



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

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Newsletter of Darjeeling Jesuits

November ~ 2020

From the Provincial's Desk

The 5th of November is the feast of all Saints and Blessed of the Society of Jesus. Together with the global Society of Jesus, we remember the countless Jesuits who offered themselves wholeheartedly for the greater glory of God. They humbly sought God in all things. They went into the world with hearts on fire, inflamed with a love that strove, as humanly as possible, to imitate Christ, even to the point of death. In order to live out our "Yes" to the Lord daily, it is very important for us to be grounded in our prayer, to stay connected to Christ in the way that inflamed us in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The moment we neglect the daily practice of prayer which allows God to dwell in our hearts, we begin to wither – our passion for this life begins to dry. Rooted in our prayer, we allow God daily to pour life into our vocation. There were many Jesuits who were contemporaries of these Holy men and who did not recognize their brethren to be Saints or Blessed. Hence this feast invites us to see in our fellow brothers living in our communities/Province saintliness and to see each other in the way God sees us. So let us encourage each other in our vocation and recognize the possibilities in each of our brothers by remaining connected to Christ.



PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAM

November 2020

- 06 SASAC Meeting
- 07 AGM- XESONB
- 09-12 Visitation: Scholastics at Rajganj
- 14 Province Consult
- 17 Mass for Holy Cross Sisters - Final Vows
- 18 Visit to SJS Community, NP
- 20-21 Visit to Namchi – AGM of SJS

FR GENERAL' APPOINTMENT

Fr Agnelo Mascarenhas, SJ (GOA) - Provincial of Pune Province.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Br Robert Lakra, Fr Siby Joseph and Fr Xavier Alangaram took their final vows on 3 October at Matigara. Due to covid-19 epidemic only two members from each Jesuit community of the Province could attend the ceremony except Gayaganga, Alipurduar and Rajganj communities from which all Jesuits attended. There were sixty-five participants including thirteen relatives of Br Robert. After the Holy Eucharist there was a short felicitation program.

NORTH BENGAL ST XAVIER'S COLLEGE, RAJGANJ

Fr Xavier Alangaram pronounced his final vows on 3 October along with Fr Siby and Br Robert at Prabhu Jisu Residence, Matigara. The 3rd year students completed their annual exams on 6 October after prolonged delays and constant changing of decisions on the mode of exams. We appreciate the dedication of the exam committee and teachers who came to the campus to complete the corrections of exam papers. Fr Lalit has been meeting various coordinators of the college to gather data and prepare documents to be submitted for the first cycle of NAAC. Fr Lalit was also busy submitting the final report of the TTC project. The college community extends sincere gratitude to Mrs Patrizia Bianconi and SOS for their generous contribution and service to this institution.



Darjeeling and Nepal scholastics, who could not go to their respective places for studies, were brought to Rajganj on 8 October. They are all accommodated in our college hostel and well looked after by Fr Deven. The scholastics' presence has added a musical flavour in daily Eucharistic celebrations and evening prayers. Fr Gabriel is meeting them individually

for spiritual conversations. **Fr Xavier** and **Fr Deven** had taken the scholastics to Gajoldoba Teesta barrage for a picnic. **Br Broney** made his annual retreat at Senior Home, Matigara under the guidance of **Fr Kalyan**.

Fr Xavier

HLDRC

In the month of October HLDRC led the social action network of the Terai and the Dooars to respond to the arrest of **Fr Stan Swamy** and other critical issues like the Farm Bill 2020 and Labour Reforms Act 2020. The arrest of **Fr Stan Swamy**, an 83 year old Jesuit priest, an academician,



intellectual, writer and Adivasi rights activist, triggered the nation to angry protests. There were several protest rallies at Ghospukur Chowk in Phansedewa Block, Bihar More, Bagdogra and at Hatighisa of Naxalbari block and Jalpaiguri Sadar. This was a spontaneous response of the Adivasi communities, Church organizations, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations and by various Adivasi Rights Forum and Lok Manch Community leaders in this region. HLDRC extended its Covid-19



response with a community development program and farming in two more tea gardens namely Lankapara, closed tea garden of Madarihut block and Gaikata tea garden of Dhupguri block. Permissions were obtained from local authorities for the use of vacant land of 8 acres at Lankapara and 30 acres at Gaikata. The village multipurpose cooperative society and the SHGs began cultivation of mustard seed in the given land. This program is supported by Canadian Jesuit International (CJI).



Fr Pascal and **Fr Amid** made their annual retreat during the puja vacation.

Fr Pascal Xalro

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, NORTH POINT, DARJEELING

The school took a ten-day break from online classes during the Durga Puja holidays. The entire school community was in a shock at the sudden demise of **Mr D N Pradhan**, the Senior Headmaster. He was a committed and loyal teacher at NP for thirty-three years.

The extended School community had a day of recollection. We also went for a night out to Don Bosco, Mirik which was quite refreshing and enjoyable.



The community gave farewell to **Sch. David Ekka**, en route to his new mission at Jesu Ashram. **Fr Leo** made his annual retreat at Manresa. **Fr Frank** was away for a few days at Sakyong to give a CLC programme to the parishioners. Six Jesuits and two guests from Loyola College Namchi came to NP to spend their Puja break from online



classes. Two Kerala Catholic youth had a halt at NP. They were on an all India tour trying to create a record of 'Van Life in India'.

Lepcha Busty church organized a blood donation camp for the youth followed by a drug deaddiction programme at Lepcha Busty. The Lepcha Busty parishioners had three days of charismatic retreat by **Br Binod** from Sonada and a special retreat for the Crusbir children was organized simultaneously. The youth from Lepcha Busty and Kankeybong parishes had a day of gathering at Singla followed by a legal awareness program.

Fr Anuranjan

MANRESA JESUIT NOVITIATE, KALIMPONG

Manresa Jesuit Novitiate community has been very quiet these days. Everyone in the campus is trying to listen in silence God's whispering voice in everything. The first year novices went to Maria Busty on 5 October, accompanied by **Fr Roshan Kiro**, the Socius, for a pilgrimage in preparation for their one month-long retreat. They walked from St Francis Xavier's church, Sakyong to Maria Busty and walked back to Sakyong. **Fr Socius** presided over the Eucharistic Celebration in the Vijaya Rani Girja, established in 1891. The novices were impressed by the experience of their vulnerability and the power of praying Rosary.



Eleven first year novices (eight for Darjeeling and three for Nepal) began their long retreat on 12 October under **Fr Shaji Joseph**, the Director of Novices, while two of the second year novices went to Jesu Ashram, Matigara for their hospital experiment and one remained at home to look after the house activities. **Fr Socius** made his annual retreat at Senior Home under the guidance of **Fr Zachaeus Dungdung**. **Br Gabriel Gurung**, the minister, keeps himself busy with the maintenance of the house and nourishing the physical needs of the community. **Sch. Sujit Minj** and **Sch. Pankaj Kumar Kerketta** made their annual retreat under the guidance of **Fr Socius**.

Fr Roshan Kiro, SJ

ST PETER'S, GAYANGA

A group of fifty-three children, after attending a two-week long intensive catechetical instructions, received First Communion during three separate Masses on Sunday, 18 October. Another group of one hundred and twenty-three children are being prepared for the sacrament of Confirmation. The parish celebrated *Crusveer-divas* on a small-scale, organized by Sisters of the Daughters of the Cross and teachers of St Peter's Primary School. **Fr Peter** organized a daylong program for sixteen couples to mark twenty-five years of togetherness in married life. **Fr John Kennedy**, the Province youth coordinator, organized a career guidance program-cum-orientation for the youth of Gayaganga on 18 October. The Commanding Officer of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Bengal



Battalion inspected St Peter's High School on 15 October, before commencing the first batch of NCC in the school, permission for which was granted last month after waiting for decades. St Peter's Primary School is distributing admission forms for LKG from 20 October.

Br Robert, along with **Fr Xavier** and **Fr Siby Joseph**, pronounced his Final Vows at Matigara on 3 Oct. **Fr Peter** and **Fr Cherian** represented Gayaganga community in a protest march at Ghoshpukur against the arrest of **Fr Stan** organized by **Fr Pascal Xalxo** and his team. **Fr Augustus** and **Br Dennis** attended a two-day Small Christian Community (SCC) training program organized by Bagdogra diocese at Loyola Pastoral Centre, Matigara. **Sch. Sujit** made his annual retreat at Manresa, Kalimpong.

The community had a meeting to review our Apostolic Plan before submitting the assessment to the Province Apostolic Plan assessment team. We had a day of recollection in which **Fr Cherian** gave a talk. The community was delighted to accommodate B.Ed. students from Namchi, **Fr Niroj Kerketta** (Jamshedpur Diocese), **Fr Manoj Tigga** (Raigarh Diocese), **Fr Manoj Tirkey** (DEL), and **Sch. Jeyaraj Solomon**, during their puja vacation. **Sch. Lawrence Kerketta** (NEP) is in the community, recuperating after a minor surgery.

Fr Augustus Ekka

ST VINCENT DE PAUL – HATIGHISA

With **Fr Kennedy's** visit to the parish, efforts to galvanise the Magis group has received much support. **Fr Alvin** remains single-minded in guiding the youth leaders who in their turn respond with equal avidity and verve. He is prompt in attending to the sick and is much sought after for confessions. On 3 October, crusaders of the parish observed "*crusbir divas*" in great numbers and with even greater fervour. Bible skits, thematic dances, action songs and spot games kept the kids on their toes. **Fr Alex** felicitated exemplary "crusaders" on account of their diligence, regularity and voluntariness. Bookmarks and pendants of the Sacred Heart were distributed to all. Many thanks are due to the primary school teachers for enthusiastically co-ordinating and conducting the day's program.

Fr Lawrence meticulously oversaw the registration process for students of class IX on 16 October. Adequate room capacity to ensure proper seating arrangements for large numbers as well as prior information on the requirements for proforma were put in place. All the teachers came together on 20th to strategize and gauge the future course of action. A comprehensive evaluation and a tentative academic plan have been decided upon. There is a splash of colour in the primary school with the installation of new study desks and benches for the kids.

During this medical impasse, we have all encountered suffering in the 'face of the other' and concurrent to this crisis, was the case of **Sapna kujur** from Raikotha whom **Fr Lawrence** had to admit to Navjeevan hospital. With vitals below normal and severely anaemic, it was phenomenal to see her receive a new lease of life. We are grateful to all the teachers, and acquaintances who spared no effort to aid and assist during the course of her month-long treatment.

On 19 October, Hatighisha rallied in support of **Fr Stan Swamy** and others falsely implicated in the Bhima Koregaon probe. On Monday 26th, we had rosary together for the release of all the unlawfully arrested political prisoners. The scholastics also made their reflection in the light of the socio-spiritual crisis during their monthly recollection at Matigara. The points for the same were given by **Fr Lawrence**. **Fr Binod Kerketta** briefly stayed with us between the 14th and 6th and **Fr David Ekka** began his annual retreat here from 25 October.

While first communion and pre-marriage classes will continue in the parish throughout this month, the school office will remain closed during the festive season and be reopened for new admissions on 3 November.

Reuell Paul



Twenty-six children received their first Holy Communion on 18 October. The SAB Sisters had prepared them well for a month. The parishioners had a day of recollection on 24 October. **Fr Bijay** and **Fr Sebastian** conducted a workshop for class X students on how to prepare for the board examination on 17 October. **Fr John Kennedy** and the Magis team of the parish conducted a seminar for the parish youth. Thirty-five youth attended the seminar. **Fr Bijay Kindo** directed a five-day retreat for seminarians **Basant Topno** and **Ajit Lakra** of Jalpaiguri diocese before their

diaconate ordination. **Fr Sebastian** directed a six-day retreat for OCD Sisters at Carmel Ashram, Mohitnagar, Jalpaiguri.

Fr Basil Toppo SJ

ST PAUL'S PARISH, KURSEONG

Fr Peter Jong and the Catholic Association members of the parish had been running from pillar to post, from SDO's office to BLRO's to DM's to the MLA, seeking help to resolve the cemetery problem as the Army was obstructing the maintenance work that was going on in the parish cemetery. Col. S. Chakrawarti from Jalpahar visited the cemetery and had a talk with the parish team, after which some positive steps have been taken. The parishioners observed a day of fasting and prayer for the solution of cemetery problem on 2 Oct. Kurseong Christian Minority Committee had a meeting in our parish hall in which other denominations were appraised of the cemetery problem and the steps taken so far on 10 Oct. On 11th the parish youth went on a prayer walk to grotto at 4th No. T.E on 11 Oct. A day of fasting and prayer was observed for the release of **Fr Stan Swamy, SJ** on 23 Oct. There was a signature campaign and press release, copies of which were sent to the Home Minister through the SDO of Kurseong. On 25 October we had six Masses in the parish during which the youth presented the life, work and the cause of imprisonment of **Fr Stan** and prayers were offered for the early release of **Fr Stan**. The parish youth have constructed a website of the parish stpaulschurchkurseong.com

Fr Peter Jong Lepcha

HAYDEN HALL DARJEELING

Hayden Hall DB Tech started a three-month advance course of General Duty Assistant from 5 Sept. It began with two days of induction classes for twenty-six students. Online classes will be conducted for three months until December 2020. As many more students were interested in taking admissions, an additional session for the course will begin from January 2021.

A three-day refresher course was held for the Community Development Workers (CDW) of Kainjalia-Kankebong, Latpanchar, Dhotre, Miling, Kalej Valley, Rangmook, Dawai Pani and Darjeeling Town area on current health issues from 12-14 Oct. Our in-house trainer **Sr Chunku Sherpa S.J.C** gave the input sessions for seventeen CDWs. The objective of the training was to refresh their minds and motivate them to work for the future.

Mr Vishal Gurung and **Ms Nilima** from the Association for Conservation & Tourism (ACT), Darjeeling conducted a training program on composting and bio-enzyme making on 16 October at Hayden Hall. The training was useful as it made us understand our responsibility towards waste management. The training encouraged everyone towards care of the Earth and People following the Fair Share Model.

October has been a festive month for everyone at Hayden Hall. We organized a short entertainment programme for our weavers on 23 Oct. This was in acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic. The simple gesture made the weavers happy and the event ended with a special lunch.

Mr Cassian Dukpa completes 25 years of selfless service at Hayden Hall (1995-2020). He has been handling various responsibilities during all these years, and continues to render his services as an able administrator. He fondly recalls his journey from a typist-cum-receptionist to an administrator with a smile on his face. There would be no second thoughts in saying that he has given his heart and soul to this organization. He has lead by example and has always been a man for others. The Silver Jubilee celebrations were combined with all the birthdays of the staff during the pandemic from March-October and Dussehra celebrations on 24 October.

Ms. Dipika Adhikari

SCH. ROMIYO WRITES FROM INIGO SADAN, BENGALURU....

Schs Roshan Toppo and **Romiyo** reached Bengaluru for their studies on 13 September after a long-awaited journey. Both were kept in 'home quarantine' for a week before joining community activities. The community is blessed to have scholastics from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds, three from Karnataka, four from Kerala, one from Ranchi, three from Dumka-Raiganj, three from Darjeeling and a regent from Kohima. The first year UG scholastics at Inigo sadan began the year with the Mass of the Holy Spirit on 24 September. **Sch. Ramhorchan** wrote his fifth semester mid-term examinations from 19 to 24 September. The Karnataka province organized a 'silent human chain' from Bridge Road to Shanti Nagar bus Stand for the release of **Fr Stan Swamy** on 12 October. The entire Inigo Sadan community along Jesuits in Bengaluru and students and staff of St Joseph's college joined in solidarity with **Fr Stan**. **Fr Olvin Veigas, S.J** conducted an ongoing online talk on Ignatian Spirituality for the Scholastics on 22 October. **Sch. Romiyo** wrote his first mid-term examinations from 24 to 29 Oct.

REST IN PEACE

Fr Joseph Thayil, SJ (KER) 90/70	30 Sept.2020
Fr Louis Francken, SJ (RAN) 82/63	05 Oct. 2020
Fr Paul Vadakel, SJ (KER) 91/71	08 Oct. 2020)
F Joachim Dungdung, SJ (RAN) (73/48)	19 Oct 2020
Fr Gregory D' Silva, SJ (JAM) 56/37	25 Oct. 2020