



SDB PROVINCE OF GUWAHATI - ING

# NEWS *Line*

VOLUME 61 | ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2019



Golden Jubilee  
of Ordination



Fifty years  
of Religious Profession



Silver Jubilee  
of Ordination



Twenty five years  
of Religious Profession

# Congratulations



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Provincial House / Don Bosco Communications

### **Published by:**

Don Bosco Communications  
Provincial House, Don Bosco  
Guwahati - 781 001, Assam

## Editorial..

### Jubilee: Celebration of fidelity and fruitfulness

Dear Readers,

As you peruse this Newline, I hope you would give praise, glory, honour and thanksgiving to God Almighty for all the wonders He has worked upon the lives of the Jubilarians. Their Jubilees invite us to have a sense of wonder at the mysterious ways of God's doings in the life of the jubilarians and in our life too. Their fidelity to God and their fruitfulness of their apostolate have brought lots of spiritual, moral, social and humanitarian good to the people they served, to the congregation and the Church as a whole. The Salesian Province of Guwahati celebrated with pomp the Jubilees of our confreres who not only have been faithful but also fruitful in their religious and priestly consecrated life. They were Fr. Edward D'Souza and Fr. Chittattukalam Kuriala who celebrated *Golden Jubilee of Ordination*; Fr. Mavelly Stephen, Fr. Vattathara Thomas (VM), Fr. Kadaprayil Jose (KC), Fr. Chellanthara John (CA), Fr. Vetticathadam Cyriac (VA), Br. Indwar Aloysius (*Fifty years of Religious Profession*); Fr. Parackal Johnson, Fr. Narzary Milon and Fr. Ishorary Sebastian (*Silver Jubilee of Ordination*) and lastly the *Silver Jubilarians of Religious Profession* – Fr. Basumatary Damian, Fr. Thyрниang Albert, Fr. Momin Gabriel and Fr. Kujur Thadeus. We salute their admirable contributions through their innumerable sacrifices, selfless dedication and commitment and above all for their youthful dynamism and passion for the growth and expansion of the Salesian Charism in particular and the growth of the Church in general.

In this issue, we also render our gratitude to Rev. Fr. Chittapanatt George (CV) our elderly confrere for his life of fidelity to the Lord and to the Congregation. He lives his life of spiritual animation by way of his availability to hear confessions anytime and anywhere.

This issue of Newline also covers some important deliberations of Fr. Provincial, meetings, events that took place in the Province and outside. To name some, we have: messages of Fr. Provincial on the occasion of Provincial Community Day and Jubilee celebrations, the inauguration of Rengdim Parish, DBYA meeting in New Delhi, Rectors' meet, Youth Pastoral Service incharges' animation by Fr. Robert Simon, the meeting of South Asia Formation Commission, Gospel Sing-Out at Don Bosco College Tura, 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation of Assam Don Bosco University, appointment of Fr. Savio Silveira as Provincial of Mumbai Province, DBC Alumni organises Health Camp at Adopted Village, DBC Students donate blood and the demise of Fr. Anthony Joseph of Trichy Province, Fr Joseph Kizhakechennadu (KJ), Fr. Rosario Stroschio of Kolkata Province, Fr. Ignas Macnan and varia.

A food for thought that we can take home after celebrating these Jubilees is that of making ourselves joyfully faithful disciples in the discipleship of Christ Jesus with whom life is always jubilation. Our Pope wants us that his children become joyful witnesses of one's faith, hope and love for God the Father who jubilates when a sinner comes back to him.



**Fr. Pojit Marak, sdb**  
*Editor, Newline*



## JUBILEE OF CONFRERES



The Salesian Province of Guwahati celebrated the Jubilees of confreres on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Fr. Edward D'Souza and Fr. Chittattukalam Kuriala celebrated Golden Jubilee of Ordination; Fr. Mavelly Stephen, Fr. Vattathara Thomas (VM), Fr. Kadaprayil Jose (KC), Fr. Chellanthara John (CA), Fr. Vetticathadam Cyriac (VA), Br. Indwar Aloysius completed Fifty years of Religious Profession; Fr. Parackal Johnson, Fr. Narzary Milon and Fr. Ishorary Sebastian celebrated Silver Jubilee of Ordination and Fr. Basumatary Damian, Fr. Thyrniang Albert, Fr. Momin Gabriel and Fr. Kujur Thadeus celebrated Silver Jubilarians of Religious Profession.

### *Summary of the homily delivered by Fr. Edward D'Souza during the Jubilee Mass*

Today, I would like to invite all of us to reflect on a phrase, that I wish to present to you this evening namely **Being a Double for Christ**. Years ago, in the early 60s we often used to hear about Stunt men performing various sorts of difficult and dangerous tasks during the shooting of a film. These were people who were able to

imitate the real actors very closely and they would perform many difficult or apparently impossible stunts, in place of the real actors. They were called "The Doubles" They would fly an airplane, dive into the deep sea, engage in martial arts, walk on a tight rope and so on and so forth. They imitated the actors, perfectly and performed marvellous deeds in the place of an actor. These were those whom the film industry called the Doubles.





For me, every priest or religious is called to be a double for Jesus Christ. He or she is called to act in the name of Jesus.... And for Jesus doing exactly what Jesus would have done. Being a double for Christ, a priest or a religious is called to perform acts that would even seem impossible...while faithfully imitating the person of Christ. A priest or a religious is truly a Stunt person acting in the name of Jesus and called to perform innumerable stunts for the Lord, while proclaiming the Good news that Jesus is very much alive even today and inviting many to the feet of Jesus. A priest or a religious is truly a double for Christ enacting stunts, to be able to endear himself or herself to the youth of our times ; a priest or a religious is a double for Christ engaged in various stunts so as to go down to the level of the poor, the marginalized and raise them up as precious children to be a double for Christ by performing stunts in the name of Jesus and in the place of Jesus in order to bring love, peace, joy and happiness in this world, as Jesus did many, many years ago.

Being a double for Christ means “**Being at His Service**” day in and day out, in times of joy and in times of suffering, when things seem easy or even when things seem difficult. I remember that **46 years ago** I left Goa to come and work in N.E. India.

As a Salesian, I was even able to convince my companion, the late Fr. Albano to join me. Greatly desired to be a missionary, but there was no opportunity for that, even after my ordination, as my then provincial would not allow me to leave the Province since the Province was only recently established. But then came a moment, when in the 1970s foreign missionaries working in Assam, were given a **quit order by the central Govt.** There was at that time, an urgent need for confreres to help out in the missions of Assam. It was then that our Superiors in Rome sent a letter to all provincials in India requesting them to permit any Salesian who was interested in assisting the Missions of Assam.

When permission was granted, we paid a visit to the remains of St. Francis Xavier in Goa and fervently asked for his blessings to be zealous missionaries as he was, eager to bring souls to Christ. But as I left my beautiful land Goa, I began to ask myself: “would it be Ok. To work for just three years in the missions and then return to Goa to continue the work of the Oratory, where I had involved myself completely as a young priest, and had spent some of the best years

of my early priestly Life? However, on reflecting later, I questioned myself saying: “would that involve “Being at his service” at the Service of Christ, as Double for Christ?

Three years went by, and today it is 46 years of life in the missions and I thank the Lord for this missionary vocation which allowed me to exercise my Priestly ministry in a very tangible and fruitful way. My prayer to St. Francis Xavier bore much fruit. I’m sure that every Jubilarian present here, would have many marvellous episodes to narrate, and fascinate us all.



*Summary of Fr. Provincial’s Talk during the Jubilee of Confreres*

Today we thank God, our Blessed Mother Mary and St. John Bosco for our 15 Jubilarians who have made significant contributions in our province. We celebrate today the milestone that they have achieved

in life. And on touching a milestone, it is time to thank God and celebrate. It is time to look back, count the blessings and acknowledge how the one who called you was faithful throughout “Behold I will be with you, even to the end of days”. Such celebrations enable us to move on ahead with greater zest and vigour.

The Province and the Salesian family rejoice with our jubilarians and on behalf of all the confreres of the province and the Salesian family, I wish to offer them our hearty congratulations and pray that God fills their hearts with gratitude, joy and contentment and hope for the future. Together with them, we thank God for all the people who have brought them up to this day, their parents and family members, their friends and well wishers, vocation promoters, companions, teachers and superiors.

Looking back, we agree with St. Paul who said, though we are many, we form one body of Christ. Different parts of the body perform distinct activities bringing health, growth and wholeness to the entire body. In the same way, though each one of them performed different roles, portfolios and assignments in the province, they all have contributed very significantly for one purpose, that is, the growth of Salesian charism in the church in the northeast. Some of them, God has called to be frontline missionaries, others to be

evangelizers through quality and higher education, some as builders, not only of structures but dreams and aspirations of the young, others still are renowned formators, translators and writers of the Word of God and while still others, accompanied the poor, the neglected, the street children and the fatherless and homeless to be someone in life, to be loved and appreciated. In all these, the youth received their maximum attention and focus.

Each one of them is unique in their own way which reflects the greatness of God. Our charism and mission is so huge, dynamic and challenging and each one brings his own uniqueness and specialisation and thereby making his contribution to the church and the society so admirably huge and good.

Jubilee is the celebration of the centrality of God in our life. God's fidelity coupled with our own response and fidelity to the beautiful call, has made huge difference in making this world, especially of the young, a better place.

It is a celebration of the beauty of life spent at the service of others. When we decide to serve others, we need to be prepared for challenges and difficulties, rightly or wrongly. Sometimes there will be appreciations while at other times, they may not be forthcoming, there will be joys but there will also be misunderstandings and failures. But in all these, we are the best judges and our inner fidelity, truthfulness and serenity keep us moving and it is good that we do everything for the greater glory of God.

It is good to celebrate today the charism and the motto that kept you motivated. Like Don Bosco, we learned to say, give me nothing else but souls. The same charism has called us to give primacy to God, hear the invitation Salesians, be saints, be holy and never disappoint the dreams and aspirations of the young.

President David O McKay's words seem relevant to be quoted today. He says that "The true purpose of life is the perfection of humanity through individual effort, under





the guidance of God's inspiration. Real life is a response to the best within us. To be alive only to appetite of individualism, power and money, pleasure, pride, and not to goodness and kindness, purity and love, poetry, music, flowers, stars, God and eternal hopes, is to deprive one's self of the real joy of living”.

Many a time our jubilarians would have heard these beautiful prophetic words of the master “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favourable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn”.

The words of Pope Francis to religious at the outset of the year of Consecrated life are meaningful and relevant to you. “I am counting on you ‘to wake up the world’ and to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth ... a religious must never abandon prophecy.”

And how are we religious to be prophetic? Pope Francis says “... with the eloquence of your lives, lives which radiate the joy and

beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full. ... by learning from Jesus the meaning and practice of love. You will be able to love because you have His own heart.”

“The consecrated life will not flourish as a result of brilliant vocation camps and programs, but only because the young people whom we meet find us attractive, and see us as men who are truly happy ... that our total self-giving in the service to the Church, to families and young people, to the elderly and the poor, brings us life-long personal fulfilment.”

Even as you celebrate your jubilee, remember, God is not finished with you yet, and He continues to count on you and need you to be the light of nations. Again, Pope Francis offers advice to us. He would like those in the Consecrated Life to be “experts in communion.” that is to move from I to we. This is the desire of a Provident God – cor unum, one heart.



## PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY DAY 2019



The Provincial Community Day was celebrated on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati. It was good to see many confreres participating in the event, which was followed by the Jubilee celebrations of our confreres. It was a meaningful celebration, which stressed our unity and brotherhood in the Province. The day started well with the parish priests taking part in the morning prayer, during which we prayed for all the communities, our collaborators, our sick confreres, for vocations and the people for whom we work, especially the young. During the morning session, we welcomed Fr Ivo Coelho and his team from the Formation department in Rome. He then animated us on the revised Manual of Rectors which is being printed now. Saying that the Rector Major will sponsor the printing cost which will be printed for every SDB confrere worldwide, he said that the purpose of

making copies available for each confrere is that the Rector can animate the community better if the individual confreres collaborate with him. He spoke about the Rector as the guardian of religious life and discipline in the community. He opined that fraternity in communities lands into problems, maybe because the faith aspect is weak. Hence, the more we strengthen the element of faith, the aspects of fraternity and discernment will be better experienced and lived. Dwelling significantly on the Educative Pastoral community (EPC), he said that if the EPC is healthy, the mission and apostolate will make greater progress and yield better results. In the afternoon session, I did a brief review and examination of the life of fraternity in the province. Projecting on the screen, the responses to the questionnaires that were given to quite many confreres of the province earlier, on certain basic questions, such as, what makes you happy in

the province earlier, on certain basic questions, such as, what makes you happy in the province, what makes you worry about the future of the province, what five urgent lines of action does the province need to take, in what creative way could we promote vocations to the congregation and to give

suggestions for the Provincial and his council to do better. The session gave me the opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who help me daily to animate and govern the province well especially the Vice Provincial, the Economer, the Council members, the Rectors and all the confreres.



### *Summary of Fr. Provincial's talk to the Confreres*

The General regulations of our Constitutions, number 42 says "Once a year let both the local and provincial communities, gathered around the rector and provincial respectively, celebrate the community feast-day as a sign of its fraternal communion and an expression of its gratitude.

I wish all of you a beautiful and fraternal celebration of our community day. Thank you for coming in large numbers to celebrate this annual event which is truly

significant as it shows our unity and our contribution to build the provincial community. It is encouraging to see the joy and happy atmosphere during the celebrations that have gone by. Today we celebrate our fraternal communion and show our feeling of gratitude to God and to one another.

I take immense pride to belong to this unique province and presently be its Provincial. Taking a cue from the first article of our constitution, I say with a



feeling of humble gratitude that our beautiful province came into existence, not merely as a human venture but by the initiative of God. It is 100 years since the valiant pioneers set foot on this culturally and spiritually rich land of ours and since then generations of Salesians have relentlessly worked and contributed to the growth of the Church and our people especially the youth who are poorer and our achievements today have been nothing short of a “miracle”.

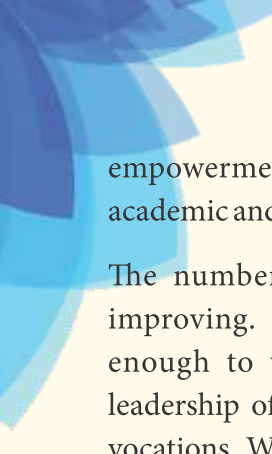
As the Provincial, today, I see beauty, unity, happiness, growth and optimism in greater measure, around me. Our community practices of piety are taking deeper roots. In most of the communities, I find confreres making effort to be seekers of God, give primacy to God, our own sanctification and fidelity and working towards becoming experts in communion and in transparency. We need to keep it up or improve it. I can confidently say that where due place is given to God, God will ensure to manoeuvre us and sail us through to our destination safe and sound in these troubled waters.

God has accompanied us thus far and he keeps telling us, “Do

not be afraid. Behold I am with you”. Recognize today Jesus accompanying us as he accompanied the two disciples to Emmaus and warmed their hearts. I feel privileged that the Centenary of the arrival of the Salesians to the Northeast will be celebrated during our tenure. The Centenary study and reflections should make us go back to hundred years and admire and imitate the missionary dynamism and dedication of the pioneers, both Indian and foreign.

I must say that we work as a team and for the poor. We have here in our midst young and old confreres who are vibrant, dynamic, focussed, missionary minded and wanting to do more for souls. The province has a very strong base as it has many confreres who are very generous in their work. It is an acknowledged fact that both the government and the general public acknowledge our contribution towards the growth in quality education and





empowerment of today's youth both in academic and vocational or skill education.

The number of vocations seems to be improving. All of you have been good enough to work very hard, under the leadership of the Vice Provincial to invite vocations. We have been insisting with the formation team to go extra mile in accompanying patiently and lovingly those who wished to be formed and prepare themselves to take our place in the near future. We feel convinced that even today our way of life is admired and is attractive to many a youth and we need to remember that vocations will come more through attraction and admiration than anything else. Promote vocations through personal contact and let our hostels become nurseries for vocations.

Our fraternal living is exemplary and good, though there is room for improvement. I request you to know your confreres. Love them as you would, your own biological brother or sister. Do not believe hearsays but verify what they say about your confreres. There may be a few who gossip, find fault, inconsiderate and lack sensitivity. I pray that our communities are places of joy, happiness and great accommodation. I pray that we kill individualism in any form.

Let the Rectors lead the community from the front - punctuality in prayer, having a depth of spirituality, with a capacity to

animate well, able to make time for confreres, boys, girls and people entrusted to their care. Most of the problems will be solved if the House councils could be held regularly, at least once a month, with an agenda well prepared and circulated in advance and all the members take an active part in it and ensure collective decision.

I am also asking you to take care of yourself and be generous with your confreres. Encourage them to rest well and enjoy good health of body and mind. Take care that they eat well. Pay lot of attention to empowering the poor. Do not get lost in the glamour of external appearance. I have seen so many smartly dressed students but when it comes to quality performance in examinations and in discipline, there is still very much to desire. Pay greater attention to the poorest of the poor.

I ask you to pray for me that I may do God's will rather than my own will. I need to discern God's will for the province. God's will often comes through collective searching, consultation and discussion.

Thank you for making this day truly fraternal. May God continue to bless our province and our many works. Remember, you are the province. May God bless you all and may our blessed mother intercede for us and may Don Bosco continue to urge us on.

## MEETING OF RECTORS AND LEADERS OF COMMUNITIES



A meeting of Rectors and Leaders of Communities was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 at Provincial House Guwahati. The meeting started with a Prayer Service animated by Fr. Maria Anthuvan, Provincial Secretary, to pray for the repose of the soul of late Fr. Jose Thiruthanathy. After the Prayer, Rev. Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Provincial, welcomed all the Rectors and Leaders of the meeting and especially Sr. Alphonsa Kurisinkal, FMA Provincial who was invited as the main speaker of the day. Sr. Alphonsa was felicitated by Fr. Joseph Teron, Vice Provincial and Fr. Maria Anthuvan, Secretary. Sr. Alphonsa spoke about the role of Rectors in animating and governing the communities. After the talk, she interacted with the participants, clarifying and answering their queries and misconceptions.

The Second session of the morning was animated by Rev. Fr. Provincial who started

with a YouTube video on the main traits of a leader. Basing on the video, Fr. Januarius said that good leaders have seven traits and these were: 1) They radiate positive energy; 2) They have a proactive attitude; 3) They delegate tasks, completely; 4) They are approachable; 5) They do what they expect of others; 6) They are accountable and 7) They are decisive. Quoting article number 176 of the Salesian Constitutions, he said that a “Rector is first in order of responsibility for it religious life...” He distributed a printed leaflet on the duties and responsibilities of a Rector – daily, monthly and yearly and requested everyone to follow it up. The members were also given sufficient time discussion and clarification.

The Third session of the day began after lunch break at 2.00 pm and this session was animated by Fr. Benny Alex, Provincial Economist. He spoke about financial discipline, irregularities in administration,



budget preparation etc. He presented the budget of the Province which was duly approved by the members. He also requested the communities to send in their contribution to implement certain designated works of the Province.

Before the closure of the meeting, Fr. Provincial asked the Rectors and communities to go through the Chapter documents in their respective communities, Copies were distributed all

members. He also gave details regarding the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Province to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> of October in Guwahati. He read out the various duties and responsibilities given to certain individuals of the Province and to other Salesian Family members. The meeting ended at 4pm after some important announcements concerning forthcoming meetings and events.

## PARISH PRIESTS' MEETING



The Meeting of Parish Priests of our Province was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati. All the parish priests except one participated in it. There was a good atmosphere for quality input and discussion during the entire meeting. Dealing on the topic of Catechesis after Evangelisation, Fr Francis Hembrom

spoke in great detail about the Small Christian Communities. Fr Denis T. Sangma spoke about how to organize the parish ministry effectively. In the afternoon session, the assembly planned the vocation strategy.

The highlight of the meeting was the animation by Fr Ivo Coelho, Fr Silvio

Roggia, Br Raymond Callo, and Fr Jose Kuttianimattathil who addressed the gathering in the evening. Fr Ivo stressed on formation which is to be lifelong. He cautioned us quoting Pope Francis, “Time is greater than space”, i.e., the initiation of processes is more important than dominating spaces. It means that the inception of right processes today will bring about healthy and lasting fruits tomorrow. Fr Silvio spoke about family apostolate in

order to get youth strongly rooted in faith. Br Mon spoke on the need to integrate Salesian methodology into our pastoral programme of the parish. Fr Jose spoke about the need to do something urgently to prevent fragility in vocations in the province. As per the statistics and data available, the ING has departures which are incredibly high and it is time that we introspect on it.

## **SOUTH ASIA FORMATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati, hosted the South Asian Formation Commission Meeting from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019, for which 21 confreres participated from all the 12 provinces of South Asia. The main animators were Fr Ivo

Coelho, General Councillor for Formation, Fr Silvio Roggia, Formation Department, Br Raymond Callo, Formation Department, and Fr Jose Kuttianimattathil, SPCSA Delegate for Formation.



## 8<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION OF ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY



The 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation of Assam Don Bosco University was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the Tapesia campus of the University. Prof. Jagdish Mukhi, the Honourable Governor of Assam, presided over the function and delivered the Presidential Address.

The Chancellor, Fr. Januarius S. Sangma, and the Vice Chancellor, Fr. (Dr) Stephen Mavely also spoke at the solemn function. A host of dignitaries from Civil, Church and Academic institutions of the region also attended the occasion.

In his presidential address, he said, “The government of India wants to establish the country as an ‘AI Garage of the world’ to

export and deploy it in the whole developing world. It will not only bring about economic and military growth, but also foster social inclusion, calling it, ‘AI for all’. AI research in India will focus on increasing access and affordability of quality healthcare; enhancing farmer’s income, farm productivity and reduction of wastage; improving access and quality of education; efficient connectivity for the burgeoning urban population; and smarter and safer modes of transportation and better traffic and congestion problems.”

This strategy of the Government aims to enhance and empower young Indians with the skills to find quality jobs, invest in



research sectors that can maximise economic growth and social impact, and scale Indian-made AI solutions that can be implemented to the rest of the world, added the Governor.

The Governor appreciated the University for creating and disseminating knowledge and skills in the frontier areas of education, developing reservoir of youth power, which effectively participate in nation building.

The Chancellor of the University, Fr. Januarius Sangma said, “Universities should contribute concretely to upholding democratic values; foster respect, fraternity, dignity of labour, non-violence, standing for truth and principles, upholding the dignity of life ... This is how we build a nation; this is how we build humanity.”

Giving a report about the University, the Vice Chancellor Fr (Dr) Stephen Mavely, said, “Assam Don Bosco University is becoming a nerve centre for the development of the North Eastern Region. The University has taken up development initiatives in 42 villages that surround the University. It is an ideal location for the packed extension and social commitment programmes of the University. It’s in our plans to ensure that every graduate of our University will have committed themselves to several months of meaningful social work during the course of their study at the University.”

“Our Internal Quality Assurance Cell is channelizing the efforts and measures of the university towards academic excellence. It has been working actively as the think tank of the university, taking on the dual roles of



initiator and monitor of all quality enhancement works of the university,” added the Vice Chancellor.

A total of 816 degrees were conferred: 212 were from Bachelor of Technology, 21 from Master of Technology, 43 from Master of Computer Application, 37 from Master of Business Administration, 67 from Master of Social Work, 21 from MSc Psychology, 14 from MSc Physics, 32 from MSc Chemistry, 15 from MSc Biotechnology, 2 from MSc Biochemistry, 21 from MSc Microbiology, 42 from MSc Zoology, 12 from MA Education, 28 from Bachelor of Computer Application, 33 from Bachelor of

Commerce and 13 from BA Philosophy. 12 doctoral degrees also conferred in various disciplines. Under the online education programme, 191 from across the globe were also conferred degrees in various disciplines. Gold Medals under various categories were awarded to 20 outstanding graduates with the highest Cumulative Grade Point Average in each program. The Chancellor’s and the Vice Chancellor’s medals, for overall outstanding performance and notable contribution to campus life were awarded to two graduating students at the Convocation.

-**Monjib Mochahari**, ADBU

## **DON BOSCO COLLEGE DIPHU FOUNDATION LAID**

The Foundation Stone for Don Bosco College Diphu, Karbi Anglong was laid by Rev. Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Salesians Provincial and was blessed by Most Reverend Paul Mattekatt, Bishop of Diphu in the presence of all Council members,

Salesians, Sisters and staff and students of the college.

This ambitious project of the province of Guwahati will give hope and future to thousands of students who want to pursue higher education from the region.

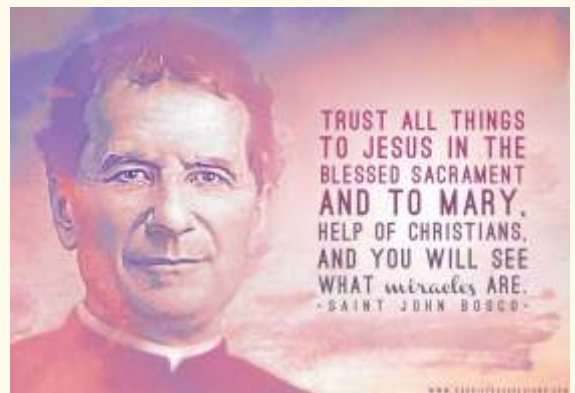


## MEETING OF HEADS OF COMMISSIONS



The Meeting of the Heads of all Commissions was held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati. The following members were present for the meeting, Rev. Fr. Januarius Sangma, Provincial, Fr. Joseph Teron, Vice Provincial, Fr. Benny Alex, Economer, Fr. Charles Sangma, Fr. Thadeus Kujur, Fr. Francis Hembrom, Fr. Cletus, Fr. PD. Johny, and Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal. It was a very fruitful meeting. All commissions except the Boarding and Hostel commission participated in it. Every commission Head presented the report of the activities of each commission. The assembly resolved that there was a need to implement reporting on a quarterly basis, and that all the reports needed to be submitted to the Vice Provincial. All commissions would henceforth draw up the Annual plan of activities and submit it to the Provincial and his Council for approval. The Heads of

Commission would meet often to review and assess the progress of activities and programmes. In the future, during the meetings, more time could be given for discussion and deliberations. During the meeting there was a proposal to release the Tiwa Bible during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, which could be published under the banner of Don Bosco Publications through the Social Communications department of the province.





## NORTH EAST REGIONAL PASTORAL CONFERENCE HELD AT DON BOSCO INSTITUTE



The annual Regional Pastoral Conference of North East India concluded with a resolution to better care for the youth of the region to make a better Church and Society on 1<sup>st</sup> September at Don Bosco Institute, Kharghuli, Guwahati.

The three-day event, which saw the participation of all the Bishops, Priests, Women Religious and around 150 youth and lay delegates from the 15 dioceses of the seven states of North East India, dwelled on the theme “Responsible Youth Leaders for a Better Church and Society” in the context of the challenges the youth face today and its implications to Society.

Msgr. Patrick Saw Zay Han, First Secretary to the Apostolic Nunciature in India, who represented the Apostolic Nuncio at the conference witnessed the three-day

proceedings appreciated the theme of the event that is in the proximate context with *Christus Vivit*, the latest Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis to the young people of the world. He also wished proper measures to implement the suggestions proposed by the conference to generate better leadership to make a better Church and Society.

The conference highlighted the challenges that are affecting the youth in North East India and listed social media addiction, crisis of faith, lack of positive relationship in the family, unemployment, early marriage as major concerns that needed immediate attention.

Archbishop Dominic Jala, SDB, the President of the North East Regional Bishops’ Council, inaugurating the

Conference called for an attitude of open-mindedness and a spirit of acceptance among those engaged in Youth ministry. “Youth ministry should not be limited to familiar space but go to popular space where young people already are”, he said.

Delivering the opening address Fr. Jerry Thomas, SDB said to make a better Church and Society we need a large group of young people who cannot be manipulated but stand firmly on the side of good.

Mr. Becare Me o Nongtdu, the North East Regional Youth President called on those engaged in youth ministry to take the youth seriously and to trust them untiringly to tap their immense creative potency.

Fr. Kuriakose Poovathumkudy, Rector, Oriens Theological College, Shillong, Mr. Joseph Lalchuana IPS (Rtd), Jeremei Krong (Miao), Vincent Tiru (Tezpur), Ferosita

Basumatary (Bongaigaon) Steffy A. Sangma (Tura), Thaimai Samson (Imphal) Fr. Jon Barman msfs, Rilinta Lyngdoh (Shillong), Ronica Devi (Guwahati), Pinky Sarkar (



DBI, Guwahati), Nguangtola Yimchunger Victoria (Kohima) Deepak Peter Gabriel IRPS, Chief Personnel Officer, NE Frontier Railway, Dorothy Jasokie (Kohima) and Albert Ekka (Guwahati) are the other speakers at the conference.

The Regional Pastoral Conference 2019 concluded with the election of new office-bearers of North East India Regional Catholic Council.

## FR. IVO COELHO AND TEAM VISITS DBI

Rev. Fr. Ivo Coelho, the General Councillor for Formation, the formation team from Rome along with South Asia Formation Commission members visited Don Bosco Institute on August 28, 2019 at 6.30 pm. The

youth of DBI welcomed all the 23 delegates with immense joy and entertained them with a variety of cultural and thematic items. Fr. Ivo in his speech said that he is always fascinated by the Northeast. Just to



look at each of your face and it is so wonderful, so different and so unique. I want to thank you for this moment of Joy and happiness. I am amazed at the amount of energy your animators can give it to you. I hope whatever you have received from this institution will stay in your heart and it will flower inside your heart. Whatever you do, remember, here you have learned to be friends and wherever you go you have to build this kind of friendship. I want to end my speech by remembering our father and founder St. John Bosco whose picture I see on the flex. You all know that he was very poor, that he lost his father when he was two

years old. But if we are here today, it is because he did something wonderful with his life. He made wonderful choices. He lived his life for somebody else. I hope you too will do something with your life, make good choices in life and to make your life something wonderful for others. Life is short, but has to be happy and it has to be beautiful. Fr. Ivo thanked DBI for the wonderful evening and everything beautiful happening out here. The evening program ended with a dance performance, "We are the World." A special dinner was served to the visitors in the Faithdome.

## ADMINISTRATOR'S MEETING





The Financial Administrator's meeting of Guwahati Province was held on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2019. The second day was animated by Fr Xavier Packiam SDB, the Provincial Economist of Chennai Province and Co-ordinator of South Asia Salesian

Economers' Network. The Auditor Mr Harish Aggarwal, CA and his team animated the members on GST and other matters related to accounting. The entire meeting was coordinated by Fr Benny P. Basil, Provincial Economist.

## YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATORS MEET

Youth Services Coordinators of Communities had a two-day animation programme from 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at the Salesian Provincial House, Guwahati. The Meeting began at 9.45 am, with a short inaugural programme in the Mario Hall, in which the resource person Rev. Fr. Robert Simon, Youth Delegate for the South Asia Region was welcomed with Phoolom Gamocha and a bouquet of flowers. After which a meaningful and prayerful song entitled "Who Am I?" was played on the screen. Fr. Perunneparambil Jose led the opening prayer, after which Fr. C.V. George

was asked to give a short reflection on the Salesian Youth Ministry. After him, Fr. Provincial, Fr. Januarius S. Sangma, strongly spoke about the need to have a house council regularly in all the houses of the province, in order to build an Educative Pastoral Community (EPC) which would bring out an Educative Pastoral Plan (EPP) which incorporates all the Four Dimensions of Education and Culture, Education to Faith, social experiences and vocational guidance.

The First thing that the resource person, Fr. Robert Simon did, was to present a book



‘Salesian Youth Ministry: Frame of Reference’, which the Salesian Congregation has drawn out for the promotion of uniformity of Salesian style of animation and accompaniment throughout the Salesian world. Then, Fr. Robert Simon clearly talked about a dire need of running our schools, parishes, technical schools, and all types of sectors in the province with a Salesian style of administration and animation. And the Salesian way of running our presences lies in adopting a Salesian methodology of planning, animating and accompanying which is summarized in the Salesian concept called ‘EPC’ – Educative Pastoral Community in which SDBs form a nucleus of animators. The outcome of the EPC is called ‘EPP’- Educative Pastoral Plan, in which all the activities and programmes of the Centre are designed in such a way as to provide a holistic formation to our youth, especially those who are poor. Thus, the EPP takes care of the four dimensions of Salesian system of education. That is, every activity is smeared with educational, cultural, social and vocational values. This is called a Salesian Youth Ministry, different and unique from any other youth ministries that exist in the Church said Fr. Simon.

On the second day, he animated on Salesian Youth Movement. He said that all the Salesian houses should encourage all the groups, clubs, and associations etc. present

in a Salesian set up and other groups and movements in the neighbourhood too, should be invited cordially to join the Salesian Youth Movement. Last one hour of the second day animation was dedicated to group discussion in which the participants were asked to suggest a way forward as to how to bring to awareness, ownership and execution of the Salesian Youth Ministry and Salesian Youth Movement in all the houses of the province with a special reference to EPC. As a response, the participants suggested that there has to be a collective effort from the part of each community and more especially it has to be powerfully endorsed by the Provincial and his council. It was decided that all the YSs who were absent for the programme would have the same programme organized in the month of August. As a resolution, each of the Youth Service Coordinators (YSC) present for the programme should instruct their community members with regard to EPC, EPP and SYM; inaugurate officially SYM in their communities as soon as possible. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Fr. Pojit Marak and a hymn to Don Bosco.

**-Fr. Pojit Marak**

## EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION MEET



Fr. Damian Basumatary and Fr. John Parankimalil (PD) attended the Salesian Regional Commission of Education and Culture Meet – South Asia on 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019, at the Don Bosco House SPCI House, New Delhi with the theme “Waking up to a New Era in Education”. Fr. Joseph Manipadam, Secretary for Education and Culture, CBCI gave an analysis of New Draft of National Education Policy 2019. Fr. Maria Charles brought out the various issues and problems connected with the policy and presented the draft to be sent to MHRD.

Fr. Albert Johnson, Secretary of Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) conducted a beautiful session on the topic, ‘A specific understanding of Education and Culture.’ He spoke about the cultural variants and the culture of young people where we Educators have an important role to play. He stressed on the need for imparting cultural values and about creating awareness about

pseudo culture spreading across our society rapidly.

A review of ‘Don Bosco Schools for Excellence’ in ten Provinces was done effectively. All the participants agreed to the Policy and some of them also suggested for the assessment to be carried out for the teachers too. They also suggested that there should be separate grade for the rural schools and the urban schools and the assessors should be from different provinces.

The Second Day began with a draft presentation of ‘Don Bosco School Policy.’ The group were of the opinion that this policy was well prepared and suggested the need for an accompanying manual to be prepared along with the School Policy. A small team constituted to compile the manual included Fr. Maria Charles, Fr. Davis Manipadam, Fr. John Parankimalil (PD) and Bro. Edwin Arokiadas. The team is expected to put together various policies and guidelines about schools together by the middle of August.

**-Nishant Kumar**



## GOSPEL SINGOUT COMPETITION AT TURA

The Salesian Province of Guwahati, Garo Hills region organised a Gospel Singout Competition at the Don Bosco College in Tura on Saturday to commemorate the arrival of the first Salesian priests of Don Bosco in North East over a century ago.



Tura Lok Sabha MP Agatha Sangma graced the occasion as the chief guest along with Bishop Andrew Marak of Tura and Rev Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Provincial Salesian Province of Guwahati as the Guests of Honour.

A colorful programme was held as part of the three-year preparation for the centenary of arrival of the Salesians of Don Bosco to the North East (1922-2022). Altogether 15 teams took part in the competition. Floral tribute was also paid to the educator friend of the young St. John Bosco on his 204<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary which happened to be on August 16.

Addressing the gathering, Agatha Sangma highlighted the importance of singing and praised her brother and Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma as a person full of passion for singing. She spoke of the contributions of

the Salesians towards education in North East. She mentioned how her father, late Purno A Sangma was educated and brought up by the Salesians of Don Bosco. She also handed over citations, certificates and prize money to the winners of the singing competition.

Bosco Mount in Rongkhon won the first prize while the second and the third prize were bagged by students of Don Bosco College Higher Secondary students and Auxilium Tura respectively.

Speaking on the occasion, the Bishop of Tura, Rt Rev Andrew R. Marak, also presented a number enthralling the audience with his singing skills.

Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Provincial in his speech, mentioned a brief history of the first



Salesian priests and brothers who came to Northeast India and also spoke briefly

about the history of the missionaries who came to preach and work in the Garo Hills region.  
- Fr. Bivan Mukhim

## JUNIOR PRIEST'S MEET

The Junior Priest's meet of the Provinces of Guwahati and Shillong was held at Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Fr James Perunneparampil of Shillong Province was the main animator. A total of 24 priests from the Provinces of Guwahati



and Shillong attended the Meeting. The highlight of the meet was their visit to Assam Don Bosco University, Tapesia and the concluding session and dinner hosted by Don Bosco Institute Guwahati on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The session at DBI was animated by Fr. P.D. Johny, the Executive Director and

Rector and supported by Dr (Fr) Shaji Joseph from Rome who happened to be in DBI during our visit. The members thanked Rev. Fr Joseph Teron Langne Teron, Vice Provincial of Guwahati Province for coordinating the meet and for making it a success.



## SCOUT MASTERS AND GUIDE CAPTAINS CAMP



A Camp for those aspiring to be Scout Masters and Guide Captains was held at Don Bosco School, Boko from 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Fr P.X. Francis, Fr Solomon Denis, Fr Joseph Paulianmung, and Mr Lazar were the main co-ordinators of the Camp. The camp was also organized as a

preparation for next National Boscoree which will be held in 2022 in Guwahati on the occasion of the centenary of the arrival of Salesians to Northeast India. The participants thanked the organizers, particularly Fr. Joy Kachappilly and the community of Boko for hosting this event.

## MULTIPURPOSE HALL AT SATGAON

The foundation stone for the multipurpose hall was laid in the premises of Mary Help of Christians Parish Satgaon on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 by Rev. Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Salesian Provincial. Present on the occasion were Fr Gabriel G





Momin, Parish Priest and Fr Francis Xavier Lakra, Principal of Don Bosco School Baithalangso. There were a host of Sisters and lay leaders who graced the special occasion. About 300 ICYM youth who were attending the summer time youth

animation programme participated in the ceremony. The youth participated devoutly in the Holy Eucharist, sang the Mass Hymns enthusiastically and also put up a well prepared cultural programme after the Mass.

## NEW PARISH AT RENGDIM

Sacred Heart Parish Shallang gave birth to a new Parish of Rengdim on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019. Archbishop Dominic Jala, Apostolic Administrator of Nongstoin Diocese inaugurated the new Parish in the presence of Rev. Fr. Januarius S Sangma, Fr. Alfred Marzo and others. The Parish is given to the care of OCD Fathers. The new Parish has a Presbytery, Church, LP Schools, UP Schools and a Dispensary.



## NEWS FROM DON BOSCO COLLEGE TURA

### 1. Health Camp by DBC Alumni

The Alumni Association of Don Bosco College, Tura on 10<sup>th</sup> September organised Medical Camp at adopted village of Matchikol on the outskirts of Tura town.

Dr Ivonne M Sangma, District Maternal Child Health Officer, West Garo Hills and an alumna of Don Bosco College spoke and explained to the people on the health camp. She stressed on the importance of regular health check up and the commitment of the alumni of Don Bosco College Tura.

Altogether 207 people registered for the health camp. Medicines were also distributed to the patients during the health camp.



## 2. Blood Donation Camp



In collaboration with the District Blood Bank, Tura Civil Hospital, Don Bosco College in Tura organised a blood donation camp in the college premises on Wednesday. Dozens of enthusiastic students came forward to donate their blood. Prior to the blood donation drive, an awareness programme was organised for the students wherein medical professionals, led by Dr. Dimpu R Marak from Tura Civil Hospital, spoke on the importance and need for donating blood. He

## 3. Inauguration of Renovated Canteen

The renovated canteen of Don Bosco College Tura was blessed and inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma, Salesian Provincial on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019 in the presence of College staff and students. Fr.

also said that awareness programmes of this sort will create awareness among people with regard to the needs of voluntary blood donation.

The in-charge of the blood bank at Tura Civil Hospital, Dr. Semidha K. Marak, highlighted the advantage of blood donation. “A male person can donate blood every four months, while for a female donor every five months,” Dr. Semidha informed.

She also said that for a regular blood donor, there is a less change of cancer as the iron in the blood keeps changing. Accompanying the team was Dr. Tami Momin from Civil Hospital and the group from the District Blood Bank.

Bivan R. Mukhim, Principal of Don Bosco College while welcoming everyone said that the old canteen needed furnishing and renovation and we have made it a welcome and attractive place for staff and students.



## ORDAINED DEACONS



Five Clerics from Sacred Heart College, Mawlai, Shillong were ordained Deacons on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 for the Province of Guwahati. They are Kishore Mushahary, Francis Xavier Kujur, John Paul Tirkey, Amit Tete and A. Antony Dhason. Another of our Cleric, Klisterwel Songthiang from Kristu Jyoti college, Bangalore, was ordained Deacon along with his other companions at Bangalore. They newly ordained Deacons

completed their diaconate experiences in various Parishes and Centres and returned to the College for the Pastoral Course which they will complete by first week of November. The Deacons will be ordained priests in the months of December and January. The Province thus will be blessed with the gift of six new priests in 2020.

## MISSIONARY AD GENTES

The Rector Major has selected three of our clerics for Mission ad gentes. They are Cl. Patrick Kujur, presently at Don Bosco Boys' Home Tura who will proceed to the Province of Brazil - Manaus (BMA) and

work in the Amazon region. Br Christopher Thaimai presently at Apostolic school Barpeta Road will go to the Province of Peru (PER) and work in the Amazon region and Cl. Petrus Nanwar, presently at Don



*Cl. Patrick Kujur*



*Br Christopher Thaimai*



*Cl. Petrus Nanwar*



Bosco Dotma who will go to Venezuela Province (VEN) and also work in the Amazon region. They have already left for Rome last month. We wish them God's

choicest blessings and pray that they may find joy and fulfillment in their Salesian missionary vocation.

## ING YS COORDINATORS' MEET

ING Youth Services Coordinators' Meeting was held in Don Bosco Provincial House, Guwahati on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2019. Fr. Sangma S. Januarius, the Provincial, Fr. Teron Joseph, the Vice Provincial and Fr. Pattamkulam Cletus Sebastian, the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) director were present for the meeting. There were twenty-three participants from different centers of the province. The meeting was begun with the hymn to the Holy Spirit, followed by lighting of the candles and thereafter Fr. Cletus, the SYM director led us to pray. Fr. Teron Joseph, the Vice-Provincial welcomed the gathering. In his welcome address he said that every youth service coordinator should speak the same language, sing same tune to the same lyric to make a Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) different. Fr. Sangma S. Januarius, the Provincial welcomed and thanked everyone who left their own community activities and

come to participate the meeting. He said that every youth service coordinator first of all should know what it is and how to go about. Therefore, he exhorted all to participate actively and try to understand.

The agenda for the meeting were as follows: Study of Salesian Youth Ministry frame of reference, Understanding Salesian Youth Ministry (SYM), Launching of SYM in all Salesian Centres, Preparation for Boscoree 2022, National Youth Expo 2020 and Study of SEPP.

At the end of the meeting Youth Service team drew up some action plan, such as to form the sym members whichever centers have not been formed. The forming of the sym should be done with hoisting of the flag and by electing president and secretary. The team has agreed to meet region wise and this has to be done in the month of September. The next province level coming together should be in

the month of November the reports with photos. The YS coordinator should also send the report regularly to SYM director, Fr. Cletus.

**-Fr. Sangma S. Daniel SDB.**



## XAVIER BOARD MEETING AT GUWAHATI



The 23<sup>rd</sup> Triennial Conference of the Xavier Board of Higher Education was inaugurated at Don Bosco Institute, Kharguli, Guwahati today. The Xavier Board founded in 1951, today represents 352 institutes of Higher Education in India including Deemed and Private Universities. Most Rev. Dr. Thomas D'Souza, Archbishop of Kolkata and Chairman of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India's Commission for Education and Culture inaugurated the event. Quoting the Education Policy of the Catholic Church, he stressed that "the most important indicator of a country's progress is the state of its higher education." Fr. Leslie Moras, President of Xavier Board, Fr. Dr. Sebastian Ousepparampil, Regional President, Eastern & North Eastern Region, Sr. Dr. Annamma Philip, Secretary General, Fr. Dr. Stephen Mavelly, Vice Chancellor of Assam Don Bosco University, Fr. PD John, Director of DBI and Fr. Dr. Emmanuel

Kallarackal, Vice President, Xavier Board were eminent speakers at the inaugural function.

The keynote address "Re-visioning Higher Education in India – Challenges and Strategies" was delivered by Prof. N.V. Varghese, Vice-Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi. He began by stating that "Universities as we know them today will not exist in the near future!" Universities should produce not necessarily "trained" graduates but "trainable" graduates who can be employable today and in the future. Any re-visioning of Higher Education should look at what Universities are "good for" rather than at what universities are "good at".

The three day event will discuss the draft National Education Policy 2019 and other relevant topics affecting Higher Education

in India. Prof. François Mabilbe, Secretary General of International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), Paris will speak on Internationalization of Higher Education. Possible future directions in Internationalization of Higher Education will be discussed under the leadership of independent researcher from JNU, Mr. Eldo Mathews and Prof. M.A. Kalam from Krea University will discuss Tribulations of Mainstreamed Higher Education. Democracy, Secularism and Education, the three pillars of modern education will be discussed by Dr. Anitha Kurup from National Institute of Advanced Studies. Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Menampal, Archbishop Emeritus of Guwahati will lead the discussion on getting people to think and develop

a sense of social responsibility. Prof. Philip Altbach, Director of the Center for International Higher Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA will lead the discussion on higher education at a turning point. A visit to Assam Don Bosco University in the city is also planned.

The three-day conference will end with election of office bearers for the prestigious Xavier Board of Higher Education in India.



## NEW PROVINCIAL FOR MUMBAI



Fr. Savio Silveira SDB - New Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mumbai took charge on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

We extend hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. Savio Silveira SDB, who was appointed as the New Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mumbai by Father Ángel Fernández

Arttime, Rector Major for the six-year period of 2019-2025.

Fr. Silveira was born on 8 December 1966 in Panjim, State of Goa, India. He did his novitiate in Nashik, and made his first Profession on May 31, 1985. He made his Perpetual Profession on May 25, 1992, in Mumbai; he was ordained a priest on December 21, 1995, in his hometown.





Fr C.V George is celebrating 80 years of his life with 60 years of profession and 50 years of priestly ordination. Born on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1937 in Thidanad, Erattupetta, Diocese of Changanacherry, Fr C.V George is known for his simplicity, love for trees and his expertise in plating trees. Fr George has worked in many mission stations of the Provinces in the States of Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya. He has done his licentiate in Catechetics from UPS, Rome from 1967 to 1970 and is well versed in languages like Italian, German, Latin besides Malayalam, Santali, Hindi, Assamese and Khasi.

He has been Vice Provincial of Guwahati Province from 7<sup>th</sup> March 1979 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 1982. He was also the Economer from 8<sup>th</sup> January 1985 to 1<sup>st</sup> February 1991.

In a candid interview with Fr C.V. George. Ms Avishka Phukan Staff of Don Bosco Communications got to know more about his life and Mission in the North East India.

## INTERVIEW WITH FR. C.V. GEORGE, SDB

*1. Hello Fr. George, Good morning! I am Avishka from Don Bosco Communications. I'm asked to do an interview with you. Let me begin by asking you, what is your full name? Does your name have any special meaning? Can you tell me something about your native place?*

**Fr. George:** My full name is Chittapanatt Varkey George. My name means the uncle who extracts oil from coconut. My native place is in Thidanad, Erattupetta, Diocese of Changanacherry in Kerala. It is a beautiful place surrounded by paddy fields, rubber plantations, hills and plains.

*2. Who were your Parents? What do you remember about them in particular?*

**Fr. George:** My father's name was Varkey Chittapanatt and my mother's name was Anna Thekkumcherikunnel. My father was a businessman who ran grocery shops in the neighbourhood and my mother was a home maker.

Our parents brought up the 10 children (3 sons and 7 daughters) in Christian faith. They themselves were devout Christians and committed their lives to the Lord. They taught us various prayers and prepared us for sacramental life. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and praying of the holy Rosary were very much part of our lives.

*3. What about your family? Where are they now and what are they doing? Have they visited you here?*

**Fr. George:** As I mentioned to you, we are 10 of us consisting of 7 daughters and 3 sons - Mary, Anne, Joseph, Rosa, Aleykutty, George, Teresa, Sebastian, Bridgit 1<sup>st</sup>, Bridgit 2<sup>nd</sup> (Bridgit 1<sup>st</sup> died at the age of 2 years).

My eldest sister Mary got married in Kerala, then next to her was my second sister Anna who joined the FCC and became Sr Canisius. She is currently in Pala in Kerala. Next to her was my brother Joseph who got married and had 6 children. But unfortunately he died. After him was my sister named Rosa who got married and one of her daughter's became a nun and joined the FMA in Assam and now she is in Cambodia.

Then there was myself who joined the Salesians of Don Bosco. Next to me was my younger sister Teresa who joined FMA and became Sr Teresa and is currently in Boko. Next to her is my brother Sebastian who joined the Kanjirpally Diocese in Kerala and became Fr Sebastian. The youngest of all is my sister Bridgit who joined the FMA and became Sr Bridgit and is currently Superior in St. Mary's School Guwahati.

*4. Tell us something about your childhood days.*

**Fr. George:** I was born in the year 1937. Life then was very simple. I went to the school that belonged to the church named Acchamma Memorial School. The School was built during the British era. Even though my father was a businessman, my ancestral family members were farmers.

We had a gramophone at home. And so our neighbours would often come to our house to listen to it. It was our only form of entertainment. In school we used to play simple games with rubber balls. I was a studious student. We used to go to the Church every morning before and in the evening after our school. Bible reading and prayers were very important part in our childhood days.

*5. Who inspired you to join the Salesian Congregation?*

**Fr. George:** I drew inspirations from those who worked in the missions as nuns and priests in our neighbourhood parishes. In Kerala the children of most of the Catholic homes knew what it means to be a priest and nun. My own second eldest sister Sr Canisius became a nun then and went to a place called Pala (Kerala).

In my family my Father used to buy Lottery tickets from Don Bosco Kolkata. So from him I came to know about the Salesian Congregation.

*6. Why did you choose to come to north-east India?*

**Fr. George:** I feel God brought me here. I left home for missions in the year 1951 and came to Sonada in West Bengal. While in Sonada in 1953, we visited Barpeta Don Bosco for our holidays now and then. So that was my first Salesian experience in the North East. Then in 1957 when I joined the Congregation of Don Bosco in Shillong it was then the capital

of Assam. We stayed in Shillong for 1 year. Then I went back to Sonada to complete my studies. Then I came to Shillong in 1963 to study Theology and in 1967 I was ordained a Priest. I went to Italy in 1967 and stayed there for 3 years doing Catechetical Studies. Then in 1970 I came back to Guwahati and visited Doomdooma, Dibrugarh and Shillong. Since 1970s I have been in the Northeast working in various places.

*7. Where did you have your initial formation? – Aspirantate – Pre-Novitiate – Novitiate.*

**Fr. George:** My Aspirantate was in Bandel in West Bengal, my Pre Novitiate was in Sonada and My Novitiate was in Shillong.

*8. When was your First Profession? What do you remember of that day?*

**Fr. George:** My First Profession was in the year 1957. In 1956 we went to Sonada and prepared for that along with 18 boys together for profession. The whole ceremony was carried out by our Superiors in the Provincial House in Shillong. We had a Church service and made our vows. We were happy that since we were preparing ourselves to join the congregation and become Salesians, our dream of becoming a member of the Congregation was coming true.

*9. Where did you have your post-novitiate formation and other studies?*

**Fr. George:** My Post novitiate was in Sonada and Darjeeling in our Lady's House that is the Salesian House. My practical Training was in

Dibrugarh and for other studies I went to Italy.

*10. Tell us something about your initial mission experiences.*

**Fr. George:** My first mission experience started from Don Bosco School in Dibrugarh in the year 1970 to 1973. There I joined as a teacher and also looked after the boarding school. From there I was posted in Shillong in 1973 in Savio Juniorate School (Aspirantate) as a priest. Then I changed the house to Don Bosco School Shillong and was in charge of financial matters. From there I joined Don Bosco Technical School.

*11. Where did you do your practical training?*

**Fr. George:** My Practical Training began in Dibrugarh in the year 1963. The school building was new and there were about 100 boarders and being with them was a great experience. We were 3 brothers in charge of them.

*12. Which are the places where you have worked? What do you remember about those places and the persons you met there? Do you remember anyone in particular?*

**Fr. George:** Yes. I have worked in Don Bosco School, Dibrugarh, Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong, Savio Juniorate, Shillong, in Kumarikatta for 9 years, in Umran in Shillong and as Vice Provincial in Guwahati.

Yes when I was studying in Sonada we met Fr Pulingathil as a cleric as he was not a priest then. He taught theology and was a very good



educator. He was a very religious, law abiding person who had a lot of patience in teaching us young boys then. And then there was an elderly father Fr Paviotti (in Sonada), Fr Francis (Shillong, Confessor), Fr Varkey (Aspirantate Shillong), Fr Comba (Met him while studying theology in Shillong) and so on. Throughout my formation years and even after becoming a priest, these Fathers inspired me a lot.

*13. You have been many years in north-east India. How has the region changed during these years?*

**Fr. George:** I have stayed in different parts of the North East since my first arrival here in the year 1957. At that time the entire North East was considered as Assam and the people here belong to various tribes, they speak various languages. We learnt a number of languages from the previous older Fathers. The region has definitely changed from then to now specially the mindset of the parents have changed towards education. Previously we had to go and meet the parents in the villages and push them to send their children to school to learn but now the Parents take active part in educating the children.

*14. What do you tell us about the Salesian vocation today?*

**Fr. George:** Salesian vocation is flourishing today because of local vocations. Advance of technology and communications have helped in this. In our time there were lots of

challenges like the language barrier, transportation barriers, and communication barrier. We had to write letters to people and wait for the replies that would come after months later. So the growth was slow then. But now we are able to reach more and more people and this has helped the world to become mentally one by becoming friends with one another through education. We are very closely connected to the youth now. Media has also played an important role in helping us to reach out. But comforts and other attractions readily available today, there is also less perseverance today.

*15. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind the decline in the number of vocations?*

**Fr. George:** The decline in the number of vocations has many reasons behind it. Today the world is open to so much recreational activities. There are lots of temptations and attractions to distract those interested in becoming Salesians. Children now have access to many recreations which gives them the access to enjoy their lives and not learn. With education they are now able to afford a luxurious life which they are not willing to give up.

*16. Do you have any regrets?*

**Fr. George:** No regret at all. I have enjoyed every bit of my life. I would like to go where God takes me. I'm happy in my Salesian vocation.

17. What message would you like to give young Salesians today?

**Fr. George:** My Message is that we should follow Don Bosco's method of living with the youth, love what the youth love and teach the

right principles of life, live the right way and invite others to live right, follow what the church is teaching without dividing so that we will be united eternally.



**FR ANTHONY JOSEPH**  
*Province of Trichy*  
*September 11, 2019*



**FR ROSARIO STROSCIO**  
*Province of Kolkata*  
*June 09, 2019*



**FR JOSEPH KIZHACHEENNADU (KJ)**  
*Province of Shillong*  
*August 25, 2019*



**FR IGNAS MACWAN**  
*Province of Mumbai*  
*September 09, 2019*





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