had sent DIG to investigate the matter. This matter reached up to Patna and therefore an investigating team came from Patna to look into the matter. I was involved very closely in the issue, but there were certain incidents shook me from within. Those who were supposed to be the witnesses of the case would not turn up in the scene and they were unwilling to come to the place. I realized that the persons who could be the leaders of the community are not so responsible to take up challenges and stand for the truth. Due to these reasons which impelled me towards *Atmnirver*.

**When you were transferred from Samtoli to St. John's High School, Ranchi, What were**



**the challenges you faced as the headmaster of St. John's school, Ranchi. How did you tackle these challenges that made you strong in your conviction for your ministry?**

My transfer to St. John's Ranchi was so surprising for me because all of a sudden there was a call from the provincial. I was engaged in so many works and enjoying my life there. There was a network of works very specially of the *Atmnirver* (Self dependence shop). I took nearly three months to settle the things before leaving the place because a number of issues were involved in it. But finally with reluctant heart gave up that recently started and flourishing work of *Atmnirver*.

When I arrived at St. John's I found that academically St. John's high school, Ranchi was doing excellent work but on the other side the management was not very efficient with regard to the managerial skills and because of that a number of issues surfaced in the scene.

In my welcome address to the teachers, I acknowledged that I did know the management rules and regulations of the school and secondly, I do not have the experience of running the school. They told me of three problems of the school :-

First Illegal capture of the place St. John's School play-ground known as *genda khel ka maidan*.

Secondly, new appointment of the teachers in place of those who had retired from their service.

Thirdly, St. John's Middle school was derecognized by then DEO Ranchi named Mrs. Sushila Malhotra and so how to get back the recognition as the aided school by the government.

Since I was new and knew nothing of the management of the school so I went to meet Fr. Bob Slattery, SJ in St. Xavier's School, Hazaribag and got all the information about the management and looking at my interest in the school he was happy and encouraged me to go ahead and gave me the things I wanted.

**When did you find yourself that you got a new direction in your life-mission ?**

One of my biggest achievements could be the formulation of Bylaws of ALLBICSA (All Bihar Christian Schools Association) where at that time three persons were so active, namely Fr. Bob Slattery, SJ, Fr. Michael Ether and Sr. Marian (Nazareth Nun). Among these well-known persons my contribution was notable. This bylaws of the ALBICSA were meant for all the boards like ICSE, CBSE, and State Board schools which were run by the Christians.

In 1988 in the month of November ALBICSA called for an annual meeting in Patna. Somehow or the other I was not present in that meeting. In the same meeting they made me the secretary of ALBICSA. Some people objected because a person who is not present in the meeting was chosen for the secretary. Fr. Bob Slattery, SJ, Fr. Michael Ether and Sr. Marian supported me to be the secretary because they had seen my interest in this regard. So, finally I was chosen as the secretary of the minority association i.e. ALBICSA and I continued as secretary for Nine years for this association.

One of the biggest challenges lied in front of me was how to formulate the bylaws of ALBICSA The management rules were drafted in about 130 pages and sent out to all the principals of the schools for correction, comments and additions. Same draft was put before the headmaster's meeting, it was passed and finally came out as a book form entitled अखिल बिहार ख्रीस्तीय शिक्षण संस्था संघ का संविधान और सेवाशर्त नियामावली ।

**How far this book was helpful to you and what kind of direction you got in this book?**

This book gave me tremendous power and we won six cases as for my knowledge. I could remember two cases of Chaibasa, one of Hulhundu, one of Gumla, one of Jitato High School, Dumka and one of Kamdara. I will not go into the details of those cases but beside these there were number of issues dealt with the help of this book. Doranda case was also won through the help of this book- अखिल बिहार ख्रीस्तीय शिक्षण संस्था संघ का संविधान और सेवाशर्त नियामावली The high court advocate named Parth





Sarthi was very much instrumental to help us to follow up the cases in the high court.

**How did you manage to take such challenges? When did you cultivate such enthusiasm to face such difficulties and never stop doing your work in the areas of education? I admire your work in this area who were your inspirations in this regard?**

Well, I have seen great personalities in my life who worked as headmasters in St. John's school, Ranchi. Fr. Van Hoeck, SJ had a tremendous organizational skill. He would take his bicycle to meet the teachers in far away places and orient them for effective education. Fr. Oscar Sevrin, SJ was a very enthusiastic person in the area of education. Fr. Victor Tucker, SJ was such an energetic person who would take the education to the villages. He was well known person in the area of education. Bihar Government was calling him to Patna for consultation regarding educational matters. He had suggested the Government to give home work to the students. He kept abreast to the teaching ability, skills for the school department. Fr. Tucker was the responsible person to make the SJ training equivalent to B. ED degree. These stalwarts were my inspiration to carry forward the work of education and the formation of organization of the teachers.

**I had read your books that are very interesting. In the area of writing as a writer How did you cultivate the interest in writing?**

Actually, when I was coming from somewhere I used to write them in bit and pieces just to narrate the incidents to the others. It so happened once I was collecting my writings someone dropped in my room and saw me gathering the pieces of paper where few things were written he asked me to write them in the book form. I pondered over the matter and started writing them. My first book was *U; k losjk* then a series of books were written

for the catechism classes in school like ईश्वर हमारे साथ, मसीह के साथ साक्षात्कार, निजी विश्वास की खोज, उनकी पुकार मेरी स्वीकृति, सात संस्कार के पाठ. These following books are my own personal creation 1. तपते जीवन की सुगंध 2. संख नदी भरी गेल कहानी संग्रह a good number of articles were written for Rahi Magazine.

**I have seen you as a singer and composer of songs. How many songs you have composed? Could you through some light in this area too?**

Yes, I could remember when I was sitting beside the Sankh river and waiting for bus then I had composed a song rather a hymn that is दान हमारा ले ले प्रभु जी 2. प्रभु आता मैं तेरे पास 3. रोटी दाखरस के रूप में 4. प्रभु राजा मेरे दिल में आजा 5. येसु प्यारा मरियम दुलारा 6. जी उठे मेरे प्रभु जी उठे है I don't remember, I have forgotten many of them.

**But I remember many of them I have sung yours hymn in the chapel? What about your passion narrative and Jyoti Gungan for the Easter vigil?**

Fr. James smiled and nodded with approval saying- so you remember them. My passion narrative was the current demand of the time, many were composing, so I did. I composed that jyoti Gungan (praising Easter light) also. I loved to sing.

**How do you feel at this juncture of life? What were the guiding principles that led you to work in your life, so, you could do a number of things that became a Hallmark for us youngsters?**

I am satisfied for my life. I treasured for myself two guiding principles that let my life and work carry forward. First Anything set before you, work them with full determination within yourself. Secondly, we should have vision of our own and aspire for something more, something greater, better, that is Magis.



41

## Fr. K.C. Philip, SJ : Anchored in Joy, Bound for Horizon's Call

**Fr. Sylverius Chermako, SJ**

• Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum



A ship in harbor is always safe but that is not what it is built for.

### Early life

God's Own Land, Kerala has its own charm, not just for its natural and geographical variety and beauty but there are many proceeds that captivate people's attention in general. In terms of Jesuits, while Jesuits were later banned in the state, Fr. K. C. Philip was one who caught the attention of many searching eyes.

Born on 14 March 1944, in Kaduthurthy, Kerala, India he was raised up in a devout Catholic family with seven brothers and a sister. His childhood was marked by open communication, empathy and understanding among siblings, fostering strong bonds and supportive environment.

Their home, a sanctuary of love and respect, where thoughts and feelings flowed, a family united, in a warm and peaceful space. This nurturing atmosphere allowed them to deepen their bonds and flourish as a family.

Primary schooling days saw a reluctant phase, yet goals were set, and dreams unfazed but sister's compassion, tender and bright, guided his path with gentle light. Jesuits beckoned from Leo XII School; his elder brother answered the calls. The echo of the call also fell in the ears of K. C. Philip and a new chapter with a different sub-plot in the story unfolded.

Despite initial reluctance towards education, his encounter with Jesuits during High School sparked his interest in joining the Society of Jesus.

### His Jesuit Vocation

As High School ended, the quest in his heart intensified. A missionary seed took root in his heart and it found its shoot. The young K.C. Philip and his elder brother were interviewed for their recruitment for the Jesuit candidates. KC recalls that his elder brother was more enthusiastic than he. Yet the call of God through Jesuits kept reverberating in the heart of KC with doubts and desires blending together as is the case for many vocations. Yet the choice was to be made with free will.

KC says that one of his classmates joined the Hazaribagh Jesuit Province. K. C. Philip sought the help of the Director to discern better and he asked, "which is the better Province to join?" He replied, "Ranchi. It is a missionary province." KC as he says that hearing the response, longing to join Ranchi Jesuit province was further strengthened. Thus, the seed of becoming a missionary was sown







in his heart. His interest to become a Jesuit in a missionary province started maturing. God has His own ways to mature the person whom he calls. As he was preparing himself to start his journey to Ranchi to join the Missionary Province, a sudden shocking blow, took away his father, leaving tears to flow. Why, Oh God! did you take him away?" His heart did cry, yet in the darkness, a glimmer of trust did ignite leading him to Ranchi. Like Abraham, he stepped forth, into unknown land, with faith as his shield, and the Lord's promise to stand. The Lord's plan a tapestry rich, with threads of love and care, unfolded.

### **Motivation for Mission**

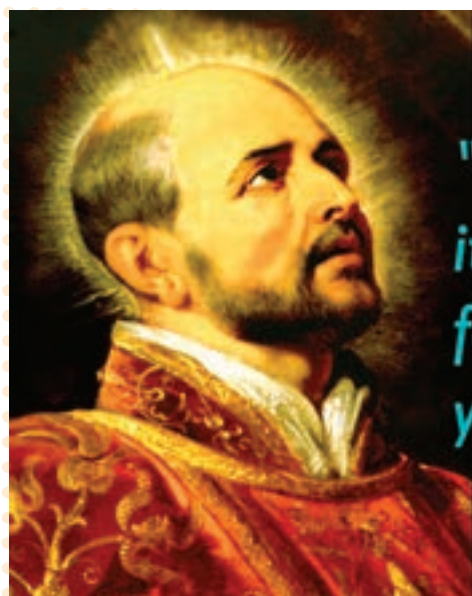
With zeal ablaze, Fr. K.C. Philip did stepped into the Society's fold, in 1963. He says that in the initial years of formation, he was inspired by the idea that mastering Latin and English would enable him to serve God and humanity more effectively. With dedication and spirit of excellence (Magis), he quickly learned Latin and English, with eager grace and made his first vows in Latin within two years. Through Juniorate, university studies, philosophy, theology and university programs across different sites in India he kept his quest on and was ordained a priest, on 12 May 1976. However, Society's needs led him to Shembaganur for Tertianship, a change that initially unsettled him, yet he heard an inner

call to find happiness in all circumstances, standing tall.

He recalled the saying, like a ship built for the sea, not a safe harbor's hold. After Tertianship, he embraced his new mission, with heart of gold. As a Director of Pre-Novitiate, he began molding many young aspirants to be Jesuits. Through various centers he continued to serve in Formation houses, such as SSC Juniorate, DNC, Satya Nilayam, ISI, Delhi etc. Currently at Jharna, his retreat ministry keeps shining, guiding many seeking souls to God. He does it with great compassion and empathy - a Formator's responsibility, a journey to the heart of God. He humbly acknowledges that while he may not have baptized many, he has helped shaped lives living the life of Baptism.

### **Message for the young Jesuits**

"As we navigate life's challenges, we inevitably encounter darkness and adversity. Yet, we must remain steadfast in our belief that love's pure light will guide us back home. For in the face of evil's bitter night, love's gentle power will banish the night. With God our companion, our hearts will ignite, and in uncertainty's darkest plight, he will lead us through, a beacon in sight. So let us hold fast to hope's unwavering flame, and never yield to despair. For nothing can quench the joy that we have gained, as Jesuits, beloved, in God's loving reign.



**"If God sends you many sufferings, it is a sign that He has great plans for you and certainly wants to make you a saint." -St. Ignatius Of Loyola**



42

## Fr. Henry Barla, SJ : Born to Lead...

**Fr. Sanjay Kerketta, SJ**

• *St. Xavier's College, Ranchi*



Only when we begin to place ourselves in the past, we begin to understand our present which in turn helps discern and envision our future meaningfully. That is the process of Ignatian Spirituality. After the spadework of Fr.

Cardon and other Belgian Missionaries in Biru mission, when Fr. Edmond Digriace, SJ, a Belgian Missionary to Chhotanagpur Mission was installed as the first Parish Priest of Kurdeg, one of the oldest parishes of then Ranchi Diocese in 1903, it evolved as a Promised Land for the people in the vicinity. Already showing great inklings of fervent evangelization, it did not take much time to flourish as a magnificent parish in the Biru Mission along with Rengarih and Samtoli. It immediately picked up the momentum and became a cradle of vocation for the Catholic Church. Mr. Gabriel Barla, Head Catechist of the parish along with his spouse Angela Barla hailing from, Konjoba may have dreamt any of his offspring (seven of them) to follow the suit. Fr. Henry Barla born in 1946 along with his sister, Sr. Ursula Barla fulfilled his dreams. Known for his gift of the gab he says he stammered to express his desire to be a priest in-front of Fr. Emile Soreng, Head Master of Sacred Heart School. Once embarked, he did not turn back. He was born to lead and as a member of the Society of Jesus of Ranchi Province, he led from the front.

Here's a glimpse of tête-à-tête with Fr. Henry Barla, who now actively works in Assam Mission at the age of 78.

### **Fr. Henry, where and how was the seed of vocation sown in your life?**

I have absolutely no notion; it seems to have been an enigma. One morning after the classes, without any purpose, I found myself in the office

of the Head Master, Rev. Emile Soreng; he was from Lachragarh. He asked me what I wanted. I was confused as I had nothing to reply. I stammered out that I wanted to go to the apostolic school, but my father would not be able to pay for my schooling. With that everything rested. Some months after my mother's death on the feast of the Lord's Ascension, my father informed my sisters and brothers after the family prayer of my intention to go to the apostolic school. Rev. Emile sent me to Gumla. Fr. Polycarp Toppo, the Director, called me the same evening and said: Rev. Marcus Tirkey, your PP of Kurdeg, has arrived in the Gumla Parish and wants you to go to the Ranchi Apostolic School tomorrow. Fr. Wim Missiaen received me in Ranchi and my life began there.

### **How did your vocation grow in the course of your life and how did you personally cement and testify it?**

There were some fast friends; Fr. Patrick Kerketta was one; and quite a few others who discontinued; some have already gone to the Lord. They were a great support to me in my studies. The second and lasting factor was poverty that accompanied me till I joined the Novitiate. It made me weep very often. My father simply could not pay my fees and for a few needs like ink and copybooks. He was a Head Catechist but received Rs 3/- There were many other painful moments related to this point. I had two considerate Regents: Fr. Antony Parapullil, and the late Fr. Alexander Beck. They were unaware of my problems, but their cordial relationship with me was something that I still cherish.

### **What were the defining moments in your life in terms of vocation?**

After my Intermediate the time finally arrived either to be a religious or a diocesan priest. My father had the intimation that I had already decided to become a Jesuit and was firm with the





decision. My father began to go through sleepless nights. His contention was that as a diocesan priest I would help the family economically, help my sisters and brothers (we were seven siblings). He also gave me several examples of the diocesan priests who had helped their families. I disagreed and left home and went to Jamshedpur where I stayed with some acquaintances. I was implacable but at the same time shamefaced because I was noncompliant to my father. Unexpectedly one day I received a letter from my father, asking me to return home; he had his consent that I could join the Jesuits. I knew he was a very holy man, always deep in prayer. He had taken time to discern, and made a fine discernment. He borrowed money and collected the material I had to bring to the Novitiate. Years later when I went home after my priestly ordination, both of us went to plough. There being alone I looked at his face and asked him, "Are you happy now that I am a Jesuit?" Copious tears bathed his face before he could say, "Yes; my son." This episode could be said a defining moment in my journey to be a Jesuit.

### **What do you cherish from your formation years?**

Companionship and guidance during my years of formation were times of joy. Of course, the growing years have their own pangs and take their

spasmodic tolls. And I had not a quite mishap. The classical Juniorate in Bangalore was a jolly time. I hated studying Greek there. But years later it came on a platter when I had to grind myself in Rome for four years. Everywhere I had very loving and concerned Local Superiors. Besides, I had five Provincials before the mantle fell on me. Of them all I cherish most the late Fr. Luc Verstraete. I was always welcome in his office where I walked in uninformed whenever I needed to share or unburden myself. He had immense patience for me. I am eternally grateful to him. But for him, I might not be in the Society today.

### **What differences do you perceive in terms of formation between your time and present?**

Well, the Society of Jesus is not an unchanging organization. You may recall that its founder never left the Society's Constitutions finished; rather he went on revising it. Fr. Nadal was commissioned to go round and get the feedback to St Ignatius. So, the Society is never constant. One of its great pillars is adaptability. The Vatican II gave fresh spirit to the Society. P. Arrupe, then Superior General, helped bring in sea changes in the Society through GC 31, GC 32. Many Jesuits were disturbed; thousands said quit. But this is the only Society that St. Ignatius instituted and there is no other. Principles keep changing because the Spirit calls the best out of us and also shows the way in new situations. Many elements have changed since I joined the Society in 1966, but at each step the transition has been handled smoothly and the fresh components have found their way in our systems of living and acting. However, a sensitive point could be noted. Whereas the Jesuits earlier were more flexible and available for any tough ministries, the present generation of Jesuits are somewhat comfort-seeking, and look for those institutions which offer better amenities, e.g., ACs, living facilities, etc. It stinks when such men give others advice on poverty, *cura personalis*, etc., when they have no tinge of poverty or lack of basic living facilities. This is what I perceive in some Jesuits of present age. The higher a monkey goes up the tree, the more of its red butts can be seen. And I also have been a victim of it. Whether



then or now, every Jesuit needs to be open to the Spirit, generous, and committed. There is no other way you can say “any difference between the former and the modern Jesuits?”

### **How were you inspired to study Scriptures and pursue in it as a Jesuit?**

Was I inspired to study Scripture? No; I was asked to go to study and willy-nilly I had to be in it. Once I wanted to return. But when I spoke to my Superior there, the secret leaked out; and three Jesuit Professors got behind me: a German, an American, and an Australian. The third one was jokingly known as Sir William of Perth! All helped me in turn. I also had a great Belgian friend who was doing his doctorate. We seemed to be stuck with fevicol, and he helped me especially in Hebrew. The Rector knew we were always hanging together! Later on, my friend visited my home. I took Syriac language by obedience: almost like Aramaic language. However, a very old German retired Professor coached me in it.

### **Whose companies do you cherish most as a young priest in the Society?**

Many of my Jesuit friends have already left this world for their heavenly reward. A great loss. My co-novice in Ranchi Province still around? Fr. Patrick Kerketta. You might think, so Fr. Henry Barla is ploughing a lonely furrow! Whose companies do I cherish “most” (superlative!)? with whomsoever I am.

### **You were entrusted with various leadership missions in the Society – Provincial of Ranchi Province, Rector of St. Albert’s Major Seminary, Rector of Vidya Jyoti Delhi, a national theologate centre. How do you assess your life as a leader in these responsibilities?**

The offices of Administration are for those who seek honour, like one of our good Jesuit who embraced the silent desire to become a Bishop, and he did! I was thrust into the job of the Provincial even though I knew nothing about our men and ministries. There was no one to introduce me to the office. Quite a few

talented scholastics were waiting to quit during my six years. It was a sad affair. Coming to know our men and apostolates (cura personalis et cura apostolica) took all my time. I am very grateful to our men for their cooperation. I might have made enemies, why not? Six years are enough, I think, to make a few enemies! The late Fr. P. H. Kolvenbach called me once to for dinner, and in course of time, asked me to take up the Rector’s job at St. Albert’s. (The late Fr. John Kerketta was then our Provincial.) I was there only five years. The years were quite tough. I found it very hard to dialogue with the Conference of Bishops. Besides I was a person of high temper. I was not aware that dignitaries of certain class had to be given kid glove treatment. After five years in St. Albert’s, I was holidaying in Dalhousie. Fr. Lisbert D’Sousa (POSA) woke me up from my siesta asking me to be the Rector of Vidya Jyoti, Delhi. My prompt question was: When do you want me to be there? “Come in June,” was the answer. Six years at VJ with the Jesuits were the best years in my administrative job, so I think even now. Unfortunately, in March-end 2000, I met with a bus accident which incapacitated much of my good will and activities. Fr. Christopher Lakra (Provincial) sent me a letter of appointment to come to Tarunoday to teach Scripture there. I was there for ten years. I came to know many scholastics but have already forgotten them. Life with the scholastics, whether in Vidya Jyoti or Tarunoday, was very enjoyable. Thereafter I was appointed (by Fr. Marianus Kujur) Rector of St. Xavier’s College, Ranchi, for two years and some months. I think, I was not meant for educational institutions. It was better that I was removed from there and stayed over a year at Ashirwad-Jharna then to St. Xavier’s Doranda for time pass. Thank God, no more administrative responsibilities. And may God be praised for the ups and downs. For the little I have been able to do in the Society, all honour and praise to Him.

### **What is most fulfilling in your life as a Jesuit?**

In the Society if there has been and is anything most fulfilling for me is the community. Life meaningfully spent and done something worthwhile with the





companions brings much satisfaction and blessing. Our Jesuit pioneers for the lack of manpower lived and slogged alone and suffered much; the majority of them lived and worked alone with the Alone. A lonely drive on today's expressway can be managed only by those who find it difficult to live in a community. (It would be a tall tale or a propaganda to assert that community is mission.)

### **What would you like to change individually if you were to receive another Jesuit vocation?**

Excuse me, but the point is not clear to me. Change me or some another individual? And to receive another Jesuit vocation? Vocations of Jesus' twelve disciples were special, but in general just one vocation. Jesus did not send them out to become princes; they were to wash the feet of others. I believe all vocations in the Church could be summarised in that one phrase—washing others' feet. I would not be able to change that, though it may take another form.

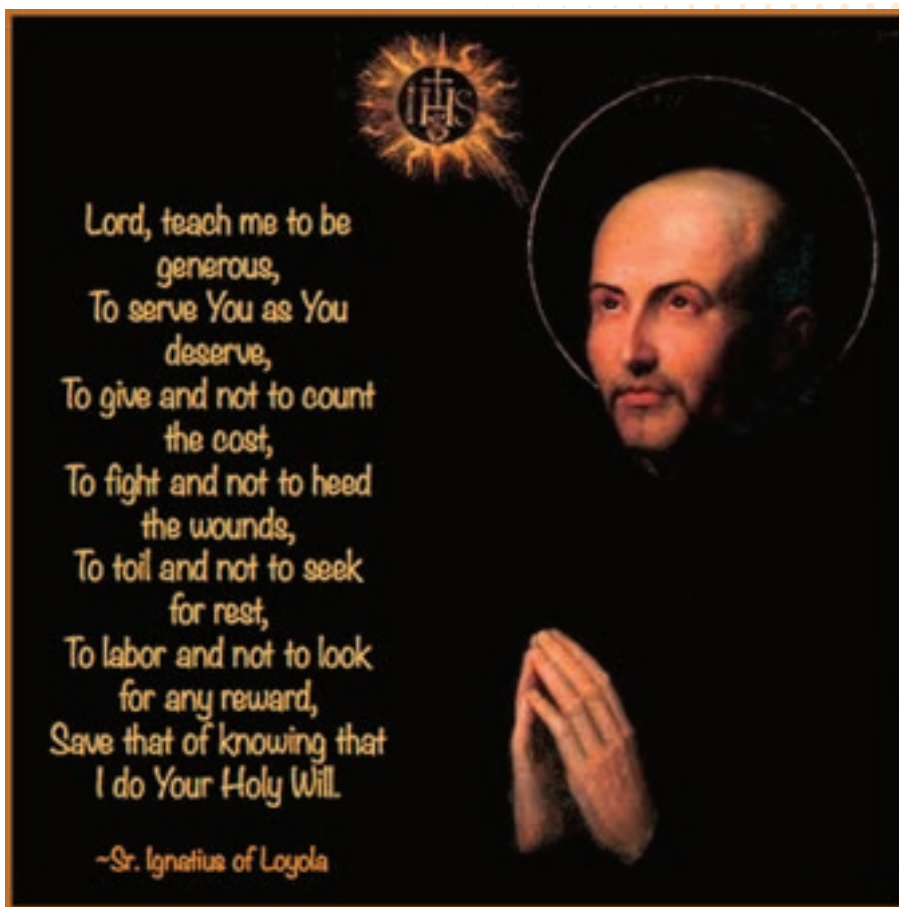
### **How do you perceive the present challenges locally, nationally and globally for the Society of Jesus?**

It seems to me that only the social workers can discuss this point meaningfully. However, since these are life-issues and affect all aspects of our ways of living and way of proceeding, perforce the Society must explore them in the light of the Spirit and proceed according to the charism of the Society. These concerns assist us to move according to the signs of the time and adapt our approach to our ministries. We need to be convinced that these challenges open up doors to new opportunities, all for the AMDG.

### **Your message to the young**

### **generation and the Jesuits of Ranchi Province.**

Fr. Sanjay, you are a very optimistic person since you still believe that the younger generation take to heart any message senior Jesuits may give! However, I should like to say that the personnel of our Province are very youthful and energetic. They are full of ideas and dreams. And dreams we must dream. We need to labour as a team; that is the source of our energy. With the strength of our Jesuit spirituality, we need to work with the Local Church and the personnel of other religious families. Secondly, know the preliminary history of the Ranchi (Chotanagpur) Mission History from H. Josson, Fr. L. Clarysse on C. Lievens, and the latest volume published jointly by Frs. Alex Ekka and Francis Minj. Without knowing our roots on what can we build? We will be like the BPL (bina pende ka lota). Finally, plan out what your ministries will be like ten years from now.





**SECTION**



**KAIROS MOMENTS**





43

## The First Perpetual vows : An entry into Jesuit life

**Fr. Sylverius Chermako, SJ**

• Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum



**O**n 21 June 2024, a significant milestone was celebrated at the Ashirvad Novitiate in Namkum, as six novices pronounced their

perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Provincial Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ. Many Jesuits, religious, and well-wishers from neighboring communities were there to witness this Kairos moment.

Meanwhile, Fr. Raymond Kerketta, Socius to the Provincial, journeyed to Shillong to partake in another momentous occasion. Two young novices pronounced their first vows in the chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola at Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate, Mawshohroh. Fr. Melvin Pereira, SJ, Regional Superior of Kohima Region preached and received their Vows during the Holy Eucharist officiated by Fr. Raymond Kerketta.



The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are the cornerstones of Jesuit life. These vows signify a total devotion to God and the mission of the Society of Jesus. By embracing poverty, Jesuits commit to a life of simplicity, free from material possessions. Chastity allows them to dedicate themselves wholly to their spiritual mission, and obedience signifies their readiness to follow God's will as expressed through their superiors.

This profound commitment reflects the Jesuit mission's essence, embodying the Ignatian spirit of finding God in all things and serving others selflessly. The novices' dedication is a testament to their faith and the enduring strength of Jesuit values in today's world.





44

## A Bumper Harvest : Priestly Ordinations in 2024

**Fr. Ashok Sandil, SJ**

• *Christ the King Church, Kanke*



The Catholic Church views the priesthood as an essential component of its sacramental structure, ensuring the continuation of the ministry of Christ on earth. The priest's role includes offering the

sacrifice of the Mass, administering sacraments, providing pastoral care, and teaching the faith. The theological foundation for the priesthood is deeply rooted in biblical principles and the apostolic tradition as interpreted by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Nine new priests were ordained in Ranchi Province in January 2024 this year. Below, you will find a brief life journey of each of them with a special highlight on their vocational journey.

### **FR. AMIT JUEL LAKRA, SJ**

Fr. Amit Juel Lakra, SJ was ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Albert Hemrom DD, Bishop of Dibrugarh, on 7 January 2024 at St. Xavier's Catholic Church Pengaree in the Catholic Diocese of Dibrugarh, Assam.

The sacerdotal ceremony was performed in the distinguished presence of 42 priests, many religious sisters, and the faithful.

Fr. Amit was born on 16 February 1988 in his native place, Ranchi Line, Pengaree Tea Estate. His parents, Mr. Juel Lakra and Mrs. Milani Lakra, are hardworking and engaged in bamboo work even after their retirement from the tea garden works. Although illiterate, they have good ideas for raising their children to be good persons. They



have six children and Fr. Amit is the second eldest. His father moved to Assam from Moreng village under Konbir Noatoli Parish when he was 12 years old and settled there, working in the Pengaree Tea Estate. The family decided to stay in Pengaree but remained connected to their close relatives now residing in Sakeya village under Dalmadi Parish in Jharkhand. Thus, Fr. Amit holds dual citizenship of Assam and Jharkhand.

Fr. Amit did not attend any apostolic or boarding school. Instead, he went to the Parish School in Philobari (his previous Parish) as a day scholar and walked up and down every day. His initial faith formation came from his family and the Parish, slowly involving him in various activities and functions of the Church and School. As a result, he regularly attended Sunday Mass. He was also attracted to the administrative lifestyle and faithful commitment of the Priests he encountered, which gradually cultivated an inclination towards their way of life. After completing his schooling at the Parish School, he joined St. Xavier's Junior College Balipara, where he met the Jesuits. Two years of his life in the boarding influenced him to become a Jesuit. Despite family concerns and the temptation to stay home and support them financially, he remained focused on his conviction. Once he made up his mind, he never turned back.

Fr. Amit began his journey in the Society of Jesus by joining the Pre-Novitiate at Jivan Deep Khunti in 2009. He then became a Novice at Ashirvad Novitiate Namkum in 2010 and pronounced his First Vows on 21 June 2012. He moved to Sanjivan Nivas Patna to complete his Juniorate from 2012 to 2013 and returned to the Province to attend St. Xavier's College Ranchi between 2013 and 2016. He studied philosophy at Satya Nilayam Chennai





from 2016 to 2018. Following this, he completed his Regency at St. John's School Balipara from 2018 to 2020. Fr. Amit then pursued his theology studies at JFCT Tarunoday Kanke and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. After his diaconate ministry at Kathalguri Parish, he was ordained as a Priest in the order of Melchizedek, a priest forever. Fr. Amit views the Society of Jesus as a mother who has provided him with love, care, and concern. Throughout his formation, the Jesuits supported and inspired him, which helped him grow even more. The Jesuits' companionship gave him a sense of belonging to the Universal Society.

Fr. Amit, a priest, has chosen "By the Grace of God, I am who I am" (1 Cor. 15:10) as his sacerdotal motto. He selected this motto because he has realized over the years that he is nothing without the Grace of God. His current state is all due to God's grace, making him a child of God. He feels happy being part of the society of Jesus, and this is all because of God's grace.

### FR. SANJAY TIGGA, SJ



Fr. Sanjay Tigga, SJ was ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Anand Jojo DD, Bishop of Hazaribagh, on 13 January 2024 at St. Mary's Catholic Church Katkahi in the Catholic Diocese of Gumla.

The ordination ceremony was joined by 68 priests, several religious sisters, and the faithful.

Fr. Sanjay was born in a religious family on 9 October 1989 to Mr. Tobias Tigga and Mrs. Martha Lakra. He was born in Chhichhwani in the Katkahi Parish of the Gumla Diocese. He is the eldest among his three brothers and one sister.

As a little boy, he was already drawn to the priesthood. Seeing priests saying Holy Mass in the Church and working in the schools in the Parish fascinated him. He often served as an altar boy during Sunday Mass and was always impressed by how Priests and Sisters conducted themselves

during visits to his village. Everything would be done differently whenever they visited, from ceremonies such as Holy Mass, Holy Communion, Confessions, and occasionally Weddings. He desired to be like them, to bring about positive change among the people, and to make a difference in their lives.

When he was still in middle school, his parents asked him what he wanted to do and where to attend high school. He couldn't answer them, so he started reflecting on his life. That's when Fr. Raju, the Principal of his School, stepped in to help him find his calling. Following his advice, he decided to attend the Apostolic School at Gumla. During his time there, Holy Mass inspired him every day.

After matriculating at St. Ignatius' High School Gumla in 2007, he entered the Minor Seminary Ranchi. He completed his Intermediate studies at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2007 to 2009. Following this, he spent a year at Jivan Deep Pre-Novitiate Khunti from 2009 to 2010. He then moved to St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha for his Novitiate, where he stayed for two years from 2010 to 2012. After completing his Novitiate, he went to Sanjivan Nivas Patna for his Juniorate from 2012-2013. Subsequently, he graduated in history at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016. He completed his Philosophy studies at Satya Nilayam Chennai from 2016 to 2018. After that, he did his regency at the Minor Seminary Ranchi from 2018 to 2020, attached to the Manresa House Ranchi. He studied Theology at JFCT Tarunoday Kanke and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. He was ordained a deacon at Vidyajyoti Delhi on 18 February 2023. Following this, he was sent to St. Xavier's Church Manas Bansbari, Assam, for diaconate ministry.

The motto chosen for his ordination is, "I have called you by name; you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1). This biblical verse is a source of inspiration and a message from God, assuring of His personal and intimate relationship with him. The verse emphasizes God's special and individual care for him, providing a sense of belonging, love, and



protection. It highlights the personal nature of God's relationship with him, reminding him of every event in his life and helping him serve God.

### FR. CELESTINE MINJ, SJ



Fr. Celestine Minj, SJ, along with his colleagues Fr. Nelson Minj, SJ and Fr. Sandeep Birendra Bage, SJ, were ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Vincent Barwa DD, Bishop of Simdega, at Catholic Church Rengarih in the Catholic

Diocese of Simdega on 14 January 2024. The ordination ceremony was attended by 100 priests, numerous religious sisters, and the faithful.

Fr. Celestine was born on 7 March 1983, in Paikpara Rugritoli village under Rengarih Parish. He is the youngest of seven brothers. His parents, Mr. Dominic Minj and Mrs. Victoria Minj, unfortunately passed away in 2012. The family had to deal with many issues, and his parents worked tirelessly as farmers to provide for the family. Despite the struggles, they did everything possible to support the family and meet their needs.

As a young boy of just five years old, the spark of a religious calling was ignited within him by Fr. Vital Ekka, SJ, who was the Parish Priest of Rengarih at the time. It all began when he saw Fr. Ekka during a house blessing ceremony. After the Holy Mass, when family members gathered around, Fr. Ekka noticed him standing close to his mother in shabby clothes. He approached him and asked his name. When he hesitated to answer, he held his hand and asked if he wanted to become a priest like himself. Fearfully, I nodded his head, perhaps inspired by the spirit from within. This 'Yes' slowly kindled a fire within him. Fr. Ekka's glittering Mass vestments and his friendly and loving face charmed him, and over the years, this particular dramatic scene lingered in his mind and echoed in his heart – a promise he made to become a priest. Of course, his beloved mother was instrumental in creating a deep-seated desire within him to realize this dream one day.

He had a desire to become a priest, so he joined the Apostolic School Gumla. However, he felt homesick and left his studies in Gumla to continue his education at the Parish School until his matriculation in 2003. Afterward, he was encouraged by his elder brother to attend St. Mary's School Samtoli for Intermediate studies, where he stayed with his brother. During this time, he became fascinated by the Jesuits and their life and mission. He was selected for Pre-Novitiate during a Summer Camp at Minor Seminary Ranchi and completed his Pre-Novitiate from Jivan Deep Khunti between 2006 and 2007. He became a Novice at Ashirvad Novitiate Namkum and made his First Vows on 21 June 2009. He then pursued his classical Juniorate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2009 to 2010. He was later sent to Don Bosco Technical Institute Delhi to specialize in that field from 2010 to 2013. Later, he pursued his bachelor's degree at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016. After completing his degree, he went to De Nobili College Pune for Philosophy studies from 2016 to 2018, followed by a Regency at St. Ignatius' School Gumla from 2018 to 2020. After his Regency, he went to JFCT Tarunoday Kanke for Theological studies from 2020 to 2022. Finally, he completed his theological studies at Vidyajyoti College Delhi and was ordained as a deacon on 18 February 2023. He served as a deacon at the Catholic Church Palizi in Arunachal Pradesh. Throughout his journey as a Scholastic, he has encountered numerous challenges. Initially, he looked for God outside of himself, but after undergoing the Long Retreat, he came to the realization that the path to finding God lies within. This realization has transformed his entire perspective on life, and he now strives to live these experiences daily. Despite struggles and hardships in the family, they have fueled his passion to grow in his decision to follow Christ and pursue this noble vocation.

He embraced the motto of his ordination, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (Jn. 15:16), realizing that God's ways are completely different from his own. He feels God has chosen him for a





purpose and saved him in many instances. He has experienced God's love and protection in every sphere of his life, and God has chosen him to work in His vineyard. As a human being, he has tried to go astray from God's presence, but God never left him. There were moments when he grappled with choices and chances, and this Biblical passage consoled him. It reminds him that the most profound and fulfilling journey begins when he realizes that God works wonders in and through him. Eventually, this verse helped him to embrace God's plan and trust in the process by surrendering himself fully into the hands of God.

### FR. NELSON MINJ, SJ



Fr. Nelson Minj, SJ was ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Vincent Barwa DD, Bishop of Simdega, at Catholic Church Rengarih in the Catholic Diocese of Simdega on 14 January 2024, along with his two companions, Fr. Celestine

Minj, SJ and Fr. Sandeep Birendra Bage, SJ The ordination ceremony was witnessed by 100 priests, several religious sisters, and a large number of the faithful.

Fr. Nelson comes from Chirratoli village in Rengarih Parish under Simdega Diocese in Jharkhand. He is the second of four siblings of Mr. Teophil Minj and Mrs. Francisca Kindo.

As a child, he worked as a shepherd boy and spent most of his time caring for the cattle. At first, he wasn't interested in going to school and had to drop out of the village school after just one year to continue looking after the cattle at home. However, his parents later enrolled him in a mission school run by the Jesuits, where he gradually developed a passion for learning and started studying seriously. After completing his sixth year of schooling at R. C. Middle School Rengarih, he was inspired to become a priest after seeing the Jesuits at the school. In 2007, he was selected to attend the Apostolic School at Samtoli and completed his matriculation from St. Mary's High School Samtoli. He fondly remembers

his father taking him to Sunday Mass on a bicycle and passing on his faith in Christ to him. He is grateful to his Godparents, whose contribution was essential in helping him grow in his Catholic faith. He firmly believes that God is loving and caring in every situation of his life.

He stayed at Minor Seminary Ranchi and completed his Intermediate studies at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2007 to 2009. Later, in 2009, he joined Jivan Deep Pre-Novitiate Khunti. After a year of learning the language and understanding the spirit and charism of the Society of Jesus, he was invited to join Ashirvad Novitiate Namkum as a Novice in 2010. He pronounced his First Vows on 21 June 2012 after spending two years in the Novitiate. Following this, he went through the regular Jesuit Formation, which included Juniorate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2012 to 2013, Graduation in Arts at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016, Philosophy at Satya Nilayam Chennai from 2016 to 2018, Regency at St. Mary's Hostel Samtoli from 2018 to 2020, and Theology at JFCT Tarunoday and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. He was ordained a deacon at Vidyajyoti Delhi by His Grace Anil J. T. Couto, Archbishop of Delhi, on 18 February 2023. He completed his Deaconate Ministry at St. Joseph Catholic Church Prothrapur, Andaman.

His Ordination Motto is "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). He reminisces about his childhood and takes comfort in these words of the Lord. This inspiration has deeply affected him, and he believes that God planned to anoint him to bring good news to the people and serve the people of God. He is convinced that God sent him into this world to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, and to announce a year acceptable to the Lord. He is happy to serve the poor and is compassionate towards the needy. He is grateful to God for the vocation he received in the Society of Jesus. He acknowledges the support of his companions and formators in different stages of formation in the Society.



### **FR. SANDEEP BIRENDRA BAGE, SJ**



Fr. Sandeep Birendra Bage, SJ was ordained a priest at the Catholic Church Rengarih in the Catholic Diocese of Simdega on 14 January 2024. Rt. Rev. Vincent Barwa DD, Bishop of Simdega, conducted the sacerdotal ceremony and

it was attended by 100 priests, several religious sisters, and a large number of the faithful. Fr. Bage was ordained along with his companions, Fr. Celestine Minj SJ and Fr. Nelson Minj SJ.

Fr. Sandeep comes from Raibera village under Rengarih Parish in Simdega Diocese. He was born into a Christian family to Mr. Vincent Bage and Mrs. Mariam Kerketta on 17 November 1987. His father is a hardworking farmer, and his mother is a housewife. Although both are illiterate, they strongly desire their children to study. He has two younger brothers. He is the eldest son in the family. The inspiring thing about his family is that his parents pray every evening, attend Sunday Mass, and pay attention to spiritual activities. They live happy and peaceful life with whatever they have.

As a child, he was fascinated by the choir of brothers who would come to the village Church on feast days and special occasions. Attending Church every Sunday with his parents, he would inquire about these boys, wondering who they were. His mother would explain that they were studying in a good school and would become priests. Similarly, he was curious about the altar boys and received the same response. He expressed his desire to attend a good school, so he began attending R. C. Boys' Middle School Rengarih. One day, a friend told him about the Apostolic School, where the boys recited prayers and conversed in English. This inspired him to improve his studies, and after two years, he applied to attend the Apostolic School at Samtoli. His parents agreed, and thus began his journey into this vocation, fuelled by his love for musical instruments and the English language.

He slowly learned about the life of the Society of

Jesus and found himself attracted to the Jesuit lifestyle. He felt called to serve God and His people and joined the Society. After completing Pre-novitiate, he told his parents he wanted to become a priest. He was afraid they would not allow him to pursue this path, as he was the eldest son in the family. However, they surprised him by saying that it was his life and that his happiness was more important than their desires. He was grateful for their support. In the Society of Jesus, he is inspired by the trust and companionship of his fellow Jesuits and the love, care, and concern they share. He is very happy in his service to God and the Society.

He completed his Intermediate studies at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2007 to 2009. He then did his Pre-Novitiate at Jivan Deep Khunti from 2009 to 2010 and his Novitiate at Ashirvad Novitiate Namkum from 2010 to 2012. He pursued his Juniorate at Sanjivan Nivas Patna from 2012 to 2013 and continued his studies at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016. He completed his Philosophical studies at De Nobili College Pune from 2016 to 2018. He then did his Regency at St. Stanislaus' High School Lohardaga from 2018 to 2020 before finishing his Theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, from 2020 to 2023. Finally, he completed his diaconate ministry at the Catholic Church in Sarwada.

His ordination motto is "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16), which reflects his vocation story. Initially, he was attracted to musical instruments and learning the English language, but God led and shaped him in a different direction. Many Jesuits inspired him along the way. Today, he is happy and grateful to God and those who helped him experience God's love and understand the meaning and purpose of his life.

### **FR. SURESH JOHN TIRKEY, SJ**

Fr. Suresh John Tirkey, SJ was ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Linus Pingal Ekka DD, Bishop of Gumla, on 18 January 2024, at the Catholic Church Bhikhampur in the Catholic







Diocese of Gumla. The ordination ceremony was attended by 32 priests, numerous religious sisters, and faithful members.

Fr. Suresh comes from Koda village in Bhikhampur Parish under the Gumla Catholic Diocese. He is the youngest of five siblings in the family of the late Mr. Placious Tirkey and Mrs. Carlina Tirkey.

Since childhood, he received a good faith formation from his mother at home. Living close to the Parish, he was inspired to attend church regularly and became the Mass server every Sunday. Looking at his vocation today, he feels grateful to his villagers, friends, and teachers who helped him grow in many ways. Their encouragement led him to choose the priesthood life, bringing him closer to God. He could not join the Apostolic School during his first attempt, although his friends were accepted. He considered it a significant setback. However, he was able to gain admission on his second attempt. There, he learned about the Society of Jesus and developed a growing love for it. Eventually, he realized that when God selects us for a specific purpose, He will always be with us. Today, he feels grateful and fulfilled as a priest in the Church.

There have been several significant milestones in his life that have helped him find his true calling. First and foremost, he is grateful to the Society of Jesus, which has provided him with motherly love and immense support. The Society of Jesus has always been there for him, especially when he felt sad, lonely, and in pain, by providing him with brotherly love. He was given ample opportunities to develop his skills and gain confidence during his training. He believes the novitiate formation was the best time for him to understand himself and God. His life took a turning point when he felt elevated and led by God, and he surrendered himself to the Lord by saying, "Lord, it is not my will, but Your will be done."

He followed the standard formation process in the Society of Jesus. He completed his Pre-Novitiate training at Jivan Deep Khunti from 2009 to 2010 and his Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2010 to 2012. He took his First

Vows on 21 June 2012, at the end of his Novitiate. He continued his Juniorate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2012 to 2013. Later, he returned to Ranchi to pursue his studies at St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016. He then moved to Satya Nilayam Chennai for his Philosophy studies from 2016 to 2018. After completing his Philosophy studies, he did his Regency at the Apostolic School Gumla from 2018 to 2020. He completed his Theology studies at JFCT Kanke and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. Finally, he was placed at Catholic Church Sogra to serve as a deacon.

His ordination motto is "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5), which gives him strength to follow God's path. He strongly believed that when God selects someone, He never leaves them alone and will never let them down. Despite facing several difficult situations and questioning why he was chosen, he held on to this belief. His family situation was also a cause of disturbance for him, with regular fights and quarrels between his parents. He felt uncertain about choosing a priestly life and was worried about what others might think of him. However, he trusted God's providence and hoped He would care for him if God had chosen him.

### **FR. IGNATIUS TETE, SJ**



Fr. Ignatius Tete, SJ was ordained a priest by Rt. Rev. Binay Kandulna DD, Bishop of Khunti, on 21 January 2024, at the Catholic Church Sundarpur in the Catholic Diocese of Gumla. A whopping 80 priests and a crowd of devoted religious sisters and faithful members were in attendance.

Fr. Ignatius was born into the family of Mr. Johan Tete and Mrs. Juliana Dungdung in Sarubera Pahantoli, a village located on the border of Gumla and Simdega districts. Hills and forests surround the village, and the people there are economically disadvantaged. As the village is located in one of the corners of the Gumla district, access to education is limited.



He belongs to St. Pius' Catholic Church Sundarpur, which was started by the Jesuits in 1965 and is now run by the Diocesan Priests of Gumla Diocese. His prayerful mother greatly influenced his childhood and gave him good faith formation. He is the youngest among six brothers and one sister.

He views his calling as a seed planted in his family and has since grown into a tree. One of his older brothers is a Priest of the Gumla diocese, and seeing him inspired him to become a priest. During his younger years, many diocesan brothers would come to preach retreats to the villagers and prepare them for Marian devotion in May. He used to accompany them when going around the village. Their way of life and talents in music attracted him even more. Thus, he joined the Apostolic School at Gumla, but on his first attempt, he was not selected. After a year-long gap, his elder brother came with an application form to join the Apostolic School Gumla, and this time, he was selected - a very happy moment. After schooling at St. Ignatius' High School Gumla, he joined the Minor Seminary Ranchi for his Intermediate at St. Xavier's College Ranchi. After much reflection on life, he decided to join the Society of Jesus. Despite facing many challenges, struggles, and temptations, he committed his life to the Lord for His service to humanity.

He began his journey by joining the Pre-Novitiate at Jivan Deep Khunti in 2009 and later moved to Ashirvad Novitiate Namkum as a Novice from 2010 to 2012. He took his First Vows on 21 June 2012. He completed his classical Juniorate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha in 2013 and then returned to St. Xavier's College Ranchi for his Graduation, which he completed from 2013 to 2016. From 2016 to 2018, he studied Philosophy at De Nobili College Pune. Afterwards, he did his Regency at Kishor Nagar Namkum from 2018 to 2020. He completed his Theology at JFCT Tarunoday Kanke and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. He was ordained a deacon at Vidyajyoti Delhi by Most Rev. Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, Archbishop of Delhi, on 18 February 2023. He carried out his diaconate ministry at St. Anthony's Church Rengarih. He attributes his disciplined and committed life

to the Society of Jesus for teaching him to be responsible, available, and hardworking. Through his experiences, he has learned to be responsible while enjoying the freedom of responsibility.

He lived by the ordination motto, "You are precious in my sight and honored, and I love you" (Isaiah 43:4). Looking back on his life, he feels grateful to God for the many gifts and blessings he has received. He recognizes that God has been with him through various events and situations, making him feel precious in His sight. This feeling of being precious in God's sight is supported by many life events, such as receiving love and care from his family as the youngest child, surviving an accident as a young boy with God's protection, seeing the face of God in the orphan boys during his regency at Kishor Nagar, and experiencing God's protection during the COVID-19 pandemic while recovering from sickness. Through all these events, he has felt God's presence, confirming that he is precious in God's sight and loved unconditionally.

#### **FR. KULDEEP LINDA, SJ**



Fr. Kuldeep Linda, SJ was ordained as a priest by His Grace Most Rev. Felix Toppo SJ, Archbishop of Ranchi, on 27 January 2024, at the Catholic Church Ulhatu in the Catholic Archdiocese of Ranchi. A crowd of devoted religious

sisters, faithful members, and 82 priests attended the ordination ceremony.

Fr. Kuldeep hails from Barkuma village, under the Aragat Parish in the Archdiocese of Ranchi. He was born into a non-Christian family to Mr. Sanicharwa Linda and Mrs. Fulmani Linda. He is the youngest of three brothers. When he was very young, his father passed away. After his father's death, he went to live with the family of his uncle, Mr. Bimal Linda, and his aunt, Mrs. Magdali Linda, at Plandu village under Ulhatu Parish in Ranchi Archdiocese. His uncle and aunt cared for him from childhood, like their son. He is very affectionate towards them and addresses them as 'Dad' and 'Mom' with immense





love and gratitude. Unfortunately, his uncle passed away during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He received his primary education at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Plandu, which the Oblate Sisters run. Later, he went to Assisi High School Samlong for his matriculation. When he looks back at his journey to becoming a Jesuit, he feels lucky and happy because he received two vocations. Firstly, he became a Catholic, and secondly, he became a Jesuit. During his school days, he was inspired by the life of the Sisters and some Jesuit priests. He aspired to become like them one day. When he expressed his desire to become a priest to one of the Sisters, she told him that he would first need to become a Catholic. After considering it, he took adult baptism at Ulhatu Parish in 1998. His entire family at Barkuma also became Catholic. Later, the entire Linda family also converted to Catholicism, following the lead of Fr. Linda. In 2007, he attended a Summer Course at Minor Seminary Ranchi and was selected as a candidate. He then studied his Intermediate at St. Xavier's College Ranchi. Finally, he continued his religious journey in the Society of Jesus.

He underwent the following formation in the Society of Jesus: he completed his Pre-Novitiate at Vivek Sadan Daltonganj from 2009 to 2010, followed by the Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2010 to 2012, where he pronounced his First Vows on 21 June 2012. He continued his Juniorate there from 2012 to 2013, after which he moved to St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 2013 to 2016 for his College studies. He pursued his Philosophy at De Nobili College Pune from 2016 to 2018 and later completed his Regency at St. Xavier's School Doranda from 2018 to 2020. He then completed his Theology at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome from 2020 to 2023. He was ordained as a deacon in the Church of Jesu, Rome, on 11 April 2023. After returning to the Province, he served as a deacon at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Tongo. Throughout the different stages of his formation, he developed a strong sense of belonging to the Society of Jesus and feels extremely grateful to the

Society for all the enriching experiences.

He adopted the phrase "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10) as his motto, as it perfectly encapsulates his life. Despite experiencing joy, happiness, sorrow, suffering, consolation, desolation, difficulties, and challenges, he believes God has blessed him with immense graces. He is convinced that it is only through God's grace that he has been able to carry out his life and mission in the Society. He expresses his gratitude to God and the Society for all he has become today, especially for the blessings of his beautiful vocations.

### FR. ALOK EKKA, SJ



Fr. Alok Ekka, SJ was ordained a priest on 28 January 2024 at Catholic Church Kurdeg in the Catholic Diocese of Simdega. The sacerdotal ceremony was conducted by Rt. Rev. Vincent Barwa DD, Bishop of Simdega. The ceremony was attended

by 95 priests, several religious sisters, and many of the faithful.

Fr. Alok comes from Khalijor Bhatthatoli village in Kurdeg Parish, under Simdega Diocese. His family later moved to Khalijor Hatta, a village by the roadside, in 2003. He was the third child of his late parents, Mr. Charles Ekka and Mrs. Fulgencia Ekka, and had one sister and one brother. He is the youngest of the siblings. Unfortunately, his father and sister passed away on 14 May 2018 due to a road accident. His mother also passed away on 14 September 2022 during his theological studies.

He attended the Apostolic School at Samtoli, where he was introduced to the Jesuits for the first time. This experience inspired him to consider becoming a Jesuit priest. However, after moving to Minor Seminary Ranchi and studying at St. Xavier's College Ranchi, he became enamored with city life. He considered pursuing a career as an engineer or an IAS officer. Unfortunately, his plans were derailed when he failed his Intermediate exam. He was deeply disappointed and even thought about



ending his life. However, he eventually found the courage to re-take the exam and asked to join the Pre-Novitiate. With God's help, he could join the Pre-Novitiate at Jivan Deep Khunti.

His motivation in the Society of Jesus is rooted in the idea that, despite our differences, we have all come together to serve the Lord. He believes God uses our talents and gifts to help those in need. He feels God called him mysteriously and uniquely and is incredibly grateful. He plans to dedicate his life to God and his service until his last breath.

He underwent his formation in the Society of Jesus, starting with his Pre-Novitiate at Jivan Deep Khunti from 2009 to 2010. After that, he moved to Jesu Bhavan Mango, Jamshedpur, for his Novitiate, where he stayed from 2010 to 2012. Following this, he spent his Juniorate at St. Stanislaus' College Sitagarha from 2012 to 2013. He was sent to Loyola College Chennai for his Graduation from 2013 to 2016. He then returned to Jivan Deep Khunti for his first year of Regency from 2016 to 2017. He completed his Philosophy at Satya Nilayam Chennai from 2017 to 2020, with a one-year Regency at St. Xavier's School Bundu in between from 2018 to 2019. Lastly, he finished his Theology at JFCT

Tarunoday, Kanke, and Vidyajyoti Delhi from 2020 to 2023. He was assigned to Catholic Church Soso for his diaconate ministry.

He chose 2 Corinthians 12:9 as his Ordination Motto, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." This verse resonated with him because he has faced many challenges and hardships as a Jesuit Scholastic. There were moments when he thought he might have to give up. However, God's guiding hand has led him all these years, and he is still determined to follow the Lord and serve Him in the Society of Jesus. The Lord has been present in his life, and he has felt His guidance and support. He acknowledges that he is not very strong in his 'YES' to the Lord, but the Lord gives him the strength to follow Him. He gives praise and glory to God for everything in his life, recognizing that God is the source of everything.

Congratulations, dear newly ordained Priests, on your ordination to the priesthood! God's blessing be upon you, we pray, as you walk life's journey in the Holy Priesthood of Christ. Our love and prayers will follow you; our blessings will support you. May you remain faithful to Him forever and be a blessing to all!







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## Final Incorporation : A Gateway to Total Surrender

**Fr. Deepak Toppo, SJ**

• *Sadbhavna, Jesuit Provincial's Residence, Ranchi*



**T**he Final Vows in the Society of Jesus mark a significant milestone in the journey of Jesuits, representing their complete and unwavering commitment to the order's mission and

charism. Recently, six Ranchi Jesuits pronounced their Final Vows, affirming their dedication to the Society.

The significance of the Final Vows lies in their embodiment of a lifelong commitment to the Ignatian ideals of service, community, and spirituality. By taking these vows, the Jesuits fully integrate themselves into the Society, pledging obedience, poverty, and chastity. This final step is not just a personal commitment but a public declaration of their readiness to serve in various

capacities, whether in education, pastoral care, social justice, or other apostolic works.

Final Vows are a testament to the rigorous formation process that includes years of spiritual, academic, and pastoral training. This process ensures that the individuals are thoroughly prepared to undertake the responsibilities and challenges of their mission. The ceremony of taking Final Vows is deeply spiritual and communal, reinforcing the Jesuit identity and the bond among members of the Society.

In summary, the pronouncement of Final Vows is a profound expression of a Jesuit's lifelong dedication to the service of God and humanity, reflecting the core values and mission of the Society of Jesus. The recent vows taken by the six Ranchi Jesuits highlight their commitment to continue the rich legacy of the Jesuit order in their respective ministries.

### Hearty Congratulations!



**Fr. Vinod Sushil Soreng, SJ**  
(15 August 2023)



**Fr. Elias Kullu, SJ**  
(08 September 2023)



**Fr. Ajit Saras, SJ**  
(17 December 2023)



**Fr. Ignatius Kujur, SJ**  
(17 December 2023)



**Fr. Samir Dungdung, SJ**  
(31 December 2023)



**Br. Telesphore Horo, SJ**  
(11 February 2024)



**SECTION**

**D**



**ACHIEVEMENTS AND  
ACCOLADES**





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## Laurels to Ranchi Province

**Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess, SJ**

• St. Xavier's School, Doranda

### Jharkhand Ratna Samman Samaroh-2024



The recognition of Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ at the Jharkhand Ratna Samman Samaroh-2024 is a testament to the profound impact of the Jesuit community in the cultural, educational, and social fabric of Jharkhand.

This honour not only acknowledges his individual contributions but also highlights the collective efforts of the Jesuits in transforming lives and communities across the state.

### Educational Initiatives and Empowerment

Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ has been a pivotal figure in advancing education in Jharkhand. Through his leadership and vision, he has established and nurtured educational institutions that have become beacons of knowledge and transformation. The Jesuit-run schools and colleges under his guidance have not only imparted academic excellence but also instilled values of social responsibility and community service among the youth of Jharkhand.

### Social Outreach and Community Development

Beyond education, the Jesuits under the guidance

of Fr. Ajit have been actively involved in various social outreach programs. They have pioneered initiatives in healthcare, rural development, and empowerment of marginalized communities. Their efforts have contributed significantly to uplifting the lives of many, particularly in remote and underserved regions of Jharkhand.

### Promotion of Art, Culture, and Indigenous Knowledge

The Jesuits have played a crucial role in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Jharkhand. Through initiatives that support rural and tribal art, craft, and folklore, they have ensured that the cultural identity of the state thrives amidst modernization. Their efforts at showcasing local talents and traditions have not only preserved cultural diversity but also provided a platform for artists and artisans to showcase their skills. One such initiative is the Lievens Museum in the premises of Manresa House Ranchi.

### Advocacy for Justice and Human Rights

Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ and the Jesuits have been vocal advocates for justice and human rights in Jharkhand. They have stood in solidarity with the marginalized, advocating for land





rights, environmental protection, and dignified livelihoods. Their commitment to social justice has earned them respect and admiration, making them a trusted ally for communities in their pursuit of equity and fairness.

### **Inspirational Leadership and Legacy**

Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ exemplifies inspirational leadership through his dedication, humility, and unwavering commitment to serving the people of Jharkhand. His leadership has not only inspired the Jesuit community but has also influenced countless individuals to contribute positively to society. His legacy is marked by transformative initiatives that continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of Jharkhand's people.

### **Conclusion**

As we celebrate the recognition of Rev. Fr. Ajit

Kumar Xess, SJ at the Jharkhand Ratna Samman Samaroh-2024, we acknowledge the profound contributions of the Jesuits in Jharkhand. Their relentless pursuit of excellence, coupled with their deep-rooted compassion and service, has shaped a brighter future for the state. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ recognition is a reminder of the power of education, compassion, and community-building in fostering sustainable development and inclusive growth.

In honouring Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess, SJ, the entire Ranchi Jesuits are honoured who continue to embody the values of Ignatian spirituality and contribute tirelessly to the well-being of Jharkhand. Their journey is a testament to the transformative potential of individuals and communities working together for a better tomorrow.







## New Doctors of the Province



**Dr. Fr. Rajesh Sandil, SJ**

*Radha Govind University, Ramgarh*

*Date : 21 March 2024*



**Dr. Fr. Samir Xavier Bhawnra, SJ**

*Central University, Jharkhand*

*Date : 3 June 2024*

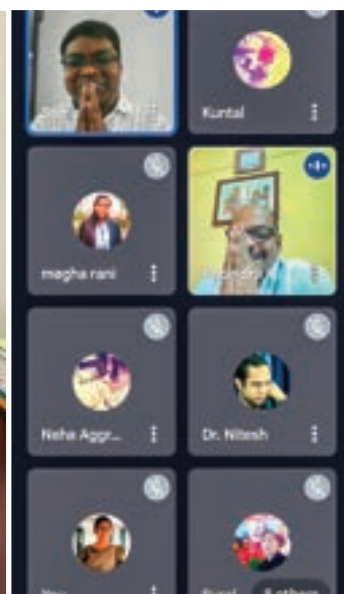
**H**earfelt congratulations to both of you on the successful completion of your PhDs! Your achievements, Fr. Rajesh in English with your insightful study on socio-political themes in the plays of John Arden and Arnold Wesker, and Fr. Samir in Commerce with your pioneering research on financial inclusion among the Tribal Community of Jharkhand, are truly commendable and inspiring.

Your dedication, perseverance, and scholarly contributions are not only a testament to your intellectual prowess but also reflect your deep commitment to knowledge and service. Your

accomplishments bring great pride to the Ranchi Jesuit community and serve as an example of excellence and diligence to all.

As you embark on the next chapter of your academic and spiritual journey, may you continue to illuminate minds, foster understanding, and enrich the lives of those around you. Your passion for learning and compassion for others make you invaluable members of the community.

Once again, congratulations on this well-deserved achievement. May God bless you abundantly in all your future endeavours.





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## Intellectual Apostolate : New Publications

**Fr. Nicholas Tete, SJ**

• St. Ignatius' School, Gumla



**T**ransliteration of the Book of Psalms in Kharia was a daunting task. As I was editing the New Testament Bible translated by the late Fr. Paulus Kullu, SJ I decided to add the Book of Psalms to the New Testament. It took me

two years. It is the best book in the Bible for prayer and meditation. It is called the treasury of prayer, worship, adoration, and instruction. I enjoyed doing that because I have done my research in the book of Psalms as a hymn book and the book of poems. All the indigenous languages have limited

vocabulary, therefore, the work of translation was a difficult task. However, I started coining new words wherever it was necessary. The interesting thing about the Psalms is one has a prayer for all the human conditions and occasions.

The book of Psalms is a miniature Bible. I also found the words of God and also as a reaction to God's inaction and silence. They reflect the deep experiences of human life, such as joys and sorrows. Indigenous people usually pray in their own mother tongue when there are crises or difficulties in their lives. I have also tried to preserve the Kharia language and expressions. I hope the Kharia people will read and pray.



*Congratulations to Fr. Nicholas Tete, SJ*

**Fr. Sudhir Kumar Minj, SJ**

• St. Albert's College, Ranchi



**C**hristian Spirituality by John Lakra, SJ, published by Xavier Publication, Ranchi (2024) is his latest book on the shelf. He had been a regular Spiritual Father of the Seminarians for several years and a Professor of

Spiritual Theology. He, therefore, has an experience in the formation of the Seminarians and the Religious. This 137-page, concise and easily readable book, written from the perspective of those in formation and for anyone who seeks to grow in holiness in the Christian life, offers a systematic presentation of what Christian Spirituality is all about.





Christian spirituality is nothing but living a spiritual life – a life of holiness, which was also called in the past, “devout life,” “interior life,” “ascetical life,” or “mystical life.” It is a fundamental call God gives to his people in the OT. Jesus affirms this for his disciples in the Gospels. The author explains this core value

of Christian life thoroughly even while referring to the dogmatic teachings and Conciliar documents of the Church and indicates how it applies to different states of Christian living– for the religious, the laity, and the priests. It leads to a sort of climax in dealing with various means of holiness: prayer, discernment, examen and spiritual direction. The author shows his mastery of interior life when speaking about the human and holy.

The Annexure in the concluding section is noteworthy where the author points out the importance of constant spiritual food that one requires to sustain holiness, i.e., the value of spiritual reading and suggests a category of books for such exercise. The Selected Bibliography mentions several classical books on spirituality for those interested in widening their understanding to discover the hidden treasure of Christian spirituality.



***Congratulations to Fr. John Lakra, SJ***



***Congratulations to Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ***





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## First Record of the Rare Anomalous Nawab from Jharkhand, India

Sch. John Osga, SJ

• Manresa House, Ranchi



A rare species of butterfly Anomalous Nawab (*Polyura agrarius*) has been found on Tagore Hill. Debasish Mahato and John Osga students of postgraduate's session 2021 – 2023 of the department of Zoology of

St. Xavier's College Ranchi has discovered the species, under the guidance of Dr. Manoj Kumar of the department and Head of the department Dr. Bharti Raipat. Both the students made this discovery during the survey of butterflies. This important discovery has been given a place by Zoo print research magazine in its July issue Vol.39. It is important to find rare species of Butterflies in Jharkhand. The species of Anomalous Nawab has been found in the states of India like west Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh but this species is not found in Jharkhand.

On 25 March 2023, during a field study, one specimen of *Polyura agrarius* was recorded from Tagore Hill situated in the Ranchi District of Jharkhand, India. This report also fills the distributional gap between Chattisgarh and West



Bengal, and it will expand the distributional range of *Polyura agrarius* which will be helpful in further studies of the species and understanding its other parameters. This butterfly of the species *Polyura agrarius* has been found for the first time in Jharkhand.

This research finding was published on Dainik Jagran and Prabhat Khabar on 19 July 2024.





**SECTION**

**E**



**REQUIESCANT IN PACE**





49

## Obituary : Fr. Emmanuel Horo, SJ

(24 February 1942 – 12 February 2024)

Fr. Francis Minj, SJ

• JFCT Tarunoday, Kanke



**M**r. Benjamin Horo of Bichna near Khunti and Naomi Barla of Sarangloya, Dorma (Khunti) sired eight children, of whom Emmanuel was the youngest. All of Emmanuel's siblings Martha, Francis, Samuel, Agnes,

Joseph, Elisaba and Philomina have predeceased him. In fact, Philomina was the youngest, but she died young, thus Emmanuel became the youngest of them all. Born on 24 February 1942, Fr. Emmanuel attended the primary school at Bichna, his village, and later completed his middle school from Dorma, his parish.

Short in stature, Emmanuel desired small things for himself in life but his aim, nevertheless, was always big. He joined St John's School, Ranchi in 1953 and matriculated in 1960. Thereafter, he joined the Intermediate course at St Xavier's College on the same campus and passed in flying colours in 1962. Aiming high, he joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1962 at St Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha and pronounced his first vows on 21 June 1964. He travelled South to pursue his Juniorate studies at Mount St Joseph, Bengaluru, then called Bangalore. After two years of classical Juniorate, Emmanuel returned to Ranchi well equipped to obtain an undergraduate degree in Hindi literature in 1966 and secured high marks. English seldom remained his secondary language. Again, his study of Philosophy took him back to the south, this time to Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur in 1969. By then he had developed great acumen for music, and so, he led the choir in the community at SHC.

Prepared as he was, Emmanuel was back to the Province for his regency, and took up the mantle of Assistant Director at Apostolic School, Gumla

1971. He worked passionately, observed things astutely and recognized the worth of his students in a masterly way. A casual observer almost always mistook him for a high school boy while Emmanuel played football or hockey with his students with a teenager's agility. After two years of regency, Emmanuel found himself at De Nobili College, Pune, for his theology in 1973. He displayed his theological bent of mind that would always shape his thought and orientation as a Jesuit teacher, pastor, book keeper and formator. He received his sacerdotal ordination on 25 April 1976 at Konbir Noatoli.

In 1977, Emmanuel had a short stint as assistant pastor at Kurdeg. His spartan training had shaped him to remain a great disciplinarian. He would wake up early and ensured that all the hostel boys woke up and attended the morning Mass. He punished the dullards, even splashing a bucket of water over the sleeping boys! But boys would be boys, anyway! Once he splashed a bucket of water over a boy who refused to wake up. Fr. Emmanuel returned after the Eucharist and found the boy still in bed. To his shock, he realized that he had punished a wooden log covered with a gudri (local mattress). The boy, now a Jesuit, had outsmarted Fr. Emmanuel; he had placed a wooden log in his place and covered that with a gudri.

Perhaps the sylvan boys did not require Emmanuel's discipline, so he came to St Albert's College, Ranchi to teach the Seminarians. He taught for a year in 1978 and in the same year on 1 July he did his Tertianship at Sitagarha. Soon after his Tertianship, Fr. Emmanuel headed to the Philippines to do his Licentiate in Theology (1979 – 1982) at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI), Manila, with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, as his mentor and guide. Field work-based research in theology





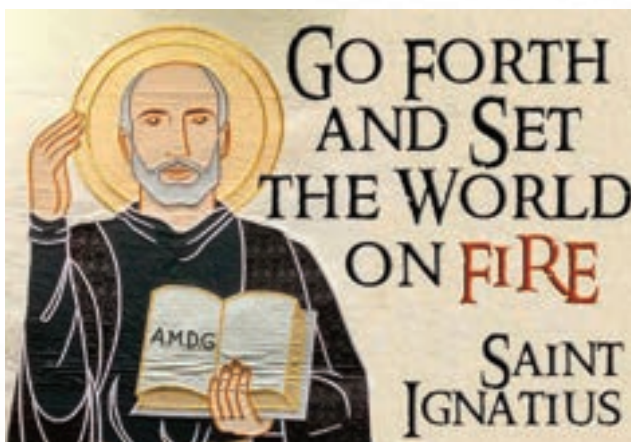
made his study very contextual. Here returned to Ranchi in 1982. Unfortunately, his mother, a hookah carrying Naomi Barla left home to receive her son Emmanuel but she never reached Ranchi airport and remained untraceable since then.

Fr. Emmanuel took that unexpected tragedy as a Jesuit would, and pronounced his final profession at Manresa House on 15 August 1982. He taught at St Albert's while he stayed at Manresa House. Then in 1984 he moved to Pune again; this time as Superior of philosophers. He was back to St Albert's in 1986 but in 1987 served as Socius to the Ranchi Provincial when the Provincial's seat lay vacant for three months. He played a second stint as Superior at DNC (1990 – 1993). Back to Ranchi again as Superior and Professor at Tarunoday (1993 – 1999) and again as Socius to the Provincial (1999 – 2003), he needed some time off, which he did at JSTB Berkeley, California (2003 – 2004). After his sabbatical, he served as Pastor of Christ the King Church, Kanke, for good ten years (2004 – 2014) and at Holy Rosary Church, Patrachauli (2014 – 2017) and Prabhat Tara, Dhurwa (2017 – 2019) altogether nineteen years. Then, he was back to Tarunoday, Arsanday as treasurer (2019 – 2022), a job he did meticulously.

Fr. Emmanuel suffered a severe heart attack in July

2022. His post hospitalization and subsequent angioplasty, his medical condition required him to stay at Manresa House infirmary. Weakening health prompted Fr. Emmanuel to frequent the hospital but his memory remained agile. He finally surrendered his soul to God whom he served so devoutly and diligently. He was just 12 days short of 82 when he left the world on 12 February 2024 at Constant Lievens Hospital and Research Centre, Mandar due to multiple complications.

Many Jesuits and the faithful passed through Fr. Emmanuel's hands, learnt discipline, accountability and simplicity. As a good record keeper, he put his office in order as Superior, Treasurer, Pastor or Socius; one finds his files well maintained, up to date and relevant. He also had special concern for his co-workers. In Kanke he took care to educate the daughter of his cook; at Tarunoday he made sure that his worker had decent roofs above their heads and some savings in banks. He remained laconic but firm in his decisions; he wrote better than he spoke, his loving actions proved more trustworthy than his countenance. He worked in the same office twice in many places but he seldom felt bored. His class notes were far superior to his lectures. He remained techno-savvy, quite well updated to suit the marching times, rarely munificent in humour but was really generous in enjoying jokes. Besides being a treasurer, he quietly contributed his personal reflections for the Hindi Bible Diary. Well done! good and faithful Emmanuel, may you find place in the joyous company of exemplary men and women in heaven.



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## Obituary : Br. Polycarp Lakra, SJ

[2 April 1938 - 16 October 2023]

**Fr. Francis Minj, SJ**

• *JFCT Tarunoday, Kanke*



**P**olycarp Lakra was one of nine children born to Hilarius Lakra and Sabina at Nanesera Tongritoli, then under Banabira parish of Simdega diocese. Born on 2 April 1938, Polycarp started his school at Nanesera in 1947

but soon was taken to Rengarih (1950 – 1953) where he completed his grade three and for a year at Kochedega (1955), Banabira (1957), Kunkuri, CG (1958). His meandering education brought him in contact with many the Jesuit Brothers and inspired him to work like them.

Polycarp's desire to become a Jesuit Brother led him to Rengarih in 1956, the year Ranchi became a Province. Realizing the gargantuan task of the Province, Ranchi Jesuits tasked Fr Henri de Jonghe, SJ to initiate the establishment of a High School in Rengarih to train the aspirants for Jesuit Brotherhood. Students were to learn Hindi, English, Mathematics and other practical skills and thus prepare themselves as Jesuit Postulants. Fr. Henri roped in Marcus Kujur, Joseph Baxla, Benedict Dungdung, Carolus Dungdung, Joseph Horo and Ignatius Kerketta who helped him to purchase about 70 acres land two kilometers away from the parish. Classes, however, started in the Dharam School with about 20 students with William Minj and Ignatius Kerketta as teachers and Fr. Paul Terrence as Principal. Besides his usual class learning, an observant Polycarp saw how the parish functioned, the kind of people came to meet their pastor and how the boys got trained at the workshop.

After his High School education, Polycarp joined the Novitiate at Sitagarha on 14 August 1960 and pronounced his first vows on 15 August 1962. He

did his Juniorate at Sitagarha and did a diploma course in construction works at Madras. He supervised the building of parish residence and School at Ulhatu (1967), Bemerla (1967 – 1969), Bardih (1969 – 1971), Samlong (1971 – 1972), Bardih School (1972 – 1973), Tumdegi (1973 – 1975) and at Bemerla (1976 – 1980). In 1970 he did his tertianship at Mount St Joseph and pronounced his final vows on 15 August 1973. He looked after the kitchens at Vidyajyoti, Delhi (1982 – 1985), St Albert's College, (1985 – 1987), Manresa House (1987 – 1991) and later took care of the dairy at Agriculture Training Centre (1991 – 1992) and served as Minister at St Ignatius, Gumla (1992 – 1994), builder at Tarunoday Regional Theology Centre, Ranchi (1994 – 1999), kitchen at Manresa House (1999 – 2003) and took care of Manresa dairy (2003 – 2022).

While supervising the construction of buildings at Raja Ulhatu Parish he felt much inspired by Fr. Louis Defrijn. Similarly, under Luc Verstraete in Tumdegi and Albert Limpens in Bardih. Polycarp and Limpens paired well in Bardih. Besides being a water diviner, Limpens was a perceptive geologist of sort. He could tell the people that some locations were bad for human habitations because of the undercurrent water beneath the houses, not because of devils as people believed. His self-acquired acumen helped Br Polycarp to build houses where others abhorred. He visited families. He became fluent in Kurukh language. At Vidyajyoti, Polycarp acquired the Delhi tone too. He inspired and encouraged students to become good priests. His workers loved him, so did he.

Besides doing the tiring work of supervising the construction work at Tarunoday, he also visited the families of construction workers. He befriended them all. But the evil eyed people





presumed that Polycarp handled money. Shocking as it sounds, in March 1995 an extortionist gang kidnapped him. His captors, however, fled when a group of theologians began combing the mango orchard where the gangsters negotiated the ransom amount. His captors left him unharmed. Undeterred, Polycarp continued to serve the community. In 2022 Fr. Provincial asked him to have a well-deserved rest from an industrious life.

Be it in parishes or houses of formation, he called youngsters his beta (sons) and encouraged them in their education and vocation. He catechized the children in parishes and visited families and that helped him to get acquainted with the social reality. Indubitably, Polycarp loved his life, vocation and mission as a Brother in the Society. Readily available, he donned simplicity as his prized virtue, humility as ornament, sociability as his habit, obedience as his inheritance and work as his passion. He seldom boasted of his achievements and never desired being in the limelight. Compassionate as he was, he ensured that those who worked under him lived a reasonably good life and their children made their future. He encouraged young Jesuits and also reprimanded when situations demanded. He valued learning languages for mission – Kurukh in Bemerla and Bardih and a bit of Mundari in Raja

Ulhatu – an inalienable task for mission that some priests today tend to ignore.

Aging Polycarp showed signs of Parkinson and other problems. During his last days he received treatment for intermittent fever, breathing problems and varicose vein at Constant Lievens Hospital, Mandar. His deteriorating and unstable situation necessitated treatment in the ICU on 5 October 2023. He surrendered his soul to his Lord and Saviour on 16 October 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Often seen reciting rosary, Polycarp lived a deeply committed life. He used to say, "I always wanted to look after the Jesuit houses and household chores so that Jesuit priests could do their ministries well without worrying about houses. I have been doing that and I enjoy doing that." Great Brother Poly!



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## Obituary : Fr. Isaac Xalxo, SJ

[25 July 1957- 03 May 2024]

**Fr. Sushil Tirkey, SJ**

• *Manresa House, Ranchi*



**F**r. Isaac Xalxo, SJ. left for his heavenly abode at 12.15 PM on 03 May 2024 from Constant Lievens Hospital and Research, Mandar, Jharkhand where he was recuperating from his illness. He was suffering from jaundice and was admitted in Mandar hospital on 06 January 2024. In the course of treatment he was diagnosed with other complication.

Fr. Isaac Xalxo came from Kamati village in Mandar Parish. He was born on 25 July 1957 in the family of late Patras Xalxo and late Balamdina Toppo. He had an elder brother and four sisters and he was fourth among the siblings. He did his Primary and Middle Schools in Roman Catholic Middle School, Mandar. He went to Apostolic School, Gumla and completed his high school from St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla. He completed his Intermediate Science (I.Sc.) in St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. He obtained his Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Chemistry from Loyola College, Chennai and the Master's degree in Chemistry from St. Joseph's College, Trichy. For philosophy he was sent to De Nobili College, Pune. He completed his theological studies in Tarunoday, Kanke and Vidya Jyoti, Delhi.

Fr. Isaac Xalxo entered novitiate on 20 June 1981 in St. Stanislaus College, Sitagarha and pronounced his first vows on 21 June 1983 at the same place. He was ordained priest on 20 April 1996 at Catholic Church, Mandar. He did his tertianship in XTTL, Patna in the year 2001 and pronounced his final vows on 08 September 2004 in St. Mary's High School, Samtoli.

Fr. Isaac Xalxo rendered his services in different places and institutions. He did his diaconate ministry in Catholic Church, Bardih. Soon after his

ordination in the year 1996 he became the Vice Principal of St. Stanislaus' High School, Lohardaga, where he also looked after the hostel till 2000. He was again the vice-principal of St. Mary's High School, Samtoli from 2000 to 2007. Afterwards, he became the Principal of the Janta High School and the Assistant Parish Noadih and rendered his services to the School and the Parish as well from 2007 to 2017. In the year 2017 he became the principal of Loyola High School, Khunti and also became the Province Consuler of Ranchi Province in 2022. In 2023 he took up the additional responsibility of the Superior of the Loyola High School Jesuit Community, Khunti and continued shouldering all the responsibilities till he left for his heavenly abode. May God give him eternal rest.

Fr. Isaac Xalxo taught Chemistry and English wherever he was placed in. As a teacher he was strict, kind and laborious. He taught his students until they understood. He used to take tuition and extra classes to the weak and poor students.







He focussed more on the students coming from the rural areas. Since he was a Master in Science (Chemistry) he was suggested to come to teach in the college in Ranchi but he chose to be in the rural set-up and catered the needs of the rural students.

He was a counsellor and guide to the students. He loved and cared for them. He always encouraged and accompanied his students perform well and secure good results.

He was convinced of his vocation and was ready to take all the challenges. He had a deep faith in Jesus

and a special devotion to Mother Mary. He liked to recite rosary. He often used to say, 'khub prarthana karna hai, khub padhna hai, khub khaana hai aur khub kaam karna hai.' (pray more, study more, eat more and work more).

As a person Fr. Isaac was simple, generous, courageous, friendly, witty and jovial. He was a man with smiling face and pleasant character. He was very much liked by his family members, relatives and friends. They all feel as a lose but accept it as the will of God and pray that God may give him eternal peace.





## *Glimpses of Province Days 2024*













*Long Live Ye Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo*



# RANCHI JESUITS

YEAR BOOK | 2024



**“Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope,  
where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.”**

**- Pope Francis**