



RICE COAL

ASANSOL DIOCESAN NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021

Year 2021 "With the Father's Heart"



I wish all of the readers of this News Letter a Very Happy New Year 2021. The New Year begins "with the Father's Heart" as the Apostolic Letter "Patris Corde" (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a "Year of Saint Joseph" from 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris Corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation." A beloved, tender, obedient father Saint Joseph, in fact, "concretely expressed his fatherhood" by making an offering of himself in love "a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home," writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI. And because of his role at "the crossroads between the Old and New Testament," St Joseph "has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people" (PC, 1). In him, "Jesus saw the tender love of God," the one that helps us accept our weakness, because "it is through" and despite "our fears, our frailties, and our weakness" that most divine designs are realized. "Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser," emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God's mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we "experience His truth and tenderness," – because "we know that God's truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us" (2). St. Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his 'fiat' he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to "do the will of the Father." Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he "cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption," as St John Paul II said, "and is truly a minister of salvation" (3).

At the same time, St. Joseph is "an accepting Father," because he "accepted Mary unconditionally" — an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, "in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident." But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, "setting aside his own ideas" and reconciling himself with his own history. St. Joseph's spiritual path "is not one that *explains*, but *accepts*" — which does not mean that he is "resigned." Instead, he is "courageously and firmly proactive," because with "Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude," and full of hope, he is able "to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments." In practice, through St. Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: "Do not be afraid!" because "faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad," and makes us aware that "God can make flowers spring up from stony ground." St. Joseph "did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it." For this reason, "he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak" (4).

Patris Corde highlights "the creative courage" of St. Joseph, which "emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties." "The carpenter of Nazareth," explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence." He had to deal with "the concrete problems" his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants. In this sense, St. Joseph is "the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty." As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot "be other than the guardian of the Church," of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. "Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect." From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, "we must learn... to love the Church and the poor" (5). Work, he says, "is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion." Those who work, he explains, "are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us." Pope Francis encourages everyone "to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new 'normal' from which no one is excluded." Especially in light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to "review our priorities" and to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!" (6).

"Fathers are not born, but made," says Pope Francis. "A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child." Unfortunately, in today's society, children "often seen orphans, lacking fathers" who are able to introduce them "to life and reality." Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be "capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities." This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a "most chaste" father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. St. Joseph, says Pope Francis, "knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the center of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus."

St. Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that "needs fathers," and not "tyrants"; a society that "rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction." True fathers, instead, "refuse to live the lives of their children for them," and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that "he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied." Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, "has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a 'sign' pointing to a greater fatherhood": that of the "heavenly Father" (7).

+Salvadore Lobo

FROM MY MEMORY

At the request of the Pope to the then Archbishop Albert D'Souza of Calcutta, to build a new major seminary in the Diocese, Archbishop made all the necessary arrangements for land at Seuli-Telenipar and completed the building. At that time (May 1968), we 15 students led by then Bro. Salvatore Lobo, senior Leader, brought tickets direct to Howrah from Mangalore, but we could not get reservation at Madras railways station, but then, by the providence of God, a coolie helped us to get a small 25 people accommodation compartment made available with 25 Rupees extra payment. The coolie put a red board written as 'students compartment' hence no one came to disturb us. Madras mail brought us after 2 nights of travelling to Howrah. Our Rector Fr. Denzil D'souza and others welcomed us and we were taken to Vianney Home, Park Circus. And Archbishop Albert took us to (Moore Avenue) - A C Convent for lunch, so that we could taste south Indian curry and rice.

Next day Fr. Rector took us to our new seminary at Barrackpore. As we were living amidst the noise pollution due to constant construction works, Archbishop came and went straight to Chapel, Played the organ and sang one of our lady's hymns. Then He named the Seminary as "Stella Matutina" (in Latin) "Morning Star". Then after some days our Philosophy classes started. Hence 'College' was added to 'Morning Star', so we wrote "Morning Star College".

In June 1968 we were 24 students and 5 regents at Morning Star College, like Bro Salvatore our Beadle, Bro Cyprian Carlo, music Master, Bro. Alexander Rebello, Bro Pradeep Roy and Bro. Maurice D'Souza. Since work of the building was not complete, we had to go to the bushes for our nature's call. Yes, it was mango garden but there were plenty of bushes everywhere. It took us a whole year to clean. Then in the 2nd year of our stay we began putting up 2 basket ball courts and cutting some good mango trees we made good football ground, too. Our rector Fr. Denzil would go to Calcutta every week to get our provisions, mend our shoes, and bring all our house articles. Therefore we had a very good family spirit and it was very homely atmosphere..... (to be continued.....)

+Bishop Cyprian Monis

DST Meeting at Chetana, Burdwan

Diocesan Service Team members gathered on 15th December at 10 am at Chetana for reviewing the progress of SCC of the diocese and planning for the up-coming program. The meeting began with the Bible veneration conducted by Sr. Rosa FJ, Fr. Sarto the director of Chetana welcomed all the members gather for the meeting.

Fr. Sarto briefly explained about youth orientation programs during the time of Pandemic situation. It was the very fitting time to encourage and motivate the youth so that they can do much more than what we are doing. Moreover they can motivate and can bring awareness in their villages and neighborhood.

All the DST members decided and agreed that this time for Christmas celebration SCC animator along with the parish youth to organize the crib SCCs unit wise. In the other hand it was proposed that they can have Christmas role play on their own locality. Moreover it was decided that DST members have to meet regularly so that we can share and spread the Word of God more and more through BEC meeting. At the end DST members were encouraged and to enhance their faith by sharing gospel values with one another.

Fr Alex Tudu

Priest's Recollection

On Dec 9 and 10, 2020, thirty priests of our diocese participated in the recollection at Chetana. Rev Fr Pradeep Roy of Baruipur Diocese, guided the recollection with his insights on the importance of the Family apostolate in the Priestly life. He stressed on the pastoral responsibilities of the diocesan priests towards the family formation. Most Rev Bishops Salvatore Lobo and Cyprian Monis were present during the recollection. Fr Rahul proposed the vote of thanks to the preacher.

"FINDING JESUS"

"FINDING JESUS" a campaign initiated by St. John's Parish, Chelidanga to help those in need.

Father Dolphy Mathias, parish priest along with some volunteers distributed blankets to the less privileged people.



RST of Bengal / Sikkim BEC Annual Planning Meet



Regional Service Team members from seven dioceses of the Bengal and Sikkim region had their annual review and planning meeting at Raiganj Pastoral centre. The theme for the meeting was, “The will of God is the need of the time” during Dec. 3 to 5, 2020.

About 50 youth, Laity, Pastoral Sisters, priests, and four Bishops (Bishop Vincent Aind virtually) joined the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) meeting to reflect on the present situation of the country and analysed the challenges in the light of the Gospel. The Church need to be proactive in today’s situation, said Bishop Stephen Lepcha of Darjeeling. We need to shift from Maintenance Church to Ministering Church, said Bishop Vincent Aind of Bagdogra. The BEC (Basic Ecclesial Community) animators need to be evangelizers like St. Francis Xavier, said Bishop Fulgence Aloysius Tigga of Raiganj while inaugurating the meeting.

Bishop Clement Tirkey celebrated the concluding Eucharist. Fr. Paulus Hembrum, Vicar General of Raiganj and Director of the Pastoral centre left no stone unturned to make the meeting a success. The participants unanimously decided to promote hope for the depressed and courage to those who are frightened. All promised to spend quality time with the marginalized in the neighbourhood. Asansol team was led by Fr. Alexius Tudu. Frs. Nilu Murmu, Rajesh Kujur OMI & Sarto, Sr.Rajni Marandi, SMI and Mr. Louis Hansda represented the diocese.

We need to see, with the compassionate eyes of Christ, the suffering of the people, said Bishop Stephen. Jesus is our vision and we need to focus on him to follow more closely, added the Bishop quoting various examples from the lives of people in Darjeeling hills.

Sister Christin Joseph HC moderated the sessions organized by Fr. I. P. Sarto, Regional BEC secretary. Sr. Christin elaborated the theme of discovering the will of God in present day - health, social, cultural and national issues and to find our challenging mission like the Prophets. Like the Old Testament prophets, we need to discern the will of God in our parishes, said Fr. Samuel Lepcha, VG of Darjeeling while moderating the session.

Fr. Sarto along with Sr.Christin helped the BEC animators to participate in the Gospel sharing using social analysis methodology. At the end of the program all took oath to live according to the Fundamental principles in the Preamble of our Indian Constitution. “I was touched by the concern of the SCCs who took risk to come to see me during the pandemic time to enquire about my well being”, said Fr.Ignatius Topno, BEC Coordinator of Jalpaiguri.

The participants decided to have regular meetings at the diocese level and to help youth to discover the need of the time at the BEC level, said Sr. Selestina, SMI, BEC Coordinator of Bagdogra diocese.

From Fr. I.P. Sarto

Youth get-together



On 18th-19th December, 2020 youth program was held at Chetana Ashram, Burdwan. The youth director Fr. Nilu Murmu organized the Christmas youth program. There were youth from seven parishes to participate. All the youth were very much excited to come together and share about their lockdown experience and their good work they had done. Most of the youth expressed their joys of helping others. The youth were given inputs to think for their future and enhance their faith in God. They were encouraged to participate in the SCC and to be the leader in the villages to bring awareness to the villagers.

They expressed their creative talents in the cultural program. At the end Fr. I P Sarto gave them a Christmas message and he emphasized the young boys and girls to be the messengers of God for the people at this Christmas season. He wished them very holy, hopeful and healthy Christmas and prosperous new year -2021.

-Fr Alex Tudu

Harvest Festival (Nawai Porob) & the Inauguration of New Grotto, Laghata.

The season of Advent is the season of Grace. The third Sunday of Advent was indeed a grace filled moment for the Parishioners of St. Joseph's Parish at Laghata. Nawai Porob which is known as the festival of harvest, and the inauguration of the newly built Grotto of our Lady and Mount Calvary was celebrated with great pomp. The joy of Parishioners was enhanced by the presence of Rt. Rev. Bishop Salvatore Lobo, the apostolic administrator of Asansol Diocese and Rev. Bishop Cyprian Monis, the Emeritus Bishop. We also had guest priests from the Archdiocese of Kolkata, Frs Hermil D'souza and Gregory Montero. The celebration began with the solemn procession which began from the primary School Ground of Laghata with Dance and singing the songs of the season of harvest, thereafter the senior most women of the village welcomed the Bishops, and the guests priests by washing their feet as per the custom of Santhal tribe.



Fr. Robert D'souza, parish priest welcomed the Bishops and invited Bishop Salvatore Lobo to inaugurate the grotto and bless the Crucifix. Bro. Somnath Murmu, briefly explained the gathering about the importance and the Devotion to the Grotto. Rev. Bishop Salvatore Lobo honoured Mr. Babulal Mardi and Mr. Bui Mardi, who were the main source and the sponsor of the Grotto in memory of their Late parents Mr. Modon Mardi and Mrs. Muni Mardi. Fr. Robert while addressing the gathering, highlighted that this is the first Grotto in the whole of west Bengal which was donated by a Santhal family, he thanked the families and invoked Gods choicest blessing upon their families. There after we proceeded towards the Church for the Holy Eucharist, Rt. Rev Bishop Cyprian Monis, who presided over the holy Eucharist and broke the word of God. People expressed their gratefulness towards God by generously offering their first crop as their fruit of hard work. Fr. Robert thanked bishops and all the guest priests and the guests, and acknowledge their presence. The holy Eucharist was followed by delicious lunch for all the people who were present. We thank the Almighty God for his bounteous blessing and love for all of us. May his holy name be blessed forever and ever .

-Br Martin Rodrigues

The Ari-Cali meeting

The ari- cali meeting was held on 25th-27th November, 2020 at Chetana Burdwan. There were 16 participants from different parishes and villages. The resource person was Fr. Salvatore Murmu SJ from Raghavpur and Mr. Binod Murmu, catechist from Bolpur. This meeting was organized and moderated by Fr. Nilu Murmu.

The agenda of discussion was '*To make one norm in the santhal marriage tradition*'. Fr. Salvatore was elaborating the tradition and culture of santal and the ways of celebrating a marriage. He was focusing on the traditional norms to be followed in the marriage today. Mr. Binod Murmu was enlightening the participants with the santhal history, culture and tradition. He said that santhal culture is very rich but due to unawareness we do not know the things. Hence he emphasized on the traditional marriage in the culture to be kept up for the new generation.

Finally in Ari-Cali meeting participants came to an conclusion that every santhal belt area to be celebrated the marriage with one culture and tradition. Everyone agreed that we need to encourage the people to know about own culture and tradition.

-Fr Alex Tudu

Education Ministry Updates



- ♦ **Fr Felix's Visit:** On Dec 13, Fr Felix Raj SJ and his team from Kolkata, St Xavier's University visited Chetana Ashram, during this visit Fr Sarto requested him to help our diocesan schools to obtain the NOCs and other requirements. Fr Felix assured that he would extend his help to obtain the NOCs to our schools. He invited the school Principals to visit him at St Xavier's university, Kolkata.
- ♦ **Principals Visit:** On Dec 23, Fr Sarto, Fr Deva, Fr Mongol and Fr Andrew visited St Xavier's University and had a meeting with Rev Fr Felix SJ and Fr Mourlin SJ. While Fr Sarto requested him to help our diocese to finalize the pending College land issue and others requested him to obtain the NOCs to our schools such as St Joseph's Katwa, Holy Family Nuta and Nirmal Hriday Ahmedpur. It was a Fruitful meeting towards our goal to obtain the affiliation at the earliest.

Kamarpara Mission gets 3rd Religious Sister



On November 29th, Kamarpara Parish felicitated Sr. Merila Tudu, Holy Cross, East India Province. She recently made her first profession in Siliguri. Parish community welcomed her as per Santal tradition and thanked her parents and family for offering her to God's service in the Church.

-Fr Stephen Britto

Congratulations

St Joseph's Convent School, Chitaranjan had Christmas get together for teachers on Dec 19th 2020. Bishop Cyprian Monis gave encouraging Christmas message to the teachers. The program was live streamed to the students to watch and to share the joy of Christmas. The teachers dressed like youth danced for Christmas carols.

SING A CAROL



Like every year this year too the ICYM St. John's Youth organised Sing a Carol on 22nd Dec. An evening heralding the Christmas season. During this pandemic the schools were unable to participate but five churches participated in both solo as well as group singing. Fr Gerald Machado, Fr Arul, Fr Linus, Fr Rahul, and Fr Nilu were present during the program. Their presence was an edifice to all youth and the participants. On this occasion Mr Choudhary and Mr Abhijet Ghattak shared their joys as guest of honour. We thanked the Almighty Lord for his constant blessings to make this event a successful one and continue to seek his blessings so that we may continue to organise it in the coming years as well. We also thank parish priest Fr. Dolphy Mathias for all his love and support.

-Fr Nilu Murmu



Christmas Charity

Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SVP) a unit of St. John's Conference Asansol that is taken care by President- Mr. Regis Michael, Vice-President: Mr. Desmond Peterson, Secretary- Ms. Victoria Joseph and Treasurer- Mr. Victor Shah along with all the other members distributed ration to 120 people during this Christmas season. A very special thanks to parish priest Fr. Dolphy Mathias for his constant support.

-Mr Thomas Bunty

Ordination Anniversary JANUARY



3 - Fr Linus Toppo
6 - Fr Michael Dias
17 - Fr Raja Sekhar
23 - Fr Mongal Tudu
23 - Fr Siluvai Kumar
23 - Fr Thomas Marandi

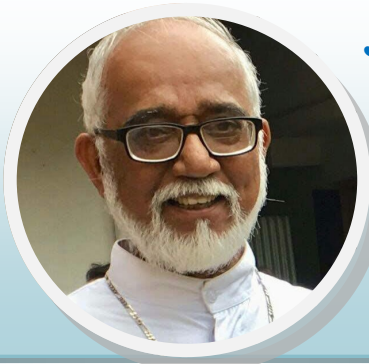
Bishop Salvatore Lobo's Programme for January 2021

Date	Time	Day	Place	Subject
01	Fri	08.00am	Bardhaman	New Year Mass at Missionaries of Charity
03	Sun	08.00am 3.00 pm	Jhamuria Asansol	Mass for the Feast of Epiphany Meeting with the government officials
05	Tue	4:00pm	Chetana	Meeting with Seminarians
06	Wed	04.00pm	Krishnagar	BRBC meeting in Bishop's House
07	Thu	06.30am 08.30am	Amghata Amghata	Mass for the staff and students of Propaedeutic G.B. meeting of Propaedeutic Seminary
08	Fri	06.30am 08.30am	Barrackpore Barrackpore	Mass for Morning Star Seminary G.B. Meeting of Morning Star Regional Seminary
10	Sun	08.00am	Asansol	Mass and pastoral visit to Jyothi Nagar
17	Sun	08.00am	Kulti	Mass and pastoral visit to Kulti Parish
12	Tue	10.00am	Asansol,	Meeting of Finance Committee
24	Sun	8:00am	Shanthinagar	Month's mind Mass for Late Fr Laborde
31	Sun	10.00am	Kalna	Confirmations and Pastoral visit

OBITUARY

4 - Fr Alwyn Fernandes
18 - Fr Cyprian Pinto

Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination Jan 29-Bishop Salvatore Lobo



Congratulations

Requesting prayers

With grateful hearts, we bid farewell to Fr Fracois Laborde to his heavenly abode.

Earthly Birth: 28th Feb 1927

Priestly Birth: 24 Mar 1951

He worked in Shanthinagar as pastor for five years and built the church and presbytery at Kalipathar.

Heavenly Birth: 25 Dec 2020

24th Jan 2021 Requiem Mass at Shanthinagar.



**Bishop Salvatore Lobo and Bishop Cyprian Monis and
 the Curia of Asansol Diocese wish all the readers of
 this news letter a Grace filled New Year 2021**