

Vol. XXIV No.2

NEWSLETTER OF KOHIMA REGION

Mar-April 2020

## Kohima Jesuit Region turns 50



On the eve of the completion of 50 years of Jesuit presence in Northeast India, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a message on my cell phone from **Fr Raymond D'Souza**. He wrote:

**50 Years ago, 3 Jesuits came to Nagaland and they dissolved themselves in the ant-hills amidst the jungles of Jakhama. Praise the Lord!**

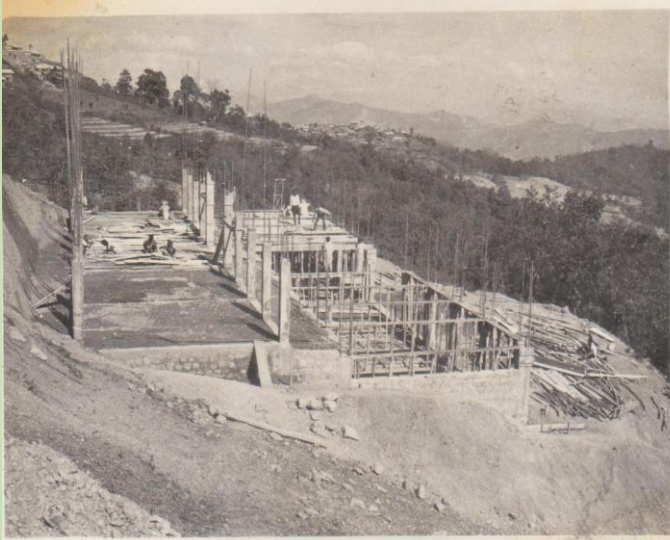
How wonderful to receive this crisp reminder from one of our pioneers! We are blessed to have Fr. Raymond amidst us and are indeed proud of him. We, his younger brothers, join him and the people we serve in thanking the Lord for these fifty fruitful years.

A seed that was sown in Jakhama fifty years ago has sprouted, grown and branched out. It presently covers the length and breadth of Northeast India. This fifty-year journey has been a saga of God's never-ending graces manifested through the generosity of innumerable men and women of goodwill. It is a testament of God's presence, guidance and sustenance. We have always felt "held in the palm of His hand."

I am sure a hymn of thanksgiving to the Lord is welling up from the depth of our hearts for the wonders the Lord has done for us. We remember with gratitude the 15 different religious congregations of women who collaborate with us in the Region, the committed catechists and lay leaders in our parishes, the dedicated teachers in our institutions, social activists, drivers, matrons and house keepers who have journeyed with us.

As our thoughts go back to the initial little but purposeful steps taken by our pioneers, may we make use of this occasion 'to read the past to write the future'. As we look forward to the next 50 years, the challenges are many and varied. Let us hope and pray that we remain vigilant and attentive to the 'signs of the times' and the 'whispers of the Spirit' goading us march forward.





Beginning of Loyola Jakhama (1971), Foundation blessed by Bp R. Kerketta, on 31.7.1970



25 Years later (1995,) Former Fr General, (L) Fr Peter Hans K. was present for the foundation of the Kohima Region & the Silver Jubilee Year



Loyola School, Jakhama where "No human hand had set foot" till Feb. 11, 1971.



Loyola's first High School batch, 1971.

Loyola school, Jakhama 1971



50 years later (2020). Fr General. Arturo Sosa SJ. was present in the Golden Jubilee Celebration

#### **APPOINTMENTS BY FR GENERAL:**

**Fr Ajit Kumar Xess SJ**, Provincial of Ranchi

**Fr Jose Jacob Muruthukunnel SJ**, (KER), Co-Instructor of Tertianship at Kandy

**Fr Sebastian Jeerakassery SJ** (DEL), Assistant General Treasurer, Rome

#### **APPOINTMENT BY RT REV. JAMES THOPPIL, BISHOP OF KOHIMA:**

**Fr Paul Raj SJ**, Spiritual Director, Good Shepherd Seminary, Dimapur

#### **APPOINTMENTS BY FR POSA:**

**Br Antony Arockiam SJ**, Administrator & Secretary, Sadhana Institute & Trust, Lonavala

**Fr Boniface D'Souza SJ**, Spiritual Director, Vidyajyoti, Delhi.

**Fr Anthony Dias SJ (BOM)**, Assistance Secretary for Jesuits in Social Action

#### **APPOINTMENT BY DARJEELING PROVINCIAL:**

**Fr Philip Abraham SJ**, Principal, St Xavier's College, Lengpui, Mizoram

#### **ASSIGNED BY RANCHI PROVINCIAL:**

**Four Ranchi novices** to do their novices at Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate, Mawshohroh

#### **APPOINTMENTS BY FR REGIONAL SUPERIOR:**

**Fr Paul Coelho SJ**, Regional Coordinator for Formation (RCF)

**Fr Walter Fernandes SJ**, Director, North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC), Guwahati

**Fr Emmanuel Patton SJ**, Tertianship in Sitagarha, Hazaribagh

**Fr M. Francis Xavier SJ (MDU)**, Retreat Apostolate, St Paul's Jesuit Community, Phesama

**Fr Wilfred Kharपुरi SJ**, Acting Superior, Principal & Parish Priest, Nazareth School, Pfutsero (*Ad Tempus*)

**Fr Jeevan Prabhu SJ (KAR)**, Palizi Jesuit community (sabbatical year)

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The second round of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Region and its concluding ceremony scheduled for 22-24 May 2020 is postponed due to the Covid-19 till further notice.

The scheduled annual programmes of the scholastics in Mawshohroh in May – retreat and get-together – are cancelled.

### **THANK YOU, ANAND AND BEST WISHES, PAUL**

On behalf of Kohima Jesuits, we want to place on record our sincere gratitude to Fr Anand Pereira for ably guiding our scholastics since May 2013. Anand has given his best to encourage, energize and enliven our scholastics. His accompaniment was much appreciated by our men in formation. Given their increasing number, Anand had to work hard to keep track of each scholastic. This he did admirably well despite holding multiple responsibilities in the Region. Tons of thanks, Anand.

Our prayers are with Fr Paul Coelho as he shoulders the onerous responsibility as the new RCF. He brings to this office his experience and expertise of working in the formation field while he was in the US and his multifaceted personality. Our best wishes are with you, Paul.



## DAWAGRE

Jesuits Community received a number of guests in the month of March. **Fr Hector D'Souza** accompanied **Fr Klaus** and **Ms Sara** on the fourth of March. Fr Klaus is instrumental in getting fund for new extended building of Loyola School Dawagre. **Fr Xavier Ignatius** of Delhi Province, Revisor to the Region visited Dawagre on 21-22 of March for. **Fr Don Doll SJ** paid a short visit. He was welcomed by the Parishoners after mass on. Ms Jean a good friend and benefactor of Kohima Jesuits from Pune also dropped by to see our work and mission in Dawagre on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. Dawagre Jesuits mourned the loss of the foster mother of Fr Melwyn. He stayed in her house for language study.

**Loyola School:** As per the guidelines from the Meghalaya Government, the school has remained closed since the 16<sup>th</sup> of March and will remain close till further information by the government. During this period of lockdown a special arrangement of online teaching is made for class X only. Lecturing videos and notes are sent to students online to keep them busy. In the mean time, the clearing of the mud behind and in front of the new school building was finally completed last month.

## GUWAHATI - JESUIT HOUSE

Jesuit House, Guwahati has a new look, thanks to the Jubilee celebration. We were blessed to have **Fr General** staying with us for two nights. After all the hectic celebrations in Jakhama, Phesama and Umbir it was good to see him relax and be himself. It was clear that he enjoyed being with all of us. Even though **Fr Don Doll** and **Fr Mike Kolb** were supposed to stay on with us for nearly a month, they



had to abort their plans owing to the sudden lockdown.



The newly added rooms and small dining hall in the basement were put to good use when **16 of our scholastics returned from Delhi and Pune**. They were quite happy to remain quarantined in the basement, which is the coolest place in the house. After a 14 day quarantine, the scholastics are now joining the community for all the activities of the



Fr General & JH Kitchen staff

house, including holy hour every evening praying for a way out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Owing to the presence of the scholastics, we had a quiet but meaningful Easter celebration. The daily Eucharist in the house is being embellished by well-prepared meaningful homilies given by the scholastics. **Fr Salew-o** who has been stranded here en route to Bishnupur is a welcome addition to the community.

The COVID-19 Outreach Program organized by Purvanchal Pragati Samaj (PPS) in collaboration with other NGOs in Guwahati gave us an opportunity to reach out to some of the most needy people in the city. The rations that we provided to nearly 150 families in our neighborhood helped re-ignite the old link that we enjoyed with our neighbours. We hope to keep this link alive through some form of ministry in the days ahead.

-Anand Pereira

## GUWAHATI - JAGRITI

**Fr Arturo Sosa**, our General, graced our Institutions and the community on 09 March, the last day of his sojourn to our Region. Having a heavy day at Umbir and Mawshohroh, he reached Jagriti at 7.00 p.m. He had a briefing of LCHR by **Fr Owen Chourappa** with few side notes by **Fr Anup**. In an interaction Fr General wanted to know about CCA, NRC etc. He was keen on listening to our involvement in this struggle for citizenship and identity.



He then moved to NESRC where **Fr Walter Fernandes** had spread the life works of NESRC, the volumes that came from his own pen and that of **Fr Melvil Pereira**, (Late) **Fr Alphonsus D' Souza** and others. Walter was at his best when he held the volume on Migration the Magnus opus of 600 pages in his hands. **Melvil and Hector** were just acolytes to see that the 'lean' on Walter did not go beyond that of Tower of Pisa. The other dignitaries who were present and General who himself was engaged in a ministry probably wondered,

*"And still they gaz'd and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew."* –  
(Oliver Goldsmith)

Then it was the time to relax and to give thanks for a successful trip that went on without a hitch. **Owen** and **Anup** had laid down choice wines and lean meat for all. The Jagriti community with its domestic staff rose to the occasion. Though Rome had given us the list of forbidden food, General flouted every one of them and was at his Venezuelan best. A visit of joy, to the land of the living, among the hot-blooded men brought down the curtain as Fr General's visit came to an end with a good night's rest and a flight to Mumbai next morning.

**Fr Ranjit Kujur (RAN)** was guarding the house and college at Balipara when all his brethren had gone to Jakhama, so he made it to Guwahati and was the lucky man from Balipara to have met with Fr General at 'one to one level' and they had a closed door meeting. It seems the media went rife speculating the future provincial of Ranchi. Unfortunately, Ranjit 'missed the bus' that night to Tezpur and had to take the next. Missed opportunity!

**Fr Boniface Lewis** was a victim of Miss Corona. He had come for a check up at Apollo in Guwahati and Corona would not allow him to go back to Bishnupur. He made the best of it by raising the spiritual fervour of this secular place by a few notches by conducting adoration on all these 'quarantined' days in the community.

**Fr Lancy D' Costa** brought his team of Financial Commission of the Region for a two day 'budget session' on 16 and 17 February. They had long drawn sessions from 8 in the morning till late at night. **Fr Thomas Mathew** too brought the Land and Building Commission for a final session with the above Commission along with the Jesuit House Community.

**Frs Scotus Fernandez, Arul S, and Pravin Solanki** visited our neighbours at the Passport Office. They found easy access through **Owen Chourappa** to deal with the officials. Jagriti played host to a well behaved group, 45 Dawagre pilgrims on their way to the Jubilee at Jakhama. **Fr Sunny Augustine** guided this slow moving group with much patience and lots of love.

**Fr Klaus Væthrøeder**, Missionsprokur from Germany and **Ms Sara Gratt**, Assistant at Austria were our guests. Hector was their tour guide to Dawagre and later they took part in the Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Jakhama.

**Fr Melvil Pereira** spent a couple of quiet days to finish his post Jubilee correspondence in the tranquil and serious atmosphere of Jagriti. **Hector D' Souza** animated the Religious of Diphu Diocese on 18 February for a whole day. He went through a course of physiotherapy for 10 days at Bishnupur to loosen the muscles of his arm.

**Walter Fernandes** was a resource person at the meeting of 90 'Franciscan Family' provincials at Lum Assisi, Maiong, Meghalaya on 29th February. He also was a resource person at the National Seminar on Women and Equality at



Pothimarhi College, Kamrup on 21st March. On his way for the jubilee celebration he went to Imphal to participate in two one day seminars on conflicts and peace processes, for teachers and students on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. They were organised by DSSS with support from NESRC.

LCHR organized a two day fruitful training programme of Catholic lawyers on 21-22nd of February 2020 at Capuchin House, Guwahati. There were 30 participants including two priests who attended the programme. Four resource persons from various social and administrative fields inspired the participants.

**Frs Anupchand and Owen** conducted a training programme for teachers of Holy Child School, Shillong on Child Protection Policy, Child Rights and New Education Policy.

## JALAPHET

We began the new academic year with a maiden first two days staff orientation conducted by **Fr Arock SJ** (Williamnagar) on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February. Thanks Arock, the staff members have learned a lot from you about tips on creative teaching, wholistic development of the child, etc. As the ICYM of the dioceses of Shillong, Nongstoin and Jowai are



preparing for their common silver jubilee celebration, to revive and bring back the youth to Christ, a convention cross is taken to all the parishes and from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Feb it was brought to Jalaphet Parish. The birthdays for Jalaphet missionaries come one after another; in February and March we had birthday celebrations of **Wilfred, Gabriel** and **Sr Martha** the school headmistress.

Some of our parishioners and staff attended the Golden jubilee programme in Jakhama. They were amazed by the variety of tribes with whom the Kohima Jesuits work. They were all inspired. On the occasion of the international women's day on 8<sup>th</sup> March our Sisters conducted one day seminar for 62 mothers from three villages on the theme "Promoting Healthy Family". It was much appreciated. And now as we are in the lockdown, together with the people all over the world, we are waiting, praying and pleading for God's mercy to heal the sick and suffering world.

-Gabriel Kharluni

## MAWEIT

**How the community feeds itself and others:** The community, during this lockdown period, sustains itself physically with local rice received as first fruits; salad leaves from the garden, 'Jamardoh' (houttuniya cordata) & 'Tyrkhang' (Fern) from the jungle; fish from streams and from river; banana, papaya and mulberries from the garden. As part of the Lenten observance and out of charity for the villagers who lack basic food supply, the community, in its capacity, provides rice available in the stock.

**Miscreants in the campus:** Some miscreants stepped inside the campus and gathered in the podium of the school ground on the night of 29 March. They were drunk and making such noise that fear gripped the neighbours. The next morning when we went to inspect the sight, window panes were found brutally pierced with bamboo and violently pelted with stones. **Fr Caldinus** went to the village to gather information about the culprits. Three days after the incident, four boys came to apologise for their misdeeds. However, as this was not the only time it happened, the matter will be looked into by the village council.

**Parish before lockdown:** The faithful from different sub-stations devotedly participated at the *Eucharistic Procession* held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March in the Parish. There was a solemn mass in the morning concelebrated by **Fr Anbarasan**, the Parish Priests, followed by the Procession in the afternoon.

Two weeks later, the 'Life and Spirit' seminar held on 14 and 15 of March saw many leaders and teachers of the Parish who attended it. The program was highly appreciated as the attendees felt spiritually greatly energised. Thanks to **Fr Cosmos**



**Jyrwa**, the Assistant parish priest of Nongkasen and Diocesan CCRS Chairperson and his team who animated the programme.

**School sleeps again:** The school having slept for a couple of months (winter holidays) opened its eyes (school gates) on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February. It was walking steadily for a month, then it began running (sports day) for two days on 17 and 18 of March. It was enjoying itself when it was abruptly interrupted and asked to sleep again.

-Jokim Nongkhlaw

## MAWSHOHROH

For a few days before the arrival of **Fr Arturo Sosa SJ**, our Superior General to this novitiate of the Kohima Region, Mawshohroh experienced cloudy skies and some rain. But on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, the novices were all very glad. The day began with a clear sky and a bright sunshine. The novices were all eagerly looking forward to that great day moment, they had to rush to the parish to be with the people there to felicitate the General who came there to celebrate Mass at 9.00 a.m. when Fr Arturo would come over to the novitiate for his rendezvous with them. But before that great



**Fr Arturo Sosa, the Superior General with the Novices and the members of the novitiate Staff**

We were all in appreciation of **Fr Robert Pohrmen SJ**, our Parish Priest who organized the function very well.

After the Mass, the cultural programme and the lunch in honour of Fr Arturo Sosa, the General did come to the novitiate to keep his tryst with the novices.



**Fr Arturo Sosa with the novices at tea**

The novices had the privilege of being with their Superior General for an hour – from 3.00 to 4.00 p.m. They were simply enthralled by Fr Arturo Sosa's friendly manner of talking to them. They came to appreciate his simplicity, his openness and his smile as he interacted with them.



**Fr General with our lay collaborators in Mawshohroh**



They told us that they were so glad to see his concern for them and the eloquent manner in which he placed his dreams and concerns of the Society before them. He inspired the novices by drawing examples from the life of St Ignatius of Loyola as he highlighted many aspects of religious life that the novices could integrate into their own lives. "He made us feel that we were loved by the Society and that we were not merely Jesuits of the Kohima Region but members of the universal Society. We are grateful to him for his gracious visit to Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit novitiate at Mawshohroh.

## PFUTSERO

The new academic year began with new vigour and zeal. A three day orientation programme-two days by **Fr John Ravi** and one day by the principal- set "the tone and tenor" for the new academic year. we have new staff members from Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland.

The diversity adds richness and excitement in the staffroom, classroom and campus. **Fr Anto** was the main celebrant at the Inaugural Mass of the Holy Spirit both at Nazareth, Pfutsaro and St Peter's Kikruma.



A highlight of the last months was the inauguration of the Renovated Nazareth Convent by **Sr Susheela Sequeira UFS**, the Superior General of the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 in the absence of **Fr Melvil**, the Regional Superior. **Fr Philip Abraham**, the local superior blessed the Convent and presided over the inaugural Eucharistic celebration.

Nazareth School marked National Science Day on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 under the theme "Women in Science" by having an inter-house science exhibition

and science lecture competition. Students from classes 1-3 took part in a Science Poster Presentation, Classes 4-5 in Science Project Poster Demonstration, Classes 6-8 in Demonstration of Science projects and Classes 9-10 in Demonstration of Working Models.



Again classes 9-10 took part in a Science Lecture Competition on the topic Women in Science. The Nagaland Science and Technology Council, Kohima issued their

Certificates to the all the teams, and sponsored the prizes and refreshments. **Fr Victor D' Mello**, the principal of Loyola School, Jakhama was the Guest of Honour at the function. Fr Victor spoke eloquently on the importance of science and technology among the students. Mrs Sutoli Sema, HoD Economics, Government College was the guest speaker.

The COVID 19 pandemic has brought a complete shutdown in Pfutsaro as in all other places. The migrant workers of the construction industry and daily labourers are very badly affected with loss of daily income.



Holy Family Parish and Nazareth School along with Development Association of Nagaland, Dimapur (DAN) offered relief to the migrant workers and poor families by giving Ration Food Packets to 72 persons, each 15 kg food packet containing Rice, Dal, Sugar, Channa, and Onions. This was done with the approval of the district administration and following the social distancing norms. The sisters and domestic staff were actively involved in the relief work.



The lockdown has also given ample time for the Jesuit Community to share stories about themselves, their faith, their families, the Region, and to build bonds of friendship and faith. **Fr Dhazu**, the lone ranger, has stayed put in his station at St Peter's, Kikrumba along with Sir John Repumai and the kitchen staff. He is unable to leave the place as his "animal husbandry" undertakings tied him down. **Fr Anto**, **Fr Philip** and **Sch. Ebanazer**, have gone on a total cleanup drive of the campus along with the sisters, drivers and stranded teachers. The PTC has been cleaned up top to bottom. The openings in the fence at the bottom of the hill near the family staff quarters has been completely sealed off and made rat proof with cement posts, metal mesh and razor wire. The ADC who had verbally approved of our plan, was informed in writing of the steps taken and so we have completely sealed up our fence all around. The gates are permanently locked leaving the policemen, the chief trespassers, having to find new alleyways to stagger their intoxicated way home after shifts.

The whole community has been making the 19<sup>th</sup> annotation retreat 5-12 put out by the South Asian Jesuit Conference. It has also been proposed to our staff and associates and families, many of whom are also doing the retreat. We wish all our readers new hope and peace at Easter.

-Sch Ebanazar

## PHESAMA

After the school and TTC reopened from the winter holidays, the campus became more vibrant and plentiful preparations were being made for the Golden Jubilee. Since the community was hosting Fr General, his teams and the other guests, the whole campus under the leadership of **Fr Arul**, put their hands in making this celebration a memorable one.

**Collaborators from Phesama contribute to the jubilee with local cuisine**



The community was so happy to have Fr General, a very important guest for the golden jubilee. Our St Paul Parish people went out of their way to help us in preparing the place for accommodation and cooking food for our guests from different centres in the Region. Over 200 guests stayed with us from various centres. Everyone appreciated the whole hearted collaboration of our parishioners.



The JTC candidates and the TTC students sang melodiously in the Golden Jubilee Celebration at Jakhama on 7 March. They also contributed to this celebration by preparing the campus. Soon after the celebration everyone were sent home because by the lockdown.



There was a counseling course that was conducted by **Fr Kulanda Raj** of Andhra Province, 23 people participated which included religious sisters and lay collaborators, from 14<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> of March. This program too came to an end in two days prior to the date of conclusion due to the lockdown announced by the centre.

The campus is quite and silent but the burning hearts of both the young and elderly Jesuits are eagerly awaiting for the normalcy to return.

-Sch Edbert

## THRIZINO

Just a week prior to our final examination, the unexpected Pandemic crisis happened, a circular from the Education Department Government of Arunachal Pradesh came asking all schools and hostels to close down with the permission of conducting the final and board examinations.

After three days, another circular came asking to shut down everything till the 5<sup>th</sup> of April. We had hoped that we would conduct our final examinations on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, but it was never meant to be so when we heard the call for the all-India lockdown till the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. Now, a circular from the CBSE head office came asking all schools affiliated to it to promote the students because the pandemic seems to be no way near its end.



Fr Lawrence clearing the campus during lockdown

In the meanwhile, during this isolation time we keep ourselves busy in the garden; clearing the weeds, tilling the ground and planting seeds.



Repairing things in the boarding and school like plumbing, splitting firewood are being done. We are also making a concrete pigsty, repairing drainage,

splitting firewood and did fencing of the compound among other things.

We hope that this pandemic will pass away as we encounter the risen Lord who has conquered sin and death.

-Sch Darimio Susngi

## UMBIR

In the month of February 19 – 24 our friends from **St Thomas More Parish, USA** headed by **Fr Warren Sazama SJ**, the Parish Priest with Mr Dan Sullivan, Mr Steve Thomas, Ms Sharon, Ms Mary and Ms Barb visited our parish. St Thomas More Parish is our twinning sister parish.



They spent their time visiting St Stephen School Umbir and interacting with teachers and students. They visited two remote villages of our Parish, Mairungpdeng and Patharan. We celebrated Masses, had our meals together and had interactions with the catholic communities. They also made a visit to Umngot river of Shnongpdeng village of War Jaintia Hills, close to the border of Bangladesh. The visit reached the climax with the participation in the **Eucharistic Procession in the Parish**. Thanks to **Fr Melvil** and **Fr Anand** for making these two parishes come close to each other.

In the same month we had a two day retreat for the children of the Parish. 350 children participated in the retreat. After that, the Parish organized a **Parish Fete**, as we do every year to raise funds for the parish Church building.





March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 was a memorable day for all our parishioners as they witnessed the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Jesuits' presence and service in the Northeast India. **Rev. Fr Arturo Sosa Abascal SJ**, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus was the



chief guest of the day. His presence along with his team from Rome was a special time of special grace to the Parish. We were happy that **Fr John Madur**, the Diocesan Administrator of the Archdiocese of Shillong joined us in the celebration. There were many Jesuit, Priests, Brothers and Sisters. Other dignitaries were, the honourable chief minister of Meghalaya, Shri Conrad Sangma, the MP of Shillong, Meghalaya, Shri Vincent Pala, MLAs, MDCs, Headmen, family members of the Jesuits, friends, well-wishers, the parish benefactors and a large number of our own parishioners.

During these times of uncertainties, fears, anxieties and the impact of the Covid-19 our Parish is reaching out to eleven villages consisting of 122 families who were in need of food. We helped them with rice, dal and salt. The procurement of the essential



**Babu Dominic (Umbir Catechist) supervises the distribution of rations**

Commodities are made possible in collaboration with the religious houses and our generous parishioners.

-Robert Pohrmen

## UMOID

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, soon after the CI XI exam results were declared, we began CI XII classes. Of our 55 enrolled students, only 34 students were successful. A lack of a facility in English, the medium of instruction in the school, seemed clearly the single most decisive factor that has held so many students back. So we also started special classes for the unsuccessful CI XI



students on the same day. They will start regular classes after the Matric results are declared, which may take a while now. This is because it presupposes a semblance of normalcy in the state as it tries to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, with only the 34 CI XII students, our school participated in the District-level interschool Quiz and Debate competitions. They bagged the First prize in the Quiz and came Third in the Debate

competition, being declared the overall champions. They will now represent the district at the state level. Mr Sainborlang, who helped prepare these teams, deserves the credit for the wonderful performance of our students.

Holy Week and Easter were quiet affairs this year and were spent entirely at home. The lockdown made sure of that. And since we live in a very small rented apartment in Jakrem village, we thought it prudent to not permit any outsiders to join us for the Holy Week services which we concelebrated at home with Juliana, the house manager and cook *par excellence*.

Despite the lockdown, we have been able to begin work on a temporary classroom structure that will house Classes XI and XII during the coming year. We felt the need to make some for additional classrooms because we are starting the Commerce stream this year, in addition to the Arts stream.

Construction work on this new Assam-type structure began on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, but the lockdown has slowed the pace of the work. And though there are a number of workers without employment in the village these days because of the pandemic, construction materials have been hard to procure and the work was limping along.



At the time of writing this report, things have changed drastically. Yesterday, on April 13<sup>th</sup>, a medical doctor in Shillong tested positive for COVID-19. He is the first case in our state (Meghalaya). From today there is curfew in large parts of the state including for our entire area. So the building work as of today has come to a standstill.

As a result of the pandemic, our school has been closed since March 17<sup>th</sup> and it looks like the construction may get delayed. But this is a small price to pay compared to the immense suffering that people the world over are enduring as a result of the pandemic. They have been our prayers every single

day, including all those on the frontlines who have so heroically been looking after the afflicted.

-David Nukhu & Paul Coelho

### DNC

As per the directive received from the Central and State Governments, JDV Pune declared emergency holiday from 14 March 2020, due to the rapid spread of Covid 19 in the State. All the exams of B.Ph and B.Th scheduled to be conducted by JDV, were postponed to facilitate the return of the students in view of the forthcoming lockdown. The DNC community has taken Covid 19 outbreak seriously and has imposed self-quarantine cancelling all house ministries and activities till further notification. The third year theologians are permitted to stay back with clear instruction from Rector not to go out of the campus and to make use of the time fruitfully for the preparation of the comprehensive exam. However, the theologians have not confined themselves only to studies, taking seriously the invitation by Pope Francis to reach out to the people suffering due to this pandemic. The DNC community has actively involved itself in relief work by packing food materials for the migrant workers stranded in Pune city. They have also brought out an 8 day Ignatian Sadhana, Prayers and Meditation titled "Vita-20 for Covid-19: Revitalizing the life-line amidst Corona Crisis".

-Dn Victor Joseph

### DNC & VIDYAJYOTI SCHOLASTICS

#### Finding and Doing God's Will in the Lockdown

In the quietude of lockdown, lingering on the corridors of the Jesuit House, Guwahati, we recount the special grace of God granted to us, scholastics. We would have been stranded in our study places had He not granted us the means to come back to the Region through the interventions of our Fathers. Ever since our arrival here, we have been experiencing love and care from the community. During our quarantine days, a TV and many books were



provided for our intellectual erudition; and even delicious food to keep our immune system robust. Defying all fears, some fathers even visited us, a gesture of heartwarming love. Our quarantine days would have been a chaos had we not been blessed by good people around us like the kitchen staff, never failing to keep abreast with our needs. All of us do feel the real joy of being together. Immersing ourselves in each other's company, with joy and laughter being our most treasured gifts, these will remain an indelible mark for us in this time of history.



At this juncture, God seems to be closer than distant from us, calling us to do His will. True enough at the end of our quarantine days we steadied our hands for charity to our most unfortunate brothers and sisters in the city. As God inspired our early fathers to do charitable works for the needy, He also whispers us now “why not feed the hungry during the time of lockdown.” So while Covid-19 shuts the whole world, God opens a door for us to share our love with strangers through the relief work. Under the guidance of **Fr Valerian** we were engaged in cooking and packing of food for the poor. This is our experience of “walking with the poor”.

What better amusement could we have than the ones during badminton! Chicken-like jump of amateur players elicit laughter and excitement in the spectators. Our reserved post-supper show, often brought out amazing story tellers who amuse us pretty like live show comedians.

Life is filled with fun and frolic. Yes, in the quietude we feel being “Friends in the Lord” becomes more meaningful. Doing simple chores and thrusting ourselves into water tanks keep our hands and feet busy. But what better practice of availability could we have than being present to the simplest tasks at our disposal! Being amidst the giants of the Region

we may feel intimidated but their sense of sharing themselves in every bit possible would dissolve insecurity and make us feel a sense of belongingness. Coffee, preparing snacks and saying ‘hello’ to us mesmerizingly elate our spirits and entomb our introversion.

This is our story in the lockdown. Though we enjoy our life here, yet we feel the real absence of the rest of our beloved companions in the diaspora. Our prayers are with you, brothers.

-Sch Goldenstar Dkhar

## KOLKATA JUNIORATE

In the beginning of February, we the Juniors, had a week-long course on *Art and Aesthetics* by **Fr Saju George SJ**, the dancing priest of the Calcutta Province. The course gave us a better understanding of the history and development of the Indian classical dances, music and painting. It also helped us to critically analyze any form of art and cultivate artistic ways of doing things by using our creativity. During this course we tried our hands in painting and were thrilled to discover our hidden talents. On 22<sup>nd</sup> February, the community along with our co-workers, went for a picnic to one of the sea beaches in West Bengal.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February, together with the students of *Kalahridaya* (a Jesuit center for dance and music) and some people from Croatia we, the Juniors, were privileged to act in a dance drama on the life and works of **Fr Ante Gabric SJ**, in one of the mission stations. Fr Ante Gabric was a Calcutta Jesuit— and a missionary from Croatia – who had spent most of his time in working for the people in rural Bengal. Hundreds of people from different religions were present to witness the dance drama.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March, we attended a short film festival organized by *Chitrabani*, a Media and Communication Centre run by Calcutta Province. We were able to analyze and appreciate those short films to a great extent since the festival took place soon after our media and film appreciation course. It was an unforgettable experience for all of us.

After the prolonged preparation and a helpful mock-test we had the long awaited Assistancy Standardized English Exam on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, we were privileged to attend *Gopal Kirtan* (chants on the life of Lord Krishna) performed by one of our co-workers' wife in a nearby village. Such traditional *Kirtans* are immensely popular in West Bengal. This was the second time for us to witness a typical Bengali style of celebrating different Hindu festivals. The first experience we had was during the Durga Puja in October.

The month of March had been hectic for us. We were on our toes due to several elocution competitions, presentations, TED Talks, assignments and the third term examinations. Presently we are busy preparing ourselves for our forthcoming *Academy Day 2020* scheduled to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> April. The programme includes William Shakspeare's play Hamlet and variety entertainments.

-Sch Roynal Machado

### FROM TRIPURA MISSION

Tripura Mission is spreading its wings from Kailashahar to Jampuijala near Agarthala. **Fr Cyriac Panjikaren** and **Fr Babu Paul** are at a Tribal school in Jampuijala and James in the village at Jamtoli. The St Mary's school having classes from Nursery to 8<sup>th</sup>



St Mary's School, Christ Hill, Jampuijala

standard has been run by a Tribal Society and now they want to hand over the school to Jesuits and this year onwards we are going to run the school. The school has got hostels for both girls and boys. The process of handing over is going on and it may take a few more months. The school is 30 years old but very less students due to poor management. We are going to begin the academic year after the lockdown with the new staff recruited and trained by Fr Cyriac Panji and Babu Paul as the principal. We are waiting to receive our new regents one in the school and the

other in Jamtoli with father James. We have got two women congregations to collaborate with us one in the school and another in the village. In the village at Kahilashahar we are planning to introduce our activities to another five more villages with remedial education and socio pastoral involvements. The lockdown has brought us to a stand still for a while.

- Fr Babu Paul



### VISIT OF FR GENERAL AND KOHIMA REGION JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Courtesy: sjcuria website

### The Gardens of Eden... in Khuzama, India

6 MAR 2020





While it's not common for Father General Arturo Sosa to speak to an audience of children or walk in the Garden of Eden, he did so on 6th March during his visitation to the Region of Kohima. The "Garden of Eden" hospitality centre was founded more than 40 years ago and provides shelter for some 200 young people from very poor backgrounds - many of them orphans - as well as a favourable environment to study, play and pray. Here is what Father General shared with them.

My dear children,

"Eden Garden", the beautiful name that Father Stany Coelho appropriately chose for this home, is found in the very first book of the Bible: "God planted a garden in Eden, in the east." (Gen 2:8). I am delighted to be with you in this beautiful Eden Garden today.

I have come to participate in the Golden Jubilee of Kohima Jesuit Region. Eden Garden is among the first initiatives taken by the founders of this Mission, for the service of the people in this region. They realised that education is the foundation of any human development, and that a large number of children in this area had no opportunity to get a proper education. Sacred Heart School, with Eden Garden as the children's home, was their response to this keenly felt need.

Your education in this Jesuit institution must prepare you for life, opening your minds to wider horizons beyond mere self-interest. Coming from diverse tribal, linguistic and religious backgrounds to live together as one family, already now, when you are young, you learn to understand and accept, love and support each other. If well integrated, this diversity is a rich gift, not a threat to true unity. (...)



Jesuit education gives you the opportunity to discover and develop your varied hidden talents:

mind and heart, leadership qualities, arts & sports, music and dancing, and so many other gifts with which God has blessed you. I have witnessed now for myself what I have often heard: that Nagas are highly gifted in singing and dancing. (...)

Dear young friends, the name of your home, 'Eden Garden', is a constant reminder to you, of the beautiful original garden God planted in Eden at the very beginning of creation: with flowering and fruit-bearing trees, clear water to drink, and clean healthy air to breathe. God's gift of love to Adam and Eve, intended for all human beings of all generations. But, as you know, today this original blessing of God's creation is badly damaged. Our common home – mother earth – is groaning with pain, because of human greed and overconsumption, irresponsible use and abuse of God's gifts.

We all have a common responsibility to change this. Everyone of you can and must take this as an essential dimension of your education. I know that Naga people live close to nature, and that you hold in great reverence everything around you. This is my special message and appeal to you today. Eden Garden and Sacred Heart School will set an example to others, – avoiding use of plastics and other toxic material, preventing water sources and streams from being polluted, planting more trees to give us clean air, using sparingly everything God has given us, helping your homes and villages to be kept clean. With your own creative talents, you will discover many other ways to save our planet from disaster.

## Facing The Winds Of Change- Phesama

6 MAR 2020



"No activity that promotes genuine human progress and builds bridges among peoples is alien to our

faith-based service. It is with this humanistic vision that the Jesuits of Kohima, like their fellow-Jesuits elsewhere in the world, offer their service to the people of North-East India.”

This is the heart of Father General Arturo Sosa’s message to the alumni of the Jesuit schools of Phesama, in North-East India. For half-a-century, the Society of Jesus has been serving this community, one of the smaller villages in the Jakhama circle. Though the Kohima district, of which the Jakhama circle is part, has a literacy rate of 85%, that percentage falls dramatically as one moves away from the urban areas and into the villages. As such, much of the Jesuit ministry in the region has been focused on the establishment and maintenance of educational institutions to serve the often forgotten populations of this peripheral region. The Jesuit work in Phesama changes not only the lives of the students who have been trained by these institutions, but also what those in similar regions think is possible in serving the underserved. In the eyes of Father General, this type of ministry exemplifies the positive change that is made possible by a commitment to the spirit of service.

For his part, Fr. General alluded to the confusion generated by the fast pace of change in the village and reminded the alumni that St. Ignatius himself experience much of that same disorientation during the Renaissance.

“Much like our post-modern age caught in the whirlwind of bewilderingly rapid changes affecting every sphere of human life, sixteenth century Europe was going through a prolonged period of turmoil. The Renaissance, the Reformation and an exciting new scientific quest had created a climate of liberal humanism and an attitude of questioning. If it spread a great deal of disturbing doubt and confusion, it also generated a new energy and a determined search for new answers to new questions.

It was in this climate that Ignatius of Loyola and his six intellectually brilliant companions studied for seven years (1528-35). As lay students, they were exposed to the intellectual ferment, the liberal humanism and free open questioning prevailing there. And, having been schooled in the Spiritual Exercises, - the experience of encountering God and discerning God’s will for the world as well as for themselves, - even as young laymen they were able to meet these winds of change head-on. In discerning openness to God’s Spirit speaking to them in the

signs of the times, they accepted what led to God and to genuine human progress; discarded what they found divisive; and fought against what was dangerous to a healthy social order.”

Speaking directly to the alumni, Fr. General asked them to have this acceptance; an energy of commitment at the heart of a rapidly changing world, the energy needed to move towards true progress. Fr. Sosa reminded them of some criteria for evaluating whether the education they received has really been fruitful.

“Your education in a Jesuit institution was intended to help you open your minds to wider horizons transcending mere self-interest, to take responsibility for yourself and for society, so that you become agents of social change, ‘men-and-women-for- and-with-others’. The values you have assimilated in Jesuit education prepare you to engage the world in all its complex challenges and make a significant contribution to creating a more humane society. (...)

It is around this shared vision that our educational campuses seek to promote unity and harmony, embracing and transcending all diversity of religious, ethnic, tribal and linguistic identities. If this essential element is missing, however successful you might otherwise be in your careers, our education will have failed in its primary objective. It is not primarily academic results or achievements in sports or the beauty and facilities of an educational campus that measure the success of Jesuit education. It is the quality of life of our alumni/alumnae. This is the best evidence, that the values for which the Society of Jesus was established, and which we try in our lives and through our educational institutions, to share with our staff and students, have had some measure of success.”

### **Reading The Past To Write The Future - Jakhama**

7 MARCH 2020

At the heart of Father General’s visit to Kohima is the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Region. After blessing the commemorative stela of the jubilee, Father Arturo Sosa presided at the Eucharist at Loyola School in Jakhama. An assembly of almost 700 students, parents, alumni and friends of the Society accompanied the Jesuits of the region for this joyful event. The theme of Father General’s entire visit to the region is Reading the



past to write the future. Here are some extracts from his homily for the jubilee.



Dear sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ,

We gather today for this thanksgiving Eucharist on the auspicious occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Kohima Jesuit Region, to thank and praise God for his loving presence and constant intervention in the collective story of this Region in the past fifty grace-filled years. On this Jubilee day, the words of Pope Francis come to my mind: “Review the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, and embrace the future with hope.”

This community gathered in worship today represents the many communities of the faithful in all the centres and institutions of Kohima Region. We gratefully contemplate God’s wonderful ways of granting to the faithful of this Region steady and continuous growth in faith as well as in number, in the past five decades. (...)

The graced history of Kohima Jesuit Region reflects the essential missionary character of the Society of Jesus. Our Holy Father Pope Francis, addressing the General Congregation of the Jesuits in 2016, challenged us with the words of our Founder St Ignatius of Loyola: “to think and live in any part of the world where there is hope for greater service of God and help of souls.” St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary to come to India, is our inspiring model. Ignatius sent Francis Xavier to India with the words, “Go, set the whole world alight.”

It is in this spirit that the Jesuits came from Karnataka to this land fifty years ago. With the same fire, the present Jesuits too have kept moving constantly, responding to the call of people and places where they discerned a greater need. They handed over to the dioceses those parish centres and

institutions that had already been sufficiently well established, to be free to move on to new apostolic frontiers where they discerned the need was greater.

This constant movement onward and outward is in fidelity to the Lord’s missionary mandate to go and make disciples of all nations, preach and teach all that he has commanded us. We continue to hear the Lord’s call to his apostles, “Put out into the deep”, leaving the known and the familiar, venturing out into unknown territory. The life and mission of the Jesuits is a journey, to be ever on the move where the Spirit leads us. Like our Founder St Ignatius of Loyola, Jesuits are challenged “never to be content with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing. We are constantly driven to discover, re-define and reach out for the ‘more’, - seeking the Greater Glory of God, as the Jesuit motto reminds us. For us, frontiers and boundaries are not obstacles or ends, but new challenges to be faced, new opportunities to be welcomed, with a holy boldness, a ‘certain apostolic aggressivity’.” (GC 34, D26) (...)

In the reading from the Book of Leviticus, we heard today: “You are to count seven weeks years... forty-nine years... You will declare the fiftieth year sacred... This is to be a jubilee for you.” Reviewing the past forty-nine years, we realize that almost every seven years the Jesuits have launched out to a new outreach. Invariably they chose to go to remote interior hamlets in the hills and valleys of these lower Himalayan Mountains, where others had not gone. And today, in this fiftieth year, you can indeed count the seven times seven years in which the sons of Ignatius have moved into the seven States of North-East India, and can rightly “declare this fiftieth year sacred, ... a jubilee year for you”.

With Paul I can say to you all, dear brothers and sisters: “I thank my God whenever I think of you; and every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Gospel from the day you first heard it right up to the present. (Phil 1: 3-5)

### The Khasi Tribe, A Matrilineal Society

9 MAR 2020

In 1995 the Society of Jesus published decree 14 of General Congregation 34. Entitled, "The Jesuits and the situation of women in the Church and civil society", the document caught the attention of both

the media and voices within the Church. Within the document, the delegates of GC 34 invited Jesuits, Jesuit works and Jesuit partners to dramatically



increase the attention being paid to women and women's issues, work for gender equality, fight violence against women, and to promote leadership roles for women in the decision-making bodies of Jesuit institutions and apostolates.

This expression of solidarity with women has not been short-lived. The Society of Jesus - and the Jesuits overall - have been faithful in promoting women's rights. With a long involvement in both the social and intellectual ministries, the current Superior General, Fr. Arturo Sosa, has been carrying this concern as a core theme of his visitations to Jesuit works around the world. His visit to St. Xavier Parish in Umbir, gave him the opportunity to highlight this commitment by recognizing the important role that women play in the Church.



The parish, located in the western portion of Kohima, is in a region in which a large portion of the population belongs to the indigenous Khasi tribe. After the Eucharist, during the presentation of a cultural program, Father General had the opportunity to speak. He started by emphasizing the richness of the indigenous peoples and the respect that is due to their traditions. But he also had the opportunity to

underline the primordial role of women in that society...



“In the past four days I have been visiting the various Jesuit centres of Kohima Region and meeting with the diverse cultures of Northeast India. Today, at the end of my short visit, I deem it a joy and a privilege to spend this time with you, Khasi people, encountering one more culture, so unique with your own rich symbols and myths, traditions and values. (...) Today I want to recall with gratitude the special favour God has shown towards the Khasis of Meghalaya, who have received the Gospel and embraced the Christian faith much before the other States and tribes of North-East India.

Speaking about tribal and indigenous peoples, Pope Francis says ‘Today we are more aware of the significance of the richness of the indigenous peoples, especially when, both politically and culturally, other forces tend to suppress them even more through globalization ... where everything becomes standardized. Today, our prophetic audacity, our consciousness, must be on the side of enculturation ... Otherwise, it is homogenizing and destructive. ... We have to interpret things differently, valuing each people, their culture, and their language.’ (GC-36 on 24 Oct 2016)

I am told that Khasis, like other matrilineal tribes of Meghalaya, recognize the special role of women in the family and in society. Pope Francis and the recent synods of Bishops have emphasized the importance of giving women their proper place in the Church’s life and administration. In fact, Catholic women all over the world, especially women religious and women’s societies, are doing so much silent work for evangelisation in all its aspects: faith formation and liturgy, education and health care, social service and nurturing families. Your good customary law that gives importance to women, effectively integrated



into the Church's life and governance, can show the way."

## Walking With The Poor

30 MAR 2020



The state of Assam is located in northeast India. The headquarters of the Jesuit Regional Administration of Kohima are in the main city of this state, Guhawati. It was a bit of luck to meet there Valerian Castelino, a Jesuit priest who covers a large territory as a social worker - some even describe him as a "social activist". Coordinator of the Social Apostolate of the Jesuit Region of Kohima, Father Valerian is almost always "on the road", travelling through the five states of North-East India which constitutes the Jesuit region of Kohima. No office, no staff, but a 4x4 that gives access to almost every corner of the territory. Initiative and imagination enable this itinerant social worker to offer the rural communities tools to take charge of their lives and their environment. Let him tell us about his work.

"The social apostolate here involves concrete actions at the social level, research, and legal interventions. From the beginning, my approach has been the promotion of local self-help groups. When I arrive in a village, I meet the people, the women first and foremost. I gather them and encourage them to form a self-help group. Depending on the size of the community, there may be 10 to 20 groups in the village. Basically, it's a savings and credit union. Women save a certain amount each month and we provide them with training to manage these funds. After six months, we have created a micro-financing program that people can use according to their needs, particularly to provide loans for children's education or to deal with health problems.

We give them a lot of freedom; people choose what is most important to them. In fact, in most cases, women choose to invest in the education of young people because they understand that their future depends on it. Typically, the self-help group lends 10,000 rupees to the family: 5,000 rupees are used for the education of a child and 5,000 for the purchase of animals, often small pigs. They have to repay the 10,000 rupees in one year with the profits

from the sale of the animals. In one village, for example, 16 children benefited from the programme



in the first year. All the loans have been reimbursed. The following year, 40 children were enrolled and all the loans were fully repaid. And this year we will be able to enrol more than 100 children in the program. Note that this is not only an opportunity to provide education for young people, but also to save them from the exploitation of child labour.



From the very beginning of my Jesuit life, I have been trained for rural work. At first I had thought of providing legal assistance, but circumstances directed me towards social work as such. Being the only one with this type of formation in the Region, I am convinced that this is our Jesuit way of helping the most vulnerable people. We offer them opportunities to express themselves before the authorities, the strength to put forward their points of view. And all of our interventions point to the importance of education - formal or non-formal - as the only path that will enable them to make the right decisions for their families and their communities. I am proud to

say that after three and a half years of activity, the women in the communities we visited are becoming true leaders and contributing to the social and economic development of their communities."

Throughout the days when he travels through the countryside of Assam, Father Valerian feels close to Jesus who, all through his ministry, was an itinerant preacher in the villages of Galilee. Today's wandering social worker makes himself close, as Jesus did, to the poor and the forgotten of society. He opens perspectives for their future, he gives them courage, he brings them the joy of the Gospel.

## GOLDEN JUBILEE EXPERIENCES

### THE HALLOW AFTER THE GLOW

-Hector D'Souza SJ

To capture the spirit of the Golden Jubilee of Kohima Jesuits, and to bring to focus the essence and mood of a feeling, to seize the soul and psyche of the community at large and to encapsulate them in a few words is not an easy task. Yet I am going to do it with a spirit of fervent faith and with a heart filled with love through three pairs of eyes of significant



men who were involved in this event: Fr Raymond D' Souza SJ, the living pioneer, Fr Arturo Sosa SJ, the General of the Society and Fr Melvil Pereira SJ,

the Regional Superior of Kohima Region. I begin with the 'Composition of the places' followed by the 'Application of the senses' in each case.

First: **Raymond and Fr General** on the dais. Raymond was supposed to wrap Fr General with a beautiful, colourful Naga shawl. It was given to Raymond; in his anxiety, as he was such a quiet simple man; standing face to face with Fr General, the Black Pope, simply unnerved him. He lost a beat and instead of putting it on Fr General put it on himself. The whole crowd went ecstatic and roared with joy. Raymond realized his mistake pulled it down and with a typical gentle smile wrapped Fr General with the love of the Kohima Jesuits and the people they serve. General was beaming with smiles.

It was a *faux pas*, but it became a symbolic gesture of intimacy and love the Jesuits have for each other. That is the defining moment of Kohima Jesuits and their people. A tenderness that flows from the sense of dedication, service and availability. Raymond, the pioneer Jesuit at 83+ is that icon of Jesuits and a model for the people Northeast. The past was celebrated.

Second: The day is done, the celebrations on last day at Mawshohroh and Umbir are over. The cavalcade of **Fr General landed at Jagriti, Guwahati**. Fr General was happy to see and share the works of NESRC and LCHR. It is time to relax and give thanks to the Lord for holding us on the 'palm of His hand' all thorough this historic visit to Kohima Region.



'Letting your hair down', is a beautiful expression of contentment in the Indian way of life. General and his team accomplished a difficult journey on bad roads, covered long distances and even had a wait of 5 hours at the Dimapur airport. It did not deter them. This is how the Kohima Jesuits have lived and worked. General felt comfortable to share in the type of difficult life they live and share. He was happy



with the animation 'through discernment and Spiritual Exercises' they do; the social apostolate they are engaged in as they 'walk with the poor'; the connection they have as they 'accompany young people' in the villages, schools, colleges and social gatherings and 'collaborate in the care of our Common Home' through intellectual work and protecting earth resources.

It is time to celebrate and they celebrated with joy a-la-Jesuit style vesper. Fr General tasted the best of Indian delicacies and even the *akuni* of Manipur. This too is an autographed gesture of love and a certificate of his affection for us. The present was relished.

Third: It is post jubilee time. Most of the letters of gratitude to bishops, provincials and other dignitaries have gone from the Regional Superior's office. Anand, Richard and Lancy are tying up the loose ends. The future looms large on the horizon with possibilities. Melvil has to be on the move. He chooses the quiet retreat of Jagriti. Three full days closed up in his room to rewind and get the Region ready for the next twenty-five years. Discernment and planning are on the anvil.



This jubilee has given an impetus for the future, the Lord of the harvest has provided many young vocations of substance, a few who do not have the sense of *magis* have to go. The rest will, 'read the past to write the future.' There is a need to enhance the local languages and cultures, commit ourselves to the challenges ahead of us. There is a call to reorient the path of development to sustainable models. The plight of the immigrants is nudging us for action and the refugees are seeking a homestead. We need to listen the deep desire of the intelligentsia to heighten geographical specialties, cultural diversities, and human values. The future is welcomed.

These three pairs of eyes are not enough. I wish I had another three pairs of Anand, Victor and Robert

Pohrmen to bring in the audacity, mobility and tenacity of the post-Golden Jubilee Musings. But the Editor has put a moratorium of 750 words. I abide.

**"Let your first rule of action be to trust in God as if success depended entirely on yourself and not on him: but use all your efforts as if God alone did everything, and yourself nothing."**

**Thoughts of St Ignatius Loyola : For every day of the year  
by Alan G.McDougall. (2<sup>nd</sup> January).**

## **MY REMEMBRANCE OF THE CELEBRATIONS**

**-Paul Coelho SJ**

After the mounting excitement in anticipation of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations in Jakhama, the events themselves seemed to fly by too quickly and in retrospect, now, they almost seem to have an air of being unreal, like a memory from the distant past, but which continues to bring back a flood of heartwarming memories.

So what is it that made the celebrations so memorable and moving?

Well, for one, the various Jubilee events staged over the two days of celebration seemed to capture the significance of the occasion – A time to stop and thank God for all His blessings to the Kohima Jesuits over the past 50 years. As may be expected, there were numerous people to be honoured, some significant places to be remembered, and various past impulses and priorities to be appreciated. And this was done.

Second, the event brought together a motley array of people, many of whom shared little in common save their association with the Kohima Jesuits. Besides the Kohima Jesuits, at the Jubilee events were people whom these Jesuits have worked with and worked for over the past fifty years. Besides, the diverse tribal groups on display, so to speak, reflected the outreach and the expansion work of this small band of Jesuits in Northeast India.

Yet another thing that made the celebrations special was the manner in which the events were staged and orchestrated. The logistical planning, the division or responsibilities, and the execution of the plans, were

all done with utmost meticulousness and care – like the little cogs of a Swiss watch that each has to do “its own little thing” to perfection. Given the Region’s limitations, both in terms of personnel and financial resources, the richness, depth and quality of the events were unimaginable and at the same time, entirely admirable.

And finally, the event was a celebration not just of things past, but an opportunity to encapsulate the hopes of the Kohima Jesuits for the years ahead. Aware of the temptation of letting the past determine the future, the events inspired a desire to explore new initiatives for the future, recognizing that God’s blessings, the support of parents, and the goodwill of



the people being served, that it is not just possible, but necessary, for the Kohima Jesuits to be audacious in exploring new and relevant ways to continue to serve God’s people in Northeast India.

If St Ignatius of Loyola was around for the Jubilee celebrations, in person, I imagine he would have approved them and reminded the Kohima Region Jesuits to continue adhering to their historical mottos of “*Going to where the greater good can be done,*” and, “*In all things, to love and serve.*”



## FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

-Walter Fernandes SJ

I have attended dozens of jubilee celebrations of institutions. In all of them the focus was on the achievements of the institution and on those who managed them. In a major departure from it, in the Kohima Golden Jubilee celebrations, institutions were mentioned no doubt so were people who founded or managed them. But they were not the centre of the event. More than on Jesuits, the focus of the celebrations was on the ordinary people who have worked with them for twenty five years or more and have made them what they are.



Such persons belonged to different institutions of the Region and came from mainland India and various areas of the Northeast. The religious congregations who have worked with us were thanked and were honoured with a shawl. But equally important were thirty one lay persons who have

worked with different communities, parishes, schools and other institutions for decades and have made them what they are. Most of them did not hold prominent positions but were matrons, attenders, teachers, catechists. We had an opportunity to tell the congregation of more than 2,000 people that we would not have survived in the Northeast without these persons who have made us and our institutions what we are. And we did it in style!

Fr Arturo Sosa’s presence did make a difference.





Equally important was the presence of ten bishops and a large number of the diocesan clergy who told us through their presence that they recognised that ours is a collaborative mission. We have our autonomy but we belong to the local people and to the Church. Also the superior general's interventions were very much in that line and in the spirit of the motto "Reading the Past to Write the Future." Without saying it in so many words, he reminded us that we should not rest on our laurels but should use this occasion to look at the future. Magis demands that we use our achievements as stepping stones to greater excellence in the future. I hope that we will use the occasion to read the past, thank God for it, and reflect on it in order to move towards a future in which we find answers in the situation of tomorrow and not in celebrating the past.

The celebrations themselves were organised in a collaborative spirit. A few persons were mentioned and thanked and they deserved it for what they did. However, while individuals worked, it was par excellence an achievement of collaboration between Jesuits, between institutions and between Jesuits and lay persons as well as other religious. My hope is that such collaboration will continue in the task of building the future based on the past.

Equally fulfilling to us was Fr Arturo Sosa's visit to Jagriti, to its two institutions and the final dinner. He showed much interest in our work since he himself has been a researcher. He was relaxed during the dinner since it was the end of the formal visit. Thank you and congratulations everybody!



## DOWN MEMORY LANE

- Fr Paul Raj



It was March, 1989. After a year in Chizami with Fr Boni Lewis, I was to go back to the Province as I was needed in Ooty to take the place of Fr Devashayam who had suffered a heart attack. That year in Chizami, my first experience of the mission, had been very challenging as I struggled a lot at the beginning to enter into that mission area that was quite remote. Towards the end,

I was more than satisfied and at home with people I came to love and cherish. The people came to know that I was on transfer. I had gone to **Messulum** village for Sunday Mass. That community had many ups and downs, and yet we had been faithful in our service to them. The catechist wanted to feast me by way of a farewell meal. "Will you eat dog meat, Father?" he respectfully asked. "I have not eaten, but I wouldn't mind." "Sister?" "Shiii..," she said. With that, the matter ended, and I didn't have a taste of the delicacy! This was a learning memory for me. After years of mission life, if one is not able to respect some of the customs of our own people, when will we then? When I came back in **1991**, I started surely to absorb them gratefully.

When we started our **Jesuit House in Guwahati in 1996**, I was privileged to be a companion to **Fr Ambrose D'Mello**. In his unique ways, he invited the neighbouring religious communities to visit us as we were new to the city. Invariably, many Sisters turned up with some gifts or other for the new house, and Ambrose gratefully offered them coconuts from our own trees and curry leaves from our garden to their great surprise and delight. He also invited them to bring their own men to pluck jack fruits from our tree! Who wouldn't be taken up with such out of the box gestures of friendliness?! Knowing him as we do, he ran the house very beautifully with the ever cheerful **Thresa of Maram** who made friends with all our neighbors. With such good hands to rely on, I became a sort of NRI Superior as I was freed then to serve different groups of priests and religious of the region with my ministry of ongoing formation!



**Original Guwahati Jesuit House: 27<sup>th</sup> March 1996**

I was thereafter commissioned to start a new center, **Chidimit, in September 2003**. It was our first

presence in **Garo Hills, Meghalaya**. After perhaps only a few weeks, I was down with malaria. I had not been sick at all for years, hence I didn't even realize I was running a high temperature. It was before evening mass. I was hearing confessions, and people were completing their rosary. I seem to have fallen from my chair, and I was picked up, water was splashed on my face, and I was led to my room nearby. That evening, my Assistant, **Fr Severius of Ranchi**, and our own **Samir** had gone to some place. The catechist knew immediately it was malaria, and so asked me if I had some medicines. I had, thanks to the **Medical Mission Sisters of Mendipathar**, 30 kms away. He administered those medicines and asked two young boys to be with me that night, and before leaving, the whole community prayed over me, led by the catechist. I was so moved by their total care, I was once and for all sure that I was going to give myself to them totally, too! I did, till I left in **March, 2007 for Langting** to be a companion to **Vally Castelino**.

In 2010, I was to be posted to **Satya Nilayam, Chennai**. Before leaving in **March**, I went to visit **Fr Ambrose** in St. John's, Guwahati, where he had been hospitalized. He held my hand and asked me to bless him! Without any objection, I blessed him, and then I took his hands, placed them on my head and asked him to bless me, saying, "Ambrose, it was you who chose me for this formation ministry way back in 1974 in view of the re-opening of Mount St Joseph novitiate, and all that I have been able to accomplish since then, I owe it all to your blessing of trust and appreciation. Bless me now as I continue that ministry as my mission in Chennai." And he blessed me as Jacob of old passed on Yahweh's blessings to his children! And when I heard from **Fr Mariaraj** that **Fr Ambrose passed away** while I was on a train, I just burst out crying spontaneously. And the passengers respected my tears of grief. **These are my memories of learning, of bonding, and of serving God's people. God has blessed us all, in fact, with such sacred memories to cherish and learn.**

A.M.D.G

## COVID-19 RELIEF WORK IN GUWAHATI

The lockdown period due to Covid-19 provided an opportunity for the Jesuit House Community to support those in dire need of food. As we are aware, the people who are affected most during the induced



lockdown, especially in the cities, are the destitute, the daily wage earners, the rickshaw pullers, the migrant workers and the poor. **Purvanchal Pragati Samaj (PPS)**, under the leadership of **Fr Valerian**, in Jesuit House, Guwahati, was not slow to plunge into action.

The presence of **16 scholastics** in our community is a blessing in disguise for no sooner did they get out of their home quarantine at JH than they joined hands in the mission of caring for the survival of those who needed most. With utmost zeal and enthusiasm, the scholastics engaged themselves with the cooking of food, packing it and sharing it with the needy.

The collaboration with the North East Diocesan Social Forum (NEDSF), the Assam Christian Forum (ACF) and the Kharguli Bihu *Sanmilian* Committee created a ripple effect in this venture to reach out to as many people as possible. As **Fr General** puts it, the collaborative efforts get the best out of the parties involved. That has been our experience in Guwahati.

This effort was initiated and supported by the Regional Superior, **Fr Melvil**. In the early planning, Fr Melvil sought the blessing of the Archbishop of Guwahati, contacted the ACF (an ecumenical forum in Guwahati), collaborated with NEDSF and tirelessly worked for the permission from the district administration. **Fr Anand** and **Fr Valerian** teamed up to take care of the logistics of purchasing the food and packing materials, preparing the food and distributing it while **Frs Richard, Tarcus** and **Salewo**, who were doing their retreat, blessed the



relief work through their prayers. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, an average 250 food packets (cooked meal) were distributed with due permission from the government authorities. We strictly observed the lockdown protocol of social distancing and other safety measures. Apart from distributing food packets, PPS helped 276 migrant families with ration kits comprising of 5 kg rice, 1 kg dal, 1 litre oil, 2 kg potato, 1 kg onion and 1 kg of salt for each family.

The people we supported were happy to receive the meals and rations. The Kamrup District Administration is closely monitoring the relief intervention in and around Guwahati. Fr Valerian was contacted by the ADC of Kamrup District to support 86 families in two places in the outskirts of



the city. We gave food kits to 65 families in Bettapara area and 21 families in Kathabari Area. People in these families work as daily wage earners in constructions and with the sudden halt of construction work, they were left to fend for themselves.

We were touched by an instance of sharing among these families. At Kathabari, we went with 21 food kits but we realized that there were 25 families. We told them that we had only 21 food kits. The leaders in Kathabari area said that they would make sure everyone got from these 21 food kits. After two hours we got a call from them saying "Thank you very much Sir for the ration kits; we managed to share the food ration with another 20 families of our neighbourhood". It is indeed heartening to note the spirit of sharing even when you have little! One is truly puzzled by this spirit of abundance in times of scarcity.

-Vally



## OURS IN PUBLICATION

### Ronald Kharsohtun:

"A balance of Ecology and Ecosophy". JIVAN, March 2020

### Royal Saldanha:

"Selfless, Sacred Service; A story of Gratitude" Asian Journal of Religious Studies. March-August VOL 65/2-4

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### Walter Fernandes:

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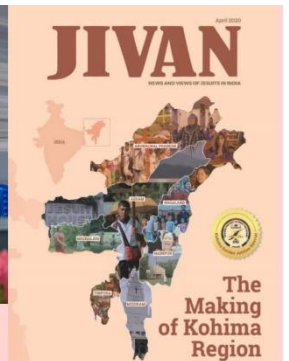
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"North Easterners Return Home to Poor Public Health Infrastructure," The Citizen, 9th April, 2020.

**Reading the Past to Write the Future:** The Kohima Jesuit Region, 1970 to 2020. Published by the Kohima Region.



Reading the Past to Write the Future



Anand Pereira, Hector D'Souza, Jangsinrei Titus, Julian Fernandes, Melvil Pereira, Paul Coelho, Philip Abraham, Richard Jarain, Robert Chawngthu, Valerian Castelino, Wilfred Kharpuri. **"The Making of Kohima Region"**. JIVAN, April 2020.

## KOHIMA GOLDEN JUBILEE ANTHEM

Sound, sound the trumpet of faithfulness.  
Long, long He's promised His goodness.  
Years of sweat, toil and labour;  
Living the hist'ry adorn with colours.  
Louder, louder swell the voices.  
Moments of grace, we celebrate.  
Rememb'ring the ways and the paths we've  
trod;  
Reaping the harvest of joy we've sown.  
Dressed in the armour of Christ, we march!  
Let the mighty anthems roar!  
Under the banner of Christ Our King,  
Reading the past, to write the future.

-Lambok Warlarpih & Richie Rex

## IN CHRISTO

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And  
let the perpetual light shine upon them.



**Fr Jose Javier Aizpun SJ** (GUJ, trans Argentina  
90 / 72 on 10.04.2020 in, Argentina.

**Fr Valentine De Souza SJ**, (GUJ 94/74 on  
06.04.2020, Vadodara, Gujarat

**Fr Dominic Muthedath SJ**, ( PAT 85/63) on  
20.03. 2020 in Patna.

**Fr Jacob Arakal SJ** (AND, 96/75) on  
12.03.2020 in Secunderabad.

**Fr Peter Kerketta SJ** ( PAT, 71/51) 09.03.2020  
in Ambikapur.

**Fr Geoffrey Michael Meagher SJ** (HAZ, 77/59)  
on 05.03.2020 in Kolkata.

**Fr Felix Tirkey SJ** (DUM, 52/28) on 02.03.2020  
in Sahibganj, Jharkhand



**KOHIMA JESUITS  
WISH YOU ALL  
A HAPPY EASTER**



**These EASTER LILIES are a Symbol of  
purity, peace, hope, and new life in the  
Resurrection of the Lord.**

