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Newsletter of Darjeeling Jesuits

May ~ 2020

From the Provincial's Desk

No doubt, Covid-19 has provided us with an opportunity to reinvent ourselves. In my travels around the world prior to the pandemic, I have witnessed a lack of religious fervor and zeal among the people, especially in Europe where we find less number of people attending church services. But post Covid-19 situation indicates that the faith of the faithful has not been weakened. Every family and every religious community is converted into a church during the lockdown period. They have been spending time in prayer together at home. The priests and religious, besides their daily routine, have been spending time before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. Many priests and religious have made or are making their personal or community retreats. Online religious services are being offered to the Catholics by their parishes and dioceses. This reinvention has led us to new ways of seeing, thinking, acting, relating, planning and living. We have realized the need to move from being institutional to being Christ-centered. There is spiritual growth and building of communion among us. Our personal and community life is refined with values of Christ reflected in deeds for our suffering humanity. The way of Jesus has become our way of life. We have become reflective and meditative. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, may we continue to become a rose that emits fragrance, a light that enlightens others, salt that prevents from being corrupted and adds taste! May we continue to experience a paradigm shift from our institutional life to people-centered and God-centered way of life!



APPOINTMENT BY FR GENERAL

Fr Stan D'Souza, SJ: President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (POSA)

RELIEF WORK BY DARJEELING JESUITS



During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic like many people of goodwill, Darjeeling Jesuits also undertook relief work among the poorest providing them food grains and other essential things for survival. All our communities have been active in the relief work. In the hills of Darjeeling, the relief work was undertaken by the Jesuits of St Joseph's School, College and Hayden Hall. In the terai region of Darjeeling district and Jalpaiguri districts it was done primarily through the institutions like HLDRC, Jesu Ashram, North Bengal St Xavier's College and St Vincent's, Hatighisa and parishes such as St Peter's, Gayaganga and St Vincent's, Hatighisa. We remain grateful to Mrs Patrizia Biaconi, the President of SOS India for her contribution towards the relief work.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, NORTH POINT



The pandemic caused by Covid-19 prompted Fr Stanley, Fr Frank, Fr Anuranjan, Fr K. L. George, Br P. D. Vincent and Br Gabriel Gurung to make their retreat. The retreat was based on the current pandemic situation. After the retreat

George took Gabriel to Manresa, Kalimpong where Gabriel is appointed as minister, along with some food supplies which the novitiate needed. Later Sch. Gorak Rudum who was also stuck in Darjeeling joined the community. Fr Frank has been busy setting up his new office in Divya Vani, the diocesan Pastoral Centre. Fr Pappadil has regained the ten kilos which he had lost last year. He is looking good and healthier now.



The school shut down on 16 March and the staff and the students left the campus within two days. But the Principal's office never really closed. Fr Leo Thomas has been working hard with the help of the school staff to keep the classes, tests and competitions going – all through online. And all of them are doing a commendable work. A new and

creative venture **Leo** initiated was the North Point Weekly which he has published two issues so far. **Fr Anuranjan** has been a strong support to **Leo** in all these. The parents regularly contact **Leo** and **Anuranjan** regarding their sons' studies and assignments. The school staff, some parents and a supplier in town have together contributed a substantial amount towards relief work organised by the Jesuit community and the school.

Fr Stanley and **Br P. D. Vincent** have done very well in coordinating and carrying out the relief works. Some staff and students from St Teresa's School under their voluntary organisation called 'Scavengers' helped us in this work. This first round of distribution was done in close collaboration with DJNB, XESNB, St Joseph's School and College on 9 and 10 April. The second round of distribution was done by the school in close collaboration with the staff, parents and well-wishers on 23 and 24 April.

Fr K. L. George, SJ

NBSXC, RAJGANJ

During the countrywide lockdown our college looks more serene than ever. As the lockdown resulted in distress for many farming and daily wage earning households, the Jesuits and some Group D staff especially **Mr Avinash Roy** and **Manoj Dey** (driver) reached out to our neighbouring villages Balaigachh and Hatimore with food supplies. This was followed by six more villages under Majhiali gram panchayat about five kilometres from the college. Simultaneously, responding to the appeal made by the principal, **Fr Lalit**, the teaching and non-teaching staff as well as many students, present and past, some parents and well-wishers came forward generously



to contribute towards the relief work done in the college. Much of the contributions went for West Bengal Emergency Relief Fund while the remaining amount was utilised locally. As the days wore on without any classes creating fear and anxiety in



students' minds, five members of the college administration had a video conference. As a result of the deliberations, they prepared a course of action for providing online class inputs using audio, video, PPT, recorded lectures, or lecture notes.

The community continued different spiritual activities including the Eucharist in the morning and Adoration in the evening. **Fr Lalit**, **Fr Xavier** and **Schs Barnabas**, **Anup**, **William** and **Roshan Castilino** made their annual retreat during the lockdown. **Br Bronney** decided to



join the Provincial on his trip back to the curia after visiting **Fr Gabriel** on 6 April. He has been there ever since.

Fr Gabriel's health deteriorated during the lockdown. He was shifted to Navjeevan hospital, Gayaganga on 7 April in consultation with the Provincial. This news, relayed by the highway patrol, created a false alarm at Rajganj Police Station. A few officers were at our door for enquiry the following day. They sternly reminded us that no sick person would be moved anywhere without their permission!

Fr Lalit SJ

Fr Kinley writes from Bhutan...

COVID-19 has confined our space but it cannot confine our minds. Use these days to go for a journey, as it had been said, "The longest journey is the journey inward."



I assure you it is not boring once you begin.

C19 challenges you to change the direction of your journey, the journey inward. So far we have been journeying outward on a map set up by others. Our minds are cluttered by things outside. Just one example, how many hours we uselessly spend on browsing the net, playing games or useless information and gossip?

NOW, go into your own space of the mind. You might discover your treasure, your REAL life. You need to go into the desert of your heart inside...befriend yourself. There standing alone in your space under the starry skies of the night you might discover yourself, Whom YOU NEVER MET...YOURSELF.

ST PETER'S, GAYAGANGA

The community Eucharistic celebrations and adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament help us to reflect on Covid-19 pandemic. It is also an opportunity to mend our relationship with ourselves, with one another and with God. The community members take their turn to keep the house and the surroundings clean. **Fr Cherian Maliekal**, **Fr Peter Pappu**, **Fr Simon** and **Fr Nabor** made their annual retreat. **Br Robert** spends much time in farming. **Augustus** and **Deepak** assist **Fr Peter** to digitalize the parish records. After getting discharged from Navjeevan hospital, **Fr Gabriel Tirkey** and **Fr Arul Das** (DUM) are staying in the community. **Sch. Deepak** (NEP) is also staying with us. He was making his retreat when the lockdown was declared. **Fr Peter Bhujel** was with us for about a month after getting discharged from the hospital.

The Holy Week services were held in the church without the faithful. Homilies and reflections were painstakingly prepared and sent to families via social media. **Fr Peter** and his team have been providing food materials to the impoverished families of the parish. As per the government orders, the High School distributed five kilos of rice and five kilos of potatoes to eight hundred and sixty students who are 'mid-day meal' beneficiaries of the school.

Fr Roshan Minj joined the community in the beginning of March. **Fr Nicholas** and **Fr Nabor** participated in a leadership training program in Delhi early March.

Sch. David Donald Minj

WERY NIWAS, KURSEONG

Fr Peter Jong conducted the Easter Triduum services in the church without the faithful. **Fr Chiranjit Bara**, **Fr David Ekka** and **Fr Peter Jong** went out to give Holy Communion to the sick and the old before and after Easter. The community had a combined celebration of Easter and **Fr Pramod's** birthday on 12 April. **Fr Chiran** along with the school staff distributed provisions for mid-day meal to our students who live far away from the school. **Fr David** with the help of his friends distributed food materials to twenty-eight needy families. Our community donated ₹20,000/- to GTA COVID-19 relief fund. The community in collaboration with the Parish supplied medicines to fifty-five people. We also provided first-aid kits to all eighteen SCC units of the parish. Due to the lockdown **Sch. Evan Basnet** is staying in the community.

Fr Peter Jong Lepcha

UTTAR SALBARI

The community spends one hour of adoration everyday these days. **Fr Sebastian** made his annual retreat. **Fr Bosco**, **Fr Bijay** and **Fr Basil** participated in the online retreat facilitated by JCSA from 5-12 April. The community members washed one another's feet during the Maundy Thursday Mass in the community chapel. The community held the way of cross in the church but the veneration of the cross was in the community chapel. The community also celebrated the Easter Vigil Mass and the Easter Sunday Mass in the church.

Fr Basil sent out to the parishioners the mass readings and a list of websites for browsing live Hindi Mass. Many families have regular hours for prayer. The parish church may be under lockdown but the 'domestic churches' are alive and active. Two novices of the

Daughters of St Anne (DSA) spent their time at Totapara and Mogulkata for two weeks, preparing children for First Holy Communion before the countrywide lockdown. The school was in the process of levelling the ground for a full-size football ground in-front of the new building before the lockdown. Elephants damaged twenty houses at Mogulkata Godam Line and ten houses at Totapara Godam Line. After breaking down the walls, they ate up all the foodstuff given by the government for the lockdown period. The Jesuit community provided them rice and other food materials, thanks to the support given by Hayden Hall and SOS, India. The lockdown period is a time when we are learning to encounter the ever present Risen Lord. We spend time praying, reading and reflection. It is also a good training period for spending our time in the Senior Home when we get old!

Fr Basil Toppo

ST VINCENT'S, HATIGHISA

Fr Alex Beck and **Fr Lawrence** made their annual retreat during the lockdown. All the Holy Week services were held without the presence of the faithful this year. The parishioners were encouraged to pray at home with the family members. The Jesuit community spends one hour in adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr Alex takes keen interest in locating the poor and the needy of the parish and providing them with essential food materials. He has already reached out to places like Dakua Jote, Nimbu Bhatta and Atal. The parish helped repair the house of a poor woman at Shivdula Jote *basti*. St Vincent's school provided a food kit of five kilos of rice, one kilo of dal and 200 ml of oil to 203 families of Khoti Line, Giramuni Bans Line, Sava Line and Bara Line. This was done with the contribution of ₹1000/- for the school staff.



Fr Alvin Minj, SJ, Shri Ruben Toppo, the catechist and **Shri Theodore Tirkey** conducted catechism and confirmation classes for the parish children in the month of February and early March. They also conducted marriage preparation classes for couples from 9 to 14 March at Hatighisa. **Mrs Sabina Horo** along with her team members gave a seminar for the Small Christian Community core team on 1 March.

We were blessed by the visits of Fr Lawrence's relatives **Fr Sebastian, Shri Dhiravyam** and **Shri Santiago** early March. **Fr Donatus Kujur, Fr Philemon Tirkey, Fr Chiranjilal Kujur, Fr Xavier Kandulna** and **Fr Daniel Bara** were the other visitors in the first half of March.

Fr Alvin Minj, SJ

HLDRC, MATIGARA

It has been a challenging time for HLDRC. The staff of HLDRC and the Lok Manch network actively engaged themselves in conducting awareness sessions on COVID-19 in thirty-four tea gardens in the terai. They also provided helplines for medical check-up to nearby health care centres to migrant workers who returned from other states. One hundred and seventy stranded



migrant workers were helped to return home safely. They were initially kept for twelve days in quarantine centres setup by the government.

Special permission was sought from the local administration to facilitate relief work to the stranded migrant workers and to travel to remote locations where basic government services were delinked during the initial stage of the lockdown.

HLDRC undertook relief work by way of distributing essential items such as food grain, pulses and oil to one hundred and ninety poor households in Dhumchipara, Dharnipur, Loksan, and Carron. All of them are closed or 'sick' tea estates in remote locations in Jalpaiguri district. They also reached out to Putinbari and Gungaram and five more tea estates in Darjeeling district.

It was an amazing experience for **Fr Pascal Xalxo** and his action team of young volunteers during this pandemic, managing themselves and also extending helping hands to those in need

Fr Pascal Xalxo

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, MUNGPPOO

During the Covid-19 pandemic in the world, we find more time for ourselves for prayer and reflection. We had a day of personal recollection on 26 March. We observed the Holy Triduum Services in our community chapel all by ourselves. The staff of the school conduct online classes for the students of classes 9 and 10 through the medium of WhatsApp. **Fr Patel** is busy completing school accounts and doing other office work.

Ever since I.T.I., Mungpoo was requisitioned as a Quarantine Center for Covid-19 patients, St Joseph's School has been taking care of providing breakfast and transportation for the medical staff of the center. **Sch. David** is the driver on duty for transporting the medical personal to the quarantine center from where they are put up, at PWD bungalow, Mungpoo.



The school had an investiture ceremony on 10 March. **Fr Patel** attended a seminar on leadership training in Delhi early March.

Sch. David Ekka

MANRESA JESUIT NOVIATE, KALIMPONG



The daily activities of the Novitiate have been unaffected by the countrywide lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, it has opened up new gates of imagination for spiritual and emotional depth. It has offered us opportunities to plunge ourselves into depth level of prayer besides the daily one hour of adoration in solidarity with the suffering humanity.



Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, visited Manresa Community on 3 March. He addressed the novices and encouraged them to be men guided by the Holy Spirit.



The first-year novices were conferred the ministries of Lector and Acolyte by **Fr John Wilfred Lobo, SJ**, on 12 March. **Fr Xavier Alangaram, SJ** gave a seminar to the novices on "Psycho-Sexual Integration" from 19-21 March. The second-year novices from Cluny Novitiate also attended the seminar. **Fr Shaji Joseph, SJ** taught our novices and the Cluny novices a three-day intensive course on discernment from 23-25 March. **Fr Shaji** also directed the annual retreat of nine Cluny Sisters from 20 April. **Fr Amid Kujur, SJ** directed a Triduum for Cluny Pre-Postulants from 20-22 March. **Br Gabriel Gurung, SJ**, our new minister joined the community on 9 April.

Fr Roshan Kiro, SJ

GANDHI ASHRAM SCHOOL, KALIMPONG

We spend an hour every day in front of the Blessed Sacrament praying for the wounded humanity. The celebrations of the Holy Week and Easter were unique experiences this year. The school campus is a quiet place without the presence of students. We try to mentor out students through the WhatsApp medium.

Fr Binod attended a Leadership Training Program at Navjivan Renewal Centre, Delhi early March. **Br Gilbert** made his annual retreat under the guidance of **Fr John Banerjee**.

Fr Binod Kenketta, SJ

ST MARY'S, KANKEBONG

We had meaningful celebrations of the Holy Triduum among ourselves. We prayed for all the faithful of the parish. We distributed essential food materials such as rice, pulses and oil to two hundred and eight needy families. This was done in collaboration with Hayden Hall and St Joseph's School, North Point.



Fr Ajay made his annual retreat during the lockdown and **Fr Arun** directed the annual retreat of SND Sisters at Sumbuck. We are in the process of levelling the ground around the parish grotto in order to have more space for outdoor programs of the parish.

Fr Ajay Labra

JESU ASHRAM, MATIGARA

The effects of COVID-19 at Jesu Ashram is not something one would imagine. Many patients showed remarkable recovery! They want to be discharged and sent home. **Fr Vincent** and **Fr Julius** reached some of them home with great difficulty. At the moment there are one hundred and fifty patients at Jesu Ashram. Three of our tuberculosis patients died in the month of April.

Jesu Ashram stopped admitting new patients due to the concerns of food, medicine and the general wellbeing of the patients who are already with us. For the first time in the history of Jesu Ashram we have not been able to provide our weekly outdoor clinic for leprosy patients.

Jesu Ashram stitched five hundred masks to be distributed to the general public and medical health workers. Jesu Ashram distributed food kits to eleven villages in collaboration with Bishop Vincent Aind, HLDRC and Sisters of the Holy Cross, Daughters of the Cross and Bethany.

Our nursing staff are provided transport to come to Jesu Ashram and go back home.

We are fortunate to have two ambulances. We have stopped construction works for rehabilitating leprosy patients due to the lockdown in the country.



Fr Julius

ST XAVIER'S COLLEGE, LENGPUI

The lockdown and closing of Mizoram borders due to the Covid-19 pandemic hit the people hard but they bravely and willingly bear with the unexpected situation. The Local Task Force does the vigilance duty of maintaining the lockdown 24x7. In my opinion the people of Mizoram are the best in maintaining discipline. All the provisions to the state have to come either from Silchar or Guwahati. We do not get fresh vegetables or meat. Yet the Lord provides something on the table every day. We have much to thank the Lord. There are three domestic helpers with me who work both in the college and in the community. Those are the only faces I have been seeing for the last thirty-five days. When there are no staff or students in the campus, it is always a 'quarantine' time for us. The countrywide lockdown due to the spread of Covid-19 has given me ample time to introspect and spend much time in praying for the suffering humanity. I spend the day reading, praying and doing some manual works.

I went to Jakhama, Nagaland to attend the Golden Jubilee celebrations and to participate in Fr General's visit to Kohima Region from 6-9 March.

Fr Justin

LOYOLA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NAMCHI

The College closed on 17 March due to Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the students were able to go home. However, there are nine members of the teaching faculty, thirty-four students and four of the support staff in the college campus during the countrywide lockdown. The faculty interact with the students through social media. Well prepared notes are also disseminated to all the students.

The International Women's Day was celebrated on 7 March, 2020. The World Consumer Rights Day was observed on 15 March, 2020 in collaboration with the Federation of Consumer Association of Sikkim. The speakers from the Association acquainted us with the rights and responsibilities of smart customers and clarified our doubts on the topic. They also familiarized us the proceedings of a consumer court. Besides the students and staff of our college, the hostel students of Namchi Public School also participated in the program.

Fr Francis George

REST IN PEACE

Fr Valentine De Souza, SJ (GUJ) 92/74 6 April, 2020

Kindly pray for the health of **Fr Mike Howkins, SJ**. He is infected with Covid-19 virus. His condition is serious.

Assistancy Appointments

Appointment by Fr General:

Fr Boniface Panna (MAP): Rector of Satya Nilayam, Chennai

JDV Pune:

Fr Herman Tirkey (MAP): Secretary and Treasurer, of Jnana Deepa and Jesuit Educational Trusts, JDV Pune

Fr Ryan Rodrigues (KAR): Trial Teaching, JDV

Papal Seminary Pune:

Fr George Cordeiro (BOM): Moderator of Philosophers Papal Seminary (Additional Charge)

Fr Dinesh Braganza (GUJ): Spiritual Director of Philosophers Papal Seminary

Fr Vincent Crasta (KAR): Secretary, Papal Seminary Trust

Fr V.M. Jose (DUM): Treasurer, Papal Seminary

DNC Pune:

Fr Richard Lopes (GUJ): Secretary DNC Trust (Additional Charge)

Fr Anthony Andrade (DEL): Spiritual Guide to DNC Philosophers

Fr Anthony Mattapallil (PAT): Spiritual Director to DNC Theologians

S.N Chennai:

Fr Satyabalan Arokiasamy (CEN): Trial Teaching, Satya Nilayam, Chennai

Fr Vinod Soreng (RAN): Librarian of Satya Nilayam in addition to Teaching

VJ Delhi:

Fr Sunil Padannamakkel (KER): Treasurer, VJ (Additional charge)

Fr Boniface D'Souza (KHM): Spiritual Director, VJ

ISI-D:

Fr Anthony Dias (BOM): JESA Secretary

Sadhana Institute:

Br. Antony Arockiam (KHM): Administrator and Secretary of Sadhana Institute and Trust

Kandy Tertianship:

Fr Jose Jacob Maruthukunnel (KER): Co-Tertian Instructor at Kandy Tertianship

Conference Development Office (New Delhi):

Fr Siji Chacko (PAT): Conference Communication Coordinator (Additional charge)

Ms Elsy Samuel: GIAN and Conference Coordinator for Ecology

JRS Mission:

Fr Alex G., SJ (JAM): JRS Afghanistan Mission.

Fr Robert C. Rodrigues (KAR): JRS Afghanistan Mission.

Fr Jesu Raja Raju (MDU): JRS Afghanistan Mission.

Studies for Conference Common Works:

Fr Ronald Lawrence Serrao (KAR): For Islamic Studies

Fr Midhun Francis (KER): Study Arabic & Urdu at Henry Martin Institute, Hyderabad

Assistancy Committees:

Fr Lancy Lobo (GUJ) & Ms. Auxilia Peter Resource persons to JFFSA.

Fr Joy Karayampuram (PAT): Coordinator for "Safeguarding work", along with Frs. Stanislaus Alla (AND), Konrad Noronha (BOM), Joye James (KER), Sr Tera Paul CSC.

Gratitude for services rendered to Common Houses & Works of South Asia:

Fr Michael Amaladoss (MDU) & Fr Rudi Heredia (BOM) for services to the JFFSA.

Fr Gnanapragasam Alex (JAM) as Secretary & Treasurer and of estate manager and investments for JDV, PS & DNC.

Br Fulgence Ekka (MAP) as Treasurer VJ Delhi.

Fr Caesar D'Cunha (GUJ) as Spiritual Director VJ Delhi (2017 – 20).

Fr Sannybhai (Jebamalai Stanislaus) GUJ as JESA Sec. (Oct 2011 – May 2020).

Br Hermon Anthony (NEP) as Adm & Sec. Sadhana Institute, (2014-2020)

Fr Ilanko Xavier M. (CEN) as Spiritual Director DNC, Pune.

Fr Robin Seelan (CEN) as Librarian of Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

Fr Thomas Anthonsamy (PAT) as Tertian Instructor at Goa; Co-Tertian Instructor Kandy.

Fr Lumnesh Kumar (KAR) as GIAN & Conference Coordinator for Ecology.

Fr Paul Raj Santiago (KHM) as Spiritual Director of DNC, Pune.