

2020/10
72nd YEAR



OCTOBER
2020

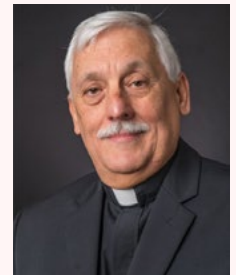
Ganga Lahar



OFFICIAL

FR. GENERAL HAS APPOINTED

- Dominic Quyen Vu - Provincial, Australian Province
Jon Roser - Provincial, German Province



FR. PROVINCIAL HAS APPOINTED

- Amul Jacob - CHS, Ara
Bernard Rajarethinam - Asst. Treasurer, KREA, Bettiah
Francis Thattaparambil - Gyanoday, Khaspur
Norbert Menezes - Acting Rector, St. Michael's
Pramod Peter - B. Ed., St. Aloysius, Mangalore
Savariappan - St. Ignatius, Aurangabad
Seraphim John - Rest & Renewal
Sijo Poovathinkal - Asst. Treasurer, XTTI, Patna
Thomas Perumalil - XLRI, Jhajjar
Vimal Kishore - Acting Superior, Aurangabad



PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAMME

OCTOBER 2020

- 03 - Final Vows - Fr. Deepak Lakra
03 - KR Bettiah
04 - Kaiserganj, Lucknow
06 - Patna
07 - 11 - Visitation XTTI
12 - 22 - Personal Retreat - Tapovan
24 - Buxar Diocese Consult
26 - 29 - JCSA Online
30 - Province Consult



NOVEMBER 2020

02 PM–05 NOON	–Province Apostolic Planning (AD)
05 PM	– Jubilarians’ Mass and Agape (XTTI)
10 – 14	– Visitation St. Xavier’s, Patna
22 – 24	– Visitation Barbigha
27 – 28	– Visitation Manthan, Khagaul

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

There will be a meeting of the **Members of the Province Apostolic Planning Group at Atmadarshan from 02 to 05, November 2020**. The meeting will begin at 5:00 pm on 02 November 2020 and will conclude with lunch on 05 November, 2020. We had scheduled the meeting in April which could not materialize due to the lockdown following the pandemic.

We will have the **Province level Jubilee celebration of the Patna Jesuits on 05 November 2020 at XTTI, Patna**. The mass will begin at 5.00 pm. It will be a Jesuits Only celebration. Please inform the minister if you plan to attend.

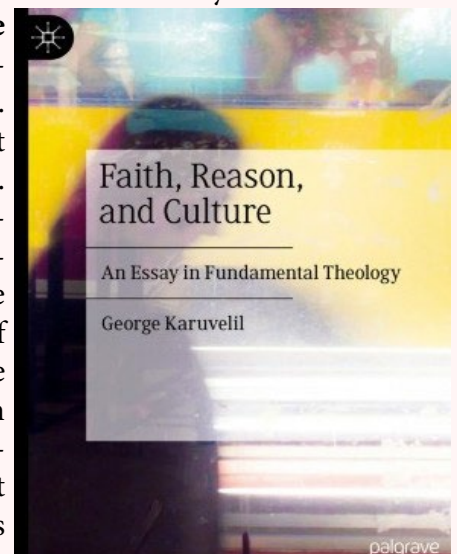
Raymond Email: raysjpatna@gmail.com
Sadhu Shilanand : sadhusj1940@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Fr. Rajesh Somepalli** who was ordained a priest on 12 September 2020 by **Most Rev William D’ Souza, SJ**, the Archbishop of Patna, at St. Xavier’s, Patna.

To **Fr. Deepak Lakra** who pronounced his Final Vows in the Society of Jesus at Asha Deep Chapel, Muzaffarpur on 03 October 2020.

To **Fr. George Karuvelil** for his book titled, “Faith, Reason, and Culture – An Essay in Fundamental Theology” published by Palgrave Macmillan. In this book, **Fr. George** seeks to establish the rationality of religion and theology in the contemporary world. Theology has always required some philosophical basis. Moreover, Christian theology has had a dynamic character that enabled it to adapt to more than one philosophy depending on the need of the time. For instance, it shifted in accordance with the change from Neo-Platonism to Aristotelianism in the thirteenth century. However, this dynamism has been absent since the dawn of modernity, when reason became identified with modern science to disastrous results. While the advent of postmodernism has brought the limits of modernism to light, it has done nothing to establish the rationality of religion, other than to treat religion as a cultural phenomenon along with science. This book conceives fundamental theology as a discipline that seeks religious truth in the midst of diverse perspectives, ranging from militant atheism to violent religious fanaticism.



To Fr. Edward Mendonca for his lyrics and music! During the lockdown, **Fr. Edward** was busy giving Hindi lyrics to his cousin's (Fr. Valerian Mendonca) Konkani hymns. The new Albums are PrabhukaStawan and *BhalaCharwaha*. He earlier composed a gazal expressing agony of migrant workers and together with Fr. Anil Benet uploaded the video for the Buxar diocese. In the last month, his youth song was videoed for the diocese again with Fr. Anil. His first Christian gazal *Mituwa Re aajaa* (Jesus inviting us into His world) is taken by the Franciscans for a video. They had already uploaded on You Tube *PyareYesu, Vishwas Mera and Tere Prem Me*. With this, Eddie has completed 125 lyrics - 45 his own compositions and 80 konkani adaptations.



LOCAL REPORTS



ASHA DEEP, MUZAFFARPUR: Asha Deep community had one more reason to rejoice on 03 October on the feast day of saint Francis Borgia. **Fr. Deepak Lakra** pronounced his final vows at Asha Deep. He had chosen very apt theme "*Christ Jesus has made me his own*" (phil: 3:12). The holy mass was presided over by **Fr. Donald Miranda**, the Provincial. Although Deepak's family members could not participate on this great day due to covid19, a good numbers of our Jesuits along with a few Muzaffarpur priests and a few neighbouring families witnessed his final vows.

- Paul Mariadass

AURANGABAD: The sultry weather of September did not dampen the enthusiasm and energy of our community. The lockdown of schools did not deter our students from celebrating online Teacher's Day on 05 September. Our students with all the current constraints made the day joyful for teachers, expressing their gratitude and wishes. At the request of **Fr. Saji**, the Principal, **Sch. Pramod** empowered the teachers in small groups on digital know-how of Google Meet and other strategies for effective online classroom teaching. On 12 September, **Fr. Norbert Menezes** explained to the staff the changes in the revised School Service Rules to be effective from 01 October, 2020. Spelling-Bee competition was held online on 13 September for the primary classes and English Elocution competition for senior classes was held on 19 September with **Fr. K. P. Dominic** and **Fr. Francis Chinnappan** as external judges and two internal judges from the school. We have started the clarification sessions for Class IX and X and corrections of assignments for the whole school. Occasionally parents' high decibels of fee queries are smartly handled by the principal.

On 13 September, **Br. Abraham** and **Fr. Norbert** went to Patna to attend the Finance meeting called by **Fr. Provincial**. Since the auditors are unable to come to Patna, Br. Abraham has sent the relevant papers for audit. Our target group children are cared for by **Fr. Albert Tirkey**. He ensures that the animators provide the learning materials to them and the students are keen to learn. **Fr. Norbert** is busy discussing the contentious issues of NEP with like-minded people to create awareness. He took a special initiative of seeking teachers' feedback on the benchmarks set by NEP from Jesuit schools of different provinces. He conducted webinars for Christian Minority Educational Institutions Jharkhand, Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Presentation Sisters and a seminar on NEP for St. Ignatius School, Aurangabad and St. Michael's teachers. We have started the regular Sunday Mass in our church.

- Pramod Kumar

GAUNAHA: **Fr. Rajan Lakra** ran from pillar to post for the past three months to get the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) scheme for St. Xavier's School, Gaunaha. We got the good news from the District Education Office (DEO) on 28 September that our school was eligible to get scholarship. Through this scheme

the deserving students will benefit to pursue their studies. **Fr. Babu Jagadeepan** visited 25 villages of the Block and selected 30 migrants to engage them in livelihood programmes with the support of Patna Jesuit Society (PJS). **Fr. Jesuraj** came for mobilization on 23 September for the skill training of SC/ST youth. He went to two Tharu villages and interacted with the youth. After undergoing an eye operation and with new spectacles Bro. Francis is able to have a clear vision. **Fr. Babu** attended Mathematics training and contingency plan workshop in Patna from 25-28 September organized by New Education Group-Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG-FIRE).



- Babu Jagadeepan

JEEVAN SANGHAM, BODHGAYA: Each day is a new day and comes with new hopes, new aspirations and new possibilities. New Life in Jeevan Sangham is more than this wisdom statement! We have a beautiful cow. We call her 'Julie'. She was given to us by Manthan. She gave birth to a new calf. In beauty and combination of white and black skin colour, she resembles her mother. Next time when you see us in Patna, you would find us 'mota – thagada'. Thanks to Julie. She is not alone in bringing new life to us. Our paddy field is filled with very healthy and green paddy plants just waiting to put out shoots. The banana garden nurtured by **Fr. Cyriac Poovakot** has not less than 15 bunches of fruits ready to be cut one by one. Our papaya plants are no less, one plant competing with the other to give us more, bigger and sweeter papayas. Wow! Variety of guava fruits, jack fruits. Seetaphal, and Jamoon lasted for two months! That is not all. We had a good catch of 'potiya' fish brought by the rain water filling our fields. The rain, plenty of it this year, has our campus green and full. What a beautiful place, visitors to our place often remark. To crown these outpouring of life, we have had **Fr. Provincial's** visitation. He stayed with us for two days meeting us and sharing our life in the community. **Sch. Sachin Surin** stayed with us for over a month, thanks to the lockdown. He brought to us freshness and youthfulness. Thirteen class IX students – all girls - who joined us early this month have brought to us a sense of 'normalcy' since the lockdown 1, 2, 3, 4, 5... Amidst all these forms of abundant life, we brothers – **Cyriac, Pradeep, Lawrence, John Ravi** and Myself – and our sister Deepika SRA who accompanies our residential children, are flourishing, growing, ... All of you are welcome to experience this marvelous flow of life! Terms and conditions do apply! **Fr. John Ravi** visited his parents as both his parents were not keeping well. The presence of their son next to them brought much healing to both.

- Anto Joseph



KURJI PARISH: The Month of September brought blessings of hope and courage amidst the pandemic times. The Community took an active part in the Ordination of **Fr. Rajesh Somepalli** and making the link available for many parishioners. We had a meaningful celebration of First Thanksgiving Eucharist of Fr. Rajesh Somepalli on 14 October, 2020, in the Parish with a good number of people and priests. Around seventeen Kurji parishioners participated in the marriage preparation classes at Navjyoti Niketan from 15 to 18 September. On 22 September, **Frs. Prashant Pius, Junas Kujur and Rajesh Somepalli** helped the Seminarians in recollection and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr. Rajesh went to Delhi for a three day-visit to clear his room and get his things back. We are having Weekdays and Sunday Masses with the social distancing and sanitizing norms.

- Rajesh Somepalli

LOYOLA SADAN, LUCKNOW: Having done a day of recollection, we entered into the month of September with new hope, zeal and enthusiasm. It was a special and joyful day for us as we celebrated the Teachers day and feast of St. Teresa of Kolkata. On that day, we had special mass for teachers and students. A special evening prayer was dedicated to St. Teresa of Kolkata. A lot of repair works were done in and around the house. The novitiate chapel has been given new shape through a renovation.

Frs. William D' Souza and **Vimal Kishore** celebrated their birthday. One of the class rooms is temporarily turned into chapel due to the repair work. We were inspired and encouraged by the visit of **Frs. Rajesh Bhaju, Joseph Sebastian,** and **Br. Manoj** from Patna and **Frs. George Nedumattam** and **Sudeep Chacko** from Kaiserganj. We were blessed with good rains.

- Ankesh



PRABHAT, SAKRI: Suposhan Mah under Roshni Suposhanof CARITAS Project was celebrated in all ten villages from 06 to 30 September. More than four hundred pregnant and lactating women as well as ASHA,



Anganwadi Sevika and Mukhyas of different Panchayaths were part of this programme. Workshops on social and cultural analysis were conducted for the youth of Musahar community of different villages and nearly 100 youth participated in these workshops. Prabhat has re-opened the SEC and CRC centers after the lockdown and trainings were conducted for the SEC and CRC teachers. The children are enthusiastic to return to the center and the parents seem to be enthusiastic as their children are kept busy by the teachers. Scholastics **Dilip Kumar** and **Anuj Toppo** appeared for their University exams (Madras University) in MA Philosophy from Prabhat, Sakri and **Fr.**

Anand Kerketta was the controller of the exams. We continue to identify more potential candidates who are affected by the lockdown in order to support them through self-employment programmes.

- Dilip Kumar

READ, BETTIAH: The month of September kept us on our toes, as we began our field visits. We visited almost 18 villages and interacted with 130 families, who were severely affected by Covid-19 pandemic and were unable to lead a decent life. At present, we are arranging ration for 23 selected families who are

hardly having one square meal per day. READ in collaboration with PJS/PJMS has begun Livelihood Programmes for 42 migrants who have started small business activities. We have started the Long-term Residential Program (L.T.R.P) for the Xth and XIIth students. READ team had an exposure visit to Gaunaha's Tailoring centers and had a good interaction with the supervisors and staff, students and their guardians. **Fr. George Ayyankanal** twice visited READ and Champaran area to mobilize the students for



Asha Deep Training Center. **Frs. Jesuraj** and **Jose Kariakatt** stayed with us from 16-18 September. **Fr. Jesuraj** together with **Fr. Joyson** visited a few villages and interacted with the students who have passed-out of READ and introduced the Khaspur Skill Development programme. On 05 September, we celebrated Teacher's Day and honored the teaching staff of READ with a short programme followed by tea and snacks. Nowadays, **Sch. Robert Razeem** is busy attending online classes, studying and submitting assignments.

- P. Arockiasamy

SANJIVAN NIWAS: Sanjivan Niwas: On 01 September, we began the academic year for the candidates. The regular time table of candidate house is followed. In the beginning, it was difficult for the candidates to adjust themselves to our way of living but after two weeks everything became in order. We have four hours of classes per day. From Monday to Friday, **Fr. Joe Kootinal** teaches phonetics, speech drills and spoken English to the candidates. Director, **Fr. Raneesh** takes classes on Spirituality, Introduction to Society of Jesus, and Vocabularies. *Sch. Gnana* takes care of Grammar, written English and choir. **Fr. Sushil Bilung** and guest lecturers take English dialogues and conversations. The candidates are strictly following English as the house



language. From 06 September, the candidates started going to Kurji Parish for the Sunday Mass. Once in a week, we have community Mass where all the community members of Sanjivan come together and pray. On 25 September, our candidates attended the funeral mass of **Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha** in XTTI and sang in the choir. On 26 September, along with the director and the Regent, all the candidates went for a day of outing to XTTI, Atmadarshan, Xavier Bhawan and Tarumitra. It was a joyful and meaningful day for all of us. We thank all the Jesuits of XTTI Campus for their love, care and support. On 28 September, the candidates had their recollection guided

by **Fr. George Karamayil**. We thank **Fr. Andrew James** for hearing the confession. In the evening, we had faith-sharing. On 29 September, we celebrated the feast of the Archangels and were invited for evening prayer and dinner by St. Michael school community. On 30 September, we had community mass celebrated by the newly ordained priest **Fr. Rajesh Somepalli**, followed by a short felicitation and cultural programme by the candidates. We also had the common birthday celebration on the same day. The Scholastics doing B.Ed. had their final semester exams from 26 September to 03 October. They are busy with their online Theology classes now.

- Amul Jacob

SASARAM: On 03 September, **Fr. Benny Moolan** attended a webinar organised by the Patna Jesuit Migrant Service Team. On 07 September, Frs. Rajendran Francis and Gabriel Michael came here for their health check-up in sister's hospital. After having lunch with us, they left for Chenari. On 12 September, **Fr. Benny Moolan** went to Patna to attend a meeting called for the superiors and treasurers. On the same day, he attended the priestly ordination of **Dn. Rajesh Somepalli**. From 14-24 September, class IX students filled and submitted their registration forms. On 18 September, **Sch. Cyprian** went to Patna for his personal works and returned on 20 September. As of now, we are all hale and hearty and waiting for **Fr. Maxentius Lakra**, our new community member to join us at the earliest. The students of classes IX and X started contact classes in the school from 28 September. It is quite encouraging to see them come to the school with great seriousness to study after almost five months of complete lockdown due to covid-19. Some of our primary section teachers have started going to different villages to teach our school kids. In a simple manner, amidst the presence of a few staff, **Fr. Michael Ekka** was given a farewell from the school on 26 September. In the evening, we, as community, had a thanksgiving dinner acknowledging his valuable presence with us for the past two years. He left for Bettiah the next day. **Fr. Benny Moolan** and **Sch. Cyprian Minj** accompanied him till Ara. We wish Fr. Michael a fruitful mission in K.R., Bettiah!

- Cyprian Minj

SEVA SADAN, RATANPURWA: The month of September brought us changes and challenges. Sr. Rajinicia took charge as the Vice-Principal of St. Thomas Hr. Sec. School in place of Sr. Shanti. Sr. Prema is yet to come in place of Sr. Jinita, the hostel In-charge, who left Seva Sadan in the month of August. On 30 September, **Fr. Maxentius Lakra** was given a grand farewell for his service of around 7 years at St. Thomas Higher Secondary School. At the same time, a warm welcome was given to **Fr. Francis Chinnappan** who took charge

as the 3rd Jesuit Principal of St. Thomas Higher Secondary School. Due to the lockdown period being extended the number of admissions to class IX and class XI came down drastically. However the admissions to class 9 and 11 got over and the registration of the same students are also coming to an end. The Bihar Board Examination form filling was completed for classes X and XII. The admission to nursery and class I is also a matter of great concern. The long term residential program (girl's hostel) was closed and the girls are expected as and when we get the permission to reopen. We have started classes for stds IX and X on 28 September. **Fr. Stephen** was busy with survey of Migrant labourers to implement the Migrant Livelihood project. With the installation of Solar system sponsored by CHA-SELCO and CCTV in the dispensary and in the Seva Sadan campus certain safety measures are upgraded. Sr. Kiran, the Nurse, keeps awake in the nights and treats snake bite patients without fear. **Bro. Vijay** is getting ready with repairing the tractors and tools for paddy harvest. But the incessant heavy rain is damaging the crops. The rain took away our fish from the pond while others enjoyed a big catch, though we tried to bring back some of them into our fish pond again. As Fr. Francis is learning to familiarize himself with the matters concerning the school he had a meeting with the school staff to plan for the coming days for regular classes. **Fr. Maxentius** plans to move to Sasaram on 04 of October 2020.

- Stephenraj

ST. XAVIER'S, PATNA: The month of September witnessed many activities in the campus. A virtual Teacher's Day celebration began at St Xavier's School with a "Teachers Appreciation Week. There were a series of videos about the struggles and success stories of teachers prepared and released as a part of the event. Thanks to Fr. Christu for this creativity. Congratulations to all our students who showed their great love and respect through their virtual meaningful cultural programme on 05 September. St. Xavier's was privileged to host the Ordination Ceremony of **Dn. Rajesh Somepalli** on 12 September. The community left no stone unturned in making this event a memorable one. All the teachers took part in a webinar on 15 September on the topic, "Enhancing Communication Skills for Teachers" organized by Oxford University Press. Earlier, our teachers attended a three days National level online Faculty Development Programme on



"Digital Skills for Enhanced Teaching and Learning" organized by St. Ann's College, Assam, which really helped them to equip themselves to take online classes more efficiently. This pandemic has made all our teachers 'Techno friendly'. The death of **Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha** on 24 September has left a void in the community. We miss him a lot. The school organized a virtual PTM for Primary Section on 26 September which was well appreciated by the parents. The second phase for High School will take place on 03 October. We are now gearing up to conduct Second Terminal Examination which will commence from 12 October.

- Devashish

SHANTI SADAN, ALLAHABAD: Shanti Sadan was verdant during the rainy season. We enjoyed playing in the rain. After laying the foundation stone for the Jesuit Residence in Kaiserganj, **Frs. Joseph Sebastian, Rajesh Bhaju, Sudeep Chacko** and **Br. Manoj** visited Shanti Sadan on 02 September and left for Patna the next morning after the mass. After completing the quarantine days, our new companions Euzeen (Delhi) and Sumit (Patna) joined the Pre-Novitiate community. On 12 September, we caught fish from our pond. On 13 September, our companion Subodh went to Rajasthan for his exam. We made a cactus garden which adds to the beauty of our garden. **Fr. Jose Elampassery** fell sick but recovered in two days with the love and care of pre-novices. Pre-Novice Subodh came back from Rajasthan. Currently, he is in quarantine. On 28 September, seven Nazareth sisters came for 12 days retreat under the guidance of **Fr. Pius Theckemury**.

- Arpit B.

XAVIER BHAWAN: The sick members of Xavier Bhavan enjoyed comparatively better health in September than in the previous month. **Fr. Augustine Ambrose**, who was mostly confined to his room in August, has started coming to the dining room and the chapel in his wheel chair. **Fr. Sushil Sah** has been greatly helped by his daily physiotherapy. Now he can walk without any help. So, he too is regular for his meals in the dining room and for Mass and evening prayer in the chapel. This is the season of tapioca. Our tapiocas planted by Mr. Naresh, one of our co-workers, have yielded a good crop. **Fr. Sevanand Melookunnel** and **Brother Joe Ullattil** are experts in cooking tapioca, especially tapioca Biriyani. We have been supplying tapioca to neighbouring houses too. The newly ordained priest **Fr. Rajesh Somepalli** offered Mass for the Atmadarshan community on 19 September.

- Joseph Vellaringatt

DIASPORA

ARRUPE NIWAS, BENGALURU: A very famous quote by Robert Schuller “Tough times don’t last, tough people do” was proved to be true as five of our community members were tested positive for covid and we defeated the virus by practicing social distancing, drinking kashayam, taking hot water, and steam inhalation for a couple of days and wearing mask every time we came out of our rooms. All the community activities were suspended for two weeks. The rector instructed us to take care of our health and we were given vitamin-C tablets to boost our immune system. We experienced the tremendous cooperation from one another during this hard time. Now the sick members have recovered and joined the community. We started the community activities with more vigour and life. After two weeks of holidays, I started attending my online classes with fervour. The covid-situation in Karnataka seems to be improving very slowly and that is why the state government has postponed the date for opening the educational institutions to the first week of November. I met **Fr. Dharam Kishore** of Patna Archdiocese who is currently pursuing LLB at St. Joseph’s Law College. I was asked to address the North Indian construction workers on the importance of their role in the development works and thank them for the hard work in the construction of the administrative block of St. Joseph’s College of Arts and Science. After Fr. Rector felicitated the workers, all the community members had lunch with them in the quadrangle of the college. I was surprised to see many workers from north Indian States even in the times of covid. I was happy to converse with them during the lunch time.

- Ravibhushan Kumar

ST. STANISLAUS, HAZARIBAG: On 05 September, we the juniors, joyfully celebrated the Teacher’s Day. We expressed our gratitude to our Jesuit Faculty of professors with a felicitation program. We made the day even more colorful with a friendly football match. It was also an eventful month for us. In the absence of Dean, **Fr. Francis Kurien**, the Assistant Dean, **Fr. K. C. Philip**, took over the job and guided us towards excellence. Our professors are providing conducive atmosphere for our studies with their ‘smart’ classes. Nowadays we are receiving ample opportunities to express ourselves rhetorically through debates and public speaking in English as well as Hindi. Our joy is doubled with the return of our Dean **Fr. Francis**. He is recuperating faster. **Fr. Sandeep** of MP took English classes for us for two months in the place of **Fr. Kurien**. **Br. Siddu** also is recuperating well. He is still continuing his medication. **Sr. Jaysheeli.CIC**, novice mistress, led us towards the Lord with a beautiful presentation on ‘holistic healing’ during our recollection. Our Tertian Fathers successfully concluded their long retreat on 02 October and gracefully rejoined our community with lots of spiritual blessings. We thank God for the graces showered upon them. We juniors are these days burning midnight oil for our first semester exam.

- Felix Richard

XAVIER NILAYA, BENGALURU: Due to Covid 19, the candidacy programme at Xavier Nilaya, Bengaluru, is shifted to Sanjivan Niwas, Patna. **Frs. Albert Abraham** and **Prakash Antony** were our guests for a few days as they appeared for their B.Ed. exams. On 16 September, 5 Patna scholastics, namely, **Arockia Nelson**, **Richard Lakra**, **Sanjeev Turkey**, **Sachin Surin**, and **Vicky Lal** arrived in XN from Patna. **Sch. Nelson** left

for Mangalore on 22 September for his studies. The rest of us are busy with our online classes. We also help out in the house activities. The number of cases in Bangalore keeps increasing day by day. By God's grace, **Fr. Mani Poovakot** and the rest of us are safe and enjoying good health. **Fr. Daniel Raj** represented our community at the installation ceremony of Fr. Dionysius Vaz as the new Provincial of Karnataka Province. Thanks to Fr. Stanislaus J. D' Souza, the outgoing Provincial, for his wholehearted support and care of Xavier Nilaya! We congratulate **Fr. Dion** and wish him all the best.

- Richard Lakra

VARIA

FAREWELL, FR. DION !

Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha SJ (PAT 65/44) died at Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, on 24 September 2020. Fr. Dion had been under medication for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) for some years besides diabetics. He was admitted in June in KHFH, Patna, and then shifted to Paras Hospital, Patna, following the lowering of his hemoglobin. He recovered well from critical stage and recuperated in Xavier Bhawan before joining St. Xavier's, Patna. However, he became weak and was admitted to KHFH, Patna, on 13 September 2020. Considering the multiple health issues, his condition was up and down and eventually, he died on 24 September.



The funeral mass was held at XTTI Chapel on 25 September. The Holy Eucharist was presided over by Most Rev. William D' Souza, SJ, the Archbishop of Patna. He was joined by **Fr. Donald Miranda**, the Provincial, and **Fr. Joseph Sebastian**, the Rector of St. Xavier's, Patna, and the other fellow Jesuits. Our candidates along with the scholastics led the choir. **Fr. Alwyn Vaz** in a personal homily highlighted the Fr. Dion's attitude of seeking perfection in his work whether teaching and writing theology or keeping accounts and his love for life. Fr. Selvin Xavier, the Socius, read out a beautifully worded tribute by the family of **Fr. Dionysius** who could not be present for the funeral. Considering the heavy rain, all the prayers were said in the chapel itself with the congregation and the participants paid their final homage in the chapel. Besides the Archbishop and the family of Fr. Dion, **Fr. Socius** specially thanked the Rector and community of XTTI, **Frs. Rajesh Bhaju** and **Gyan Prakash** of the Province Infirmary, **Fr. Gregory Gomes**, the Prefect for Health, and the administrator, doctors and staff of KHFH, Patna. May his soul rest in peace!

(please see the obituary on the next page)

REQUESTING YOUR PRAYERS

FOR THE SICK

Fr. George Karamayil is admitted to KHFH, Patna with body ache and general weakness.

FOR THE DEPARTED

Mrs. Annakutty D. Njarakulam, (78), **sister-in-law of Fr. Joe Njarakulam, SJ**, died on 08 Sept., 2020.

Fr. Jayant Kumar Padival, SJ, (KAR 71/54), expired on 08 September 2020 in Mangalur.

Fr. John Berchman Nag, SJ, (JAM 72/36) died on 10 September 2020 in Tata Hospital, Jamshedpur.

Fr. Jacob Carvalho, SJ, (GOA75/57), expired on 12 September, 2020, in Belagavi, Karnataka.

Fr James Thottakath, SJ (KER 83/63) died on 15 September 2020 at Christ Hall, Kozhikode.

Fr. Vijay Prabhu, SJ, (KAR 80/61) expired on 15 September 2020 in Father Mullers, Mangaluru.

Fr Erik Breye SJ (RAN 80/61) on 18 September 2020 in St. Albert's College, Ranchi.

Br. Nicolas Hernandez Blanco, SJ (SPAIN/ GUJ) 92/75 died on 20 September, 2020 in Spain

Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha, SJ, (PAT 65/44) died on 24 September 2020 at KHFH, Patna.

Fr Joseph Thayil, SJ (KER 90/70) died on 30 September 2020 in Nirmala Hospital, Kozhikode.

FR. DIONYSIUS RASQUINHA, S.J. (65/44)
Died at Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, India, on 24 September 2020



Born : 13-10-1954
Entered the SJ : 02-01-1976

Ordained : 26.04.1986
Final Vows : 31.05.1996

FORMATION & STUDIES

Sec. Education: St. Stanislaus School, Mumbai, 1971
Graduation: Sydenham College of Commerce, Mumbai 1975
Novitiate: XTTI, Digha Ghat, P.O., Patna, 1976-1978
Juniorate: XTTI, Digha Ghat, P.O., Patna, 1978
Regency: Catholic High School, Ara, 1979 (Jan-June)
Philosophy Yr1: S. H. College, Shembaganur, 1979-80
Philosophy Yr 2: Satya Nilayam, Chennai, 1980-81
Regency: St. Xavier's Sch, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 1981-83
Theology: RTC, Danapur (1983-84) & Vidyajyoti, Delhi, (1984-1986)
Ordination: Mumbai, 26.04.1986;
Bible Studies, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 1988-89
M. Th., Vidyajyoti, Delhi, 1989-1992

Tertianship: Vinayalaya, Mumbai; 1993-94
Final Vows: St. Xavier's, Patna, 31.05.1996

APOSTOLIC ASSIGNMENTS AS A PRIEST

Pastoral Yr & Co-Pastor, Barbigha Parish, 1986-1988
Acting Director, RTC, Danapur, 1992-93
Research: 1994-98
Teacher, St. Stanislaus High School, Mumbai, 1998-99
Vice Principal, St. Xavier's, Patna, 1999-2001
Theology Professor, Gyanoday, RTC, Patna, 2001-2011 (Sabbatical, 2009-2010)
Theology Professor & Theological Research, Navjyoti Niketan, 2011-2015
Asst. Treasurer, PJS, St. Xavier's, Patna 2015-2020

Fr. Dionysius Rasquinha, SJ, affectionately called Fr. Dion, was a scholar, teacher, guide and mentor, writer, musician, vibrant Jesuit, dedicated priest and above all, a lover of life. Love for the poor, especially Dalits, permeated his research, teaching and writing, along with a commitment to promote integral cosmic wellbeing. He was a perfectionist who wanted to excel in all that he did and in all that was entrusted to his care; for this he applied himself fully into all that he undertook, not counting the cost. His zest for life and desire for perfection sprang from his faith and love for his Master and Lord Jesus, whom he always endeavoured to follow ever more closely; love for the Church and joy in his vocation as a Jesuit priest were integral aspects of his love for Jesus.

A major part of Fr. Dion's life as a Jesuit priest was dedicated to theological research, teaching-guiding-mentoring theology students and writing. He was one of the stalwarts of Regional Theology and he promoted theological reflections on contemporary issues. He demanded the best from his students and closely accompanied them for achieving it; hence many of his students, who are serving as priests today, are not only grateful to him but have fond memories of him because he knew how to bring the best out of them. In as much as he was a 'hard task master' on the intellectual front, he was an affectionate companion who accompanied them with immense love. The annual seminars in Regional Theology Centre (RTC) in which Fr. Dion participated and/or guided the students invariably had the stamp of academic rigour.

Besides many articles in theological journals, Fr. Dion's two books bear testimony to his intellectual caliber and spirituality: 1) Towards Wholeness from Brokenness: The Dalit Quest - A Historical Analysis and Theological Response (2013) and 2) Prayer Services in the Indian Context (2014). In community or Ministry Commission and Province level meetings/gatherings, Fr. Dion always insisted on intellectual analysis and theological response to any topic or issue that was discussed; his persuasive arguments invited and enabled the participants to perceive reality at a deeper level and respond to it from a faith perspective, not just follow the crowd or be satisfied with mediocrity. His knowledge was encyclopedic which made him a good teacher, guide and an interesting conversationalist.

After he had spent nearly a quarter-of-a-century in theological pursuits, Fr. Dion was assigned to be the Assistant Treasurer of Patna Province / Patna Jesuit Society. He had done graduation in Commerce before he joined the Society; so, he had to refresh as well as update himself with accounts and book-keeping, become familiar with all the relevant laws of the land and guidelines of the government, get to know the system of accounting and documenting which the funding agencies prescribe, and keep track of the financial status of the Province institutions, centres and projects. He laboured for long hours and soon he was on the saddle; for the next five years, till his death, he assisted the Treasurer efficiently. This showed the typical Jesuit spirit of availability of Fr. Dion, not counting the cost.

Fr. Dion celebrated life in many ways: music, food, companionship, animated discussions and jokes - heartfelt outbursts of laughter with his whole body shaking, was his trademark. There were no half measures in his work or celebration of life, there was only fullness and abundance. Even serious health setbacks could not dampen his spirit because his source was Jesus, who came to give us life, and life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

Eternal rest grant unto Fr. Dion O lord and may perpetual light shine upon him. Goodbye Fr. Dion till we meet again.

- Fr. Susai Raj, SJ

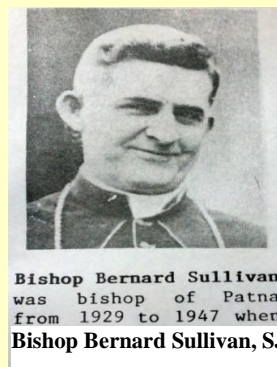
Beginnings of a Promising Mission in Central Bihar

Jose Kalapura, SJ

In mid 1930s, Patna Jesuits found a vast mission field in central Bihar, south of the Ganga, where Dalits in large numbers responded to evangelisation. The latter's positive response to evangelisation eventually became a movement of the people. In this narrative we cover a decade of effervescent growth of Patna Mission, 1936-1946.

Bishop Bernard Sullivan's Leadership

In this new missionary venture, the leadership of the Bishop of Patna was very significant and successful. On May 25, 1927, Patna Jesuit Fr. Bernard Sullivan was appointed Administrator Apostolic of Patna Diocese, when Bishop Van Hoeck was transferred to Ranchi. He had been working as the Bishop's secretary for a few years during which time he had learnt how to manage a diocese. In mid 1929 he was appointed Bishop of Patna and that year Patna Jesuits had a new Jesuit Superior, Fr. Peter Sontag. Both would make great progress in the diocese through evangelization and education.



Depressed Classes Movement and Patna Jesuits

Patna's missionaries were also gripped by the social and religious restlessness among the Dalits (formerly known as Depressed Classes), led by Ambedkar in 1930s. There were all-India religion conferences wherein preceptors from diverse religions were invited to address the Depressed Class conferences. One such conference was held at Patna (1937) wherein two Patna Jesuits attended and addressed the people offering them on behalf of the Christian community, both spiritual and material help. The Catholic missionaries read the signs of the times and increased their effort to propose to those who were searching for liberation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Historically the movement of Dalits to Catholicism began in Barh, initiated by Fr. Henry Westropp in May 1936. It began with the baptism by his catechist of a dying child from village Rais at Patna Hospital. Reporting to Westropp about the event, the catechist and Westropp visited Rais and thereafter a few men folk requested baptism. They were so touched by the kind gesture of a priest at Patna who seemed to have helped the child's father in post-death arrangements.

From Rais they went to Sheikhpura and baptized several persons: men, women and children, all Dalits. Similar invitations came from other villages: Rajpur, Inglis, Saksorah, Dolluekali, Rajapuri, Govihari, etc., south of Barh.

Besides Westropp, Fr. Michael Lyons and Fr. Sontag were engaged in the movement. Scores of villages in Patna, Bhojpur and Gaya districts were visited. Westropp was given charge of Bhojpur District, Sontag, east of Patna and Lyons, south of Patna. This policy made possible a more systematic care of the converts.

As the work expanded two resident priests were placed in each station such as at Mokama, Bakhtiarpur, Bihar Sharif, Gaya, Nawada, BarBigha, Piro, Ara, and Buxar. Rented houses were used initially by the missionaries. There was great desire for the people to be received into the Church, on an average, 100 per month. The census returns marked about 20,000 converts in a decade or so.

Conversion was not the sole work of the missionaries: people's positive response was equally important. Dalits' capability to make decisions for themselves on conversion is often undermined by certain scholars. The Dalit movement was fostered, and even initiated by the determination of the Depressed Classes who were disenchanted with their depressive status under the oppressive, discriminatory caste system. They were asking for social justice, from any religion that would give them better social status in society.

Complaints in many newspapers came saying that those conversions had no enduring character, and succeeded only in making nominal Christians. It might have been true in some cases. The number of conversions alarmed some people, complaints reached the ears of Fr. General of the Society of Jesus, that the Patna Jesuits were threatening ruin to the Indian missions by baptizing without proper instruction. Hence a Visitor was sent from Rome who passed orders that unless the missionaries could proceed in a radically different manner, the work should be discontinued.

Both the Bishop and the Superior had heartily approved of the method they were following; but the Superior had no other alternative than to accept the decision of the official Visitor. But the Bishop said, "As your Bishop, I want you to go right ahead as you have been doing." No orders contrary to the Bishop's decisions came from the Holy See. The result was that a fair number of canonically established parishes with beautiful churches, schools, convents, medical dispensaries and orphanages were built.

Founding Missions in Central Bihar

A brief sketch of the development of various mission centres in Patna is apt here. Settling down at **Barh** in 1932, Sontag acquired the present site, put up a bungalow, a church, a school (1940) and a convent. The diocesan priest Fr. Gregory Thekel came to help him and from 1943 he was full in-charge for over 30 years and developed Barhas a flourishing mission station.

In **Mokama** Fr. Marion Batson set up a chapel and a residence, founded schools at Kherwara, Bar Bigha and Nawada. He wanted Mokama to be a pilgrim centre, with a beautiful shrine to Mother of Divine Grace. In 1943, Bishop Sullivan laid the foundation stone of the Shrine in the presence of Mr. Leslie Martin, the donor of the shrine. **Bakhtiarpur**, first visited from Mokama by Fr. Morrison, was founded in 1939 by Batson.



Fr. Marion Batson, SJ



Fr. Francis Welzmler, SJ



Fr. Jacob Kunnunkal, SJ

Towards the south of Patna was **Gaya** station, visited from Patna until 1937 when Sontag bought the present site. In 1940 Fr. Creane further expanded the plot and developed the mission, built a chapel and residence. **Bar Bigha** was a substation of Mokama, built by Batson. In 1942 the present site was obtained, and a residence was begun. In 1944 diocesan priest Fr. Joseph Padamattam took charge. **Nawada**, visited from Mokama, was opened by the far-sighted Batson in 1938. In 1940, diocesan priest Fr. Remy Andrew took up residence but later joined Gorakhpur Diocese. In 1944, diocesan priest Fr. Matthew Mezhukunnel, took charge of Nawada. **Bihar Sharif** was visited from Mokama from 1938 by Batson. From 1946, Fr. Wilkinson was resident there. **Jehanabad** was developed from 1943, by Fr. Alphonse Goveas.

When Sontag and Batson were establishing a chain of stations and schools in the east and south of Patna, Westropp was doing so in the west of Patna. In 1934 Westropp started a boys' school at Ara, bought the present site in 1937, and in 1939 Bishop Sullivan planned and built the first chapel and residence. In 1939 Sontag's middle school at Patna City (1935-1936) was shifted to Ara.

Westropp rented a small house near Buxar station in 1937. In 1939 diocesan priest Fr. Bernard D'Cruz joined him and bought the present property, built a church and a bungalow. Later, he developed **Itarhi** and **Pirowas** developed by Fr. Welzmler.

Maner was first explored in late 1930s by Westropp and Michael Lyons (later he left the Society). In early 1940s, diocesan priest (later a Jesuit) Fr. Jacob Kunnunkal, acting as Bishop Sullivan's secretary, followed up the work and gradually the present station developed after 1943.

Patna Mission attained the highest growth during the period, 1936 to 1946: the largest number of mission stations (16 stations) were opened, whereas in the next 23 years (1952- 1975), only 12 stations were opened. From 1980, Patna Diocese was bifurcated and till 1993, 11 stations were opened in Patna and Muzaffarpur dioceses.