



himaldhvani

Prabhu Jisu Residence, Post Box 3, Matigara – 734 010, Dt Darjeeling, West Bengal

No 7

Newsletter of Darjeeling Jesuits

August ~ 2020

From the Provincial's Desk

In the context of the prevailing pandemic in the country today, almost every educational institution is busy with online education in compliance with the notifications of various civil and government authorities. The online education is based on the principles of efficiency, ease, and convenience. However it changes the real classroom to the internet-based "coronavirus classroom". It alters teaching as a process of formation to mere acquisition of knowledge. Many educationists have explored "group chat", "shared screen", and "simultaneous writing documents". "Webinar" and "zoom" are the fashions of the day. But the question is "Is online education fully Catholic Education?" There are three reasons why I am of the opinion that online education cannot be fully Catholic Education. First, Catholic Education demands presence. Presence is sacramental. In this presence we participate in "real" reality and not in virtual reality. Second, Catholic education is an encounter with Christ in and through the encounter with teachers. E. Tyler Graham, a High School teacher says, "Catholic Education works through a student's imitation of the teacher whose words and actions draw out young people to see, know, and desire the way, the truth, and the life." Virtual screens truncate the fullness of one's modeling of others. Finally, Catholic education follows the divine pedagogy where "We meet students where they are; we see them and know them, and this unlocks the fullness of education." No screen can fully manifest the person whom we are teaching. I hope the civil authorities will recognize the deficiencies of internet-based "coronavirus classroom" teaching and get back to the real Catholic classroom, fully present to one another, as soon as possible.



PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAM

August 2020

- 03-06 Visitation – Wery Niwas/Woodcot
- 07 Meeting - Province Planning Assessment Team
- 10 Visitation - Hayden Hall
- 11-14 Visitation - Arrupe House
- 15-19 Visitation - St Joseph's School Community
(includes visits to Lepcha Busty/Singla/Mungpoo)
- 20-22 Visitation - Kankebong Mission
- 24 SJS Community Meeting/Eucharist
- 27-28 Visitation – Manresa Jesuit Novitiate

APPOINTMENT BY FR PROVINCIAL

Fr Peter Jong Lepcha: Superior, Wery Niwas, Kurseong

PROVINCE COMMISSIONS:

1. SERVICE OF FAITH:

Fr Pappu Peter (Coordinator), Fr Banerjee John, Fr Bhujel Peter, Fr Dungdung Zacheus, Fr Lepcha Peter Jong, Fr Beck Alex, Fr Tshering Kinley, Fr K. A. Thomas

2. SOCIAL APOSTOLATE AND ECOLOGY:

Fr Xalxo Pascal (Coordinator), Fr Toppo Basil, Fr Dabhi Pramod, Fr Kujur Julius, Fr Susai John Kennedy, Fr D'Souza Paul

3. SECONDARY EDUCATION:

Fr Thanislaus Lawrence (Coordinator), Fr Padappanikel Santy, Fr Maliekal Cherian John, Fr Minj Sebastian, Fr Leo Alphonse Raj, Fr Patel Jayantilal, Fr Kerketta Binod, Fr Moktan Kevin

4. HIGHER EDUCATION:

Fr Lalit P. Tirkey (Coordinator), Fr Abraham Philip, Fr Kujur Donatus, Fr K. J. Jose, Fr A Francis George, Fr Alangaram Xavier

5. FORMATION:

Fr Alangaram Xavier (Coordinator), Fr Susai John Kennedy, Fr Chakkalakkal Shajumon, Fr Maliekal Cherian John, Fr Dungdung Zacheus, Fr N. Shaji Joseph

6. FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT:

Fr Pitchai Joseph Victor (Coordinator), Fr Thanislaus Lawrence, Fr Lepcha Peter Jong, Fr Kerketta Simon, Fr Chakkalakkal Shajumon, Fr Siby Joseph

7. FORUM FOR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Fr K.L George (Coordinator), Fr Leo Alphonse Raj, Fr Moktan Kevin, Fr Tirkey Lalit, Fr Kujur Donatus, Fr Cherian Maliekal John

8. ASSESSMENT TEAM FOR PROVINCE APOSTOLIC PLAN:

Fr Lawrence Thanislaus (Coordinator), Fr Francis George, Fr Pascal Xalxo, Fr Peter Jong Lepcha

HLDRC

One of the initiatives of HLDRC during the coronavirus epidemic was exploring ways and means of providing employment opportunities to migrant laborers who returned to their villages. We identified ten acres of uncultivated land near forest areas under the Nagrakata block. After getting necessary permission from the government officials, we



motivated women self-help groups (SHG) to cultivate paddy for this season. Seven women SHGs came forward. After tilling the land they transplanted paddy. Thanks to the efforts of Mrs Nishita Lakra, the coordinator of SHG, the village communities are united in this effort. Fr Pascal continues to look for more such available land for cultivation. A special thanks to Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) for supporting such an innovative project at HLDRC.



HLDRC also completed the drinking water project at Ramjhora tea garden located near the border of Bhutan. Bore wells were dug to the depth of 410 feet of rocky ground and water tanks to the capacity of 4000 liters

were constructed. The villagers could not imagine such a feat could be materialized. This project provides clean drinking water to 110 households. A special thanks to **Mrs Patrizia Biaconi**, SOS India for making this dream come true.

Ramjhora tea garden was shut down in 2002. Since then Darjeeling Jesuits of North Bengal had been running educational programs for children and community development programs for women SHGs, tailoring and dress designing for young girls and special coaching classes for class IX-X students.

Fr Amid took up skill development programs for sixteen students with special emphasis in spoken English in the month of July.

Fr Pascal Xalvo

MASK DISTRIBUTION

The **DJNB** and **Udaar Charitable Trust**, Darjeeling jointly organized distribution of N95 reusable masks and reusable gloves to 1000 people in Darjeeling and the Bijanbari Block in the 2nd week of July. The target



groups were the municipal garbage collectors, Accredited Social Health

groups were the municipal garbage collectors, Accredited Social Health



Activists (ASHA), hawkers, vegetable vendors, taxi drivers and others who are prone to be infected by coronavirus and who do not have proper protective equipment. Short awareness sessions



were also conducted to the same groups but dividing them into smaller numbers. Seeing the works done by us a few concerned citizens of Darjeeling came forward to help us in the distribution of the masks. This project

were also conducted to the same groups but dividing them into smaller numbers. Seeing the works done by us a few concerned citizens of Darjeeling came forward to help us in the distribution of the masks. This project

was possible through the help of some generous people from England who didn't want their names to be revealed.

Fr Stanley

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, KURSEONG

We resumed celebrating the Eucharist in the church since 1 June. There are seven Masses on Sundays in which a certain number of faithful are assigned according to the SCCs they belong to. Family blessing was undertaken from 7 to 12 July in which all the community members took active part. As a precaution, the parish purchased a sanitizer machine with which the church is disinfected regularly. The youth of our parish participated in a choir competition organized by ICYM of Darjeeling Diocese. They have reached the final. 'Christ-teen' group was formed in our parish on 12 July. They take up the choir for one Mass on Sundays. After getting approval from Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA), we are presently doing the beautification work of the cemetery.

Fr peter Jang

ST VINCENT'S, HATIGHISA

The parish priest and the co-pastor continued to provide all the emergency church services for the parishioners such as administration of the sacraments, funeral services, marriage preparation classes and giving communion to the sick. **Rev. Fr John Wilfred Lobo SJ**, the Provincial, made his annual visitation to the community from 8 to 9 July. We experienced great blessings and consolations during those two days. **Sch. Ashish Soy** joined us on 17 July for community experience. We wish him a fruitful stay at Hatighisa. **Sch. Rajasekharan Pilendran** left the Society of Jesus on 15 June and we were all sad to see him go. We wish him all the very best in life and we pray that God bless him and take care of him. We also thank 'dil se' **Fr Pascal Ekka** for his four long years of loving and committed service to the parishioners and the primary school students at Hatighisa. He was loved and most sought after by all people at Hatighisa. The school students, staff and parishioners will never forget him. He left us on 28 July to join the Tertianship program at Sitagarha. We wish him all

the very best for his Tertianship. We just want to tell **Fr Pascal** that the world is round and surely we'll meet again.

Fr Alex Beck, our superior, while riding a bicycle had a collision with a scooter. He was thrown off the cycle and fell in the middle of Asian Highway near Saat Bahiya. Immediate attention from one of his parishioners and an ex-Jesuit helped him to get up from the road. **Fr Alex** has a hairline fracture on his spine. He is recuperating now.

We congratulate **Fr Lawrence Thanislaus**, the headmaster and his committed team of teachers for achieving excellent results in the Madhyamic and HS examinations this year. The highest scores were 75% and 94.2% of Madhyamic and Higher Secondary Examinations respectively. Admissions are on for classes 11 and 12.

Fr Alvin Minz, SJ

SANGEETANJALI

The lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the smooth running of Sangeetanjali. We were about to put up several shows of a Biblical Dance Drama. We were ready with the shows and even had sent out posters and invitations.

However **Fr Kalyan** and **Fr Edu** have not been sitting idle. In the month of March **Fr Kalyan** performed with many other artists at a concert for Doordarshan, Kolkata. It was a rare and unique experience for him although he had to stay up a whole night. **Fr Kalyan** was invited as a judge for an online singing and instrumental competition called 'Meera Ki', a cultural society of Salesian College, Siliguri. Both **Fr Edu** and **Fr Kalyan** were invited as judges for the ICYM West Bengal and Sikkim online singing and dancing competition 2020 for the Catholic youth of West Bengal and Sikkim. They spent several days watching the uploaded videos of students before declaring the winners. In the month of July they were judges for another online competition of singing and dancing for the



youth of Bagdogra diocese organized by ICYM. This competition was also a very challenging one, going over the uploaded content for many hours and choosing winners.

Sangeetanjali sends out online videos of practices and feed-back sessions of

music and dance. It cannot however be equivalent to real time classroom sessions and practices. Moreover it is difficult for our students from tea gardens who are not under internet network or poor network. Music and dance are practical and performing arts, they need to be learnt from a master or guru face to face.



Fr Edu and **Fr Kalyan** keep themselves busy cleaning and mopping the classrooms regularly. The lockdown in one sense is an unexpected blessing because they get ample time for personal practices and updating themselves.

We regularly get calls from the students and parents that they miss Sangeetanjali classes. But following the governments' directives we are not opening Sangeetanjali classes, but will continue to help our students online.

Fr Edward

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, NORTH POINT, DARJEELING

The Principal, **Fr Leo**, met with the staff of all three divisions separately to review the work in progress during the shutdown period so far. During these meetings the online teaching was reviewed and many suggestions were received and implemented. Live Google classes are going on for classes 9 to 12. From the last week of July Google classes have started for classes 6, 7 and 8. The results of ICSE and ISC were published earlier this month, which came as a huge relief to all here. **Samdup Dorji Lama** of class 12 has made a new school record by scoring 98.75% in Humanities. Online quiz competition was won by the class 11 boys and they were awarded cash prizes. **Fr Leo** and **Bro. P. D. Vincent**, with the

help of the school staff, have planted more than 100 saplings in and around the school campus, besides clearing a lot of useless jungle.

In spite of the limits imposed by the lockdown every member of the community is fairly busy with useful works, each in his own areas. More important is the good spirit and the cheer that prevails in the community. **Fr Stanley** and **Fr Frank** have been busy with their collaborative works with the Darjeeling Diocese. **Fr K. L. George** gets booked for giving recollections to the Religious around, sometimes in person and sometimes through Zoom Meet. **Fr Anuranjan** and **Sch. David Ekka** have been actively helping **Fr Stanley** in the Lepcha Busty ministry. **Fr Pappadil** is more cheerful than before and is taking an active interest in the community exercises. He looks much healthier and livelier now than he was earlier.

Fr K. L. George, SJ

NBSXC, RAJGANJ

Soon after ISC and CBSE results were declared, we started issuing forms online and from the fourth week of July started taking provisional admissions. Although a good number of forms are being issued, the number of admissions is very low as students and parents weigh their options in other colleges. The office staff and heads of departments and other teachers were called to the college campus for various meetings, notably the preparation for the first cycle of accreditation from NAAC. With no immediate sign of reopening of the college, we are gearing ourselves for another round of online classes. The construction of the top floor of the new building is almost completed. It has apart from two large classrooms, a spacious hall. Plans are afoot to install solar panels on the rooftop and water harvesting systems. NBSXC took the initiative of organising an online faculty development program on, 'Becoming a Virtual Teacher: E-Teaching and E-Learning in the Post-Covid World'. Two hundred and fifty eight teachers from seven high schools and three colleges of our Province participated in it. It is a first of its kind of program on a virtual platform. The resource person was **Fr Dr Joe Arun, SJ**, the Director of LIBA, Chennai.

Fr Gabriel once again went to Gayaganga for health check-up and rest. We place on record our gratitude towards Gayaganga community for their hospitality and caring for **Fr Gabriel**. **Xavier** spent some time at Premanjali receiving the scholastics and also giving a day's program to the nuns at Auxilium convent. Siliguri. **Lalit** also took a break at Kelabari and Panialguri Jesuit communities while also completing a chapter for a book being published from Delhi. **Br Bronney** went over to Loyola School, Mogulkata for electrical works. **Sch Anup** accompanied him. Earlier, **Schs. Barnabas** and **Anup** spent a week at LPC, Matigara with other scholastics of the Province. **William Tirkey** who until last month was a member of the Society and our community, is continuing his stay at the hostel while searching for a suitable place outside the college. **Deven**, continues to clear the unnecessary undergrowth and piled up garbage around Xavier Niwas and hostel, leaving no place for cobras to make nests.

Fr Lalit SJ

UTTAR SALBARI

Bro. Bronney and **Sch. Anup** from North Bengal St Xavier's College, Rajganj were in the community from 17 to 24 July to give their expert help in solving our electricity problems. **Sch. Romiyo** and **Sch. Krish Murmu** (NEP) are with us from 17 July for community experience. Of the seventy-six students who appeared for the Madhyamik exams from Loyola school one secured A, twenty-three secured B+, Forty obtained B while 11 received the grade of C and one has to take a compartment exam later. Our community went to St Xavier's school, Alipurduar for a day of recollection on 28 June, points for which were given by **Fr Freddy Baraik**. The two communities had another day of recollection on 25 July, this time at Loyola Niwas, Uttar Salbari in preparation for the celebration of the feast of St Ignatius. **Fr Sebastian Minj** gave the points on the Principle and Foundation. **Fr Bosco** left for his Tertianship program at Sitagarah on 26 July.

Fr Basil

JESU ASHRAM



We have been distributing medicine for our outdoor leprosy patients at our gate since 8 July in spite of the severe shortage of

medicines for leprosy. The good news is that we have not detected new cases of leprosy recently.

There are seventeen families of rehabilitated leprosy patients of Jesu Ashram living by our outdoor leprosy clinic at Mallaguri. Their livelihood depends on daily begging. Due to spreading of the coronavirus epidemic they are unable to beg in and around Siliguri. Jesu Ashram reach out to them with food, medicine and other relief materials on a regular basis.

A building is being constructed with the help of SOS INDIA, Italy for rehabilitating leprosy patients. The nearly completed building has four living rooms, washrooms and facility for clean drinking water. Once completed we intend to accommodate twelve persons who are cured of leprosy. Another building is being built for Shrimati Prabha, a leprosy affected widow who survives on begging. She has two mentally challenged children. This project is sponsored by SELAVIP housing project and **Canadian Jesuits International**.

Anamika Sengupta, a mentally challenged and aged 35 woman who was staying in a relief camp in Siliguri for three months. When the relief camp was dismantled she had nowhere to go. We were informed by some social workers that she was sexually abused. She was brought to Jesu Ashram pregnant on 10 July 2020. She will be with us till her baby is delivered. The government officials have promised to take care of her and the baby. She seems to be very happy staying in Jesu Ashram.

Fr Julius

ST PETER'S, GAYAGANGA

At this time of stress and distress due to Covid-19, the parish priest and co-pastors continue to attend to the spiritual needs of the faithful. There were two week long marriage classes for couples and classes in preparation for the sacrament of Baptism for parents and godparents. St



Peter's Higher Secondary School has been distributing class 10 certificates and admission forms for classes 11 and 12. **Fr Roshan** and **Br Denis** have taken the staff of the Primary School to

the next level in spoken English course with storytelling and performance of skits. **Sch. Gorakh** is staying with us until he can cross the border to Nepal for his regency. This year, **Br Robert** has been able to dedicate more time to prepare the field and transplant paddy.

Fr Provincial made his annual visitation to Gayaganga from 13 to 16 July. **Fr Augustus** directed his first ever triduum to the Sisters of the Daughters of St Anne at Faudijot in preparation for their congregational feast of St Anne and St Joachim. On 1 July, **Fr Cherian** and **Fr Simon**, along with **Fr Provincial**, made a trip to New Doars tea garden near Chamurchi in Jalpaiguri district for vocation promotion work. The community has been fervently praying for vocations to the Society. The community devotedly participated in novena, with special themes, in honour of St Ignatius of Loyola.

Fr Augustus Ekka

MANRESA JESUIT NOVITIATE, KALIMPONG

Manresa Jesuit Novitiate is delighted to have eleven first year novices this year. The first probation was facilitated by **Fr Roshan Kiro**, the Socius,



which ended with the "Cassock Day" on 3 July, the Feast Day of St Thomas, the apostle of India. The "Cassock Day" Mass was presided over by **Fr Socius** while **Fr Director** concelebrated it. Soon after the first probation, on 4 July, the novitiate community went for an outing to Gandhi Ashram School. They also visited

St Joseph's church. The Gandhi Ashram School provided us with a sumptuous lunch. Indeed, the day was a memorable one.

Fr Pradeep Rai, a Darjeeling diocesan priest, is making his retreat under **Fr Shaji Joseph**. **Br Gabriel Gurung**, the minister, has been utilising his expertise in carpentry, electricity and other maintenance work of the house. The novices are occupied with the novena prayers to St Ignatius and other preparations such as an exhibition and a short drama for the Feast Day of St Ignatius of Loyola, the Founder of the Society of Jesus, besides regular classes.



Fr Roshan Kiro, SJ

UPDATE ON SCHOLASTICS

Few of our scholastics managed to come back to the Province during this lockdown. Initially they were quarantined at LPC under the care of **Fr Tommy**. At the end of the quarantine period, scholastics had a faith



sharing in the presence of the PCF and the Provincial. Eventually **Fr Provincial** thought of sending them to different Jesuit houses to have community experience. **Sch. Gorak Rudum** is in Gayaganga, **Sch. Ashish**

Soy in Hatighisa, **Sch. Romiyo Anthony** and **Krish** (NEP) in Kelabari, and **Sch. Amit Kullu** in Sitong. I sincerely thank all the superiors of these communities for accepting to accompany them during this lockdown. **Deacon Antony Xalxo** is staying at LPC, preparing for his online comprehensive exam. After several attempts, we succeeded in bringing **Schs. Reuell** and **Rajan** back to the Province. They arrived on 24 July. They will be home quarantined for a few days at LPC. I sincerely thank **Fr Tommy** for keeping our scholastics on their arrival, and taking care of them without any hesitation.



Fr Xavier Alangaram

SCH. EALIOT SJ WRITES FROM AHMEDABAD...

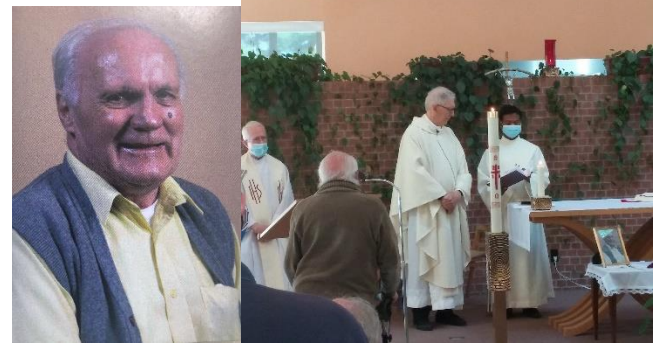
Premal Jyoti, a 'home far from home' for forty college going scholastics from different provinces, is now experiencing a huge vacuum. Due to the uncertainty regarding reopening of the college and the examination dates and the news of further extension of the lockdown, most of the scholastics were sent back to their respective Provinces during the first week of June.



However, some of us (from Darjeeling, Nepal, East-Timor and Kohima) were unable to return. At present, with the arrangements made by the Rector and superior of Premal Jyoti, the scholastics who stayed back were sent to different mission stations of Gujarat Province. St Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmadabad, has also started regular online courses. Moreover, along with the numerous learning experiences, exposure to missions and new places, online classes have also become the part of the lockdown schedule currently. Hoping for things to get better and normal and adapting to this new and strange situation, we march forward! AMDG.

DEACON OSHISH WRITES FROM CANADA...

We had a beautiful memorial service for **Fr Michael Hawkins** at Pickering.



Fr JP Horrigan was the main celebrant. He spoke about **Fr Mike's** helpful nature by narrating the events which took place in the 70s. There were around thirty people at the service. Many could not join because of the gathering restrictions in Toronto.

SCH. BINOD TOPPO WRITES FROM MUMBAI...

On 25 June 2020, **Binod** and **Samson** landed at Mumbai airport and were welcomed by our dean **Fr Aubrey SJ**. We were quarantined at retreat house wing of Vinayalaya for a day. On 27 June, we began our Juniorate with an inaugural Mass celebrated by **Fr Arun SJ**, the Provincial of Bombay. The theme taken was 'Lord make us an instrument of learning and healing'. The inauguration day was an enriching experience. We are eleven juniors from five different Provinces. During the first week of our Juniorate, we had an orientation programme given by our community members, that helped us to know more about one another. The orientation also gave us a sense of responsibility, belongingness, inclusiveness of our vocation and purpose of our present formation. We had a two-day workshop on self-awareness by **Fr Tony V**. This enabled us to delve deep into our inner selves. We also met scholastics from different Provinces including **Sch. Lawrence**, who is still at Vinayalaya because of the lockdown. Regular classes began from 6 July. Keep us in your prayers.

REST IN PEACE

| | | |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Fr Joseph L. Pragasam, S.J. (MDU) | 83/64 | 03 July 2020 |
| Fr Paul Jackson, SJ , (PAT) | 83/64 | 05 July 2020 |
| Fr George Gispert-Sauch, SJ , (BOM) | 90/74 | 29 Aug 2020 |

Happy feast!

St Ignatius, Pray for us.