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No. 505

**Special studies:** Sch Samuel Soren, MSC Biotechnology, St Joseph's, Trichy.



**Holy Father's Intention for March 2020: For Catholics in China:** We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.

**Province Days 2020 at Jeevandhara, Raiganj. Arrival:  
20 May; Province Days: May 21-22.**

The first Province Retreat for the Year 2020 will be held at Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, from 1st June pm to 9th June pm. Kindly inform Socius (7908417335) by 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Finance Commission Meeting will be held at Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, from 19<sup>th</sup> March pm to 21<sup>st</sup> March pm.

The Education Apostolic Planning Meeting was held at St Xavier's School, Sahibganj, on 5-6<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The first session began at 5:00 pm on 5<sup>th</sup>. Fr Provincial briefed



the gathering on the purpose of the meeting which was to discern and envisage how the educational ministry would be in five to ten years from now. Attending the meeting were 35 Province men from our educational institutions. We chalked out *an action plan* to bring in professionalism in our work and to help us achieve new heights in all our educational

**Tertianship at Hazaribagh:** Fr Jesuraj Poobal and Fr Joby Kachappilly.

**Tertianship at Kodaikanal: Fr A.Thomas Carter**

Theology Studies at VJ, Delhi: Sch Rajesh Katru

Theology Studies at JDV, Pune: Sch Marianus Ekka

Philosophy Studies at Satyanilayam, Chennai: Sch Francis  
Hembrom and Sch Sonatan Murmu

Philosophy Studies at JDV, Pune: Sch Samuel Murmu and  
Sch Devit Tirkey

College Studies: Mangalore: Sch Francis Hansdak'

**Bengaluru:** Sch Ratan Hansdak' and Sch Anup Marandi

Vijayawada: Sch Alesius Tudu and Sch Albinus Hembrom

**Regency:** St. Ignatius, Sahibganj: Sch Habil Murmu

**Majlispur:** Sch Vinil D'Souza; **Mundli:** Sch Borson Hembrom

**Bathbanga:** Sch Vinod Kujur; **Loyola Sadan:** Sch BirendraB.

Marandi; Banpokharia: Christopher Kisku



institutions. Similar meetings were held at Jisu Jaher for the Pastoral Apostolate Planning on 14-15<sup>th</sup> February and for the Social Action Apostolic Planning on 17-18<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to the communities of St Xavier's, Sahibganj, and of Jisu Jaher, in particular to Fr Lourdu Xavier and Br Bernard Kisku, the participants were very well looked after and enjoyed their stay. (**Fr Basil Manojin SJ**).

### Diaconate Ordination

On Saturday, 22 February 2020, at Vidya Jyoti Theologate in Delhi, twenty-eight Jesuit Scholastics, belonging to ten Provinces, were ordained deacons by the Archbishop of Delhi, Most Rev. Anil J.T. Couto. Among the ordained there was



Sch Arockia Julian Jesu SJ of our Province. In the evening a short felicitation programme was put up during which Archbishop Couto gave away the diaconate certificates to the deacons. The presence of Fr Claudius Tauro SJ of our Province and of Sr Stella, the elder sister of Deacon Julian, doubled his and our joy. (**Sch Pratap Samad SJ**).

### Grand Jubilee Celebration

The Provincial Father Varghese Palli SJ and Jisu Jaher Community celebrated, in a grand way, the Golden Jubilee of Br Bernard Kisku's joining the Society of Jesus on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1970. Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, decked with festive decorations, on Monday 10 February 2020, at 6:00 pm joyfully welcomed the host

of invitees to the celebration. these included Br Bernard's younger brother and family, two nieces of another brother, both Sisters of the Holy Family, and other relatives, many clergy and religious, a group of girls from



'Maharo Girls' Hostel' and some friends from Dumka. While 35 concelebrating priests,

Bishop of Dumka, assisted by Fr Provincial Varghese Palli SJ and Fr Paul Aquilina SJ made their way to the altar in the well-decorated hall, Jisu Jaher candidates with the director Fr Ravindra Darshima SJ at the keyboard, led the congregation in singing the entrance hymn and other hymns during the celebration. After the lighting of the lamp, Fr Provincial read out a short biographical note on Br Bernard mentioning, among other things, that he '*is very much a community man*'. In his homily, Bishop Julius expressed his joy at presiding over the Jubilee celebration of a coadjutor brother, a rare event in the diocese. He pointed out the fine human qualities of Br Bernard who invariably receives people with a smile and readiness to help. Brother welcomes the Bishop whenever he visits Jisu Jaher. After the Eucharist, a short felicitation programme was put up beginning with Br Bernard being garlanded and presented with a bouquet and gifts. Jisu Jaher Candidates and then the Maharo Hostel girls sang felicitation songs in English and then danced a beautiful tribal dance. All present, then, made their way to the refectory to the accompaniment of the beating of drums and dancing in Santal fashion. The grand festivity ended with a grand dinner. The participants carried away with them the beautiful message displayed on high behind the altar '*I THANK GOD WHOM I SERVE WITH LOVE*.' Credit for the grand celebration goes to Fr Provincial, Fr Stany Pinto, Fr Jesuraj, Fr Ravindra Darshima and the hard working Candidates, domestic workers and Brother Bernard Kisku himself. (**Fr Paul Aquilina SJ**).

### Jubilee Celebration at CTC

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February, CTC, Torai, celebrated the Golden Jubilee of religious life in the Society of Jesus of Fr Peter Marandi SJ (Director) and of Br Benjamin Sarupurti SJ (Minister).

At 6:30 am, a solemn Thanksgiving Eucharist was celebrated in the Parish Church of Torai. Fr Peter presided over the solemn Eucharist assisted by the Parish Priest Fr Julius Hembrom and the local Superior Fr Gilbert D'Souza SJ. Other concelebrants were Fr Bernard Murmu SJ, Fr Francis Murmu SJ (his predecessor at CTC), Fr Charles Hansdak and Fr Silverius Kujur. Jubilarian Br Benjamin was seated close to the altar.





St Maria Goretti Hostel girls and the Parish Hostel boys, St Anne's Sisters and many faithful from the neighbourhood enhanced the joy and solemnity of the celebration. Felicitation programmes given to the Jubilarians in different places brought to light peoples' appreciation for the contribution both rendered the Church over the years. In the evening, the CTC community put up a special cultural programme cum dinner to felicitate the two jubilarians. On 9<sup>th</sup> February, Fr Peter Marandi SJ celebrated a solemn Jubilee Mass in his home parish of Dumria in Bhagalpur diocese. Around 600 of the faithful thronged the Parish Church. The Parish Priest, Fr Lucas, assisted him at the altar. After Mass, the people felicitated Fr Peter with songs and dance and returned home carrying a hamper each. Later in the evening, a felicitation programme and 'bhoj' (dinner) was organized for the residents of Dumria village by Fr Peter's niece and her husband Samuel. (*Fr Peter Marandi SJ*).

### Mother Mary Fellowship Festival

Gogo Mariam Helmel Porob (Mother Mary Fellowship Festival) held at Mariampahar on 19 February 2020, drew a large crowd of over 13,000 Santal pilgrims from the dioceses of Dumka, Raiganj, Purnea, Krishnagar and Bhagalpur. Many of the pilgrims arrived on the previous evening. On the 19<sup>th</sup> morning, a procession from the Parish Church on top of the hillock began with the Santal ritual of welcome. After that, Fr Chrysostom Hembrom SJ, Parish Priest of Mariampahar and Dean of Sahibganj Deanery, hoisted the flag and pronounced a prayer. The Women's Sodality (Gogo Dol), youth volunteers and parish council members led the procession with the accompaniment of devotional hymns and prayers. The procession headed down towards the playing field where Holy Mass was to be celebrated.



Fr Chrysostom Hembrom SJ, presided over the Eucharist and 25 priests concelebrated. During the liturgy, Mariampahar parish children performed the entrance dance, Daharlangi took care of the Bible procession, Kundli performed the offertory procession, Jibonpur performed at doxology and Chilimpur women's group performed the recess dance. The singing was led by Torai Parish choir under the direction of Fr Simon Murmu, (P.P. of Sonmuni) who sang melodious



hymns. Fr Albinus Murmu, (P.P. of Kundli) delivered an inspiring homily on Mother Mary. Fr Ignatius Manjhi SJ, (Father Incharge, Salti), Frs. Charles Tudu SJ and Sudhir Ekka SJ (Asst. Pastors, Mariampahar) and Sr Mukta HC took care of the food. The Apostolic boys of Gonzaga Sadan, Mundli, worked tirelessly preparing food packets for thousands of people. Holy Cross Sisters from both the convents at Mariampahar fittingly decorated the altar and, besides, prepared the place where all the Fathers and Sisters had their meal after the celebration. Dr Sanyal offered a cup of tea to each participant. Mr Albinas Murmu, our neighbour, arranged for drinking water facility from the nearby stone crusher. Mr Laus Hansdak, (President of Parish Council), Mr Manoj Murmu and Mr Benjamin Hembrom steered beautifully the whole programme which was chalked out by a core parish committee. The Novena in preparation for the event was conducted by the assistant pastors. Some of the faithful gave witness to graces received from Mother Mary, with regards to conception and healing. (*Fr Chrysostom Hembrom SJ*).

### Fr Klaus Visits Jirulia

Fathers Lourdu Susai and Thomas Carter, SMA Sisters, Staff and Students of Fr Fritz Dietz Memorial St Xavier's



School, at Jirulia, were extremely happy to welcome Fr Klaus Vaethrueder SJ and Ms Sara Gratt on 26 February 2020.



The children put up a short but impressive programme. Fr Klaus and Ms Sara learnt the Santali word 'Johar' from the students and in turn taught them



how to say 'Good Morning' in German. They encouraged the children to do well in studies and life and congratulated the Staff for their good work. Then the foundation stone of a new block for higher classes was laid and blessed by Fr Klaus. The visit ended with a fellowship meal.

### Youth for Jesus

A one-day seminar, on 16<sup>th</sup> February, was organized at Haripur village for the youth of four Mass Centres of Shikaripara parish, namely, Hasapathar, Mahulbuna, Latakandar and Bon Haripur. Fr Vernard SJ invited the 55 participants to realize the power of Jesus within themselves and helped them become aware of local issues that affect the people. He also encouraged them to preserve the rich cultural values in the Adivasi community and to become a source of unity in the villages. The youth, divided according to the four centres, engaged themselves in discussions and, then, each presented a report and an action plan to the assembly. The seminar ended with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Being Sunday, the faithful of the four centres joined as well. The youth went back home with



enthusiasm and a desire to do more for the Lord, particularly in their own Centres. A select number from this group will be given more guidance and training at Johar-HRD Centre, Dumka. Five youth animators at the seminar made the youth more active and eager to get into action for the glory of God. Thanks are due to Catechists Jutin and Philip who took initiative in bringing the youth to attend the seminar. **(Fr Vernard Antony SJ).**

### Jeevan Dhara

The dawning of 2020 was welcomed in a prayerful atmosphere by 32 retreatants, including three Jesuits, at Jeevan Dhara during the mid-night Mass. Twenty nine religious Sisters and Fr Carter SJ were directed by Fr Varkey Chenakala SJ. Frs John Chandran SJ and John Victor SJ made their retreat separately. After the retreat Fr Varkey left for Jammu to preach a retreat to a group of Presentation Sisters. Once back, he was given a farewell by the local Jesuits during a common evening prayer followed by a fellowship meal. He left Jeevan Dhara on 19<sup>th</sup> January by motorcycle to take up residence at Jisu Jaher, Dumka. He will be associated with JD for preaching retreats.

Fr K.C. Stephen directed a 30-day Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius to the tertians of Ursuline Congregation. After the retreat, he underwent an Ayurvedic treatment of fifteen days for his back pain in north Kerala. At present he is taking bed-rest in the Jesuit community at Pariyaram, Kerala. After a short home visit, he will be back at JD by 5<sup>th</sup> April. Fr George Uthira SJ conducted a seminar cum retreat to the Propaedeutic Seminarians of West Bengal Ecclesiastical Region. He also guided two of our regents, Marianus Ekka SJ and Habil Murmu SJ during a triduum of prayer. Fr Tom Kottackal SJ is busy writing a book on the Eucharist based on his experiences and studies. After brushing up his Santali, he preached the first Santali retreat of the year in which thirty lay people participated. Br Tony Lakra SJ is keeping himself young by regular morning walks and taking care of the needs of the retreatants. **(Fr George U. SJ).**

### CTC Programmes

Catechists Training Centre at Torai, conducted the Basic Course for 15 village Catechists from February 10<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>. This was the syllabus: learning prayers; salvation history; introduction to the Old and New Testaments; how to conduct Sunday church service without priest; catechism and practical sessions on SCC/BCC. The instructors included Frs Peri Moses SJ and Peter Marandi SJ, and Catechists Mr Philip Arun Marandi and Mrs Sunita Murmu. Besides conducting various courses at the centre, CTC is also actively involved in fostering BCC in Torai itself and Bipotpur villages. Every Saturday evening, CTC's BCC unit conducts Bible reading and Rosary in different families. **(Fr Peter Marandi SJ).**

### Achievements

The last semester exam on 28<sup>th</sup> February concluded the academic year 2019-2020 at St Xavier's School, Sahibganj. However, the Board Exams (ICSE & ISC) were still going



on under the supervision of Frs John Victor SJ and Melchi Tigga SJ respectively. In the year 2019-2020, St Xavier's Sahibganj achieved the following: (1) ICSE results, 100% passed with the highest percentage being 96.60% and that of ISC 95.20%. (2) In Co-curricular subjects, the School stood First in the Quiz Contest held at Rajmahal; secured the Overall Championship Trophy in Fr E. Stellini Memorial Inter-school Elocution Contest; stood First in Speech, Painting and Drawing Competitions in the Independence Day Program organized by the District Administration; Second Prize in the Zonal Painting and Drawing Competition. (3) In Sports, in the Zonal Athletic Meet, the Girls stood First and the boys were the Runners-up; in the Zonal Cricket Tournament our team was the Runners-up; in the Zonal Badminton of Junior Category, First Prize; in the Regional Football, our team stood Second; our students took part in the National Basketball, Cricket and Football Tournaments. And New Look: the Senior Assembly Place in front of the main entrance gives a new



look with a basement under it. However, the basement work is still in progress. The school's main playground is also being given a new look by leveling it and sowing grass seeds. (**Mr Shyamal Palmer**).

### Exam Fever

The month of February was stressful for our hostel boys preparing for and appearing in their final exams. After the exams, they went home for holidays but looking forward for their results with eagerness and perhaps some anxiety. Results usually come out in the first two weeks of March. Our Class X boys began their board exams on 27<sup>th</sup> February and results are expected in May. The new academic session begins on 14 March. (**Sch Marianus Ekka SJ**).

### Special Guest Lecturer

The Department of English at St Xavier's College, Maharo, organized a Special Guest-Lecture Session by Prof. Mihir Kr Jha who is an Assistant Professor at Santal Parganas College and Sido Kanhu Mumru University. He lectured on the art of reading poetry and interpreting both poetry and



literature in general. The lecture was titled: "*Close Reading of a Poem*". He chose a poem by Robert Browning '*My Last Duchess*' and demonstrated the techniques of the close reading method. After his illuminating lecture, Prof. Jha interacted with the students who came from all semesters. Prof. Jha was a Charles Wallace Fellow at the University of Stirling in Scotland. Head of the Department Rev. Fr David Raj SJ who chaired the session, formally addressed the students at the end of the lecture. (**Mr Himadri**).

### First Alumni Meet 2020

St Xavier's College, Maharo, organised its first ever Alumni Meet on 8<sup>th</sup> February. Since its establishment in 2011, several batches of students have completed their academics here, with the first batch in 2015. This reunion of past students was a wonderful initiative of the management to bring together past students and enable them to re-live the golden days of college life at St Xavier's, Maharo. The programme started at 4:00 pm when Rev. Fr Stephen Raj SJ, College Principal, extended a very warm welcome to them. He presented the erstwhile college captains with flowers and mementos. Rev. Fr David Raj SJ motivated the students regarding their present and future. Several students came forward to share memories of the beautiful moments they experienced in the college. Ms Preety Sagar, alumna and presently, a faculty member of the Department of English, shared her experiences both as student and as teacher at St Xavier's. The programme was planned and very well



coordinated by Mr Kusum Kanan Mishra, the Head of the Department of Business Administration. The reunion was also attended by many professors of the college who shared their experiences as well. (**Mr Himadri**).



Khrist Raja School, Nunbatta, had its Annual Sports on 7<sup>th</sup> February. The Chief Guest of the day, Dr Stephen Marandi MLA, informed us, at the last moment, of his inability to arrive on time. It was a big disappointment for all. Fortunately, to save the day Fr Anand Minj SJ, on his way back to Murguni from an educational meeting in Dumka arrived in the nick of time to substitute for the Chief Guest. However, Dr Stephen



Marandi MLA did arrive at 1:00 pm, and students, parents and all present rushed to the School gate. Having received a grand traditional Santal welcome,

Dr Stephen Marandi was escorted to the dais, then hoisted the flag and received the salute of the march past. In his address,



Dr Stephen Marandi emphasized the value of education in this fast changing world. He also shared his unforgettable and lifelong cherishing

experiences in the hostel and school at Guhijori under some of the great Jesuit educationists of the Province. A memorandum concerning the current challenges and difficulties that the students of class VI face in getting admission in other schools were read out and a copy of the same was given to him. Dr Stephen was highly impressed by the creative sport activities and the number of students attending the School. He assured us that he will look into the matter and act as soon as possible. The presence of Frs Philip Hembrom SJ (the Secretary), Manoj Toppo SJ (the Superior), Peter Savari SJ, Nisthamani Toppo SJ, and Fr Anand Minj SJ was a great support to Staff and students alike. Hearty Thanks to Dr Stephen Marandi MLA who graced the occasion with his presence and with encouraging words and sat at table with us. (Fr Vimal Kerketta SJ).

### Educational Exposure Trip

The Department of Zoology at St Xavier's College, Maharo, organized an Educational Exposure Trip to Birsa Agricultural University Extension Centre situated at Dumka for the final year students as part of their academic co-curricular enterprise



under the supervision and guidance of the Head of the Department, Dr. R. K. Roy. The main objective of this visit was to gain first-hand knowledge of the ecosystem and infested parts of plants in general. The visit proved quite enriching and beneficial to the students as Dr. Roy explained several mechanisms at work with the help of samples. (*Mr Himadri*).

### Xaverian Family Picnic

The Xaverian Family of Sahibganj had two picnics in the month of February: (1) the Staff Picnic: The teaching Staff of both English and Hindi Medium Schools, on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, went on picnic together to a beautiful spot called Tetria, about 15 km away. This year it was organized by the



Hindi Medium Staff. Nearly all the members of both teaching staffs, including Frs Rector, Principal and Headmaster were present. Everyone enjoyed it thoroughly,

thanks to Fr Ignatius Lakra SJ, Headmaster of St Xavier's Hindi Medium.

(2) Picnic in the Bus: On 23<sup>rd</sup> February, after Sunday Mass and breakfast, about 54 Christian Staff and Students, in the



company of Fr Hilary D'Souza SJ the Principal, Sr Gracy D'Souza DSH, the Vice-Principal and Fr JL Xavier SJ, left for a tour of: Moti Jharna, Rajmahal, Mangal Hat and Mundli Mission. We had our first stoppage at Moti Jharna where we spent about half an hour enjoying the sight of the waterfall.



Our next stop was to be at the historical places of Mangal Hat and Rajmahal. Due to a road block at Maskalaiya, where a local resident was run over at night, we had to cancel the visit to the historical places and decided to visit the new Sahibganj Multi- Modal Port. With the intervention of SDO of Sahibganj, contacted by the Principal, we were allowed to visit the port. Our final destination was St John Berchmans High School, Mundli, near Tinpahar. Before reaching, we faced another road block and had to make a detour to reach the place at 2:30 pm warmly welcomed by the Jesuits, we sat at table to enjoy a delicious lunch. After lunch, we visited the institutions at Mundli: St John Berchmans Primary, Secondary, Inter College, Hostels, Gonzaga Sadan Apostolic School, Church and Convents. Thanks to Fr Sunit Kullu SJ, Superior and Headmaster of the High School and the Jesuit community for the warm welcome. We reached back home, at around 6:30 pm, tired but satisfied with an enjoyable picnic in the bus. (*Mr Shyamal Palmer*).

### Teachers' Picnic – “The Energy Booster”

All the teaching and non-teaching staff members of St Xavier's at Raiganj were excited when, along with the new Principal Fr Damian Tudu SJ, Fr Manojin Basil SJ and Sr Rita SDS, they reached the picnic spot at Radhikapur village on the Indo-Bangla border. The picnic went off well and



was enjoyed by all and proved to be an ice-breaker for many. Of special interest was the railway gate at the border fence and the railway track that goes from India to Bangla. A big thank-you to the organizing committee. (*Mr S.M.J. Lazar*).

### Mother Tongue Day



International Mother Tongue Day was celebrated in Johar-HRD Centre with the aim of promoting and preserving all living languages, in particular Santali. The Conference Hall filled to capacity with 220

participants of whom 120 were students of Classes VIII and IX from 10 High Schools. A Santali language quiz, for all present, featured *kudum* (riddles) and *bhentakatha* (idioms and phrases). Students of St Claret High School, Basmata, secured first place, followed by those of Krist Raja High School, Jiajor and, third place by St Teresa High School, Dudhani. All students in the hall were given a small gift as reminder to stay rooted in their Mother Tongue, Santali. The programme was a Joint venture of Hul Baisi, Johar HRD Centre and Xavier Communications Centre (XCC). The last named XCC took the initiative to bring all the 120 students from 10 different schools, near and far. (*Fr Vernard Antony SJ*).

### Departmental Exhibition 2020

St Xavier's College, Maharo, organised an All Departmental Exhibition on its premises on 31<sup>st</sup> January. Each department, including Zoology, Physics and Chemistry, Commerce and English, put its creative project on display. The programme was inaugurated with the cutting of the ribbon by the Head of Departments. The judges examined the projects and



exhibits and offered their valuable critique regarding concepts and creativity. The Exhibition attracted a large number of students and their guardians. Heads of Departments explained to visitors the technicalities related to the concept of an exhibition. (*Mr Himadri*).

### Book Stall at Hijla Mela

The 130 years old famous Tribal gathering at Hijla close to Dumka town and popularly known as Hijla Mela (Hijla Festival), was held on 7-14 February 2020. The festival originated in February 1890, during the British Raj, when Santal Parganas District Magistrate, Mr John Roberts Gasteres sought to promote local traditions, cultures, customs and social regulations and, moreover, to communicate directly with the tribal people. Every year, Xavier Communications Centre (XCC), at HRD Centre JOHAR in Dumka, actively participates in the 'Hijla Mela' festival. Together with Satia Paharia Seva Samiti (PSS), XCC put up a stall to promote the rich tribal culture. The stall offered books on tribal culture, traditions, laws and customs,



history, Santali grammar, tribal medicines and the SPT-CNT Acts. People showed a lot of interest and bought several books. Satia-PSS displayed and promoted Herbal medicine. Audio songs on the Santal Hul, Santal culture and cultivation, together with flexes and posters on cultivation, Lok Munch and Johar-HRD Centre village activities attracted many visitors to the stall. The Santali magazine Marsaltabon and advertisements on St Xavier's College, Maharo, and St Xavier's School, Jurulia were also exhibited in the stall. (**Fr Vernard Antony SJ**).

### **New Year Brought a New Change**

Yet another mile-stone in the history of St Xavier's School, Raiganj. The New Year 2020 saw Fr Damian Tudu SJ taking over as Principal from the out-going Fr David Raj SJ who moves to St Xavier's College Maharo as Head of the English Department and Head of Research. A brief welcome cum farewell function took place to welcome Fr Damian and to thank and bid good bye to Fr David Raj in the presence of all the staff members. A big 'thank you' to Fr Davidraj SJ for his guidance and care during his tenure and a warm welcome to the new Principal who has his hands already full with exams, including ISC, ICSE and the school annual examinations. (**Mr S.M.J. Lazar**).

### **Friendly Basketball Match**

In honour of the new Principal, Fr Damian Tudu SJ, a friendly basketball match between the teachers and the boys of St Xavier's was keenly played. Both teams tried their best.



Needless to say, the young ones won the cup. One important outcome is that the match motivated many students and some teachers to spend some time on dribbling the ball whenever possible. Thanks to our former Superior, Fr Stany Pinto SJ who was the referee of the match and made his presence felt among us. (**Mr S.M.J. Lazar**).

### **“Peace & Reconciliation” – A Seminar at ISI Bangalore**

A seminar on “Peace, Harmony and Reconciliation” was organized at ISI Bangalore by the JEA for the teachers of Jesuit schools in India. Fr Alban Minj SJ, the PCE of our Province, led a team of three teachers, namely, Mr Arindam Chakraborty of St Xavier's, Sahibganj, Ms Dipti Ekka of St Xavier's, Purnea and Mr S.M.J. Lazar of St Xavier's, Raiganj. All of us had an enriching experience. We are now fully geared up to work as peace ambassadors in our respective schools and localities. We were provided with guide-lines to start a “PEACE CLUB” in our schools. It was an opportunity for the teachers to meet a number of experienced teachers from different parts of our country. We inspired each other to work jointly and wholeheartedly in the ministry of Jesuit Education. Fr Joe Kalathil SJ shared his work among the school children as an ambassador of peace between India and Pakistan. It touched the hearts of everyone. A heartfelt thanks to Fr Alban Minj SJ for giving us this wonderful chance to discover ourselves and get motivated to proceed with our service in Jesuit Education. (**Mr S.M.J. Lazar**).

### **Santal Harvest Festival**

The Hihiri Pipiri Santhal Association organized Sohrae Porob in association with Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, for Santal Migrants on 26<sup>th</sup> January at St Joseph's College, Bangalore. The program began with “Janga Arup” (washing of feet) Santal ceremony welcoming all the guests. Sr Mukta welcomed the guests and the Chief Guest, Fr Kamal Soren of Kolkata Diocese, gave a talk on “The present scenario of Santal youth.” Fr Sebastian Lakra SJ from Migration Watch, Ranchi, our special Guest, strongly urged the tribal listeners to remain united among themselves. It is unity that





can save tribal society from diminishing and disappearing. Sch Sushil Hansda SJ gave a talk on “*The Beauty of Santal Culture*.” The “*akhra*” (stage for discussion) was then handed over to the participants who by their cultural dances (Sohrae enec) and songs made the day a memorable one. Masters of Ceremonies, Sch Prakash Murmu SJ and Ms Arunima led the Cultural Programme. A group of people from “*Badoli Santali Band, Kokrajhar*,” Assam, with their attractive music and songs, enlivened the day for the more than 300 people present for the programme. The participants shared tea and a fellowship meal at the break. A big thank you to Fr Martin SJ, the Director of Indian Social Institute (Migration Department), Fr Joe SJ of Mumbai Province, Fathers, Sisters, Scholastics and the people of Jigani for their support. (*Sch Sushil Hansda SJ*).

### **Premal Jyoti Ahmadabad**

The Scholastics of Premal Jyoti, Ahmedabad, began the month of February with a tour to Udaipur in Rajasthan accompanied by Fr Charles Kispotta SJ and a tourist guide. We visited several historical places like Chittorgarh Fort, Fateh Sagar Lake, and City Palace which enhanced our knowledge of history. The tour was also a relaxing and enjoyable one for all of us. The new Superior, Fr James Savarimuthu SJ, took charge on 11<sup>th</sup> February during a Holy Eucharist celebrated by Frs James Savarimuthu, Alpesh Macwan and Charles Kispotta. We had an awareness program about “CAA” by Fr Cedric Prakash SJ, one of the well-known social activists of Gujarat Province. Since the module of internal exams changes every now and then, a modal exam was conducted which made us more involved in our studies. Sch Samuel Murmu (sr) met with an accident while crossing the road recently and got minor injuries on his left leg from which he is recuperating slowly. (*Sch Cyril Hembrom SJ*).

### **Lucknow Novitiate**

In the beginning of the month of February we made our monthly recollection based on the theme, “*The Purpose of Human Life*.” The recollection was guided by our Novice Master and ended with Confession and Adoration. On 24<sup>th</sup> February, we had a free day on which we played a friendly volley ball match among ourselves, enjoyed a variety of food items served at lunch and ended the day watching an interesting movie. We entered into Lent with Holy Eucharist, Fasting and half a day of Recollection. We made an action plan to come closer to God during Lent. Novice Vinod Tudu feels that he is completely healed from his illness. He is grateful to God and thankful to Fr Provincial, St Xavier’s community at Sahibganj, Novice Director and all others who looked after him with loving care. Dumka-Raiganj novices Vinod Tudu, Samuel Kisku and Shailendra Hansdak are enjoying their Novitiate life with their

companions and are growing in the spirit of *Ignatian Spirituality*. (*Nov. Vinod Tudu*).

### **Patna Juniorate**

We began the month of February with a two-day pilgrimage to Mokama. We were enriched by our spiritual experience there and also by observing how devotees of different religions performed their holy duties. Once back home, we had a course on ‘Introduction to Pauline Letters’ by Fr Peter Ignatius SJ of Patna Province. We celebrated Parish Day vibrantly on 16<sup>th</sup> February with Holy Mass, games and delicious food. We put up two ‘One Act Plays,’ namely, ‘*Pincushion*’ by Ramesh Vakshi in Hindi and ‘*The Bet*’ by Anton Chekov in English at St Michael’s School, Digha Ghat. Around 300 religious present for the programme appreciated our performance. Then we went to Bodhgaya for a study tour. Fr Lawrence SJ celebrated the Eucharist for us and also gave us inputs on Buddhism. We also visited Nalanda and Rajgir, the historical places related to Gautam Buddha. (*Sch Alesius Tudu SJ*).

### **RIP**

**Fr Edwin Rasquinha SJ** (BOM), 91/60, on 20.02.2020 at Andheri, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

### **Fr Felix Tirkey SJ - RIP**



**Fr Felix Tirkey** died of a massive heart attack on 2 March 2020 at Asha Deep Mission, Bathbanga, close to Aprot in Sahibganj District of Jharkhand. For the past two years, in spite of poor health, Fr Felix had been serving, with exemplary dedication, for the uplift of the Paharias, Santals and others at the Socio-Pastoral Centre and Arrupe High School in his assignments of Director of the Boys’ Hostel and of Teacher in the School. Born at Jena village in Gumla District on 14 July 1968, after completing his matriculation, Felix entered the Jesuit Novitiate of Jisu Jaher at Dudhani in



June 1992. He did his Juniorate studies at XTII, Patna and his college studies at St Joseph's, Trichy. After his ecclesiastical studies of Philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai, and Theology at Parasmani and Vidya Jyoti, Delhi, Felix was ordained priest in 2007. His first pastoral assignment was as assistant pastor in Hathimara parish. From 2008 to 2013, Fr Felix was the Director of the Boys' Hostel of St Xavier's Hindi School at Sahibganj and a teacher in the same school. He loved the children and took good care of them. After his tertianship, Fr Felix was appointed Headmaster of Krist Raja School at Nunbatta from 2013 to 2018. Wherever appointed, Fr Felix always shouldered his responsibility with enthusiasm and eagerness. A simple person and affable by nature, Fr Felix could get along with whomsoever he came in contact with, be it students or hostellers or school staff or any other person whatsoever. He showed himself understanding of others and of their problems and tried to be helpful to the best of his ability. He came across as a man with a vision in the service of the Lord and of His People. There was in Felix an openness and readiness to face challenges in mission as he showed when he was hostel prefect. He showed himself a committed person in his religious and priestly life. He was noted for his hard work, adjustability, friendliness and prudence in judging persons and happenings. He had a preferential love for the poor. He himself was always content with the little he had. Fr Felix always impacted those who came in contact with him and is sure to remain alive in their memory. May his dear soul rest in the joy of the Lord!

### **A Farewell to Remember**

Late in the evening of 2 March 2020, Fr Provincial received an urgent call from Bathbanga informing him that Fr Felix Tirkey SJ was no more. Fr Provincial Varghese Palli SJ, accompanied by Fr Ignatius Soren SJ, immediately was on his way to Bathbanga with Br Bernard Kisku SJ at the wheel. On arrival, two hours later, he learnt that Fr Felix had succumbed to a massive heart attack as certified by the doctor who examined him. The CJ Sisters at Bathbanga and Sr Ranjana HC from nearby Bathani prepared the body to be taken to Jisu Jaher, Dudhani. By 2:30 am on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, the mournful procession of two vehicles arrived at Jisu Jaher. Meanwhile, the Socius of the Provincial, Fr Stany Pinto SJ together with the Treasurer, Fr Jesuraj Poobal SJ, and the Candidates with their Director, Fr Ravindra Darshima SJ, prepared the large community chapel, extended into the attached hall, and received the body of Fr Felix which was placed to lie in state in the middle of the chapel. The Candidates kept vigil from now on till the funeral. During

the day, Religious Sisters of various Congregations, priests and laity in Dumka, kept coming to pay their respects and pray for his dear soul.



At 4:30 pm the large chapel saw over 80 concelebrating priests, Jesuit and others, from far and near, vested and seated in two rows on each side and facing each other. In the congregation that filled the hall to capacity, there were Fr Felix's brother, nieces and other relatives (around 22 in all), several Sisters of various Congregations, 70 School boys and girls from Bathbanga whom Fr Felix looked after or taught and other friends and acquaintances. At 5:00 pm Fr Provincial Varghese Palli SJ, assisted by Frs Michael Minj SJ and Deepak Tirkey SJ, proceeded to the altar while the Candidates' choir under the direction of Fr Ravindra led the congregation in singing the entrance hymn. Fr Provincial read a short biographical note on Fr Felix. After the reading of the Gospel, a eulogy of Fr Felix was given by Fr Michael Minj SJ who knew him quite well and had worked with him in schools or hostels. At the end of Holy Mass, Fr Ignatius Soren SJ performed the rite of blessing of the body in church before taking it for burial. By now it was dark, and with the help of electric light, the blessing of the grave and final commendation were performed by Rev. Fr Pius Marandi, V.G. of Dumka Diocese. On 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Chotanagpur group of Fr Felix's relatives attended Holy Mass at 5:30 am presided over by Fr Nirmal Xaxa SJ, who hails from the same village Jena as Fr Felix. After saying prayers at the grave of Fr Felix and taking breakfast, they boarded their vehicles to return home. The funeral gave a fond and memorable farewell to the amiable departed Fr Felix Tirkey SJ. Due thanks are hereby expressed to the members of communities that gave their precious help in this emergency and time of sorrow, namely, CJ Sisters of Bathbanga, Holy Cross Sisters of Bathani, Sisters of Charity SCCG of Dudhani and the Jesuit communities of Sahibganj, Tinpahar, Johar in Dumka and Jisu Jaher of Dudhani and all our co-workers and others who gave us a helping hand in various ways. May the Soul of Fr Felix Tirkey SJ Rest in the Peace and Eternal Joy of the Lord! *(Fr Paul Aquilina SJ).*