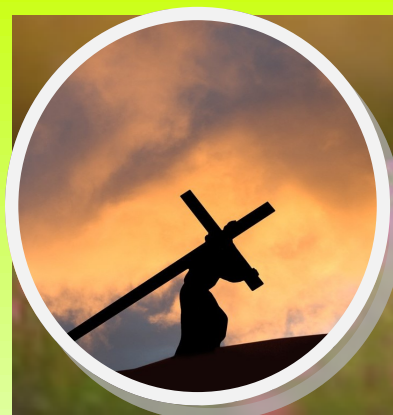




RICE COAL

ASANSOL DIOCESAN NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021



Fruit of Lent is Works of Mercy

Forty days of Lent are special days when we are invited to love Jesus and follow him by additional prayer, fasting, acts of penance, daily attendance of Eucharist and extra readings of the Bible. This is the time when we are invited to meditate on works of mercy and put them into practice. The church speaks of two types of works of mercy- Corporal and Spiritual. Lenten season is the best time when we can put into practice works of mercy.

Corporal works of mercy are those that tend to bodily needs of others. In Matthew 25:34-40, in The Judgment of Nations, six specific work of mercy are enumerated, as the reason for the salvation of the saved, and the omission of them as the reason for damnation. The last work of Mercy, burying the dead, comes from the Book of Tobit. God looks upon Charity given to the poor as an act of charity to himself. "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me." (Mt 25:40) Jesus also said in the beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy."

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy:

1. **To feed the hungry.** Do not turn away anyone who is hungry, specially if poor, old or disabled. Giving work is the best means for removing the necessity of feeding the unemployed. St. Louis of France provided daily food to the poor, and often served them himself. Many charitable people today, especially the religious institution, feed the hungry. Lay people can help out best by giving work to al they can afford to help; work is better for the able – bodied then direct almsgiving.

2. **To give drink to the thirsty.** Our Lord says that a cup of water given in his name shall not lose his/her reward (cf Mk 9:41). Those who construct reservoirs, or purify public drinking water, are giving drink to the thirsty.

3. **To clothe the naked.** Giving clothes to the needy and poor, helping mothers of large families mend clothes and taking part in drives for used clothing are some of the ways. The story of St. Martin, giving half his cloak to a beggar, exemplifies this work of mercy.

4. **To visit the imprisoned.** Visiting prisoners in jails and detention homes, consoling and helping their families and providing assistance for legal cases of poor families are meritorious work. In the Middle Ages the Order of Ransom was founded for the ransom of Christians held captive by the Turks.

5. **To shelter the homeless.** A few examples are: giving shelter and being hospitable in cases of fire and disaster, providing clean and comfortable homes for the poor at low rates of rent and helping homes for refugees and orphans. St. Paul said "don't not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels" (Heb 13:2).

6. **To visit the sick.** Visiting, consoling and giving relief to the sick and very old, providing medical assistance and proper food, assisting to build and support a hospital are a few the meritorious acts of charity. Doctors and nurses who perform are a few of the meritorious acts of charity. Doctors and nurses who perform their duties to please God

will be rewarded in heaven and on earth.

7. **To bury the dead.** Attend a funeral; visit a home in mourning, aid the bereaved family.

Other corporal work of mercy are: helping a fire or accident, rescuing one in danger of death, etc. Every word or act done in the name of or for the sake of Christ is a work of mercy, and will be rewarded.

The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy:

1. **To admonish the sinner.** Whenever we think our words may have a good effect, we should not hesitate to admonish the erring prudently. Those in authority, such as parents and teachers, are bound to admonish those under them or their faults, even if in doing so they bring trouble upon themselves. Good example is another way of admonition. In admonishing, we must do so with gentleness and charity. "Whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins". (Jas 5:20).

2. **To instruct the ignorant.** Missionaries, catechists, confessors, Christian writers and teachers- all who teach religion or other useful knowledge- are doing an important work of mercy, and will receive a reward." Those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever". (Dan 12:3).

3. **To counsel the doubtful.** We are to be most Zealous in helping those whom a word may save or aid. How happy we should be if the word we say helps a doubtful one to become firm in his/ her faith!

4. **To comfort the sorrowful.** We can comfort the afflicted by showing them sincere sympathy, by suggesting consolations, and by helping them in their need. To comfort the sorrowful is a work of mercy similar to curing the sick, since grief is a mental and emotional ailment. To give comfort, we may speak of God's providence, of his love for every single one of his creatures, of the happiness he reserves for us in heaven, when all earthly sorrows and troubles will be ended.

5. **To bear wrongs patiently.** By being patient with injustice, we benefit both ourselves and our fellow being. Our patience helps a person realize his/ her wrong – doing. It is; however, wrong to permit others to falsely lay a serious crime to our charge. But let us be patient, for love of God.

6. **To forgive all injuries.** We must not seek revenge." Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Rm 12:19). We must forgive others, as we hope God will forgive us. Instead of revenge, those who wish to imitate the saints go out of their way to do favors to those who injure them. Like Christ, they love all.

7. **To pray for the living and the dead.** We may not see the effects of our prayers, but God sees. Not one single prayer raised to God from a sincere heart is wasted." More things are wrought by prayer than this world dream of. "Prayers do good not only to those we pray for, but to ourselves.

+Salvadore Lobo

FROM MY MEMORY

As we began our 2nd year of philosophy, some more priests were added as staff, like Fr. Bronckers S.J, Fr. Nallail and Fr. Jacques SJ and first year brothers were also added. We were nearly sixty brothers. Due to a bigger community we needed a foot-ball court. We had to cut some mango trees, and raise the ground, so that water logging may not be there. Besides foot-ball court, we needed Auditorium to display our talents through music, Drama and group singing that is seminary choir. For our seminary day in November we invited Calcutta Fathers and Sisters as Audience. They appreciated our talents. Till the end of my Philosophical studies, this practice of inviting Calcutta crowd was on.

Our 1st Rector, Fr. Denzil D'souza, after one and half years of service, had to leave us, for he was appointed as the Bishop of Silchar. Then Cardinal Picachy SJ appointed Fr. Alan D'Lastic as our Rector. He was very friendly with all, and also a sports person. He took brothers to Calcutta to play Basket ball with many other teams. Whenever our games were played in Calcutta, he was with the group. It was a great boost to our brothers and to the seminary. Besides basket ball, foot ball played outside clubs and seminary group had good players and so they won many games outside our seminary too. Fr. Alan, our Rector used to encourage us. In his time as Rector, Morning Star B.A section was recognized by Calcutta University and our Moring Star College was affiliated to Calcutta University. Thus he laid strong foundation to our seminary before he was appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of Calcutta. I also finished my 3rd year of philosophy by giving comprehensive exam that year. At the End of my 3rd year we were given cassock for our regency to use. It was solemnly blessed by Bishop and was given to Us. (To be continued)

+Bishop Cyprian Monis

Budding Seminarians Meet

On January 5-6, 2021, Seminarians' get together was held at Chetana. Nine seminarians were present with Bp. Lobo, Bp. Cyprian and 8 priests. **Fr. Sebastian Rodrigues** organized the event and welcomed all. Bishop Lobo informed the seminarians that **Fr. Martin Behera** has been appointed director of formation for the seminarians from Regents to Deacons. **Fr. Harshavardan** has been appointed director of formation for the seminarians from Minor Seminary to Philosophy. Fr. Sebastian Rodrigues has been appointed as the guide for young priests ordained during the last six years. Bishop Lobo interacted with each seminarian.

Fr. IP Sarto took a session on the role of Seminarians in the parishes and how to facilitate Gospel Sharing meetings in the villages. Bp Monis celebrated the Eucharist to pray for the seminarians. Bp Lobo and Fr. Sarto thanked Fr. Rodrigues for guiding the seminarians for the last 22 years and his contribution for the growth of the diocese. They also acknowledged the contribution of Bishop Monis for the welfare of seminarians. Bp Lobo gave a gift each to all seminarians. -Fr I.P Sarto



REPUBLIC DAY SPECIAL PRAYER SERVICE



On January 26, 2021, Chetana community celebrated 72nd republic day with a special prayer service. The prayer service was conducted by Brs George Mardi, Luis Kisku and Paul Mardi under the guidance of Fr I P Sarto. During this prayer service a special prayer was made to our country, Leaders, soldiers and all those who serve our country. Prayer service was attended by Fr Sarto, Sr Christin HC, Frs Andrew, Alex.



Government officials' meet

On Jan 3, 2021, An informal get together at Bishop's House, Asansol was organized for Government officials and prominent citizens of Asansol and Durgapur with the Bishops and priests of Asansol area. Ten officials were present to interact with **Bishop Salvatore and Bishop Monis** and some priests. Congrats to Frs. Ananth Kumar and Kulandaisamy who made all arrangements for the evening get-together. Bishop Lobo welcomed all and gave New Year cake to greet all of them.



Youth celebrate Christmas with competitions

The Youth of Kamarpara parish celebrated Christmas with Biblical competitions on Dec. 26, 2020. Youth from four SCC groups of Kamarpara St. Paul's parish had competitions on Nativity drawing, singing, dance and quiz on St. Luke's Gospel.

These biblical competitions are essential to enhance their knowledge on the Bible, said Mr. Mathias Murmu, a local teacher. "Jesus is the model for all youth and he stood for Human values", said Sister Christin Joseph, HC while appreciating the youth. "Do not be afraid" is the Christmas message in the Gospels. So youth need to be courageous and give this message of not to be afraid of any evil in society to all people in our neighbourhood, added Sr. Christin.

The youth need to stand with those who are unjustly oppressed, exploited and agitating farmers and give hope to those who are frightened, said Sr. Christin while giving the Christmas message. The SCC youth of our parish are active and they made the crib, decorated the Church and conducted prayer service in different villages, added Fr. Stephen Britto, Parish priest. They conduct Gospel sharing and lead SCC meetings in the villages, said Fr. Britto. St. Cecilia, St. Monica, St. Veronica and St. Theresa of Calcutta SCC groups participated in the competitions

All the competitions were held in SCC groups to foster collaboration, unity and trust among the youth, said Bro. Nirmal Mardi, Regent in the parish. These competitions made us to read and listen to the Bible readings attentively, said Miss. Lokhi Tudu, a youth leader. The Bible quiz on St. Luke's Gospel was conducted by Frs. Britto and I.P. Sarto. The day concluded with fellowship Christmas meal prepared by youth for all the youth of the parish. -Fr. I.P. Sarto



Visits

On Jan 4th, 2021, Bishop Lobo Visited Mihijam (close to Chittaranjan), and visited Shanthinagar to plan for the memorial Mass for Fr Laborde, who died recently.

On 18th Jan 2021 Fr Raju from the archdiocese of Kolkata and Fr Bernard Murmu SJ visited Chetana. Fr Raju stayed till 23rd Jan to make his annual retreat. Fr Bernard guided the retreat. Fr Bernard also visited Bolpur, Katwa, Ahmedpur, Laghata, Asansol, Sahebda. He will stay in the diocese to guide the Priest's recollection on 8th and 9th of February 2021. Br Paul Mardi from Bhagalpur spent a week in Chetana from 25th January.

Notice

1. The Vatican has altered the traditional Ash Wednesday ritual for this year, to minimize contact between the priest and members of the congregation. Rather than praying over each person, the priest will say that prayer — “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” or “repent and believe in the Gospel”—once, and then silently sprinkle ashes on the head of each person.
2. This year the Holy Childhood Day is on February 14 with the theme, “You will be my Witnesses”. The example of Blessed Carlo Acutis is placed before the Children. Kindly celebrate the Holy childhood Day with right dignity and devotion. Today’s children are tomorrow’s Catholic Church.
3. February 11, is the World Day of the Sick. Due to the on going pandemic Covid-19, the day has assumed a greater importance. Kindly pray for all those who are sick and infirm and all those who take care of them. Please conduct a special prayer service for the sick on that day.
4. The Apostolic Administrator shall be away from the diocese for home visit and work at NISCORT from February 08-28, 2021. In his absence Rev. Fr. I.P Sarto, special secretary to the Apostolic Administrator, shall look after the diocese.

Priest’s Health Care

On 9th Jan 2021, a meeting was held in Bishop’s House with the Health World Hospital Officials to discuss about the health care of the priests in their hospital. Bishop Lobo met the officials along with a few priests at Bishop’s House, Asansol.

Recently Frs. Wilfred Monis, Tony Lobo were admitted for treatment and they felt well looked after. We are grateful to Mr Sylvester and Fr Rajashekar for all their assistance.

Recollection

On Jan 21, 2021, Fr. Bernard Murmu, SJ guided recollection for MC Sisters of Bolpur at Shantiniketan. He elaborated to them deep relationship between Religious and Jesus who strengthens the former for a committed mission.



Thanksgiving

On Jan. 10, 2021, A thanksgiving service was held to pray for **Bro. Michael Kisku** who was in Chetana for five months studying for his exams. Chetana community is grateful to him for all his services for the guests and visitors to Chetana. Fr. Alexius Tudu conducted a meaningful prayer service and Fr. Sarto wished Bro Michael for his future ministry. Bro. Michael thanked all in Chetana for their encouragement and support.

Christmas celebration

On Dec. 23, 2020, Chetana community celebrated Christmas. The Marist Brothers, St. Anne’s Sisters, priests and Brothers at Chetana had Eucharist, prayed for all the suffering, esp. the farmers agitating in Delhi and sang carols to greet one another. **Bro. Jose Marion** sang a Spanish and Santhali carol to wish. Fr. Sarto presided over the Eucharist while Fr. Lawrence Sah preached the homily. Brs. Michael Kisku, George Mardi, Louis made the crib along with Mr Sonot Mardi

- Fr Alexius Tudu



Heartfelt Tribute to Fr Francis Laborde (93)

Rev. Fr. Francis Laborde (93), the messiah of the helpless, the marginalized and hopeless passed away at St. Joseph's Hospital, Midnapur on Christmas day, Dec.25, 2020 at 9.30 P.M. He was born on 28th February 1927. Fr. Laborde belonged to the Prado society. He was ordained on March 24, 1951. As per the charism of 'Prado', he committed his life to follow blessed Fr. Antoine Chevrier's example of service to the poorest. He chose to live the life of poverty, among the most destitute people in Kolkata, the city of Joy and beyond. His life was dedicated to the poor and the marginalized of society. After his ordination he taught philosophy at Prado seminary for eight years and finally in 1965 he came to India as a true missionary. His seminal research work, Relations between Marginal and Integrated Populations in India, under the aegis of the UNESCO was his stepping stone into the world of poverty. His experiment with the poor began in Pilkhana, where he set up Seva Sangh Samiti to improve the condition of the slum dwellers.



He also started a rehabilitation home for the poor and physically challenged at Andul under the Nirmala Mata Maria Girja parish. Besides, he initiated several formal and non-formal schools, a colony of lepers and their children, health centers, mobile dispensaries, mother and child care centers etc. With great humility and simplicity, he continued his mission for over 55 years. Religion, caste and creed did not matter to him as he served the poorest of the society. He made Kolkata, his second home. Certainly, inspired by the works of St. Teresa of Calcutta, he searched for a pastoral field where he could live his charism of 'Prado' congregation. God so loved Fr. Laborde that his soul was taken away on the day of Christmas that inspired Prado to be born to live in the midst of broken humanity. Gradually, his dedicated services were recognized.

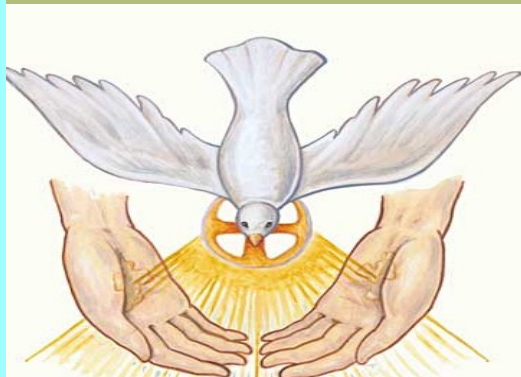
His services to humanity and the downtrodden inspired Dominique Lappiere, a world renowned filmmaker to make a film on those marginalized of the society, living in inhuman conditions. In December 1991, Lappiere's bestseller 'The City of Joy' was released as a major motion picture, generating tremendous new interest and excitement for an extraordinary book. It is an epic story about the soul of all humanity—a lesson in tenderness and hope for all people for all times. The priest depicted in the film remains anonymous, Fr. Laborde himself. In Bengal, the release of the film had controversies and the film was banned from viewing in the cinemas due to the poverty and inhumanity shown graphically. Despite his speech impediment, his heart was full of love and compassion for the poor and the poorest of the poor. The resources he had, he made use of those to help those who lived below poverty line. All his life he served the underprivileged, the marginalized and physically handicapped children. At Andul, in Howrah district, he created a center for the Adivasi settlement. Eventually, that took a shape of a parish, Mata Maria Girja. The Adivasi community found a 'Messiah' in Fr. Laborde. He made the center sustainable and for holistic development. The children and grandchildren of those initial migrant settlers. In the diocese of Asansol, he served at shanthinagar as priest-in-charge and built our lady of Kalipatar church. He helped the MC sisters at Shanthinagar to serve the patients with leprosy. In 2019, he was conferred the Legion d'Honneur, the highest civilian award of France, for his tireless work among the underprivileged. French ambassador, Alexandre Ziegler, had gone to Howrah South Point in Andul, the home that Fr. Laborde set up for those in need, to confer the award. This was the second time that he won the award, the first time he was awarded by the Late President Mitterrand.

Fr. Laborde lived his spiritual life very intensely as per the charism of Prado spirituality and later as a diocesan priest of Calcutta Archdiocese. His mortal remains were brought to Mata Maria Girja, Andul Road, on Dec. 28. People paid their respect to the departed soul from 8.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. A Mass was celebrated at 11.00 A.M. by Archbishop Thomas D'Souza. An additional funeral Mass was held at St. John's Church at 3.00 P.M. followed by internment at St. John's cemetery, Sealdah.

A Memorial Holy Mass was celebrated at Shanthinagar church. Bishop Cyprian Celebrated the Holy Eucharist, Bishop Lobo Preached the homily. Frs Sarto, Sebastian Joseph, Bernard SJ, Rahul, Devassy, Ananth Kumar, Lawrence (from Howrah South Point) concelebrated the Holy Mass. Ananda Bhawan, a home established by Fr Laborde, served delicious breakfast to those who were present. This church was built by Fr Laborde with the assistance from his friends.



Ordination Anniversary February



1 - Fr Anand Raj
20 - Fr Tony Lobo

Happy Birth Day

2 - Fr Antony Raj
4 - Fr Clarence Bhaju
12 - Fr Mongal Tudu
24 - Fr Henry Rodrigues



OBITUARY

6- Fr Valerian Fernandes
19 - Fr Richard Saldanha



Bishop Salvadore Lobo's Programme for February 2021

Date	Time	Day	Place	Subject
2	10 AM	Tues	Bolpur	Blessing of the out door stations of the Cross and Holy Mass.
3	10 AM	Wed	Burdwan	G.B. ABSK at its office in Sacred Heart Church campus
4	10 AM	Thu	Asansol	Meeting of the board of consulters at Bishop's House.
5	10 AM	Fri	Asansol	G.B. meeting of St. Xavier's College, Asansol at the College office.
6	7 AM	Sat	Asansol	Death anniversary Holy Mass for Fr. Valerian Fernandes-RIP.
8	1:40 PM	Mon	Mangalore	Goes to Mangalore & Udupi – family visit & to work at NISCORT.
28	9 PM	Sun	Asansol	Returns to Asansol

Memorial Holy Eucharist

On Jan. 4, 2021, Memorial Eucharist for **Fr. Alwyn Fernandes** was celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Asansol. Bishop Cyprian presided over the Eucharist participated by 10 priests. Bp Lobo blessed the grave.

On January 18, Memorial Eucharist for Fr. Cyprian Pinto was held at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Asansol Bishop Cyprian presided over the Eucharist participated by 10 priests. Bp Lobo blessed the grave.

At Chetana along with the beginning of the Ecumenical Octave, a memorial Eucharist for Fr. Cyprian Pinto was celebrated, Fr. Bernard Murmu SJ was the main celebrant. He exhorted the importance of unity in the Church. Frs. Alexius, Andrew, Christopher OMI and Fr I P Sarto concelebrated the Eucharist.

Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention

Violence against women

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

