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NEWSLINE

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF GUWAHATI - ING



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Cover Photo

His Eminence Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, former Rector Major, with Rev. Fr Stefano Martoglio, the Vicar of the Rector Major

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Rev Fr Sebastian Kuricheal, Provincial ING meets His Eminence Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, Major Rector of the Salesians on 17 July 2024.

Editorial..

The dissemination of news plays a crucial role in any institution, and newsletters serve as a primary communication tool. They provide regular updates on important events, announcements, and deadlines, keeping students, parents, parishioners, and community members well-informed. These publications foster community life by highlighting individual and group achievements, sharing personal stories, and promoting volunteer opportunities. They contribute significantly to enhancing our ministries. They offer spiritual reflections, religious education materials, and liturgical information, helping community members deepen their faith. Newsletters also promote transparency by sharing financial updates and insights into decision-making processes. They serve as historical records, documenting essential milestones and preserving history. *Communio et Progressio*, Pastoral instruction of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications issued on 23 May 1971, points out that Christian communication aims to build better communities and lead us all towards greater communion.

As we revive the publication of *Newsline*, our province newsletter, after a gap of more than a year, a peep into its history is worth attempting. When the province of Guwahati was established in 1959, the province news bulletin of the province of Kolkata, Family News, published from Sunnyside, continued to be the official news bulletin of both provinces. Later, each of the provinces began to publish its own bulletins. When Fr Lukose Cheruvalel was the editor while serving as the provincial secretary from 1985 to 1988, the title was changed to *Newsline*.

Initially, the bulletin was typed on a manual typewriter; later, it was an electronic typewriter with limited memory. It was then cyclostyled and dispatched by post. When a photocopying machine was available, some photos could be inserted in the write-ups. However, with the advent of computers and modern printing technologies, it is printed in colour, as we have nowadays. The frequency of its publications was also varied, often depending on the editors and the availability of news items – monthly, bi-monthly, or even quarterly. However, the recently concluded 22nd provincial chapter has decided to publish it quarterly. It is hoped that the digital version of the *Newsline* will be posted on the province WhatsApp groups every 15 March, 15 June, 15 September and 15 December. For archival purposes, the province secretary has agreed to print some copies.

It is a matter of great pride that the province's social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have been revived/activated thanks to the initiative of Rev. Fr Bivan Mukhim Rodrigues, our vice provincial.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GuwahatiING>

Twitter/X: <https://x.com/SDBGuwahati>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/salesian-province-of-guwahati>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/salesianprovinceing/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@DonBoscoGuwahatiProvince>

Similarly, the province's website (<https://www.donboscoguwahati.org>) is in the process of developing and improving its content, functionality, and design. We are grateful to Fr Jayaprakash Anthonimuthu, provincial economist, for his steadfast support. Since monthly provincial circulars and the activated social media accounts regularly provide news about events in the province and our houses, we could focus in the *Newsline* on detailed information on the various ministries our communities and confreres are engaged in.

The issue begins with news from GC 29 and the message from Fr Sebastian Kuricheal, our provincial, inviting everyone to be partners in this venture. We shall focus on the lives and contributions of the tenth successor of Don Bosco, Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, who recently resigned, and Bishop George Mamalassery, who passed away in recent months. The recurring floods in Satgaon, the recently opened Apostolic School in Sashipur, the golden years of Haflong parish, and an overview of Don Bosco College, Diphu, are part of our focus on the houses of the province.

From the South Asia region, we have an article on the reduction of multidimensional poverty in the region, the latest initiative of SPCSA. The forthcoming second session of the synod on synodality, a significant event in the Church, is given special attention in this issue, attempting a summary of its *Instrumentum Laboris*. Anecdotes on the veteran missionaries who worked in our region under the title *All in the Family* help to recall with gratitude the services that the brave sons of Don Bosco rendered. A brief article on World Literacy Day focuses on the Salesian contribution towards

eradicating illiteracy worldwide. The various activities related to youth ministry in the province are covered in the following article. In the literature section, a résumé of the recently published book titled *The Salesians of Don Bosco among the Garos: A Brief History of Evangelizing Mission (1933-2023)* by Fr Jogesh B. Sangma is presented.

All the members of the Social Communication Commission gratefully acknowledge the contributors and hope that this publication will enhance the familiarity with the province, which is a constituent of the Salesian congregation within the Catholic Church.

NEWS FROM THE 29TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The 29th General Chapter with the theme, “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people,” will begin in Turin on 16 February 2025 and conclude in Rome, coinciding with the Jubilee 2025. The closing ceremony will be held on 12 April 2025 in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome.

To prepare for the Chapter, the Pre-Chapter Juridical Commission met in Rome from 1 to 10 September 2024.

The Commission examined the contributions of 85 Provincial Chapters relating to the 3rd core area of the Chapter theme. It asks for reflection on “A courageous evaluation and re-planning of the governance of the Congregation at every level.”

The Commission collected the data that emerged from the Chapters, sorting them by topics about world, provincial and local government. A broad picture emerged, with greater or lesser convergence on specific issues.

The Commission then identified fifteen topics. Proposals calling for changes to the constitutional text and their justifications have been identified for each of them.

Proposals that do not request any change to structures of governance and the reasons offered were then highlighted.

All the suggestions that invite actions to improve what currently exists and that do not require juridical intervention were also brought together.

Here, too, a broad picture emerged, representing the reflection made in the provinces on governance issues. The Commission then drew up a framework in an orderly and faithful manner.

The work concluded with a meeting of the Commission with the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Stefano Martoglio, and the Moderator of the General Chapter, Fr Alphonse Owoudou, to whom the documents were handed over.

They will be examined by the Pre-Chapter Commission, which will prepare the Working Document of the General Chapter.



MESSAGE FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Confreres,

It is with great joy and renewed enthusiasm that we are bringing out our quarterly newsletter of the province, *The Newslines*. After a year-long interruption, we are rekindling this vital flame of communication within our province. The *Newslines* has long served as a beacon of spiritual growth, a source of religious education, and a chronicle of our collective journey in faith and service.

The decision to revive *The Newslines* stems from our recognition of its irreplaceable role in nurturing our Salesian spirit and fostering a sense of unity among our diverse institutions. In today's fast-paced world, where information often overwhelms us, *The Newslines* offers a curated space for reflection, learning, and connection. It is a testament to our commitment to ongoing formation and our desire to share the richness of our Salesian charism.



As we relaunch this publication, we envision it not merely as a newsletter but as a living document of our faith in action. Each issue will continue to offer spiritual reflections to nourish our souls, religious education materials to deepen our understanding, and updates from our various institutions to inspire and inform. Through these pages, we hope to celebrate our achievements, address our challenges, and chart our course for the future, always guided by the spirit of Don Bosco.

The Newslines offers something unique. It is a tangible connection to our Salesian community, a pause from the constant digital noise, and a chance for deeper, more reflective engagement with our shared mission. Recognising the changing times, we are making *Newslines* accessible in digital format to ensure that it reaches every member of our province and other members of the Salesian family.

I invite each one of you to engage actively with *Newslines*. Your contributions, whether through articles, testimonies, or feedback, will breathe life into this publication. Let it be a platform where we share our experiences, exchange ideas, and support one another in our vocation. By doing so, we strengthen the bonds of our Salesian family and renew our commitment to the young people we serve.

As we embark on this new chapter of *Newslines*, let us approach it with the same zeal and devotion that characterises our Salesian mission. May this revival spark a renewed sense of purpose and unity among us, inspiring us to greater heights in our service to God and the young. Together, let us make *Newslines* a true reflection of our vibrant Salesian spirit in the province of Guwahati. In the words of Don Bosco, "It is not enough to love the young; they must know that they are loved." May *Newslines* be another way we express this love for one another and for those we serve.

With prayerful wishes,

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fr. S. Kuricheal".

Fr Sebastian Kuricheal
Provincial



ÁNGEL CARDINAL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME: 10TH SUCCESSOR OF DON BOSCO

Fr Pradeep Ekka

His Eminence Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime resigned as the Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales on 16 August 2024. In the ten years that he served the Salesian Congregation as its head, he has left an indelible mark on the life and ministry among the members of the Salesian Family.

Life

Born on 21 August 1960 in Gozón-Luanco, Asturias, Spain, Cardinal Ángel made his first profession on 3 September 1978, took perpetual vows on 17 June 1984 in Santiago de Compostela, and was ordained a priest on 4 July 1987 in León, Spain. He obtained a degree in Pastoral Theology and a Licentiate in Philosophy and Pedagogy. He served as the provincial superior of the Salesian province of León, Spain, from 2000 to 2006 and of the Salesian province of Argentina South from 2009 to 2014 before he was elected as the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco in 2014, becoming the 10th successor of Don Bosco. He was re-elected for a second six-year term as Rector Major in 2020. In the consistory held on 30 September 2023, Pope Francis created him a cardinal. However, the Pope permitted him to continue leading the Congregation until 16 August 2024.



Episcopal Ordination of Angel Cardinal Fernandez Artime

Now that he has demitted the office, Cardinal Ángel has passed on the baton to Rev. Fr Stefano Martoglio, the Vicar of the Salesian Congregation, who will look after the governance of the Salesian Congregation *ad interim* until the election of a new Rector Major during the 29th General Chapter in Turin, scheduled to be held from 16 February 2025 to 12 April 2025.

After he was elected the Rector Major of the Congregation on 25 March 2014, while accepting his mandate, Cardinal Ángel said: “Trusting in the grace of the Lord and in faith, with the certainty that I will always be supported by my Salesian confreres, and because I truly love the young people whom I carry in my Salesian heart, I accept what is asked of me.” As he now concludes his mandate, he feels that everything he had hoped for, has come true with God’s grace.

Dreams

On the sidelines of the bicentenary of Don Bosco’s birth on 25 July 2015, Cardinal Ángel offered the Salesians the dreams he outlined for the Congregation:

- I dream of a Congregation of happy Salesians.
- I dream of a Congregation of men of faith on a journey of faith and searching for God.
- I dream of a Congregation of Salesians who are passionate about young people, the poorest, always seeking service, never power or money.
- I dream of a Congregation of true evangelisers and educators in the faith.
- I dream of a Congregation that is always missionary.

Planning Mentality

One of the notable aspects of Ángel Cardinal Fernandez Artime, as the Rector Major of the Congregation, was his planning mentality. Immediately, after the General Chapters, the general council under his direction prepared projects of animation and government for the Rector Major and the general council under various priorities that the General Chapters that elected him spelt out.

The project of animation and government for 2014-2020 outlined three main priorities for the Rector Major and general council: 1) To be “mystics in the Spirit” by living the primacy of God and following Christ radically; 2) To be “prophets of fraternity” by building authentic communities through relationships and work in a family spirit; and 3) To be “servants of the young” by putting themselves more decisively at the service of the poorest youth. These priorities aimed to foster spiritual conversion, fraternal conversion, and pastoral conversion in the Congregation.

The plan provided detailed objectives, processes and interventions for each sector of the Congregation’s leadership. Key focus areas included strengthening Salesian identity and charism; improving initial and ongoing formation; putting youth ministry at the centre of the Salesian mission with a focus on the poorest youth; developing social communication; promoting missionary vocations and solidarity; ensuring transparent and professional management of resources; and fostering the sense of belonging to the Salesian Family



For the regional councillors, the project outlined goals and strategies tailored to each region’s context and needs. Common themes included consolidating formation processes, accompanying provincials and local leaders, promoting missionary and vocational animation, strengthening regional cooperation and networks, and addressing challenges specific to each region like redesigning presences or responding to youth migration.

Overall, the project aimed to guide the animation and governance of the Salesian Congregation from 2014-2020, with a focus on spiritual renewal, fraternal communion, and refocusing the Salesian mission on poor and marginalized youth. It provided a comprehensive roadmap for Salesian leaders at all levels to implement the directives of the 27th General Chapter and respond to the challenges facing the Congregation in different parts of the world.

Similarly, for the six years 2020-2026, the Rector Major and general council outlined key priorities and focus areas for the Salesian Congregation based on the decisions of the 28th General Chapter. The main priorities were growth in Salesian identity, being Salesian pastors today, ensuring priority for the young (especially the poorest and most vulnerable), and fostering Congregational generosity. These priorities aim to strengthen the Salesian charism and mission in the modern world.

The project emphasized several major areas of focus across different sectors. In formation, there is a push to strengthen initial and ongoing formation, particularly formation in mission, and to prepare competent formators and formation teams. Youth ministry was centred on putting young people at the heart of the Salesian mission, with a focus on vocational dimensions and reaching the poorest youth. Social Communication aimed to live communication in an evangelical and Salesian manner, supporting institutional communication and

social media presence. The Missions sector focused on nurturing missionary vocations, strengthening mission solidarity, and exploring new missionary frontiers.

In the area of economy, the project promoted transparency, self-financing, and professionalism in resource management, while emphasizing the importance of living in evangelical poverty. The Salesian Family sector aimed to deepen the understanding of Don Bosco as a founder and grow in awareness of being a charismatic family in the Church. These sectors were encouraged to work in synergy to achieve the overall vision of the Congregation.



The document provided detailed objectives, processes, and action guidelines for each sector and region to implement these priorities over the six-year period. Common themes across regions included strengthening Salesian identity and charism, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable youth, promoting a shared mission between Salesians and laity, formation for Salesians and lay collaborators, emphasizing the vocational dimension of youth ministry, fostering missionary spirit and openness, enhancing communication and social media presence, and promoting care for creation and ecological awareness. The project underscores the importance of collaboration across sectors and regions to achieve its goals.

The Present State of the Congregation

As he neared his term of office, in the letter addressed to the Salesian in the Acts of the General Council dated 8 September 2023, Cardinal Ángel reflected on the state of the Congregation. He highlighted the positive developments we can be proud of and the ongoing challenges the Congregation faces today. He combines gratitude for the progress made with a strong call to address ongoing weaknesses and live the Salesian vocation more radically.

Among the positive developments that we can take solace, Cardinal Ángel lists the following:

- Today, the Congregation is present in 136 countries of the world
- There is an atmosphere of communion and harmony within the Congregation
- A continued focus on serving poor and at-risk youth is visible
- Growth in evangelisation and faith proclamation efforts are on the increase
- One can feel a strong sense of belonging to the Salesian Family
- Economic solidarity between provinces is evident
- Progress in social communication is taking shape
- Advancement of shared mission between Salesians and laypeople
- Continued communion with the broader Church is concretized with the appointment of several Salesians to the episcopate.

- The gift of many vocations (an average of 442 novices per year) is an encouraging sign
- The canonisation of Artemides Zatti, Salesian Brother, is a unique gift to the Congregation

There are many ongoing challenges. As he leaves office, Cardinal Ángel exhorts the Salesians to address them so the Congregation flourishes. He singles out four major challenges.

- There is a weakening in the spiritual life and relationship with God. Some Salesians are losing their charismatic identity and radical commitment. There is a need for a deeper personal experience of God, not just knowledge. Spiritual “anaemia” and activism without depth are risks.
- Several Salesians are leaving the Congregation. He finds several reasons for this phenomenon, such as lack of maturity, affective issues, difficulty with conflicts, and loss of faith motivation. Challenges in community life are often cited, though they may only sometimes be the reason.
- Community life that is functional but not prophetic. Communities focused on roles/management rather than fraternal relationships. Need for more joy, solidarity, and moderation in lifestyle. Intercultural communities are challenging but prophetic.
- Insufficient attention to the poorest youth. While much good is done, not all Salesians have hearts “madly in love with the poorest.” Some Salesians have become “bourgeois,” seeking comfort over the mission. Risk of “domesticating” the charism to make it less demanding

To address these challenges, Cardinal Ángel calls Salesians to deepen their spiritual lives and relationship with God, cultivate more prophetic and joyful community life, renew their radical commitment to poor youth, and live their vocation with greater authenticity and enthusiasm.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is noteworthy to mention that Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, as Rector Major, made two official visits to our province. From 8-11 November 2017, he visited our province. Again, in 2022, when the centenary of the arrival of the first Salesians to northeast India was celebrated, the Rector Major visited the province from 24-26 October 2022.

Cardinal Ángel believes that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide the Congregation. We have nothing to fear. As grateful sons, our hearts raise in prayer for his good health and continued service to the Universal Church in whatever capacity that the Holy Father deems fit!



The Rector Major is Welcomed in the Provincial House

BISHOP GEORGE MAMALASSERY: A SHEPHERD OF PROGRESS IN GARO HILLS

Fr Charles Deepen Lakra

Bishop George Mamalassery, who passed away on 5 July 2024, leaves behind a profound legacy that transformed the religious, educational, and social landscape of the Garo Hills in Meghalaya, India. As the first Bishop of Tura, his 28-year tenure (1979-2007) was marked by visionary leadership, unwavering dedication, and a deep commitment to uplifting the lives of the people he served.

Life

Born on 23 April 1932, in Kalathoor, Kerala, George Mamalassery's journey to becoming a transformative figure in the Garo Hills began with humble origins. Orphaned at the age of 12, he found his calling in the Church, joining the Sacred Heart Seminary in Poonamallee, Tamilnadu. His missionary zeal led him to volunteer for service in the northeast, a decision that would shape the course of his life and the future of the Garo Hills region.



Ordained on 24 April 1960, Father Mamalassery was sent to the Garo Hills in the then Archdiocese of Shillong-Guwahati. This remote and challenging terrain, plagued by malaria and wildlife, became the canvas on which he would paint his legacy of service and development.

Father Mamalassery's early years in the Garo Hills were characterized by tireless work and adaptability. He served as an assistant parish priest in Tura and Baghmara for a decade before becoming the parish priest of Dalu in 1970. His compassion and leadership were evident during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War when he provided shelter, food, and support to displaced people in his parish. These experiences laid the groundwork for his future role as a bishop, instilling in him a deep understanding of the region's challenges and the needs of its people.

On 8 February 1979, at the age of 46, Father George Mamalassery was appointed as the first Bishop of Tura, with his ordination following on 18 March 18, 1979. Taking the motto "Thy Kingdom Come" (Mt 6:10), Bishop Mamalassery embarked on a mission to build not just a diocese but a community uplifted by faith, education, and healthcare.

The Pastoral Initiatives

Under Bishop Mamalassery's leadership, the diocese of Tura saw remarkable growth. He expanded 14 existing centres and established 23 new parishes, each complete with churches, presbyteries, convents, dispensaries, hostels, and schools. This expansion was not merely about increasing the Church's physical presence but about creating hubs of spiritual guidance and community development across the Garo Hills.

Recognizing education as a key to progress, Bishop Mamalassery prioritized the development of a comprehensive educational network. His efforts led to the establishment of numerous schools. He was instrumental in opening 35 Middle Schools, 16 Secondary Schools, 2 Higher Secondary Schools, 24 Girls' hostels and 23 Boys' hostels in the region.

These institutions were spread across the Garo Hills, ensuring that even the most remote areas had access to quality education. Bishop Mamalassery's vision extended to higher education as well. He invited the Salesians and Jesuits to establish colleges in Tura and



Williamnagar, respectively, providing local youth with opportunities for advanced studies without leaving their home region.

Bishop Mamalassery's contributions to healthcare in the Garo Hills were equally significant. Under his leadership, the diocese established 34 dispensaries across Garo Hills' five districts, a 150-bed Holy Cross Hospital in Tura (founded in 1993) and the Rino Simonetti School of Nursing in Tura. These initiatives dramatically improved access to healthcare in the region, addressing a critical need in an area previously underserved by medical facilities.

Bishop Mamalassery's vision of development was holistic, extending beyond education and healthcare. He initiated several projects aimed at social welfare and community development. The establishment of Bakdil, the diocesan social service agency, is one of them. It has grown to become one of the northeast's top-performing non-governmental organisations. He also invited the Montfort Brothers to create the Montfort Centre for the physically challenged, addressing the needs of differently-abled individuals. The creation of two old-age homes for the poor and destitute, including one in Tura, added further impetus to the social upliftment of the people.

Bishop Mamalassery's numerous construction projects earned him the affectionate nickname "Engineer Bishop." His ability to conceptualise and execute infrastructure projects was crucial in realising his vision for the diocese. From churches to schools, hospitals to hostels, his legacy is built into the very fabric of the Garo Hills landscape.

An Assessment

Bishop Mamalassery's approach to development was not insular. He actively collaborated with government agencies and other organisations to maximise the impact of his initiatives. His collaborative spirit and significant contributions to the region's development earned him several accolades. He was honoured with the Pa Togan Sangma award from the Government of Meghalaya and an honorary doctorate from the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya, in 2019.

Even after his retirement in 2007, Bishop George continued to serve the diocese from the Priest's Home, offering guidance and inspiration to the community he had nurtured for decades. His passing away in 2024 was mourned not just by the Catholic community but by the entire Garo Hills region, a testament to the broad impact of his life's work.

The Meghalaya government's decision to rename the road from P.A. Sangma Road junction to Holy Cross Hospital as "Bishop George Mamalassery Road" is a fitting tribute to a man whose life was dedicated to serving and uplifting the people of Garo Hills.

Bishop George Mamalassery's legacy in the Garo Hills is one of transformative leadership, visionary development, and unwavering commitment to human dignity. Through his work, he not only built a strong Catholic community but also contributed significantly to the overall development of the region. His life exemplified the power of faith combined with action, showing how spiritual leadership can be a catalyst for social, educational, and economic progress.

The institutions he established, the communities he nurtured, and the lives he touched stand as enduring testaments to his vision and dedication. As Garo Hills continue to develop and progress, the foundations laid by Bishop George Mamalassery will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping its future. His life's work serves as an inspiration for future generations, demonstrating the profound impact one dedicated individual can have on an entire region.

**DIOCESE OF TURA
DEEPLY MOURNS THE PASSING
AWAY OF**

Most Rev. George Mamalassery
Bishop Emeritus of Tura

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(2 Tim. 4:7-8a)
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness.

Born : 22 April, 1932
Priestly Ordination : 24 April, 1960
Episcopal Consecration : 18 March, 1979
Returned to the Father : 05 July, 2024 (early morning)

Funeral details are awaited



**The Funeral
of**
Bishop George Mamalassery



RECURRING FLOODS IN SATGAON

Fr Albert Thyrniang

Satgaon is in the West Karbi Anglong district of Assam. It falls under the Rongkhang Block and is situated in the plain belt of West Karbi Anglong. The parish of Satgaon was opened on 4 January 2015, bifurcating from Christ King parish, Sojong. Fr Gabriel G. Momin was appointed the first parish priest, and Fr Francis Lakra was the first assistant parish priest.

It was in the 1960s that Fr Michael Balavoine from Nongpoh visited Karbis and Garos. In 1967, Sojong was declared a parish, and Fr John Marie was appointed the first parish priest. It was in 1973 that Fr Joseph Poopilil, the then parish priest of Sojong, thought of making a Catholic Centre at Satgaon, which is surrounded by Garo villages. Fr Albano D'Mello, when he became the parish priest of Sojong, started regular masses for the Garos. A school was also opened at Satgaon for the education of the Garo children.

The Garos in Satgaon became a vibrant Catholic community with the arrival of Fr Abraham Vetticad, who was appointed assistant parish priest in Sojong in 1978. With his arrival, greater attention was given to the pastoral needs of the Garo community, which then numbered more than 7000 Catholics. He is fondly known as the 'Achu Father' (Grandpa).

With financial assistance from the Salesian province of Guwahati, Fr George Maliekal, who was the parish priest of Sojong from 1992 to 1996, purchased the additional plot of land adjacent to the Mission land at Satgaon. Thanks to the generous contribution of Mgr Orestes Marengo and others, the new school building was constructed at Satgaon. In the following years, when Fr Sebastian Kunnathukuzhy was the parish priest of Sojong, the construction of the church was completed at Satgaon. With the newly constructed church, convent, school, and hostels for boys and girls, Satgaon became a cherished Centre for the numerous Garo villages. On 25 January 1997, the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC) opened their convent at Satgaon with the primary aim of attending to the pastoral, educational, and healthcare needs of the Garo community.

When Fr Francis Lakra was transferred, Fr Thomas Chenginiyaden joined as the assistant parish priest in 2018, and he was transferred to Garobadha in 2021. In 2020, Fr Siby John Vattappara joined the parish community as an assistant parish priest. In 2021, he was transferred to Sojong as its rector and parish priest. Both Fr John Chellanthara and Fr Albert Thyrniang joined the parish community as assistant parish priests in 2021. When Fr Gabriel G. Momin was transferred in January 2022, he took over as parish priest of Satgaon. In the same year, Fr Justin Chinnaparaj was appointed assistant parish priest and vice principal. Fr Charles Sangma joined the community as an assistant parish priest in 2023. In May 2024, when Fr John Chellanthara was transferred to Boko as rector and parish priest, Fr Albert Thyrniang became the parish priest.



The construction of a multi-purpose hall at Satgaon, which commenced in 2019, was completed in 2023. To upgrade the school into a higher secondary, the construction of a new block began in 2023. There are about thirty vibrant Catholic villages in the parish.

Floods in Satgaon

Floods in Satgaon occur almost yearly. In my three years of stay here, Only in 2023 there was no flood. However, two significant floods took place this year in 2024. A third is not ruled out. Only at the end of October can one be sure that the water will not return until the following May.

When the first wave of the flood occurred in May, people remarked, “This was the worst flood in living memory.” However, when the second flood came in June, they said, “This was even worse than the first flood.”



The first flood started on 27 May 2024. The highest level was during the nights of 27 May and 28 May. The water came in quite suddenly and flowed into homes, covered paddy fields, farms, and villages, and overflowed and damaged public roads. The major Dongkamukam-Hojai road remained closed for more than a week. When the dawn broke, village after village was inundated. There was a sea of water everywhere. In the worst affected villages, people had to leave their houses for higher places like embankments and roads. They carried whatever they could as they took shelter on the highlands. In other villages, residents raised their beds higher to stay out of water. They cooked on tables and chairs. Many villages were cut off. The water receded only by 1 June 2024.

The second wave of floods happened on 17 June 2024 and started receding on 19 June 2024. According to the initial estimates, about 2,300 households from more than 30 villages were affected, but later, we realised that the number was much higher.

The Cause

Satgaon is adjacent to the interstate river Kopli, which originates from neighbouring Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills. It is the largest tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra on the southern bank. It is a 290-kilometre-long river that divides West Karbi Anglong with the Hojai district. It is this river that submerged Satgaon villages. In the first wave of floods, there was incessant rain, particularly in the hills. Still, the overflow/release of the dams in the upper stream in Umrangso, Dima Hasao district, was responsible for the flood. In the second flood, cyclone Remal caused destruction, but the man-made aspect of the flood created the havoc.

The Impact

The floods do not carry away houses per se. However, the impact is telling all the same. Most of the houses are made of bamboo and mud. The walls are plastered with mud, and the floor is muddy. When water remains for three or four days, the floor is worn out completely, and the bottom part of the wall rots, producing a foul smell. It takes four to five months to dry. Houses get dry only by December. Till then, people live in unhealthy environments. In many cases, the bamboos have to be discarded. People cannot relish their lives as they have to spend their energy, time and resources repairing their houses year after year.

Poorly Constructed Embankments

In 2022, the government of Assam promised a flood-free Assam in five years. Embankments were constructed along the Kopli, too. However, the fresh embankments gave way in many places. In long stretches, embankments were made only on one side of the river. The embankments made affected villages worse. Those who bore the worst brunt were the villages situated within the embankments, where the floods concentrated on them. The path of the water is narrowed down. Secondly, the water carried mud and silt from the broken embankments and deposited them in houses and courtyards. It was a nightmare for villages like Kollongamukh, Mogasong, Baligoan, Tumpreng market village and others. In the last three villages, houses are still in the water. Crops and newly planted vegetables are damaged completely.

Relief Efforts

Last year, the Satgaon parish created a “Flood Relief Fund” from the contributions of the people themselves. The parish immediately responded to the flood. On 30 May and 1 June, the parish reached out to the worst-affected villages of Kollongamukh, New Bithung, and part of Deramukh village.

On 3 June, Jirsong Asong, the social service wing of Diphu diocese, came and chipped in with crucial help. Later, Bosco Reach Out (BRO) and the Northeast Regional Youth Commission (NERYC) rendered significant aid to the flood-affected people. Satgaon parish collaborated with these agencies to provide storage, arrange for volunteers, collect names of beneficiaries, and lead the relief teams to the actual spots and other services. Further, the parish saw to it that all affected communities received help. About 2500 families were beneficiaries of our efforts.



THE APOSTOLIC SCHOOL AT DON BOSCO SCHOOL, SASHIPUR

Fr Marcus Lakra

Apostolic schools play a crucial role in the formation process within the Salesian style of formation, specifically preparing young men for religious life and priesthood. It is a unique educational institution designed for those considering a vocation as a Salesian priest or brother. Attending an apostolic school is not a binding commitment to become a priest or brother. Instead, it offers a supportive environment for vocational discernment and preparation for those who feel called to this path, allowing students to explore their vocation without pressure.

Key aspects of typical Salesian apostolic schools include:

- As to their religious formation, the candidates receive instruction in Catholic theology, spirituality, and the specific charism of the Salesian order.
- Academic education in apostolic schools is comprehensive, with a strong emphasis on general education alongside religious studies. This balance ensures that students are well-prepared for both their educational and spiritual journeys.
- The Salesian methodology of education that is followed in these institutions is based on the principles of St John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, who focused on reason, religion, and loving-kindness.
- The candidates live in a community setting, learning to work and pray together under the diligent care of Salesians.
- These schools provide an environment for young men to discern their calling to religious life.
- To prepare the candidates for the apostolate, they are introduced to various aspects of the Salesian ministry, particularly in youth, education and evangelisation.



Don Bosco School, Sashipur

Don Bosco School, Sashipur, situated on the gateway to Bhutan, had its humble beginning in the nearby village of Horotola. As the parish priest of Kumarikatta (1990-93), Fr Augustine Edasserithottathil began an English Medium Primary School on 10 February 1992 in a little shed at Horotola. Meanwhile, seeing the educational needs of the people and recognising the possibility of evangelisation in the region, a larger plot of land was purchased at Sashipur for a Don Bosco School. The foundation stone for the School was laid on 1 November 1993. In 1995, the school at Horotola was shifted to Sashipur, though the school building still needed to be completed. Most Rev. Thomas Menampampil, the then Archbishop of Guwahati, blessed the newly constructed Don Bosco School at Sashipur on 6 January 1996. Fr Elias Kerketta (parish priest 1993-98), exercising his responsibility as the principal, used to visit the school daily.

The Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny arrived at Sashipur on 4 January 1996. They used the top floor of the School as their temporary residence. The sisters rendered their services to the School, while the parish priest of Kumarikatta was officially the

principal. The School, situated in a strategic place bordering Bhutan, grew in number and got affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE), thanks to the hard work of Fr Ethelbert Minj (parish priest 1998-2005) and others. In 2002, Fr Joseph Puthenpurackal was appointed principal of the School, separating the responsibility for the School from that of the parish priest. In February 2002, Fr Joseph began his residence on the School premises at Sashipur.

Since then, Don Bosco School, Sashipur, has grown into a full-fledged secondary school and holds out great possibilities for education and evangelisation in the region. Although the school was upgraded to higher secondary, due to the lack of students, the higher secondary section has been put on hold. During the time of Fr George Mudakkampuram, a chapel, nursery block and an in-door stadium cum auditorium were constructed. For some years, the Centre also organised skill training programmes to empower and provide employment to young people under the aegis of DB Tech.



Apostolic Schools in the Assam Plains

The province recognised the need to look after the fresh candidates who want to join the Salesian life from the Assam Plains in loco, at least for the initial years, instead of taking them to Savio Juniorate, Mawlai. Hence, the first apostolic house in the Assam plains was opened in Tangla parish in 1987. Fr Philip Barjo was put in charge of looking after the candidates. The candidates were admitted to Don Bosco School, Tangla, in Class VII. Fr Jose Thiruthanathy was the rector and parish priest, and Fr Marcus Lakra was the assistant parish priest. When Fr Santosh Minj succeeded Fr Jose Thiruthanathy as rector and parish priest, the apostolic school continued in Tangla.

In 1991, the apostolic school was shifted to Kumarikatta parish. Fr Thomas Pampadiyil was in charge of the apostolic boys, and they studied class VII at Don Bosco School, Kumarikatta. It functioned only for a brief period up to 1993.

The apostolic school started functioning in Boko in 1994. Fr Chacko Vellatukara was in charge of these boys. Later, when Fr Philip Barjo became the provincial, Fr Marcus Lakra was appointed vocation promoter of the province. He was asked to look after the candidates. Fr Jose Veliaveetil was the rector and parish priest, while Fr Augustine Karotupuram was an assistant parish priest and headmaster of the school. This experiment continued until 2004, when the boys were shifted to Bosco Mount, Rongkhon.

In 2008, the apostolic school was opened at Don Bosco School, Sashipur. Fr Glorious Syiemlieh, the principal of Don Bosco School, was put in charge of looking after the candidates. Fr Joseph Almeida, the then provincial, made necessary arrangements to provide the required facilities for the apostolic boys. Due to some untoward problems, the apostolic school had to be shifted from Shashipur.

In 2013, the apostolic house was brought to Barpeta Road. The then provincial, Fr Thomas Vattathara, asked Fr Marcus Lakra to look after the apostolic candidates. Fr Santhosh Minj was then the rector and parish priest of the Centre. The apostolic house continued for some years, but it was discontinued in 2020. The students were once again shifted to Bosco Mount, Rongkhon.

Apostolic School at Sashipur

After a gap of four years, an apostolic school in the Assam Plains was once again opened at Sashipur on 16 April 2024, thanks to the initiatives taken by Fr Januarius S. Sangma, the then provincial and his council. Fr Marcus Lakra was appointed to look after the candidates. He is also the vocation promoter of the province. The residence of the boys was blessed, and twenty-four young candidates from the six parishes, Doomni, Kumarikata, Mazbat, Satgaon, Amkachi, and Mariani, joined the apostolic school on 20 April 2024. They are doing their studies at Don Bosco School Sashipur. Fr Nicodem Aind is the principal of the school, and Fr Paul Minj is the vice principal.



At present, four Salesians are placed to guide and help the candidates to discern their vocation. Cl. Marius Barjo, the assistant, who is also a part-time teacher at school, looks after them as a brother among brothers. The whole Salesian community is interested in their education and formation. The candidates are given a Salesian experience of welcoming, joy, friendliness, approachability and hospitality. Don Bosco said, "It's not enough to love the young, but the young must feel that they are loved and taken care of." This is what the Salesian community of Sashipur is doing at present. The candidates are well informed that they are brought to the Salesian house by Mary Help of Christians. The formators inculcate among them a filial devotion to her.

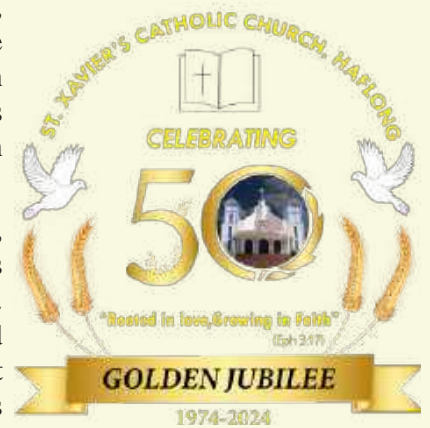


GOLDEN JUBILEE OF ST XAVIER PARISH, DON BOSCO HAFLONG

Fr Thomas Kunnappillil

Dima Hasao, formerly known as North Cachar Hills, is one of the districts of Assam, India. It is situated in the northeastern part of Assam and is known for its picturesque landscapes, lush green hills, and diverse culture. It is characterised by its hilly terrain and is part of the Eastern Himalayas. The district is rich in natural beauty and is home to numerous rivers, waterfalls, and dense forests. Some prominent rivers in the region include the Barak River, Jatinga River, and Diyung River.

Dima Hasao is home to different indigenous tribal communities, including Dimasas, Zema Nagas, Hmars, Kukis, Karbis, Khasis, Hrangkhawls, Khelmas, Adibasis and many others. The Dimasa tribe is the dominant community in the district. The primary languages in the Dima Hasao district are Dimasa, Hmar, Kuki, and Assamese. These languages reflect the linguistic diversity of the region. The district boasts of a rich cultural heritage with various traditional dances, songs, and festivals celebrated by the indigenous communities. The Dimasa people, in particular, have a distinct cultural identity with their traditions and customs. Dima Hasao district in Assam offers a unique blend of natural beauty and cultural diversity. It is gradually becoming a destination for nature enthusiasts and travellers seeking an offbeat and tranquil experience in northeastern India.



Christianity in Dima Hasao

The history of Christianity in the Dima Hasao is closely tied to the broader history of Christian missionary activities in the northeastern region of India. The arrival of Christianity in Dima Hasao can be traced back to the efforts of Christian missionaries who began their work in the region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The American Baptist missionaries played a significant role in introducing Christianity. They established Mission stations and schools to spread Christianity. They were successful in bringing a substantial number of tribal people to Christianity. The Dimasa Baptist church is one of the prominent Christian denominations in the region. Through education, they could attract people to the Christian faith. The missionary schools profoundly impacted the region's education, social, and economic development. Several primary schools established by the missionaries are now well-known educational institutions in the region. Over time, other denominations entered the region, establishing the churches. Christianity changed the lifestyle, customs and traditions of the people.

Catholic Church in Dima Hasao

The Catholic Church in Dima Hasao is relatively a recent entrant compared to the long history of Christianity in India. The origin of the Catholic Church in the Dima Hasao goes back to the era of British rule, particularly the construction of the railway link to Chittagong. Among the railway personnel, there was a small group of English-speaking Catholics. At the insistence of the railway authorities, Msgr Christopher Becker SDS, the then Prefect Apostolic of Assam, requested the RNDM Sisters who were at Chittagong to open an English medium school at Haflong. In 1916, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) began St Agnes School and the hostel for the girls. A priest was stationed at Haflong, principally the chaplain of the sisters.

The Salesian Evangelizing Mission in Dima Hasao

At the arrival of the Salesians in Assam in 1922, there were 81 Catholics in Haflong, mostly the Railway employees. The Salesians began their work in Haflong in April 1923 when Fr Giuseppe Hauber took over as the Chaplain of the Sisters from Fr Letellier SJ. In July of the same year, Fr Giovanni Fergnani was appointed the Chaplain. Later, Fr Henry Raygasse became the Chaplain. Rev. Fr Peter Ricaldone, the extraordinary visitor, visited Haflong in 1927.

In 1927, Cachar, including the Haflong and Sylhet districts, formed part of the newly erected Chittagong Prefecture entrusted to the Holy Cross Congregation by the Propaganda Fide. When Haflong became part of the Prefecture of Chittagong and was entrusted to the Holy Cross Missionaries, after much discussion and discernment, it was decided that the Salesians leave Haflong. In 1928, the Salesians left Haflong. Unfortunately, the Cachar region did not receive much missionary attention from the new Prefecture.

On 17 January 1952, Haflong was established as a Prefecture comprising Cachar, Tripura and Mizoram and was placed under the care of the Holy Cross Fathers of the Canadian Province. Msgr George Breen CSC was appointed the first Prefect Apostolic.

On 26 June 1969, Pope Paul VI raised it to a diocese with the episcopal See at Silchar. Most Rev. Denzil D'Souza, the first bishop of Silchar, invited the Salesians to Haflong. In 1974, Haflong was officially handed over to the Salesians, and Fr Peter Bianchi was sent to be in charge of the mission at Haflong. He took over from Fr Hyacinth OFM. In 1974, the parish of Haflong, dedicated to St Francis Xavier, was established with Fr Peter Bianchi as its first parish priest. The other parish priests who followed him were Fr Alexis Sanglura, Fr Mathew Kadavunkal, Fr Joseph Palamthattel (Sunny), Fr Thomas Anikuzhikattil, Fr Joseph Kunnathukizhakethil, Fr Sebastian Kuricheal, Fr Andreas Panna, Fr Jose Perunnerparambil, Fr Sebastian Ishorary, and now, Fr Thomas Kunnappillil.

In 1976, Fr Bianchi began the English medium primary school for the boys in a temporary shed. By 1980, the new building of Don Bosco School was completed. Meanwhile, Fr Peter Bianchi carried out the construction of the church.

In December 1983, when the new diocese of Diphu was created, the North Cachar Hills district, with its headquarters in Haflong, was detached from the diocese of Silchar and joined Diphu. The Silver Jubilee of the parish was celebrated on 11-12 December 1999.

On 19 March 2004, the old school building was handed over to the diocese as it was located in the church land. It was converted into a hospital, which the Holy Spirit Sisters look after. The Don Bosco School was then shifted to the parish campus by constructing new buildings. On 16 January 2005, Fr John Changsan, the first priest from the parish, was ordained. Most Rev. John Thomas, the then bishop of Diphu, ordained him. The New Testament in Dimasa was published in the same year. On 24 March 2005, Most Rev. John Thomas, the then-bishop of Diphu, released it.

Vocations to priestly and religious vocations from the parish are praiseworthy. There are three Salesians (two priests and one cleric), one Jesuit priest, four nuns belonging to the RNDM, four nuns belonging to the MSMHC congregation and one nun belonging to the VSDB congregation.

The Salesian presence was canonically established in 2016, and Fr Emmanuel Marngar was appointed its first rector. The Church was renovated in 2016. In 2022, Fr Thomas Kunnappillil, serving as parish priest, was appointed the new rector. The Salesian residence was also renovated in recent years. Other Salesians who work in the centre are Fr Xavier Beck (principal of Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Haflong & assistant parish priest) and Br Benjamin Rosant Indwar (vice-principal of Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Haflong).



Fr Thomas Kunnappillil



Fr Xavier Beck



Br Benjamin Rosant Indwar

Fr Douglas Wollaston, Fr Alexis Sanglura, Fr Thomas Vattoth, Fr Mathew Chollamadathil, Fr Thomas Puliparambil, Fr Stephen Chemmalakuzhy, Fr Joseph Ngamkhochung, Fr Paul Kuttikadan, Br Benjamin Kujur, Fr Chacko Kanjooparambil, Fr Isaac Mattappillil, Fr Milon Narjary, Fr Edmund Lakra, Fr Jose Nadackal, Fr Christopher Warlarpih, Fr John Gilbert Kharshandi, Fr Arvind Kailash, Fr Albert Sangma, Fr Pradeep Ekka, Fr Joseph Mung and Fr Prasad Kalaparthy have served as vice principals or assistant parish priests or as both in the past years.

The evangelisation work in Haflong assumed greater momentum in the years that followed the Silver Jubilee celebration. The parish has a Catholic population of 2000, with 275 families in 12 villages. The Zeme Nagas are the largest Catholic tribe in the parish. The farthest village from the parish is Baladhan, which is a six-hour journey by jeep. There are eleven units of Catholics in Haflong and nine villages of Zeme, Kuki, Hmar, and Khasi communities. All the villages now have RCC churches, and the last one, Mahur village, is nearing completion with also a multi-purpose hall below the church.

There are five village schools under the parish: Asalu, Mahur, Laisong, Baladhan and Haranggajao.

The Golden Jubilee Celebrations

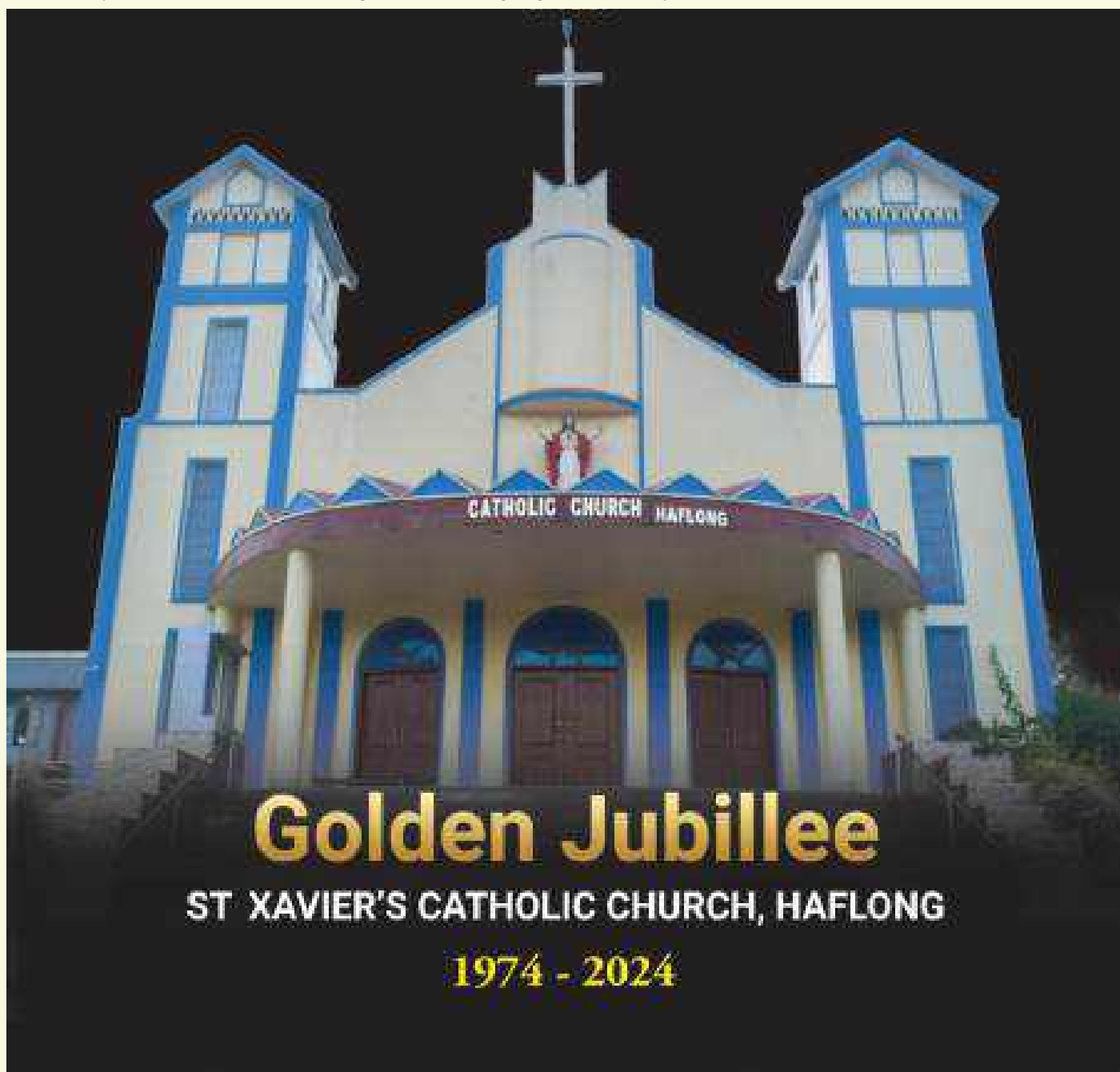
The Golden Jubilee celebrations commenced on 28 January 2024, the Sunday preceding the feast of Don Bosco. Most Rev. Paul Mattekatt, bishop of Diphu, presided over the solemn Holy Eucharist and was concelebrated by many priests. During the Eucharist, the bishop administered communion to several children for the first time. The lighting of the jubilee lamp, the hoisting of the jubilee flag and the release of the jubilee balloons were the highlights of the celebration. The community meal and a cultural-musical programme made the day memorable for the people.

The Golden Jubilee logo with the verse from Ephesians, “Rooted in Faith, Growing in Love,” has been the ongoing animation programme for the faithful through the year leading up to the Golden Jubilee celebration on 1 December 2024.

The three-day Golden Jubilee charismatic retreat was conducted by the DRC Tezpur led by Rev. Fr Joby VC and a team of six animators.

Various commissions like the Reception Committee, Cultural, Food, Venue and Stage, Liturgy, Liturgical singing, Musical evening, Golden Jubilee Souvenir, etc., are at work in preparation for the Golden Jubilee concluding celebration.

Bishops, priests, religious, civil and government authorities and faithful of the parish, including from the far-flung villages and invitees from the parishes of the Diphu diocese and the houses of the province, are expected to attend the function. The Solemn Episcopal Eucharistic celebration, Felicitation, release of the golden jubilee souvenir magazine, community meal, and musical evening will be the highlights of the day.



DON BOSCO COLLEGE, DIPHU: THE INTELLECTUAL DELIGHT OF KARBI ANGLONG

Fr Johnson Parackal

Situated on NH-329, about seven kilometres either from Diphu or Manja, the Don Bosco College, Diphu stands as a lighthouse for the young, offering quality education coupled with personality development and a sense of direction for their future goals in life. Established in 2014 as a junior college with three streams of Arts, Science and Commerce to cater to the educational needs of the young people of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts in particular and of north-east India in general, the institution was upgraded to a Degree College by affiliating it with Assam University, Silchar in 2018.



Don Bosco College, Diphu, has the unique distinction of being the first Catholic College in the diocese of Diphu. The foundation of the Junior college was laid on 8 December 2014 by Fr Thomas Vattathara, the then Salesian provincial of Guwahati, and blessed by Most Rev. Paul Mattekatt, bishop of Diphu. The classes for the first batch of 23 students of CI XI were held at the Diocesan Agricultural Training Centre, Manja, in August 2014. The new college building was blessed exactly two years later, on 8 December 2016, by Most Rev. Paul Mattekatt, bishop of Diphu. It was inaugurated by Prof. Dhruvajyoti Saikia, Vice Chancellor, Cotton College State University, Guwahati. Today, the college has a strength of over 960 students taking full advantage of the educational services of Don Bosco by pursuing different courses of study.

The decision to start a college at Diphu was initiated when a proposal was made by Fr Thomas Vattathara, the then Provincial of Guwahati, during the meeting of rectors and leaders of communities held in October 2013. After that, a request was made to Most Rev. Paul Mattekatt, bishop of Diphu, to start a Salesian presence in East Karbi Anglong for the higher education of the poor and the deprived youth who have little or no access to higher education. The bishop and the diocese responded positively by offering generously 40 acres of land for the college. Much moral support came from the clergy and people of all walks of life who believed in Don Bosco's education system. Shri Tuliram Ronghang, CEM of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, and his executive members have made several visits to the college to encourage students and the college authorities to bring quality education to Karbi Anglong, which will have a lasting impact on the educational scenario of the region.

The construction of the college building was not without struggles and difficulties. A good measure of troubles and obstacles were present all along the way - no boundary walls at the building site, meagre funds available for the construction, arduous journey, etc. But a strong desire and determination to give the very best to the least of this place kept the Salesians to forge ahead. Don Bosco School, Panbazar, came in a big way with financial assistance to help construct the Junior college. Other houses also generously supported the project. In a record time of two years, the building was completed, and the classes were shifted to the new building despite the lack of many facilities.

Today, the college campus consists of a cluster of buildings, which includes the Don Bosco Junior College, Don Bosco Degree College, the Helena and Sophia girls' hostels, Bishop Mathai boys' hostel and the college canteen. Sisters manage the girls' hostels from two different religious congregations: The Daughters of the Cross – Kolkata province (Helena Girls Hostel) and Mission Sisters of Ajmer – Rajasthan (Sophia Girls' Hostel). These hostels were built by their respective congregations at their

own cost on the plots allotted to them. The boys' hostel, named after the first Salesian Bishop of Diphu Diocese, Bishop Mathai Kochuparampil, is managed by the Salesians of the college community.

Fr Cyriac Vettickathadam and Fr Jimmy Sangma were the first Salesians to form the Salesian community at Diphu. Later, they were joined in by Fr Cornelius Panna. When Fr Jimmy Sangma was transferred, Fr Jogesh Sangma was appointed the principal. These Salesians had to put up with many inconveniences, difficulties, and sacrifices, including lack of proper accommodation, food, and facilities till finally when the college building was completed in 2016. In June 2018, Fr Johnson Parackal joined the college as the principal in place of Fr Jogesh Sangma, who was transferred to Don Bosco Junior College, Tura. Fr Joachim Pumah joined the college in 2022 as the warden of the Mathai Hostel.

In 2024, Fr Cyriac Vettickathadam was transferred to Don Bosco College, Bongaigaon and Fr Joachim Pumah was sent to Amkachi as parish priest. Fr Vivek Lakra was posted as vice principal, while Fr Simplicius Kerketta joined the college as warden of the Mathai Hostel. At the same time, Fr Johnson Parackal was appointed rector of the community. Today, the community consists of Fr Johnson Parackal, Fr Cornelius Panna, Fr Vivek Lakra, Fr Simplicius Kerekatta and two clerics, Cl. Dominic Dipka Marak and Cl. Rockenjoy Hasda, who are pursuing their graduation.



Don Bosco Degree College, Diphu

The College envisions a holistic and quality higher education that is within the reach of all. It upholds a participatory, intellectually competent, multi-skill oriented, value-based and socially transformative education.

The success of the College Diphu has much to do with its qualified and dedicated faculty. The teachers of the college are more than mere lecturers or experts in their respective fields but are also deeply committed to the growth and well-being of their students. They go beyond the conventional teacher-student relationship, serving as mentors and guides who nurture the intellectual and personal development of each student. These teachers are known for their innovative teaching methods, which encourage critical thinking, creativity, and independent learning. Their dedication to academic excellence, coupled with their approachable demeanour, creates an environment where students feel supported in their educational journey. The faculty's passion for teaching and their willingness to go the extra mile ensure that students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for real-world challenges.



Salesian Community with the Provincial

A defining characteristic that makes the college so very special is its beautiful and scenic environment. The campus exudes a sense of warmth and community, making students feel at home from the moment they step foot on the grounds. The well-maintained campus, with its lush greenery and peaceful surroundings, provides the perfect backdrop for learning and personal growth. The college places a strong emphasis on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. Students from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together at Don Bosco College, creating a vibrant and dynamic community. This diversity enriches the learning experience, as students are exposed to different perspectives and ideas. The college's emphasis on community living fosters a sense of belonging, which is crucial for students as they navigate their academic and personal lives.

It is this sense of oneness and unity that attracts students from different parts of the northeast to take admission to the college. The various curricular programmes that the college organises from time to time, like the Don Bosco College Week, Don Bosco Ethnic Food Festival, Student Development Programme, DB Cultural Day, DBC College Quiz, DBC Outreach Mission, DBC Educational Trip, Mr & Miss DBCD, DBC Survey & Support Services, DBC Environment Services, etc. give the students an all-round formation. The combination of quality education with a nurturing environment and a strong sense of community makes the college a sought-after place for students seeking more than just an education. The college's commitment to creating a safe and engaging learning environment makes it the number one choice for students looking to pursue higher education.

The college has much bigger plans for the future. It intends to add more honours courses to the already existing programmes in the coming years and introduce courses like B.Sc, BCA, integrated B.Ed., and other job-oriented one-year diploma courses in tourism-travelling, rubber technology & industry, hospitality and hotel management, sales, and marketing, refrigeration, beauty, and spa, etc. The college has infrastructural plans to build an amphitheatre, staff quarters, gym, swimming pool, football stadium, basketball court, etc.

The joy and enthusiasm of the young students know no bounds when they come to realise the great possibilities that the college offers. Naturally and so wonderfully gifted as they are, they give a spontaneous expression to the singing of their favourite college anthem.

Here we stand, in one heart and mind
Singing the song with the rhythm divine
Children of the land – the Karbi Hills
Sons and daughters of Don Bosco

Come Bosconians, let's boldly march on
Till we reach our cherished goal
Come Bosconians, let's boldly march on
Striving for a better world
Knowledge and wisdom, value and service
Excellence our motto
Don Bosco, lead us on



Helena Girls' Hostel

Mathai Boys' Hostel

Sophia Hostel-Diphu

THE INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY: SUMMARY

Fr Joy Kachappilly



The Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality will take place from Wednesday, 2 October to Sunday, 27 October 2024, to continue the work of the Synod on Synodality around the theme “For a Synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.” It will be preceded by two days of spiritual retreat from 30 September 2024 to 1 October 2024.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Second Session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, published on 9 July 2024, will be the guiding document for the synod. The thirty-two-page document contains 112 paragraphs divided into three main parts, namely, relations, pathways and places, besides an introduction, a section on foundations and a conclusion.

The document focuses on the question, “How to be a synodal Church in mission?” It builds on the First Session’s work and aims to guide the Church’s discernment on implementing synodality. Let us attempt a brief summary of the text.

The introduction proffers a brief history of the three-year journey of the synod since its opening of the synodal process on 9-10 October 2021.

Immediately after the introduction, there is a section on “Foundations,” which outlines the theological and ecclesiological basis for a synodal Church. It emphasises that the Church is the People of God, called to be a sign and instrument of unity with God and among humanity. Synodality is presented as rooted in the Church’s nature, expressing the communion that flows from the life of the Trinity.

This section stresses the importance of baptismal dignity and the *sensus fidei* of all the faithful. It highlights the need for a renewed understanding of relationships within the Church, particularly between men and women, and calls for greater recognition of women’s roles. The foundation of synodality is linked to Christian initiation and the Eucharist,



which nourish the Church’s missionary life. The section also addresses the need for conversion and reform, emphasising that synodality offers a witness to the world a different way of relating and decision-making. Overall, this section provides the theological groundwork for understanding synodality as an essential expression of the Church’s nature and mission.

Synodality is described as the Church’s particular style of life and mission, involving communion, participation, and mission. It emphasises listening, dialogue, and discernment among all members of the Church. The document stresses that synodality is not an end in itself but a means to proclaim the Gospel more effectively.

The document highlights the importance of Christian initiation and the Eucharist as foundations for synodal life. It emphasises the need to recognise and promote the variety of charisms and ministries within the Church, including those of the laity and women.



The text calls for a renewed understanding of ordained ministry within a synodal framework, emphasising service and co-responsibility rather than hierarchical authority. It suggests re-evaluating decision-making processes to involve broader participation while respecting the proper roles of bishops and other leaders.

The formation of various groups of people in the Church is identified as a crucial aspect of developing a synodal Church. The text recommends integral, shared formation programmes that involve laity, religious, and clergy together, with a focus on listening skills and discernment.

The document addresses the need for greater transparency and accountability in Church governance, including financial matters and safeguarding practices. It suggests regular evaluations of ministerial performance and increased lay involvement in decision-making processes.

Ecclesial discernment is presented as a key practice for a synodal Church. The document emphasises the importance of listening to the Word of God, to one another, and to the signs of the times. It calls for developing and sharing methodologies for communal discernment.

The text recognises the changing nature of ‘place’ in the Church due to urbanisation, increased mobility, and digital culture. It calls for adapting ecclesial structures to these new realities while maintaining the importance of local communities.

The document proposes strengthening the role of Episcopal Conferences and other regional church bodies, suggesting they could be given greater doctrinal and pastoral authority to address local needs while maintaining unity with the universal Church.

Regarding the Petrine ministry, the text suggests exploring ways to exercise papal primacy that better support synodality and decentralisation while maintaining the Pope’s role as the visible sign of Church unity.

The document emphasises the ecumenical dimension of synodality, encouraging learning from other Christian traditions and exploring possibilities for shared discernment on common concerns.

The text addresses the need for inculturation and appreciation of diversity within the Church, recognising how different cultural contexts shape the expression of faith and ecclesial life.

The document calls for a renewed commitment to listening to and involving those on the margins of the Church and society, seeing this as essential to the Church’s mission and synodal nature.

The text highlights the importance of the digital world as a crucial dimension of the Church’s contemporary witness and mission, calling for formation and engagement in this area.

The conclusion of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, titled “The Synodal Church in the World,” emphasises the interconnectedness of all things and the Church’s role in witnessing God’s presence in the world. It draws on the vision from Isaiah of God’s eschatological banquet, presenting the Church as a place where this vision is lived out, offering refuge and hope to those in need.

The conclusion links the synodal process to the call for universal fraternity presented in Pope Francis’ encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, framing synodality as a way of addressing the wounds and divisions of our time. It reiterates the key questions addressed in the document about being a synodal Church in mission, engaging in deep listening and dialogue, fostering co-responsibility, and transforming structures to enable greater participation. The conclusion ends with a call to praise God and continue the synodal journey as pilgrims of hope, emphasising the Church’s mission to proclaim the Good News of salvation to those who still await it.

As we pray for the success of this forthcoming synod, let us hope that this synod will bring about the much-needed changes that can help the Church to lead her flock more effectively to the feet of her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ!

REDUCTION OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA

Fr Tony Pellissery

The project “With the Youth, to Eradicate Poverty” – Reduction of Multidimensional Poverty in South Asia - is designed as **a comprehensive animation and formation initiative for the SDBs** of the South Asia Region in all sectors of their work, inspiring a shift in the approach to serving the poor. This shift involves acceptance and enthusiasm among SDBs of the region to let established standards and benchmarks to verify their institutions and interventions and evaluate the outcomes of their endeavours. Adequate systems and processes, sufficient capacity, and sustained enthusiasm among SDBs of the Region to evaluate their work through objectively verified outcomes would be a significant measure of success. This change of approach and the evaluation criteria are together expected to stimulate **further creativity among the SDBs in addressing the needs of the poor.**

The project underscores the importance of **recognising and appreciating every SDB’s role** – regardless of specific assignments or responsibilities - in the holistic development of poor young people. Within its mission, it views all types of work as integral and interconnected components rather than isolated interventions.

A two-pronged strategy is recommended:

a. Leveraging our diverse existing programmes and interventions

The project leverages the large bundle of diverse existing programmes and interventions of the SDBs, sharpening their focus towards the reduction of extreme poverty in its various forms. This involves assessing and documenting current programmes and interventions in each of the provinces and re-energising, re-focusing and up-scaling, where needed and possible, those especially that have the potential to contribute to the reduction of extreme poverty.

b. Initiating programmes to address specific contexts of intense poverty

The project accompanies the SDB provinces, through sustained processes of discernment, to identify specific contexts of greater poverty, vulnerability, deprivation or discrimination and motivates and supports them to design, launch, monitor and document appropriate programmes to address them.

The single major outcome the project envisages is that by the end of the project period, **300000 families** overcome extreme or absolute poverty – understood as living below the current international poverty line (*\$2.15 per person per day or Rs 5000 per person per month*) – or being multi-dimensionally poor, according to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Activities for Year One, from September 2024 to September 2025, include a. Formation of project teams and dissemination of project vision and strategy, b. Designing province and network-level strategies and action plans, c. Participatory development of criteria and benchmarks, d. Province Level Planning and Monitoring Meetings, e. Preliminary baseline data and identification of Key Result Areas in each province.



This project looks beyond its immediate outcome and outputs to **a sustained manner of being and acting of the SDBs** of this region that is **in consonance with core SDB values and mission.** While the role of the project itself is that of a catalyst and an enabler, the combined effort of all the provinces of the region is expected to ensure that a significant per cent of the total annual average “reach” of each SDB province of the region consists of persons living below the current international poverty line or are multi-dimensionally poor as per the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index.

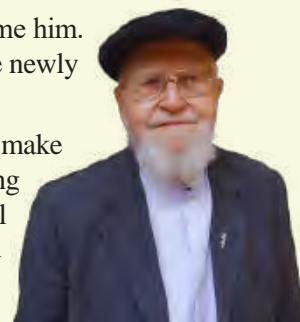
The project was **launched by Fr Martoglio Stefano**, the Vicar General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, on 05 August 2024, at Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu, in the presence of the Regional and the Provincials of South Asia Region: “With the Youth, to Eradicate Poverty.”

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Anecdotes from Fr John Batista Busolin

When Fr Busolin first came to Damra on a “temporary assignment,” there was no one to welcome him. Fr George Stadler was out in the villages. Not knowing a word of Garo and still less English, the newly arrived missionary went to bed on an empty stomach.

Fr Busolin was a good mimic, and whenever anyone touched his beard, he would surreptitiously make a clucking noise, and the person who touched the beard would believe that it was a beard making the noise. He/she would exclaim: “Look, Father’s beard sounds like the serenda (a Garo musical instrument).” There would be long discussions about it among the Garos, and everyone wanted to touch the beard of Fr Busolin to see if that was true.



In Damra, the first allotment of land for the school, church, Fathers’ residence, boys’ boarding,



convent and girls’ boarding were all one-beside-the-other on the same side of the road. Fr Busolin and other Salesians thought it would be better for the convent and the girls’ boarding to be set up on the opposite side of the road. So, Fr Busolin went to the Block Development Officer and petitioned for a piece of land on the other side of the road for the convent and boarding. The genial Bengali officer, with a twinkle in his eyes, remarked, “Aru ki, Father, it is not prudent to keep ‘fire and firewood’ one next to other, hai na!” He readily granted the government land where the convent and boarding stand today.

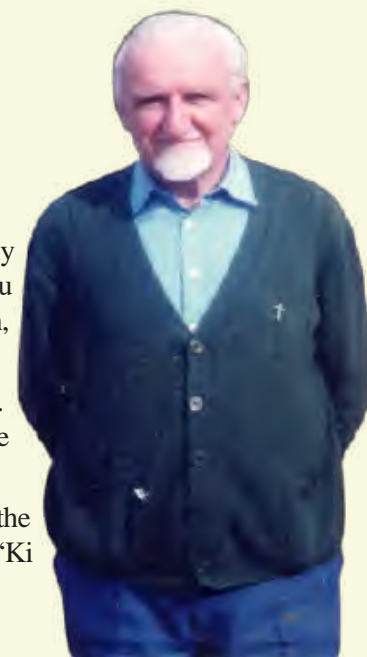
On one of his pastoral tours through the thick jungles near Jengjal, Fr Busolin was trekking along when the team travelling with him heard a growl. The team stopped to check what that growl was about. It was a bear up a tree feeding on wild honey. As they walked on, a rushing sound attracted their attention again: it was the bear close on their heels. There was no question of running away. So, they merely stepped aside to give the beast right of way. As the bear passed them by, Fr Busolin waved his hand and greeted it. Jisuna Rasong (praised be Jesus Christ). The beast grunted in acknowledgement and went about its own business.

Anecdotes from Fr Henry Frassy

It was afternoon. Fr Frassy, the parish priest of Rongkhon, was getting ready to go to Europe for his home leave. He wanted to leave the parish in the good care of Fr Anthony Buccieri. He delegated all the powers and faculties to him. “You can baptise anybody! You can absolve anybody. You can bury anybody. You can marry any...” Fr Buccieri butted in, “Oh! I am too old!”

Fr Frassy, while working in Golaghat, was questioning some kids on their catechism lessons. One girl, when Father asked, “How many sacraments are there?” answered, “One.” Little disappointed, Fr Frassy asked her, “Which one?” The girl replied, “Drakharas (wine).”

Another time, while in Barpeta Road, Fr Frassy asked a girl a question, “Who instituted the sacraments?” The girl, after thinking for some time, said, “Tahero (wait).” Then she said: “Ki jane, Don Bosco hoga (who knows, it may be Don Bosco).”



Anecdotes from Fr Sylvanus Sngi

At Kotagiri, Fr Sylvanus Sngi, attending the provincial chapter of Madras province, was speaking to Fr Villanova, a veteran missionary of North Arcot district, during the coffee break. He asked him, “Father, why don’t you come to the northeast and spend some time there?” “What would I do there?” asked Fr Villanova. “You can do animal husbandry.” “But, how? I have made the vow of chastity,” replied the veteran missionary.

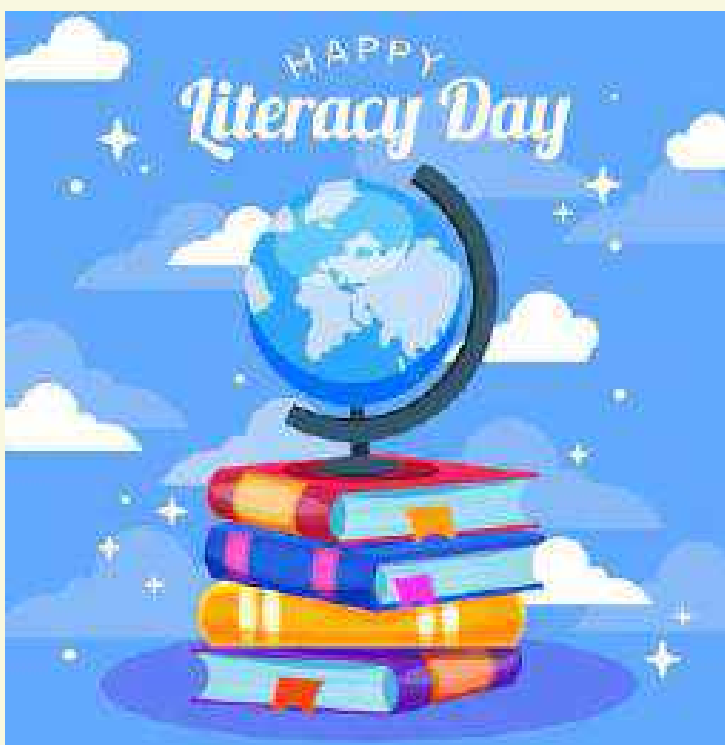
In 1967, Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai, was closed down, and the studentate was temporarily shifted down South to Kotagiri in Tamil Nadu. Once there, Fr Sngi took to a



programme of thoroughly Indianizing himself. The first step was to adopt a strict vegetarian diet. He made no secret about it. One day, a colleague caught Fr Sngi eating beef and remonstrated him for not keeping to the diet and for breaking his vow. Fr Sngi, Who is never at a loss for a word in an argument, could not be caught on the wrong foot. "I am not doing anything that goes against my vow of a vegetarian diet," answered Fr Sngi. "Scripture says, 'all flesh is grass!'" In fact, it does. Read Is 40:6; 1 Pet 1:24.

Once, Fr Sylvania Sngi, preaching during the Christmas novena, dwelt at length on the patience of the donkey because nobody ever has a kind word for the donkey who carried Mary and Jesus.

THE WORLD LITERACY DAY



On 8 September, International Literacy Day was celebrated. We are reminded of an alarming fact, namely, that more than 765 million people worldwide cannot read and write.

In addition, according to UNESCO, at least one young person and one adult in seven do not have basic literacy skills, and more than 258 million children and young people do not have access to education.

25% of the world's children live in countries affected by some humanitarian crisis, such as Syria, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Haiti, Sudan, and Palestine. Schools, in such circumstances, not only perform their function of teaching skills and abilities, but they are also places where children can feel safe, play, interact with other children, and share.

The 2030 Development Agenda focuses on Goal Four, on quality education. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 defines the objectives of education for the coming years: universality, preschool development, skills attainment, equal access, youth literacy, education to care for the planet and sustainable development.

According to Misiones Salesianas, Salesian missionaries around the world are at the forefront of education. More than 2.3 million children and young people receive education and find protection and security in one of the almost 4,800 Salesian educational centres, sometimes in difficult situations, such as armed conflicts or camps for refugees or displaced persons.

YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE PROVINCE

Fr Bivan R. Mukhim and Fr Cletus Sebastian

Laity and Animators Formation Programme 2024 Held

The Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati hosted the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) – Leaders and Animators Formation Programme (LAF) 2024 from 5-7 September, drawing youth from the three northeast provinces of Guwahati, Dimapur, and Shillong. The event saw a remarkable turnout of seventy-seven participants across the seven States of northeast India. Thirty-three young people from Guwahati province participated.

The highlight of the programme was the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on the morning of 6 September, presided over by Rev. Fr Sebastian Kuricheal, provincial of the of Guwahati. The concelebrants include Fr Patrick Lepcha, Secretary of Don Bosco Youth Animation for South Asia (DBYA-SA); Fr Bivan R. Mukhim, vice provincial of Guwahati; Fr Cletus Sebastian, executive director of Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati; Fr Ritonbor Kharkongor, youth ministry delegate of Shillong; and Fr Theotimus Lakra, youth ministry delegate of Dimapur.



Following the Holy Mass, participants engaged themselves in animated sessions led by Salesians and representatives who recently participated in the SYM SYNOD in Turin. These sessions provided insights into the broader Salesian Youth Movement and fostered discussions on youth engagement and ministry.

The diverse representation of participants underscored the unity and shared mission of the Salesian Youth Movement across the northeast. Delegates from all seven States of northeast India contributed to a rich exchange of ideas and experiences, reflecting the dynamic spirit of the Salesian community in the region.

During the group discussions, participants reflected on the sessions, sharing thoughts on their involvement in the Salesian Youth Movement. They suggested how to make SYM visible in their respective centres and provinces.

To spread the knowledge of the Salesian Youth Movement and Salesian Youth Spirituality, the youth from Guwahati province suggested the following:

- Organise a Youth Orientation Programme for SYM members in all our centres/presences in collaboration with the Youth Service Coordinator (YS), which could be held on the first Sunday of every month.
- Revive the Salesian oratory in our presences by actively involving SYM members. The oratory can run every Sunday for two or three hours.

To make the Salesian Youth Movement active in our parishes, the youth from Guwahati province suggested the following:

- Conduct Youth Masses frequently, with SYM members taking an active role in animating other youth.

- Encourage SYM members to accompany the parish priest during house visits.
- Organise youth meetings/SYM Meetings on the first Sunday of each month, ensuring the presence of the Youth Service Coordinator (YS).

To raise awareness and strengthen SYM in Guwahati province, the youth suggested the following:

- Organise an Annual Salesian Youth Movement programme at the province level.
- Convene a gathering of youth and SYM coordinators to present and submit reports to the vice provincial, who serves as the Youth Movement Delegate (YMD) of the province.
- Publish a tri-monthly SYM newsletter or magazine to promote awareness and share updates on the movement.

SYM - LAF 2024 has helped strengthen the bonds among the youth of the Salesian provinces. The programme was a remarkable opportunity for our young people to come together, share their experiences, and grow in their faith. It is heartening to see such engagement from all corners of northeast India.

The Youth Outreach and In-House Programmes

The Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati, under the auspicious of the Province Youth Ministry Commission, organised youth outreach and in-house programmes. These programmes aim to empower young people by offering them opportunities to develop their skills, gain knowledge, and actively participate in community service. The outreach component focused on engaging youth within their communities, while the in-house programme provided a structured environment for more intensive learning and personal development.



The primary objectives of the programmes are:

- To engage with young people in their communities and bring them into our broader support network.
- To provide educational workshops and hands-on training in a variety of disciplines.
- To equip youth with the tools they need to make informed life choices and succeed in their personal and professional lives.
- To offer ongoing mentorship and counselling to guide youth through their challenges.

The content of the programmes includes goal setting, coping with stress, personality development, the importance of effective communication, the effect of media on youth, team building and self-confidence.

1. **Goal Setting:** These sessions guided participants through identifying and setting realistic, achievable goals. Participants learned how to break down their goals into manageable steps and develop action plans to stay on track.
2. **Coping with Stress Sessions:** Given the increasing stress levels among young people, this activity focused on teaching stress management techniques such as mindfulness, breathing exercises, and time management skills. The aim was to equip participants with tools to handle pressure in their academic, social, and personal lives.
3. **Personality Development:** These workshops helped the youth to understand their personality traits and strengths. Activities included self-assessment exercises, confidence-building tasks, and discussions on self-esteem and personal growth.
4. **Importance of Effective Communication:** In these sessions, participants were taught the value of clear and respectful communication. The workshops cover both verbal and non-verbal communication skills, active listening, and how to resolve conflicts constructively.
5. **Effect of Media on Youth:** This session explored the significant influence of media on today's youth, focusing on both the positive and negative impacts. Participants examine how various forms of media shape their perceptions, behaviours,

and self-identity. The workshops encourage critical thinking and provide strategies for consuming media responsibly, developing a balanced and informed approach to media engagement.

6. **Team Building:** This session emphasised the importance of collaboration and communication in achieving group success. Participants engage in interactive activities designed to strengthen trust, improve interpersonal relationships, and enhance teamwork skills. The sessions provide tools and techniques for effective teamwork, helping participants understand the dynamics of working together towards a common goal.
7. **Self-Confidence:** This session was designed to help participants recognise and build their self-confidence. Through various exercises and discussions, participants learned to identify their strengths, challenge self-doubt, and develop a positive self-image. The workshops provide practical techniques for boosting self-confidence, enabling participants to approach challenges with assurance and a resilient mindset.

The youth programmes have helped the participants to equip them with essential skills for personal and social development. The programme's diverse sessions addressed various aspects of youth growth, from goal setting and stress management to communication and media literacy. By focusing on these critical areas, the programme has contributed to developing well-rounded, resilient, and confident young individuals. The positive outcomes observed by participants suggest that the programme has effectively fulfilled its objectives, providing valuable tools and insights for navigating personal and social challenges. Moving forward, continued support and expansion of such programs can further enhance youth development and well-being.

We thank Fr Cletus Sebastian, executive director of DBI and his team members, Sr Veronica Rang Dila, Miss Pinky Sarkar, Mr Ravi John Hembrom, Mr Loli Kapena and Mr Zenith J. Joseph, for organising the programmes.

The Mega Faith Fest 2024 at DBI

The Mega Faith Fest 2024, held at the Don Bosco Institute, was a spiritually enriching event that drew a large and diverse audience. The five-day fest aimed to foster community, inspire faith, and provide an opportunity for personal and spiritual growth. The event featured various activities, including talks, workshops, music, and community service.

The event began with an opening Holy Eucharist and prayer service. Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati and Fr John Barhman, director of NERYC & ICYM, also participated.

Archbishop John Moolachira, in his message, highlighted the significance of faith in today's fast-changing world and the role of the younger generation in shaping the future of faith communities.

Throughout the fest, there were workshops on personal faith development, strengthening community bonds, youth leadership in faith, and interfaith dialogue.

Special sessions were dedicated to youth, focusing on life skills through faith, spiritual resilience, and handling modern-day challenges with faith-based solutions.

The evenings were dedicated to praise and worship sessions led by various choirs and musical groups, offering a vibrant expression of collective spirituality through music and song.

Cultural performances included religious dances, skits based on biblical stories, and faith-based art exhibitions, providing a platform for creative expressions of spirituality.

The Fest concluded with a solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr Sabu Francis, MSFS provincial of Guwahati province.

The event brought people from different walks of life together under a shared spiritual purpose. It emphasised the importance of faith in community building and personal growth while also highlighting the role of the youth in carrying forward the legacy of spirituality in a modern context.



A RÉSUMÉ

Fr Bromio Ch. Marak

The Salesians of Don Bosco among the Garos: A Brief History of Evangelizing Mission (1933-2023) by Fr Jogesh B. Sangma provides a comprehensive historical account of the Salesian mission among the Garo people from 1933 to 2023. It details the arrival of the first Salesian missionaries, Fr Archimedes Pianazzi and Fr Luigi Rocca, in Tura in 1933. The narrative tracks the gradual expansion of the Salesian presence through the establishment of various mission centres, parishes, and educational institutions. This chronological approach allows readers to understand the progressive growth and impact of the Salesian mission over nine decades.

The pioneering work of the early Salesian missionaries is emphasised, highlighting their dedication and perseverance in the face of numerous challenges. These included language barriers, rugged terrain, lack of infrastructure, and initial resistance from local communities. The book describes how Fr Pianazzi quickly learned the Garo language and began publishing religious materials. It also details the missionaries' efforts in touring remote villages, often on foot, to reach out to the people. Their work in establishing the first churches, schools, and dispensaries is presented as laying a crucial foundation for the future growth of the mission.

The Salesian approach of combining evangelisation with education is a central theme. The book offers comprehensive information about the numerous schools, colleges, and hostels established by the Salesians. These institutions are portrayed as not just centres of learning but as integral to the overall mission of uplifting the Garo community. Particular emphasis is placed on Don Bosco's preventive system of education, which is described as being especially effective in the local context. The book suggests that this educational approach helped in both the spiritual and social development of the Garo people.

The gradual expansion of the Salesian mission is meticulously documented through the establishment of new parishes and mission centres. Each new centre - Tura, Damra, Baghmara, Mendal, Rongjeng, Garobadha, Williamnagar, Sellsella, Gojapara, Shallang, Satgaon and others - is described in detail, including the year of establishment, the missionaries involved, and the initial challenges faced. This detailed account helps to illustrate the steady growth of the Catholic Church among the Garos and the persistent efforts of the Salesians to expand their reach.

The elevation of the Tura mission to a diocese in 1973 is presented as a significant milestone. The appointment of Bishop Orestes Marengo as the first apostolic administrator is described as a catalyst for accelerated growth. The book details how this led to the opening of new parishes, the arrival of more religious congregations, and an increase in local vocations. This event is portrayed as a recognition of the growth of the Catholic community and the success of the Salesian mission.

The book provides an in-depth look at the various evangelisation methodologies employed by the Salesians. These include regular village tours, use of catechetical materials, promotion of popular devotions, provision of medical care, organisation of annual gatherings called *Sobhas*, and involvement of lay associations. Each of these methods is explained in detail, with examples of how they were implemented. The boarding schools are particularly highlighted as effective means of nurturing faith and fostering vocations.

Significant attention is given in the book to the Salesian contributions to Garo language and literature. The book details the publication of religious texts, catechetical books, hymns, and journals in the Garo language by various Salesian missionaries. This work is presented not just as a means of evangelisation but as a significant contribution to the preservation and enrichment of the Garo language and culture. The book suggests that this linguistic and literary work helped to make the Christian message more accessible and relatable to the local population.

The fostering of local vocations is presented as a significant achievement of the Salesian mission. The book provides details about the first Garo priests and religious, both men and women. It describes the establishment of formation houses like Bosco Mount and their role in nurturing vocations. The influence of exemplary missionaries in inspiring vocations is emphasised, with several anecdotes about families who produced multiple vocations. This focus on local vocations is presented as crucial for the long-term sustainability and growth of the local church.

The collaborative efforts between Salesians and other groups are a recurring theme throughout the book. It describes how the early Salesians worked alongside diocesan clergy, other religious congregations (like the Missionaries of Christ Jesus), and lay catechists. The book presents this collaboration as a critical factor in the growth and success of the mission. It provides numerous examples of how different groups complemented each other's work, leading to a more effective and far-reaching evangelisation effort.

The book concludes with a tribute paid to twenty-six valiant Salesians who contributed their mite to the evangelising mission of Garo Hills at different times and in varying intensities. Although they have already left for their heavenly reward, the author wants to remember and appreciate their selfless contributions to the growth of the Church among the Garos. The impressive list highlights life, missionary work and the contributions of these Salesians to the people of

THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

Among the GAROS

A Brief History of Evangelizing Mission (1933- 2023)

JOGESH B. SANGMA SDB

FR. ARCHIMEDES PIANAZZI SDB

FR. LUIGI ROCCA SDB

About the Book

The book 'The Salesians of Don Bosco Among the Garos - A Brief History of Evangelizing Mission. (1933-2023)' by Fr. Jogesh B Sangma SDB traces the history of the Salesian work among the Garos. Narrated in simple language, the book covers the growth of the early mission centres and institutions mentioning also the personnel who served at these centres. Noteworthy is the short biodata of the veteran missionaries - both foreign and Indian - who have gone before us for their eternal reward. This book will not only give the much needed information about the history of the Salesian mission among the Garos but also will inspire all its readers.

+ Rev. Bp. Jose Chirackal
(Auxiliary Bishop of Tura)

The book narrates the arrival of Fr Archimedes Pianazzi and Fr Luigi Rocca, the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1933 which marked a significant milestone in the history of Garo Hills. They were followed by the Salesian missionaries from abroad and from within. With their missionary zeal, they ventured into unfamiliar and uncharted territories, bringing the message of Christianity to them. Recognizing the importance of indigenous leadership, they invested in nurturing the local vocations. Through education, spiritual formation, and pastoral guidance, the Salesians cultivated a new generation of clergy and religious leaders, empowering them to serve their community with humility and dedication.

As the narrative unfolds, the book pays tribute to 26 deceased dedicated Salesians who selflessly served among the Garos. These unsung heroes, through their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment, left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of the Garos. In essence, the story of the Salesians' presence among the Garos is one of resilience, compassion, and unwavering faith. Through their pioneering spirit and tireless dedication, they not only brought the light of Christianity to a distant land but also sowed the seeds of empowerment, education, and cultural enrichment, leaving behind a legacy that continues to resonate within the hearts and minds of the Garo community.

Rev. Fr. Januarius S Sangma
Provincial of Guwahati Province

Fr. (Dr.) Jogesh B. Sangma SDB is a member of Salesian Society (ING). He has done MA (English), B. Ed, and PhD in Garo Literature from North Eastern Hill University. He has served as Vice Principal in Don Bosco College Tura, Principal in Don Bosco Junior College Diphu, and is currently serving the Community of Don Bosco Centre for Learning (DBCL Tura) as Rector and Principal.

Garo Hills. The list includes Fr Archimedes Pianazzi (1906- 2000), Fr Luigi Rocca (1900-1956), Fr Anthony Buccieri (1913-1998), Fr George Stadler (1917-1986), Fr Julius Costa (1901-1970), Fr Busolin Battista (1922-2016), Fr Hubert Colzani (1908-1982), Fr Dominic Curto (1922-1989), Fr Henry Frassy (1920-1997), Bishop Orestes Marengo (1906-1998), Fr John Larrea (1921-2013), Fr Anthony Poothara (1939-1989), Br Solomon Angeles Ch. Marak (1922-2001), Br Attilio Areng (1931-2003), Fr Victor Ampanatthuvila (1933-2012), Fr Thomas Kochupurackal (1938-2019), Fr Thomas Chenginiyaden 1943-2023), Fr Abraham Vetticad (1924-2018), Fr John Vadakkekuzhikattil (1954-2007), Br Eligius Khain (1932-2010), Fr Milon Narzary (1965-2020), Fr Michael Bhengra (1959-2017), Fr Anthony Abong B. Marak (1968-2018), Fr Francis Hembrom (1966-2023), Fr Rajesh Ekka (1979-2010), and Cl. Vijay Toppo (1982-2010). May they rest in peace!

While the overall tone of the book is celebratory, it does touch upon some challenges faced by the Salesian mission, especially in recent times. These include maintaining quality education, addressing the loss of faith among the younger generation, the need for better documentation of Salesian history, and difficulties in fostering new vocations. However, these challenges are presented more as areas for future focus rather than as significant setbacks. The overall narrative remains one of remarkable growth and positive impact of the Salesian mission among the Garos over 90 years.

As we congratulate Fr Jogesh B. Sangma on this welcome initiative in familiarising us, especially the younger generation of Salesians, with the evangelising mission that the Salesians accomplished in Garo Hills, let us read this book and be enthused in our ministries! Copies of the book are available in the office of Don Bosco Communications, Guwahati (), and with Fr Jogesh B. Sangma, Don Bosco Centre for Learning, Tura, 794 002, Meghalaya. Mobile number: 60018 16845.

JUBILARIANS

Diamond Jubilee of First Profession



Fr Paul Kuttikadan



Fr Francis Cheeramben



Fr Francis Cheeramben

Golden Jubilee of First Profession



Fr Abraham Kanattu



Fr Sebastian Kunnathukuzhy



Fr Joseph Teron Langne

Silver Jubilee of Ordination

Silver Jubilee of First Profession



Fr Bhaskar Raj Chinthamalla



Fr Paul Rabha



Fr Cletus Sebastian
Pattamkulam



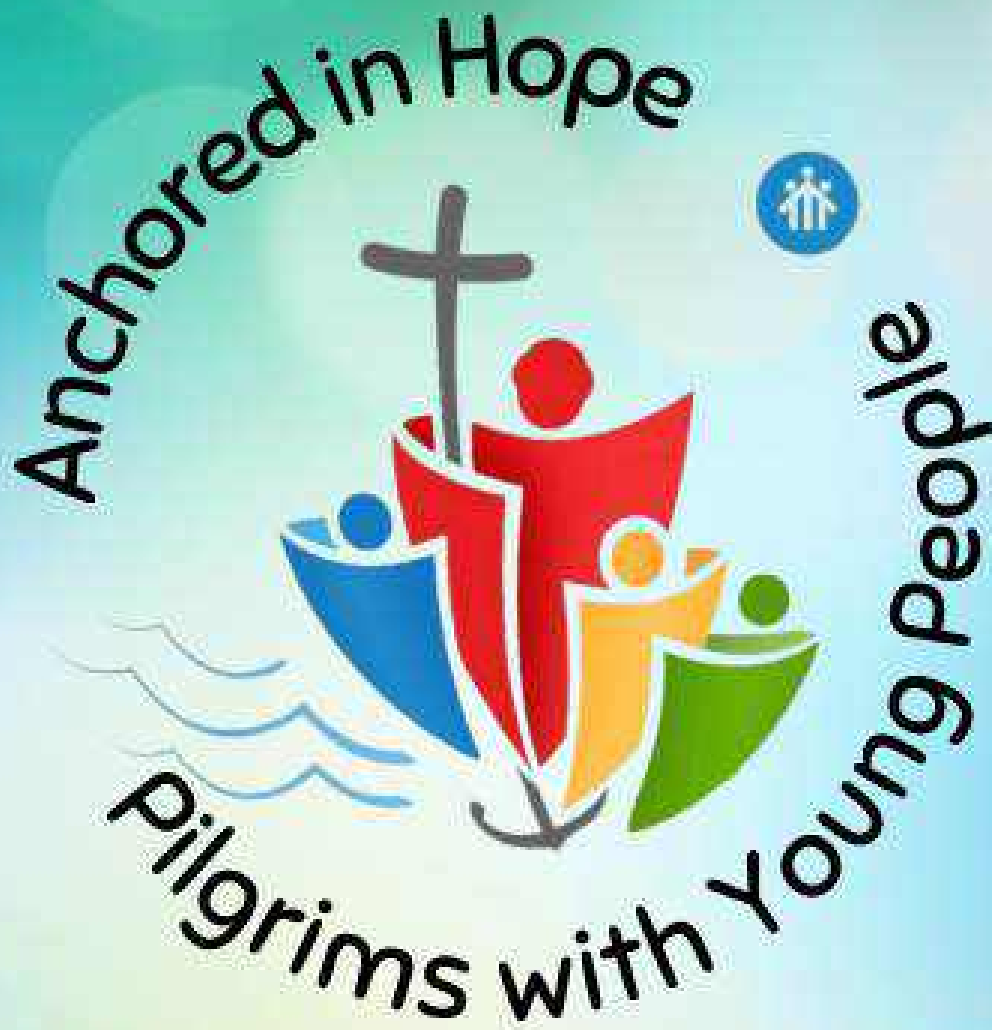
Fr Ignatius Gari



Br Nirmal Ekka



Br Sunil Prakash kerketta




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