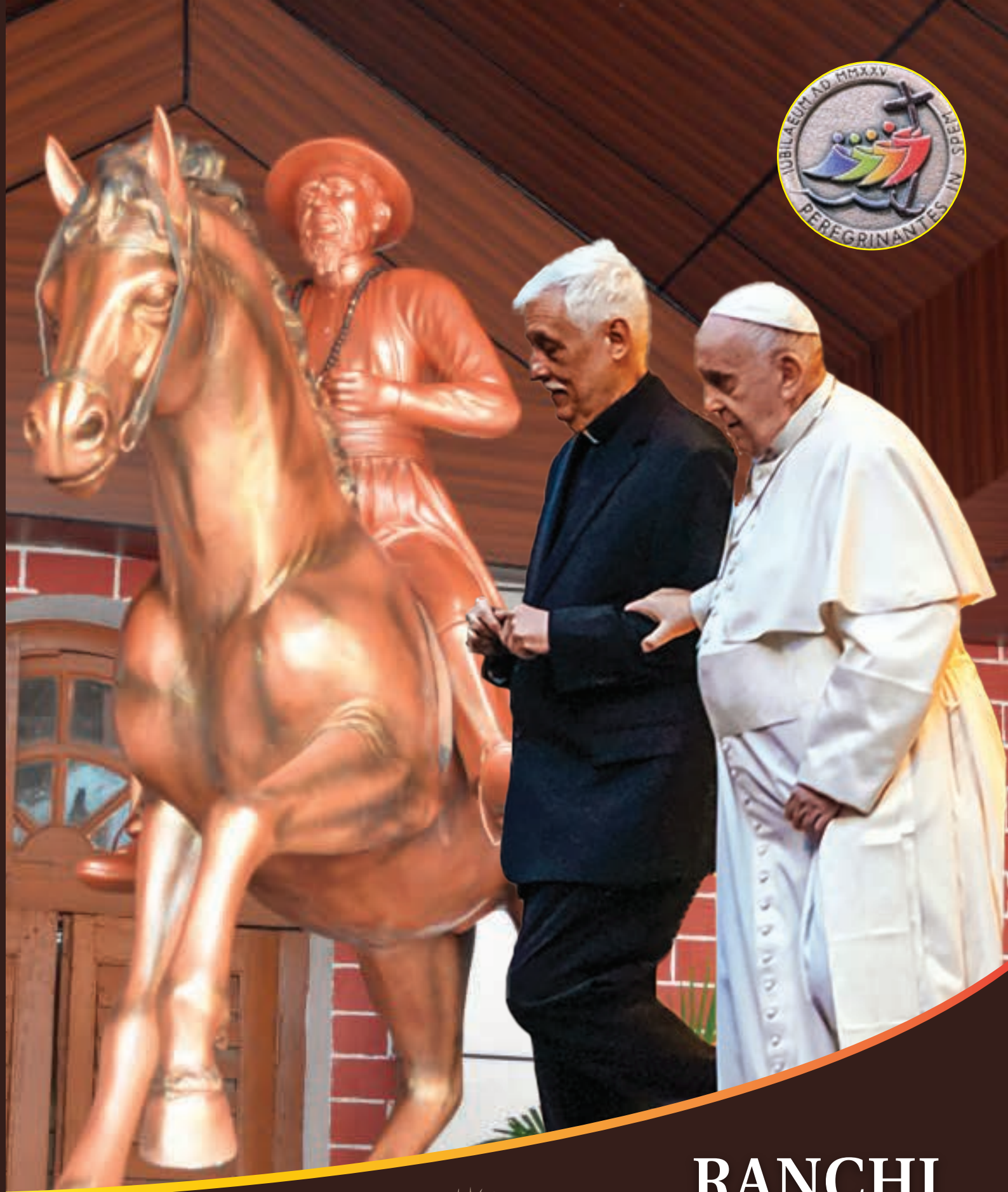




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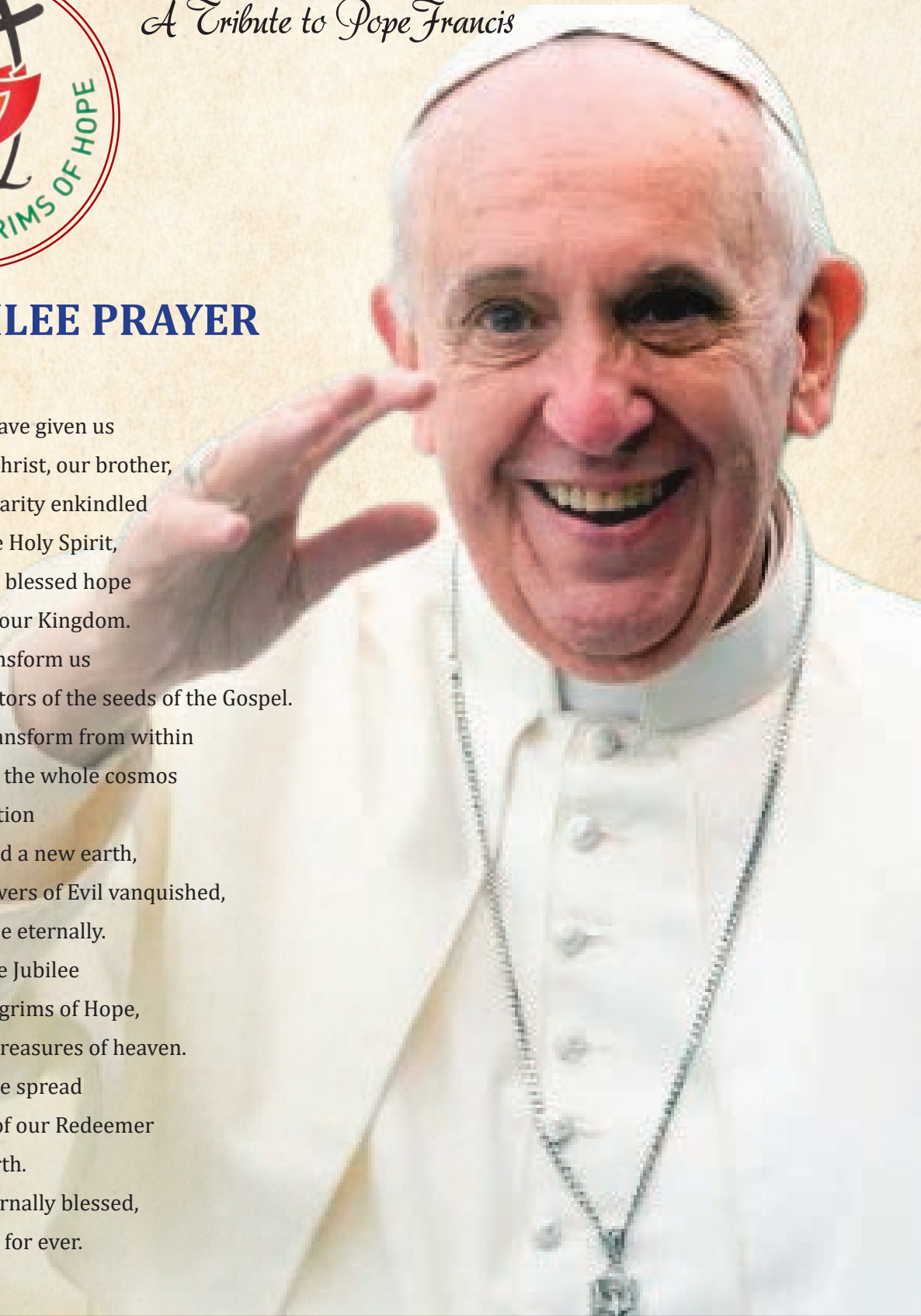
RANCHI JESUITS



A Tribute to Pope Francis

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
May the faith you have given us
In your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
And the flame of charity enkindled
In our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
Reawaken in us the blessed hope
For the coming of your Kingdom.
May your grace transform us
Into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
Both humanity and the whole cosmos
In the sure expectation
Of a new heaven and a new earth,
When, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
Your glory will shine eternally.
May the grace of the Jubilee
Reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
A yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
The joy and peace of our Redeemer
Throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
Be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.



RANCHI JESUITS

YEARBOOK | 2025

Our Faith Journey: Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission as Pilgrims of Hope

A New Era of Leadership - Pope Leo XIV



Leo P.P. XIV



RANCHI JESUITS

YEARBOOK | 2025



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, Ranchi Jesuit Society

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Editorial Board



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Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess SJ



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Fr. Fuldeo Soreng SJ



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Fr. Florence Purty SJ



Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ



Mother Mary Pray for us



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MESSAGE FROM FR. PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

Greetings of peace and joy in the Lord!

As we unveil the Ranchi Jesuit Yearbook 2025, we take a contemplative pause to reflect on the sacred journey of our mission in this land, rooted in the heroic legacy of our forefathers, nourished by the faith of our people, and oriented toward a renewed future of hope. This year's theme, "Our Faith Journey: Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission as Pilgrims of Hope," invites us not merely to commemorate the past but to walk boldly into the future with discerning hearts and generous spirits.

Our Jesuit pioneers — missionaries from far-off lands — entered this soil with little in their hands but with fire in their hearts. They walked the muddy paths of Chotanagpur, lived among its people, learned their languages, respected their cultures, and proclaimed Christ through lives of service, education, and accompaniment. They envisioned a Church that breathes with the lungs of the local community, and today we stand as heirs and stewards of that vision.

We walk today in the footsteps of giants — Fr. Constant Lievens, Servant of God, whose deep love for the tribal people of Chotanagpur laid the spiritual, cultural, and legal foundations of our mission; and Fr. Herman Rasschaert, Martyr and Servant of God, who bore witness to Christ even unto death, bringing peace and reconciliation among the people in Gerda, Kutungia (Simdega). Their lives are living testaments of what it means to hope against hope, to serve selflessly, and to journey with the people of God with courage and compassion.



Yet the call of Christ remains ever new. In a rapidly changing world marked by shifting values, environmental degradation, socio-political uncertainty, and deep human suffering, we too are called to reimagine and restructure our apostolic life. This is not simply about administrative reform, but about spiritual and communal discernment — a movement toward more meaningful collaboration, deeper solidarity with the marginalized, and a radical openness to God's will.

Being "Pilgrims of Hope" means believing that God is already at work in our midst, even when the path seems unclear. Hope is not naïve optimism; it is the fruit of faith lived courageously, especially in the peripheries. Let us be pilgrims who listen to the Spirit, who walk with one another, who recognize Christ in the wounds of our people, and who offer our ministries — educational, pastoral, social, and spiritual — as humble instruments of reconciliation and justice.

As we journey together with mission partners and collaborators, let us keep alive the dream of a more just and compassionate world. Let us allow our structures, plans, and priorities to be shaped not by convenience, but by the cries of the poor and the whispers of the Spirit.

May this Yearbook be not just a record, but a testimony of a people on the move, a Society discerning together and a hope that does not disappoint (Rom 5:5). I sincerely congratulate the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board for publishing this Yearbook.



Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ

Provincial



"You wish to reform the world; reform yourself, otherwise your efforts will be in vain."

- St. Ignatius of Loyola



EDITORIAL

"Let us get up, therefore, and set out as pilgrims of hope, because, just as Mary did with Saint Elizabeth, we too can bring news of joy, generate new life, and be artisans of brotherhood and peace."

Pope Francis

Dear Friends,

Greetings!

As we reflect on our faith journey, we recognize that our lives as Jesuits represent a continuous pilgrimage of hope, faith, and love. The theme of this year's Yearbook, "Our Faith Journey: Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission as Pilgrims of Hope," invites us to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Jesuit in today's world. This inspiring theme encourages us to embark on a reflective and renewing journey together as companions in Christ, strengthening our life-mission and fostering transformative actions within our communities.

We are called to live our faith authentically by turning our words into action and embodying compassion and justice. This journey invites us to walk together as we seek God's will in our lives and ministries. We are also called to share God's love with all, demonstrating generosity and kindness as we serve the Body of Christ. Looking ahead, we feel hopeful and excited about the possibilities before us, committed to living our Jesuit tradition in relevant and meaningful ways.

Our journey of faith began with missionaries who came with hearts aflame, venturing into the dense forests and unfamiliar cultures of Chotanagpur. They sowed the seeds of the Gospel not through imposition



but through immersion — learning languages, living simply, and walking alongside the marginalized. This missionary spirit birthed a Church deeply rooted in tribal ethos and values. However, times have changed. The once-vibrant structures of the mission are showing signs of wear and fatigue. While institutions remain strong, the spirit often feels weary. New forms of poverty — such as digital divides, ecological displacement, mental health crises, and a creeping individualism — demand a renewed response and a revitalized missionary presence.

We are called to reflect on our lives and ministries, looking for ways to renew and revitalize our commitment to the Gospel. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, we must remain faithful to our Ignatian heritage while also addressing the needs and challenges of our time. We should remember that our lives are not solely our own; they are gifts meant to be shared with others. The evolving realities of our world, the Church, and society prompt us to reimagine and restructure our life-mission with discernment and courage. As Jesuits and collaborators, we are invited to deepen our response to God's call by seeking new and meaningful ways to serve the people of God. This journey requires an openness to renewal, a thorough evaluation of our structures, and a bold commitment to the mission entrusted to us.

Reimagining our life-mission is not about abandoning our legacy but rather expanding it. This process invites us to engage in discernment — a spiritual listening to what the Spirit is conveying through the cries of the Earth and the struggles of the poor. For the Ranchi Jesuits, this means placing our tribal communities at the centre once again, not merely as passive recipients of service, but as active partners in transformation. We must consider: Are our ministries — educational, pastoral, and social — still life-giving, or are they just maintaining existing structures? Are we truly forming "men and women for and with others" with prophetic courage, or are we only producing professional graduates? Reimagining involves the courage to step into uncomfortable spaces and innovate in spirituality, pedagogy, and social action while remaining anchored in Christ.

Restructuring involves letting go of what no longer supports our life-mission. The General Congregations have consistently called us to engage in apostolic planning, collaborate, and thoughtfully redeploy our personnel and resources. This requires the humility to recognize institutional fatigue and the courage to close, merge, or reinvent our ministries. For the Ranchi Jesuits, this could mean enhancing grassroots leadership among tribal youth, revitalizing our parishes with a synodal spirit and lay collaboration, prioritizing ecological justice and sustainable livelihoods, creating new platforms for digital evangelization and dialogue, and rethinking our formation. We need to prepare Jesuits not only for traditional priestly roles but also for engaging in frontier missions.

Our Jesuit life-mission is essential for fostering peace, justice, and reconciliation, reflecting Christ's mission to uplift those on the margins of society. Guided by Pope Francis' encyclical, '*Laudato Si*', we are committed to ecological justice and sustainability. Our schools, parishes, and social centres actively promote environmental responsibility and sustainable practices, aligning with our faith.

Our Jesuit life-mission emphasizes a preferential option for the poor. In a world marked by inequality, we stand in solidarity with marginalized communities through education, social development, and pastoral care, authentically living our faith in service to those in need. The mission of the Society of Jesus is enriched by our collaborators and alumni, who continue to promote our values and vision. Their stories and contributions highlight the lasting impact of Jesuit education and formation.

The call to be "Pilgrims of Hope" resonates deeply with the essence of our Jesuit life-mission. In a world filled with uncertainties, such as ecological degradation, social unrest, political polarization, and spiritual fatigue, the need to reimagine and restructure our life-mission is not just a reflective exercise but a prophetic



necessity. For the Ranchi Jesuits, rooted in a rich heritage of missionary zeal and tribal accompaniment, this call requires a creative fidelity to the past and a brave reorientation toward the future. To be 'pilgrims' means being on the move — open to God's surprises, vulnerable to the unknown, yet grounded in hope. Hope is not blind optimism; it is a trusting belief in God's promises amidst the wilderness. As Ranchi Jesuits, our hope is nurtured by walking alongside the people, their songs, their struggles, and their indomitable spirit. Pope Francis' invitation to be a synodal Church aligns with our tribal values of community, consultation, and consensus. Our faith journey must reflect this collective path of walking together: Jesuits, laity, youth, women, and tribal elders — each contributing a unique grace to the shared mission.

As we compile this Yearbook, we are reminded that our journey of faith is a continuous pilgrimage. It calls us to trust in God, act with love, and embrace transformative hope. In the face of challenges, we walk as pilgrims of hope, sustained by faith and energized by love. Our journey as Ranchi Jesuits is ongoing, with the road ahead filled with both urgency and hope.

Let us reimagine our path with faith, restructure our approach with courage, and move forward as pilgrims — guided by the Spirit and grounded in the Gospel. May this Yearbook inspire authenticity, courage, and generosity in our lives.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Provincial for assigning me the role of Editor-in-Chief, to the entire editorial board for their unwavering support, and to all contributors for their valuable and timely submissions.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Fr. Ashok Roshan Sandil SJ

Editor-in-Chief



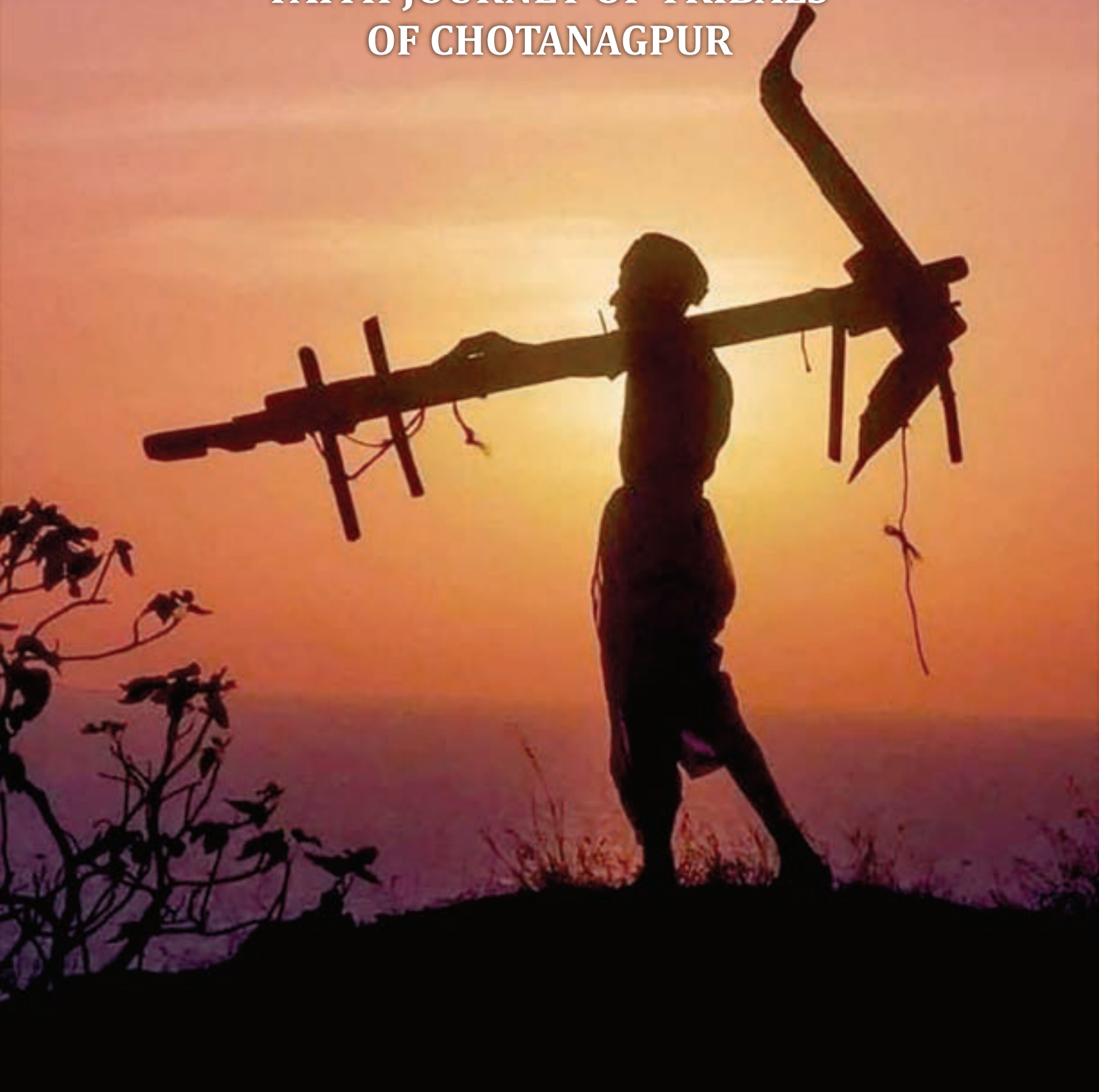
**"If God sends you many sufferings,
it is a sign that He has great plans
for you and certainly wants to make
you a saint."**

- St. Ignatius of Loyola



Section - A

FAITH JOURNEY OF TRIBALS OF CHOTANAGPUR





MEANDERING FAITH JOURNEY OF RANCHI PROVINCE

Fr. Francis Minj SJ

Director, JFCT Tarunoday, Kanke

Introduction



The Christian faith, like food, cannot be assimilated by people of a given culture unless that culture digests it. Digesting implies assimilating the food according to the individual's body metabolism.

The stupendous success of Jesuit missionary activity among the Adivasis (indigenous people) of Chotanagpur since the nineteenth century reveals that the faithful people of God have well assimilated the Christian faith. Proper digestion, however, requires reimagining and restructuring in the sense that one cannot always swallow faith the way the messenger offers; the recipients of faith accept the faith through their senses, including their tongue, taste, and systems. A cursory look at the faith journey of the Jesuit mission in Chotanagpur over the past 150 years offers a fine example of resilience, reimagining, restructuring, and reclaiming faith to suit the changing times. For the sake of convenience, this article seeks to view the journey of faith in Ranchi Jesuit Province under different historical epochs, i.e. from 1845 – 1869; 1869 – 1893; 1893 – 1947; 1947 – 1969; 1970 – 2000 and 2000 onwards because of their religious, ecclesiastical, political or socio-cultural significance and the inseparability of faith and life.

(1) A Faith-Journey from Turmoil to Transformation (1845-1869):

One should be cautious of the expression “journey of faith,” as if the Adivasis lived a life devoid of faith before the advent of Christian missionaries in Chotanagpur. The people did have faith, but their traditional Adivasi faith encountered a new

situation when the dominant Indic religious groups, with their alien ideologies and actions, threatened the very existence of the traditional Sarnā religion (Sarnā has three meanings. First, it refers to a cluster of virgin *Sal* or *Sakhua* (shorea robusta) trees, the home to *Chala Pacho*, the Lady (deity) of the Sacred Grove, a sacred place for Adivasis' worship. Second, Sarnā refers to the traditional religion of the Adivasis of Chotanagpur, a name probably given by anthropologist Keshri Nath Sahay during his field study in the Christian villages in 1962-1963. Cf. Keshri N. Sahay, *Under the Shadow of the Cross* (Calcutta: Institute of Social Research and Applied Anthropology, 1978), 2, 23, 26, 71. Third, it refers to the believers of the Sarnā faith. At present, 84% of the Adivasis of Jharkhand profess the Sarnā faith. For various reasons, the Adivasis found themselves caught up in the quagmire of internal and foreign colonizers – internally colonized by the *diku* (alien) *zamindars* (landlord), *theekedars* (lease holder), *jagirdars* (lease holder) for centuries, and externally colonized by the British since 1765. What sociologists call the internal (Indian) and the British systems formed one civilization, while the Adivasi civilization formed the other. Upon examining Adivasi history, one finds that the Adivasis lived under tumultuous and oppressive





rule for much of their known history. John Baptist Hoffmann describes the turmoil as “the general inability of two entirely different civilizations to understand each other” (John Baptist Hoffmann, *Encyclopedia Mundarica*, vol. II, p. 513) that finally resulted in the exploitation of the hapless Adivasis.

A reflection on the “journey of faith” in Ranchi Province leads to another question. Why did the Adivasis change their religion? This simple question requires complex answers. Besides the three factors — namely, the condition of the people, the attitude of the landlords, and the attitude of the missionaries — other factors also contributed to the spread of the Christian faith in Chotanagpur. Lutheran missionaries report that the police and the judiciary acted in favour of the landlords to usurp the Adivasi land. Friedrich Batsch, a Lutheran missionary in Ranchi, wrote on 18 January 1851 that the converts refused to submit to the illegal demands of the landlords. As a result, the converts were “being imprisoned for days by the *zamindars*, and beaten, their cattle, harvests, homes and property (are) being taken from them and they are driven out of the villages” (As cited by Fidelis de Sa, *Crisis in Chotanagpur* (Bangalore: Redemptorist Publications, 1978), 83.). While some officials, including Colonel Dalton, viewed the conversion movement as a social movement rather than a religious one, the movement of people to the missionaries could be seen as a way to find safety among them. Besides finding safety among the missionaries, the neophytes confessed with aplomb that they had changed their religion for the sake of their souls (Fidelis de Sa, *Crisis in Chotanagpur*, 235; Lucien Clarysse, *Father Constant Lievens* (Ranchi: Satya Bharati, 1985), 329). Hence, it can be conveniently described as a faith journey from turmoil to transformation.

Often enough, and quite wrongly, some people claim that the Adivasis embraced the Christian faith because of mixed motives and remained only nominal Christians, and that the Jesuits converted the Adivasis by using allurements and other unfair means. However, the observation sounds

superficial because religious conversion occurs in different layers, where at times, socio-economic and political reasons might seem more prominent than others. One must realize that traditionally, the Adivasis sought remedies for calamities through the veneration of ancestors and the appeasement of spirits. Such recourse, however, bore no desired results; the oppression by the *zamindars* and the police continued unabated, resulting in a crisis of faith. It was pretty natural that the Adivasis sought the help of the pastors; the latter offered legal help and won cases for the victims, a remarkable transformation indeed! One can safely say that faith is not devoid of socio-economic, religious-cultural, and political implications.

(2) An Epoch of Faith-Journey Filled with Hope (1869 – 1893)

Although initially slow, the faith journey of Catholics took off where Lutherans left off. Missionary fatigue and ideological rifts within



Fr. Constant Lievens



the Church contributed to the formation of the Anglican Church in 1869. In the same year, Belgian Jesuits entered the Chotanagpur plateau via Chaibasa at a time when the oppression of the Adivasis was at its zenith. Making a meandering journey with his neophytes, led by pioneer Fr. Augustus Stockman, to Khuntpani, and later, after much negotiation with the Munda (headman) of Kochang, they settled at Burudi in 1875. Intrepid and indefatigable Belgians braved the hostile climate, disease, and the people and cultures of their surroundings. It seems that Fr. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit in India, wrote to his Superior General, Fr. Ignatius Loyola, with a request, *Da mihi Belga!* (Give me Belgians!). Centuries later, that wish came true in Chotanagpur!

Jesuit work in Chotanagpur instilled hope and courage not only among Jesuits but also among the Adivasis. Fr. Constant Lievens (1856–1893), the most effective Jesuit missionary, said to the oppressed people, “I have come here among you for your eternal happiness. But in this life, too, I can make you happy. Confide your difficulties to me. I shall help you as much as the law allows. Believe me, I know the law better than you” (Lucien Clarysse, Father Constant Lievens (Ranchi: Satya Bharati, 1985), 145). Those immortal words emanated from a deeply reflective, prayerful, and socio-religiously committed Lievens of faith and worked wonders in the mission. As for his *modus operandi*, Lievens, like his Lutheran counterparts, relied on elders, catechists, and teachers for evangelization, catechism, and education (Fidelis de Sa, *Crisis in Chotanagpur*, 107-108). And that helped deepen faith in the community.

Contrary to his Jesuit contemporaries, such as Ferdinand De Cock (1830-1890), John Fierens (1844-1893), and Joseph Müllender (1850-1891), Lievens took a radical approach to the Jesuit mission of faith through works of justice. Joseph Müllender helped in a legal case only once; others remained aloof from the socio-economic issues of the oppressed people and only opted to care for the baptized Christians. Lievens realized that if

faith had to get rooted in the hearts of the people, Jesuits needed to address their socio-legal issues. Unfortunately, overwork and austere life weakened Lievens, and he died of tuberculosis in Louvain in 1893. However, his tireless work led to the rise of Christians from 2092 in 1885 to almost 80,000 in 1892, when he left India for his medical needs. In sum, the depth of the pastor’s faith works miracles in the people!

(3) An Epoch of Resilience and Reimagining (1893 – 1947)

Calamity struck the Catholic faith after Lievens left India. Rumours were rife when he recuperated in Darjeeling in 1891 that Lievens had abandoned his people. Consequently, the number was reduced to 35000. What happened to the faith? Jesuits had reversed Lievens’ policy of working for faith and justice. Some reverted to traditional religion while others joined the Protestant groups. Jesuits learned a lesson that personal depth of faith, devoid of works for justice, is a dead faith (James 2:17-20). And that’s the Catholic faith!

Catholicism required resilience and reimagining. The Jesuits had to regain the confidence of the people by strengthening schools and catechism, and also addressing the social issues of the people. It was during this period that the Ranchi Jesuits ventured into the princely states of Jashpur, Raigarh, Udaipur, and Gangpur. It was a mission of diplomacy with the *Rajas* and their kingpins aimed at bringing liberation to the Adivasis of those regions, of course, along with their baptisms.



First Church built by Fr. Constant Lievens at Torpa



Despite severe restrictions and persecutions, the mission experienced phenomenal growth in Jashpur and Gangpur, prompting the Ranchi Jesuits to withdraw their men from Assam to serve in these regions. Here, faith can be seen as people moving to the priests rather than the priests moving to the people. Those desiring to become Christians sneaked into Ranchi, Rengarih, Kurdeg, and Katkahi, where they were catechized. On their way back, they catechized the people, and once home, they catechized their tribesmen and women in their villages. This period also saw the emergence of local indigenous vocations to the priesthood and religious life – a dream that Lievens had already nurtured in 1888. First among the vocations was Bernadette Kispotta and her cousins, who founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Saint Anne, Ranchi in 1897. Similarly, Augustus Lakra became the first indigenous Catholic priest in 1914 (who eventually left the priesthood), and Louis Ekka joined the Jesuits as a Brother. Scores of vocations followed that today, Ranchi and its vicinity have become a minefield of vocations.

(4) An Era of Restructuring (1947 - 1969)

India's independence ushered in a new ecclesiastical and political situation that necessitated an indigenization of the faith and the church. English medium schools switched over to Hindi. A protracted movement for a separate tribal state of Jharkhand gained wider acceptance; the church, with its chain of educational institutions and its increasing number of Christians, also faced increased harassment in some regions, including the incarceration of priests, which required a deep focus on faith. The church journeyed together, and the laity became a force in spreading the faith. Together with the documents of Vatican II also came the Anti-Conversion Law in Madhya Pradesh, then

still part of Ranchi Province. Intense lobbying and hard work reaped the fruits of faith. Oxonian Fr. Philip Ekka led the inculturation efforts. More than elsewhere in the country, the Jesuits of Ranchi led the inculturation and praised God in native tongues and tunes. Meanwhile, a college for higher education was established in 1944. This period also saw a renewed missionary effort, which led to the expansion of the mission and the redrawing of boundaries. The Ranchi Jesuits ceded the Gangpur mission to the Society of Divine Word of Indore Province and the Ho land to the Jesuits of the Maryland Province in 1948, and the Chhechhari, Daltonganj, and Hazaribag regions to the Australian Jesuits in 1951.

Vocations multiplied as faith and the faithful spread far and wide. Ranchi became a Province in 1956, much before Calcutta, its mother mission. During the centenary year, the Ranchi Jesuits established a vocation bureau in 1969 to route all vocations to different regions of the country. Also, the Ranchi Jesuits offered themselves for the African mission. Fr. Polycarp Toppo became the first Regional Superior of the East Africa Region. This period also saw a growing rift between the Christian and Sarnā Adivasis as Kartik Oraon (Minj) spearheaded a political movement to deny tribal rights enshrined in the Constitution of India to the Adivasi Christians. However, good sense prevailed in the government. Faith unites; religion divides

emerged as a learning. Despite all efforts, that rift has resurfaced in different forms today. Jesuits need to work hard to bring the communities together to form a cohesive community.

(5) An Enigmatic Faith Journey for Prophetic Action (1970 - 2000)

Spearheading the struggle for land rights of the Adivasis, the bedrock of Ranchi Jesuits, came as a test case for the Jesuits when massive displacement caused by mega



Fr. Herman Rasschaert



industrial, mining, dam, and other infrastructural projects, so to speak, tested the depth of our faith. Committed to the service of faith and the promotion of justice, Jesuits are required to give witness to their faith in the works of justice. Regardless of the faith of the victims, the people worked together against the Koel Karo dam that was to decimate the identity and history of the people. Involvement in people's issues also had its consequences for faith and the church. More recently, the issue of the Pilot Project Netarhat Field Firing Range threatened to displace the tribals, mostly Catholics, from 245 villages from Lievens' mission. Ministering to God's people in such situations under lay leadership provided numerous learning experiences in interfaith dialogue, collaboration, and networking in the pursuit of justice. It offered a learning experience that being religious entails being inter-religious; working for justice involves risks.

(6) An Emerging Situation with Challenges and Opportunities (2000 onwards)

Every journey of faith takes place in a context. The new millennium brought significant challenges and hopes, with a call to renew our life-mission as Jesuits. The protracted movement for a separate state of Jharkhand came into reality in 2000. With it also came new sets of opportunities, challenges, and hopes. Influx of a large number of people into Jharkhand – be they entrepreneurs, investors, job-seekers, religious polarisers, students, or simply land grabbers – brought a complex situation. In contrast, a large number of Christians continue to migrate to other parts of the country in search of a livelihood. Despite its growing influence, the Christian community got branded as a proselytizing force. In effect, the state enforced a new draconian law to curb religious conversion, seemingly to dismantle the legacy bequeathed by the Jesuits. Divisive forces work overtime to polarize the people, keeping them in the echelons of power. Like Saint Paul, the Jesuits and God's people continue to place their profound confidence and hope in God. It appears that we are facing very similar issues that challenged Fr. Lievens and his companions

while they journeyed in faith in Chotanagpur.

Conclusion

What would be the task of the Ranchi Jesuits to continue this faith journey? The legacy of faith bequeathed to us by the Jesuits of yesteryears can be our inspiring guide. A glimpse into the past can provide us with a clue. While assessing the impact of Christianity among the tribes, Ravi Bhushan Pandey, a Hindu Brahmin, makes an incisive observation about the transformation the Christian faith brought in the lives of the Adivasis.

The primary aim of Christian missions was not to civilize Aboriginal people by imposing a Western way of life or any other way of life that was alien to them. It was rather to draw out the distinctive qualities within them and help these to grow and blossom. In other words, they were concerned with the man as a whole, and the all-round development of the whole man towards the fullest maturity he is capable of attaining. They believed that the three processes of healing the body, educating the mind, and awakening the spirit to consciousness of God. However, in a sense, these distinctive activities were three inseparable processes belonging to a greater purpose. The purpose was to make a man whole, and Christians conceived that the only way that could lead man to that wholeness was through the way of Jesus Christ (Ravi Bhushan Pandey, *Christianity and Tribes in India* (Delhi: Academic Excellence, 2005), 176).

I think Pandey captures the spirit of the faith journey quite powerfully. If the Christian faith journey of hope impacts the most vulnerable people of God so positively, giving a profound meaning to life (Jn 10:10), how much more meaningful would reimagining God's mission and our life-mission be in our day? It would mean that we become the salt, leaven, and the light of the world (Mt 5:13-16). This faith journey, however meandering, then invites Jesuits to recapture the spirit of Paul on his way to Damascus and his subsequent pastoral journeys for universal mission, with his continued conversion, reimagining, and restructuring.



150 YEARS OF FAITH AMONG THE TRIBALS OF CHOTANAGPUR

Fr. Ashok Roshan Sandil SJ

Coordinator, XIPT, Namkum

1. Introduction



The history of the Church in Chotanagpur reflects the resilience and faith of the tribal communities that embraced Christianity, transforming it in unique ways over the past 150 years.

The Pilgrim Journey of Hope commemorates this legacy, celebrating over 150 years of faith and resilience in Chotanagpur, India. The event highlights the cultural heritage and shared histories of these communities, engaging participants in reflective rituals that strengthen communal bonds while honouring their past.

More than a pilgrimage, this journey aims to empower tribal peoples and preserve their narratives in the face of challenges such as land alienation and cultural erosion. It also serves as a platform for political mobilization, allowing these communities to advocate for their rights and recognition in today's socio-political landscape.

2. Background

The Chotanagpur region has a rich historical background, characterized by significant transformations, particularly during the colonial period. The historical narrative of Chotanagpur dates back to the late 16th century A.D., providing the context for its subsequent developments. The region came under colonial administration in 1765, becoming part of the Subah of Bihar and integrating into the British metropolitan economy.

2.1 Non-Tribal Incursion and Its Impact

Between 1850 and 1950, Chotanagpur experienced a significant influx of non-tribal populations driven by the demands of mining and industrial

activities. This demographic shift led to a rapid population increase, particularly after 1872, as people from various regions migrated to capitalize on the economic opportunities presented by the expanding industries. While industrialization and urbanization brought prosperity to the region, the tribals faced numerous challenges, including deforestation, land alienation, unemployment, and rising indebtedness. Often, these tribes were recruited by non-tribal employers and forced to migrate to distant labour sites, such as the tea gardens of Assam. There, they faced similar exploitative practices from contractors and plantation owners, further exacerbating their struggles. The demographic shift caused by the incursion of non-tribal communities contributed to the gradual outnumbering of tribals, fundamentally altering their social structures and cultural practices. This transformation affected not only their economic stability but also led to profound changes in their identity and community dynamics as they navigated the challenges imposed by a rapidly changing environment shaped by colonial interests. In recent years, educational initiatives, often spearheaded by Christian missionaries, have aimed to address these challenges by promoting literacy and social development within tribal communities. Such efforts seek to empower tribal peoples and help them reclaim their rights and identity in a post-colonial context. However, the legacy of colonial exploitation continues to play a critical role in understanding the ongoing struggles and resilience of these communities in contemporary India.

2.2 Christian Missionary Activities

During this turbulent period, Christian missionaries began to establish a presence in Chotanagpur,



particularly among the tribal communities. The missionaries aimed to train local leaders for the church, reflecting their commitment to nurturing a Christian community amidst the challenges posed by colonial rule. Despite limited resources and infrequent visits from missionaries, the early Christian community demonstrated remarkable dedication and perseverance. Local converts often travelled considerable distances to participate in worship and communal activities. Support from sympathizers, especially English women in Ranchi, facilitated the construction of small chapels in numerous villages, showcasing a grassroots effort to sustain the growing Christian faith among the tribals of Chotanagpur. This complex interplay of socio-economic changes and religious influences set the stage for the next 150 years of faith development among the tribals of Chotanagpur as they navigated the challenges of colonial incursions and cultural transformation.

3. Legacy

The legacy of the Pilgrim Journey of Hope in the Chotanagpur region is profoundly intertwined with the cultural and social transformation of the tribal communities. Over the last century, these communities have increasingly recognized the importance of cultural identity as a means of self-representation and empowerment. This movement is not merely about preserving heritage but also about affirming a unique identity amidst the challenges posed by external influences and socio-political changes.

3.1 Cultural Heritage Preservation

One significant aspect of this legacy is the documentation and preservation of tribal narratives and myths. The archives of the region contain a rich variety of texts, categorized primarily into creation myths, village stories, and historical accounts that highlight their experiences. These myths reflect a distinct historicity, portraying their origins and migrations while also addressing the transformation experienced over time. The village stories serve as cultural artefacts, offering insights into daily life, the interplay between humans and

deities, and the sociocultural dynamics within the community. They also highlight how relationships and conflicts are navigated in the context of traditional beliefs and practices.

3.2 Impact of Colonial Incursion

The colonial period significantly influenced the tribal landscape, marked by the incursion of non-tribal populations into the Chotanagpur region. This period, spanning from 1850 to 1950, saw the region's integration into the British economy, resulting in rapid population growth driven by migration linked to mining and industrial activities. While this brought economic development, it also led to detrimental effects for the tribal communities, including deforestation, land alienation, unemployment, and debt. Many tribals were compelled to migrate to distant places, facing exploitation and marginalization in their quest for work. The challenges of colonialism and subsequent socio-economic changes have catalysed a collective identity revival among them, emphasizing the importance of cultural roots in their ongoing struggles for rights and recognition.

3.3 Religious and Cultural Identity

The intersection of faith and culture is another critical element of the legacy of the Pilgrim Journey of Hope. The Christian identity adopted by many in the tribal communities has transformed their cultural practices, yet it has also reinforced their indigenous identity in a modern context. This dual affirmation of faith and heritage is a powerful testament to the resilience of these communities as they navigate the complexities of contemporary society while holding onto their traditions and beliefs.

4. Pilgrim Journey of Hope

The concept of the pilgrim as a metaphor for life and faith is deeply rooted in the understanding of personal and communal journeys towards spiritual fulfillment. A pilgrim walking in hope is fundamentally grounded in the love of God, navigating life's complexities and challenges while also experiencing its joys and beauty. In the



context of the Jubilee Year 2025, the concept of being "pilgrims of hope" is particularly relevant in today's digital landscape. Pope Francis has encouraged individuals to adopt this role, urging them to bear witness to the love and power of Jesus Christ in a world often filled with distractions and challenges.

4.1 Pilgrim Journey of Hope through Education

The story of the tribals of Chotanagpur is a profound testament to the power of education as a Pilgrim Journey of Hope. For generations, the tribal communities of this region were marginalized, deprived of access to formal education and socio-economic opportunities. Yet, through the pioneering efforts of missionaries, especially the Jesuits, a light began to shine in the darkness. Education became more than just literacy — it became a path to dignity, empowerment, and transformation.

Schools and hostels were established in remote villages, often under challenging circumstances, to nurture young minds. The tribals, despite poverty and systemic neglect, embraced this opportunity with resilience and determination. Education enabled them to reclaim their identity, preserve their rich culture, and participate meaningfully in society.

Today, many sons and daughters of the soil serve as teachers, doctors, administrators, and change-makers. The journey is still ongoing, and challenges persist, but the spirit remains unbroken. This Pilgrim Journey of Hope through education continues to inspire new generations to rise, rooted in their heritage and driven by dreams of a just and inclusive future. It is a journey marked by struggle, grace, and a deep faith in the transforming power of knowledge.

4.2 Pilgrim Journey of Hope through Health Care

The Pilgrim Journey of Hope through health care among the tribals of Chotanagpur is a story of compassion, resilience, and human dignity. For

decades, the tribal communities of this region endured neglect and limited access to basic medical facilities. Poor infrastructure, poverty, and superstitions made health care a distant dream for many.

Amidst these challenges, missionaries, religious congregations, and committed health workers stepped in as beacons of hope. They walked with the people, often to the remotest villages, providing not just medicine, but a healing touch. Dispensaries, mobile clinics, and later, hospitals and health centres were established with a special focus on maternal care, child health, and preventive education. This health care mission was not merely about curing illness; it was about restoring wholeness — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Training local tribal youth as nurses, health assistants, and community caregivers ensured that the mission was rooted in the people themselves.

Today, the journey continues through health awareness programs, collaboration with government schemes, and a growing network of community-based health initiatives. It is a Pilgrim Journey of Hope, where the sick are cared for, the forgotten are remembered, and every life is valued as sacred.

4.3 Pilgrim Journey of Hope through Evangelization

The Pilgrim Journey of Hope through evangelization among the tribals of Chotanagpur is a profound narrative of faith, identity, and transformation. When the first missionaries arrived in the late 19th century, they encountered communities rich in culture yet burdened by exploitation, injustice, and marginalization. The message of the Gospel was received not merely as a new religion, but as a liberating force that affirmed the dignity of every human being.

Evangelization in Chotanagpur was deeply incarnational — it walked with the people, respected their traditions, and responded to their struggles. Baptism was not an end, but the beginning of a new journey rooted in Christ and expressed through education, health care, and



social upliftment. The Good News became a source of hope, healing, and empowerment.

The faith journey of the tribals gave rise to a vibrant Church, enriched by tribal expressions of worship, music, and community life. Catechists, lay leaders, and local clergy became the torchbearers of this mission, nurturing a Church that is truly Swaraj Church — self-reliant, inculturated, and prophetic.

Even today, this evangelizing mission continues to be a journey of hope — bringing light to the margins, standing for justice, and witnessing to God's love in the heart of tribal life. It is a pilgrim journey that transforms both the giver and the receiver, leading all toward the fullness of life in Christ.

5. Reimagining and Restructuring

In the face of growing socio-political challenges, ecological degradation, and cultural erosion, the mission among the tribals of Chotanagpur demands a sincere reimagining and restructuring of the approach. While the foundations laid by earlier missionaries — in education, health care, and evangelization — remain strong, the present context calls for a more integrated, justice-oriented, and participatory approach.

Today, the tribal identity is under threat from displacement, unemployment, loss of land rights, and systemic marginalization. The mission can no longer remain charity-driven or institution-centric; it must evolve into a people-centric, prophetic journey. Empowerment through education must go beyond literacy, fostering critical consciousness, leadership, and skills for self-sustenance. Health care must prioritize mental health, indigenous knowledge, and community-based care models. Evangelization must be rooted in dialogue, liberation, and ecological spirituality, making the Gospel truly good news for the poor and the Earth.

Reimagining and restructuring our life-mission also means decentralizing leadership, promoting tribal vocations, and listening more deeply to the voice of the people. Missionaries and collaborators must become companions on the journey — co-dreamers of a just and inclusive future. Ultimately, it is about rekindling hope: walking humbly with

the tribals of Chotanagpur, affirming their identity, defending their rights, and nurturing a faith that acts in love and justice.

5.1 Reimagining our Life-Mission

Reimagining our life-mission among the tribals of Chotanagpur today calls for a bold return to the heart of the Ignatian charism — deep listening, discernment, and a faith that does justice. The world has undergone drastic changes since the early Jesuit missionaries first walked alongside the tribal communities. While the foundations of faith, education, and health laid in those years still stand, today's reality demands a fresh, context-sensitive vision rooted in hope, justice, and accompaniment.

The tribals of Chotanagpur now face new challenges: increasing land alienation, ecological destruction, exploitation by corporate forces, weakening of traditional leadership structures, and socio-cultural fragmentation. At the same time, there is growing awareness among the youth, a thirst for identity, and a desire for inclusive progress. In this context, our life-mission must be reimagined in the following ways:

1. **From Institutions to Communities :** While institutions have played a key role, the focus must now shift toward grassroots engagement — empowering village communities through education, leadership training, and community-based initiatives that build resilience and self-reliance.
2. **From Service to Solidarity :** The mission must move from merely providing services to standing in solidarity with the oppressed, raising prophetic voices against injustice, advocating for tribal rights, and walking with the people in their struggle for dignity and land.
3. **From Evangelization to Inculturation:** Evangelization must be re-rooted in the lived experiences of the tribals, allowing for deeper inculturation. The Gospel must dialogue with tribal worldviews, values, and rituals, giving rise to a truly indigenous expression of Christian faith.



4. From Charity to Justice and Ecology: Inspired by *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, the mission must integrate ecological awareness, sustainable practices, and care for the common home — healing both people and the planet.

5. From Centralization to Collaboration: Reimagining our life-mission also means decentralizing authority, empowering lay collaborators, involving women and youth in decision-making, and working collaboratively with other religious groups and social movements.

Ultimately, to reimagine our life-mission among the tribals is to embark on a journey as pilgrims of hope, ready to be transformed as we walk alongside the people, discerning God's presence in their joys and struggles, and co-creating a future rooted in justice, peace, and reconciliation.

5.2 Restructuring our Life-Mission

Our life-mission among the tribals of Chotanagpur, rooted in a legacy of faith, service, and solidarity, now stands at a critical crossroads. The current socio-political, economic, and ecological realities necessitate a profound and courageous re-evaluation of this life-mission, one that is responsive, relevant, and radically inclusive.

Today, tribals face intensified threats: displacement due to mining and development projects, loss of land and livelihood, commodification of culture, weakening of traditional values, and the growing allure of consumerism. At the same time, the younger generation aspires for quality education, dignified employment, and leadership roles. In this context, our life-mission must transition from a provider model to one of empowerment and accompaniment. Thus, the key areas for restructuring include the following:

1. Education for Transformation: Moving from conventional schooling to contextualized, value-based, and skill-oriented education that equips tribal youth to be critical thinkers, leaders, and agents of change in their communities.

2. Faith that Does Justice : Evangelization must embrace prophetic action — defending tribal rights, promoting eco-justice, and nurturing indigenous expressions of spirituality. The Gospel must speak to the lived struggles of the people.

3. Integral Ecology and Sustainable Livelihood : Aligning with *Laudato Si'*, our life-missions must promote sustainable farming, environmental awareness, and alternative livelihood initiatives that preserve both nature and culture.

4. Leadership from Within : Encouraging tribal vocations, forming lay leaders, and practicing synodality to ensure that decisions and directions emerge from grassroots voices.

5. Networking and Advocacy : Collaborating with NGOs, civil society, and other religious groups to influence policy, resist injustice, and uphold the constitutional rights of tribals.

The call today is to rekindle the original spirit of our life-mission — a faith that walks with the poor, listens to the land, and builds communities of hope. Restructuring is not simply an organizational matter; it is spiritual and pastoral — a return to the roots with eyes wide open to the signs of the times. In doing so, we can continue to be faithful companions of the tribal people on their Pilgrim Journey of Hope.

6. Conclusion

The journey of the Chotanagpur Church is far from over. The faith of the tribal people remains a source of hope in the face of social challenges, climate change, and cultural erosion. There is a strong movement within the Church to preserve indigenous languages and stories. As we look to the next 150 years, the Church is called to be rooted in justice, inclusivity, and love. We honour the many men and women whose faith, courage, and determination have shaped a Church that symbolizes hope. The journey of the Chotanagpur tribals serves as a reminder that faith, when grounded in justice and lived out in community, can truly transform history.



Section - B

EVOLUTION OF RANCHI MISSION



NURTURING OF PROFESSIONALS WITH A DIFFERENCE SINCE 1955

70 YEARS OF XISS

Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur SJ

Director, Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi



“Act as if everything depends on you; trust as if everything depends on God.”

These profound words resonate deeply with our philosophy of blending relentless effort with faith in

the Almighty to achieve success as we successfully enter the 70th year of excellence at Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi. It fills me with immense pride and joy to announce that all four programs of XISS, namely Human Resource Management, Rural Management, Marketing Management, and Financial Management, have been successfully accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a major body responsible for accreditation of higher education institutions in India.

This milestone is a testament to the collective dedication, hard work, and perseverance demonstrated by all our stakeholders over several months. It highlights our shared vision and commitment to excellence and the pursuit of delivering value-driven education, national and international research projects, and promoting entrepreneurship pursuits.

At XISS, our mission has always been to provide holistic and quality education that imparts knowledge and instills the values of social service and ethical leadership. With this accreditation, we reaffirm our pledge to shape our students into industry-ready professionals equipped with the skills, values, and mindset to excel in their careers and make meaningful contributions to society.

This achievement is not the culmination of our

efforts but a significant step forward in our journey toward greater accomplishments. As we march ahead, we do so with a renewed sense of preparedness, positivity, and an unwavering focus on setting new benchmarks of excellence. We are grateful to everyone who made this possible and remain steadfast in our mission to uphold the highest standards of education and service to society.

The past year has shown a learning curve, been exceptionally challenging, and highly rewarding, if I can sum it up. The learnings, which have been manifold in terms of grasping ourselves with today's rapidly evolving business environment, have made one aspect crystal clear: innovation and adaptability are no longer optional but imperative for survival and growth. As the Director of XISS Ranchi, I am privileged to lead an institution rooted in a tradition of excellence while fully committed to fostering a generation of professionals prepared to meet and exceed the demands of an ever-changing global market.

Our mission is to craft leaders who drive economic progress and societal transformation, always with an eye toward sustainable growth and inclusive development, and a shared love for our beloved nation.

I agree without any qualms that business and survival are important, but so are our social values. Empathy, in one's nature, is a tool for ensuring societal balance.

Value-Driven Education

The XISS management education has an edge because of the vision-mission and values it stands for. Last year, two parents in high positions came



and told me, “We send our wards to XISS because it has something unique which other B-Schools do not have, viz., a balance between academic excellence and social responsibility. Other B-Schools may have academic excellence without any social concerns.” Yes, indeed, XISS tries to integrate academic excellence on the one hand and societal concerns on the other. XISS tries to create leaders with conscience, compassion, competence, commitment, and character. The recruiters come to select not those who top their class but those who have character. For the recruiters, honesty, sincerity, and integrity are the values that are required to keep their organizations going. In order to make our system inclusive, XISS has a provision of reservation of seats – 40% for Christians and tribals, and another 10% for Dalits, OBCs, and other marginalized communities. Moreover, XISS has also launched some institutional scholarships for tribal and Dalit students in the names of veteran pioneer Jesuits, like Fr. Michael Windey, Fr. Michael Van den Bogaert, and Fr. Louis Francken.

Recognizing Change as the Only Constant

The business world has undergone a transformative shift in recent years, driven by rapid technological advancements, market globalization, and a growing focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. These forces are redefining the traditional business landscape, demanding that companies remain competitive, agile, innovative,

and socially responsible. This evolving environment has also reshaped the priorities of management education. Institutions must go beyond delivering knowledge to fostering creativity, critical thinking, and a strong sense of ethical responsibility in their students. We understand that our graduates are entering a dynamic world where technology, sustainability, and social impact are intricately connected. We nurture them with the skills and mindset to navigate and thrive in this complex, ever-changing ecosystem.

Raising the Bar in Management Education

We continuously refine our curriculum and teaching methodologies to address the evolving demands of the modern business landscape. Our faculty actively engages in research and collaborates with industry experts, ensuring that the latest insights and developments are seamlessly integrated into classroom learning. We strongly emphasize experiential learning here, enabling students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios through internships, live projects, case studies, and interactive sessions with industry leaders. They gain invaluable practical skills and insights guiding them throughout their professional journeys. By aligning our curriculum with global industry trends, we ensure our graduates are well-equipped to make meaningful contributions in their fields from the moment they step into their careers.





Chief Guest Mrs. Shilpi Neha Tirkey, Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Jharkhand

Shaping Purpose-Driven Leaders

The principle of developing leaders with a deep sense of social responsibility is woven into the fabric of our institution, rooted in the Jesuit tradition of service to others. We firmly believe that the purpose of business extends beyond profitability—it is also about driving positive societal change. Our students are encouraged to critically explore how to use their skills to promote inclusive growth, address inequality, and champion environmental sustainability. We are especially proud of our alumni who have made significant contributions in areas such as rural entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, and rural health initiatives. Their impactful work exemplifies the values we strive to instill in every XISS graduate and reaffirms our mission of building socially conscious leaders for a better future.

Cultivating an Innovative Mindset

We take pride in prioritizing fostering a culture of innovation to prepare our students for industries undergoing rapid technological transformation. By encouraging creative thinking, experimentation, and an entrepreneurial mindset, we empower them to tackle challenges in dynamic fields, where digital transformation has reshaped traditional processes. To support this vision, we have enhanced our infrastructure with state-of-the-art facilities, including Incubation Cell, Data Analytics Labs,

and Collaborative Workspaces that nurture creativity and problem-solving. Additionally, our strategic partnerships with technology firms and start-up ecosystems provide students with invaluable hands-on experience and insights into the evolving digital economy.

Partnering with Industry for Practical Impact

A key strength of XISS is our strong and dynamic relationships with the business world. Our partnerships with leading companies and organizations across diverse industries provide students

with invaluable exposure to current practices and industry demands. Through these alliances, we facilitate guest lectures, mentorship programs, and corporate engagements that effectively bridge the gap between academia and industry. By incorporating industry insights into our teaching approach, we ensure our curriculum remains both relevant and aligned with evolving market trends.

Our message to prospective students, faculty, and industry partners is simple: XISS is committed to excellence, integrity, and impact. We invite you to join us on this journey as we continue to break new ground, challenge norms, and lead with a purpose that transcends profits.

We thank each other for our unwavering dedication and commitment. We continue moving forward with determination and clarity, confident in our ability to create a brighter future for everyone.

My message to prospective students, faculty, industry partners, and others who wish to be associated with XISS in the future is clear: here, we are dedicated to excellence, integrity, and making a meaningful impact. We warmly invite all to join us on this transformative journey as we push boundaries, redefine conventions, and lead with a purpose that goes beyond profitability.

Together, let us move forward with resolve and vision, confident in our shared ability to shape a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH SINCE ITS INCEPTION

Fr. Ajay Remi Soreng SJ

Superior, St. Stanislaus' High School, Lohardaga

A THROWBACK : BURUDIH-KOCHANG



“May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.” (Psalm 126:5-6).

This verse beautifully reflects the spirit of celebrating the 150th Jubilee on 2 March 2025, marking the foundation of Burudih-Kochang Parish. A jubilee celebration is always a moment to reflect on a glorious past, to thank the Almighty, to rejoice and exult, and to remember the people who made it all possible gratefully.

Fr. Augustus Stockman, the first missionary to Chotanagpur, was a prophet sent by God to this land. He faced numerous challenges and hardships, yet he planted the seeds of evangelization that future generations would harvest abundantly. Now is the

time to sing Alleluia to the Lord: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” (Matthew 21:9).

In 1867, during his visit to Rome, Mgr. Steins received a papal mandate instructing him to establish missions in his vicariate. Recognizing the pressing obligation to act, he urged Fr. Stockman to take on the Chaibasa mission. Despite the challenging journey—a ten-day trek by bullock cart from Midnapur to Chaibasa, filled with hazards and difficulties, such as steep hills and treacherous rivers—Fr. Stockman successfully arrived in Chaibasa on 10 July 1869.

For Fr. Stockman, this mission meant venturing into the unknown, facing an unfamiliar land, people, culture, language, and geography. He was indeed a true outsider – *diku* – in every sense of the word. Yet, the ways of Providence are beyond human understanding, much like the ways of Patriarch Abraham, who traveled to an unknown



Archbishop of Ranchi, Vincent Aind blessing the Statue of Fr. Augustus Stockman at Burudih, Kochang



land, leaving the familiarity of his home behind.

Fr. Stockman faced numerous challenges but was fortunate enough to experience the joy of seeing the fruits of his hard work. On 8 November 1873, he baptized 28 Mundas from seven families in Khuntpani village, Chaibasa, during a solemn ceremony conducted by Mgr. Steins, who felt relieved of his pastoral responsibilities after this event. However, the joy of this achievement did not take root in a community that remained largely unwelcoming despite all the various efforts and approaches Fr. Stockman employed. Feeling the weight of this challenge, he humbled himself and sought opportunities elsewhere, venturing into the unknown once again. Throughout this journey, the loving and compassionate heart of Jesus, whom the small Catholic community invoked during their novena, remained ever close to the people and attentive to their needs.

Without distinction, the Almighty creates generous hearts, even among pagans. The pagan Munda (chief) of the village of Tutui warmly welcomed the families who embraced the new faith, allowing them to settle on his land. The Divine actively worked to establish His Kingdom among the poor of the region. As a result, the first Catholic Church was founded in Chotanagpur, thanks to the generosity of the God-fearing Munda of Tutui village, which laid the groundwork for a promising future.

Fr. Stockman, committed to his mission, followed his parishioners from Chaibasa to Tutui, embodying the sentiment of the prophet Isaiah: "Can a woman forget her nursing child?" (Isaiah 49:15). In January 1875, he established his base on Burudih, the "mountain of God," to proclaim, "God's kingdom is at hand." To enhance his mission on the hill, he brought along two Sisters of the Daughters of the Cross, Sr. Electra and Sr. Berchmans, along with 32 children from the Chaibasa orphanage.

A robust church was founded, and its influence spread to the surrounding villages. Missionary activities echoed across the mountains, valleys, and dense forests. The local communities were

filled with a sense of delightful expectation, excitement, and great hope as they embraced the new opportunities brought to their lives.

The church established at Burudih holds the distinction of being the first church among all those that have since emerged throughout Chotanagpur and beyond. Following the Burudih-Kochang parish, many high-ranking and renowned parishes have developed in Chotanagpur, but history remembers and records only one as the original: Burudih. This sentiment, belief, and conviction inspired our church authorities, Bishop Binay Kandulna, DD (Khunti), and Fr. Provincial Ajit Kr. Xess SJ (Ranchi), to honor Burudih by designating it as a center of pilgrimage. They also made the decision to celebrate its 150th anniversary, the triple golden jubilee, on 2 March 2025.

So, the grand and impressive 150 years of jubilee was magnificently organized and celebrated on 2 March 2025, calling all the faithful from all corners of Chotanagpur to witness the wonders that the Lord has done among the simple, ordinary, and illiterate tribals of this part of the country. The believers, 10 to 15 thousand strong, from all dioceses converged there gratefully to praise and thank the Lord for his love and benevolence upon us.

The hierarchy at the celebration included Archbishop Vincent Aind DD from Ranchi and Bishop Binay Kandulna DD from Khunti. Also present were Archbishop Emeritus Felix Toppo SJ from Jamshedpur, Bishop Telesphore Bilung SVD from Jamshedpur, Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas, SFX, from Daltonganj, Bishop Linus Pingal Ekka DD from Gumla, Bishop Vishuvasam Selvaraj DD from Port Blair, and Bishop Antonis Bara from Ambikapur. Among the Provincials were Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, from Ranchi; Fr. Ranjit Toppo SJ, from Madhya Pradesh; Fr. Jerome Cutinha SJ, from Jamshedpur; Fr. Manoj Vengathanam TOR, from Ranchi; Fr. Bishu Benjamin, VG from Khunti; and Mother General Sr. Lily Grace Topno DSA, from Ranchi. Additionally, Fr. Joachim Jojo SJ, Parish Priest from Kochang-Burudih, along with



about a hundred Priests and another hundred religious Sisters, were in attendance. Government representatives included MLAs and MPs: Mrs. Shilpi Neha Tirkey from Mandar, Shri Vikas Munda from Bundu-Tamar, Shri Viksal Kongari from Kalebira, and Shri Kalicharan Munda, MP, from Khunti. All made their gracious presence felt at this auspicious celebration.

The descendants, or great-great-grandchildren, of the seven original families were also present, sharing their testimonies about their faith journeys over the past 150 years. They have remained steadfast in the face of trials, united in their bonds, and formed a strong faith community, providing an example of how the church of today should live. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, along with the Province Curia and the Parish Priest of Burudih, have played an essential role in the successful planning and execution of this event.

One of the highlights of the event was the installation of a bust of Fr. Stockman along the climbing path leading to the church. Another significant moment was the blessing of the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which represents the heart that guided the first Catholics to settle in this mountainous region. Additionally, a memorial stone slab was placed at the original site of the home and chapel where Fr. Stockman resided. This slab is inscribed with a chronological history of the foundation of Burudih up to the present day.

The event celebrated a faith that has grown significantly, extending its reach to areas such as Gangpur, Surjguja-Udaipur, Assam, the North East, and the Andaman Islands. It is evident that the tribals of Chotanagpur have been part of God's plan from the beginning, with a revelation of salvation and liberation coming to them in its own time. Thus, Burudih represents the first step in a long journey of faith and hope for the community.



Jubilee Celebration of 150 Years of Christianity at Kochang

05 NISHKALANKA: THE SERVICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND PROMOTION OF HINDI



Fr. James Toppo SJ

Writer, Manresa House, Ranchi



Sensitivity to the needs of our less fortunate neighbours is the foundation of Christian charity in action. Why do some individuals become mere spectators in the face of human suffering?

Often, this occurs because

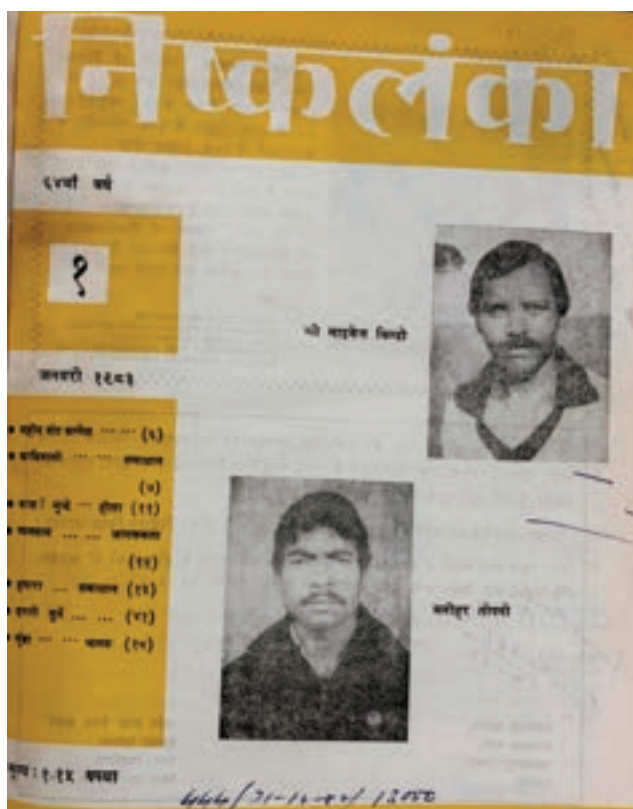
they develop emotional immunity to the joys and sorrows of those around them. In certain circles, a callous indifference to both happiness and suffering is mistakenly regarded as a virtue of courage and forbearance during difficult times. Some consider this detachment a necessary form of prudence for self-preservation in our modern world.

In contrast, the Belgian Jesuits who volunteered

to work among tribal communities in the late nineteenth century exemplified deep sensitivity. From the first encounter of Fr. Lievens with the Adivasi people, who were once proud landlords but had been reduced to serfs and bonded laborers, these missionaries felt compelled to help rebuild their dehumanized communities into vibrant expressions of God's creation. This commitment to sensitivity was the catalyst for a mission among the indigenous populations of Chotanagpur, which began around one hundred and fifty years ago.

This approach sharply contrasts with that of the East India Company, which arrived in the same vast region with a heightened sensitivity solely aimed at generating wealth for the British Empire at the expense of the Indian people. While sensitivity can be present in such cases, it is not motivated by humanitarian concerns or genuine Christian charity intended to uplift the downtrodden or support marginalized groups. Instead, it is a self-serving endeavour orchestrated purely for personal gain.

Organized community selfishness is more harmful and dangerous than individual selfishness. The Belgian Jesuits' sensitivity was entirely altruistic, while the sensitivity demonstrated by the British was egocentric, exploitative, and detrimental to vulnerable populations. This highlights the significant difference between the sensitivity shown toward the plight of the weak and marginalized and the opportunistic sensitivity exhibited by the wealthy seeking greater acquisition of resources. One type of sensitivity aims to promote change and improve deplorable living conditions to ensure lives of dignity and self-respect, while the other is solely focused on extracting wealth and power, disregarding the well-being of the victims involved.





All ministries and apostolic endeavors of the Ranchi Province must align with our great leaders—Lievens, Grosjean, Bodson, Van Hoeck, and many others, including St. Ignatius and his companions. These efforts should be evaluated against the realistic manifesto that the Society of Jesus of the Belgian Mission has consciously chosen: to engage with the Adivasis, the poorest of the poor, and the neglected, faceless multicolored crowds. Our mission is to embrace them and transform them into a large family of God's children, fostering a culture of love and resilience against the exploitative forces at all levels.

We aim to organize these communities to promote a forward march toward comprehensive progress and prosperity. This task involves educating people to first understand themselves and their environment and then comprehend the various forces shaping human societies. Our goal is to establish institutions that educate all demographics—children, youth, and adults.

The Belgian Jesuits' planned strategy continues to require a concerted effort from the Tribal

Jesuits, even today, after 150 years. It is essential that we maintain our determination to follow in their footsteps. This organizing process began at the village level, which was the foundation for establishing parishes in the major mission centers.

In our ambitious plan to create a new world where everyone is treated as Brothers and Sisters, embracing change and progress, a monthly magazine will play a crucial role in spreading information and strengthening the ever-growing network of relationships at all levels. Whether you call it a magazine, a journal, a monthly news bulletin, or by any other name, our focus is on the contributors of the articles in the pages of Nishkalanka during its initial years. We are all proud members of the "Maria Sangat" organization, devoted followers of Mother Mary from the days of St. John's Ranchi.

You'll notice the cover page features a line below the main title: "निष्कलंक, संत जॉन्स स्कूल की संगत का मासिक पत्र" Until 1930, Nishkalanka reflected the sensitivity of the Johannine family. Fr. Bodson, one of the Jesuit staff at St. John's Ranchi, was filled with ideas to bring about change among the Oraons and Mundas. Before the magazine was officially printed, our handwritten pages were circulated among the alumni of St. John's Ranchi, who were spread across the then-literate Chotanagpur. Each copy reached a minimum of five readers in its turn. It was named "निष्कलंक," not "निष्कलंका"

It's essential to remember that in 1921 and the decades surrounding that time, only about 10-15% of the new Christians were literate. The others, while good Christians, had not received systematic catechism, yet they remained faithful. For them, Nishkalanka served as a vital tool for nurturing their faith—avidly read, reread, and passed on to neighbours who, for some reason, failed to secure their copy.

The passage above is not a direct quotation but a quasi-quotation, as the author can no longer find the original texts. However, while reading the reports from the Chotanagpur Mission's Golden



Jubilee Celebration in 1935, he encountered similar sentiments multiple times. When discussing the year of Nishkalanka's first publication in 1921, some senior members remarked, "You should have seen the glow on their faces when they shared how, among the third-generation adults, a deep sense of achievement radiated from them when Nishkalanka was published. Although not many of them were matriculates, their Christian character made it inspiring to witness their participation in the transformative act that changed the tribal society into the enlightened Christian community of that time. The remarkable force of 1,500 young men who volunteered to go to France to form the Labor Corps during the First World War did this brave act of 'Living your life not for yourself alone but for others' prior to Nishkalanka's birth. They drew inspiration from Fr. Louise Bodson SJ, St. John's Ranchi, and similar figures in the significant mission centers of Barwe, Biru, and the Munda country of Torpa, Khunti, and Karra. This marked a significant milestone in faith formation, with village schools and Nishkalanka collectively offering guidance to the people during its early

years."

The decades of history continued to unfold. St. John's High School in Ranchi, the only formal high school of its kind in Chotanagpur for 40 years, worked in conjunction with 150 village primary schools and 12 middle schools in nearby compact villages, as well as 14 non-formal adult study centers, known as Parishes. These institutions had made significant strides in addressing the *Zamindari* system of administration across various parganas and kingdoms. They tackled blatant exploitations such as bonded labour, known locally as *baith begari*, and the usurpation of tribal land under the pretext of unpaid debts.

During this time, St. Mary's School Samtoli and St. Ignatius' High School Gumla joined the movement for liberation. However, by then, agrarian unrest and tribal frustration due to excessive exploitation had diminished. The enactment of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 1932 served to defend the land rights of the Adivasis and solidified a pro-tribal stance among the British colonial powers—a sentiment that took over two centuries to develop. In the mission centers, non-formal education





for adults shifted towards the sacramental and ecclesiastical formation of the faithful. The Lievens-in-Torpa style of faith formation, which had persisted in the newly established mission centers (now called parishes), began to be replaced by *Dharm* Schools, First Communion preparation classes lasting one month, *Shadi* Schools, and larger celebrations during Christmas and Easter, alongside processions for Christ the King and *Corpus Christi* adorations. There were also novenas, devotion to the Sacred Heart, and Sunday gatherings centered around Banks and *Dhan-golas*, along with special weeks dedicated to healthcare for domestic animals and sessions on herbal medicine and entrepreneurship.

This shift marked a departure from the traditional approach to faith formation, which had focused on meeting Jesus the liberator amid prolonged suffering due to exploitation. With the decrease in exploitation and with tribal families now standing on equal footing with non-Christian and non-tribal families, it became evident that the local *Rajas*, *Zamindars*, *Baraiks*, and *Ilakedars* were now cautious in their dealings with Christianized tribals. Additionally, the demands from the Education Code Offices in Patna gained strength, requiring compliance with established school management rules and regulations.

Consequently, faith formation patterns underwent significant modifications and changes in their structure and delivery. However, despite these alterations, the mission to strengthen, confirm, vivify, and rejuvenate the faith of Christianized individuals continued in this evolving environment, and Nishkalanka continued to thrive in this new context.

In 1927, Ranchi was separated from the Archdiocese of Calcutta and established as a new diocese, with Bishop Van Hoeck SJ as its first prelate. This organizational change transformed the mission into an official Christian diocese, structured hierarchically with the bishop at the top, followed



by parish priests in various parishes. Alongside the parish structure, an educational framework emerged, focusing on primary education, with branches set up in almost every village with a sizable population.

St. John's Ranchi became a formal education center in line with educational standards aimed at professional efficiency in school management. Two new high schools, St. Mary's High School in Samtoli and St. Ignatius High School in Gumla, were established to adhere to the educational regulations issued by Calcutta and Patna. Consequently, by 1930, the term "निष्कलंक" was no longer a cherished concept at St. John's Ranchi.

Fr. Bodson, the driving force behind non-formal education through a magazine, had already passed away in 1924. At that time, Fr. Oscar Sevrin SJ became the Headmaster of St. John's while also serving as the Inspector of Schools throughout Chotanagpur and the Director of the Mission—all in one role. This period in the history of tribal Christianity is marked by significant community-building efforts.



Under the skilled editorship of Fr. Nicholas Kujur SJ, one of the most notable figures from the tribal community, "Nishkalanka" excelled in promoting faith formation and building Christian communities at both the diocesan and parish levels. It became an important Christian platform in print media for various tribal Christians, fostering connections among diverse groups—urban and rural, highly educated and less literate, students, and both religious and non-religious communities.

In 1941, Fr. Kujur passed the leadership of "Nishkalanka" to Fr. Simon Bara SJ, who transformed the monthly publication into a voice for tribal communities, celebrating a distinct cultural identity. This contributed to a diverse yet beautiful cultural hegemony that the nation could take pride in.

On the eve of Nishkalanka's centenary, the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) awarded Nishkalanka for its service to faith and the promotion of Hindi, our National language. This recognition marks the culmination of Nishkalanka's growth over the past 150 years as a prominent voice for Christianity, elevating it to the status of a national monthly magazine. We are called to celebrate this milestone.



Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ, Director, Satya Bharti Ranchi, receiving the award for Nishkalanka by ICPA



Section - C

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE JUBILARIANS





Fr. Alexius Tirkey SJ

Assistant Director, Satya Bharati, Ranchi

God Loves the Cheerful Giver (2 Cor. 9:7)



Reflecting on fifty years of serving the Lord, I realize how my journey has been influenced by unwavering faith, a spirit of generosity, and a strong commitment to the Society of Jesus. From my family's humble beginnings

to my calling and ordination as a priest, every chapter of my life has been marked by grace and a profound desire to serve the Lord.

Family Background

I was born into a middle-class family in Gumla and raised in a devout environment. My father, a former army man, worked as an ambulance driver for the Ursuline Sisters in Dharam Jaigarh (C.G.) after his retirement. My mother, a housewife and sacristan at Gumla Parish, nurtured our faith through daily prayers and inspired me with her deep devotion. Although our family has experienced loss, with my elder sister and youngest brother now in heaven, the strength and spirituality instilled in me by my mother have shaped my path.

School Life

My time at St. Patrick's Middle School and St. Ignatius' High School in Gumla was a significant period of growth. I completed my education with a second division, carrying forward my mother's teachings and my developing sense of purpose.

Vocation: A Divine Calling

My journey towards the priesthood began unexpectedly in Class VII when Fr. John Kohlburge invited me to visit Samtoli in Simdega. A simple conversation by the pond ignited a lifelong

commitment in me. Fascinated by the music and camaraderie of the Apostolic boys, I enrolled in Gumla Apostolic School. This led me to the Minor Seminary Ranchi and then to the Pre-Novitiate in Sitagarha. I officially began my Novitiate journey on 20 November 1975.

Life in the Society of Jesus

The Novitiate years from 1975 to 1977 were transformative for me, especially during the long retreat, which deepened my spirituality and strengthened my prayer life. My passion for music flourished during this time, and I took on the responsibility of leading the choir in various stages of formation. Following the Novitiate, I continued my studies at the Juniorate in Sitagarha and Manresa House in Ranchi, where I pursued a degree in Economics with Honours.

Regency and Further Formation (1985-1986)

During my time at the Apostolic School in Samtoli, my Regency years laid the practical foundation for my priestly life. Engaging with students through teaching, praying, and leading music significantly enriched my ministry. Recognizing my musical talents, Vice-Provincial Fr. Michael Fonseca SJ encouraged me to study the sitar at Guru Gyan Procksh Ashram. I continued this musical journey while pursuing my Philosophy studies at DNC Pune. Exposure to Philosophy and Theology broadened my perspective on faith and interreligious dialogue, deepening my understanding of life's purpose.

Priesthood and Ministry

After completing my studies in Theology, I was ordained as a Deacon in Pune and served in Gholeng, Chhattisgarh, which provided me with



valuable pastoral experience before I received the priesthood. The long-awaited moment finally arrived on 17 May 1989, when Archbishop Telesphore Toppo ordained me a Priest. This marked the peak of my spiritual journey and was a joyous occasion for my family.

Following my ordination, I was entrusted with key roles at Satya Bharati in Ranchi, serving as Treasurer, Assistant Director, Director, and as the person in charge of the Vatican Radio Regional Centre for Hindi. Each of these roles reinforced my mission to spread the Gospel, uplift communities, and deepen the connection between faith and service.

As I approach fifty years in the Society of Jesus, I reflect with gratitude on God's guidance and grace throughout my journey. From humble beginnings to serving in various capacities, this path has been a testament to faith, dedication, and the fulfillment of a divine calling. Through prayer, education, and service, I continue to embrace the mission entrusted to me, striving to be a joyful giver in the spirit of Christ.

Fruit Gathering of 50 Years: A Journey of Grace and Contribution

1. A Moment of Grace at Rashtrapati Bhawan

On 18 December 2010, under the leadership of Fr. Alex Vadakumtha, who is now the Bishop of Kannur, our Satya Bharati Choir had the rare privilege of presenting two Christmas carols at Rashtrapati Bhawan before President Pratibha Patil and Vice-President Hameed Ansari. Entering Rashtrapati Bhawan was an extraordinary experience, and I regarded it as a divine moment of grace and honour.

2. Vatican Radio – A Platform for Peace

As the head of the Vatican Radio Hindi Regional Centre in Ranchi, I was deeply touched by the engagement of over 4,000 listeners, many of whom identified as Hindus and Muslims. Their letters expressed how listening to our broadcasts brought peace to their hearts and helped them appreciate Christ's values. These sentiments were featured in our monthly magazine, Vatican Bharati, highlighting how



Fr. Alexius Tirkey SJ, Director, Satya Bharti, receiving the memento from President Srimati Pratibha Patil (2010)



Meeting Pope Francis during visit to Vatican Radio, Rome

faith can transcend religious boundaries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Vatican Radio transitioned to online broadcasting, which limited direct personal interactions. At Manresa House, Satya Bharati took the initiative to establish online Mass broadcasts, ensuring that the Gospel message continued to be spread.

3. Meeting Pope Francis – A Profound Blessing

In 2015, I had the incredible opportunity to visit Rome for the 50th Jubilee Year of the Hindi section of Vatican Radio. On 14 May 2015, I arrived, eagerly looking forward to an audience with Pope Francis. As he entered the Aula, I stood near the door and became the first person to meet him. In this unforgettable encounter, I introduced myself as being from Ranchi, Jharkhand, and presented him with a symbolic Adivasi *Gamchha*, which held deep meaning for me. Meeting the Pope was beyond anything I had ever imagined, and his encouraging words motivated us to spread the Gospel message in India, especially in Chotanagpur. Many in Rome commented on my rare fortune, noting that they had spent years there without having the chance to meet him.

4. Pushpa Archana Song Series – A Legacy in Music

Over the years, I have composed more than 100 devotional songs that blend lyrics and music. Many of these compositions have

become an integral part of liturgy and prayer dances across India. Notably, two Easter songs I wrote in 1998 are still sung annually at Loyola Ground during Easter services, evoking a sense of spiritual fervour.

5. Photography – A Chronicle of Celebrations

During my journey, I have carefully documented the celebrations in our Province, capturing precious moments that reflect the vibrancy of our faith community.

6. Jharkhand *Sthapna Diwas* (2017) – A Grand Cultural Tribute

On the 17th anniversary of Jharkhand *Sthapna Diwas*, Satya Bharati organized an impressive tribal dance performance featuring 500 students from Ursuline School, St. Anne's School, St. John's School, and Manresa House. Under the guidance of Mrs. Gyan Latika Toppo and Fr. Florence Kujur SJ, the students delivered an awe-inspiring performance in front of the Chief Minister, creating a memorable tribute to Jharkhand's rich heritage.

Conclusion

Reflecting on fifty years of faith and service, I have come to realize that grace, challenges, and the lessons learned have shaped my journey as a Pilgrim of Hope and have solidified my steadfast commitment to the Society of Jesus. Despite the ups and downs, I find deep fulfillment and gratitude as I embrace the mission entrusted to me. I am deeply grateful to the Society of Jesus for nurturing my vocation and providing numerous opportunities to serve and deepen my faith.



Pushpa Archana Song Series – A Legacy in Music



LEARNING BY TEACHING : MY FAITH JOURNEY IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Fr. Emmanuel Barla SJ

Researcher, St. Michael's, Khunti



The Society of Jesus embodies love, care, respect, human dignity, freedom, and identity, nurturing individuals like a mother. It never discriminates based on caste, birthplace, or nationality; instead, it

invites and welcomes all, offering service with great kindness, compassion, empathy, and love. The Society instills in each person a passion for the Blessed Mother and the Sacred Heart. It encourages a commitment to faith, justice, and a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. As an international society, it emphasizes love for the Church, which is the body of Christ. Through its services, the Society attracts people from various nations to live together in community and work for the cause of Jesus and His kingdom, which is why I was drawn to join. The Society has provided me with many positive experiences, which I will illustrate below.

The vocation I have in the Society of Jesus is a precious gift from God. When I began my journey with the Society of Jesus, I was surrounded by my parents, three sisters, two brothers, and other members of my extended family. Unfortunately, before my priestly ordination, I lost a sister, my mother, an uncle, and two of my brothers. This was a significant vocational crisis in my life. However, my father provided me with encouragement and support, assuring me that my sisters would take care of him. This strengthened my vocation and led me to make a firm decision and a personal choice to love Jesus, the Society, and the Church. I am truly grateful to the Lord for my vocation in the Society.

The Society provided training at various stages,

including the Pre-Novitiate, Novitiate, Juniorate, Philosophy, Theology, and Tertianship. During my Juniorate, I had the opportunity to pursue a Bachelor's degree at St. Xavier's College in Ranchi, where I excelled and ranked at the top of my subject at the university.

After being ordained as a priest, I was assigned to various ministries in schools, including St. Ignatius' School in Gumla, Prabhat Tara School, and St. John's School in Ranchi, as well as in Parishes such as Khunti and Samlong. While serving in Samlong Parish, I completed my Master's degree, achieving second rank at the university.

At Ashirvad Novitiate, I assisted the Novice Master as a Socius and eventually joined St. Xavier's College in Ranchi. While teaching at the college, I also pursued further qualifications, including an M.Phil., Ph.D., and D.Litt. I earned first rank in the university for my M.Phil. research, and both my M.Phil. and Ph.D. research works were published as a book.

The Society recognized my qualifications and talents, utilizing them, which filled me with joy. I was given the opportunity to teach at various schools and the two university colleges—St. Xavier's College in Ranchi and St. Xavier's College in Simdega—from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. This experience enabled me to participate in national and international conferences and seminars. Additionally, it was a privilege for me to prepare detailed course materials for the Departments of Customary Law and Folklore at the Central University of Jharkhand.

My experiences provided me with opportunities for administrative roles in schools and at two university colleges at various levels. I served as Assistant Superintendent of the hostel, Assistant



Addressing the gathering at St. St. Xavier's College, Simdega

Professor In-Charge of the Evening Section, and Coordinator for vocational courses and departments. I was also appointed as the Principal of both colleges. It was fulfilling to work on teachers' concurrence, promotion, and pension matters, as well as to secure approval from the Bihar government for the payment of supportive staff at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. During my time at this institution, I gained valuable experience working in various committees. I served as the State Coordinator for minority colleges in Jharkhand. I was also a member of the university's Academic Council, the Jharkhand Academic Committee, and the NAAC committee responsible for accrediting colleges and universities. Additionally, I built strong relationships with officials and departments at Ranchi University, as well as with the Governor's house and the Secretariat of Jharkhand and Bihar, which greatly aided my work with the colleges.

I had the opportunity to start the Xavier Research Centre as an Assistant Director. I published the "Xavier Research Journal" and helped build the

library for the research centre at St. Xavier's College in Ranchi. Additionally, I conducted research for private agencies. I have authored six books and edited four others, as well as written numerous research articles for national and international journals, along with a few articles on religious topics. I am grateful to the University for allowing me to guide three M.Phil. students and twelve Ph.D. research scholars in their degree programs.

My experience as the Principal of St. Xavier's College, Simdega, has been enriching. I focused on establishing a favourable academic environment and culture within the institution. One of the significant challenges we faced was obtaining affiliation from Ranchi University for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, as well as securing a university examination center to conduct exams. Additionally, it was pretty challenging to secure scholarships for students from the SC, ST, and OBC categories, as well as those from weaker sections of society. Financial constraints made it difficult to pay both teaching and support staff adequately. I also took on the responsibilities of Controller of Examinations and was in charge of the college library. Another crucial aspect of my work involved obtaining land documents for St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, and resolving land disputes in Rargaon and Pithoria. Similarly, I worked on settling land disputes for St. Xavier's College, Simdega.

I have faced some less positive experiences in life, such as the deaths of my parents, siblings, and other relatives, which have impacted my journey. I have endured injustice, humiliation, dehumanization, jealousy, negative criticism, opposition, and character assassination. However, these challenges have provided me with deeper insights into myself, my work, and my mission, driving me to perform with great dedication and graciousness. Ultimately, I can say that my heart is filled with gratitude and love for society and its members.



A TESTIMONY OF 50 YEARS IN THE SOCIETY

Fr. Sudhir Kumar Minj SJ

Rector, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi



"Imagine... as God walks in the garden of Eden one cool evening, calling His friend, the man made in His image, to walk with Him. The man into whose nostril He breathes the breath of life, who has a desire to know and be like His

Maker. This first encounter scripts a journey from blissful communion to the knowledge of good and evil, and the longing to return. Is it not a prototype of our pilgrimage – a journey to experience the divine and to become holy as he was meant to be? This walking through life mirrors that first walk in Eden, a pilgrimage of faith, a quest for holiness. This is the foundation of our creation, the ultimate goal of human existence. Within this context, we begin to reflect on the journey of 50 years – a walk with God, of a 'pilgrim of faith'.

This journey began with a call, a whisper in my heart. The years that followed were a crucible, shaping and moulding me for the path ahead. My entrance into the Novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, in 1975 shaped the foundational course. The seeds of vocation were sown, and their understanding unfolded gradually. It taught the core values of the Society of Jesus, of prayer and discernment. The College also provided the next level of formation, the Juniorate, where, besides studying humanities from 1977 to 1978, deepening of prayer life, and orientation to ministries found space.

Pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Arts at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi [1978-1980] enabled intellectual growth for future philosophical and theological studies. It broadened my horizons, exposing me to academic rigour. The study of Philosophy at

Satya Nilayam, Chennai, from 1981 to 1983, was spent in intense intellectual formation, essential for theological reflection. It challenged me to think critically and grapple with fundamental questions about existence and being.

The regency at the Hostel in 1981 and AROUSE in Gumla from 1983 to 1985 were pivotal in putting theory into practice. The challenges of regency tested my tenacity and perseverance, preparing me for theological studies at the RTC Ranchi from 1985 to 1986 and at Vidyajyoti, Delhi, from 1986 to 1988. Theology offered opportunities to reflect and understand Christian faith, doctrines, Scripture, history, and traditions.

A special preparation for future ministry led me to Rome, the centre of Christianity. The four years from 1988 to 1992 at the Pontifical Biblical Institute were transformative. This rigorous academic study of biblical exegesis, languages, history, and archaeology equipped me to appreciate the Scriptures profoundly and prepared me to interpret and share the Word of God with clarity and depth. Biblicum helped me to understand the hierarchy and universalism.

The Tertianship at Dindigul from 1994 to 1995 was a 'school of love', a time dedicated to deepening my love for the Society of Jesus and understanding its history, spirituality, and mission. It was an intense time of prayer and discernment, renewing my commitment to the Society's ideals, purifying my motives and preferences, inner healing, and a disposition of generosity for the mission.

Studies at Biblicum prepared me for a specific mission – to teach Scripture at St. Albert's College in three phases, from 1992 to 2002, 2006, and from 2007 to 2010. It was a privilege, a sacred trust,



and awe-inspiring to step onto the campus amidst eight elderly and active Belgian stalwarts. Teaching the future clergy, shaping their understanding of the faith, and preparing them for the ministry was a profound responsibility and a humbling experience.

Coming back to St. Albert's College in 2018, I found a significantly changed landscape in the Seminary. The challenges and opportunities of seminary formation have evolved. Yet, the core mission remained: to accompany and guide seminarists in their journey towards the priesthood. This phase demanded adaptability, understanding, and a renewed commitment to the emerging needs of the Church and its future leaders.

Pursuing a doctorate was a call to delve deeper, exploring the very foundations of my faith, which landed me at Sankt Georgen in Frankfurt, Germany, from 2002 to 2006. I immersed myself in doctoral research in biblical theology, which required intense study, wrestling with ancient texts, and seeking to understand the Word in its historical and literary context. The libraries, lectures, and the scholarly community contributed to my theological discourse, enriching my understanding of God's Word, a crucible for the mind and spirit.

The journey of faith continued, albeit briefly, at the Regional Theological Centre Anekal, Bangalore (2006-2007), shifting my focus from pure research to the transmission of knowledge. I began to teach Scripture, not merely as an academic exercise, but as a living, breathing testament to God's enduring Presence. The insights gained through research began to take shape in the classroom, triggering new understanding and illuminating the familiar passages afresh. It was a profound experience to accompany the students with answers to their questions and foster their eagerness to learn. The study of Scripture implied that it is not an end in itself, but a means to deeper communion with God and a more effective ministry. Thus, the foundation was laid for future engagement with theological students at RTC, Ranchi, in 2018 and 2022.

Serving at Sadbhāvnā, the Ranchi Jesuits'

Provincialate, from 2010 to 2018, was a different kind of ministry that altered my life and vision. Assisting Father Provincial in the administration facilitated my insights into the organisational and apostolic works of the Society. It summoned me to serve my fellow Jesuits of the Province and support their work. Constant communication with the Father General's Curia sustained my understanding of the governance of the Society of Jesus.

A new chapter began at St. Xavier's College in 2024 after spending years in formation. It was a different experience, taking up the responsibility as the head of the community with its unique challenges, embracing a new horizon to serve. It is an opportunity to contribute to the academic and administrative excellence of this esteemed institution, catering to the students, and to continue the legacy of Jesuit education.

This pilgrimage of faith also testifies to the share of grace flowing through my human miseries—surviving from two occurrences of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), in 2012 and its relapse in 2014. On the first occasion, the precipitously prolonged treatment on the first occasion tested my patience and the physician's competence. Its puzzling relapse in 2014, severely and rapidly affected my physical activities, paralysing me within a few days. Gripping physical numbness and a paralytic condition awakened my mere vegetative existence, reminding me of Ps 8:4, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" I wondered at the divine wisdom, yet my brittle belief in divine grace working miracles in life made me surrender my helplessness to Him.

Looking back on the memory lane of this journey, there is an impressionable awareness of God writing on the pages of our lives with His benign presence, instilling a sense of wonder, praise, and gratitude. Whatever has happened in my life's journey appears like a dream! In all this, He who called me to this walk affirmed his faithfulness, sanctioning the rays of hope to spark into life.



Section - D

TÊTE-Â-TÊTE



09

FR. MATHIAS DUNGUNG SJ: A PILGRIM OF JOY AND HOPE



Fr. Francis David Kullu SJ

Province Treasurer, RJS



“Hello, Dr. Mathias! How are you?” Hard of hearing and seeing, no reply came. “Happy Easter, Dr. Fr. Mathias!” I said again, close to his left ear. “Who is it?” “Fr. David!” “Oh! Fr. David.” Replied with great joy and a cheerful

smile. “Happy Easter!” Laughter continued. “How are you?” He did not hear. His laughter continued. “Mr. Thomas Dungdung and family came to see me.” “From Amritbag road, Ranchi”. “Once I will have to go to them.” He was still rejoicing, having met his close relatives. “Who else came to wish you?” I asked, but could not hear me. “How is Raymond?” He asked. “He is fine. He will come to see you.” “OK?” “Provincial?” “He will come to see as well.” “Oh. OK.” “Let’s sing some Easter Song.” After some time, he starts singing. *Milenge Kahin Baharo Ki Manjil Rahi*.

Then, he narrates that Marianus Horo very often sang this song. His memory is still very sharp. “Received the catalogue, thank you.” “When is the Province Day?” he asked. “May 21-24” “Ok. I will go to listen to Fr Provincial!” “I am 99 now.” “Oh yes. Next, you will be a centenarian! Come 12 January 2026, we’ll have a grand birthday celebration.” Immediately, started singing, *Sau Saal Pachele, Mujhe Tumse Pyar Tha...Aaj bhi Hai Aur Kal bhi Rahega*. (Hundred Years ago, I fell in love with Thee, that love is still there and shall continue to be there forever.) “Wow! What a fantastic memory, love, and energy, Fr Dungdung!” I said to myself. We talked for quite some time about many things. He was extremely grateful for this meeting of love. “Thank you! You came to see me after a long time.” “Keep well, hale and hearty!” and took leave of him.

On Easter Sunday (20 April 2025), after a long chat with Fr. Mathias Dungdung, as I walked out of his room from the Manresa House, Infirmary, his cheerfulness, his laughter, his joyfulness, and hopefulness kept resounding in my mind. “Indeed, Fr. Mathias became a source of Easter joy and Hope!” I told myself. At the same time, a series of questions arose in my mind. Who is this great, legendary man? What keeps him so joyful and hopeful in life? What is his secret to a happy and healthy life? I started a journey into the life of this pilgrim of joy and hope.

14 Years of a Joyful Retired Life

Fr. Mathias retired from active service on 11 June 2011 and moved to the Manresa House Infirmary. It has been 14 years since then. His life is marked by joy and hope. He sings daily and even dances for pleasure. When he recognized me, he was overjoyed and began dancing. He has no complaints about anything. Even at the age of 99, he continues to enjoy life to the fullest. Now his eyesight and hearing abilities are failing him. Still, he continues to re-live a life of hope and joy. That keeps his memory very sharp. The romantic Hindi Songs, Hindi *Shayris*, plentiful life anecdotes, and events are still very fresh in his memory. “It is so very edifying to serve this great man!” those serving/attending him would say.

One of his favorite quotes that he once asked me to memorize. I recited for him, “Here hath dawn yet another blue day! From eternity it came and into eternity at night it shall return. Think, will you let it slip useless away?” and he exclaimed with joy, “Oh, you remember that!” This quote reveals a great deal about him, particularly his philosophy and theology. The filmy romantic song – one line only – that he sang for me has a deep



meaning, which I could pick up. One year of life or 100 years of life – we have come from eternity and into eternity we shall all return. No single moment, therefore, should be whiled away uselessly. He has understood this so very well. He has fallen in love with this eternity, i.e., God, and that this love continues forever and ever.

21 Years of His childhood life

Looking at the joyful and gracious life of old age – a second childhood - I try to imagine his early childhood days. In his second-to-last scholarly work, *Ujaale Yadon Ke*, he has dedicated five chapters to his childhood. He was the only son of his parents. He had a sister and a brother older than him, but they died early, before he was born in January 1926. His father was a part of the Indian Army and was sent to France during World War I. But due to the adverse effects of gases used in warfare, he developed a severe sickness. He died when Mathias was just three years old. From then on, his mother, Martha, was everything to him. He grew up as a beloved boy to his mother. He loved his mother so dearly. I had heard him repeat several times, “A boy’s best friend is his mother!” He beautifully describes in his autobiography his early, joyful, and playful childhood days in Konbir Noatoli, his native place. He received his primary schooling at Ursuline Convent School. He was excellent in his studies.

In his third standard, he passed the government exam to obtain scholarships, which lifted the financial burden of paying fees till seventh class. He had his middle schooling from St. Joseph’s

Middle School, Konbir Noatoli. He passed the Seventh Class with good marks and paved the way to study at St. John’s High School, Ranchi. He was in the Apostolic School, Ranchi, while pursuing his High school from 1940 to 1944. He continued his Intermediate Arts studies at St Xavier’s College, Ranchi. It was here, in the Apostolic School, Ranchi, that he expressed his desire to join the Society of Jesus. His mother wanted him to become a diocesan priest, but sacrificing her desire allowed her son to pursue his call to be a Jesuit Priest.

13 Years of His Glorious Jesuit Formation

Pilgrim joined the Society of Jesus on 21 June 1947 by starting his first stage of Jesuit Formation in St. Stanislaus’ College, Sitagarha. Fr. Francis Quirainan and later Fr. Peter Ponnet rooted and grounded him well in the Ignatian Spirituality. He was found fit and worthy of the Jesuit way of life. On 21 June 1949, he professed his first vows in the Society of Jesus. At that time, there was no classical juniorate stage of formation. He was sent to St. Xavier’s College, Ranchi, for graduation. St. Xavier’s College, Ranchi, was five years old at the time, with Fr. Schokart as the Principal and an excellent scholarly faculty, including Fr. Camil Bulcke, Prof. Mohanto, and Prof. B. Banerjee. He chose to study Hindi (Honours) with English and Economics as other subsidiary papers. All scholastics stayed in Manresa House while doing their college studies, and Latin Language class was compulsory before classes in the college. Two years passed by swiftly, and college life was over!

Pilgrim went to Shembaganur for his philosophical studies. He had wise scholars to teach him philosophy, including Fr. Shouriya, Fr. Dorairaj, Fr. Ogarte, and Fr. Savrimuthu. It was an international community of staff and students at Shembaganur and provided Mathias a suitable atmosphere to grow in spiritual and intellectual depth. He had the opportunity to deeply reflect on and understand the philosophies of great philosophers, such as Thomas, Descartes, Schelling, Hegel, Freud, and Jung, among others. In Shembaganur, at an elevation of 7,000 feet above sea level, amid the



Fr. Socius visits the Infirmary at Manresa House, Ranchi



A quality time out with the senior Jesuits

silence of the Palani mountain ranges, he learned the skills of philosophizing life with a blend of silence and smiles. Three years of philosophy equipped him well to see realities from different perspectives. He came down the mountain as a wise man. Then came the period of the Regency. He did three years of Regency from 1954 to 1957 at Loyola High School, Kunkuri.

On completion of three years of Regency, Fr. J. B. Moyerson, the first Provincial of Ranchi Province in 1956, sent this pilgrim for the theological studies in Louvain, Belgium. After completing his third year of Theological studies, he was ordained on 10 August 1960 in Heverly. As a newly ordained Jesuit Priest, he had a chance to serve for four months in Aschaffenburg (Germany) as a chaplain in the camp of American soldiers. He completed his theological studies and returned to India by ship from Manchuria to Mumbai, and then traveled by train to Ranchi. He pursued an MA (Hindi) from Ranchi University, Ranchi, from 1961 to 1963. He did his tertianship - the last stage of formation in the Society of Jesus from Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha.

51 Years of His dedicated, loving Service

When I look back at the life of the pilgrim, I am mesmerized to find that he had 51 years of long, dedicated, and loving service to the Church in the Society of Jesus. He began his active life in the

education ministry at Loyola High School, Kunkuri, in 1964, where he served as a regent for three years. After a year in 1965, his great call/appointment came from Fr. Provincial Crick as the Hindi Professor of the Department of Hindi in St Xavier's College, Ranchi. Together with his lectureship, he continued his academic pursuits and obtained a PhD in Hindi in April 1976 from Ranchi University, Ranchi. His PhD research was on "Hindi and Kharia - A comparative and analytical study." He continued teaching in the college for seventeen long years. From 1983 to 1985, he served as the Socius to the Novice Master in Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, when Fr. Sylvanus Kiro was the Novice Master. He was appointed as the Hindi Teacher of the Juniorate at Sitgarha for a year. It is here he completed his 25 years of priesthood, but had no silver jubilee celebration.

The pilgrim was posted for three years as caretaker of Param Veer Albert Ekka College, Chainpur, between 1987 and 1990. He worked there under Principal Patras Ekka. He had a chance to work there with his students of St Xavier's Ranchi, who had now become professors of that college. The college was facing challenging times due to some legal court cases. He worked there in such difficult times. But tough times too pass away.

The pilgrim received a transfer in 1991 to be an assistant parish priest of Majhatoli, a parish located a little beyond St. Ignatius' School, Gumla, on the way to Chainpur. In Majhatoli, he also served for a year as a Spiritual Director in St. Aloisius' Minor Seminary. After the death of great Hindi Scholar Dr. Camil Bulcke on 17 August 1982, a research centre was established in 1983 at Manresa House, Ranchi, and named as Dr. Camil Bulcke Research Centre. In 1992, the pilgrim was appointed as the Director of the Research Centre. He served as the Director of the Bulcke Research Center for over 19 years. It is during this period that the pilgrim devoted himself to scholarly work, mostly in translations. He guided over 138 PhD research scholars through the Dr. Camil Bulcke Research Centre. He retired from this office of the Bulcke Research Centre on



11 June 2011 at the age of 87. However, even after his retirement, he continued his pilgrim search and shared his life, vision, and mission through his writings.

His Scholarly Works

Fr. Mathias Dungdung, as a joyful and hopeful pilgrim, has touched the lives of thousands through his scholarly writings. He is genuinely a Hindi Pandit (Hindi Scholar) – a *chalta firta* Bulcke Hindi Dictionary (Walking Hindi Dictionary). He has made a significant contribution to Hindi Literature. He has to his credit 36 books, mostly translations, the latest being *Karuna Ki Kirne*, a book on Divine Mercy. *Seva Ki Saugaat*, *Subhah Ke Adhkhile Phool*, *Sankalp Ki Safalta*, *Door Thi Manjilen* are some of the

well-read translated books. However, according to him, every translation is a new creation of his own. *Ujale Yadon Ke*, an autobiography, is a summary of his life and work, which he published after his retirement in 2015. In the book, he recalls, reviews, relives, and repeats – Amen! In this autobiography, he divides his life into two parts: first, from his own land to a foreign land, and second, from a foreign land back to his own land. Symbolically, our life is a journey. From eternity it has come, and into eternity it must return. That's our destiny. We are citizens of heaven. To reach heaven is our destiny. In between, we have only delightful memories.

I wish we could learn from the pilgrim the art of blissful life.



Fr. Mathias Dungdung SJ so young and lively at 99



FR. EMMANUEL KUJUR SJ: A GREAT MISSIONARY OF ZAMBIA

Fr. Florence Purty SJ

HOD, St. Xavier's B.Ed. College, Ranchi



Fr. Florence Purty SJ had a conversation with Fr. Emmanuel Kujur SJ, a missionary in Africa for 46 years who hails from a small village, Musgutri, in Chhattisgarh. He was happy to share his experiences, which

are given below:

Q. Fr. Emmanuel, could you please tell briefly about yourself and your vocation story in the Society of Jesus?

Fr. Emmanuel – One day, I reflected on how I came to my vocation in the Society of Jesus. My main inspiration came from our family's evening prayer traditions. Every day, my father would lead our family in prayer before meals. If anyone happened to be away from home, he would pray alone, dedicating his prayers to all of us, especially the children, and mentioning each of our names one by one to ask for God's grace. His prayers deeply moved me because he took the time to remember each of us before God.

After finishing middle school, my friends from Musgutri, Ginabahr, Tapkara, Gholeng, and Ambakona dropped out of school. I remembered a teacher from Chandigarh who taught history in English, and I was captivated by his proficiency in the language. I wanted to speak English like him. Additionally, the priests I knew spoke English very well, which further inspired me.

In school, I was not well-informed about the roles of diocesan priests and Jesuits. My friends often talked about diocesan priests and Jesuit priests. They explained that Jesuits take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience before the Provincial

Superior, whereas diocesan priests are allowed to manage their own finances. I learned that priests do not marry, as they dedicate their lives to serving God and the community.

After much reflection, I ultimately decided to attend St. John's School in Ranchi to pursue my vocation.

Q. You were a missionary in Africa for many years. Could you please share your experiences as a missionary in Africa?

Fr. Emmanuel – In 1978, I traveled to Africa as a missionary. It was a new environment, filled with unfamiliar people, language, and a mission that presented both significant challenges and new opportunities. Two things were particularly important to me during my mission: "acceptance" and "language." The parishioners welcomed me as a missionary, and they provided me with a language book. I believe that language learning relies on memory; if you have a good memory, you can learn a language quickly.

After about a month, I began attending classes alongside priests, brothers, and sisters. I picked up the pronunciation of the language and was able to prepare for the courses in advance. Within two to three months, I was able to say the Mass in the native language, while my parish priest friend delivered the sermon. I was also given the responsibility of teaching catechism to children, which I thoroughly enjoyed. This experience helped me become fluent in the local language.

To improve my conversational skills, I traveled to Chipata in the Eastern Province. I spent some time there, but the parish priest soon called me back due to an increase in work demands. During my



stay in Chipata, I learned to sing the Nyanja preface and other small parts of the Mass.

After that, I was assigned to a new parish in Matero, where I worked alongside senior Jesuits from Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia who spoke English. Before long, I became the parish priest in Matero when the previous priest went on an extended vacation. This was an adventurous and exciting experience, and I truly enjoyed my role there.

I spent a total of nine years in Zambia. When the time came for a refresher course, I needed to find and arrange the location myself. During this time, I was assisting the Canadian missionaries in Darjeeling, who were friends of mine from Ontario, Canada. Our group consisted of approximately 57 individuals from the United States, Canada, Australia, and the Philippines, and we conducted numerous programs together. The refresher course turned out to be a wonderful experience.

Q. You are a ninety-one-year-old Jesuit. How do you look at your Jesuit life? What keeps you going in Jesuit life?

Fr. Emmanuel – Many people have asked me how I managed to stay strong as a Jesuit for so long.

When I was about 3 or 4 years old, my mother gave me a rice beer in a sippy cup. When my father found out, he warned my mother never to give it to me again. I understood his message and chose not to drink alcohol for the next 60 years.

On my birthday in Zambia, my friends encouraged me to show my generosity, so I tried drinking for the first time and ended up feeling unwell. Occasionally, I mixed alcohol with tea, which helped me cope better.

I believe that the secret to my longevity as a Jesuit lies in leading a balanced and integrated life. This includes harmonizing my spiritual life with my apostolic duties and maintaining a disciplined daily routine alongside balanced eating habits. This approach has kept me going strong.

Q. What message do you want to give to the young Jesuits who want to be missionaries in new frontiers?

Fr. Emmanuel – Prepare yourselves physically, spiritually, and psychologically. Some people may test you if you come from a developing country. If you are a qualified person strong in faith, you will be able to endure. Stay open to everyone.



A deep conversation often reflects deep faith - Fr. Florence Purty SJ interviewing Fr. Emmanuel Kujur SJ



Section - E

MISSIONARY FAITH JOURNEY





11

NAVIGATING COMPLEX REALITIES : MY FAITH JOURNEY IN JAPAN MISSION

Sch. Priyatam Lakra SJ

Student of Theology, Wakamiya Scholasticate, Nakano-Ku, Tokyo, Japan



It has been almost five years since I came to Japan. As I reflect on my journey, I realize that adapting to new customs, traditions, and ways of life has fostered flexibility in my thinking. Embracing a new culture has been a significant

milestone, and I feel grateful to God for guiding me along this path and for the new experiences I have encountered. Navigating cultural differences and language barriers continues to teach me the importance of patience and adaptability. I have developed a deep sense of gratitude for these experiences and an appreciation for the beauty of cultural diversity. Here I am, eager to share with you the unique journey of my faith in the uncharted territory of Japan.

As I reflect on my journey in Japan so far, I am filled with a sense of nostalgia. On one hand, I am amazed by the profound discipline and beauty of this nation, with its rich culture and modern advancements. On the other hand, I find myself missing the warmth of our tribal culture and traditions. The Japan Mission, with its deep-rooted traditions and spirituality, presents both challenges and opportunities for sharing the Christian faith. My experience with the Japan Mission has not only shaped my understanding of the Japanese people and society but has also deepened my faith.

Japan is undoubtedly a technological powerhouse, renowned for its innovative and efficient approach. However, beneath this impressive exterior lies a harsh reality: the country is facing significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the decline in the birth rate, coupled with a rapidly aging population. This is a phenomenon that I

can observe in everyday life. As a result, there is a growing sense of isolation among the elderly and increasing uncertainty within Japanese society.

Having experienced the work culture in schools during my time there, I can attest that many young people feel immense pressure to succeed academically and professionally. This pressure often leads to stress and mental health issues. Additionally, the high cost of living drives many young men and women to opt for single lifestyles rather than pursuing marriage. The phenomenon of *hikikomori*, where individuals retreat from society for extended periods and isolate themselves at home, has become increasingly common and concerning. This trend is also impacting the nation's workforce.

What stands out about Japan is the remarkable organization of both its private and government systems, which helps maintain order even during natural disasters. People cooperate sincerely with government initiatives and adhere to rules with patience and understanding. The citizens are disciplined and prioritize the well-being of everyone in society. This is one of the reasons I have many opportunities to learn from them.



Reflecting God's smile after Sunday Class



I am sure many of you have heard about rich Japanese philosophies such as *Wabi-sabi*, *Ikigai*, *Mono no aware*, *Gaman*, *Wa*, and *Shinzen*. These concepts continue to inspire people worldwide. It's a fantastic experience for me to witness people living harmoniously, undisturbed by external social and political forces. In this context, the role of Christian missions becomes significantly vital. As many Japanese seek a meaningful and fulfilling life, the message of hope resonates profoundly.

When I initially arrived in Japan, I was greeted by the warm and vibrant energy of Tokyo. However, I quickly realized that behind the bustling streets lies a profound loneliness, stemming from an individualistic lifestyle. The work culture here is incredibly intense and professional, which presents a stark contrast to the work culture in Indian society.

I am grateful for the opportunities I have to participate in cultural exchange programs, especially at Sophia University. Interacting with people from various backgrounds allows me to connect with new students, cultures, and communities. I often have the chance to share insights about Indian culture. When I talk about the warmth of the tribal society in Chotanagpur, where we share our joys and sorrows, those who listen are often amazed by the strong bonds we maintain in times of need.

I find it quite strange and sometimes amusing how people here prioritize their privacy. In Indian society, we often share details about our parents, siblings, and work casually. In contrast, people in Japan tend to keep their personal lives more private, not out of insecurity, but as a cultural norm.

When it comes to relationships, we often stay connected with our uncles, aunts, nephews, and cousins. However, in Japan, most individuals are only familiar with their immediate family—siblings, parents, and, at most, grandparents. Extended family relationships, such as those with uncles, aunts, or in-laws, are generally not a part of their social interactions. Thus, living in such a developed country as Japan can feel quite individualistic and isolating.

While my experiences in Japan have been enriching, they have not come without challenges. Being away from my homeland and striving to adapt to and accept everything around me has been a challenging experience. Additionally, the societal pressures within Japanese society complicate the role of a missionary. The expectation to conform to societal norms often leaves little room for personal exploration of faith. Japan has always been a land open to missionaries, so many individuals wrestle with existential questions and identity crises outside of their cultural context.

As a Jesuit Scholastic, I continue to navigate these complexities and embrace them in my prayers. Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities for growth and blessings. I have had a unique experience in my exploration of faith, and I am deeply grateful to God for the life we share as Jesuits, wherever we are. We are all committed to the same mission—*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*—in different places but with the same spirit. This sense of connection in prayer with all of you, the Ranchi Jesuits, provides me with support and energy in various ways.



A photo session after Sunday Mass



PILGRIMS OF HOPE IN THE LAND OF WATERS

Fr. Elias Surin SJ and Fr. Amar Bage SJ

Missionaries at British Guyana



Faith is a journey that involves great trust and confidence in God, motivating us to take action. Throughout our life journey, we encounter a variety of experiences, including hardships, adventures, and profound

spiritual moments. As we navigate this journey, we are entrusted with different responsibilities in God's vineyard, based on our abilities. In discussing the mission journey in Guyana, several key areas can be highlighted: (1) The foundational work of the British Jesuits and the recent establishment of the new Caribbean province, (2) The contributions made by the Ranchi Jesuits to the mission, (3) The role of the diocese in engaging the community during this Jubilee year, 2025, and (4) The challenges and blessings of inculturation in the mission work. These topics represent a few important aspects of our mission journey in Guyana.

The Jesuit Mission in Guyana was entrusted to the British Jesuits by Pope Pius IX in 1857, with Fr. James Etheridge appointed as its Superior. Initially, the mission was established in Georgetown, and the Jesuits expanded their efforts over time, including the founding of the Rupununi Mission in the interior of Guyana in 1909, led by Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes. Jesuits from other provinces, including North America, Canada, Brazil, and thirteen provinces from India, also contributed to the Jesuit Missions in Guyana and Jamaica. On 31 July 2023, the Society of Jesus established the Caribbean Province (CAR) as a new territorial division, integrating the former Antilles Province (ANT), which included Cuba, Miami, and the Dominican

Republic, with the Jesuits of the English Caribbean, comprising the former Guyana Region and Jamaica.

Ranchi Jesuits in Guyana

I would like to highlight the significant contributions of the Ranchi Jesuits to this mission. We strive to give to the people what we have. By our nature, we are rooted and grounded in faith and rich cultural traditions. We are honest, genuine, loyal, hardworking, intelligent, docile, loving of nature, straightforward, sociable, lovable, kind, generous, open, cheerful, courageous, and responsible—committed missionaries.

Our missionary presence in the Diocese of Georgetown, Guyana, began in 2006, with Fr. Anil Kishore Tirkey SJ and Fr. Anugrah Amar Bage SJ as pioneers from the Ranchi Province. We can work in various situations—whether urban or rural—and we easily adapt to different places and communities. Fr. Anil has made a significant impact in this mission as one of the finest Parish Priests in the diocese. At the same time, Fr. Amar has served in various capacities throughout the diocese, often in remote areas as a Parish Priest. Currently, he is the Parish Priest at Ascension Church in New Amsterdam and Guardian Angel Church in Hopetown, Berbice. Additionally, he serves as the Director of the Guyana Human Development Centre in Berbice.

Fr. Gabriel Xess SJ served for three years in the remote area of St. Joseph's Mission in Kurukabaru, North Pakaraimas. In 2012, Fr. Elias Surin SJ and Fr. Suman Prabhat Toppo SJ, both young and energetic priests, arrived in Georgetown, Guyana. Fr. Suman





generously served in St. Robert Bellarmine in Aishalton for two years. Fr. Elias has been the Parish Priest at St. Joseph's Mission in Kurukabaru for 12 years. During that time, he has learned the local language and celebrates the Holy Eucharist in Patamuna. He also organizes annual retreats for Parish Lay Assistants and Youth and regularly visits village communities.

Fr. Mark Mukul Lakra SJ arrived in 2014 and served at St. Francis Xavier's Church in Port Mourant, Berbice, and St. Teresa's Church in Campbellville, Georgetown.

Diocese of Georgetown

In this Jubilee Year, under the able leadership of His Lordship Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB, Bishop of Georgetown, the entire Diocese walked together in unity. For the first time, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius were introduced, allowing a significant number of the faithful from their respective parishes to participate and renew their spiritual lives.

During the Lenten season, annual retreats for both adults and youth were organized in nearly all parishes. Additionally, pilgrimages to neighboring villages were arranged.

The villages have seen improvements in technology, particularly with the enhancement of internet services, which enabled residents to partake in various programs organized by the diocese. An

online Parish Lay Assistants' Training Program was conducted, benefiting many participants. The Annual Bible Quiz Competition for the youth was a remarkable success, and all Parishioners were encouraged to embark on a pilgrimage.

Furthermore, Parish Lay Assistants and church team members engaged in missionary visits to neighboring villages, fostering a spirit of outreach and community.

Mission and challenges

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." Missionaries came and baptized people, instilling faith in them. However, today the meaning of baptism has changed for some; many seek baptism merely for the sake of records and documentation. More than the act of baptism itself, the renewal of faith presents a real challenge. Many individuals are confused about their faith due to the diverse teachings from different denominations, as well as the influence of media and technology. Nonetheless, many have maintained their faith, even in the absence of a priest for years.

Local culture and traditions play a significant role, encompassing aspects such as food, accommodation, family life, geographic settings, and accessibility for reaching people. Mountains,



Fr. Elias Surin SJ with his flock after the first Holy Communion Mass



His Lordship Francis Alleyne OSB, Bishop of Georgetown with his Priests

forests, swamps, and rivers often make it challenging to access mission areas. However, the journey becomes easier and more joyful when walking with the Lord Jesus.

City life differs significantly from village life in many ways. The main challenges include accessing villages, adapting to the traditional foods of Indigenous people, such as *faraine*, *cassiri*, *carri*, pepper pot, and *cassava* bread. Traveling for hours on rough terrain often leads to arriving at locations without proper food or adequate places to rest. Despite these challenges, there is joy in knowing that you can share the Gospel with people, hoping that they will embrace the word of God and keep it alive in their hearts to share with others.

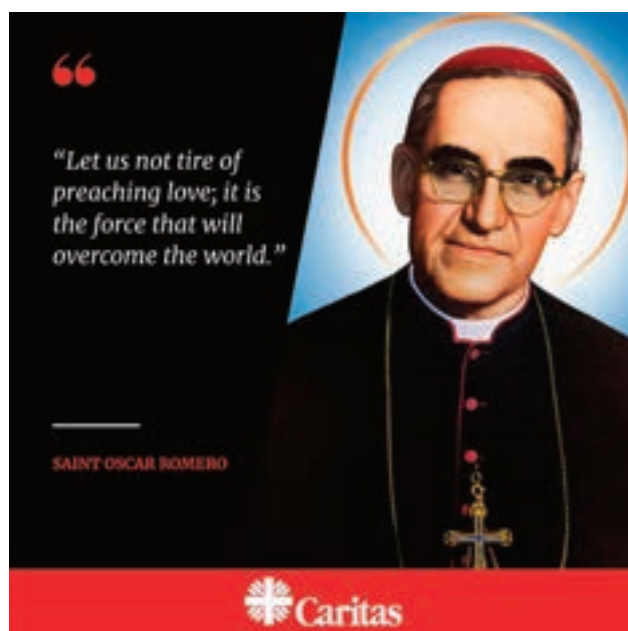
Inculturation and Blessings

The missionary journey is full of challenges, especially when you leave your comfort zone, place, or country. I believe that every missionary would express similar feelings. However, being open to God's call makes a significant difference in our life journey. When we accept the cultures and traditions of a new place with an open heart and mind, life becomes easier and more joyful. Openness to God's call helps us find beauty in everything, regardless of the circumstances.

I am happy to share my experiences from the Guyana mission. From what I understand, all the

missionaries from Ranchi have embraced life, even in difficulties and challenges, because we learned to appreciate and accept the cultures and traditions of the local people and their ways of living.

The Jubilee Year is indeed a grace-filled period in many ways. Numerous activities within the Diocese of Georgetown have significantly contributed to renewing our spiritual lives. We have been strengthened in our faith and challenged in our responsibilities within the church and our communities. We are invited to seek God, support one another, and radiate hope in every aspect of life.





ETERNAL FAITH IN THE ETERNAL CITY

Fr. Prem Xalxo SJ

Professor at Gregory University, Rome

Sent on a New Mission



Rome, the Eternal City, is the epicentre of Catholicism, the seat of a magnificent religious, cultural, and historical legacy, and the embodiment of a vast and multi-millennial tapestry of the chronicles of ideas, significant artistic, philosophical, and theological milestones that humanity has ever known. All pilgrims start their journey of faith as soon as they set foot on the soil of Rome because it is commonly believed that every particle in Rome is inscribed with distinct historical, cultural, and religious connotations. At the dawn of the new millennium, I was assigned a new mission in Rome in 2000 by my Authorities to pursue the Licentiate in Moral Theology. That was the era when internet connectivity was available only through landlines, and social networks were still a distant dream. I landed in Rome, having no concrete ideas regarding the place, language, people, and local food habits. However, my faith journey took flight as I began the process of “see – judge – act” to explore possibilities and ground realities, and to put into practice my personal, relational, formative, and aspirational aspects in my research and studies, as well as in my community life at Collegio Roberto Bellarmino.

Beginning of a New Mission: Teaching Mission in Rome

Towards the end of my Licentiate studies, I was assigned another mission: to complete the Doctoral studies in preparation for joining the Teaching Staff of the Pontifical Gregorian University, a completely new mission in an

uncharted territory of Rome for a Jesuit from Ranchi Province. Choosing a theme related to Ecological Ethics for the doctoral dissertation turned out to be a blessing in disguise for years to come. After completing my doctoral studies, I was sent for Tertianship to Santiago de Chile. On my return to Rome, I eventually joined the Gregorian Community of Professors in 2007, a mission which seemed to be full of challenges and complexities. By taking into account the fundamental aim and deeper purpose of the mission assigned to me, I began teaching with a profound sense of purpose, making concerted efforts, dedicating myself to hard work, and persevering. Having full faith in God, I was determined to foster an environment of continual spiritual and intellectual growth, as well as a commitment to dynamic and creative engagement with students, both in teaching and among the non-teaching staff. The example of St. Paul always guided my ideas and steps, whose faith journey through the uncharted territory of Rome was truly a venture into the unknown, an extraordinary and transformative experience that marked the beginning of a pivotal chapter in the history of the early Church.

***Laudato si'*: New Impetus to the Mission**

The promulgation of the historical and ground-breaking Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on the Care for Our Common Home, *Laudato si'*, in 2015 turned into a fertile ground for my mission. The interconnected and interdependent relationship in creation, which is at the heart of the integral ecology inscribed by *Laudato si'*, was the central theme of my doctoral dissertation. Inspired and encouraged by the teachings of *Laudato si'*, an inter-University project was launched named Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology, which Pope Francis personally



Papal Approval of the Inter-University Project : Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology (22 June 2017)

blessed on 22 June 2017. The Joint Diploma was a new arena in the uncharted territory of Rome, as it marked the first time in the history of the Pontifical Universities of Rome that a team of Professors from all Universities came together to create an alliance and initiate a cultural revolution, fostering ecological awareness among the people. For the past eight years, I have successfully coordinated the Program by maintaining and promoting a cordial spirit of collaboration and friendship among the Professors. Enthused by the success of the Joint Diploma Program in Italian, an Online Course in English was launched in 2024, which wrote its own success story with 662 registered participants.

Diverse and Innovative Curriculum Development

Amidst my teaching mission, I developed a curriculum for Ecological Ethics from theological, ethical, and spiritual perspectives to enhance scientific literacy, competence in ethical reasoning and moral discernment, and foster a sense of social responsibility among students for their future

vocations as leaders in a rapidly changing world. With the help of the Professors, the Joint Diploma course was adequately divided into Classroom Lectures, Conferences, and Workshops to equip the students with the necessary tools to navigate and engage with the contemporary pressing ecological and ethical dilemmas and challenges. Over the years, the students have visited the Communities where the immigrants are accommodated, the City of Boys (Kishor Nagar), Amatrice (a city flattened by the earthquake in 22 August 2016), Civitavecchia (Holy Mass presided over by the Local Ordinary on the ship used to save the migrants), and *Laudato si'* Gardens. The students and the Professors were enthused and elated when Pope Francis declared in February 2024 to create a Borgo *Laudato si'* (*Laudato si'* Village) in Villa Papal Garden (Castel Gandolfo), where the Popes used to go for the summer vacation. Unlike his predecessors, Pope Francis opted not to spend the summer at the Villa Papal Garden from the first year of his pontificate. The visit to the Borgo *Laudato si'*, as part of the Workshop, remained a milestone in learning and broadening one's ecological vision!



His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson during the Inauguration of JDIE

Apart from the regular lessons, the challenging mission in Rome also includes active participation in Seminars and Conferences. I represented the Rector of Gregorian University to present papers on the Foundations of Integral Ecology in Udine (2017) and Barcelona (2019). On 11 April 2025, Partito Democratico (Democratic Party of Italy) invited me to speak on the need for ecological awareness as an inevitable guide to sustainable living. Although the Conference was primarily a political event, with two members of the European Parliament and mayors from different cities in attendance, I felt privileged to present my reflections from an ethical-theological perspective. An enriching experience to share one's reflections

from faith conviction in a political event!

Indelible Mission Experiences

The missionary journey of faith in the uncharted territory of Pontifical Gregorian University is filled with highly enriching, challenging, and exciting experiences, which have revitalised my faith and strengthened my religious vocation as a Jesuit. Despite coming from a tribal background in Ranchi and initially lacking a global perspective, I readily opened myself to new realities, adapted to change, faced challenges with determination, and sustained my faith in the face of adversity. My Jesuit friends, either studying or working in Rome, have been a great source of inspiration, encouragement, stimulus, and support in carrying out the mission, although unworthy, in the uncharted territory of Rome. The regular coming together of the Ranchi Jesuits becomes a means to invigorate my spirit and to sustain my faith amidst adversities. The atmosphere of trust from the immediate as well as from the Province Authorities has been instrumental in keeping alive and aflame my missionary spirit. Finally, the Jubilee Year of Hope has rejuvenated my unwavering hope and faith in the Lord, the Alpha and Omega of all our mission, in whose hands I dedicate my mission, always and everywhere, for His greater glory.



The first batch of Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology 2017



MISSIONARY FAITH JOURNEY IN THE UNCHARTED TERRITORY OF ASSAM

Fr. Thomas Barla SJ

Delegate to the Provincial, Assam Mission

Introduction



The current realities we observe—the number of Jesuits, communities, educational institutions, parishes, and social centers in the Assam Mission of the Ranchi Jesuits—are a testament to our faith in

God and our trust in His unwavering love. We believe that God has called us to love and serve Him among His people living in tea estates, rural villages, and small towns in Assam, where poverty, oppression, and challenging conditions prevail. Our experiences of His unfailing love have instilled hope, courage, and strength within us, enabling us to face difficulties and challenges while carrying out the mission of our Lord Jesus in the uncharted territory of Assam.

The Call of God and the Discernment of Spirit

The Jesuits of the Karnataka Province began their mission in the North East States of India in 1970, focusing primarily on Nagaland, Manipur, and Meghalaya. In 1995, this mission was established as a Region. The first Regional Superior, Fr. Hector D'Souza SJ, became a prophet for the Ranchi Jesuits. During the Province Days of the Ranchi Province in 1996, he addressed the entire assembly, sharing the struggles faced by the Adivasis in the tea plantations of Assam and calling for their liberation. His powerful message resonated deeply, stirring the hearts of many Jesuits and authorities present. They felt compelled to engage in conversations, discussions, discernments, and decisions regarding the situation. Consequently, Fr. John Kerketta SJ, Provincial Superior, decided to send some Jesuits to investigate further. Among them

was Fr. Anthony Doongdoong SJ, who collaborated with the Kohima Region to assess the conditions of Adivasi, tribal, and marginalized communities and explore the possibilities for ministry among them.

The First Missionaries from Ranchi Province

On 14 January 1998, the first two missionaries, Fr. Xavier Lakra SJ, and Fr. Gabriel Xess SJ, arrived at Jesuit House in Guwahati, Assam. They joined the Jesuits of the Kohima Region to work in the plain areas of Assam, focusing on the Adivasi, Boro, Garo, and other marginalized communities. On 18 January 1998, they were sent to the Diocese of Tezpur, where Rt. Rev. Bishop Robert Kerketta SDB presided. The Bishop assigned them to his parish in Missamari, which is located 33 kilometers from the Bishop's House and the district headquarters in Tezpur.

During their brief four-month stay in Missamari, they served the local community with great missionary zeal, simplicity, and humility. Despite having limited resources and the challenge of scattered Christian villages, they reached out to the communities by bicycle or on foot, conducting pastoral ministries diligently. Although they won the hearts of many, some criticized their simplicity, making remarks such as, "They are poor, and we cannot expect structural development from them," even referring to them as *Cycle Chhap*. Nevertheless, their missionary spirit remained undeterred, and they continued to do good for the people. Their time in Missamari was intended to be temporary as they sought a permanent location to establish a new mission station. Within those four months, they successfully acquired a piece of land in Balipara, along the roadside, and decided to establish the first mission center there, despite the challenges posed by the marshy terrain.



Students posing in their Bihu outfit

The First Jesuit House in Tezpur Diocese

On 13 May 1998, Fr. Xavier Lakra SJ and Fr. Gabriel Xess SJ moved from Missamari to a rented house owned by Mr. Gagan Pathok, a Hindu Assamese man in Baligaon, Balipara, to establish the first Jesuit mission center in the Tezpur Diocese. Along the highway, a marshy piece of land was purchased, and construction of the Jesuit residence and parish church began.

On 18 October 1998, Rt. Rev. Bishop Robert Kerketta SDB, Bishop of Tezpur Diocese, declared Balipara Parish, which included units carved out from the Rangapara, Dholabibil, and Tezpur parishes, as St. John De Britto Parish. This new parish comprised 25 units with approximately 5,000 Catholics and extended into the West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh. The Jesuit centers in the Kohima Region, including Palizzi, Bana, Buragaon, and Trizino, fell under the jurisdiction of Balipara Parish.

The Jesuits conducted their mission work from the rented house in Baligaon until 4 February 2002. Meanwhile, Fr. Telephore Lakra SJ, the third missionary from the Ranchi Province, joined the Kohima Region on 2 July 1998. Initially appointed in Phesama, Nagaland, he was later reassigned to the Tezpur Diocese and served as the Assistant Parish Priest to Fr. Joseph Vadaya, a diocesan priest, in Rangapara Parish until December 2001.

Expansion of Ministries in Tezpur Diocese

St. John's English Medium School Balipara was established on 1 May 1999, at Khelmati near Old Addabari, with 120 children initially housed in a bamboo hut. The school was strategically located near a tea estate to cater specifically to

the children of tea plantation labourers. However, due to recurring damage to the bamboo hut classrooms caused by wild elephants and some opposition from confident labour leaders of the tea plantation, the school was relocated in 2004 to a new site along National Highway 52. A proper concrete school building was constructed in 2005.

Gana Chetana Samaj, a non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to social work, was established in Eragaon, Balipara, on 1 September 1999, by Fr. Oscar Pereira SJ, of the Bombay Province. The organization operated for 12 years, from 1999 to 2010, beginning in a rented house in Eragaon, then moving to Xavier Sadan (Jesuit Community) in Bamgaon, Balipara, and eventually to its office building in Hazarapar, Tezpur, in 2012. Gana Chetana Samaj conducted activities across multiple states, including Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh, focusing on the formation and support of Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The organization's practical work earned it recognition, including an award for its Director from the State Government.

St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel, Tezpur was established in 2009 to promote higher education among Adivasi, tribal, and marginalized groups. Initially, the college operated on the St. John's School campus in bamboo hut classrooms before relocating to its current site. Rt. Rev. Bishop Robert Kerketta SDB welcomed the Jesuits' initiative to establish a college for higher education.

In Palizzi, Arunachal Pradesh, Fr. Vital Ekka SJ took over the mission in 2000, succeeding Fr. Paul Coelho SJ. He worked with the Akka tribe, baptizing many and spreading Christianity in the West Kameng district. He also established a small school in Palizzi to educate the Akka tribe, which was educationally disadvantaged.

The number of Jesuits from the Ranchi Province increased annually as ministries expanded, with new arrivals including Fr. Theodore Ba'a SJ (4 April 2001), Fr. Domnic Topno, SJ (15 January 2002), Fr. Pradeep Kullu SJ (January 2003), Fr. Jerome Dungdung SJ, Fr. Sushil Tirkey SJ (June 2004), and Fr. Severius Ekka SJ (5 June 2005).



Creation of Assam Mission

The Jesuits from the Ranchi Province collaborated with the Kohima Region in Northeast India from 14 January 1998 to 3 December 2006. This date, which coincides with the feast day of St. Francis Xavier, became historic for both the Kohima Region and the Ranchi Province. On that day, Rev. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, the then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, announced that the Assam Mission would become a separate mission of the Ranchi Province, distinct from the Kohima Region.

Although the Jesuits from the Kohima Region and Ranchi Province had worked together for nine years across various mission centers, they embraced the separation as a sign of God's will. This new arrangement enabled them to pursue their mission with greater focus and effectiveness. Fr. Xavier Lakra SJ was appointed as the first Delegate of the Provincial to the Assam Mission.

Jesuit Mission in Dibrugarh Diocese

On 4 April 2002, Fr. Xavier Lakra SJ and Fr. Dominic Topno SJ were sent to the Diocese of Dibrugarh to establish a Jesuit mission. They initially stayed in Philobari Parish for about five months, surveying the area and searching for a suitable location to serve the neediest people. During this period, they moved from one place to another. On 8 September 2002, they relocated to the village of Kathalguri, where they lived with the family of Catechist Lt. Mr. Ignatius Toppo while continuing their search for a site to establish a Jesuit Mission Center. Eventually, they succeeded in acquiring land from the workers at Pengaree Tea Estate, adjacent to the Ranchi Line.

On 18 February 2003, Joseph Aind SDB, Bishop of Dibrugarh, declared Pengaree as the Mission Centre of the Jesuits in the presence of Fr. Gregory Coelho SJ, the then Regional Superior of the Kohima Region. After spending nine months in Kathalguri, they moved to Pengaree in June 2003 and lived in a temporary shed on the campus of Lt. Mr. Masih Topno.

On 1 May 2003, St. Xavier's School in Pengaree and Loyola School in Kathalguri were inaugurated by Fr.

Ranjit Pascal Toppo SJ, the then Provincial Superior of Ranchi Province. Loyola School in Kathalguri was inaugurated in the morning with 50 children, while St. Xavier's School in Pengaree opened in the afternoon with 130 children. Both schools were initially housed in temporary bamboo structures.

In 2004, Jesuit Scholastic Owen Chaurappa and Fr. Tej Kumar Tigga joined the mission. However, Fr. Tej Kumar returned to Ranchi after a year due to health issues. Fr. Manohar Khoya SJ became the Headmaster of St. Xavier's School in Pengaree in 2005.

The mission continued to expand with the arrival of more Jesuits and the introduction of new initiatives in Konapathar, St. Stanislaus' School, and Bogapani, Prabhat Tara Jesuit School. Despite numerous challenges, the missionaries worked tirelessly, trusting in the Lord's guidance and providence.

Miraculous Entry of the Jesuits in the Diocese Of Bongaigaon

A group of Santhal individuals from the border area of Assam and West Bengal, who were working in Guwahati, reached out to the Jesuits, inspired to invite them to establish a new mission center in the Santhal Colony located in the Gossaigaon area of Kokrajhar District. They approached the Bishop of Bongaigaon with this request, but the process was delayed.

In 1996, during a period of riots, a militant group known as Cobra emerged and kidnapped a Diocesan priest, Fr. Thomas D'Silva, holding him captive for three months in a forest to pressure the Bishop into fulfilling their demands. Eventually, Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil DD invited the Jesuits, and Fr. Ajay Tirkey SJ arrived at Gossaigaon Parish on 13 October 2001. Fr. Charles D'Souza joined him on 4 February 2002, and Fr. Benjamin Ekka from Dumka Province on 4 August 2002. The Jesuits searched for a suitable location to establish a mission center and ultimately decided on Kathalguri, near the Mornai Tea Estate. In 2003, they relocated from Gossaigaon Parish to a rented house in Ransapur village, owned by a Santhal Catholic named Mr. Raj



Shekhar Marandi. Living without electricity and basic facilities, they traveled from village to village to carry out pastoral ministries.

After a year, they moved to Kathalguri and lived in a temporary bamboo house from 2004 to 2012. During this time, they engaged in pastoral, educational, and social ministries across 44 village units of Catholic faithful. The mission established sub-centers in Jacobpur (St. Joseph's School) and Tipkai (St. Xavier's School) to enhance educational efforts and broaden its outreach.

The Manas Bansbari Mission was initiated by Fr. Telesphore Lakra SJ, who arrived on 2 October 2004. Located 25 km from Barpeta Road Parish, it was inaugurated by Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil DD as St. Xavier's Parish and St. Xavier's School on 30 January 2005. The mission served a diverse community, including Adivasis, Boros, Bengalis, Assamese, and Muslims, with Adivasis and Boros making up the majority of the faithful.

Fr. Jerome Dungdung SJ joined Fr. Telesphore in May 2005, followed by Fr. Ajay Tirkey on 10 April 2007. Recently, the Bishop of Bongaigaon has requested that the Jesuits hand over St. Xavier's School and Parish to the Diocese by the end of December 2025 and establish a new center in the Baksa District, which is a previously unreached area.

Future Plan of New Mission Centers

Individuals from various dioceses have approached the Jesuits, inviting them to establish new mission centers in their regions. Two bishops have extended formal invitations and granted permission to begin these initiatives.

The Bishop of Dibrugarh has provided written authorization to open a mission center in Bholukoguri, located in Tingkhong Mouza, Dibrugarh District. This decision comes after requests from the local community dating back to 2020. The process of purchasing land for the mission center has already begun. The second proposed mission center is in the Bongaigaon Diocese. Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil DD has requested that the Jesuits hand over Manas Bansbari and establish a new mission center in the Baksa District, an area currently lacking a Christian presence. A potential location for this mission has been identified in Angulia village, Jalah Tehsil, Baksa District, and a preliminary study has been conducted. The purchase of the land will proceed once permission is received from the Society.

Conclusion

The missionary journey is one of hope, where missionaries fully commit themselves by dedicating their thoughts, desires, energy, and work to fulfilling God's will among the people. This journey involves extensive prayer, communal discussions, and discernment to carry out ministries, expand them, and initiate new ones.

Missionaries must be willing to make sacrifices, letting go of personal desires, dreams, and comforts for the greater love and service of God. Although challenges, problems, and issues are inherent to the missionary journey, there is also immense happiness and joy in knowing that the Lord is always present in His mission of love for humanity.



Fr. Provincial with the Assam Jesuits (13-15 July 2024)



JESUIT MISSION IN CAMBODIA: REIMAGINING AND RESTRUCTURING

Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti SJ

Missionary at Cambodia

Historical Background



The beginning of the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia dates back to 1980 in the refugee camp on the Thailand-Cambodia border, first through the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugee (COERR) and soon

after through the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in 1981. The camps held 600,000 Cambodians who fled from the civil war that ensued after the Vietnamese invasion and the subsequent collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime. Fr. Pierre Ciraque SJ (MDU), Fr. John Bingham SJ (JAM), Bro. Noel Oliver SJ (PUN), and Bro. Paul Macwan (GUJ) came to the refugee camps in 1980. Their priorities were to care for people with disabilities and to provide education in the camps.

In the late eighties and early nineties, after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese soldiers from Cambodia, the Cambodians started coming back to their country in hundreds and thousands. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), recognizing the greater needs of the poor and the disabled returning home, decided to enter Cambodia, the pioneering group of Bro. Noel Oliver SJ (PUN), Sr. Denise Coghlan RSM (Australia), Sr. Marie Jeanne Ath CDP, and Fr. Jub Phoktavi SJ (then a lay volunteer from Thailand) entered Cambodia in 1990. They stayed in a hotel. The government officials kept an eye on their movements. In 1990, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) signed an agreement with the Ministry of Social Action of the Royal Government of Cambodia to open its office in Cambodia. Sr. Denise Coghlan RSM became the first country director of the Jesuit Refugee Service

in Cambodia. They committed themselves to the development and accompaniment of the poor in the villages, persons with disabilities, landmine victims, refugees, and marginalized people in Cambodia.

Banteay Prieb (Center of Dove)

In 1991, the first founding members of Jesuit Refugee Service Cambodia were shown a piece of land by the Cambodian Government at Ang Snuol, 22 kilometers from Phnom Penh, to open a Technical School for persons with disabilities. In 1991, the Jesuit Refugee Service Cambodia established a technical school for people with disabilities, initially enrolling seven individuals with disabilities.



Inter - Religious Dialogue with Buddhist



Bishop Kike Figarido SJ with the students and priests during Holy Confirmation

They named the school Banteay Prieb (Center of Dove) because the land had previously been used as a military camp, a storehouse for arms, and a message carrier pigeon station. Fr. Jub Phoktavi SJ (then a lay volunteer from Thailand) was the first director of the school. Sr. Marie Jeanne Ath CDP, a Cambodian Providence religious nun who escaped the genocide because she was in France for her formation during the genocide, started the Rural Community Development project in the villages. Bro. Noel Oliver SJ (PUN) sought funding for the projects.

Soon, Banteay Prieb (Center of Dove) became the Technical School for the disabled and also the residence of the members of the Jesuit Refugee Service Cambodia. They accompanied people with disabilities by providing community life and teaching skills and values, which enhance their sense of dignity, confidence, and independence. It enables them to generate income independently and live harmoniously within society upon completing the program. Among its various programs, a total of 2,810 students have resided in Banteay Prieb. Additionally, 3,040 students were supported by scholarship programs to continue their studies. Furthermore, 25,161 wheelchairs were produced, and 1,175 families were provided with decent shelter. Banteay Prieb was a place where individuals with various disabilities could find a space for healing their hearts and minds while learning a skill that would help them secure

a job or access an income-generating opportunity. Another accomplishment is its dedicated team. Many of them have been part of the Jesuit Mission Cambodia from its inception to the present day. They are the people who did not come for big salaries. They went with a heart to help the poor people and the marginalized. This was the place where Fr. Samir Dungdung SJ (2005-2007) and Fr. Sandeep Kujur SJ (2016-2018) did their regency.

In 2019, Banteay Prieb, set up in 1991 by the Jesuit Refugee Service as a place where people who had lost their legs or arms due to landmines accidents and other people with disability, celebrated its last graduation ceremony as the Social Welfare Ministry of the Royal Government of Cambodia took back the land to develop Banteay Prieb land as the National Rehabilitation Center for the persons with disability. It is a sad ending indeed, the Jesuit Mission Cambodia; the best base for the Jesuit Mission Cambodia for reaching out to the needy people is lost.

In 1994, what was initially the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Cambodia became Jesuit Service – Cambodia (JSC), enabling the organization's programs and services to expand. In the same year, the mission was formally established by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ. It was entrusted to the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific, then known as the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania. However, the



mission continued to be led by missionary religious priests, brothers, nuns, and lay volunteers from around the world.

In 1997, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), in which then Jesuit Service Cambodia Director Sr. Denise Coghlan RSM and other Jesuit Service Cambodia members played key roles, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Jesuit Service Cambodia team member Mr. Tun Channareth, who himself lost both legs in a landmine explosion, received the award on behalf of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang

In the year 2000, one of the three administrative Ecclesiastical units of Cambodia, the Battambang Prefecture, was entrusted to the Jesuit Mission Cambodia in the person of Msgr. Enrique (Kike) Figaredo Alvargozalez SJ. This saw the scope of the mission expand considerably in terms of reach and responsibility. Here, it is worth mentioning some historical background of the Cambodian Catholic Church. On 26 September 1968, the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh was divided into three: Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, and Battambang. During the genocidal Khmer Rouge years of 1975 to 1978, all the Cambodian priests and religious, except for a handful of religious nuns who

happened to be outside the country for formation, and a significant number of lay Catholics, were either killed or died of hunger and sickness. Msgr. Paul Tep Im Sotha, the first Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, was killed together with Fr. Dom Jean Badre, a French Benedictine monk, in May 1975 in Bat Trang village, some 60 kilometers away from Battambang. All the Churches and the Church run institutions were destroyed. At the end of the Khmer Rouge period, in 1979 and the early eighties, only some Catholics were among the several hundred thousand who lived in the refugee camps along the Thailand border.

Due to the ongoing war and genocide, all of the Prefecture's pastoral activities were brought to an end. After the liberation of Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, the Catholics slowly re-gathered, prayed together, and organized their lives around their faith quietly and unofficially. With the return of the refugees in the early 1990s, the new Catholics from the camps revitalized the Catholic communities in the Northwest of the prefecture.

In 1990, the Catholic community was officially granted permission by the Government to worship in Cambodia. The NGO Caritas Cambodia was reestablished after a fifteen-year absence. Bishop



Science Exhibition at Hun Sen Klakon High School, Sisophon



Yves Ramousse MEP, who had been responsible for the pastoral care of Cambodian Catholics dispersed around the world since 1983, officially returned to Cambodia in 1992. On 25 July 1992, the Holy See re-appointed him as Vicar Apostolic of Phnom Penh. On 21 December 1992, he was also appointed Apostolic Administrator of Battambang, a position he held until 2000.

On 1 April 2000, a Jesuit priest, Enrique Figaredo Alvargonzalez SJ (commonly known as Msgr. Kike) from Asturias, Spain, was appointed as the new Prefect Apostolic of Battambang Prefecture. He was installed as the Prefect of the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang on 2 July 2000. He was deeply involved in the lives of the Cambodians since 1985 as a Jesuit scholastic first through the Jesuit Refugee Service, Cambodia (JRS) in the Thailand-Cambodia refugee camps and later in Banteay Prieb (Center of Dove) Technical School for the persons with disabilities and the landmine victims in Ang Snuol, 22 kilometers from Phnom Penh—the school aimed at the reconciliation and reintegration of the war and landmine victims into society.

After the installation of Msgr. Enrique Figaredo SJ (Msgr. Kike), as the Apostolic Prefect in July 2000, resumed all pastoral activities. Since then, there has been a concerted effort to rebuild the social, cultural, and religious foundations in the region. The Apostolic Prefecture currently has 28 parishes, which manage social projects addressing various needs, including education, support for people with disabilities, agriculture, and socio-economic development, as well as assistance to migrant workers and their family members left behind. These projects directly benefit over 50,000 people in the region. Today, more than one-third of Jesuits are solely involved in the ministry of the Apostolic Prefecture of Battambang. Fr. Manoj Kumar SJ (2005 onwards) and Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti SJ (2001-2003 as a regent and 2009 onwards as a priest) from the Ranchi Jesuit Province are currently serving.

In 2006, the Cambodian mission was entrusted to

the Korean Jesuit Province by Fr. Kolvenbach. Fr. Gabriel Je SJ was appointed as the first Delegate of the Korean Provincial to the Cambodian Mission in 2007. He was succeeded in 2013 by Fr. In-don Oh SJ.

Xavier Jesuit School, Svay Sisophon

In 2014, following three years of discernment meetings and the reimagination of the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia, the Jesuit Mission Cambodia initiated an education project in the remote Banteay Meanchey province under the leadership of Fr. John Ashley Ivans SJ (Ireland). Other founding members of the education project were Miss Lucia Wang (Hong Kong Lay Missionary), Sch. Ham Teoun SJ (Ex Jesuit from Cambodia), and Miss Sonai (Cambodia). The school was named Xavier Jesuit School. It has four components: a community learning center, a kindergarten and primary school, a secondary school and high school, and a teacher resource center. Two batches of grade 12 students have already graduated so far. Currently, there are approximately 800 male and female students.

Ranchi Jesuit Involvement in Jesuit Mission Cambodia

The Ranchi Jesuit involvement in the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia began when Fr. Vincent Direcks SJ arrived in 1993. He came to Cambodia after his retirement, having taught biology for 33 years at St. Xavier's College in Ranchi. Fr. Vincent served as the minister of the Jesuit Refugee Service's main office in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. In 2001, Fr. Alphonse Aind SJ and Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti SJ, who were then young scholastics, arrived at Phnom Penh International Airport. They were warmly welcomed by Fr. Vincent, who offered them moral support during their two-year regency. Unfortunately, Fr. Vincent had to return to Belgium in 2004 due to a bed sore that developed as a result of a fall. In 2005, Fr. Manoj Kumar Ekka SJ, a newly ordained priest, and Fr. Samir Dungdung SJ, who was then a scholastic, arrived in Cambodia. After their Khmer language studies, Fr. Manoj was assigned to Jesuit Service Siem Reap, while Fr. Samir went to Banteay Prieb, the Center of Dove



Technical School for persons with disabilities. Fr. Rajat Hassa Purti SJ returned to the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia for the second time on 29 July 2009, after completing his ordination and higher studies. Fr. Manoj Kumar Ekka SJ rejoined the mission in Cambodia in 2010 after his tertianship. Both were assigned to the Battambang Prefecture, where they have been providing socio-pastoral care to the people of the Apostolic Prefecture ever since.

Additionally, Fr. Rakesh Kerketta SJ (2013-2015, Catholic Church, Kompong Roteh), Fr. Sandeep Kujur SJ (2016-2018, Banteay Prieb Technical School), and Fr. Marius Baghwar SJ (2018-2019, St. John's Catholic Church, Siem Reap)—all of whom were scholastics—offered their valuable services to the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia as regents.

Most recently, Sch. Joseph Kenedy Soreng SJ arrived in Cambodia in July 2023. He was assigned to St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Svay Sisophon and served as the assistant director of De Nobili Hostel, which accommodated both high school boys and girls. He also contributed to various projects of Jesuit Service Cambodia. This year, he has returned to the Province for further formation.

The spirit of collaboration between the Jesuit Mission in Cambodia and the Ranchi Jesuit Province in India is being renewed and strengthened through visits from Major Superiors. These visits include:

- Fr. Ranjit Pascal Toppo SJ, Provincial of Ranchi Province in 2009.

- Fr. Gabriel Je SJ, the Delegate from the South Korea Province to Cambodia in 2010.
- Fr. Oh In-don Francesco SJ, the Delegate from the South Korea Province to Cambodia in 2016.
- Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur SJ, Provincial of Ranchi Province in 2017.
- Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of Ranchi Province in 2023.
- Fr. Oh Chang Simon SJ, the Delegate from the South Korea Province to Cambodia in 2024.

These interactions have played a vital role in reinforcing the collaborative efforts between these two Jesuit communities.

Conclusion

Jesuits and their collaborators are continually reimagining and restructuring themselves to fulfill a more effective life mission. Jesuit Mission Cambodia has established four apostolic preferences: (1) Living in harmony in our common home, (2) Transformative education, (3) Addressing the needs of the local church, and (4) Accompanying migrant workers and communities that have been left behind. These preferences are the result of reimagining and restructuring efforts aimed at improving life missions. Achieving these goals requires collaboration with people of different religions and those of goodwill. The Society of Jesus encourages all mission members to embrace the apostolic preferences of Jesuit Mission Cambodia and apply them in their personal and community lives.



Farewell Mass of Sch. Joseph Kenedy Soreng SJ



Section - F

FAITH JOURNEY OF PROVINCE COMMISSIONS





FORMING HEARTS AND MINDS: A JESUIT PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

Secretary to the Provincial, RJS

The Transfiguration : A Vision for Formation



The Gospel account of Jesus' Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9) presents a powerful image of the faith journey experienced by those in Jesuit formation. Like Peter, James, and John, who were led up the mountain to encounter the

glorified Christ, young men entering the Society of Jesus embark on a transformative pilgrimage. Their formation is a process of being transfigured by faith, hope, and love, preparing them to descend into the valleys of life and carry Christ's light into the world.

While lengthy and challenging, Jesuit formation follows the model established by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. It is a deliberate journey that unfolds in five key stages: Novitiate, Studies, Regency, Theology, and Tertianship. Each stage is designed to shape men who will serve faithfully and joyfully. In our contemporary context, as we reimagine and restructure the Society of Jesus, the formation process must adapt to new challenges while remaining deeply rooted in the Spiritual Exercises, the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), and the commitment to being men on a mission.

Pilgrims of Hope: Walking Together in Formation

Formation in the Society of Jesus is a communal journey, a pilgrimage of hope. The Formation Commission, tasked with guiding young men in their discernment and preparation, ensures that every phase—Pre-novitiate, Novitiate, Juniorate, College Studies, Philosophy, Regency,

and Theology—provides a solid foundation for Jesuit life. These stages are not merely academic or pastoral requirements but spiritual milestones that shape a Jesuit's identity.

For instance, young Jesuits participate in full-time apostolic work during the Regency, applying their learning in schools, parishes, and social ministries. Here, they experience the joys and challenges of the mission first-hand, learning to rely on God's grace and deepening their commitment to the Church. Reports from formation houses have been particularly encouraging, describing regents as men of deep intellectual and spiritual depth, fully dedicated and available for the mission entrusted to them. Their commitment extends beyond duty; they embrace the mission wholeheartedly and go the extra mile to ensure its success.

These testimonies remind us that Jesuit formation is not just about academic excellence or pastoral training but about forming hearts that burn with zeal for God's mission. As the Society of Jesus calls for reimagining and restructuring, our formation process must inspire young men to embrace a hopeful vision of the Church and society, equipping them to respond to emerging local and global challenges.

Livers of Faith: Embodying the Gospel in Formation

The journey of formation is not merely intellectual but deeply incarnational. Jesuits in formation are called to live their faith authentically—allowing themselves to be shaped by the Word of God, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and the community of faith. The Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) guide this journey:



1. **Showing the way to God** – Formation deepens personal and communal prayer, leading Scholastics to a mature relationship with Christ.
2. **Walking with the excluded** – Experiencing ministry among the marginalized shapes the heart of future Jesuits.
3. **Journeying with youth** – As young men in formation, Scholastics are witnesses to and companions of other young people seeking faith and meaning.
4. **Caring for our common home** – Formation instills an ecological consciousness, encouraging future Jesuits to integrate sustainability into their mission.

The formation process integrates these apostolic preferences, ensuring that young Jesuits do not merely learn about faith but embody it in their choices, commitments, and relationships. Jesuits who undergo this formation emerge as theologians and scholars and as spiritual guides, educators, and agents of justice.

Givers of Love: Serving God's Mission Selflessly

A Jesuit in formation is called to be a “man for others.” Formation is not about personal achievement but about preparing individuals who will selflessly give of themselves in love. The essence of Jesuit formation is grounded in the call to serve—whether in the classroom, in a rural village, among refugees, or through theological reflection.

Love is expressed in mission, and mission requires love.

As we reimagine and restructure our formation process, we must ensure that our Scholastics are well-trained and deeply committed to God's mission. They must be individuals who can bridge faith and culture, tradition and innovation, personal holiness and social engagement. Formation is not an end in itself; it is a preparation to be sent forth to labour in the vineyard of the Lord.

Conclusion: Formation as a Transfiguration Experience

Like the disciples at the Transfiguration, young Jesuits in formation experience moments of clarity, struggle, and renewal. They are invited to stay with Christ, listen to Him, and ultimately follow Him down the mountain into the mission of the Society of Jesus. The Formation Commission plays a crucial role in ensuring that these young men grow into Jesuits who are pilgrims of hope, lovers of faith, and givers of love.

As we move forward, may our commitment to formation respond to Christ's invitation: “Rise, and do not be afraid” (Matthew 17:7). Jesuit formation, as Matthew Briand SJ, reminds us, is a slow and steady process, fostering trust in God's work. The Society of Jesus is undergoing renewal, and our formation must reflect this new spirit—deepening our faith, strengthening our hope, and expanding our capacity for love. In doing so, we prepare a new generation of Jesuits who will carry forward Christ's mission in a world yearning for transformation.



Scholastics' get-together at Apostolic School Samtoli, Simdega



FAITH JOURNEY THROUGH SPIRITUAL APOSTOLATE

Fr. Medard Xalxo SJ

Tertian Instructor, SSC Sitagarha



Genesis 12:1, The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people, and your father’s household to the land I will show you.”

I have been involved in Spiritual Apostolate for the past 23 years as a Spiritual Director and Counselor for individuals from various walks of life. My primary focus has been on young Jesuit Scholastics, priests, religious, and laypeople. Over the years, my faith journey has been enriched through listening to and accompanying them. Their experiences have deepened my faith in Jesus as I guide them in their faith journeys. They have challenged me to be rooted in Scripture, prayer, the Jesuit legacy, and the traditions of the Catholic Church. As a result, I have engaged in serious studies and research on these topics. Through these studies, I am well-equipped to journey through faith alongside people from diverse groups.

The Jesuit Scholastics possess various skills and talents that are particularly relevant in today's modern world, especially in technology, social media, and visual communication—elements that reflect the signs of our times and the needs of the hour. They dedicate significant effort to their studies to prepare for today's challenges. However, under the guise of intellectual pursuit, they occasionally overlook the spiritual aspects of their lives. Guiding and accompanying them on their faith journeys can be a daunting task. Nevertheless, it is truly inspiring and fulfilling to witness how God is active in their personal faith development. They often express happiness, satisfaction, and renewed energy through this companionship. Furthermore, they share their faith experiences with remarkable openness, seeking spiritual growth.

In recent years, starting from 2022, I have had the privilege of accompanying the Jesuit Tertiaries at Sitagarha, Hazaribag. They are part of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. This program is known



Men in blues (Tertiaries) with Fr. POSA at SSC Sitagarha, Hazaribag



Rejuvenated Ursuline Sisters after Long Retreat

as the 'School of the Heart,' where participants engage in an intensive study of Ignatian texts, a month-long retreat, classes, preaching retreats, and various experiments. Each week, we share our experiences and review the week, enriching one another through these reflections. As the final stage of formal formation, the Tertians are prepared to be incorporated into the Society of Jesus. During this period, they receive quality accompaniment tailored to their needs. The Tertians arrive with profound experiences from their ministries, and witnessing their Jesuit maturity is both inspiring and uplifting. Accompanying them on their faith journey brings immense joy, as we mutually grow in our spiritual lives. After their Tertianship, they undergo the Spiritual Exercises, through which they learn the Contemplation to Attain Love and the Contemplation to Attain Hope, drawing on the Jesuit Constitutions. At this point, they feel a deep sense of grace and confidence, ready to work in the vineyard of the Lord, fulfilling His mission while facing the world, particularly in service to the poor and needy.

Recently, I had the fantastic opportunity to lead a month-long retreat for the Tertian Sisters of

OSU (Ursuline) and DSA (Daughters of St. Anne) at different intervals. The retreat aimed to guide them toward a deeper relationship with God through the Spiritual Exercises and Discernment. The participants came from the Provinces of Ambikapur, Gumla, Ranchi, and Tezpur. Throughout the retreat, we explored the five key meditations of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and engaged with the whole dynamics of these exercises. This process has reformed, conformed, confirmed, and transformed their spiritual lives over four weeks. Now, the challenge for them is to transcend these rich experiences and graces from the retreat and to embrace a renewed perspective in Christ. They have gained a profound appreciation for Ignatian spirituality, realizing it can be intense and impactful. They are inspired by the mentality, vision, mission, and values of Jesus, filled with enthusiasm, zeal, and energy to proclaim the Gospel, like Mary Magdalene and the other disciples.

The Universal Apostolic Planning (UAP) encourages us to support young people in creating a hopeful and fulfilling future. The Long Retreat is an excellent platform for instilling hope, courage, and enthusiasm in young minds. These groups consist of young Religious Sisters who possess numerous gifts, potential, skills, and the ability to use them to serve others, especially the poor. They are ready to face the world with tremendous courage and enthusiasm. Let's remind ourselves that young minds have the potential to make a meaningful difference in the world.



St. Anne's Sisters ready for the mission after Long Retreat



RANCHI JESUITS : FINANCIAL FAITH JOURNEY

Fr. Ashok Kandulna SJ

Finance Officer, XISS, Ranchi



In the heart of Jharkhand, the Ranchi Jesuits are dedicated to living and serving with a deep commitment to the Ignatian way. One of the most important yet often unspoken aspects of Jesuit

life is our understanding and

management of financial resources. We view these resources not as ends but as means to further God's mission.

Like our counterparts in the global Society of Jesus, the Ranchi Jesuits embrace a financial spirituality rooted in faith, discernment, and solidarity. This reflects our identity as "Pilgrims of Hope, Livers of Faith, and Givers of Love" on our faith journey.

Spirituality

At the core of Ranchi Jesuit spirituality is a fundamental conviction: God is the Creator, the Master, and the ultimate Authority. Nothing truly belongs to us—not our institutions, projects, or resources. Everything we have is a gift from God, entrusted to us for a time to be used responsibly in service of the mission. Everything begins and ends with God. As St. Ignatius of Loyola taught in the Principles and Foundations of the Spiritual Exercises, human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God (Sp. Exs. 23).

The Society of Jesus, along with its works, lands, finances, and institutions, belongs to God. Its mission, resources, and people exist for the greater glory of God (*Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam*). This foundational truth influences how Ranchi Jesuits view money, not as a tool for power or security, but as something sacred, given by God for fulfilling His work among His people, especially the poor and marginalized.

Recognizing that everything belongs to God shifts our perspective on finance. We are not owners; we are stewards, called to manage resources with reverence, purpose, and accountability. In this way, even financial administration becomes a spiritual exercise—a concrete expression of our faith and fidelity to God's call.

The Ranchi Jesuits are deeply rooted in a disposition of total surrender and trust in God. Inspired by St. Ignatius's example, we believe that God provides—sometimes in unexpected ways and often through the generosity of others. We approach our financial life with openness and confidence in the Lord, trusting that God will sustain us if we remain faithful to our mission.

This trust does not imply carelessness or imprudence. Instead, it invites us to be detached from material concerns while being deeply responsible for what is entrusted to us. It means planning wisely, living simply, and continually discerning the best way to use what we have, not for personal gain, but for the greater good and the mission.

Promising Practices in the Province

In the Ranchi Province, Jesuits view themselves as accountable and responsible co-workers in God's vineyard. Whether a community is financially strong or struggling, all are called to uphold the same standard of integrity and transparency in managing finances.

Jesuits in the Ranchi Province are not merely administrators but custodians and caretakers of what belongs to God. They collaborate in the mission, sharing responsibilities and making decisions not as individuals but as part of a larger body. Thus, the roles of treasurers and



administrators are not just technical; they are also pastoral and spiritual, serving the community and the mission with humility and prudence.

This accountability extends beyond the internal structures; it includes those we serve. The people of God, particularly the poor and marginalized, must trust that Jesuit institutions use their resources ethically and for the common good.

A key aspect of Jesuit spirituality, especially in Ranchi, is the commitment to discernment, whether large or small, financial decisions are made collectively, not in isolation. These decisions emerge from community discernment that encompasses both spiritual and practical elements, involving prayer, dialogue, consultation, and careful analysis.

Community discernment ensures that financial choices reflect the group's collective wisdom and spiritual insight. It helps guard against selfishness, shortsightedness, and personal agendas, rooting decisions in society's shared mission and values.

In the Ranchi Province, community discernment around finances guarantees that funds are used strategically and compassionately, prioritizing ministries that serve the poor, educate the young, empower the marginalized, and promote justice and reconciliation.

The mission entrusted to the Society of Jesus is the lens through which we view our financial practices. In the Ranchi Province, there is a conscious effort to align all expenditures and investments with the Society's mission priorities—education, social action, spiritual formation, indigenous leadership development, and pastoral care.

This approach has led to better utilization of available funds. Rather than spreading resources thinly or reacting to immediate needs without a plan, the Province engages in careful budgeting, evaluation, and long-term planning. Budgets are crafted for operational needs, sustainability, and mission growth.

Jesuits in Ranchi are increasingly aware that good financial planning is a form of spiritual stewardship.

It enables them to remain free and available for mission work, unencumbered by debt, confusion, or inefficiency.

A powerful example of Ignatian fraternity in the Ranchi Province is the financial solidarity demonstrated toward weaker communities. Stronger institutions and communities not only sustain themselves but also support those who are struggling or still developing. This support arises not from obligation or superiority but from a place of fraternal love and spiritual responsibility.

This solidarity is expressed through subsidies, shared resources, personnel support, and collaborative projects, ensuring no mission is abandoned due to a lack of funds. It also fosters unity within the Province, building bonds of trust and mutual care among communities.

Recent developments in the Ranchi Province reflect a growing maturity in financial stewardship. Communities are now preparing surplus budgets, indicating both foresight and fiscal discipline. This is not a sign of wealth accumulation but of effective planning and the capacity to support broader apostolic efforts.

There has been notable improvement in financial projection, estimation, and planning. This reflects increased competence and a deepening awareness of the spiritual dimension of financial responsibility. When Jesuits plan effectively, they create opportunities for more impactful ministry, long-term sustainability, and flexibility to respond to new challenges.

Moreover, the Province's financial control mechanisms have strengthened, ensuring that decisions are made prudently, implemented, and monitored effectively. Accountability structures support transparency and fidelity to the mission while fostering a culture of trust and collaboration.

Conclusion

These practices reflect the early Church, where believers "had everything in common" and prioritized the needs of the poor. They remind us that financial justice within the Province is essential to our witness to the broader world.



CREATIVE MINISTRY IN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Fr. Christopher Lakra SJ

Director, St. Xavier's School, Gumla



Religion is interpreted in various ways by different philosophers, theologians, and religious thinkers. Asian countries have been the birthplace of numerous religions. Among these are Vedic Religion, Buddhism,

Jainism, Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Sikhism, and various forms of animism, all of which emerged at different points in history, particularly in India.

Swami Vivekananda's Vedanta philosophy views various religions as paths leading to the same destination, similar to how many rivers converge into the ocean. Despite their twists and turns, all these roads and rivers ultimately reach a common point. This syncretic approach encourages the spirit of coexistence, fostering mutual appreciation and communal harmony among diverse religions.

The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*—the Church in the Modern World—recommends interreligious dialogue to foster a spirit of syncretism, where individuals of different faiths can come together, share their beliefs, and gain a deeper understanding of one another with respect and appreciation. Inspired by *Gaudium et Spes*, the Ecumenical Movement was initiated with a similar spirit of dialogue among various Christian denominations. These efforts represent past attempts to journey together as "Pilgrims of Hope" toward the "promised land."

The new approach to Interreligious Dialogue was experimented with in Gumla, aiming for the same goal: to march together as "Pilgrims of Hope." Instead of organizing seminars, talks,

and conferences on Interreligious Dialogue, we attempted to create a forum (*Manch*) that included all the religious communities in Gumla. The town is home to Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and members of the Sarna community.

Members of the forum come from various walks of life, including intellectuals, social workers, lawyers, business people, retired individuals, current school teachers, media professionals, and volunteers. The forum, *Sarvadharm Sadbhavna Manch*, was established in November 2014, initially comprising 13 members. Fr. Christopher Lakra SJ was elected president after he initiated the forum while working with the Animation Rural Outreach Service (AROUSE).

That same year, some antisocial elements attempted to incite a communal riot in the town; however, well-meaning individuals from both communities successfully averted the situation. This event served as a backdrop for the formation of the forum. AROUSE NGO in Gumla was designated as the forum's office, as it was established under the auspices of this organization.

Aims and Objectives

The *Manch* aims to honour and respect all religions and sects, promote communal harmony, and foster universal brotherhood. To achieve this goal, the



Sarvadharm Sadbhavna Manch, during Eid Milan



Sharing the joy of Sarhul at Gumla

Manch has outlined several concrete programs. We celebrate significant festivals from various religions, inviting individuals from different religious communities in the town. Festivals such as Holi, *Sarhul*, Eid-ul-Fitr, Guru Nanak Jayanti, and Christmas are celebrated with a focus on their social aspects. Additionally, we participate in processions like *Ram Navami*, *Sarhul*, *Chehelum*, *Prakash Parab*, and the *Christ Raja* Procession.

Furthermore, when news arises about communal disharmony, members of the *Manch* undertake fact-finding missions to address the situation and pacify both groups before tensions escalate. Over the past ten years, no communal disturbances have existed in and around Gumla. The *Manch* also organizes occasional awareness meetings in the town to promote social and communal harmony, emphasizing peace, justice, and reconciliation. During any “Festive Milan Ceremony,” guests and speakers take the opportunity to discuss the ideology of *Sadbhavna Manch*.

The *Manch* has profoundly and widely impacted the town and district. Members are deeply convinced of the need for socio-communal harmony, as they all aspire to live peacefully. A harmonious environment paves the way for thriving businesses and the smooth operation of institutions, markets, transportation, and daily life. No one wants to experience curfews, bandhs, or lockdowns due to communal riots, especially within the business community. There is open public approval and appreciation for the activities of the *Manch*, with newspapers regularly reporting on our programs.

Expanding our Programs

The *Manch* is now ten years old, and the members have decided to expand our activities. Some of the programs they suggested include a town's cleanliness campaign (*Saphai Abhiyan*) and efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug use among young students. Additionally, there are plans to raise awareness about superstitions, such as the practice of witchcraft, in villages within the Gumla district. These practices can sow seeds of enmity among people and lead to quarrels, fights, and even murders in rural society.

Last year, the *Saphai Abhiyan* was successfully carried out as a joint effort between the *Manch* and the Nagar Parishad of Gumla Town, just before Puja, Diwali, Chhath, and Christmas festivals. Furthermore, the members have identified several panchayats in the Ghaghra Block for the upcoming Awareness Program on witchcraft, slated for 2025. The Gumla administration is also willing to cooperate with the *Manch* for the awareness program in the villages.

Conclusion

We have made significant progress with the activities of the forum. Since membership is voluntary and most members have jobs in businesses, government offices, or private institutions, they cannot dedicate much time to our initiatives. Therefore, we usually organize activities during holidays and Sundays. Our members are very philanthropic and readily volunteer for various responsibilities, assist with the functions of the Executive Committee, and contribute to the work of the forum. The forum is well-known and appreciated for its contributions to the town and surrounding areas.



Celebrating Unity in Diversity during Ramnavami



A SILENT LEGACY POISED FOR RENEWAL

Bro. Telesphore Horo SJ

Conference Coordinator of Brothers, JCSA

Introduction: Jesuit Brothers



The Society of Jesus, known worldwide for its dedication to education, social justice, and spirituality, derives its strength from priests and Jesuit Brothers—men who are deeply committed to God's mission through humble and

transformative service. In the Ranchi Province, their legacy is not just admirable but essential. The story of the Jesuits in this region cannot be told without recognizing the quiet, unwavering presence of the Jesuit Brothers who have shaped their mission and identity.

A Legacy Rooted in Love and Service

Jesuit Brothers in Ranchi have played crucial roles in building and sustaining communities for decades. They have served as educators, administrators, infirmarians, farmers, builders, and spiritual companions. Whether running farms that provided food for entire communities, overseeing the construction of schools and churches, or caring for the sick and elderly, these Brothers have embodied the Gospel through their actions and quiet witness.

Many Jesuits today reflect on how their vocations were inspired by the profound yet straightforward lives of the Brothers, whose presence often spoke louder than words. These men have been the often-unseen pillars of Jesuit life, evangelizing not through sermons but through their daily commitment to God's call.

Facing the Challenge: A Decline in Vocations

Despite this rich heritage, the vocation to Brotherhood in the Ranchi Province has declined.

Currently, only 10 Brothers are serving in the Province. While this reality is sobering, it is also a call to action, not a reason for despair, but an invitation to renew and reimagine. Several factors have contributed to this decline:

- 1) The hidden nature of the Jesuit Brothers' ministry often makes it less visible to the public.
- 2) Societal shifts have led many youths to seek roles that offer recognition and prestige.
- 3) Internal promotion of the vocation may have been inconsistent or limited.
- 4) A broader global trend of diminishing religious vocations, especially among Brothers.

Signs of Hope : Coordinated Efforts for Renewal

The Province is actively taking steps to revitalize interest in the Jesuit Brotherhood—a dedicated Commission for Brothers, led by Bro. James Barla SJ and Bro. Telesphore Horo SJ is working diligently on this initiative. In collaboration with Fr. Johny Kujur SJ, the Province Vocation Promoter, the Commission organizes vocation camps and visits to parishes and schools, particularly Jesuit institutions. These efforts create opportunities for



Brothers' Retreat at SSC Sitagarha, Hazaribag



young people to experience the Jesuit Brotherhood first-hand.

Although the road ahead is challenging, there is hope in these initiatives. We trust that, in God's time, they will inspire young men to embrace the joyful, service-oriented path of the Jesuit Brother—a path of profound communion with Christ's mission.

A Path Forward: Rekindling the Flame

This moment calls for hope-filled action and deep prayer. First and foremost, we must pray to God, asking Him to stir the hearts of young men to embrace the Jesuit Brotherhood. Without God's grace, no vocation can truly take root. The call to a life of humble, generous, and often hidden service is a divine invitation—and only God can awaken that desire.

Alongside prayer, here are some vital ways to continue building momentum:

1. **Celebrate the Legacy** : Make the contributions of Brothers more visible. Share their stories in newsletters, social media, and community events. Help people see that a life of humble service is also a life of profound impact.
2. **Prioritize Vocation Promotion** : Include the Brothers' vocation explicitly in all vocational outreach. Their path should be presented as equally valid and vibrant as that of Jesuit priests.
3. **Highlight Role Models** : Feature stories of past and present Jesuit Brothers whose faith and dedication inspired others. Personal witness often touches hearts more than formal speeches.
4. **Create a Culture of Appreciation** : Encourage Fathers and Scholastics to speak positively and openly about the Brothers' vocation. A community that values all vocations equally becomes fertile ground for new ones to emerge.

Conclusion : Looking Ahead with Faith

The call to Brotherhood is not fading; it is simply waiting to be rediscovered. The God who once called young men to serve as Brothers in Ranchi continues to call today. We must listen to, promote, and support this call with faith.

Let us honour this silent legacy not with nostalgia but with renewed passion and commitment. By uplifting the vocation of Jesuit Brothers, we are not only preserving a tradition but also preparing a new generation to serve, build, and love in the spirit of Jesus, with hands that heal and hearts that give.





RANCHI JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ODYSSEY OF HOPE

Fr. Ajay Arun Minj SJ

Vice Principal, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi

Introduction



Higher education (HE) in India has experienced several phases, including the ancient Gurukul, Monastery, Madrasa, and modern English education systems. Each of these phases had its principles and pedagogical approaches

that addressed the needs of its time. One can critically analyze the goals, principles, and teaching methods of these different phases to draw their conclusions. It seems that the common, implicit goal of higher education has always been to cultivate skilled, helpful individuals who contribute to the demands of their respective periods.

In independent India, HE has also aimed at strengthening constitutional and democratic values. Existing commissions made various recommendations regarding different aspects of higher education to enhance educational standards. As a result of these recommendations, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1956 as a statutory organization responsible for

coordinating, determining, and maintaining standards in teaching, examination, and research within higher education. Two national education policies—National Education Policy 1968 and National Education Policy 1986—were implemented to define specific goals and objectives in response to the evolving needs of the nation and society. The recent New Education Policy 2020 has been introduced to ensure that every citizen becomes employable and self-reliant. Overall, higher education has mainly focused on personal and societal development over the years.

Ranchi Jesuit Higher Education

Ranchi Jesuit higher education began in 1944 with the establishment of St. Xavier's College in Ranchi. In 1955, the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) Ranchi was founded as an extension of St. Xavier's College Ranchi to train young students in rural development, personnel management, and industrial relations. The educational initiatives expanded further with the establishment of the Xavier Institute of Polytechnic and Technology (XIPT) in Namkum in 2010, St. Xavier's College in Tezpur in 2013, and St. Xavier's College in Simdega in 2016.



Media and Communication Class at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi



The vision of the Ranchi Jesuit Society for higher education is to empower students to become intellectually competent, morally upright, socially committed, and spiritually inspired, ultimately shaping them into men and women for others. Our core values are academic excellence, integral formation, social responsibility, and ecological consciousness, with a special emphasis on supporting tribal and other marginalized groups in the region.

Higher education's impact in this area has been significant. It has empowered the local community and its students, promoted research and social responsibility, and produced dedicated civil and public servants. It is widely recognized that higher education has transformed Jharkhand from a place of darkness into empowerment. The presence of tribals in esteemed professions nationwide is a testament to this change.

After speaking with our stakeholders, I can confidently say that such transformation is achievable due to our institutions' existing practices and procedures, which are deeply rooted in Jesuit Spirituality.

Compassionate Management

In our institutions, management has been supportive and generous toward its stakeholders. Our alumni continue to cherish the Jesuit practice of *Cura Personalis* on campus and openly acknowledge how caring and compassionate Jesuits have shaped their lives, motivating them to commit to justice and service. Students on campus are not only learning academic lessons but also important human values, such as compassion and a willingness to help others. This is evident in their initiatives and their prompt responses whenever there is a need.

Discipline and Character Building

The daily practice of discipline, punctuality, and commitment significantly impacts the overall development of students. On their first day on campus, students receive an orientation introducing them to the Jesuit vision and

values. The emphasis on strict discipline and punctuality continues throughout their time on campus, reinforced through various sports and cultural activities. There is zero tolerance for using unfair means during examinations, helping students understand the importance of sincerity, commitment, and hard work. These practices contribute to students' character formation, shaping values they carry with them throughout their lives. Many former students proudly share that their rich experiences of discipline, sincerity, and hard work continue to inspire them in their personal and professional endeavours. As a result, they become agents of transformation in the world beyond their education.

Reaching out to the Marginalized and the Downtrodden

The primary goal of the Ranchi Jesuits' Higher Education (HE) initiative has been to empower tribal and other marginalized groups. This mission remains our central focus. The management has been considerate in providing concessions and waiving off fees for those who cannot afford them. Rural and economically disadvantaged students have access to hostel facilities for a minimal fee.

Many notable alumni, who have benefited from these facilities, have successfully advanced in their careers and have subsequently come forward to offer scholarships to needy students. Additionally, through outreach programs, students are encouraged to contribute by teaching children in schools, cleaning their surroundings, and celebrating Christmas with orphans and the elderly by giving small gifts. Over the years, these initiatives have helped students learn the fundamental values of becoming men and women for others.

Academic Excellence and Commitment

Quality education by highly qualified and dedicated teachers has been repeatedly put on record by various visiting peer review teams. On the other hand, the attendance of the students is regularly monitored. If any student fails to get the



required attendance percentage, he or she is not allowed to appear in the semester examination. These practices help students inculcate the habits of continuous commitment to their duties and achieve academic excellence, inspiring them to pursue *magis* in academic pursuit, which becomes an integral part of their lives later in their personal and professional lives.

Holistic Human Development

Jesuit higher education has consistently encouraged extra-curricular activities through various clubs and societies. Activities such as outreach programs, social service, tree plantation, blood donation, participation in community movements, and ecological conservation are organized, where students are encouraged to participate voluntarily. These activities help students learn the principles of holistic human development by aligning their personal goals with broader social objectives, enabling them to make prioritized choices in their lives.

Challenges Ahead

As times change, higher education's digital and technological demands are increasing. The new requirements outlined by NEP 2020 through various guidelines issued by the UGC have placed

significant pressure on individuals and the systems involved in the learning process and administration. The challenge lies in clearly understanding these guidelines and proactively implementing them within our old, cramped campus.

While our higher education institutions will continue to lead in integral formation, social responsibility, and ecological concerns, we must avoid being sluggish or haphazard in responding to these new demands. If we fail to adapt, students may seek alternative options for higher learning. By not embracing these changes, we risk missing the opportunity to transform education into a journey of self-discovery and empowerment, potentially losing the chance to guide many young individuals who genuinely need our support.

Conclusion

Jesuit higher education has a proud legacy, but we cannot simply rest on our past achievements. We must continue this legacy with renewed energy and a restructured approach. As demands evolve, we must adapt to global needs, preparing to tackle new challenges. Our goal should be to remain relevant and serve as guiding lights and leaders in higher education. This must be our mission if we genuinely aspire to be pilgrims of hope.



Fr. Pradeep Kujur SJ, Principal St. Xavier's College, Ranchi with the overall Champions during Annual Sports 2024



SHAPING THE CLAY : FAITH JOURNEY THROUGH SECONDARY EDUCATION

Fr. Fuldeo Soreng SJ

Principal, St. Xavier's School, Doranda

Fr. Manohar Khoya SJ

Principal, St. Ignatius' High School, Gumla



Introduction

The early missionaries established schools at each mission station because they recognized that socio-economic transformation is achievable only through education. Today, we see many

flourishing Jesuit schools, and Jesuit education continues to play a crucial role in shaping the lives of thousands of students in the Ranchi Province. Currently, over 88 Jesuits are involved in educational ministries, influencing the lives of approximately 45,623 students. All the schools consistently strive to excel in their academic performance.

Education is incomplete without students' spiritual and moral development, as these aspects are essential for each individual's holistic education and character formation. The Faith Journey through Secondary Education is a structured initiative to nurture students' spiritual growth, moral values, and emotional well-being throughout the academic year. Through faith-based and value-oriented activities, students are guided

to deepen their relationships with themselves, others, nature, and God. This program encourages them to reflect on their roles as responsible and compassionate individuals.



Highlights of the Activities

One of the key highlights of the faith journey is the regular celebration of the Holy Mass. Special Masses are held on significant dates, including 31 July to commemorate the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, 15 August for the Assumption of Mary and Independence Day, and 3 December, which marks the feast of St. Francis Xavier. On Ash Wednesday, schools organize a Holy Eucharistic Celebration for Christian teachers and students, along with the Way of the Cross prayers, to strengthen their spiritual foundations. These activities foster community among the school members, reinforcing spiritual unity and gratitude.

The Novena to St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier offers students and teaching and non-teaching staff members an opportunity to reflect on the virtues of faith, humility, service, and other



Students of R.C. Middle School, Keondtanr during Childrens' Day



Students of St. John's School, Balipara, Assam during the morning assembly

themes central to Ignatian spirituality. This event encourages introspection and fosters a deeper understanding of these values. Special prayer services are held annually on various occasions, providing moments for communal reflection and spiritual nourishment.

Catechism and Moral Science classes are conducted regularly to provide religious and moral teachings and Christian doctrines. These sessions aim to instill moral values, deepen biblical knowledge, and help students build a personal relationship with God.

Programs such as the Recollection, Life Orientation Program, *Jeewan Pravesh* Seminar, CLC, and the School Health & Wellness Program play a vital role in students' emotional and psychological development. These initiatives promote mindfulness, self-reflection, and ethical decision-making, reinforcing a strong value system. The Self-Awareness Program is specifically designed for targeted students, guiding them to explore their identity, talents, and life purpose. This program emphasizes personal growth, emotional intelligence, and resilience, which are essential for young adolescents navigating their crucial

academic years.

Some schools have introduced the Examination of Conscience (*Aatm Manthan*) at the end of each class. This exercise helps students reflect prayerfully on their thoughts, words, and deeds, encouraging them to become better human beings and, above all, to become children of God.

During the last academic session, the schools organized weekly reflections as part of the Values of the Week initiative. This initiative focused on themes related to moral, human, and patriotic values and Ignatian legacies. Some of the key values highlighted included New Life, Happiness, Hope, Courage, Home, Respect, Generosity, Peace, Service, Hospitality, Honesty, Compassion, Cooperation, Devotion, Piety, Motivation, Time, Health, Knowledge, Wisdom, Simplicity, Worship, Newness, Innocence, Light, Transformation, Love, Availability, Obedience, Forgiveness, Joy of Giving, Enthusiasm, Vision, Aim, Prayer, Life, Friendship, Hard Work, Honesty, Ignatian Generosity, Finding God in All Things, *Magis*, and Discernment. These values were reinforced through a notice board decoration competition, classroom discussions, assemblies, and various activities aimed at



encouraging students to embody these values in their daily lives.

A Call to Renewal

The Jubilee Year 2025, themed 'Pilgrims of Hope,' invites Catholic schools to renew their spiritual lives and hope. During this special year, some schools have already made pilgrimages to Pharsabera, Khunti, and other pilgrimage centers, while others are still in the planning stages. This initiative supports students and staff on their faith journeys, helping them recognize this year as a time of grace, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal.

Through these diverse and enriching experiences, the faith journey has played a crucial role in shaping students into spiritually grounded and morally upright individuals. The impact of these spiritual activities has been quite positive. Often, students may not receive adequate spiritual nourishment at home, which makes our educational institutions vital platforms for their spiritual growth during this journey. The school's nurturing environment

and spiritual atmosphere have greatly enhanced vocation promotion over the years.

Challenges Today

However, various factors have influenced students' faith journey in secondary education, leading to different life challenges. The adverse effects of social media and the digital world make it difficult for students to maintain a strong faith amidst the pressures of academics, social life, and personal struggles. Addictive mobile use, alcoholism, and drug abuse are significant issues contributing to this disorientation among students.

Conclusion

Today, we must "understand and accompany the youth for a meaningful life and a hope-filled future" (Ranchi Province Apostolic Preference 3). To achieve this, we must renew our life mission, grounded in Ignatian Spirituality. In doing so, we enhance our ability to support students on their faith journeys.



Students of St. Xavier's School, Doranda, during Novena to St. Francis Xavier



INTEGRATION : FROM PLUCKING TO WRITING HANDS

Fr. Ranjit Kujur SJ

Asst. Professor, St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel (Assam)

I. Introduction



The phrase "Plucking to Writing Hands" symbolizes the transformative power of education in the lives of tea garden labourers of Assam. They have traditionally been confined to hard physical labour. It highlights a shift

from manual, exploitative work to intellectual and creative engagement, signifying personal growth and societal upliftment. Education equips labourers with the ability to read, write, and advocate for their rights, enabling them to break free from cycles of oppression and poverty. On the other hand, education and faith life go together hand in hand, complementing each other. Literacy opens doors to knowledge, self-expression, greater economic opportunities, and deepens their faith in God.

II. Historical Background of Tea Garden Labourers

Colonial-Era : Tea garden labourers have historically endured systemic exploitation, starting during the colonial era when they were coerced into bonded labour through deceptive contracts. British plantation owners established tea estates in remote regions, isolating workers from mainstream society and denying them fundamental rights. Living and working conditions were deplorable, with extended hours, minimal wages, and limited access to healthcare and education.

Bonded Labour : British powers established tea plantations in regions like Assam and Ceylon, relying on cheap labour from poorer areas. Workers were often bound by debt in a system of bonded labour, where meagre wages kept them in perpetual servitude. Harsh working conditions and exploitation were common, with little legal protection.



Daily life at Sonabheel Tea Estate, Assam



Denial of Education : During the colonial era, tea plantation owners denied education to labourers' children to prevent an educated workforce from challenging exploitation. Workers were isolated, and educational opportunities were scarce. Even basic education was lacking in quality.

Post-Independence : After independence, illiteracy remained a significant barrier, preventing workers from understanding their rights or seeking better opportunities. Generations of tea garden families remained dependent on the plantation system, with limited access to education, which left them vulnerable to exploitation by estate managers and intermediaries. Many, especially women, faced underpayment or no payment for their labour, reinforcing economic disparities. The seasonal nature of tea production contributed to job insecurity, further destabilizing workers' financial well-being. Discrimination and the struggle for fair wages continue. Even after independence, there was no improvement at all.

III. Experience of Transformation : From Plucking Tea Leaves to Holding a Pen

The Jesuits arrived at Balipara, Assam in 1999. They anticipated a grand celebration with over two thousand faithful for Christmas. They had prepared 100 hymn leaflets, expecting an equally vibrant choir. However, to their dismay, only about 10 people could read and sing. This wasn't due to a lack of enthusiasm, but a lack of literacy. Most people, primarily tea garden workers, had spent their lives plucking tea leaves, not holding books or pens. Recognizing this gap, the Jesuits didn't just prepare for the next Christmas — they prepared the people for a better life. They launched social ministries, including night literacy classes for adults. These classes were about reading and writing, giving people dignity, voice, and opportunity. After six months, those once hesitant hands could write their names. After a year, the people who had only known tea gardens stood confidently in front of 100 singers, proudly reading lyrics and singing in unison. The following Christmas wasn't just a festival but a celebration of empowerment, transformation, and hope.

The shift from plucking tea leaves to holding a pen symbolizes the transformative power of education, turning silence into song and dependence into dignity. It shows that literacy empowers individuals and uplifts entire communities, unlocking once-unheard voices. These initiatives have improved socio-economic conditions, inspired youth, and enabled social mobility.

IV. Education improves all dimensions of life among Tea Garden Labourers

Self-Improvement : Education has deepened tea garden labourers' faith in improving their lives. It helped them recognize their growth potential, boosting confidence and self-reliance. With new skills, they believe in shaping their futures and breaking free from poverty while preserving cultural and religious values.

Justice and Equality : Education has strengthened tea garden labourers' faith in justice and equality by raising awareness of their rights. With literacy and knowledge, they challenge unfair practices, demand better wages, and advocate for improved working conditions.

Community Upliftment : Education has instilled a strong sense of faith in community upliftment as role models and sources of inspiration for others in their communities. With newfound knowledge and skills, these individuals guide and motivate others. They often take on leadership roles, helping organize literacy programs, advocating for workers' rights, and mentoring younger generations.

Better Future : Education provides improved job prospects, better living conditions, and the ability to assert rights. This shift instills personal empowerment, helping workers envision progress, dignity, and social and economic advancement for themselves and future generations.

Church and Spiritual Life : Faith in Jesus can broaden one's perspective on life by offering a more profound sense of purpose, hope, and love. Embracing Christian teachings encourages individuals to view life beyond immediate circumstances, emphasizing eternal values such



as compassion, forgiveness, and service to others. Church provides a framework for overcoming challenges, as faith teaches trust in God's plan and the strength found in Him. Thus, spiritual life invites a life rooted in grace, humility, and the pursuit of justice and peace.

V. Challenges and Barriers

Continued Economic Struggles : Despite the positive impact of education, economic struggles remain a significant barrier for tea garden workers. Financial hardships often prevent families from affording school-related expenses like uniforms and books. This forces many children to leave school early, perpetuating illiteracy and economic dependence.

Cultural and Societal Resistance : Cultural and societal resistance, particularly gender inequality, hinders education in tea garden communities. Traditional norms prioritize plantation work over schooling, especially for girls, who are expected to handle household duties. This belief limits support for girls' education, preventing equal opportunities.

Lack of Infrastructure : One of the biggest challenges tea garden communities face in accessing education is the lack of proper infrastructure. Many areas lack nearby schools, forcing children to travel long distances and often face safety concerns or financial barriers. Even when schools exist, they are typically overcrowded

and poorly equipped.

VI. The Way Forward: Strengthening the Movement

A multifaceted approach is needed to strengthen the movement for education and empowerment among tea garden labourers. Improving access to education can be achieved through initiatives such as scholarships, night schools, and mobile learning centres, which help overcome barriers like financial constraints, limited school availability, and long distances. Vocational training programs are also essential to create alternative employment opportunities, enabling workers and their children to acquire practical skills that can lead to better jobs outside the tea industry. Thus, these efforts can raise awareness of the injustices they face, demand change, and maintain their cultural heritage for future generations.

VII. Conclusion

Education is a beacon of hope for tea garden labourers, offering the promise of a better life beyond exploitation and poverty. The shift from plucking tea leaves to writing words symbolizes a change in occupation and a profound transformation of mind and spirit that represents liberation, faith, and empowerment. Tea garden workers and their children gain the tools to challenge historical injustices through education. After all, they find more meaning and inner satisfaction in their faith life.



Fr. Anuranjan Purty SJ instructing his office staff

PROTOCOL COMMISSION: BEACON OF HOPE

Fr. Amrit Tirkey SJ

Parish Priest, Soso

Context: Violence and Sexual Abuse



Violence and sexual abuse against children and vulnerable individuals remain critical social and religious challenges in India. Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi, during the *Bharat Yatra* rally in Ranchi on

Monday, 25 September 2017, stated, "It is tragic to see that in a country where children are revered as embodiments of the divine, they have become victims of sexual abuse and trafficking. We must consider how we can contribute to society and work together to stop such evils" (The Times of India, Ranchi September 26, 2017). In response to the increasing number of sexual abuse cases among children, Satyarthi referenced a survey conducted by the government and UNICEF in 2007, which reported that "53% of children in this country have been victims of sexual abuse." By 2016, there were as many as 15,000 cases registered under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

To mention a few cases of such nature: the Delhi gang rape and murder, commonly known as the Nirbhaya case, involved a rape and fatal assault that occurred on 16 December 2012 in Munirka, a neighbourhood in South Delhi. Police in Kerala arrested Fr. Edwin Figarez on 8 December 2015 on charges of sexually assaulting a girl repeatedly for three months (UCAN, Kochi, Indian Church, Clergy Abuse Case, December 10, 2015). Fr. Lawrence Johnson was arrested for allegedly abusing a 13-year-old boy at a Church (Mumbai mirror, Bombay Archdiocese, Catholic priest, Child Abuse Case, January 11, 2016). In a horrifying incident,

a five-year-old girl was raped and tortured to death in Hisar's Uklana village of Haryana State. The perpetrators used a 24-centimetre stick, which was found inserted in the victim's private parts (India Today, December 10, 2017). A nun belonging to the order of Missionaries of Jesus had accused Bishop Franco Mulakkal of raping her several times between 2014 and 2016 at a convent in Kerala (The Indian Express, 06 January 2019). The women in Manipur on 4 May 2023 were stripped and forced to walk naked, surrounded by a mob that dragged them to a field and allegedly gang-raped one of them. On 9 August 2024, a 31-year-old female postgraduate trainee doctor at R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, was raped and murdered in a college building (The Hindu, September 10, 2024). Three minor tribal girls were raped and two others molested by several minor boys in Rania block of Khunti district (Times of India, February 25, 2025). On 2 April 2025, a seven-year girl was raped and murdered



Created in the image and likeness of God



under Chanhoo police station (Prabhat Khabar, 2 April 2025).

Faith Response

Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The Bible asks, “What are human beings that you are mindful of them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:4-5). Every human being possesses inherent and inalienable dignity. It is our responsibility to uphold the dignity of every individual, particularly those who are weak and vulnerable, such as widows and orphans (Exodus 22:21-24). As human beings, we are called to reflect divine love by respecting and caring for one another. In doing so, we not only uphold the dignity of our fellow humans but also reaffirm our own dignity as individuals.

Jesus showed his deep concern for children when he said to his disciples, “Let the little children come to me” (Matthew 19:14). He also warned, “If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their

neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Jesus cautioned his followers not to emulate the Scribes, who exploit widows and their resources (Mark 12:38-40 and Luke 20:45-47). He consistently supports the most vulnerable members of society.

The protection of children and vulnerable individuals is an essential part of the Gospel message. Christ has entrusted us with the care and protection of the weakest and defenseless (Matthew 18:5). Therefore, we have a duty to warmly welcome children and vulnerable persons and to create a safe environment for them. This requires ongoing and profound conversion, where personal holiness and moral commitment unite to enhance the credibility of the Gospel message and to renew the Church's educational mission.

Urgent Call to Become the Beacon of Hope

At the core of Catholic Social Teachings is the unwavering belief in the inherent dignity of every human life, a principle that is central to *Dignitas Infinita* (*Dignitas Infinita* was issued by the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith on April





2, 2024). This document reaffirms the Church's consistent teaching that every human being, from the moment of conception until natural death, has immeasurable worth, regardless of gender, social status, or any other distinction. Violence and sexual abuse against children or vulnerable individuals, in any form, is a serious violation of this principle. Such acts dehumanize women and children, stripping them of their dignity and reducing them to objects of abuse. The teachings of *Dignitas Infinita* demand that every person, especially children and those who are vulnerable, be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

On 2 February 2015, Pope Francis addressed the Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and the Superiors of Institutes of Religious Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. In his letter, he emphasized the urgent need to eliminate the sexual abuse of minors within the Church and to create pathways for reconciliation and healing for survivors. He urged the Church at all levels to take necessary steps to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, and to respond to their needs with fairness and compassion.

Pope Francis highlighted the responsibility of Diocesan Bishops and Major Superiors to ensure the safety of minors and vulnerable adults in parishes and other Church institutions. In a significant address, he called for a comprehensive effort to combat the abuse of minors in all its forms, both sexual and otherwise (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis at the end of the Eucharistic Concelebration 24 February 2019).

In response to the call for action, the Catholic Church has implemented various initiatives aimed at improving justice in cases of sexual abuse. This includes updating canonical procedures and establishing structural and administrative mechanisms to ensure a thorough and prompt resolution of these cases. Additionally, on 3 May 2011, Cardinal Levada, the head of the

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), issued a Circular Letter with the stated purpose: "To Assist Episcopal Conferences in Developing Guidelines for Handling Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics."

Adolfo Nicolás SJ, who was the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, stated in a letter dated 18 May 2015, addressed to all Major Superiors, that "the Society of Jesus is committed to creating safe and healthy environments in all areas of our ministries." In this letter, he reminded all Major Superiors of their responsibility to protect minors and vulnerable individuals from sexual abuse in the institutions and ministries overseen by the Jesuits in their Provinces or Regions.

As directed by the Curia of Father General, each Jesuit Province is required to establish a Province Protocol Commission. In 2010, Fr. Marianus Kujur SJ, the then Provincial of Ranchi, formed this Protocol Commission. The Commission drafted a policy titled "Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults from Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment," which was introduced to the Province during the Mini Province Days on 7 July 2016.

To ensure that every Jesuit in the Ranchi Province understood and embraced the policy, the Commission facilitated workshops on "Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons" in four different zones: Ranchi, Khunti, Simdega, and Gumla. The Commission has also addressed several concrete cases of violence and sexual abuse within the Province. As a result, the Protocol Commission has become a beacon of hope.



**PROMOTION OF A
CONSISTENT
CULTURE OF
PROTECTION**



STRONG FAITH, VIBRANT CHURCH - STRONG BUILDING, SPIRITED MISSION

Fr. Ravi Hemant Kujur SJ

Bursar, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi



The Jubilee Year 2025 invites the entire church to come together and reflect on the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." This theme encourages us to look back at history and thank God for His marvelous interventions in our lives

and work. It also inspires us to view our current situation through the lens of faith, recognizing how God is actively building His dwelling place within and among us. Throughout this year, the church is deeply engaging with this theme, which has motivated me to reflect on my spiritual journey, rediscover my faith, and find hope in this rapidly changing world. As a Jesuit, I believe having strong and complete trust in Almighty God is essential. This trust fills me with great hope and encourages me to move forward.

I am a new member of the Building Commission, and while my work experience is still limited, I would like to share my experiences from my year working under the commission. I never anticipated working in this field, but while serving in the Treasurer's office at St. Xavier's School in Doranda, I had the opportunity to observe and participate in the construction work on the campus. A significant aspect of this project was the large sum of money invested in it. My role involved ensuring the quality of work from the contractors and workers and verifying that the funds were being utilized properly. This personal involvement and my willingness to take initiative helped me become engaged in the work of the Building Commission.

The year 2024-2025 was a tremendous success for the Building Commission. We undertook numerous new construction projects and carried out major

renovations, which significantly enhanced our ability to engage in apostolic and mission work. The Building Commission prioritized our efforts based on the needs of the community and our apostolic goals.

Our primary focus was on the village primary schools associated with various parishes, commonly referred to as feeder schools. These schools are located in the most remote areas of different parishes. Unfortunately, these schools' conditions were dire due to inadequate monitoring and insufficient funding. The local communities felt neglected and discouraged, facing numerous challenges that led to losing hope.

We listened to their concerns and understood their struggles, and we initiated efforts to improve their situation by constructing the following village schools as part of our educational apostolate: -

- 1) R. C. Primary School, Majhgoan, under Noadih Parish.
- 2) R. C. Primary School, Banjhar, under Bardih Parish.
- 3) R. C. Primary School, Kitam, under Bardih Parish.
- 4) R. C. Primary School, Parhi, under Keondtanr Parish.
- 5) R. C. Primary School, Konbegi, under Rengarih Parish.
- 6) R. C. Primary School, Korchebahar, under Rengarih Parish.

The construction and renovation of these school buildings have had a very positive impact on the community. People have regained hope and feel happy, united, meaningful, and encouraged. The



overall effect has been very satisfying. Students, teachers, parents, and village residents are grateful for this initiative. In some areas, the number of students has even increased.

Major construction projects are underway in various parts of Ranchi Province, including St. Xavier's College in Simdega, St. Mary's English Medium School in Simdega, St. Xavier's English Medium School in Gumla, Loyola English Medium School in Khunti, Janta High School in Noadih, and St. John's High School in Balipara, Assam. These projects aim to provide better facilities for students and teachers.

The Building Commission successfully addressed the needs of Pastoral Ministry by renovating the Maranghada and Vijaygiri Parish Churches. They also constructed additional rooms for the priests' residences in Kochang and Bingoan parishes, improving the facilities available. Furthermore, Kochang parish has been developed into a pilgrimage center for the Khunti Diocese. This initiative received widespread appreciation from the community. For instance, during the 150th Jubilee celebration at Kochang parish on 2 March 2025, more than 15,000 faithful and over 500

religious men and women participated in this event, which took place amidst the jungle. This celebration significantly strengthened their faith and hope in God, allowing the people to truly experience His presence, love, mercy, peace, and joy.

We completed renovation work at the Apostolic School in Samtoli and the JFCT Tarunoday in Kanke to prepare our men for the future. Additionally, we finished the new chapel and hall at the Jharna Spirituality Centre. While many more projects were undertaken, listing all of them is not feasible.

The Building Commission extends its heartfelt gratitude to the generous benefactors, agencies, and institutions that contributed valuable resources to support our mission work. May God bless them for their kindness and impact on our community.

Jesus's mission was to build a community and a church founded on strong faith, ensuring longevity. As we work on these buildings, we must remember that we participate in constructing the body of Christ, reflecting our faith journey through the Building Commission.



Before



After

R.C. Primary School, Banjhar, under Bardih Parish



Before



After

R.C. Primary School, Majhgoan, under Noadih Parish.



DISARM MEDIA OF VIOLENCE AND UNTRUTH FOR PEACE AND TRUTH

Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ

Director, Satya Bharti, Ranchi

Introduction



The Jubilee Year 2025, themed "Pilgrims of Hope," is a significant opportunity for renewal and spiritual reflection for Catholics worldwide. Proclaimed by Pope Francis, this Holy Year invites believers to embark on

a faith journey, rediscovering hope in Christ and embracing the transformative power of mercy and forgiveness. The theme highlights the importance of approaching the future with trust and openness, fostering unity and resilience during challenging times.

In his recent message for the World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis emphasized the urgent need to "disarm communication" in a world often plagued by disinformation and polarization. He urged communicators to cleanse their words of aggression and division, promoting hope, unity, and understanding. This message closely aligns with the mission of the Jubilee, encouraging believers to become messengers of hope and agents of peace within their communities.

Satya Bharati Ranchi, a Jesuit Communication Center, is crucial in promoting the message of the Jubilee Year 2025. The center emphasizes the significance of hope, peace, and harmony in society through various activities. It actively works to equip the media with tools and strategies to counteract violence and negativity, fostering a culture of understanding and harmonious living.

By aligning its initiatives with Pope Francis' call to "disarm communication," Satya Bharati Ranchi creates a media landscape that promotes peace

and builds bridges among communities. Its efforts reflect the spirit of the Jubilee Year, inspiring individuals and organizations to embrace hope and unity in their daily lives in various ways.

The communicators' activities also align with the Province's revised mission-vision statements, the mission-vision of the Communication Commission, and the Ranchi Province Apostolic Preferences.

1. Regular update on the News and Views of the Province

The Communication Commission has consistently shared information through the Province WhatsApp group. This not only helps spread news among the Jesuit community but also keeps us connected. Regular photo updates tell the story of the Province, capturing moments of joy and sorrow.

2. Publication of Books and Matters for the Mission

On 23 March 2025, Satya Bharati organized a book launching ceremony for *Tridiwasiya Adhyatmik Sadhna*, written by Mrs. Gyanlatika Toppo—special thanks to Fr. Mahendra Peter Tigga SJ and Fr. Alexius Tirkey SJ for facilitating the program. In addition, Satya Bharati published *Pajhra* (Streams), a daily Biblical reflection, and *Catholic Patra*, a Hindi liturgical ordo. They also released *Anchra* (or *Anchal*), a collection of poems by Dr. Manju Joytsna.

3. Mission-Vision statement

The Province's new mission-vision statement inspired the Communication Commission's draft mission-vision statement. This document will guide and direct future actions in service to the community. It calls upon individuals in



the media to collaborate in Christ's mission of proclaiming the Good News of love, service, and healing, particularly for the poor, needy, and marginalized people of Chotanagpur. The statement encourages media professionals to take creative initiatives, becoming channels and advocates for peace while defending human dignity.

4. Prime Time National Magazine Publication for Marriage Encounter

Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ was the editor for the Marriage Encounter (ME) group's annual publication, "Prime Time," for their convention in Jharna, Ranchi. The theme of the ME convention was "Celebrating Differences." We thank the Manresa House Scholastics for their valuable contributions during the Inaugural Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral Ranchi.

5. JESCOM Annual Meeting at Kolkata

Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ participated in the JESCOM Annual Meeting 2024, which was held from 14 to 16 September 2024 at Dhyan Ashram in Kolkata. This year's theme was "Re-Imagining and Re-Structuring the Communication Apostolate in the Conference of South Asia of the Society of Jesus." This theme was chosen in response to the advice of Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, Superior General, who urged Jesuits and their collaborators to continue the process initiated by General Congregation 36, which involves reviewing and evaluating the restructuring of Provinces and Regions. Reflecting on this call, Fr. Stany D'Souza, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, encouraged the South Asia Conference to commence a discernment process on the topic of "Reimagining and Restructuring the Society of Jesus in South Asia" (RR) to review, renew, and reorient our life-mission.

6. Expansion of the Father Lievens Museum

The Father Lievens Museum has recently undergone significant enhancements, including the following notable additions : 1.

Lievens Kuan: While specific details are not provided, this addition is anticipated to enrich the museum's historical and cultural narrative.

2. Replica Grotto of Mother Mary : This new feature aims to offer visitors a tranquil and reflective space, emulating the serene ambiance of the original *Grotto* of Mother Mary. **3. Statue of Father Constant Lievens on Horseback :** Positioned prominently at the entrance, this statue serves as a tribute to Father Constant Lievens and enhances the visual appeal of the museum's entrance. With these features now at the Manresa Gate, the entrance boasts heightened grandeur, creating a more immersive and engaging experience for visitors.

7. Composition of Hymns promoting the Adivasi Unity and Identity

Recently, two hymns were composed to celebrate and honour significant themes. The first hymn is dedicated to the Adivasi community's rich cultural heritage and steadfast resilience. The verses highlight their strength, traditions, and deep connections with nature. This hymn emphasizes their customs' enduring legacy and unwavering spirit in the face of historical challenges. The second hymn honours Dr. Father Camil Bulcke, a renowned Hindi scholar and missionary who significantly contributed to the well-being and uplift of Adivasi communities. It recognizes his scholarly works, particularly in Hindi literature, and his dedicated service to improving the lives of underprivileged communities through education and advocacy.

8. Talk on Media and Church Document

Fr. Justin recently delivered informative talks to the Daughters of St. Anne in both Kunkuri and Ranchi. The discussions focused on the Church documents from Vatican II and the role of media in today's context. He provided a comprehensive overview of significant documents from the Second Vatican Council, including: **1. Lumen Gentium :**



Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 2. *Dei Verbum* : Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, 3. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* : Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. These documents were examined to highlight their relevance and application in contemporary ecclesiastical and social practices. Additionally, the talks emphasized the crucial role of media in evangelization and communication within the Church.

9. Two Documentaries by Satya Bharati

Satya Bharati has created a comprehensive documentary on the Rural Integrated Holistic Approach to Alcoholism (RIHAA). This film aims to highlight the innovative and compassionate strategies employed by RIHAA to address and mitigate the challenges of alcoholism in rural communities. It features real-life stories of individuals and families who have benefited from RIHAA's programs, illustrating the positive impact of a holistic approach to rehabilitation and the power of community support in overcoming addiction. The documentary also addresses the challenges faced by RIHAA, including limited resources, social stigma, and resistance to change. It explores how the organization is overcoming these obstacles through innovative solutions and steadfast determination. The goal of this documentary by Satya Bharati is to raise awareness about the issue of alcoholism in rural areas and demonstrate the effectiveness of integrated, holistic approaches in combating it. It serves as an inspiration for other communities and organizations to adopt similar strategies in their fight against alcoholism.

The second insightful documentary explores the life of Father Stan Swami, a Jesuit priest and tribal



rights activist who devoted his life to advocating for marginalized communities. It highlights his significant contributions and the challenges he faced, particularly during the period leading up to his arrest and death. This documentary by Satya Bharati aims to raise awareness about the injustices faced by activists like Father Stan Swami and to inspire public advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities. It serves as both a tribute to his life and a call to action for ongoing efforts in social justice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is essential to disarm the media of violence and misinformation to foster peace and truth. Upholding ethical journalism, promoting narratives focused on peace, ensuring accountability through fact-checking, and enhancing media literacy empower society to resist harmful influences. Inspired by Gandhian principles, the media should embrace truth and non-violence to promote constructive discourse. By prioritizing responsible reporting, we can transform the media into a force for harmony, ensuring informed and ethical communication that strengthens social cohesion.

A PILGRIMAGE TO FIND ONESELF: VATICAN RADIO AS A PILGRIM

Fr. Dilip Sanjay Ekka SJ

Vatican Radio, Rome



Vatican Radio is the official broadcasting service of the Holy See, under the authority of the Pope. It commenced operations on 12 February 1931, initiated by Guglielmo Marconi Pacelli, who later became Pope Pius XII. Since

its inception, Vatican Radio has been dedicated to transmitting and broadcasting the messages of the Pope, rooted in Christian faith and values such as peace, hope, and justice. Among the 47 different languages in which it broadcasts, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada are four important Indian languages used to disseminate and promote the messages of the Holy Father worldwide.

Breakthrough of the mission

My mission at Vatican Radio began in 2015, shortly after I completed my final stage of formation, known as tertianship. This opportunity felt like a prophecy coming true for me, a prophecy shared by the late Fr. Walter Pillan, with whom I spent a brief period during my diaconate in Tongo Parish from 2009 to 2010.

During a conversation, Fr. Pillan, a veteran of the Tongo mission, told me, "One day, you will go to Rome and work for Vatican Radio." In response to this prophecy, I jokingly replied, "Let the prophecy of the prophet Fr. Pillan be fulfilled." At that moment, I never imagined that Fr. Pillan's words would come true for me so soon. This situation serves as a reminder that our loving service and care for our elderly family members and community will eventually return to us as blessings from God. After spending ten years at the Vatican Radio mission, I now have a deeper understanding of the Holy Father, Pope Francis's, continuous

encouragement for young people to stay close to their grandparents and share their lives with them. This idea is not only found in the holy scriptures but also resonates across various religions, as well as in tribal cultures and traditions. Acts of mercy and compassion towards the needy and the elderly are never in vain.

Mission without omission

The Hindi section of Mission Vatican Radio consists of three members: Srs. Usha, Anugarha, and I. We are responsible for translating the Pope's activities and programs, with a primary focus on his discourses, homilies, catecheses, and other events from the Vatican. Our work is subject to daily deadlines, as we must submit our programs for radio transmission in a timely manner.



The Hindi Section at Vatican Radio, Rome



A Kairos moment with Pope Francis at Vatican Radio, Rome

The process consists of four main steps: first, writing, preparing, and documenting the program; second, recording the material; third, editing the recorded content; and finally, uploading everything to the Vatican website. This requires the team to remain alert and work diligently without any slack.

During a visit to the radio station, someone asked what would happen if a team member fell ill. In response, we joked that there is no room for illness or weakness; each member must fulfill his/her responsibilities regardless of personal circumstances.

Challenges-opportunities and learnings

Every mission presents its unique challenges and opportunities. However, these challenges can become blessings when faced and embraced with courage and faith. For me, my first year in radio felt like being thrown into the sea, where I had no choice but to learn to swim. This demanding role required a great deal of resilience to navigate the complexities of the international arena. I needed to adapt to various aspects, including the office environment, language barriers, food differences, cultural nuances, and the diverse temperaments of the community and friends. Although the

challenges were significant, they also came with limitless growth opportunities.

During the first year of my mission, there were days when I had to work tirelessly for 12 to 14 hours to complete the program on time for submission. While others enjoyed their Christmas, Easter, and summer breaks, my vacation days became even more hectic. This was often the case with Pope Francis, as he never took a break during his pontificate. It's clear that when the leader is focused on serious matters, the team members must also put in extra effort. Additionally, translating the Pope's beautiful messages and sharing them with Hindi-speaking audiences worldwide helped refresh my weary mind, heart, and body.

Insights, learnings, and findings

Reflecting on my ten years with the Vatican Radio mission feels more like just ten months. The daily deadlines and the seriousness of my work made time fly by without me realizing it. Yes, I've noticed the changes in my hair, which has shifted from black to grey and from thick to thin. However, I have no regrets; all those years have been spent in genuine toil. I feel a sense of contentment and great satisfaction, knowing that, by God's grace,



I have done what is right and just in my mission. I am confident that I can accomplish anything because the giver of life has provided me with everything I have asked for, and He will continue to do so. My heart is filled with gratitude for the countless blessings God has bestowed upon me, allowing me to be an instrument in the Eternal City. I can visualize and recognize the various situations where God has cared for me and enriched my life with abundant grace and consolation.

It is God who undertakes His pilgrimage in and through us, provided we open the doors of our hearts. As we humbly share His love with others, a sense of elation begins to well up within us. This is because He desires for us to be communicators, as Pope Francis emphasized on World Communication Day: "We need to communicate with others what God communicates with us." God expresses love and care for us, and in turn, we are called to do the same with everyone we encounter.

While I often found my work challenging and felt discouraged at times, one thing consistently kept me grounded and focused on our mission: reflecting on the resilience of our dedicated Belgian missionaries. Whenever I considered that they lived with the barest necessities while I had so much available, I would ask myself, "Why can't I fully commit to the mission I have been assigned?" This reflection would reinforce my identity, reminding me that "I am a son of Ignatius; I cannot shy away from my mission." It helped me pull myself out of despair and stay on track.

The phrase "complain prayer" is one of the teachings of Pope Francis that has made my life easier. During his pontificate, he often addressed youth by saying, "You should make complaint prayers to the Lord." Pope Francis emphasized that our prayers of complaint are heard and answered by God because they come from the very depths of our hearts.

From the beginning of this mission, I found myself making many heartfelt prayers of complaint, and to my amazement, they were all heard and answered. There are countless blessings in my life, and my

heart proclaims, "God is amazing grace." This realization inspires me to live my life with love, freely sharing the gifts of love, joy, and friendship that I experience. Feeling loved and lovable gives me a profound sense of freedom, allowing me to let go of worry about what tomorrow may bring.

A pilgrimage of discovery continues....

Over the past ten years, my experience at Vatican Radio has been more than just a mission; it has been a journey of self-discovery. I have embarked on a pilgrimage to explore and uncover the hidden treasures within myself. I choose to embrace the positive and let go of the negative. This process ignites a spark within me, allowing me to radiate hope to those who enter my life. It also prompts many questions for reflection: What am I truly seeking in life? Have I discovered the precious pearl that every human heart longs for? Am I preserving and protecting the gems that reside within me? Therefore, I make it my daily mission to strive to become the best version of myself and to fulfill my true purpose.



We are Friends in the Lord



Fr. Raymond Kerketta SJ

Novice Master, Ashirvad Namkum



As the Socius to the Provincial and the Prefect of the health of the fellow Jesuits, I have provided a brief reflection on the topic of caring for the sick and elderly in the Province. This reflection focuses on some important

directives that have been established over a decade ago to ensure the well-being of our community members.

Fr. Cipriano Díaz Marcos SJ, who once served as the delegate for the Sick and Elderly in the Province of Spain, shared his perspective on caring for fellow Jesuits. He stated that as members of the same family, we share a responsibility for one another. One of the main challenges, in addition to providing appropriate care, is addressing the spiritual aspect of diminishing health. Our spirituality reflects our vow of poverty, and old age may present an opportunity for dispossession—a moment for willing surrender. This allows us to live fully, embodying the principles taught by Fr. Arrupe when he had to resign from the Society of Jesus due to health issues. (GC Daily News: 3/11/2016)

Caring for our sick and infirm brothers invites us to deepen our connection with those who need us. Our spiritual communion and proximity to those suffering from physical ailments and spiritual loneliness call for self-sacrifice on our part. It requires us to change our busy schedules to be available for them. This means making an effort to visit, spend time with, and engage in conversation with them.

The history of our mission shows that when our founders learned of someone's illness, they would quickly rush to visit and care for them in the mission

stations where they worked. It is heartening to see how some of our elderly or recuperating brothers take the initiative to visit one another, providing companionship, comfort, and solace.

Caring for our sick and elderly brothers requires a magnanimous heart, which is central to the Spiritual Exercises. It is no surprise that our Father Ignatius and his companions dedicated themselves to caring for the sick. The spirit of availability in serving our brothers within our communities—where our mission begins, even before we are sent to missions elsewhere—comes from the Exercises. (Adapted from Document of Health, Ranchi Province 2016)

A Few Practical Directives : -

- 1) Every Jesuit has the responsibility to take care of their own physical and mental health. Following the routine of the House, including time for work, meals, recreation, and rest, is an important part of health care for each individual member.



Sr. Virginia Lugun, DSA & Sr. Susana Xess, DSA



- 2) If someone in the community is physically unwell, they should first inform the Minister/ Superior of the House. The Superior should respond promptly and take the necessary steps to assist the sick member, including arranging for proper medical consultation and treatment. If a case requires specific attention, it should be reported to Fr. Socius and the Province Infirmarian without delay to ensure timely arrangements for better treatment.
- 3) In the case of a Jesuit needing hospitalization, we always seek assistance from the Novitiate. We are grateful for the generosity and availability of our Novices, who offer their services whenever needed. Our Pre-Novices are also available for assistance when required.
- 4) Communities should show concern for their fellow companions and make a positive effort to visit sick or recuperating members in the hospital when necessary.
- 5) It is important for the sick and recuperating brothers to faithfully adhere to the post-surgical care schedule and the prescriptions provided by their doctors. Experience shows that those who diligently follow these guidelines have better outcomes in regaining their health.
- 6) Sometimes, family members may express a desire for enhanced treatment for the sick, even to the point of contradicting our established procedures. We must remind ourselves that, as members of the Society, we place our trust entirely in the discretion of our Superior regarding health and treatment. In good health and in sickness, we place our faith in Divine Providence.
- 7) This Province is the largest in the South Asian Conference, with approximately 396 members. This means that caring for our elderly and sick brothers is a significant financial concern. While the Province is committed to providing the best possible care for its members, we also trust in God's providential care, who alone gives us life, sustains it, and ensures our well-being.



Fr. Clement Ekka SJ



Fr. Robert Kindo SJ



Fr. Benedict Kiro SJ



Fr. Emmanuel Kujur SJ



Fr. Patric Kerketta SJ



Fr. Gilbert D'Souza SJ



Fr. Pratap Toppo SJ



Fr. Mathias Dungdung SJ



Fr. Ernest Kujur SJ



Bro. Habil Kujur SJ



ECO PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Fr. Prabhat Kennedy Soreng SJ

Registrar, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi



“Pilgrims of Hope” is the theme for the Jubilee Year 2025 in the Church. By its nature, all creation is moving toward Christ, the fullness of our lives. Christ, present at the moment of the world's creation, guides this journey

toward the Omega point—our ultimate destiny.

Pope Francis envisioned a Synodal Church where every believer actively participates in this journey with hope. Currently, humanity faces critical issues such as wars, violence, natural disasters, hunger, migration, discrimination, poverty, and hatred, all stemming from human selfishness and sin. These situations can sometimes shatter our hope. However, the Bible provides many examples of individuals who encountered hopeless circumstances but continued their journey toward a hopeful future through God's intervention and their deep faith. Figures such as those destroyed by the flood, Job, Moses, Esther, David, the chosen

people, and Paul, among many others, serve as inspirations for maintaining hope.

When we reflect on the ecological journey of all creation, we see that everything was good when God created the world; it was a beautiful place to live, praise, love, and serve Him. Humans experienced a close relationship with God. Even in our current reality, filled with turmoil from climate change, global warming, natural disasters, epidemics, floods, cyclones, and earthquakes—many of which are driven by human actions—God is guiding us toward our destiny. He calls each of us to join Him as He works on our behalf.

Unfavorable conditions such as pollution, global warming, and climate change threaten human existence. However, some individuals can connect with God in these challenging situations; they can hear God's call through the cries of those suffering and pleading for help and climate justice. It is crucial to restore the Earth, which is our common home.



Fr. Anand Kerketta SJ with his students during Van Mahotsav



Students of St. Xavier's College Ranchi at Champi Village, Lapung (1-7 July 2024)

I often wonder why many people seem careless and indifferent toward our shared environment. Is it ignorance or selfishness? I am shocked when educated individuals contribute to our planet's pollution without showing concern for our common home.

I greatly admire poor and illiterate individuals who protect the natural environment, even if their efforts do not yield significant results. As an eco-Jesuit, I strive to do small things to make Mother Earth a better place to live. While I sometimes feel frustrated, I also find strength in knowing that many good people are on this journey with me.

Nature knows no boundaries; all creatures on Earth are interconnected and interdependent. Our actions—whether good or bad—have a global impact. Let us become eco-sensitive. Although

humans have damaged the Earth, we also have the potential to restore it if we choose to do so. This hope springs from the presence of eco-sensitive individuals actively working toward environmental restoration.

The Earth is our common home, and we must conserve it. All the apostolates we undertake in the Church are interconnected because the cries of the poor and the cries of the Earth are one and the same (*Laudato Si*). Our ecological activities should embody integral ecology, impacting every aspect of our mission work. We cannot separate our efforts for ecology from Christ's mission.

Let us take on the common responsibility to protect our common home, become more eco-sensitive, and make our lives and campuses clean and eco-friendly.



Students of St. Xavier's College Ranchi during Tree Planting and Outreach Program (1-7 July 2024)



OUR APOSTOLIC WITNESS : ROOTED IN MISSION, JOURNEY IN FAITH

Fr. Elphiz Kerketta SJ

Asst. Director, AROUSE, Gumla

Introduction



As Jesuits working in the heartland of Jharkhand, our mission among the tribal communities in remote areas such as Lohardaga, Simdega, and Tongo embodies the essence of being Pilgrims of Hope, Livers of Faith, and

Givers of Love. Amid Jharkhand's rich cultural and spiritual heritage and the challenges its people face, we remain committed to walking steadfastly with Christ, guided by the Spirit and inspired by the Gospel.

Pilgrims of Hope

Our educational institutions, pastoral missions, and social centers serve as beacons of hope—empowering youth, amplifying the voices of the voiceless, and restoring human dignity. We are not just administrators for minorities; we are pilgrims who believe in a future shaped by faith and respect for human dignity. Through school support, regular contact and visits, a friendly approach, a valuable presence, active listening, and genuine accompaniment, we nurture hope in these underserved communities, especially among young people, so that they can become agents of change within their neighborhoods.

Livers of Faith

Our faith is not limited to chapels or pulpits; it is expressed in our daily interactions with those at the margins—the vulnerable and the most neglected members of society. As people of faith, we draw inspiration from the Gospel and the Ignatian call to “find God in all things.” Our ministries in education, healthcare, tribal rights, youth empowerment, and

ecological justice are acts of faith in action. Each community we serve becomes a sacred space where the Word is proclaimed through words and demonstrated through acts of love and integrity.

Givers of Love

Driven by the love of Christ, we share God's love freely and generously with the most vulnerable members of our society. Our mission compels us to extend compassion through the gentle care of the least and the lost, the development of youth leaders, and the support of rural women in self-help initiatives and marginalized children. Our presence in conflict zones and areas of displacement goes beyond mere service; it represents true solidarity. Like Christ, we aim to be with tribal children and people in remote villages, emphasizing that our unconditional love is centered on education and empowerment.

Livers of Faith in Soil and Soul

Our faith is rooted in the earth. We promote organic farming in Tongo, located in the Chainpur Block, as a new initiative involving 500 families across



Distributing registers to village leaders



10 villages. This effort serves as an economic solution and a spiritual commitment to the earth and sustainable living. Several training sessions and awareness programs in these villages have empowered many tribal families to reduce their reliance on exploitative systems and reclaim the dignity of self-reliant agriculture. This mission manifests living faith, where Gospel values intersect with indigenous wisdom.

Givers of Love for a Just Society

Our love manifests through various forms of ministry. At the grassroots level, we engage in awareness-building through the Migration Awareness and Intervention Network (MAIN), addressing the harsh realities of distress migration. By organizing workshops, community meetings, and youth engagements, we ensure that families are not compelled to leave their land and heritage for a livelihood. Additionally, we assist the underprivileged in accessing government schemes, healthcare, and basic education while bridging the gap between systems and those often overlooked.

A Journey of Transformation

Our faith journey, grounded in mutual learning and humble service, transforms us and the communities we serve. We do not impose solutions; instead, we walk alongside the people, discern with them, and empower them to find their voices. In every smiling child, every farmer returning to the land, and every woman who speaks up in a village meeting, we see the face of Christ.

Struggles from within: Faith amid Storms

This journey has not been without its struggles. At times, we encounter challenges not only from outside the Church but also from within. There are moments when cooperation is lacking, genuine pastoral efforts are misunderstood, and priests face false accusations that shake the very core of their faith. In these times, the Spirit is tested. However, in these moments, the Spirit acts most profoundly—strengthening our resolve, humbling our hearts to forgive unconditionally, and reminding us that we serve not for reward or recognition, but out of love for Christ and His people. Our mission continues not by our strength, but by the Spirit who guides us from darkness into light.

Led by the Spirit : Sustaining the Flames of Mission

Through all these trials, we remain grounded in the Spirit. The Spirit keeps alive the fire of faith, the tenderness of love, and the daring courage of hope. Whenever a tribal family reclaims its livelihood, a young person chooses education over migration, or a community stands united in prayer and purpose, we know the Spirit is at work. The mission continues—not because we are strong, but because Christ is faithful to all humanity and loves unconditionally in every circumstance.

As Jesuits of the Ranchi Province, our missions in various places are sacred journeys—a testament to the belief that true hope, living faith, and generous love can bring about lasting change, even in the world's most remote corners. Even when we walk through valleys of doubt, we know the Spirit of the Lord is with us.



Legal Awareness Programme at Tongo by Fr. Peter Martin SJ (JAM)



YOUTH ANIMATION IN OUR MINISTRIES

Fr. Augustine Kujur SJ

Director, Jeevan Pravesh, Gumla

Introduction



The booklet “Ranchi Jesuits: Province Apostolic Planning 2020 – 2023” is open before me as I write about the Faith Journey through Youth Apostolate. I want to quote the vision-mission statement of the Ranchi Jesuit Youth

Ministry Commission: “The vision of this ministry, in light of our commitment to faith and justice and in alignment with the current Universal Apostolic Preference (UAP), is to accompany youth—especially the unorganized and marginalized tribal youth—in their integral growth and empowerment. This support aims to help them contribute to a more just, fraternal, and hope-filled world based on Gospel values and the liberative teachings of other religions.”

The following paragraphs provide reflections based on my experiences working with youth of different age groups. These insights aim to help readers understand and support them in accordance with the demands of the times. My involvement with youth can be divided into two phases: the first phase was as the Headmaster of schools, and the second phase as the Director of Jeevan Pravesh. Both roles focus on supporting teenagers.

The Fruits of Value-Based Education in our Institutions

“Father, please accept this envelope. It contains a small token of my gratitude to the school that taught me generosity, charity, and many other human values,” expressed Santosh Ram, a former student of Loyola High School in Khunti. He continued, “Father, this is a modest amount of

fifteen thousand rupees, representing a small portion of my salary. I hope this money can be used to help poor students.” He then began to share how the school had significantly shaped him into a man of good character.

Another student, Neeru Kumari, a St. Xavier’s Inter College graduate in Bundu, exclaimed, “Your words, ‘St. Xavier’s Inter College is not just a place to score high marks and become the district or state topper; it is a place to grow into a responsible man or woman who can transform society,’ still resonates in my mind and heart. They inspire me to create a more humane society and bring about social change.” She then began to share various experiences that illustrated how she became a guiding light among her friends by taking on a leadership role in the student council.

These student comments highlight the hope our schools have in inculcating human values.

Jeevan Pravesh: Seminars and their Impacts

Here is a brief introduction to Jeevan Pravesh, an organization founded by Fr. Peter Paul Van Nuffel SJ. Its primary aim is to conduct life orientation seminars for students of Class X. Still, it has since expanded to include other grades as well. The organization addresses various issues and concerns that teenagers face. Some topics covered include self-discovery, life changes and responses, aim discernment, family dynamics, social awareness, career guidance, spiritual devotion, vocational choices, prayer life, sin, and reconciliation. The whole module is based on Ignatian Spirituality.

Responses coming from the Participants may be put as

“I will never forget the rich experiences from the Jeevan Pravesh seminar I attended at Charles



Borromeo School in Kuru,” stated Mamta Kujur. She added, “It was a wonderful experience to realize my worth and accept myself as I am.” Milani Topno, a student from St. John de Britto in Assam, reflected, “The line from the Bible, ‘Since you are precious and honoured in my eyes, and because I love you’ (Isaiah 43:4), gave me a new perspective in my life that led to a profound experience of God.” Sonu Baitha, who participated in the seminar for St. Inigo High School in Saparom, exclaimed, “The most enriching part of the seminar was the daily disposition exercise and examination of consciousness based on Ignatian Spirituality that we had at the beginning and end of each session.” Astha Kumari, a student who attended the seminar at Notre Dame School in Gumla, shared, “For my assignment, I sketched and painted a tree symbolizing my life, which left a deep imprint on me. A tree is so generous; it gives its flowers, fruits, leaves, and branches to all without cost. I am challenged to be like a tree. Through this process, I recognized my qualities, talents, and worth, which taught me the art of discernment.” Additionally, some participants from other schools expressed their feelings, saying, “The topics discussed, such as Sin and Reconciliation, Saving Mother Earth, Migration and Human Trafficking, and Mobile Addiction, are very educational for us as teenagers.”

Opportunities and Strengths

There are numerous opportunities and strengths in addressing youth concerns, which can be outlined as follows:

- 1) The Ranchi Province has a clear vision statement and well-defined objectives.
- 2) The Ranchi Province Apostolic Preference (RPAP) for 2020-2030 includes an actionable plan with a clear strategy.
- 3) The youth commission and other organizations, such as Jeevan Pravesh, the Christian Life Community (CLC), and AICUF, take youth ministry seriously.
- 4) The Jeevan Pravesh team focuses on one segment of the youth population, specifically

school-going teenagers, and conducts seminars tailored to this group.

- 5) This team has developed a well-structured module that is appropriate for teenagers.
- 6) The Christian Life Community (CLC) is another organization dedicated to supporting and accompanying Catholic students.
- 7) Parishes provide care and attention to Catholic youth.
- 8) Yearly and monthly meetings, as well as periodic seminars and rallies, are organized for various youth groups at both the parish and diocesan levels.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by quoting Sonu Sharma, a motivational speaker: “This is the age when the future can either be built or damaged. Do you know when the twist comes in the story? It occurs during the years between 14 and 20. At this stage, hormones start to surge, which can lead to a serious effect: these hormones often drive children away from their parents. During this time, children seek freedom, but parents hesitate to grant it because they understand that this is not the right age for such independence. They realize that these years are crucial, as children can easily stray from the right path.” He further adds, “The responsibility of teachers has increased significantly. It is not enough to provide intellectual knowledge; they must also instill moral values, teach love for the country, and cultivate gratitude toward their parents. If teachers fulfill this role, their students will be able to achieve something greater in their lives.” Finally, he offers three pieces of advice, referred to as *Suraksha Kawach* (safety armour), to teenagers:

1. Spend at least thirty minutes each day with your parents.
2. Never misbehave with your parents or raise your voice when speaking to them.
3. Seek their blessings daily; always touch their feet before leaving home.



Jiwan Pravesh Seminar



Ango Ipil High School, Rumtukel



St. Ignatius High School, Gumla



St.Xavier's High School, Pengree, Assam



Section -G

COLLABORATIONS : JOURNEY OF LEARNING AND GROWTH WITH THE RANCHI JESUITS





Dr. Shyamal Gomes

Professor and HOP – HRM at XISS, Ranchi

Background



From my childhood, I recognized the call of the Lord Jesus. While everyone receives this call, only a few are ordained as priests and nuns, dedicating their lives to the service of God and the community. It is true that

not everyone can become a priest or nun, but that doesn't mean they alone are responsible for serving others. As ordinary lay Christians, we must also be prepared to accept His call and work for the poor and marginalized in various ways.

After completing my Master's degrees in Social Anthropology and Business Management from Calcutta University and WBTU, I worked as a training and development manager with various organizations in India and abroad. In 2000, I obtained my Doctoral Degree from the Faculty of Social Science at Magadh University in Bodhgaya. In September 2002, I visited the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross (SCSC) and Stri Shakti in Hazaribagh for the first time. These organizations focus on women's empowerment, particularly in the areas of self-help group (SHG) development, awareness building, capacity development, and livelihood promotion. In 2005, I was appointed the CSR and Training Head at Usha Martin (KGVK) in Tatisilwai. Finally, in 2008, after a long journey through the industry and the social development sector, my Lord called me to serve as an academican at XISS, which is run by the Jesuits.

Journey with Ranchi Jesuits

According to the history of the Ranchi Jesuits, Fr. Constant Lievens SJ (11 April 1856 – 7 November 1893), a Belgian Jesuit, was deeply committed to

promoting social justice, the right to education, and women's empowerment. From 1885 to 1893, he particularly focused on advocating for the rights of marginalized and underprivileged communities in the Bihar and Jharkhand regions.

Fr. Michael Vanden Bogaert SJ (16 October 1928 – 31 August 2009), another Belgian Jesuit, played a significant role in promoting Ignatian spirituality across Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and other parts of India. He strongly believed in providing higher education to the most neglected segments of society and emphasized livelihood development for women and marginalized groups as a means to bring about transformational change in rural India. He served as the Director of XISS from 1963 to 1986.

I would like to highlight the remarkable Gandhian Belgian priest Fr. Michael Windey SJ (1921–2009), who founded XISS in Ranchi in 1955. He envisioned nurturing young tribal leadership and managerial skills. Initially, classes for the "social league" that preceded XISS were conducted in the evenings under the staircase of St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. Fr. Windey, as a sociologist and social reformer, was involved with various organizations both in India and abroad. After establishing XISS, he dedicated himself to serving the cyclone-affected communities in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, where he founded the Village Reconstruction Organization (VRO) in 1970. He worked tirelessly as a guide, philosopher, and mentor to the community until 2008. This year, I had the opportunity, along with other new faculty members, to meet Fr. Windey during his visit to XISS. His warm demeanour made us feel as if we had known him for a long time. Dressed in a *kurta-pyjama* and sipping tea



with samosas, he was everything we had imagined, having learned so much about him from Fr. Beni Ekka SJ, who was the director of XISS at that time.

We had a similar experience with Fr. Francken SJ, a Belgian Jesuit missionary who served as the Principal of St. Xavier's College Ranchi from 1982 to 1986 and later as the Director of XISS from 1987 to 1992. He would travel on an old moped from one remote village to another in Ranchi and Odisha, setting an example of how to live a simple life alongside the poor and marginalized, whether at Boys' Town, Namkum, or XISS Ranchi.

In July 1993, Fr. Christopher Lakra SJ, Assistant Director, succeeded him as Director, and Fr. Francken humbly accepted the role of Assistant Director. This transition reflected a policy of empowering local personnel with greater responsibilities. The most beautiful aspect was the collaborative spirit between the Indian and Belgian Jesuits, who worked hand in hand to grow the institute.

In June 1999, Dr. Beni Alphonse Ekka SJ was appointed as Director of XISS. He later handed over the leadership to Dr. Alexius Ekka SJ, who served from 2009 to 2018. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Joseph Marianus Kujur SJ, took over as Director of XISS. Under his able leadership, all four academic programs of XISS received accreditation twice from the NBA, in 2022 and 2025.

In this context, it would be a significant oversight and an incomplete narrative if I did not mention Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, the current Provincial of the Ranchi Province. When I joined XISS as a faculty member in the HRM program, I was also entrusted with the important responsibility of coordinating Social Service Fieldwork. At that time, HRM students only visited three centers; I expanded this by adding four more: Cheshire Home, Braj Kishore Netrahin Balika Vidyalaya, Government Middle School Upper Bazar, and MMK High School (a minority institution). St. Xavier's School and its outreach program had long been associated with XISS. Upon meeting the then-principal of St. Xavier's School Doranda, Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, I was impressed by two valuable pieces of advice he shared with me:

1. Social fieldwork should not be viewed as an extra-curricular activity for management students; rather, it should be considered a co-curricular one.
2. Management students need to adopt a learning mindset from those outside the mainstream, such as dropouts, the poor, marginalized individuals, and the downtrodden. Only then will they genuinely grasp the essence of effective "human management."

I would like to emphasize that anyone interested in understanding the concept of Educational Social Responsibility (ESR) should visit St. Xavier's School, Doranda, and its outreach program, initiated by Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ. This program has created a platform for individuals with potential who have been excluded from mainstream education.

Conclusion

In recent years, the Jesuits of the Ranchi Province have successfully defined both the content and methods of their ministries. As lay collaborators, we learn from their example of commitment, compassion, competence, conscience, and character. They embody the true spirit of creativity and are genuine leaders who guide us in discovering and practicing effective approaches to working with the poor and marginalized. They serve as "leaven in the dough," quietly yet powerfully transforming everything around them. They show us how to cultivate a more humane environment within organizations and society as a whole.

Let us remain hopeful. The *Aag* (fire or light) embraced by the Ranchi Jesuits with full confidence must now be carried forward by us, their followers. We must become the flag bearers and help transform society into one where peace, love, justice, and reconciliation are truly fostered.

In conclusion, I would like to share the inspiring words of Fr. Constant Lievens: "I have come here among you for your eternal happiness, but I can also help you find happiness in this life. Share your difficulties with me, and I will assist you as much as the law permits."



A JOURNEY OF SHARED HEARTS : MY TIME WITH THE RANCHI JESUITS

Sr. Mabel CMC

Asst. Teacher, R.C. Middle School, Keondtanr



It was not just a date; it marked the beginning of something profound – 14 May 2011. It was the day I, Sr. Mabel, started working with the Ranchi Jesuits—a journey that transformed my understanding of service, faith,

and the true meaning of community. At that time, I had no idea how close we would become, sharing meals, prayers, and a bond that would endure well beyond those five years. I wasn't just a coworker but a fellow traveler, walking alongside them toward a shared dream of justice and kindness. The Jesuits, with their strong commitment to those on the margins, became my teachers, my guides, and, in many ways, my family.

Living with them, sharing their simple meals, and praying together created a bond that transcended our work. We became companions on a spiritual journey. This closeness allowed me to understand their mission better and appreciate their dedication to the people they served.

Our efforts to empower tribal communities through education were significant. We didn't just teach in schools; we created spaces where young people could learn, celebrate their culture, and develop essential skills. We focused on educating the whole person by blending traditional knowledge with modern learning, ensuring the community's voice was heard.

It was not just the lessons I learned, but the spirit of the Jesuits that transformed me. Their unwavering commitment to justice, humble hearts, and deep faith continuously inspired me. I discovered the significance of thoughtful action and the value of reflecting on our experiences to guide our efforts.

The concept of *cura personalis*, or caring for the whole person, was central to everything we did. We recognized that actual progress involves nurturing

not just the body, but also the spirit and heart. We organized retreats, counseling services, and spiritual programs to support this, creating environments where individuals could heal and grow.

My five years with the Ranchi Jesuits were transformative. We shared meals, prayers, and dreams. I learned and grew, understanding what being a pilgrim of hope means. Although I no longer live in the same community, my journey continues. My work at St. Ignatius Church in Keondtanr and R. C. Middle School in Konhratoli demonstrates how profoundly those years have impacted me. The values I learned, the connections I made, and our shared vision still guide me. The Jesuits' spirit is a constant reminder that true collaboration involves shared hearts and common hope. Much like our shared meals, this journey nourishes both body and soul. It is a journey that continues with every act of service, prayer, and step toward a kinder world.

My time with the Ranchi Jesuits was a learning, growth, and profound inspiration journey. It strengthened my belief in the power of collaboration, the significance of service, and the strength of hope. I learned that being a pilgrim of hope involves walking alongside others, listening to their stories, and working together to create a fairer world.



People of God at St. Ignatius' Church, Keondtanr

WALKING THE PATH OF FAITH : A PILGRIM'S REFLECTION

Mr. Raju C. A. Singh

Prefect, St. Xavier's School, Doranda



And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left." (Isaiah 30:21)

Looking back on my 29-year journey as a lay collaborator with the Ranchi Jesuits, I am filled with gratitude, reflection, and a profound sense of purpose. My path has been one of faith, hope, and love—values that have shaped my vocation as an educator and my commitment to the Jesuit mission.

My educational foundation was built upon the Jesuit ethos, first as a student at St. Michael's, Patna, then Loyola School, Jamshedpur, and finally, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. These formative years instilled in me a deep appreciation for academic excellence, service, and justice—principles that have guided my professional and personal life.

In 1996, I responded to an inner calling, leaving behind a successful career in civil construction, mining, and transportation to join St. Xavier's School, Doranda, as a teacher of English and History. It was a leap of faith, yet one that felt divinely inspired. The unwavering support of the then Principal, Fr. Joseph Lakra SJ, and Vice Principal, Fr. Ajay Soreng SJ, reassured me that I was on the right path. Their encouragement helped me navigate this new chapter, and I embraced the noble vocation of teaching with a renewed sense of purpose.

The initial years were transformative. I soon realized that education was not just about textbooks and examinations but about nurturing hope in young minds. One of the most rewarding experiences was preparing and leading a team of students to the prestigious Bournvita Quiz Contest in Mumbai in 1998. This experience reinforced my belief that true education cultivates curiosity,

creativity, and confidence.

A significant turning point came in 1999, when I was entrusted with additional responsibilities as Prefect under the new leadership of Fr. James Lakra SJ, Principal, and Fr. Ajit Kr. Xess SJ, Vice Principal. This role immersed me in school administration, event organization, and discipline management, teaching me valuable lessons in leadership and service.

During the early 2000s, I encountered the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP), introduced by Fr. Crick SJ. Its core principles—experience, reflection, and action—resonated deeply with me, reinforcing the idea that learning must inspire transformation. Around the same time, I attended a national conference on human rights at the Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi, with Fr. James Lakra SJ, and other Jesuit principals. That experience deepened my understanding of the Jesuit mission—an unwavering commitment to justice, faith, and service.

In 2006, under the dynamic leadership of Fr. Ajit Kr. Xess SJ, as Principal, I was challenged to grow even further. His mantra, *No chalta hai, banta hai*—urging us to reject mediocrity and strive for excellence—became a guiding principle in my professional life. This period also brought immense responsibilities, as we did not have a Vice Principal for the senior section for several years. The weight of daily administration fell on my shoulders, but the trust placed in me and a supportive work environment gave me strength. Over time, this sense of stewardship became deeply personal, shaping my unwavering commitment to the school.

The late Fr. Britius Ekka SJ played a crucial role in my faith journey. His wisdom and guidance, especially in moments of doubt, kept me grounded. His life exemplified faith in action—a lesson I strive to embody every day.

Through my association with the Jesuit community,



I have learned invaluable life lessons: how to respond rather than react, how to accept criticism with grace, how to seek solutions rather than dwell on problems, and how to embrace God's plan with trust and hope. Retreats, seminars, and workshops have deepened my spiritual and professional growth. The Jesuit ideals of *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (AMDG) and forming "men and women for others" have become integral to my approach to education. Concepts like *Cura Personalis* and *Magis* have shaped my relationships with students and colleagues. At the same time, the practice of discernment and the Examen has taught me to recognize God's presence in daily life.

My journey has also taken me to various Jesuit communities across the province, exposing me to the challenges of rural and suburban life in Jharkhand. Witnessing the selfless dedication of Jesuits working under challenging conditions has been profoundly humbling. Despite hardships, they radiate joy and hope, committed to their mission of faith and service.

In October 2023, the Jesuits of the Ranchi Province trusted me and invited me to direct a play on the life and legacy of Fr. Constant Lievins SJ. The production drew nearly 2,000 spectators each day and vividly brought Jesuit values to life through the medium of theatre. It received heartfelt appreciation from His Grace, Archbishop Felix Toppo SJ, Auxiliary Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas SFX, and the Jesuit Provincial Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, affirming its spiritual and cultural impact.

I sometimes reflect on my decision to leave behind

the business world—a life of financial security—for the calling of education. Each time, I find renewed conviction that this journey was divinely ordained. Teaching is not just my profession but my vocation—a path of faith, hope, and love.

As St. Xavier's School Doranda celebrates 65 years of excellence, I feel privileged to have been part of this remarkable institution. With only a few years left before retirement, my heart is filled with gratitude. This has been more than just a career; it has been a pilgrimage of faith, shaping me as an educator and a person. The Jesuit ethos of being a person for others is no longer just a philosophy but a way of life.

I remain ever grateful for the mentors, colleagues, and students who have shaped me. I hope to pass on the same spirit of faith, love, and service to those who walk this path after me, carrying forward the mission of being pilgrims of hope, liverers of faith, and givers of love.

As I near the horizon of my time with the Ranchi Jesuits, I see not an end, but a beginning—a call to kindle the flame of faith in others. This journey has taught me that hope is not a gift we receive, but a garden we tend; that faith is not a solitary song, but a chorus we join; and that love is not a possession, but a river that flows through us to the world. To every soul I've met along this path—students with eager eyes, Jesuits with tireless hearts—I offer my silent vow: to leave behind a trail of light. As I step forward, I wonder: how will you, too, carve a path where hope takes root, faith finds voice, and love becomes your legacy?



Fr. Provincial meeting the teachers at St. Xavier's School, Doranda



Sr. Sukanti Tirkey FC

Former Principal, Prabhat Tara School, Dhurwa



Looking back on my ten years at Prabhat Tara English Medium School in Ranchi, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and joy. When I first arrived on the school campus in 2014 as a teacher, shortly after completing my B. Ed.

from Loyola College of Education in Jamshedpur, I had no idea how significantly this journey would shape my career as an educator and my path as a religious. It has been a decade filled with growth, challenges, collaboration, and countless blessings.

In my early years as School In-Charge and Vice Principal, I collaborated closely with our dedicated teachers, support staff, and enthusiastic young students. Their passion and sincerity inspired me every day. I was deeply involved in academic planning, supporting faculty, and strengthening the school's administrative systems. These experiences allowed me to grow as a leader while

remaining committed to service. I was fortunate to have numerous opportunities to participate in workshops, conferences, and leadership training, significantly boosting my confidence and moral foundations.

One of the most significant and fulfilling chapters of my journey occurred in 2023 when I was entrusted with the role of Principal for an academic year. I am grateful to the Ranchi Jesuits for placing their trust in me. I accepted this responsibility with great humility, relying on God's guidance, effective management, and the support of my team. Our school achieved its long-awaited affiliation during this period—a significant milestone that marked a turning point in our institutional journey. Securing this affiliation involved tireless preparation, meticulous documentation, coordination with authorities, and the collective efforts of our entire school community. Leading the school during this landmark achievement was both an honour and a deeply fulfilling moment. I felt a shared sense of



Fr. Provincial as the Chief Guest during Annual Prize Distribution at Prabhat Tara English Medium School, Dhurwa



Sr. Punam Kujur FC, Principal felicitating the Jesuits

pride knowing that our students would now have even greater academic opportunities and that the school's future was on a much stronger foundation.

Over the past ten years, I have been incredibly fortunate to work alongside the Ranchi Jesuits. I had the privilege of serving under four visionary and dedicated Jesuit Principals: Fr. Alexius Dungdung SJ, Fr. Ignatius Lakra SJ, Fr. Sanjay Kerketta SJ, and Fr. Swarn Tigga SJ. Each of them contributed unique gifts and a strong sense of mission to their leadership. Their guidance, trust, and camaraderie were instrumental in shaping my experience and enhancing the spirit of collaboration and leadership at Prabhat Tara.

Alongside our school community, we embraced challenges, celebrated important milestones, and worked together to create an environment where children are educated and shaped into responsible and compassionate individuals. Every step we took—classroom reforms, teacher training, cultural events, or spiritual activities—was aimed at nurturing both hearts and minds in the Jesuit tradition.

What I treasure most from this journey are the relationships I have built along the way. I cherish the laughter of children echoing through the

corridors, the smiles of teachers after a successful class, and the heartfelt conversations with parents. The support from the FC Sisters and the Jesuit community, and the quiet strength I find in my encounters with the Lord, have all contributed to this experience. These moments have left lasting imprints on my heart.

In addition to my time at the school, I had the opportunity to engage with the Mahila Sangh and participate in church activities, such as visiting families, joining in celebrations, and attending the Unit Masses on various occasions. These experiences deepened my connections with the community at Prabhat Tara Church. I received immense support and affection from the parishioners, particularly the mothers. I also enjoyed a friendly relationship with the Jesuits of Prabhat Tara and other community members. I felt comfortable and at ease with everyone I met.

As I finish this chapter, I hold onto countless memories, lessons, and a profound sense of peace. I am grateful to God for calling me to serve here, and the entire Prabhat Tara family for supporting me. May the light of knowledge, faith, and love shine brightly within this school's halls for generations to come.

MY JOURNEY AS A COLLABORATOR WITH THE RANCHI JESUITS

Mr. Suman Kiro

Asst. Teacher, St. Mary's High School, Samtoli

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." - Helen Keller



I am celebrating my 18th year as a collaborator with the Ranchi Jesuits at St. Mary's High School in Samtoli. As an Assistant Teacher, I have the privilege of teaching chemistry and catechism at this esteemed institution.

It brings me immense joy and satisfaction to provide quality education that positively impacts the lives of people in this community, regardless of their caste, creed, religion, or economic status. I feel fortunate to work alongside the dedicated and generous Jesuits in empowering rural tribal youth to address their challenges and develop into competent, conscious, committed, compassionate, and caring stewards of the earth.

My journey has been marked by deep personal growth, spiritual enrichment, and a profound commitment to sharing the values of the gospel. From the beginning, I was drawn to the Jesuits' dedication to education and social justice and

their unique approach to seeking and finding God in all things. The Jesuit principles of *Magis*, *Cura Personalis*, and *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* have become my guiding stars throughout my journey.

I am a valuable asset to the institution, as my skills and talents are effectively utilized. I am often entrusted with the responsibility of managing the school in the absence of the Jesuit staff. Additionally, I have many opportunities to update and enhance my professional development. The Teacher Effectiveness and Enhancement Program (TEEP) in Patna has deepened my understanding of the legacy of Jesuit education and provided me with the skills necessary for the 21st century.

As an active member of the Christian Life Community, I have participated in formation programs in locations such as Mumbai, Goa, Kolkata, Kanyakumari, Mangaluru, Jharsuguda, Ranchi, Khunti, and Gumla, which have helped me to embrace Ignatian Spirituality. I strive to live this out as a layperson, which has positively transformed my life.



CLC Rally at St. Ignatius High School, Gumla



CLC Students with their animator at St. Ignatius High School, Gumla

Some of the challenges that I see in my journey are as follows:

1. Many parents prefer to send their talented children to English-medium schools. My challenge is to enhance the academic standards of the weaker students who attend my school, helping them reach the same level as those in English-medium schools.
2. I often attend formation programs during the most significant holidays, limiting the quality time I can spend with my family. I need to balance my responsibilities at the institution and my family life.
3. The Ignatian practice of *Examen* is not regularly implemented in my school. I am challenged to ensure that all students and staff engage in this practice.
4. I aim to assist the Jesuits in fulfilling the four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs): i) Leading everyone to God through spiritual exercises and discernment, ii) Uplifting people who are marginalized, iii) Accompanying the

youth in creating a hopeful future, and iv) Caring for the Earth, our common home.

The Ignatian call to be “men and women for others” has transformed my understanding of my teaching vocation. I see myself not merely as a helper, but as a partner in a tradition that aims to bring justice, peace, human dignity, and love into the world.



Choir singing during the Holy Mass

JOYFUL COLLABORATION WITH THE RANCHI JESUITS

Sr. Nirmala SJC

Pastoral Sister, St. Joseph's Church, Prothrapur



I have been working in the Andaman Islands, specifically in St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Prothrapur, in the Diocese of Port Blair, where the Jesuit Priests are charged with tending the Parish's flock. Working

closely with Jesuit Priests has deeply enriched my pastoral journey. These experiences have deepened my spiritual life and helped me grow in leadership, service, commitment, and fraternity. Working alongside the Jesuit Priests, I view the Church as a family united in one mission: to serve God's people. Celebrating the sacraments together, planning Parish events, and reaching out to every family provided us with opportunities to stand as brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than as separate individuals.

The sense of community I experienced was truly profound. Celebrations of the Sacraments, pastoral meetings, and even informal gatherings were characterized by mutual respect, joy, and support. These relationships reminded me that our strength in ministry comes from our communion — living and working together as one body. I have grown in humility, patience, and understanding throughout this journey. Observing the dedication and simplicity of the Priests inspired me to contribute more of myself to service. Their mentoring, prayers, and encouragement helped shape my pastoral identity. These experiences taught me that pastoral ministry is not a solitary mission; it thrives on collaboration and mutual love.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to walk this path with the Jesuit Priests, especially Fr. David Bara SJ, with whom I began my pastoral mission in

the Andaman Islands. His dedication, commitment, authenticity, availability, austerity, self-discipline, and, above all, fraternal love inspired me to work with enthusiasm and zeal for the glory of God. I consider it a tremendous blessing to have spent about nine years witnessing his exemplary life under his leadership. The journey was enriching, but it came with its own set of challenges. Adapting to various leadership styles required patience and flexibility. Additionally, balancing pastoral responsibilities with community life proved to be difficult. The demands of ministry often left little time for rest, leisure, and personal needs.

Concerns have been raised about the frequent changes and transfers of Priests in the Parish. This is a significant issue as it disrupts the smooth operation of Parish activities.

The collaboration between the Jesuit Priests and Cluny Sisters in the Andaman Islands serves as a powerful testament to the Church's mission of service, unity, and love. Our joint efforts in providing spiritual guidance showcase the richness of our diverse charisms coming together for a common purpose. By working hand in hand, we strengthen the faith of our parishioners and demonstrate to the world the beauty of a shared vocation rooted in Christ. As we look to the future, may our fraternal unity continue to inspire dedicated service and foster a spirit of communion within the Church.



Marian Procession at Parish



Section - H

FORMATIVE FAITH JOURNEY



ARTISTIC SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE: FAITH EXPRESSION



Sch. Nitesh Rohit Minj SJ

Student of Philosophy, DNC, Pune

My Journey



Art is a profound and personal journey, not merely a skill but a spiritual exercise that deepens one's connection to faith and creation. My formative experience with art began as a curiosity in school and later

flourished during my novitiate days, evolving into a meaningful expression of gratitude and devotion. Each stroke of colour, every moment spent refining a piece, became an act of worship—a silent hymn to God's magnificent creation.

Supported by fathers and brothers, I learned that art is never an isolated endeavour. Instead, it is a collaborative pursuit that mirrors the beauty of sacrifice, unity, and shared vision. Their guidance nurtured my confidence, transforming art into an integral part of my journey. As I explored different techniques, I realized that perseverance and faith unlock hidden talents, pushing me beyond my comfort zones.

Art, much like academia, requires discipline. While my studies in Computer Science trained me in logic and problem-solving, art demanded patience, precision, and a keen understanding of colours, proportions, and architectural foundations. Every piece I created carried lessons in balance—balancing spiritual, intellectual, psychological, and physical aspects of life.

One of the most valuable lessons I encountered came from a mathematics professor who advised, "Brother, there are multitalented people on this journey, but sometimes they exhaust themselves and lose sight of their core strength. Due to this,

they fail to master a particular skill." His words reminded me that while exploring multiple passions is enriching, true mastery requires focused dedication and commitment.

Under the mentorship of Fr. Wendal, I discovered that art is not only a medium of self-expression but a form of divine praise. Each painting became a reflection of faith—a testament to the intricacies of creation and the silent stories held within every hue and stroke. Through art, I have come to embrace the coexistence of opposites: the blending of colours, the contrast between light and darkness, and the delicate balance between individuality and unity.

Art is also an offering—a way to bring people together in service of a greater purpose. One of





my most cherished experiences was painting for Fr. Kondrad's vision, where tribal children stood alongside Jesus, radiating the message that every child is seen, valued, and embraced by God's love. This artwork became a symbol of our collective dedication, a visual pilgrimage honouring hope and faith.

An Act of Imagination

Art is more than a pursuit of aesthetics—it is a sacred act of reflection, prayer, and divine connection. It serves as a bridge between the seen and the unseen, allowing us to appreciate the magnificence of creation in its raw and beautiful form. Through each stroke, colour, and composition, we celebrate faith, gratitude, and the spiritual resonance within artistry.

This journey has reinforced that every artist and every piece of art holds intrinsic value. Just as colours blend to create new life, we, too, merge our strengths, lessons, and sacrifices to contribute to something greater. Art is an open invitation to

observe, create, and rejoice in the splendour of God's hand at work.

Invitation

I invite all those drawn to art and faith to join me on this path. Let us journey beyond the canvas and see art not as an individual pursuit but as a communal act of devotion, collaboration, and reverence. Whether experienced or new to creative expression, all are welcome to celebrate the divine gift of artistic vision.

Contribution

Your presence, insights, and shared creations are priceless. Every suggestion, reflection, and piece of art strengthens our collective experience, fostering growth and understanding. Let us embrace this sacred practice, lifting one another as pilgrims of hope in God's kingdom.

Together, we will paint a world filled with faith, beauty, and devotion. Let the colours of our journey shine in praise of the Creator.



I have a Dream, a Fantasy



Dn. Peter Paul Horo SJ

Deacon, Catholic Church Vijaygiri



The crisis of faith is a pressing reality in our society, often leading to a loss of hope. This was my experience upon arriving at Vijaygiri Parish, where faith seems to hold little importance for many. However, it is

essential not to let ourselves be overwhelmed by fear or discouragement. Amid this crisis, we, the Christians, are called to strengthen our faith and to account for the hope within us.

After eight months of serving in my diaconate ministry, I would like to highlight some key elements that have marked this journey, which I refer to as a journey of faith. Instead of providing an exhaustive list of my achievements, I would like to share what I consider the key outcomes of my experience. As a believer and minister of the Church, these insights will serve as benchmarks for me in a world often weakened by fear, indifference, and emptiness.

I consider my apostolate with the people of Vijaygiri Parish, “Little Flower,” an honour. It beautifully illustrates how challenging it can be to respond to a call to vocation, especially for ordained ministers. I had the opportunity to share my faith with people who primarily live in remote, inaccessible hills. However, with the support of the Parish Priest and Catechist, I was able to climb those hills and meet the people of God. I could only admire their unwavering faith. At times, I even wondered how faith could still flourish in those villages. It is no surprise that hills and mountains have always been chosen for theophany—from Moses to Jesus, including Elijah—there are places where God has met His people, such as in Vijaygiri. In this village,

there are only two to three houses for Catholics.

The transmission of faith has been a blessing, not only for the people living in that hilly area but also for me. By sharing our convictions and experiences, we enrich one another and grow together in faith. This sharing is essential today, as Christian life faces numerous challenges, even in the villages. Issues like health crises, poverty, political tensions, and violence in and around these communities can leave people feeling perplexed and discouraged.

Yet, despite these intense difficulties, the people of Vijaygiri remain steadfast, spreading acts of love, peace, and justice. These gestures, carried out by men and women of goodwill, reflect God's presence in the area. I am honoured to have contributed to their spiritual formation, and I am also grateful for how my faith has deepened through this experience.



A traditional welcome at the entrance



Fr. George Kerketta SJ, PDD, giving away prizes

I want to emphasize how enriching my interactions with various groups have been. Engaging with people of different ages has allowed me to experience love and maturity. Additionally, I had the opportunity to communicate with individuals of other religious faiths. This experience helped me form fraternal bonds and provided support on my faith journey. Reflecting on my eight-month

ministry in Vijaygiri Parish, I can confidently say it was a positive and stimulating experience. I have built a strong foundation of faith that has helped me discern my vocation.

My visits to different villages to preach God's word have been a central part of my ministry. Sharing the word of God not only serves as a vital expression of diaconate ministry but also helps cultivate a deep and intimate relationship with God. I strive to "believe what I read, preach what I believe, and practice what I preach." When this occurs during the celebration of the Eucharist, the divine word truly comes alive in our hearts.

It is essential to highlight the community aspect of my ministry. My experience with the people in Vijaygiri has taught me, as a deacon, the value of collaboration, active listening, and the importance of sharing ideas. This experience has also helped me appreciate the richness of community—the diversity and unity within the Church. Engaging with this communal dimension has strengthened my faith and deepened my commitment to serving both the Church and the world.



Our Partners in Mission from Belgium



Sch. Sameer Ekka SJ

Student of Theology, Gregorian University, Rome



As a novice, I had the opportunity to visit Noadih Parish in the Gumla diocese for a village experiment. I proclaimed the Word of God to the gathered assembly in the villages and shared my vocation story with

them. Once, after a prayer session in one of the villages, a man approached me politely and said, “Brother, you forgot to make the sign of the cross at the beginning. It would have been very nice if you had started with it.” I responded, “I apologize for forgetting. I will remember to do it next time. Thank you for reminding me.” That moment taught me a lifelong lesson. The village experiment allowed me to share my faith experience with others.

Today, as I reflect on the event of not making the sign of the cross, I realize what I missed. There is a profound mystery of salvation inherent in this gesture. Making the sign of the cross means invoking God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be present with us. I began to comprehend the depth of its meaning after I started studying theology. Our salvation is indeed found through the cross. The sign of the cross carries significant theological, spiritual, and liturgical implications. It declares our belief in one God in three persons. Additionally, making the sign of the cross serves as a reminder of our baptism. When I affirm my faith in God, I recall that I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—what we profess in the Apostle’s Creed.

Why am I sharing all of this with you? The reason is to illustrate my faith journey. The faith I received from my loving parents has continually evolved. It has grown continuously, seeking deeper meanings

in the Sacraments and the Church’s teachings. I don’t mean to imply that I am well-versed in explaining my faith journey or the mystery of God calling me to work with Him. I am still in the process of discovering His plans for me. I want to emphasize that personal faith experiences are crucial because they lay the foundation for establishing a personal relationship with God, as revealed in Christ. These experiences are key to understanding God’s salvific plan.

Former Superior General Peter Hans Kolvenbach SJ, in his letter to the scholastics studying theology, outlined the essential requirements for these students. He stated, “[...] Similarly, the scholastic must cultivate a faith-vision of the whole of reality, beginning with a reflection on his experience as a human being related to God, and on the divine mystery revealed in Christ and made known in Scripture and Tradition, and through the magisterium and life of the Church” (The Formation of the Jesuits during the stage of Theology, p. 102).

A personal experience of God’s providence in one’s life is unique and vital for building a relationship with Him. Faith not only helps us grasp the depth of God’s love but also enables us to comprehend the economy of salvation. Therefore, it is crucial to nourish and strengthen our faith.

I believe that the stage of studying theology is one of the best opportunities to deepen one’s faith, as this is when students engage directly with the teachings of the Church. During this formative stage, they gain a profound understanding of the Catholic faith’s journey, passed down through generations for thousands of years. Our Catholic faith is rich and deeply rooted in history.

Kolvenbach’s words also touch on the three pillars of



the Church: Scripture, Tradition, and *Magisterium*. It is during this stage that students learn how these three pillars are interconnected and serve as the sources of the Church's teachings. I recall how much Fr. Prem Xalxo SJ emphasized these pillars during my seminar with him. He always reminded us, "Never forget these three pillars of the Church; our teachings must be founded on them." While those may not be his exact words, they capture the essence of his message.

Theological study has broadened my understanding of the richness of our faith. It has allowed me to see how faith engages with different times and contexts throughout history. I want to emphasize that our faith is always evolving.

Living in a diverse international community in Rome, where Scholastics come from nearly all continents, brings me immense joy and happiness. Here, at the Collegio Internazionale del Gesù, I feel enriched and privileged to listen to others' faith journeys from various contexts and cultures. Sharing my life with them has deepened my understanding of the mystery of God's call. I have come to realize that God calls each of us in unique ways. Despite our different paths, the beautiful truth is that we share the same faith and mission, which is truly amazing.

I see faith as dynamic; it has the power to mould and transform us. Let's share our personal faith journeys and vocation stories with others—whether in class, within our communities, or through our apostolates, wherever we may be and with whomever we are working. My faith experience is not something I can keep to myself; it naturally moves from my inner world, formed by personal experiences, to the outside, where interactions with others occur. Consider what might have happened if St. Paul had not shared his experiences of encountering God and being transformed. Without his rich letters to communities like the Corinthians, Galatians, Thessalonians, and Ephesians, we would have been deprived of the wisdom he imparted.

I've come to realize that studying theology involves

more than just acquiring theoretical knowledge about Christology, the Trinity, or the history of the Church. It is about integrating one's faith with what is learned in class and connecting it to the contemporary world. This enables us to observe how God is at work in our current context. I feel privileged to share my faith experiences with many people. Through sharing and listening to others' experiences, our faith is nourished and strengthened.

My faith journey, from my novitiate to the present, has been beautiful, and my perspective on it has undergone significant changes. I now understand that the more I learn, the more I discover how much there is still to know and experience. My faith journey continues to evolve as I engage in dialogue with others, allowing me to grasp the profound mystery of the Cross through which God brings us salvation.



At the foot of the Cross in Rome



Sch. Thomas Purty SJ

Regent, Pre-Novitiate, Ahmedabad



"Thy will be done" is not merely a phrase; it has a profound meaning compressed into four words. It is a paradox—a simple sentence that carries the weight of eternity, a quiet whisper that echoes louder

than thunder. It is both a surrender and a victory, a death, and a resurrection. For the Christians, these words are not just a prayer but a lifeline, a reminder of the moment in Gethsemane when Jesus, in His humanity, bowed to the divine will, changing the course of history and the destiny of creation.

When I reflect on these words, I see them as a living force, a river that flows through the soul, carving out valleys of humility and mountains of hope. It is a force that works silently, ceaselessly, and irresistibly. It is not a passive acceptance but an active embrace—a driving energy that propels me toward a life filled with purpose and aspiration. This was the spirit that guided me as I accompanied a group of budding Pre-Novices, each one a unique thread in the tapestry of God's grand design.

Teaching English to these young men was like sowing seeds of faith. Some arrived with no knowledge of the language, while others had only fragments of understanding. The first challenge was dismantling their fears—fears of mistakes, sounding foolish, and failure.

But language, much like faith, is not built overnight. We started with the basics—verbs like "to be" and "to have," simple sentences that carried profound truths: "I am here because God called me." "I have a mission." Slowly, their confidence grew. The classroom became more than a place of grammar drills; it was a sanctuary where words like "vocation," "discernment," and "surrender" took roots in their hearts.

One student, who initially struggled to form a single sentence, later stood before his peers and declared, "God's will is my happiness." That moment was a miracle, not just of linguistic progress, but of spiritual awakening.

If teaching English was an exercise in patience, coaching basketball was a masterclass in humility. Most of them had never held a basketball



Integrated learning for the mission



United we stand

before. Dribbling resembled a chaotic dance, passes flew in unpredictable directions, and defensive manoeuvres often ended with someone accidentally slapping their own face.

Yet, in the midst of the laughter and missteps, there was growth. The same hands that fumbled the ball eventually learned to shoot with precision. The same feet that stumbled now moved with purpose. Basketball became a metaphor for their spiritual journey—every fall was a lesson, every success a testament to perseverance.

The true heartbeat of their formation was the daily rhythm of prayer, comprising Holy Mass, the Rosary, and Meditation. For many, sitting in silence was the most rigid discipline. The mind wandered, distractions crept in, and restlessness was a constant battle.

Yet, in that struggle, grace worked silently. One Pre-Novice shared, "At first, meditation felt like a waste of time. But then I realized—God speaks in the silence." Another admitted, "I used to think prayer was about asking for things. Now I understand it's about listening." Their growth mirrored the mustard seed—small beginnings leading to towering faith. In learning to quieten their minds,

they were learning to surrender their wills.

India's diversity was reflected in our community—different languages, cultures, and temperaments. Yet, unity was found not in uniformity, but in shared purpose.

Monthly picnics became moments of joy, where laughter and camaraderie dissolved differences. Evening recreations—filled with music, chess, and storytelling—revealed how God's will weaves individual threads into a single tapestry. One Pre-Novice, who once felt out of place, later said, "I thought my differences were a weakness. Now I see they are my gift to the community."

As my time with the Pre-Novices drew to a close, I realized that "Thy will be done" is not a one-time prayer but a lifelong journey. It is the student stumbling through English sentences until they speak with clarity. It is the Pre-Novice missing a basketball shot a hundred times before finally scoring. It is the restless heart learning to sit in silence, trusting that God's plan is greater.

Ultimately, their formation was not just about becoming Jesuits—it was about becoming fully alive in Christ. And as I walked with them, I too was transformed.

For when I truly pray, "Thy will be done," I do not lose myself—I find myself. I do not diminish—I become who I was meant to be. And in that surrender, I discover the most incredible freedom of all.

"Not my will, but Yours, O Lord." Amen.



Our memorable performance during Juniorate at Ahmedabad

SHAPING FAITH THROUGH PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION

Sch. Sameer Kerketta SJ

Student of Philosophy, DNC, Pune



Faith encompasses more than just a set of beliefs or rational ideas; it is cultivated through real-life experiences. Such personal encounters have profoundly shaped my faith. Studying philosophy has encouraged me to reflect more

deeply on life, truth, and the existence of God. It drives me to ask fundamental questions: What is the purpose of my life? What do I truly believe? What is the nature of truth? What do I genuinely hope for? This journey has included periods of doubt, moments of insight, and a growing trust in God's unfolding plan.

Over the past year, I had the incredible opportunity to study philosophy in Pune. It was a transformative experience for me. I met people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, each offering unique perspectives and ideas. In the classroom, I engaged with various thinkers and their philosophies. This exposure allowed me to view life and truth from many different angles, broadening and deepening my understanding of faith. Several themes resonated with me, prompting deeper reflection on my personal life.

1. The Struggle with Doubt and the Quest for Meaning

My faith was nurtured in the context of a Christian household. My grandfather served as a village catechist, and family prayer played a crucial role in our daily life. Attending Sunday Mass was expected of me, and these practices instilled in me a sense of purpose and a deep connection with the Christian community. These formative experiences laid the foundation for my Christian convictions and helped me grow in the values of Christ. However, I believe that faith is not static; it is dynamic and ever-evolving. As I gained knowledge and life experience, my perspective began to shift. I started questioning the meaning and purpose of life, and these questions, along with my inner search, continue to this day. For me, the journey of faith is not about having all the answers, but about remaining open to the questions and trusting that God is with me through them all.

2. Learning from Great Thinkers

Throughout my academic journey, I have encountered a series of philosophical thinkers whose ideas have significantly influenced my perspective on life. For example, Soren Kierkegaard highlighted the importance of making



Karam Celebration in Pune



Union of hearts and minds

a personal leap of faith. At the same time, St. Augustine taught that faith and reason can coexist harmoniously rather than being in opposition to each other. However, in today's world, we must remain vigilant against false beliefs. I have come to realize that certain misguided beliefs can lead to misinterpretations that may ultimately harm individuals and society as a whole.

3. Deepening our Faith through Mission

During my time in Pune, I had the opportunity to engage with various communities through my involvement with the Chotanagpur Catholic Association. There, I witnessed a remarkable testament to the human spirit. Tribal families, often living in modest rented homes and facing financial hardships, demonstrated a steadfast commitment to education and the upbringing of their children. Their resilience in the face of adversity, fueled by unwavering faith, not only inspired me but also deepened my sense of purpose. This experience revealed a profound truth: faith is a catalyst for dignity. It empowers individuals to rise above their circumstances and aspire to a better future.

4. Leadership Rooted in Faith and Trust

Being a Christian leader involves deeply caring for others and accompanying them through both their sorrows and joys. In our ministry, we aimed to do just that. We provided support, prayer, and guidance by visiting families in their

homes. We organized Hindi Masses, seminars, and celebrations, including Children's Day, Mother's Day, and pilgrimages. These events brought people together, offering them hope and a sense of belonging. Not only did these experiences transform their lives, but they also changed ours. Witnessing the difficult living conditions and situations faced by many profoundly moved us, prompting us to reflect on our own lives and strive for meaningful change.

5. Embracing Faith as a Journey of Hope

Life is a journey, and we are all pilgrims on this earth. We are not walking alone; we share a common destination. Faith brings us closer together and strengthens us during difficult times, offering hope when the path ahead seems uncertain. Every experience, whether joyful or painful, contributes to our growth. Even when I feel distant from God, I believe He is still with me. That belief gives me peace and the courage to carry on.

Reflecting on my life's journey, I have come to realize that faith is not a final destination, but rather a path we walk every day. It matures through our experiences, studies, personal encounters, moments of silence, and even in times of doubt. To me, faith is a precious gift. It gives my life meaning and purpose, strengthens my desire to serve others, inspires me to lead with compassion, and fills me with the hope to keep moving forward.



MY INTERIOR PILGRIMAGE AT PRERANA, BANGALORE

24 April – 23 May 2025

Sch. James Ekka SJ

Student of Theology, VJ Delhi

"Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God." – St. Ignatius of Loyola



When I joined the Retreat Director Course at Prerana, Bangalore; my main intention was to check where I stood in my spiritual life. But as the course progressed, I realised it was much deeper than I had imagined. I had

many expectations from myself—and with that came fear. Overcoming this fear was not easy. I kept praying and surrendering myself to Jesus. I reminded myself: I can do this—I am a child of Ignatius.

Before starting, I reflected on a few key questions:

- How has God been guiding me so far?
- When did He surprise me with His presence?
- How has He entered my life even when I was unaware?

I also noticed a weakness in myself—I often used a “passive voice” in life, avoiding responsibility. I made mistakes, and I accept that.

But I also discovered something beautiful: we are all in different boats, but sailing in the same direction—towards Christ. My deep desire is to love Him more deeply, follow Him more closely, and serve Him more faithfully. For this, I need to become more aware of my life—the life God has gifted me. I must look back at my experiences and recognise where I have encountered Him. I should not be guided only by emotions or feelings, but by honest and deep reflection.

One of the most powerful parts of the course was faith sharing. Listening to others and sharing my

own story helped me trust God completely. It confirmed that God has always been active in my life and brought me closer to Him.

I now understand that spirituality is not just about rituals or religious practices. It's about living like Christ—for others. It's about listening to my conscience and recognising the inner movements of the heart. It is personal—it shows in how I live, how I behave, and how I respond to God in everyday situations.

When I stay close to God, even during pain, confusion, or struggles, my faith gives me strength and meaning. My spirituality is rooted in awareness—of God's presence, my brokenness, and my identity. I've also realised that negative thinking or denial only wastes time and energy.

Ignatian Spirituality teaches me to be honest, reflective, and active—to do my best and trust God to do the rest.

During the course, I learned something very important—how deeply our feelings affect our lives. Sometimes, our feelings can be so strong that we react without thinking. But through the sessions, I learned how to identify and manage different emotions. This is a slow and ongoing process. As I become more aware of my experiences, I understand my feelings better. I now believe that healing begins with feeling. Accepting myself as I am is more important than trying to be accepted by others.

One story that deeply stayed with me was shared by one of our guides:

“Fish in the sea love to eat snails. But when they do, the snails eat their intestines from inside. The



fish die, but the snails survive. Similarly, over 85% of our sicknesses come from within. Negative thoughts can destroy us from the inside.”

This simple story had a deep impact on me. It reminded me how harmful negativity can be. Like the snail, toxic thoughts can live inside us and slowly destroy us. That’s why it’s so important to be aware of what we think and feel.

The course gave me life-giving tools. I learned the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, how to discern spirits, grow in spiritual direction, and develop skills in counselling and guiding retreats.

But more than the content, what touched me deeply was the call to complete surrender to Christ. It’s not just about reading or studying—it’s about allowing the Spiritual Exercises to touch my heart, shake me, and lead me to a real encounter with Jesus.

I learned that everything depends on how I approach it. I must enter the Spiritual Exercises with a deep desire and affection, letting my life experiences shape my reflection. It’s about connecting my life story with the text of the

Exercises—that’s where real transformation begins.

The most powerful part of the course was the Annual 8-Day Retreat Direction. It was deeply moving—both as a director guiding someone, and as a retreatant being guided. I realised how sacred it is to truly listen to someone who trusts you with their inner journey. And it’s not just about listening—it’s also about trusting them in return. That mutual trust gives meaning and safety to a spiritual journey.

I was reminded of the saying:

“Listening you forget; seeing you remember; doing you understand.”

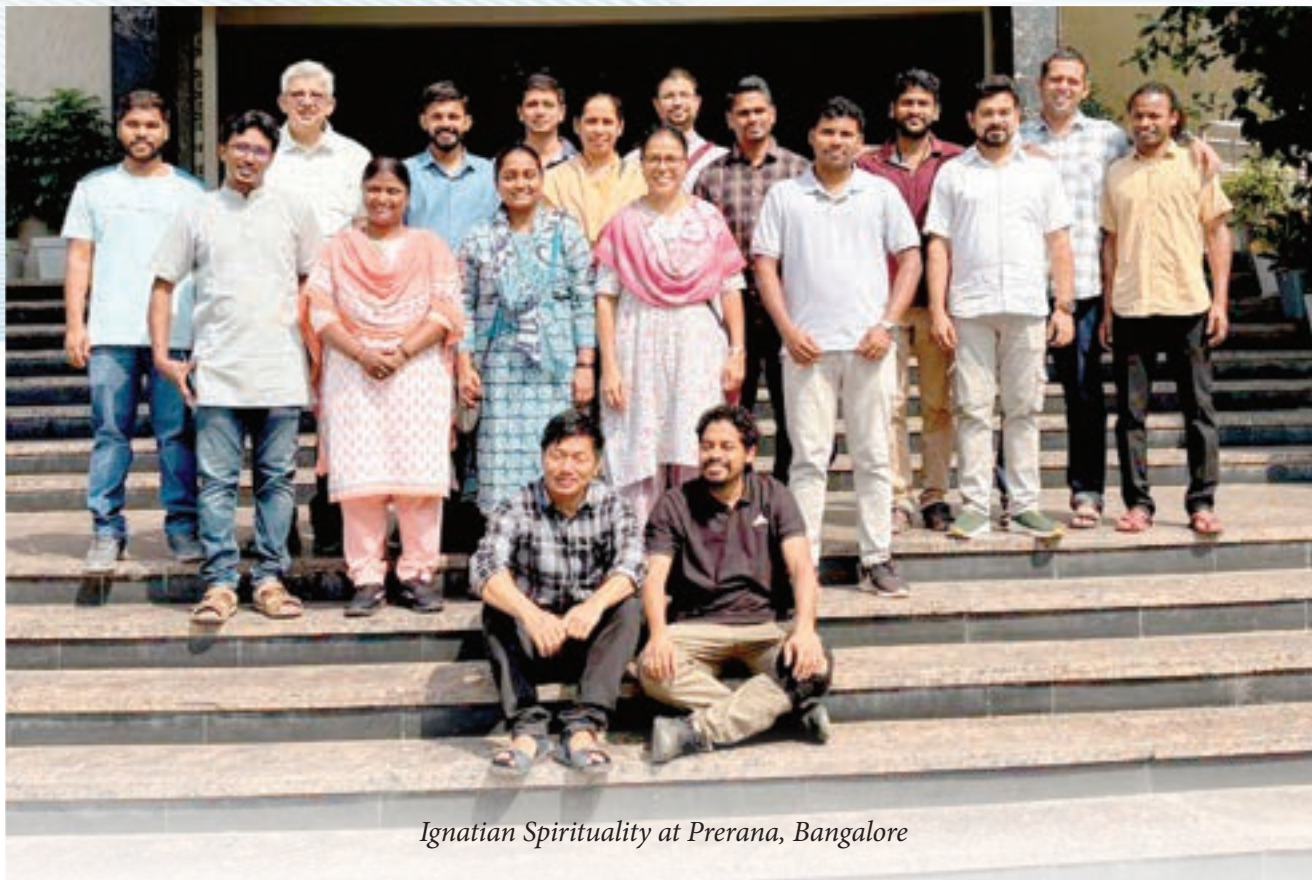
This course was all about learning by doing. We prayed, experienced, reflected, and grew—together. We learned to respond with empathy and presence.

Some key attitudes I developed while guiding were:

- being genuine
- being open



Ignatian Spirituality at Prerana, Bangalore



Ignatian Spirituality at Prerana, Bangalore

- supporting people in times of desolation

It also meant helping them go deeper into reflection—not avoiding difficult areas, but gently “care-fronting” them with love and respect.

St. Ignatius also spoke of the “silence of the eyes”—that even our eyes should communicate peace and not cause distraction. I learned how powerful non-verbal communication can be. A calm presence, a gentle look, or a simple smile—these small gestures can open hearts. We must be careful about how we use our eyes during spiritual conversations.

Another important part of the course was being supervised by a professional guide. It helped me see whether I was on the right path and how I could grow further. This mentoring helped shape me deeply.

One line from Ignatius’ Autobiography touched me deeply:

“When one can kneel before the Cross, he can kneel before anyone.”

This taught me humility. To guide others spiritually, I must first kneel before Christ and recognise Him in everyone I meet.

This course helped me live the Ignatian charism more fully and reminded me of my Jesuit vocation. I understood more deeply the meaning of our vows:

Poverty calls me to be credible

Chastity calls me to be loveable

Obedience calls me to be available

Vocation is a precious gift from Christ—and I now realise how important it is to treasure and live it fully.

As someone who has experienced this course deeply, I can say—it has been life-giving and transforming. That is why I believe every Jesuit, before entering mission after ordination, should attend this course. It will make our mission more effective, grounded, and Christ-centred.



Section -I

PROVINCE EVENTS





Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

Secretary to the Provincial, RJS



In the life of a Jesuit, the Final Vows mark a moment of profound grace, commitment, and joyful offering. After years of formation, discernment, and apostolic service, the Jesuit reaches this milestone not only as a personal culmination

but as a public witness to his complete dedication to the mission of Christ through the Society of Jesus. It is the Society's confirmation of his suitability and readiness to be fully incorporated into its body and mission.

The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus remind us that Final Vows are not merely a continuation of previous stages but represent a definitive commitment. Those who take these vows—whether as Professed Fathers, Spiritual Coadjutors, or Brothers—do so after being "well tried and tested," having demonstrated their apostolic availability, spiritual maturity, and deep love for the Society and its mission. For the Professed Fathers, this includes the unique fourth vow of obedience to the Pope regarding mission, emphasizing the Society's universal apostolic character.

In the year 2024–2025, the Ranchi Province rejoiced as ten Jesuits offered themselves in this final and solemn act of commitment:

1. Fr. Ajit Saras SJ
2. Fr. Ignatius Kujur SJ
3. Bro. Telesphore Horo SJ
4. Fr. Francis David Kullu SJ
5. Fr. Edwin Dang SJ
6. Fr. Anuranjan Hassa Purty SJ
7. Fr. Elias Surin SJ
8. Fr. Ranjit Horo SJ
9. Fr. Anupchand Kiran Minj SJ
10. Fr. Erenius Toppo SJ

Each of these Jesuits, in his way, has walked a journey of discernment, fidelity, and generous service. Their vow ceremonies—often celebrated in the context of the Eucharist with fellow Jesuits, family members, and collaborators—were moving reminders of the Lord's fidelity and the Society's continuing vitality in mission.

These Final Vows are not the end, but rather a new beginning: a deeper incorporation into the apostolic body of the Society, a stronger bond with Christ, and a renewed call to serve the Church wherever the need is greatest.

As a Province, we give thanks to God for these brothers of ours who have responded with love and courage to the call of Christ in the way of St. Ignatius. Their lives now speak more eloquently than words: "Take, Lord, and receive..."



Fr. Ajit Saras SJ & Fr. Ignatius Kujur SJ



Bro. Telesphore Horo SJ



Fr. Erenius Toppo SJ



Fr. Elias Surin SJ



Fr. Anuranjan Hassa Purty SJ



Fr. Francis David Kullu SJ & Fr. Edwin Dang SJ



Fr. Anupchand Kiran Minj SJ



Fr. Ranjit Horo SJ



PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS 2025

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

Secretary to the Provincial, RJS

A First Jesuit from Kurkuria: Fr. Ruben Xalxo SJ, Ordained to the Priesthood



The morning of 5 January 2025 will be remembered with joy and gratitude in St. Luke's Church, Kurkuria, as Ruben Xalxo SJ was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Felix Toppo DD (Emeritus) of Ranchi. The celebration

brought together numerous priests, both Jesuits and diocesan, as well as a large gathering of around 1,500 faithful who came to witness this sacred moment in the life of the Church and the Society of Jesus.

Hailing from Khatanga village in Kurkuria parish, Fr. Ruben is the first Jesuit from Kurkuria to be ordained for the Ranchi Province—a significant milestone for this small parish in the Ranchi Archdiocese, which, though modest in size, has nurtured deep roots of faith among its people.

Born to the Late Mr. Rafail Xalxo and the Late Mrs. Pushpa Lakra, Fr. Ruben's vocation journey has been one of dedication, intellectual growth, and spiritual maturity. Anchored in his inspirational scripture passage from Philippians 3:9, "...not having a righteousness of my own...but that which comes through faith in Christ," he embodies the spirit of a true disciple—humble, committed, and ready to serve.

The ordination Mass was both solemn and joyful. During the ceremony, Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of Ranchi Jesuit Society, publicly affirmed that Deacon Ruben was prepared and worthy for priestly ordination. In that profound moment, the Church gained a new priest, and

Kurkuria witnessed a new chapter in its spiritual legacy.

Fr. Ruben's ordination is not just a personal grace but also a blessing for his parish and the entire Ranchi Province. It is a reminder that God continues to raise leaders and shepherds even from the most unexpected places, igniting hope for vocations in smaller communities.

With grateful hearts, we welcome Fr. Ruben Xalxo SJ to the vineyard of the Lord and pray that his ministry bears much fruit in the years to come.

A Shepherd from the Heart of Piriaponch : Fr. Ajay Paulus Minj SJ, Ordained Priest

On 12 January 2025, a wave of joy and gratitude swept through the village of Baazartoli in Piriaponch, Simdega, as one of its own, Ajay Paulus Minj SJ, was ordained to the sacred priesthood at St. Xavier's Catholic Church in Piriaponch. This momentous occasion was graced by the presence of Bishop Vincent Barwa DD, who ordained him with solemnity and joy amidst a large gathering of faithful.

Born to Mrs. Nainu Minj and the late Daud Minj, Ajay's journey from the remote corners of Simdega Diocese to the altar of God is nothing short of inspirational. His motto, taken from John 21:19 — "Follow me" — speaks to a life of humble obedience and radical discipleship.

Piriaponch, known as one of the most remote parishes in the Simdega Diocese, has rarely witnessed such an event, making this ordination a profound sign of God's special blessing upon the people of this land. It is a powerful testament to the seeds of faith sown long ago now bearing fruit in the form of a Jesuit priest arising from its soil.



The ordination was attended by over 100 priests, both Jesuits and diocesan, who joined in the celebration with heartfelt joy. The church grounds swelled with the presence of more than 2500 faithful, who came from near and far to witness this grace-filled moment. The vibrant liturgy, the earnest prayers of the people, and the spirit of unity all came together to mark this as a truly historic and blessed day.

Fr. Ajay's ordination is not only a personal milestone but also a beacon of hope for many young people in similar remote villages. His life now stands as a living invitation to "follow Him," and to trust in the quiet work of God in even the most hidden corners of the world.

As the Ranchi Province welcomes this new labourer into the vineyard of the Lord, we give thanks for Fr. Ajay's vocation and pray for his fruitful ministry ahead.

"Precious in His Sight": Fr. Simon Horo SJ, Ordained at Khunti

On the bright morning of 14 January 2025, the air around St. Michael's Cathedral Khunti, was filled with prayerful joy and deep emotion as Simon Horo SJ was ordained a priest in the Society of Jesus. The ordination was solemnly conferred by Bishop Binay Kandulna DD, in the presence of Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of the Ranchi Jesuit Society, along with hundreds of priests and an assembly of around 2500 faithful.

A son of Mr. Joseph Horo and Mrs. Anjela Sanga, Simon hails from Bakaspur village in Mahugaon parish, in the Diocese of Khunti. His roots are grounded in simplicity and struggle. Coming from a humble and poor family, Fr. Simon's journey to the priesthood is marked by perseverance, deep faith, and an unwavering trust in God's call.



Newly ordained priests with Fr. Provincial during the Province Days 2025



Despite the hardships and challenges of life, he held firmly to the Word of God, especially the promise from Isaiah 43:4: "You are precious in my sight because I have loved you." This verse became his anchor, guiding him through trials and shaping his vocation in the Society of Jesus.

Fr. Simon's story is a shining beacon for many young men and women who hesitate to respond to God's call due to economic constraints or family burdens. His life speaks volumes: that no situation is too small or too poor for God to work wonders.

The liturgy, rich in tribal tradition and Jesuit solemnity, witnessed the faithful offering their prayers and blessings with hearts full of joy. The people of Khunti and Mahugaon stood proud as one of their own was raised to the altar of service and sacrifice.

The Ranchi Province celebrates this new priest with joy and hope, praying that Fr. Simon Horo's life and ministry may continue to touch lives, especially those who feel forgotten or overlooked. In God's eyes—and now in the eyes of the world—he is truly precious.

From Grazing Goats to Shepherding Souls: Fr. Wilson Kandulna SJ, Ordained in Balipara

In a deeply moving and joyful celebration on 19 January 2025, Wilson Kandulna SJ was ordained to the priesthood at St. John De Britto Church, Balipara, in the Tezpur Diocese. The ordination was presided over by Bishop Michael Akasius Toppo DD, in the presence of Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of the Ranchi Jesuit Province, and Fr. Thomas Barla SJ, Delegate for the Assam Mission. The

church overflowed with joy and devotion as a son of the soil was anointed to serve the people of God.

Born to Mr. Luis Kandulna and Mrs. Anita Aind, Fr. Wilson hails from New Adabarie Tea Estate, a humble village under Balipara Parish. His journey to the priesthood is woven with simplicity, wonder, and a deep love for nature and the Eucharist. As a young boy, he would graze goats and often find himself in silent conversation with the natural world. In the quietude of the tea gardens and fields, his heart was stirred by more profound questions, especially about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

This interior journey, coupled with an intense devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, matured into a calling. From an early age, it was evident to many around him that Wilson was marked for a life of service to Christ. His favourite verse from 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain," aptly captures his humble self-understanding and gratitude.

During his first homily as a priest, Fr. Wilson spoke movingly about the Eucharist, the very mystery that had drawn him to the Lord. His words echoed the longing and faith that shaped his vocation, revealing a man deeply rooted in Christ, ready to shepherd others.

Fr. Wilson Kandulna SJ is a precious gift to both the Ranchi Province and the Assam Mission. His ordination is a testimony that even in the simplicity of rural life and the labour of tea garden communities, God continues to call and anoint His

chosen ones. His life is a message to many: that holiness can blossom in the humblest of places.



"But you are... A Royal Priesthood" - 1Peter 2:9



THE FIRST REQUISITE OF A JESUIT PILGRIM

Fr. Ravi Bhushan Xess SJ

Vice Principal, St. Xavier's School, Doranda



Every year on 21 June we celebrate the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga; the patron saint of young Christian students and Jesuit Scholastics. There had been the Jesuit tradition to mark this day prominent as on this

day the novices all over the world pronounce their first perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to commit themselves into the

Society of Jesus. This year we had twelve novices who pronounced their first vows at different places. Fr. Provincial Rev. Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ had gone to Loyola Jesuit Training Centre, Aluva, Kerala. He had delegated Fr. Raymond Kerketta SJ, Socius to Provincial; to receive the vows at Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum, Ranchi. Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ and Fr. Medard Xalxo SJ represented the province at Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate, Mawshohroh, Shillong and St. Stanislaus' College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag respectively.

SL.	NAME	NOVITIATE	PLACE
01.	Sch. Aman Tete SJ	Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum	Ranchi, Jharkhand
02.	Sch. Ankit Kullu SJ	Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum	Ranchi, Jharkhand
03.	Sch. Avinash Ekka SJ	Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum	Ranchi, Jharkhand
04.	Sch. Gulshan B'aa SJ	Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum	Ranchi, Jharkhand
05.	Sch. Harshit Lakra SJ	Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum	Ranchi, Jharkhand
06.	Sch. Prabhaker Bilung SJ	Loyola Jesuit Training Centre	Aluva, Kerala
07.	Sch. Naresh Roshan Purty SJ	Loyola Jesuit Training Centre	Aluva, Kerala
08.	Br. Santosh Turkey SJ	St. Stanislaus College	Sitagarha, Hazaribag
09.	Sch. Maximus Kachhap SJ	St. Stanislaus College	Sitagarha, Hazaribag
10.	Sch. Arman Turkey SJ	Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate	Mawshohroh, Shillong
11.	Sch. Amit Dhan SJ	Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate	Mawshohroh, Shillong
12.	Sch. Rohit Abhishek Ekka SJ	Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate	Mawshohroh, Shillong

This time I had a privilege to attend the Solemn Ceremony at Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum; and I had a deep nostalgic experience. It took me 25 years back to my Novitiate when I along with my four companions namely- Fr. Sylverius Chermako SJ, Fr. Francis David Kullu SJ, Fr. Rajesh Kullu SJ and Fr. Elias Surin SJ had pronounced our first vows. Rev. Fr. Christopher Lakra SJ, who was the Provincial at that time had received our vows into the Society of Jesus.

As I mark 25 years of my Jesuit journey, I'm filled with gratitude and awe. My life has been a pilgrimage of hope, marked by moments of profound joy and inevitable sorrow. Through it all, I've been blessed with good friends and the steadfast support of the Society.

The path has not always been easy. There have been times of doubt, uncertainty and struggle. Yet, in the midst of these challenges, I've discovered that hope is not just a feeling but a choice – a



Ashirvad Novitiate, Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand

choice to trust in God's providence, to believe in the goodness of others and to persevere in the face of adversity.

As a Jesuit, I've been shaped by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, which has guided me in discerning God's will and finding meaning in my experiences. I've learned to see the divine in all things, to find God in all people and to serve with compassion and humility.

My journey has taken me through various stages of formation, from the novitiate to scholasticate and eventually to priesthood. Each step has been a significant milestone, marking growth, learning and commitment. Along the way, I've had the privilege of meeting remarkable individuals, forming lasting friendships and serving in diverse ministries.

One of the most profound lessons I've learned is the value of community. As a Jesuit, I'm part of a global network of individuals united in our pursuit of spiritual growth, intellectual inquiry and service to others. This sense of belonging has been a source of strength, comfort and inspiration.

The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience have been a cornerstone of my Jesuit life. Poverty has taught me to live simply, to detach from material possessions and to trust in God's providence. Chastity has allowed me to cultivate a deep sense

of spirituality, to dedicate myself to God and to others and to experience the beauty of celibate love. Obedience has helped me to discern God's will, to trust in the guidance of my superiors and to be open to new experiences and challenges.

As I reflect on my journey, I'm reminded of the countless experiences that have shaped me – the struggles, the triumphs and the moments of pure joy. I'm grateful for the opportunities to serve, to learn and to grow. I'm thankful for the friends and companions who have walked with me, supported me and encouraged me along the way.

"Love one another as I have loved you" – Jn 15:12" inspires me to discern God's Will. I'm eager to see where God will lead me, to discover new opportunities for ministry and to deepen my relationship with God and with others.

This milestone marks not just a personal achievement but a public declaration of my commitment to the Jesuit way of life. In the words of St. Ignatius, "Go forth and set the world on fire" ignites me to embrace all challenges irrespective of its consequences.

As I celebrate 25 years of my Jesuit journey, I'm filled with hope, gratitude and anticipation. I know that the road ahead will be filled with its own set of challenges and opportunities. But I'm ready, trusting that God's plan for me will continue to unfold in unexpected ways.



Loyola Jesuit Training Centre, Aluva, Kerala



St. Stanislaus College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag



Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate, Mawshohroh, Shillong



Section - J

PROVINCE REPORTS





STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

Secretary to the Provincial, RJS



One of the key highlights of the year for the Ranchi Province was the Central Zone Major Superiors and Consultors Workshop, held at Manresa House, Dr. Camil Bulcke Path, Ranchi, on 14 and 15 February 2025. This

significant gathering brought together Provincials and their Consultors from the Central Zone for an enriching and reflective workshop led by Fr. Vernon D'Cunha SJ, General Counsellor from Rome.

The purpose of the workshop was to promote good governance for effective and efficient leadership within the Society of Jesus. It provided a valuable platform for deep engagement and honest sharing between Consultors and their Major Superiors, who together carry the weight of leadership and decision-making in the Province.

The sessions were carefully designed to encourage meaningful dialogue. Consultors were divided into smaller groups, where they engaged in deep sharing about their experiences of consolation and desolation in their ministry. They discussed challenges, difficulties, and the personal dynamics they experience in their service to the Province. Parallel to this, the Provincials also shared their perspectives on working with Consultors, offering insights into the mutual struggles and strengths of this collaborative governance model.

A notable aspect of the workshop was its interactive

nature. In advance of the gathering, Consultors submitted queries related to governance, roles, and leadership dynamics. These were thoughtfully addressed by Fr. Vernon D'Cunha, who not only responded to specific concerns but also offered a broader contextual understanding of the Society's vision on leadership and governance. Drawing from the lived experiences shared during the sessions, Fr. Vernan highlighted key issues and provided guidance rooted in the wisdom and values of the Society of Jesus.

This workshop marked a crucial moment of introspection, learning, and unity for the Central Zone, reaffirming the importance of dialogue, trust, and shared mission in leadership. It underscored the vital role of Consultors in assisting Major Superiors and the responsibility of Provincials in aiding Fr. General in the governance of the global Society.

As the Province looks ahead, the insights and renewed commitment born from this meeting are expected to yield more transparent, participatory, and mission-driven leadership at all levels.



Rev. Fr. Vernon D'Cunha SJ, Regional Assistant with Provincials and other delegates



RRSJSA – ACTUAL PROCESS IN RANCHI PROVINCE

A JOURNEY OF RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

Secretary to the Provincial, RJS



On 29 April 2025, the Ranchi Province took a bold step towards reimagining its future through the Reimagining and Restructuring of the Society of Jesus in South Asia (RRSJSA). This journey of transformation began with a Holy Mass that

set the tone for the days ahead, calling on all present to embrace spiritual rebirth. Celebrating the theme of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, the Mass was a powerful reminder that true renewal begins in the heart.

A Call to Collaboration and Spiritual Renewal

Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial Superior, shared his vision for RRSJSA, emphasizing that this is not merely a structural change but a spiritual renewal. He called for a collaborative approach that empowers both Jesuits and lay collaborators, urging everyone to discern how their unique gifts can serve the mission. Fr. Xess reminded us that this is a ten-year process of spiritual transformation, intellectual growth, and revitalization of apostolic work.

Fr. Francis Minj SJ built on this by stressing that "Being before Doing" is the key to lasting change. Personal renewal must precede external restructuring. He emphasized that RRSJSA is a profoundly spiritual journey grounded in Ignatian discernment, a call to respond freely to God's invitation for transformation.

Facing Hopes and Fears with Faith

As the day progressed, Fr. Pradeep Kerketta SJ invited the delegates to share their hopes and fears for RRSJSA. Hopes emerged around greater collaboration, empowerment of the marginalized,

and a deeper renewal of intellectual and spiritual life. While concerns existed about preserving regional identity and potential centralization, the spirit of trust and openness prevailed. The journey, though uncertain, was embraced with faith and confidence in God's guidance.

Renewed Purpose and Trust in God's Plan

The day concluded with a recognition that RRSJSA is not just a process but a spiritual journey—one that calls for ongoing discernment, prayer, and a renewed commitment to the collective mission of the Society. The participants left with a renewed sense of purpose, grounded in their shared faith and openness to the future.

Reimagining Jesuit Life and Mission: Day Two of Reflection

The second day began with another powerful Holy Mass, during which Fr. Pradeep Kerketta SJ invited all present to reflect on their personal commitment to Christ. He challenged each Jesuit with three questions: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?" These questions set the stage for a day dedicated to deep reflection on Jesuit identity and mission.

Embracing Change with Prophetic Vision

Fr. Francis David Kullu SJ led an enlightening session on the demographic shifts that are reshaping Jesuit ministry. He called for a prophetic response, urging Jesuits to embrace intellectual rigour, collaboration, and a deep commitment to *cura personalis*. In response to both internal and external challenges, Jesuits were reminded of their mission to serve with compassion and creativity in the face of changing realities.



Addressing Internal and External Challenges

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ highlighted internal challenges within the Ranchi Province, including a lack of spiritual depth and mediocrity. These concerns called for a renewed focus on spiritual formation, community life, and accountability. At the same time, Fr. Mahendra P. Tigga SJ addressed external threats such as migration, political instability, and religious fundamentalism. He urged the community to stand in solidarity with marginalized groups and be a prophetic voice for justice.

Strategic Planning for a Renewed Mission

The day culminated in a plenary session where participants reflected on how to strengthen inter-provincial collaboration and integrate both spiritual and intellectual life into all ministries. The process of discernment provided clear insights on how to respond effectively to the needs

of today's world, emphasizing the importance of collaboration with lay partners and a focus on interdisciplinary learning.

A Path Forward: Embracing Renewal Together

The journey of reimagining and restructuring the Society of Jesus in South Asia is not merely a change in structure—it is a call to deeper conversion. It is an invitation to each Jesuit to renew their commitment to Christ and the mission of the Society. With faith, hope, and a shared vision, the Ranchi Province is poised to continue this transformative journey, responding boldly to the challenges of our time while remaining grounded in Ignatian spirituality and the greater glory of God.

"Lord, guide us in this journey of renewal. Grant us the wisdom to discern Your will, the courage to embrace change, and the strength to walk together in unity for the greater glory of Your name."



Ranchi Jesuits during RRSJSA in Manresa House, Ranchi



CENTRAL ZONE TRIENNIAL JESUIT EDUCATORS' MEET- 2024

Fr. Ireneus To'ppo SJ

Vice Principal, St. John's School, Ranchi



The Central Zone Triennial – 2024 Jesuit Educators Meet was held at the Spirituality Centre, Namkum, Ranchi, from 8 to 10 October 2024. The theme of the event was "Re-imagining and Restructuring Jesuit

Education in Today's South Asian Context - Review, Reinvent, Renew." Approximately 200 delegates from five different Central Zone Jesuit Provinces—Dumka-Raiganj, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur, Madhya Pradesh, and Ranchi—arrived in the evening and were accommodated at various Jesuit houses in Ranchi, including Manresa House, XISS, St. Xavier's College, St. John's School, Sadbhavna, and Jharna.

Transportation to Jharna, Namkum, was provided by the school buses of St. Xavier's Doranda and St. John's School for the initial visit, welcome, logistics, and meals. The program began with a brief welcome by Fr. Florence Kujur SJ, the PSSE Ranchi, at 7.00 pm in the newly constructed auditorium of the Spirituality Centre, Jharna. The Jesuit Pre-Novices greeted the delegates with a well-synchronized musical performance.

Despite heavy rain that evening, which caused some disruption and inconvenience during the meal, the event continued as planned. The CSSE, the JEA Secretary, and several prominent contributors to Triennial 2024 were invited onstage to introduce themselves and discuss their contributions to the event. By 9.00 pm, delegates returned to their accommodations for the night.

The day's program on 9 October 2024 began with the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice at 6.45 am at the newly built and magnificent chapel of Jharna, Spirituality Centre. Fr. Jerome Cutinha SJ, Provincial of Jamshedpur Province, officiated the Mass, with assistance from Fr. Ranjit Tigga SJ, Provincial of Madhya Pradesh Jesuit Province, and Fr. Ranjit Marandi SJ, from Hazaribagh Province. As the main celebrant, Fr. Jerome invited Jesuit educators to engage in critical collective thinking regarding our approach to Jesuit school education.

At the beginning of the morning session, Fr. Ranjit Marandi SJ, PSSE of Hazaribagh, welcomed the delegates to the inaugural ceremony. Miss Sweta from St. Xavier's School, Doranda, conducted the inaugural program. The formal inauguration ceremony started at 9.00 am in the auditorium with



Central Zone delegates with Fr. POSA at Jharna, Namkum



the lighting of the lamp by the guest dignitaries, including the POSA, JEA Secretary, PSSEs, and Fr. Raymond Kerketta SJ, Socius to the Provincial of Ranchi Province.

The St. John's Intercollegiate girls presented a prayer dance to honour God's presence in creation and seek divine blessings. The meeting was officially inaugurated by Fr. Raymond Kerketta SJ, Socius to Ranchi Provincial, along with POSA Fr. Stany D'Souza SJ, Fr. John Ravi SJ, the JEA Secretary, and the PSSEs from five Central Zone Provinces: Dumka, Hazaribagh, Jamshedpur, Madhya Pradesh, and Ranchi.

Fr. Raymond Kerketta SJ welcomed and honoured the distinguished guests and Provincial officials by presenting them with shawls, mementos, and saplings. In his inaugural address, Fr. Stany D'Souza SJ, POSA, focused on the role and importance of Jesuit schools as centers for learning. He emphasized the need to read the signs of the times to become more effective and relevant in today's context. He reminded the delegates to serve as models of reconciliation and justice through their educational ministry, aiming to bring about positive changes in students' lives and achieve high standards in learning outcomes.

Fr. John Kennedy SJ (MDU), recently released his edited and compiled book titled "Igniting the Future: Leadership Through Jesuit Education." The book offers a comprehensive introduction, highlighting various elements and aspects of Jesuit education, along with researched benefits and outcomes from notable Jesuit educators.

The book release began with an icebreaking session facilitated by Fr. Ignatius Lakra SJ, featuring the title song "MAGIS." The "Halo Hola" exercise served as a bonding experience for the delegates. The first session commenced at 11.00 am, focusing on the central theme of "Jesuit Education in Today's Context: Multiple Perspectives." Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur SJ, a scholar, presented insights into global, national, regional, and local realities and perspectives. He emphasized the importance of collaborative, critical, and creative innovation in Jesuit education.

The afternoon session focused on the theme: "Jesuit Education at Different Levels - Demographic Changes." Prof. Dr. M. G. Jomon from XLRI presented an overview of the modern context of education. He discussed various factors, including societal contexts, governmental contexts, educational policy levels, Jesuit education contexts, parent and family contexts, child contexts, and alumni contexts.

The third session of the afternoon was dedicated to a SWOC Analysis and the new ventures undertaken by the provinces. The PSSEs delivered a well-prepared PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the demographic setup, educational establishments, enrollment figures, relationships among school management, parents, and staff, financial challenges and obligations, fee structures, salaries, governmental policies and gaps, academics, results, initiatives, plans, programs, achievements, as well as prospects, opportunities, and challenges.

After the SWOC presentation, Province delegates had a group discussion on the relevant questions, namely;

1. How can strength be utilised to minimise weaknesses?
2. How can opportunities be utilised to counteract challenges?

Day II

Day two of the Triennial commenced with Holy Mass at 6.30 am, presided over by Fr. Stany D'Souza SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (POSA). The Mass was concelebrated by Fr. John Ravi SJ (JEA Secretary) and Fr. Florence Kujur SJ, PSSE of Ranchi. POSA spoke about God's immense generosity and how we are created in God's image and likeness, reflecting His generosity. He illustrated this by saying that when a servant asks a king for a golf club, the king provides the entire golf course instead.

Following Breakfast at 8.30 am, the session began with a tribute to Ratan Tata, who passed away at the age of 87. Ratan Tata was a remarkable



philanthropic industrialist of modern times, honoured at the initiative of JEA Secretary Fr. John Ravi SJ.

The first session focused on the theme “Going Back to Our Roots/Legacy/IPP/Global Identities.” Fr. Francis Minj SJ delivered a comprehensive presentation on the topic, highlighting key aspects such as the Ancestry of Education, Ignatian Roots, including the Constitutions and Spiritual Exercises, the history of Jesuit schools, the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599, and the characteristics of Jesuit education. He also discussed the Integral Pedagogy Paradigm and its core elements: Context, Experience, Reflection, and Action. Addressing Adivasi education, he noted, “Communities in the Central Zone governed themselves for centuries without formal or technical education. Historical circumstances inspired, and sometimes compelled, the Adivasis to adopt formal education, with Christianity playing a significant or, in some cases, a sole role. While a deep dive into the history of Adivasi education is necessary, we can conclude that the church has played a crucial part in educating illiterate Adivasis for their 'faith' and 'future.'”

The third session on Lay Collaboration featured a panel discussion held after the coffee break. This session was chaired by Mr. Raju CA Singh (SXD), Md. Ziauddin (SXH), Mr. Chandrashekar (DHN), and Mrs. Sunaina Subarna (SXD). The speakers were expressive, highlighting both the privileges and challenges of collaborating with the Jesuits. They acknowledged that working with Jesuits is fulfilling and purposeful, despite facing challenges such as peer pressure and a degree of rigidity in specific decision-making processes. They emphasized

that their primary guiding force is a strong sense of purpose, which includes *cura personalis*, the formation of men and women for others, and the moral, spiritual, and emotional development of individuals. They discussed the importance of working as a trusted team, being a catalyst for social change, implementing IPP teaching-learning modules, engaging in co-curricular activities, and fostering a congenial atmosphere.

The provinces offered deep, insightful, and concrete suggestions for actions to be undertaken in the central zone in the coming days. The resolutions, plans, and visions shared by the provinces were presented in the plenary session in the afternoon. From this discussion, the Triennial Declaration and the Common Minimum Program will be developed for action and implementation.

The JEA Secretary outlined the objectives of the Declaration, which will contribute to the Conference Triennial Declaration. The responsibility of drafting the Triennial Declaration for the Jesuit Education Ministry in the Jesuit Conference of South Asia was assigned to the PSSEs.

After the session, the JEA Secretary invited delegates to provide feedback. The feedback was positive, with much appreciation expressed for the Triennial Jesuit Educators' Meet 2024. The JEA Secretary concluded by thanking the organizers of the Triennial, especially the PSSEs under the capable leadership of Fr. Florence Kujur SJ, for their tireless efforts in successfully organizing such a significant event. The Triennial Meet concluded with the singing of the National Anthem. After receiving their certificates, the delegates departed for their Provinces and destinations after tea at 4.00 pm.



The Central Zone Triennial – 2024 Jesuit Educators Meet at Jharna, Namkum



CHAKRAVYUHA 2024 : A JOURNEY THROUGH JESUIT VISION

Fr. Ignatius Lakra SJ

Principal, St. John's English Medium School, Ranchi



The history of Chackravyuha, an Inter-School Athletics Competition, dates back to the late 1960s and has a humble origin. It began in 1969 with a clear vision and objective, initiated under the visionary

leadership of Fr. Emil Kerketta SJ, Fr. PP Van Nuffel SJ, Fr. Kenneth McNamara SJ, and Fr. Bob Slattery SJ. These pioneers aimed to nurture and develop local talent, particularly among tribal students in schools and colleges. This innovative initiative has led to numerous success stories in sports and academics, producing many athletes who have competed at national and international levels.

The chakravyuha event, organized by the Jesuits for many years, aims to foster interest in games and sports among students alongside their academic pursuits. The much-anticipated 53rd Chakravyuha took place on 14 and 15 November 2024, at the Birsa Munda Athletics Stadium in Khelgaon, Ranchi. This year's event was a collaborative effort among the Central Zone Jesuit Provinces, including Hazaribag, Jamshedpur, Dumka, MP, and Ranchi; however, Dumka and MP Provinces did not participate this time. From the Ranchi Province, there was an encouraging turnout from the districts of Gumla, Simdega, Khunti, and Lohardaga. Additionally, 55 athletes and teachers from four schools in the Assam Mission also attended. The 2024 Chakravyuha was unique, featuring participation from 35 Schools and 7 Inter Colleges. Over 575 athletes competed for 260 medals and certificates. Beyond the participants, thousands of students gathered around the stadium to witness this spectacular event. It marked the first experience of

its kind for students, providing them with a taste of a national-level competition.

In his younger days, Inigo was passionate about fencing and physical fitness as he aspired to join the military. Similarly, St. Francis Xavier enjoyed sports and gained a reputation as an athlete and high-jumper in his early years. This spirit of games and sports is integral to the teaching and learning framework of all our Jesuit institutions. The *Ratio Studiorum*, established in 1599, outlines the administration, curriculum, methods, and discipline within the Jesuit education system. This foundational Jesuit document emphasizes a holistic approach to education, focusing on the intellectual, moral, and physical development of the individual. While it does not explicitly mention sports, it advocates for recreation and physical activity as vital components of maintaining a balanced and disciplined life. Education is seen as a means for the all-round growth of a child; it emphasizes activity-based learning and student involvement. This educational philosophy has a long-standing tradition within the Jesuit education system, leading to gradual improvements in infrastructure. The system has consistently



Opening Ceremony of 53rd Chakravyuha at Khelgaon, Ranchi



prioritized the availability of fields for sports and cultural activities on school campuses.

In the document "Characteristics of Jesuit Education" (1986), the concept of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person, is emphasized. This approach highlights the holistic development of individuals, underscoring the importance of games and sports in education and character formation. It demonstrates that genuine care for a person involves recognizing their hidden talents and nurturing their overall personality. Alongside academics, games and sports serve as a significant platform for student development and growth.

The modern Olympic Games were founded by Pierre de Coubertin, a French historian and educator, in 1863. The famous motto, "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*," which translates to "Faster, Higher, Stronger," was coined by Dominican priest Henri Didon. Today, the motto has evolved to "Faster, Higher, Stronger, Together." The Chakravyuha 2024 initiative has represented a moment of restructuring and reimagining the education system, fostering close collaboration and cooperation among various Central Provinces and within the Province itself. There has been a willingness to learn and grow together for the benefit of our young minds. The cultural fiesta

concluded on an inspiring note, highlighting that fitness is not just a destination but a journey we undertake together.

Chakravyuha Awards 2024

1. Individual Championship

- 1) Best Athlete (Junior Girls): Miss Parwati Murmu, Loyola High School Chaira, Jamshedpur.
- 2) Best Athlete (Junior Boys): Master Sukesh Beck, Boys' Town Kishore Nagar, Namkum.
- 3) Best Athlete (Senior Girls): Miss Shruti Sapna Tuti, St. Xavier's School, Doranda.
- 4) Best Athlete (Senior Boys): Master Rachit Benedict Dungdung, St. Xavier's School, Doranda.

2. Group Championship

- 1) Junior Girls (Joint Winners): Janta H/S, Noadih, St. Joseph's, Mahuadanr, St. Thomas School, Gande.
- 2) Junior Boys: St. Ignatius' School, Gumla.
- 3) Senior Girls: St. Xavier's School, Doranda.
- 4) Senior Boys: St. Xavier's School, Doranda.

3. Overall Championship:

St. Xavier's School, Doranda.



'United in Sports, Together for Peace.'



LIEVENS' DEVOTION PROMOTION MISSION IN ANDAMAN

Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ

Director Satya Bharti, Ranchi



In the serene expanse of the Andaman Islands, a unique mission began—a mission inspired by faith, heritage, and hope. Fr. Justin Tirkey SJ led this endeavour, guided by Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of Ranchi, and blessed by

His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Vishuvasam Selvaraj DD. Joined by his dedicated team, Fr. Sikandar and Fr. Ruben, Fr. Justin embarked on a ten-day journey aimed at rekindling spiritual roots and celebrating the legacy of Fr. Constant Lievens, affectionately known as the "Apostle of Chotanagpur."

On the morning of 5 March 2025, the mission set out through the vibrant parishes of Prothrapur, Port Blair, and Ferrargunj. The air was filled with anticipation as faithful parishioners gathered to learn about the story of Fr. Lievens—a man whose unwavering faith and sacrifice ignited hope and social justice among the tribes of Chotanagpur over a century ago. Fr. Justin shared Fr. Lievens' inspiring journey through poignant talks, interactive sessions, and a moving documentary screening. Calendars, pamphlets, and prayer booklets were distributed, spreading Fr. Lievens' devotion like seeds across the fertile ground of faith.

The mission continued to Wimberligunj and Pani Ghat, where enthusiasm among the parishioners continued to grow. Through storytelling and visual presentations, they felt a strong connection to Fr. Lievens' legacy, which resonated deeply with their aspirations for spiritual growth. The warmth of their smiles and the sincerity of their prayers reflected the profound impact of this outreach.

As the mission entered its second phase on

9 March 2025, Fr. Justin and his companions ventured into the Middle Andamans, covering Rangat, Mayabunder, and five other parishes. These visits required extensive travel, totaling 500 kilometers, but every mile was embraced with purpose. Fr. Justin's talks were more than just lectures; they were stories of hope that rekindled pride in faith and missionary heritage. Clergy and religious congregations, including the Daughters of St. Anne and the Missionaries of Charity, united in collaboration, enriching the mission with their presence and support.

Each parish welcomed Fr. Justin with open arms and attentive hearts. At every gathering, opening prayers were followed by heartfelt greetings, a captivating talk about Fr. Lievens, and an interactive question-and-answer session. Through personal conversations, Fr. Justin connected with parishioners, catechists, and youth, nurturing their curiosity and devotion. Publicity materials, such as calendars and pamphlets, served as reminders of Fr. Lievens' enduring legacy.

As the mission progressed, it became clear that this was more than just an educational initiative; it was a spiritual renewal. Parishioners expressed



Blessing of Fr. Lievens' statue at Manresa House, Ranchi



their gratitude and newfound appreciation for Fr. Lievens' contributions and their commitment to continuing to promote his Beatification. Fr. Justin observed the vibrant faith life of the communities and admired the pastoral collaboration among clergy, religious, and laypeople, all working together to foster a sense of unity.

With every parish visited, Fr. Justin witnessed the fruits of the mission: the rekindling of hope, the strengthening of faith, and the encouragement for future outreach. As the ten days came to a close, the mission stood as a testament to the power of storytelling, shared faith, and collective effort. The faithful of the Andaman Diocese wholeheartedly embraced Fr. Lievens' legacy, carrying forward his light into their lives and communities.

After the mission, Fr. Justin shared a heartfelt message: "In this Year of Hope, let us walk as pilgrims of gratitude and light, inspired by the life of Fr. Constant Lievens. May his legacy remind us to build bridges of love, justice, and unity, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come."

Thus, in the tropical heart of the Andaman, a mission dedicated to faith and heritage came to a close, leaving behind an enduring flame of devotion and hope that would continue to illuminate countless lives.

Mission, Theme, and Purpose

The Lievens Devotion Promotion Mission focused on celebrating and promoting the spiritual legacy of Fr. Constant Lievens, known as the Apostle of Chotanagpur. The mission aimed to inspire

participants to deepen their connection with their faith and encourage them to reflect on their missionary heritage.

The key purposes of the mission were as follows:

1. To bring forth the life, mission, and contributions of Fr. Constant Lievens, reigniting devotion and understanding among the faithful.
2. To reconnect the participants with the roots of their faith, fostering a strengthened sense of spiritual formation.
3. To highlight the contributions of St. Francis Xavier, St. Thomas, and Fr. Lievens in evangelization efforts, offering a model of missionary zeal to emulate.
4. To encourage prayers for the Beatification of Fr. Lievens, fostering hope for the recognition of his sainthood.
5. To invite participants to embrace their journey as pilgrims of hope, celebrating the gift of faith and their missionary inheritance with gratitude.

Structure of the Talk Program in Parishes

The mission adopted a well-organized structure for each parish visit, ensuring a consistent and meaningful experience for all participants:

1. Opening Prayer to set the tone and invite blessings for the session.
2. Welcome and Greetings to foster a sense of hospitality and togetherness.
3. Introduction of the Speaker, giving insight into their role and connection to the mission.
4. Main Talk (45 minutes) focusing on the life, mission, and legacy of Fr. Lievens.
5. Documentary Screening (9 minutes), providing a visual portrayal of his inspiring journey.
6. Interactive Session (7 minutes) for questions and answers, enabling a participatory and reflective dialogue.



Promoting the spiritual legacy of Fr. Constant Lievens in Andamans



7. Thanksgiving, expressing gratitude for the participants and their engagement.
8. Concluding Prayer, asking for strength and guidance in their faith journey.
9. Hymn dedicated to light or Mother Mary, leaving a spiritual and uplifting impression.

Methods and Techniques Used

To ensure an engaging and impactful experience, the mission utilized various methods and techniques:

1. **Participatory Approach** : Actively involving participants through dialogue and interaction, fostering a shared sense of purpose.
2. **Storytelling** : Narrating the life and work of Fr. Lievens in a relatable and inspiring manner.
3. **PowerPoint Presentations** : Incorporating visuals to emphasize key points and maintain interest.
4. **Documentary Screening** : Offering a vivid and immersive understanding of Fr. Lievens' journey and contributions.
5. **Targeted Engagement** : Conducting individual discussions with families, youth, Parish Priests, Catholic *Sabha* Presidents, *Mahila Sangh* members, and Catechists to foster personal connections.

Publicity Materials

To support the mission's objectives and extend its message, the following publicity materials were distributed:

1. Lievens Calendar, serving as a visual reminder of Fr. Lievens' legacy.
2. Pamphlets, providing information about his life and mission.
3. Prayer for the Beatification, encouraging the faithful to join in this spiritual endeavor.
4. Pamphlet on the Lievens Museum, offering insights into the museum's purpose and exhibits.

5. PowerPoint Presentation, summarizing the mission's theme and key points.
6. Documentary on Lievens Museum, presenting a broader understanding of his contributions and influence.

This structure and approach ensured the mission's success in engaging participants, promoting devotion, and fostering a renewed sense of faith and hope.

The Lievens' Devotion Promotion Mission in the Andaman Islands has been a remarkable journey of faith, unity, and renewal. It has touched the hearts of many and bridged the present with the legacy of Fr. Constant Lievens, the Apostle of Chotanagpur. Through meaningful discussions, prayer gatherings, and interactive sessions, the mission has sparked a renewed appreciation for our missionary heritage and fostered a deeper connection to the roots of our faith.

Fr. Lievens' life and mission stand as a beacon of light, inspiring people to embrace paths of love, compassion, and justice. His commitment to evangelization and his unwavering dedication to serving the poor and marginalized remind us that faith is not just a personal treasure but a collective responsibility to uplift one another.

As this mission concludes, it leaves us with a powerful sense of hope: hope in the enduring power of faith to transform lives; hope in the unity of the Church to inspire and guide; and hope in our collective prayers for the Beatification of Fr. Lievens, a step toward recognizing his saintly contributions.

May this mission serve as a foundation for future initiatives, carrying forward the light of Fr. Lievens' legacy to the farthest corners of the world. Let us, as pilgrims of hope, continue to walk in gratitude, wisdom, and faith, kindling the flame of devotion for generations to come. May this journey inspire us to be bearers of light, united in love and purpose, as we strive to live out the call of our faith with courage and joy.



RANCHI JESUIT PROVINCE DAYS 2025 : JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Fr. Sanjay Kerketta SJ

Asst. Exam Controller, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi

"Remain in me, as I remain in you." – John 15:4



From 21 to 24 May 2025, the Jesuits of Ranchi Province gathered at Manresa House for a deeply significant and grace-filled moment in our ongoing faith journey. Under the stirring theme, "Journeying Together:

Reimagining and Restructuring our Life-Mission as Pilgrims of Hope," the Province Days became a space of spiritual renewal, prophetic introspection, and courageous dreaming for our future.

In a time marked by rapid socio-political shifts, ecological crises, and internal challenges to the Jesuit life-mission, these four days served as a *kairos*—an opportune time of the Spirit—for Ranchi Jesuits to pause, listen, discern, and chart a course forward together.

Day One: Rooted in Christ, Open to Transformation

The opening day set the tone for the days to come. Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ welcomed the participants with grace and gratitude. The Holy Mass of the Holy Spirit, presided over by Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, our Provincial, reminded us that without abiding in Christ, we can bear no fruit. Drawing from the Gospel of John (15:1–8), Fr. Provincial invited the province to embrace spiritual pruning—letting go of the unfruitful, so new life may blossom.

Fr. Sudhir Kumar Minj SJ, the convenor, recalled the spiritual heritage of Manresa House and the global call for Reimagining and Restructuring initiated by Fr. Adolfo Nicolás SJ. The day ended with joyful fellowship, foreshadowing the unity and shared commitment that would unfold in the days to come.

Day Two : A Synodal Church in Mission

The second day deepened our journey through Eucharistic celebration and collective discernment. Archbishop Vincent Aind's keynote, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission," brought the universal Church's call into our local reality. His prophetic call for inclusive leadership, justice, and participatory governance resonated strongly with our own path.

The testimonies in the session "Our Men in Mission" brought the mission alive—stories of resilience, creativity, and solidarity from the Andamans to Assam, Kerala to Jordan, and the North-East to JRS frontiers. These voices made synodality tangible: listening to the cries of the poor, walking with the displaced, and labouring with faith amid cultural and political tensions.

Day Three : From Self-Reflection to Apostolic Clarity

The third day became a spiritual mirror—where light and shadows of the Province were held in faith and humility. The Eucharist, led by the newly ordained priests, reminded us of the new hope that God continually sows through young Jesuits.

In his comprehensive Province Report (State of the Province), Fr. Provincial affirmed the vibrancy of Ranchi Province with its 389 men and diverse apostolates. Yet, he also courageously named areas of concern: lack of intellectual depth, weak community life, dependence on foreign funding, and insufficient lay involvement.

The afternoon session on "Reimagining and Restructuring" encouraged frank discussion. Internal challenges—such as comfort with the status quo, a lack of leadership, and dwindling missionary zeal—were examined alongside



external realities, including fundamentalism, displacement, youth despair, and ecological destruction.

This day marked a turning point: a shift from reflection to re-commitment.

Day Four: Discernment to Action – Planting Seeds of Renewal

The final day was marked by strategic thinking rooted in discernment. Led by Fr. Francis Minj SJ and Fr. Joseph Marianus Kujur SJ, the sessions helped us move from dreams to direction.

Key themes emerged:

- **Tribal and Minority Rights** – with a focus on advocacy, political education, and collaboration with civil society.
- **Apostolic Balance** – redistributing resources, empowering the laity, and reviewing apostolates through the lens of mission effectiveness.
- **Governance and Collaboration** – nurturing participatory leadership, investing in lay

training, and exploring inter-province synergy.

- **Cultural Rootedness** – preserving tribal identity through language, festivals, and constitutional values.

The journey concluded with a Thanksgiving Mass, during which Fr. Alexius Toppo SJ expressed heartfelt gratitude. The bonds of brotherhood were renewed over a fraternal lunch, sealing the Province Days not as a conclusion, but a beginning.

A New Chapter Begins

The 2025 Province Days were not just a once-a-year event. They were a Spirit-led encounter with our past, our present reality, and our future hope. We walked together, listened deeply, spoke truthfully, and dreamed boldly.

Let us now live what we discerned—grounded in the Gospel, enriched by our tribal identity, and led by the Spirit to new frontiers.

As **Pilgrims of Hope**, we carry forward the fire that was rekindled in those four days. The journey has just begun.



Fr. Provincial offering Holy Mass with the Rectors and Mission Delegates



ASSAM MISSION DAYS 2025

Fr. Alexius Ekka SJ

Superior, St. Xavier's College, Sonabheel (Assam)

Introduction



The Assam Mission Days 2025 were held at St. Xavier's College Sonabheel, Tezpur, from 1 to 4 July 2025. In addition to all the Jesuits of the Assam Mission, notable guests included His Lordship Michael Akasius Toppo DD, Bishop of the Tezpur Diocese,

who was the main celebrant at the Holy Mass on 2 July 2025 and delivered a message on synodality during the first session. Other attendees included Fr. Valerian Castelino SJ, Regional Superior of the Kohima Region, and Fr. Gabriel Kharluni SJ (RCF-KHM), who served as an observer.

The inaugural Eucharistic Celebration, which invoked the Holy Spirit, took place at 6.00 pm on 1 July 2025 with Fr. Ajit Kr. Xess SJ, as the main celebrant. He was joined by concelebrants Fr. Valerian Castelino SJ, Fr. Thomas Barla SJ, Mission Delegate, Fr. John B. Dungdung SJ, Vice-Superior of

Xavier Sadan Balipara, and Fr. Alexius Ekka SJ, Vice-Superior of St. Xavier's College Sonabheel, Tezpur.

During the three-day program, two primary topics were addressed: (1) Synodality and Pilgrims of Hope, and (2) Reimagining and Restructuring in the Assam Mission. Following each session, participants engaged in spiritual conversations in groups and shared reports in plenary sessions. Below, we provide an overview of the key features of the two topics that were presented and discussed on the second day of the Assam Mission Days.

Synodality and Pilgrims of Hope

Fr. Valerian Castelino SJ, Regional Superior of the Kohima Region, presented a concise paper on the theme of Assam Mission Day 2025, articulating its key points clearly. He expressed that upon first seeing the theme, he felt quite inspired. The image that came to mind when thinking about the concept of 'journeying together' was that of migratory birds flying long distances in a 'V' formation. These birds travel together and instinctively switch leadership



Fr. Provincial in Assam for Assam Mission Days 2025



roles. Similarly, we, as a church, are pilgrims of hope.

Synodality signifies collegiality; it embodies how the church should engage in today's world according to God's will, characterized by a dynamic process of listening and discerning together. The core features of synodality include active listening and compassionate, open-hearted attention to all voices, particularly those of marginalized individuals. It requires discernment—seeking together the movement of the Spirit, focusing not only on what is effective but also on the active participation of the faithful. This approach fosters dialogue and shared responsibility among all members.

Fr. Castelino likened this journey to the spiritual pilgrimage of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as described in Luke 24:13. There is a vital need for synodality today due to the church facing several crises, including clericalism, disconnection from the youth and laity, growing secularism, and the presence of intra- and inter-religious tensions. Resistance to synodality often arises from fear of change and cultural inertia; many individuals prefer old, comfortable ways and have not developed the habits of listening, which can contribute to a lack of trust between the laity and the hierarchy. This situation can lead to two extremes: authoritarianism and passivity.

The prerequisites for adequate synodal discernment include a spirit of positive indifference and a good understanding of one's internal movements, distinguishing them from superficial feelings. Additionally, it requires the ability to be

attuned to the spiritual dynamics of both oneself and the discerning group. In the context of synodality within community life, which embodies collegiality, this means engaging in regular in-depth sharing. This fosters genuine friendship in the Lord and encourages meaningful spiritual conversations in the decision-making processes.

In response to participants' questions, Fr. Castelino emphasized that synodality should extend beyond the Church; until now, it has primarily been confined to ecclesiastical contexts. It should also address issues of justice and human rights. Therefore, we must advocate not only for a synodal Church but also for a synodal world. Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* resonates with social and human rights activists, as well as environmentalists, underscoring this idea. Synodality requires a mindset focused on frontier missions, which involves setting aside narrow personal ambitions. To foster this, we need to create a culture or ethos of synodality that becomes an intrinsic value for the people. This principle should be active not only within church circles but also in the everyday lives of individuals, influencing civil society in areas such as education, healthcare, and others. Ultimately, synodality embodies hope—specifically, the hope of pilgrims, which is an empowering form of hope.

Synodality can significantly impact the Assam Mission by enhancing our ability to listen to the Adivasis, the poor, and the marginalized. It is essential to train collaborators across various fields within our educational, pastoral, and social ministries, with a focus on consultation in mission planning, execution, and evaluation. Encouraging people's participation will foster successful



His Lordship Michael Akasius Toppo DD, Bishop of the Tezpur Diocese with Ranchi Jesuits working in Assam



synodality both within the church and in civil society.

Fr. Ajit Kr. Xess SJ, Provincial, pointed out that while synodality has been a part of the church since its early days, it has unfortunately been lost over time; thus, it is crucial that we reclaim it today. He highlighted the presence of synodality in the ethos of tribal society, suggesting that we should embody it in our lives and that others can learn from the tribal community. Ultimately, we must practice synodality at the personal, community, and apostolic levels.

In his message, His Lordship Michael Akasius Toppo first congratulated the organizing team of the Assam Mission Days 2025 on their meaningful theme, "Journeying Together: Reimagining and Restructuring our Life-Mission as 'Pilgrims of Hope.'" He acknowledged that since 1998, when His Lordship Robert Kerketta served as the Bishop of Tezpur Diocese, the Ranchi Jesuits have exemplified the practice of synodality that the Church advocates today. He further stated, "You have come a long way since the time of my predecessor. You have practiced synodality by promoting literacy among the people of the tea gardens. You began to live among them and listen to their concerns, fostering dialogue for socio-religious empowerment. As a result, their Christian lives have grown significantly. My heartfelt congratulations to Fr. Thomas Barla and the organizing team for selecting such a meaningful theme for your Assam Mission Days."

Reimagining and Restructuring in Assam Mission

It was encouraging to hear Fr. Thomas Barla SJ, Delegate to the Provincial, share his observations about the practices and challenges of reimagining and restructuring within the Assam Mission during his presentation on the second day of the gathering. His insights provided an update on the status of the Assam Mission and offered incentives for future developments.

Assam Mission in 25 Years: An Introspection

Fr. Thomas emphasized the life and mission in Assam from its inception, highlighting that it is for the greater glory of God. However, he posed a critical question: Are we truly bringing about the greater glory of God with our lives? Can we accept

our roles as missionaries and transform ourselves along with those we serve? The goal is for the Ranchi Jesuits to work effectively among the Adivasis, Tribals, and marginalized communities, including the Nepalis and Bengalis, to promote their overall socio-economic emancipation. Reflecting on the 25 years of the Assam Mission, it is evident that much work remains to be done. To reimagine and restructure our mission and life, we must first engage in discernment of spirits. This calls for focusing our life-mission on the glory of God, rather than on self-glory or self-gratification. It also involves *cura personalis*, which means we must support one another's growth as effective religious individuals by providing constructive feedback, rather than undermining each other out of hostility or competition. Our companionship should be evident in our words, actions, and behavior. Too often, we present ourselves as 'secular people' rather than as consecrated religious. We need to lead exemplary and edifying lives. This requires us to reflect on our spiritual lives to cultivate inner freedom. We must develop detachment from people and material possessions that hinder our relationship with God. Simple communal activities, such as daily Eucharistic celebrations, evening prayers, and shared meals, should be prioritized to strengthen our bonds as friends in the Lord. We also need to nurture our personal and community prayer life for active engagement in our ministries. The principle of *magis* should guide all our actions. Overall, while there is a cordial relationship among community members, we must work to enhance communication and transparency.

To enhance effectiveness in the education ministry, we must adhere to the policy guidelines outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP). Additionally, we should optimize our collaboration with the Sisters by sharing our Jesuit values and placing them in significant positions, avoiding the tendency to treat them merely as teachers. Furthermore, we must establish various committees, such as the Child Protection Committee, to safeguard the well-being of our students. It's essential that we provide strong leadership rather than merely functioning as ordinary staff members within our schools. Cultural sensitivity should be a priority in our actions and interactions to foster harmonious growth for the individuals and communities we



serve. In terms of pastoral ministry, we should focus on developing Small Christian Communities, conducting regular catechism classes for the faithful, and training catechists to support their growth. Promoting daily family prayers and offering counseling, particularly to youth, is also vital. Additionally, parish councils must be strengthened with a clear socio-pastoral orientation to support our lay leaders effectively. Regarding social work and its associated commission, we must embrace a holistic vision and mission. We should impart Christ's values through various projects under Gana Chetna Samaj. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) should not only focus on collecting funds to operate their initiatives efficiently but also promote self-sufficiency and cooperation to combat social evils and injustices. This approach requires proper training and formation for our staff, including those working at the village level.

Conclusion and Takeaways

The two topics for the Assam Mission Days—"Synodality and Pilgrims of Hope" and "Reimagining and Restructuring Our Life-Mission as Pilgrims of Hope Shaped in Assam Mission"—were two sides of the same coin. While Assam

Mission was the primary focus, these topics served as strategies to ensure its enduring success. The presentation on Synodality and Pilgrims of Hope by Fr. Valerian Castelino SJ, along with the message from His Lordship Michael Akasius Toppo DD, complemented each other effectively. Fr. Valerian Castelino SJ had the unique responsibility of outlining Synodality in the Assam Mission, which was entrusted to the Ranchi Jesuits for apostolic effectiveness a quarter of a century ago. Similarly, His Lordship Michael Akasius Toppo's presence was significant as he supports the Jesuits in the Assam Mission, which falls under his diocese of Tezpur.

Regarding the consolidation and expansion of the Assam Mission, it was clarified that both aspects are necessary, given the historical context. Strengthening and consolidating the mission was essential in its early days, just as expansion is required today, based on past experiences and the current availability of personnel and resources. A key takeaway from the Assam Mission Days for all Ranchi Jesuits was the deepening understanding of what it means to be a missionary—not only in the Northeast, but also in any part of the country and even abroad, wherever the Lord's mission leads us.



Our Life - Mission in the Fertile Land of Assam



EXCELLENCE FOR INTEGRITY : A JESUIT TRIBUTE TO ACADEMIC AND MORAL LEADERSHIP

Fr. Fuldeo Soreng SJ

Principal, St. Xavier's School, Doranda



The first *Magis* Award Ceremony 2025, organized by the Ranchi Jesuit Society, was held on 6 July 2025 at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, at 10.30 am with the theme "Excellence for Integrity."

This inaugural celebration brought together the top three rank holders from each of the class 10 and 12 CBSE, ICSE, and JAC boards Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools run by the Society of Jesus in the Ranchi Province, recognizing their academic achievement and the embodiment of Jesuit values such as service, discipline, and integrity. This ceremony aimed to honour the toppers of all the schools run by the Jesuits in Ranchi Province, covering districts such as Gumla, Simdega, Khunti, Lohardaga, and Ranchi.

The visionary behind this initiative was Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ, Provincial of the Ranchi Jesuit Province, who served as the Patron of the Program. It was his deep commitment to student formation and Jesuit ideals that inspired the launch of the *Magis* Awards—a platform to encourage young learners to pursue not only academic success but also personal growth rooted in ethical and spiritual values.

The ceremony was graced by Shri Ramdas Soren, the Honourable Minister of Education, Government of Jharkhand, who served as the Chief Guest. In his address, he lauded the Jesuit institutions of the Ranchi Province for their consistent role in promoting inclusive, value-based education across Jharkhand, especially among tribal and underprivileged communities. He congratulated the awardees and urged them to continue striving



Shri Ramdas Soren, the Honourable Minister of Education, Government of Jharkhand as the Chief Guest



A Symbolic welcome by Fr. Provincial

for excellence while maintaining a balance between moral and social responsibility.

A total of 157 student participants were honoured, and over 200 awards were presented to meritorious students in various categories. The awardees were recognized for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence. Each awardee was honoured with a memento, a certificate of excellence, and a specially curated *Magis* bag as a token of appreciation for their dedication and achievements. These awards symbolized more than just academic performance—they recognized the hard work, resilience, and inner strength that define true excellence.

Guests of Honour included Mr. Ajay Linda, IPS,

Mr. Aseem Vikrant Minj, DIG Ranchi, Fr. Robert Pradeep Kujur SJ, Principal of St. Xavier's College, and Fr. Sudhir Kumar Minj SJ, Rector of the College. Their presence, alongside respected educationists Mr. Jasbir Singh Khurana and Mr. Devender Singh, as well as all the Principals of Jesuit schools in the Ranchi Province, lent prestige and significance to the event.

The program was thoughtfully and seamlessly coordinated by a dedicated team of Jesuits, including Fr. Manohar Khoya SJ (Province Coordinator for Education), Fr. Ajay Anil Tirkey SJ, Fr. Binod Toppo SJ, Fr. Ignatius Lakra SJ, Fr. Ajit Kalyan Kujur SJ, Fr. Vijay Minj SJ, Fr. Florence Kujur SJ, and Fr. Fuldeo Soreng SJ. Their collective efforts ensured that the event remained both spiritually enriching and academically inspiring.

The celebration opened with a graceful prayer dance performed by the students of St. John's Hindi Medium School, Ranchi, invoking divine blessings. This was followed by a vibrant cultural dance by students of St. Inigo High School, Saporom, celebrating the diverse traditions and spirit of Jharkhand. A captivating thematic presentation on *Magis* was delivered by students of St. Xavier's School, Doranda, which eloquently portrayed the Jesuit ethos of striving for the "greater good" in all spheres of life.



The Proud moment for the toppers with the Education Minister of Jharkhand



Appreciation of the Jesuits and their collaborators in Education Ministry by Fr. Provincial

Magis, a Latin term meaning “more” or “greater,” reflects the Ignatian call to go beyond self-interest—to aim higher, live deeper, and serve better. It is central to Jesuit education, which focuses on the holistic development of students—intellectually, morally, spiritually, and socially. The theme of this year’s event, “Excellence for Integrity,” served as a reminder that academic success should always be grounded in ethical values and a sense of responsibility towards others.

In his address, Fr. Ajit Kumar Xess SJ encouraged the students to be torchbearers of change, to utilize their knowledge to serve humanity, and to lead lives marked by compassion and justice. He emphasized that the Jesuit vision of education is not just to create successful individuals, but to form “men and women for others” who are committed to building a just and inclusive society.

The ceremony was not just a recognition of individual merit, but a celebration of the values that Jesuit institutions hold dear—integrity, discipline, compassion, inclusiveness, and a thirst for justice. The presence of government officials, Jesuit leaders, and school principals further reinforced the strong collaboration between education, leadership, and community building.

In closing, the first *Magis* Award Ceremony 2025 proved to be a significant and inspirational event. It celebrated not only academic brilliance but also the transformative power of Jesuit education. With this initiative, the Ranchi Jesuit Society has laid a strong foundation for a tradition that will continue to encourage students to strive for excellence, grounded in faith, integrity, and service. The *Magis* spirit now lives on in the hearts of the awardees and all those who witnessed this momentous occasion.



Section - K

OBITUARIES



HIS GRACE PASCAL TOPNO SJ (1932–2025)



Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ
Secretary to the Provincial, RJS

What We Learnt from Him

"I am the Good Shepherd." – John 10:11

The life of His Grace Pascal Topno SJ, Emeritus Archbishop of Bhopal, was not just long — it was luminous. Spanning 93 years, with 71 as a Jesuit, his life was a beautiful blend of deep faith, simple wisdom, and quiet strength. He left behind

more than memories; he left us values to live by.

1. To Be Humble in Greatness

From a tribal village in Keneloea to the Archbishop's seat in Bhopal — his journey was extraordinary. Yet, Archbishop Topno never let his position define him. He walked with dignity but without airs. He remained approachable, simple in dress and



His Grace Pascal Topno SJ, Emeritus Archbishop of Bhopal,



Funeral Mass of His Grace Pascal Topno SJ, Emeritus Archbishop of Bhopal

manner, and deeply connected to his roots. His greatness lay in never needing to prove it.

2. To Lead from the Heart

As Bishop of Ambikapur and later Archbishop of Bhopal, he led not through control but through care. His leadership was marked by listening more than speaking, encouraging more than commanding. He was deeply pastoral, nurturing both the spiritual and human dimensions of his flock. His door was always open — and so was his heart.

3. To Stay Rooted in Christ

Though called to serve in high ecclesial offices, he never lost his Jesuit identity. Prayer, discernment, and Eucharist remained central in his life. He once said, “The Good Shepherd doesn’t walk ahead of the people — He walks with them, following Christ.” Even as Provincial of the then-undivided Ranchi Province, he never stopped being a man of prayer and inner silence.

4. To Be Present to People

Whether in the remotest mission village or at a diocesan synod, Archbishop Topno had a calming presence. People felt heard and respected around him. He never rushed through encounters. His

ministry was about being there with people in their joys, sorrows, doubts, and decisions. That presence changed lives more than sermons ever could.

5. To Let Go with Grace

When he retired as Archbishop in 2007, he faded quietly into the background, not seeking the spotlight, but embracing solitude and prayer. In his final years, he became even more reflective, his wisdom deepened by silence. His passing on 6 April 2025 was gentle, like the life he lived. He returned to the Good Shepherd whom he had served so faithfully.

A Life That Speaks to Ours

The story of Archbishop Topno is not just a chapter in Church history — it is an invitation. An invitation to lead with love, serve with humility, and remain rooted in God. His life mirrored Christ’s — and in doing so, it points the way forward for us all.

May his memory continue to guide us. May his spirit live on in the Society and the Church he loved.

“A Good Shepherd — gentle, compassionate, and courageous.”

(Source: Funeral Message of Fr. Ajit Kr. Xess SJ, Provincial)



FR. JAMES WILLIAM DUNGUNG SJ (1936 -2024)



Fr. Jerome Xalxo SJ

Superior, Catholic Church, Noadih



Fr. James William Dungdung SJ passed away on 16 September 2024, due to multiple organ dysfunction. He had been admitted to Constant Lievens Hospital and Research Centre in Mandar, Jharkhand, on 8 August 2024, for various health issues.

Fr. Dungdung was born in Mariam Tikumtoli village, located within the boundaries of Gangutoli Parish. He was the eldest of six children in his family, and two of his sisters are Ursuline nuns. He completed his primary and middle school education at RC Middle School in Gangutoli. After that, he transferred to Samtoli for high school from St. Mary's High School. He then attended St. Xavier's College in Ranchi, where he completed his Intermediate studies and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Fr. Dungdung began his novitiate at St. Stanislaus' College in Sitagarha on 15 July 1958. He

pronounced his First Vows on 16 July 1960. From De Nobili College in Pune, he completed his studies in philosophy. For his first year of regency, he was assigned to St. Ignatius' High School in Gumla, and for his second year, he served at St. Mary's High School in Samtoli. He then moved to Kurseong, North Point, for his theology studies. Fr. Dungdung was ordained on 18 August 1970, at St. Mary's Parish Church on Purulia Road in Ranchi.

After his ordination, he served in various communities and mission centers. From 1972 to 1977, he worked as an assistant teacher at St. Mary's High School in Samtoli. In 1977, he became the Parish Priest of the Catholic Church in Bardih, where he pronounced his Final Vows on 8 September 1977. He also served as the Parish Priest in several other locations, including the Catholic Church in Jampani, Jokari, Vijaygiri, Soso, and Kachal in the Andaman Islands.

As an Assistant Parish Priest, he contributed his valuable services to parishes such as the Catholic Church in Tongo, Tumdegi, and Diglipur in the Andaman Islands. Additionally, he was a minister at St. Stanislaus' College in Sitagarha and St. Ignatius' High School in Gumla. His final community was the Catholic Church in Noadih, where he took great interest in caring for the plants and vegetables in the garden. He loved Noadih and its people deeply.

Fr. Dungdung was a man of deep faith. He loved God with his whole heart, mind, and soul. He was a devoted and regular participant in the Holy Eucharist. After Mass, he visited Mother Mary in the grotto every day. He had a compassionate heart for the poor and needy and was always available to offer his loving assistance to those in need.

Fr. Dungdung was a simple and honest man who had a special interest in animals and plants,



including honeybees, snakes, cattle, and various trees. He genuinely wished well for all people and made it a point to refrain from hurting others. When it came to controversial issues, he preferred to avoid entering into discussions.

He had a remarkable gift for learning local languages, which greatly aided his ministry among diverse communities. He was fluent in Kharia (his native language), Sadri, Mundari, and Kurukh, allowing him to communicate effectively with people in their own languages. In Noadih, he delivered homilies in Kurukh, which garnered much appreciation from the congregation.

As he grew older, he became less talkative, but he remained at peace and attentive to the presence of community members and the events unfolding around him. Slowly, his memory began to fail him, yet he remained conscious of his priestly duties. He was always ready to offer Confessions, distribute Holy Communion to the elderly and sick, and administer the Sacrament of the Sick.

The presence of many parishioners from Noadih at his burial in Ranchi was a testament to the love and respect they had for him as their pastor. He deeply loved and served them. May God grant him eternal rest!



*"If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord
Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God."*

Romans 14:8



FR. K. C. PHILIP SJ (1944 – 2024)



Fr. Camil Kerketta SJ

Superior, Jharna Spirituality Centre, Namkum



Fr. K. C. Philip quietly passed away on 26 December 2024, in the afternoon. Since it was the second day of Christmas, the house members were away; the novices had gone on a day outing to the town. At around 3.00 pm, Manju, the house caretaker, discovered K. C. Philip lying on the ground near the newly constructed hall. Bro. Isidore and I quickly rushed to the scene, only to find him completely lifeless. We immediately contacted St. Anne's Hospital in Ulhatu, and the doctor arrived to examine the body. Following her advice, we transported him to the hospital, where it was confirmed that K. C. Philip had passed away.

The burial ceremony took place on 28 December 2024. His four nephews traveled from Kerala to attend the funeral.

Fr. Philip was born on 14 March 1944, in Kadathuruthy. He was the second of nine siblings,

with seven brothers and one sister. His parents were Mr. Chandy and Mrs. Sara.

Fr. Philip completed his early schooling at Leo XIII in Alleppey. He had a strong vision of making a meaningful impact in life, driven by his desire to love and serve both God and humanity. This calling led him to join the Ranchi Province. He entered the Novitiate at Sitagarha, Hazaribagh, on 20 June 1963. After two years, he took his first vows on 20 June 1965. He then moved to St. Joseph's in Bengaluru for his Juniorate, starting on 25 June 1965.

Fr. Philip pursued his college studies at St. Joseph's College in Trichy and Loyola College in Chennai. He completed his philosophy studies at DNC in Pune and his theology at Vidya Jyoti in Delhi. After successfully completing all his formation years, he was ordained a priest on 12 May 1976, in his home parish at Kadathuruthy.

For his tertianship, he attended St. Stanislaus' College in Sitagarha from 1979 to 1980. He took his Final Vows at Sitagarha on 2 February 1982.

Fr. Philip had the opportunity to complete his regency in two locations: St. John's Ranchi and St. Xavier's Doranda, Ranchi. In the year 1979-80, he served as the Director of the Pre-Novitiate at Borea, Kanke. Due to the need for staff at the Juniorate of SSC Sitagarha, Fr. Philip was appointed as a Professor and Dean there in 1981, serving until 1989.

In 1995, he moved to DNC Pune, where he took on the responsibility of Superior of the Philosophers, a role he held until 2001. Afterward, he spent a sabbatical year in Chicago, staying at Arrupe House from 2001 to 2002. Upon returning to India in 2002, he was appointed Registrar and Spiritual



Funeral Mass of Fr. K. C. Philip SJ at Jharna-Ashirvad, Namkum

Guide for the Philosophers at Satya Nilayam, Chennai, where he served with great dedication until 2005.

Given his extensive knowledge and experience in the field of formation, he was appointed Assistency Delegate for Formation (ADF) by the Provincial of South Asia (POSA). Additionally, he took on the role

of house Superior at Jorbagh, Delhi, for six years (2005-2010). His final significant position was as Superior of the Jharna-Ashirvad Community in Namkum, which he held from 2010 to 2021.

Fr. Philip was known for his simplicity and was a man of few words, yet his gentle demeanor left a lasting impression on those around him.

*"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted."*

Matthew 5:4



SCH. ANAND MINJ SJ (2018 – 2025)



Sch. Robin Minj SJ

Regent, Minor Seminary, Ranchi



The New Year 2025 brought heartbreaking news to the Manresa House Scholastics, the entire Manresa Community, and the family members of Scholastic Anand Minj SJ. On the night of 2 January 2025, at 10.45 p.m., Sch. Minj passed away at Samford Hospital, Kokar, Ranchi, leaving us all stunned and grieving, as if struck by “a bolt from the blue.”

Sch. Minj had been battling a severe skin ailment since his Novitiate days. Initially treated at Lievens Hospital in Mandar, his condition grew critical, leading to his transfer to Samford Hospital. Tragically, the prolonged treatment had taken a toll on his vital organs, yet through it all, he bore his suffering with remarkable patience and unwavering faith.

Born on 30 June 1996, in the serene village of Katkayan near Manjhatoli in Gumla district, Sch.

Minj was the second child of Mr. Habil Minj and Mrs. Margret Minj. Raised in a nurturing Christian environment, he grew in faith and devotion under the guidance of his family and cousins. His early life was marked by active participation in village and parish religious activities, a foundation that later shaped his Jesuit vocation.

With a burning desire to serve as a priest, and with encouragement from his parish priest, Fr. John Dungdung, young Anand joined the Apostolic School in Gumla. After completing his middle school education, he moved to St. Robert's Inter College, Hazaribagh, while staying at the Jesuit candidate house, Ankur. He completed his Intermediate studies in 2017 and entered Jeevan Deep Pre-Novitiate in Namkum the same year. His journey continued at SSC Sitagarha, Hazaribagh, where he embraced the rigours of Novitiate life.

It was during the Novitiate that his health challenges became severe. Despite the intense physical suffering caused by his skin ailment, Sch. Minj never wavered in his vocation. His faith deepened, his resolve strengthened, and his patience shone as an inspiration to all around him. On 20 December 2020, in the Chapel of Manresa House, Ranchi, he professed his First Vows, a testament to his steadfast commitment to the Society of Jesus.

Even during the tumultuous days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sch. Minj embodied the spirit of selfless service. Though he himself contracted the virus, he cared for others with compassion and hope. True to his name, “Anand” (meaning joy), he brought light to the lives of the sick and elderly, always ready to lend a helping hand.

Despite his persistent health challenges, Sch. Minj



Funeral Mass of Sch. Anand Minj SJ at Manresa House, Ranchi

remained an active and enthusiastic member of the Manresa community. Whether participating in college studies or community activities, he always gave his best, leading from the front with a smile that masked his struggles. His resilience and courage were deeply inspiring.

On 2 January 2025, Sch. Anand's earthly journey came to an end as he embraced the promise of the heavenly Kingdom. Though he endured great physical suffering, he bore it with silent strength, never burdening others with his pain.

The Ranchi Province has lost a promising young Jesuit whose faith, simplicity, and dedication were truly commendable. In life, he was approachable, kind, and compassionate, a beacon of humility and generosity. His sociable and adaptable nature made him a joy to be around, and his courage in the face of adversity left an indelible mark on all who knew him.

Today, the Ranchi Jesuits mourn the untimely loss of a beloved brother. We pray for eternal rest for

Sch. Minj and solace for his grieving family. May the Lord welcome him into His eternal embrace and grant us the strength to emulate his example of faith and fortitude.





BRO. VINCENT SORENG SJ (1936 – 2025)



Jesuit for 69 years | Missionary in Africa for 54 years

Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

(Source: Father Binamungu Faustine Mukasa, SJ, Socius to the Provincial, Jesuits Eastern Africa)



“Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Master.” (Mt. 25:23)

With deep gratitude to God and with sorrowful hearts, the Ranchi Jesuit Province mourns the passing of Bro. Vincent Soreng SJ, who was called to eternal rest on 3 May 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, just weeks before his 89th birthday.

He was a Jesuit for 69 years, a missionary in Africa for 54 years, and a beloved brother whose life bore fruit across two continents. He belonged to the first batch of seven Ranchi Jesuits sent as missionaries to Africa in 1971—a bold act of faith and mission that continues to inspire generations.

A Son of Chotanagpur, Sent to the World

Born on 26 May 1936, Bro. Soreng grew up in the rich soil of faith, simplicity, and service that marks the tribal heartland of Chotanagpur. Drawn to the quiet, committed life of a Jesuit Brother, he entered the novitiate in 1955 and offered himself entirely to God’s mission.

When the call came for Jesuits from Ranchi to serve in Africa, Bro. Soreng was among the first to say “yes.” Along with six others, he embarked on a journey of faith to a land he had never seen but would soon call home.

Missionary of God’s Love in Africa

From Sudan to Zambia, Tanzania to Kenya, Bro. Soreng served with tireless devotion. He was not a man of big titles but of a big heart. His hands built, repaired, planted, typed, drove, cooked, and cared. Whether working in a seminary kitchen or tending a garden, coordinating logistics or supporting novices, he did it all with gentleness, competence, and humility.

He spoke Hindi, English, Swahili, and even some Arabic, and more importantly, he spoke the universal language of love and service. For over five decades, the African soil became his sacred ground, and its people, his family.

An Ecological Prophet Before His Time

Before “care for our common home” became a global Church theme, Bro. Soreng lived it. His love for nature—expressed in planting trees, growing vegetables, photographing birds, and tending gardens—was deeply spiritual. He lived *Laudato Si’* long before it was written.

At the Pedro Arrupe Community in Nairobi, where



he spent his final years, he became known as the “early riser,” rising before sunrise to plant and prune, transforming every blade of grass into a prayer.

A Heart That Never Returned—By Choice

When Bro. Soreng, last visited Ranchi, quietly told a few: “I’m not coming back. My life is there now—with my people.” That one sentence captures his spirit: a man who had fallen completely in love with his mission. Though his body remained far from his native land, his soul was always in communion with us—his Jesuit brothers in Ranchi, his family, and his roots.

Honoured and Remembered

Pope Francis himself wrote to Bro. Soreng, in 2019, praised his vibrant missionary life and ecological witness, and sent him a blessing and rosary.

The Vincent Soreng Eco-Award was instituted in 2024 in East Africa to honour ecological and missionary excellence.

His fellow Jesuits, both in Africa and Ranchi, have

long regarded him as a model Jesuit Brother—quiet, practical, loving, and faithful.

His Final Offering

Bro. Soreng fell ill shortly after Easter this year. Though he seemed to recover briefly, a stroke due to ventricular haemorrhage left him in a vulnerable state. He received excellent medical care and the tender presence of his community. In the early hours of 3 May 2025, the Lord gently took his soul.

Our Salute and Our Prayer

Bro. Vincent Soreng SJ is a shining missionary son of Chotanagpur, a witness to the global vocation of the Society of Jesus. His life reminds us that mission is not about distance, but about depth—not about leaving home, but about finding home wherever love leads.

We, his brothers in the Ranchi Province, salute him with reverence and pride. His memory will continue to inspire us to love with simplicity, serve with fidelity, and walk wherever God sends us.

SAINT JOHN BERCHMANS

“Our true worth does not consist in what human beings think of us. What we really are consists in what God knows us to be.”

- Saint John Berchmans



Glimpses of Province Days 2025

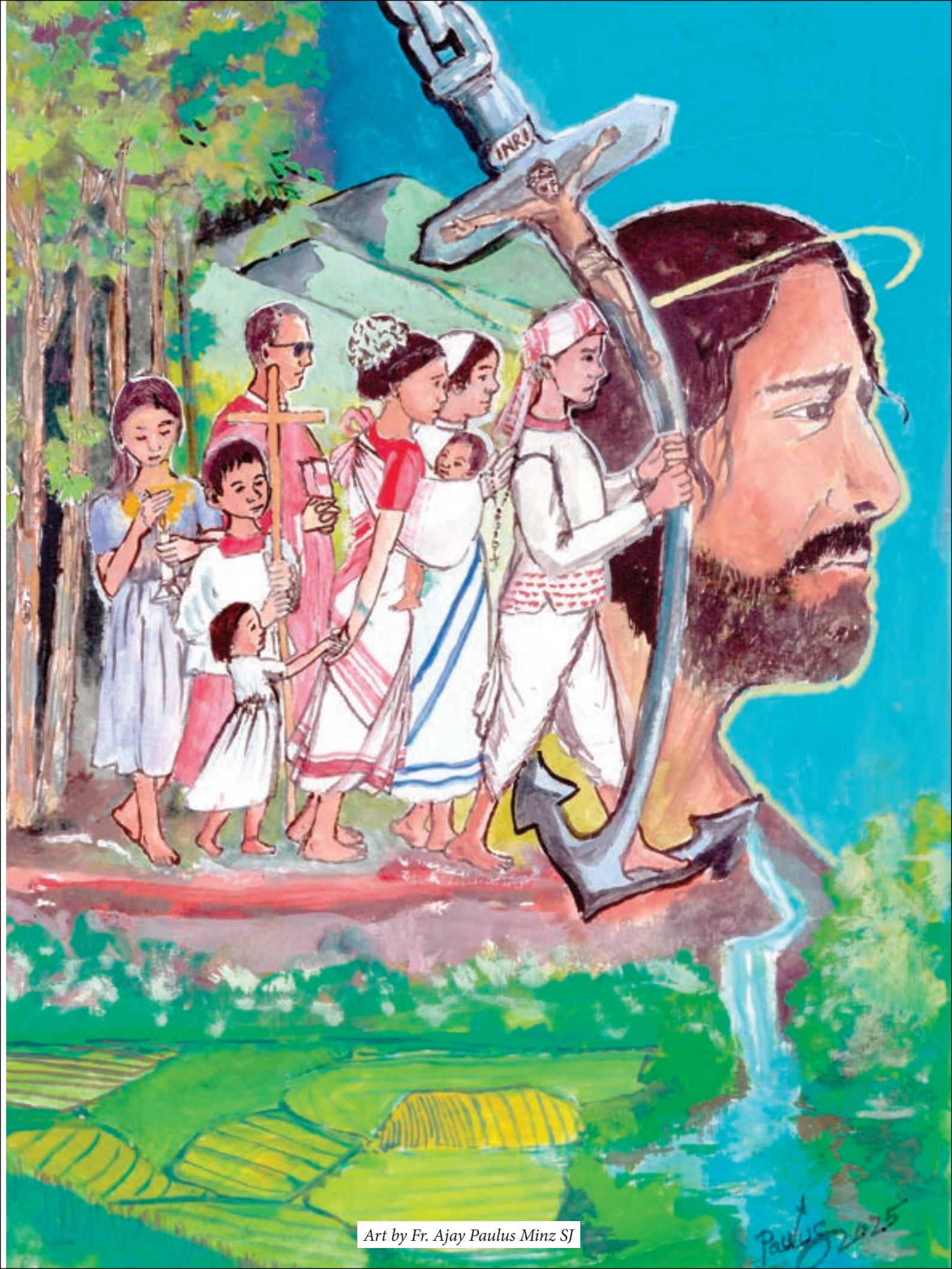




RANCHI PROVINCE DAYS

(21 to 24 May 2025)





Art by Fr. Ajay Paulus Minz SJ

Paulus 2025



St. Ignatius of Loyola Pray for us